

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT AT WORK

Continuity



Creating Spaces for Study and Action Under the Social Justice Umbrella

by Marlene Carter, Norma Mota-Altman, and Faye Peitzman

*UCLA Writing Project
University of California, Los Angeles*

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

Continuity

Creating Spaces for Study and Action Under the Social Justice Umbrella

by Marlene Carter, Norma Mota-Altman, and Faye Peitzman

*UCLA Writing Project
University of California, Los Angeles*



National Writing Project
Berkeley, California

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

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

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

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

© 2009 by the National Writing Project.

All rights reserved.

Developmental Editor: Lynette Herring-Harris

Series Editors: Joye Alberts, Shirley Brown

Consulting Editor: Amy Bauman

Copyeditor: Judith Bess

Design: Diana Nankin, 38degrees.com

Layout and page design: Karen Karten

National Writing Project

University of California

2105 Bancroft Way #1042

Berkeley, CA 94720-1042

Telephone: 510-642-0963

Fax: 510-642-4545

Email: nwp@nwp.org

www.nwp.org

FOREWORD

How do writing project sites continue to attract and engage hard-working teachers in cocreating professional development throughout their careers? How do they sustain a presence in their local service areas, adapting to the interests of successive generations of teachers while still maintaining a sense of organizational mission? This third set in the NWP at Work monograph series focuses on the varied approaches local NWP sites take to “continuity.” Each monograph offers a window into the design and structure of opportunities that provide an intellectual home for writing project teacher-consultants who lead the work at each of the nearly 200 local sites around the country.

The first two sets in the NWP at Work series highlight two of the three components of the NWP model: the summer institute and site-sponsored inservice programming in schools and districts. The present set offers illustrations of the third component: continuity. Continuity, essentially, consists of those practices that nurture ongoing professional development and provide an indispensable source for sustained leadership development at local sites. The invitational summer institute identifies, recruits, and invites teachers into the culture, offering opportunities for leadership of the site. Inservice programs disseminate learnings about the teaching of writing. And it is through continuity that each site invests over time in the continued learning of its community of teacher-consultants.

Continuity, as the name implies, extends and deepens the cultural values enacted in the invitational summer institute: learning is ongoing, and it is socially and collaboratively constructed. At NWP sites, continuity goes beyond follow-up to the summer institute and constitutes the programming that sustains the professional community of the site and builds its leadership. Sites rely on teacher-consultants and university colleagues to collaborate and reinforce the partnership that is the backbone of the site; and continuity programs allow each site to grow and respond to changing educational landscapes. Continuity, according to Sheridan Blau, director of the South Coast Writing Project, is “where knowledge is as much produced as consumed.”

Continuity to Support Continued Learning

The kinds of programs sites engage in as continuity are wide-ranging and varied in intensity, drawing on local interests and needs. Such programs can include writing retreats, teacher research initiatives, and study groups on issues of concern in the service area, to name a few. While aspects of continuity described in this series involve long-range programming, teacher-consultants at writing project sites also value the less-formal and more-social occasions for learning. These might include book groups, dine-and-discuss gatherings, yearly reunion dinners, and ongoing listserv discussions that keep them involved and connected. An effective approach to continuity supports the dynamic growth of teacher-consultant knowledge by offering teachers access to colleagues and intellectual engagement in the midst of what can be the isolated act of teaching. It is, as one teacher in Oklahoma notes, a place where “you keep seeing people grow.”

Continuity to Develop and Support Leadership

The monographs in this set provide a look at slices of the professional communities at a number of writing project sites. Taken together, these stories from site leaders offer a theory of action about leadership that has attracted—and continues to attract—teacher-leaders. Successful sites have found ways to respond to shifting educational priorities while preserving their core values. Not an easy task in many cases.

It will be apparent from this set of monographs that continuity is firmly linked to sustainability, so that the challenge of preparing for both normal and unanticipated site leadership transitions might be met. Continuity programs vary in form and purpose, yet they all share the goal of supporting the continued learning of teacher-consultants. This focus on learning encourages sites to take an inquiry stance toward their work: to devise new structures that support diverse and democratic leadership; to reassess the goals and mission of the site through visioning and strategic planning; to examine ideas about literacy occasioned by new technologies; and to inform thoughtful, sustained, and relevant professional development in schools.

Local Sites / National Network

Finally, the NWP itself, over its nearly 35-year history, sponsors an array of initiatives, subnetworks, and events that support continuity at local sites. These cross-site exchanges provide opportunities for teacher-leaders and directors to extend their work by identifying new resources and learning from other sites. Local continuity programs then become a way for site leaders who participate in national programs and initiatives to involve colleagues in sharing new resources and learning throughout the local community.

So the explanation for the sustainability of NWP sites over time is this notion of continuity, the means by which teachers make the local site their intellectual home and a place of continual learning. Writing project sites are like solidly built houses: they endure because they have solid foundations and adhere to a set of principles that value the collaboratively constructed knowledge of teachers from preschool through university.

With this volume of NWP at Work we invite directors, teacher-consultants, school administrators, and all education stakeholders to explore the concepts and practices of the National Writing Project's continuity programs. These programs build leadership, offer ongoing professional development that is timely and responsive to local contexts, and provide a highly effective means of sustaining a community to support current and future teacher-leaders.

National Writing Project at Work Editorial Team

JOYE ALBERTS	PATRICIA MCGONEGAL
SHIRLEY P. BROWN	PAUL OH
ANN B. DOBIE	NANCY REMINGTON
PATRICIA SHELLEY FOX	SARAH R. ROBBINS
LYNETTE HERRING-HARRIS	

INTRODUCTION

The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Writing Project makes it a priority to provide a wide array of continuity opportunities that range from one-day sessions to multiyear programs for our teacher-consultants, or “fellows” as we call them. We offer writing retreats, advanced institutes, and sessions devoted to the teaching of English language learners. During the last week of our summer invitational, we share information about the continuity programs already in place and ask our new fellows to envision their own next steps as part of the UCLA Writing Project professional community (see appendix A). At the same time, our leadership team, composed of directors and fellows, continues to keep an eye on our service area as a whole, taking the pulse of local schools.

Sometimes pursuing continuity helps us get at the “big issues” of teaching. This monograph focuses on two social justice concerns, matters of race and issues of homophobia, and the continuity effort that brought them to center stage at our site. We write about how we shaped study groups around these issues, and how these groups have deepened our fellows’ personal and professional learning and sharpened their leadership skills. We offer the particularities of our experiences in an effort to be of use to writing project sites across the country, sites with local landscapes that don’t necessarily match our own.

The authors of this monograph are Faye Peitzman, UCLA Writing Project director, and Marlene Carter and Norma Mota-Altman, UCLA Writing Project associate directors and classroom teachers. All three are among the leaders of the study groups discussed here. In this document, we describe the impetus and ongoing work of two study groups: Matters of Race and Issues of Homophobia. We write about leadership, gathering resources, and engaging in hard conversations. We describe how both study groups were moved to take action. Finally, we reflect on how these study groups have impacted the work of our site and on the significance of nurturing long-term, focused continuity for teachers.

CREATING SPACES FOR STUDY AND ACTION UNDER THE SOCIAL JUSTICE UMBRELLA

by Marlene Carter, Norma Mota-Altman, and Faye Peitzman

The bottom line for our writing project site is this: When we don't attend to the back-drop of schooling by assuring safe spaces for all children to learn, we can't think that we're providing young writers with access and equity.

—Faye Peitzman, Director, UCLA Writing Project.

The UCLA Writing Project (UCLAWP), a site of the National Writing Project since 1977, is housed in Center X within UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Center X is also the home of UCLA's Teacher Education Program, known for its focus on access and equity for students in underserved urban areas. The UCLAWP serves teachers and students in the greater Los Angeles area, including but not limited to the 708 square miles of the Los Angeles Unified School District and its 600,000 students taught by over 35,000 teachers.

The reality of the local service area drives the need for the study-group aspect of our continuity. In our case, shifts in population continue to present new challenges for teachers. As a result, the UCLAWP is drawn to issues of social justice that include across-the-board equity and access, with particular attention to respect for home languages and cultures, to immigration realities, and to racial tensions in the schools.

More recently, an additional focus for our shared work emerged. While many understand that the social justice umbrella includes matters of race, class, gender, and language, we've found that some forget about sexual orientation. Safety, equity, and inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students aren't necessarily front and center for many people. We in California are no exception. While California laws stipulate safety and inclusion for LGBT students, a good number of teachers and administrators are unaware of these laws and unclear about how to meet these responsibilities (see appendix B).

ESTABLISHING SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDY GROUPS

The Impetus for the Groups

In 2003, the UCLA Writing Project leadership team was holding its annual mid-summer getaway planning retreat, with a focus on the site's continuity programs. The setting was perfect: Palm Springs in August. It was too hot to do anything but stay air-conditioned (or immersed in water) and problem solve, dream big dreams, and make action plans. Five of us attended: Site Director Faye Peitzman;

Co-director Jane Hancock; and associate directors and full-time classroom teachers Marlene Carter, Norma Mota-Altman, and Sidnie Myrick.¹ We worked from an inquiry stance as we examined continuity plans for our site. What were the pressing issues that impacted the teaching of writing in our service area? We began speaking of the demographic changes and the tensions between black and brown students in some of our schools. As a leadership team, we wondered how students and teachers were faring. To what extent were schools safe and equitable?

Picking up on this theme of safety and equity, Faye brought up a second arena. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students navigate physical and emotional threats at school every day. While the physical dangers are from their peers, some school personnel are also openly homophobic, and few seem to know how to acknowledge gay presence and accomplishment in our world. LGBT students' lives and realities can be invisible in the curriculum.

The excitement was growing in our small meeting room, pushing against the walls and door. We all knew we had pinpointed two focus areas whose study would enrich individual and collective understandings and power. We knew that writing project fellows would find multiple ways of influencing their students' learning. How should we proceed? We began by considering some of the past continuity programs offered by the site. Could any of these program structures serve to facilitate dialogue about race and homophobia among writing project fellows?

Designing the Study-Group Structure

We needed a format that would welcome writing project teachers who were interested in exploring matters of social justice. Two continuity program structures came to mind: a Thursday night study-group series and our teacher-research program. About ten years before this, we had offered Thursday night study groups, monthly opportunities to get together with past fellows and to discuss topics of mutual interest. For many years we also offered a 12-month teacher-researcher program. In our teacher-researcher groups, all participants chose their own topics and defined their own questions. This was just what we had hoped for at the time, but the type of collaboration we anticipated for these new groups would require a different format.

If we offered groups that combined study and inquiry across the course of a year, participants would have time and opportunity to explore together how matters of race and issues of homophobia impact learning. And they might want to remain with these groups for several years. We left the 2003 leadership retreat with a focus, a meeting structure, and a draft of the invitation we would send to all of our past fellows (see appendix C).

The Importance of Inclusive Leadership for the Study Groups

We believed the best leaders for social justice study groups would be those passionately interested in the issues at hand and respectful of others' opinions. We asked Marlene Carter, who had initiated the discussion of racial tensions at the Palm

¹ The UCLAWP now has a 12-member leadership board.

Springs meeting, to facilitate the Matters of Race study group. As a past director of our teacher-researcher program for several years, Marlene was the ideal leader, having completed two of her own teacher-researcher studies focused on issues of African American students: “The Best of Both Worlds” (1998) and “Helping African American Males Reach Their Academic Potential” (2005).

We looked to Erik Travis to facilitate the Issues of Homophobia study group. A relatively new fellow, Erik had spoken during our invitational summer institute about leading his school’s Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and had made it clear that keeping his classroom safe for LGBT youth was very important to him. He was outspoken, passionate about bringing visibility to the invisible and being respectful. Faye volunteered to cofacilitate both groups for the first year. This was an unusual move on her part, since she believed that K–12 classroom teachers were the best fit for leading most writing project endeavors. In this case, though, she wanted to be fully involved, both for her personal growth and to have the opportunity to share insights gleaned from work with UCLA colleagues and students. In addition, her antennae were up: breaking the silence around matters of race and homophobia was a new and sensitive endeavor, and she felt her support might be particularly useful. As it turned out, Faye’s presence lent valuable support to the initial work, and then was important over the long term. Other cofacilitators over the six-year period included Norma Mota-Altman, Joel Freedman, Deborah Lowe, Alfee Enciso, and LaSonja Roberts.

Leadership and Positionality

In addition to drawing on the NWP tenet of taking an inquiry stance, these groups also embraced and applied learnings from feminist scholarship. From the very start, we understood that positionality would play a role in our leadership choices. The term *positionality* captures the notion that in our culture we are socially located—positioned—on a continuum of power in terms of facets of identity such as race, class, gender, language, and sexual orientation. Our life experiences and various identities combine to create this positionality, which in turn contributes to shaping how we construct knowledge and make meaning in the world (Cooper 2006; Collins 1990).

In addition to positionality shaping one’s perspective, one’s positionality in general and, arguably, race in particular, send signals to others. Having cofacilitators of different races may send a message that the group will also be multiracial. For the first-year study group on race, the cofacilitators self-identified as African American and Jewish. Our group of seven included African American, Latina, Asian, and white teachers, some of whom self-identified as Jewish. The second-year group was also multiracial, but it was smaller in numbers. To encourage more participants for year three, a flyer that noted one of the core books would be *Young, Gifted, and Black* was sent to all writing project fellows. In addition, Marlene made phone calls to teachers she thought would both benefit from and contribute significantly to the work; she also encouraged these teachers to bring their friends. That year’s group was almost entirely African American women. For year four, we intentionally tried

to broaden the racial diversity of the study group. We asked a biracial male to cofacilitate, and that year's group was diverse in terms of both race and gender.

That's not to say that there is no place for race-alike groups or for concentrating on a particular group of students. Actually, year three of the study group on race satisfied another need at our site. Teachers were eager to focus, finally, on issues that pertain to black students. Usually those issues were included in broader discussions on equity and access, on language variation, or on problems associated with students from low-income neighborhoods. The choice of books had brought to the forefront issues pertaining to *all* African American learners, not just the ones who were poor or under-performing.

We don't know what would have happened if a white teacher had facilitated without a coleader of another race because we didn't proceed that way. Having a single leader whose racial positionality precluded direct experience with the day-to-day challenges most people of color know just didn't make sense to us. Of course there is a place for a white facilitator to lead a group focusing on race or a straight facilitator to lead a group focusing on homophobia. An examination of white privilege or homophobia could well lead to significant advocacy, the kind that allies do so well. For example, a white teacher might be in a position to help other white teachers grapple with the notion that all whites in our culture do have privileges that they haven't earned (Rothenberg 2008). Similarly, a straight teacher can advocate for the safety and inclusion of LGBT students without being accused of having a personal agenda. We were, then, strategic as we invited our study-group leaders.

Creating Communities of Learners

The two study groups began their first sessions in similar ways:

- introductions, including why people were interested in the group
- acknowledgment that we would all be resources for each other
- agreement that respecting all stances was critical.

The Issues of Homophobia group, diverse in sexual orientation and race, had a particularly interesting beginning. It turned out that the group of ten spanned the range of UCLA Writing Project summer institutes, which began in 1977. Faye was the only one who knew all the participants, and none of the participants knew anyone else in the group.

Given that we were, after all, study groups, we moved quickly to naming texts that might serve as one of our shared focal resources. Participants in each group brought suggestions for texts (see appendix D).

Discussing texts would be a thread running throughout the study-group years, but by the middle of year one, a clear desire for action emerged in both groups. In the Matters of Race group, two teachers in very different school environments brought their classes together to discuss racial issues in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Their

students wrote on the topic “How does the world see you and how do you want to be seen?” Students did primary research about race: “What is it like when you have lunch with a group of students of another race?” In the Issues of Homophobia study group, there was classroom piloting of Bruce Coville’s short story “Am I Blue?” (1995) from the collection by the same name.

Needing Space for Hard Conversations in the Study Groups

When we first began our study groups, we never intended that they would be one-year experiments, and the groups didn’t develop a curriculum but rather a process. As the groups matured and lessons were learned, the particular focus would necessarily change. In fact, one of the earliest lessons we learned was that not everyone will see the need for discussing race and sexual orientation. (See appendix E for responding to parental concerns.)

The sections that follow present structures and activities that capture two aspects of our work: a consideration of our own identities and attitudes and a focus on working with students. We recognized that the phrase “hard conversations” means those discussions that push members to articulate thoughts, feelings, and stances that may or may not be acceptable to others. The topics are high-stakes; often there is a fear of being misunderstood or being caught in ignorance. Sometimes these conversations are planned; that is, we willingly agree to make ourselves vulnerable in order to break new ground. Just because they are planned, however, doesn’t mean they are “dummy runs.” We can’t avoid the emotional pull of the topics. We can “practice,” but the practice doesn’t stay on an intellectual level (Montaño et al. in draft).

We also understood early on in our study-group work that it was wiser to plan for the teaching of social justice issues rather than wait for a “teachable moment” to emerge at our site or in our classrooms. We do not want to wait for a moment that may or may not present itself. We want to be thoughtful and intentional, finding and shaping the texts and writing activities that are just the right fit for the particular students we teach.

The Homophobia Study Group Gets to Know Its Members More Deeply

Whenever groups of teachers meet for the first time, there are the usual introductions and reasons for joining a group. But the fourth year that we offered the Issues of Homophobia study group, we decided to introduce ourselves more deeply and put forth our attitudes more explicitly. We had the sense that there could be important things to say that might not come up in a year’s worth of studying together. We decided to conduct a “focus group” where particular questions would be posed and where everyone would speak and would be granted attention, respect, and leeway by the audience.

We understood that some of the conversations might be difficult, but we thought that we needed to experience some “hard conversation” if we expected to facilitate

discussions with students. We talked out what might be important to know, and then one of us shaped the following first questions:

- Please introduce yourself in terms of your positionality: race, class, language, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age. How does your sexual orientation, and others' awareness or lack of awareness of it, give you an advantage in the classroom and on the school site?
- How do you come to the table—that is, why are you here? Specifically, what do you hope to gain? What do you bring to the conversation?

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups—in this case interactive interviews with five to eight participants—are a form of qualitative research that probes individuals' attitudes toward particular products. In our case, the focus was our positions in the world and attitudes about self and others. Here are some guidelines we followed for holding focus groups:

- Choose facilitators sufficiently skilled to guarantee a safe space for potentially highly emotional talk.
- Clarify the group's goals and how the chosen focus might move the group toward the goals.
- Coconstruct the gist of the questions to be posed.
- Make sure all group members are willing to proceed.
- Establish ground rules: for example, no one will be pressured to answer a particular question.

When we put these questions into use in the group, all of us understood that we were free to decline to answer any questions that we objected to. For most of us, the opening line was a rote list: “Latina, middle class, Spanish, female, straight, divorced/partnered, 54” or “White, middle class, English, transgender female to male, gay, single, 27.”

But one teacher objected to the vocabulary available to her to name her marital status and refused to label it, though she did describe it. Another noted a question not posed that made her feel vulnerable: whether or not she had children. One refused to disclose her sexual orientation because she felt that specifying her orientation wouldn't illuminate her stance that LGBT literature should be a thread woven into the curriculum and that classrooms should be safe and respectful places for all students. We followed up on the naming of our positionality with our question about the advantages that sexual orientation offers in the classroom and school site.

The next cluster of questions focused on the reasons our colleagues joined the study group and what they thought they could contribute. On the one hand,

everyone was here to improve the environment for all students, particularly high school LGBT youth, so that classrooms would be safe, inclusive, and respectful. On the other hand, group members varied in their responses to the dual parts of the second question: what I want and what I bring. One teacher said she wanted to learn how to facilitate discussions of homophobia “in a practiced, educated way, not just like a hell-raiser.” A teacher who self-identified as lesbian noted that while she spends a good amount of time “helping other teachers figure out how to deal with gay and lesbian issues in their classrooms and in their curricula,” she actually doesn’t spend much time herself explicitly teaching about gay and lesbian issues.

Everyone figured out what he or she had to offer: maturity, enthusiasm, fearlessness, spontaneity, and “jumping in with my heart.” Perhaps most surprising was the remark of a teacher we knew was a “friend” to proponents of combating homophobia.

What do I have to offer? Not much really. While I’m working in a school with a high percentage of LGBT students and teachers, I come from a homogeneous, conservative population...but I want to learn. I might be naïve, but I’m open. Maybe this could be a model for others.

We found that this examination of positionality held potential for profound learning about self and others and offered the likelihood of forming an even closer community of learners. We’ve come to understand that positionality does count, even if we can’t make assumptions about which aspects of our positionality are difficult for us to discuss. We also found out that by speaking, we learn about ourselves as well as about others.

Further, we came to realize on a different level the advantages each of us had and the potential power of collaborating with those whose positions were not the same as our own. While gay teachers might serve as role models and confidants for gay students, which was a clear advantage, they actually had less leeway in the classroom. Colleagues, administrators, and/or parents might decide that they were just following a “personal agenda.” On the other hand, while straight teachers didn’t have an “insider’s understanding” of what it feels like to be LGBT in a homophobic society, they have a greater chance of being viewed as allies in the same way that native English speakers can be allies for immigrant students.

Talking in the Matters of Race Study Group

The study group on race also realized that concentrating on self was essential before moving on to engaging students in the classroom. Talking about race is hard. We fear that we may offend someone, that we may “sound” racist or ignorant, or that we *are* racist or ignorant. The monthly meetings of the study group on race needed to provide a safe space for fellows to have the kinds of hard conversations that are often avoided. We made a conscious effort to create a safe space through the readings we used and the activities we planned for the group.

An initial focus on a shared text gives participants common ideas to discuss and helps the group delve into hard topics. For example, the group read and discussed

Beverly Tatum's *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (2003). The text propels hard conversation with Tatum's definitions of racism and white privilege.

Many people use the terms prejudice and racism interchangeably. I do not, and I think it is important to make a distinction. In his book Portraits of White Racism, David Wellman . . . defines racism as a "system of advantage based on race." (7)

This definition of racism is useful because it allows us to see that racism, like other forms of oppression, is not only a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, but a system involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals. (7)

The systematic advantages of being White are often referred to as White privilege. (8)

For many Whites, this new awareness of the benefits of a racist system elicits considerable pain, often accompanied by feelings of anger and guilt. (9)

A group member strongly disagreed with Tatum's definitions and did not accept her statements about white privilege. The discussion that ensued provided an opportunity to explore the definitions offered and to apply them to our experiences.

Role-Playing Hard Talk

At another meeting, group members assumed the roles of students they taught and wrote questions about race they had heard students ask or ones they believed their students had. The activity had a dual purpose. Marlene, in her role as facilitator, hoped to create an opportunity for participants to ask the questions they might not be able to voice in any other context. The questions, written anonymously, were placed in a box. She pulled them out one at a time and read them aloud for the group to practice how they would respond.

In one role-play, Marlene read this question aloud: "Why do black girls talk so loud?" The group was silent for a moment. Marlene held back, giving the group time to think and respond. More silence. But slowly, the group pieced together a response. The discussion felt a bit awkward, but we kept at it until it seemed that no question could surprise or offend us.

Later, a member said that he had assumed that loud black students meant misbehaving students, but after being in the group, he started to observe his students very intentionally. He soon noticed that high decibels were not necessarily an indicator of misbehavior; and he realized that quiet students misbehaved, too. Our group had provided a safe space for this teacher to examine his perceptions of his students and even to change his way of interacting with them. He was not so quick to focus his criticism on his African American students, a change that undoubtedly made his classroom a more comfortable place for him and his students.

CREATING TEACHABLE MOMENTS OUT OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDY GROUPS

Realizing that waiting for the teachable moment was not the only way to engage people in thinking about homophobia and race, the two groups decided to act. They developed action plans for the teachers' individual classrooms that would intentionally invite discussion and writing about these social action issues.

Piloting *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

During the spring of 2006, the study group on homophobia decided to teach a text in their classes that included gay characters as part of a larger setting, much like real life. Given that one goal of the study group was to weave LGBT literature into the curriculum, we intentionally decided to teach a longer work that would call for a more in-depth period of study and that would engage students of different abilities. We decided to pool initial plans, teach in ways that made the most sense given our different student audiences, and debrief in our monthly study-group meetings.

The group decided on Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), a highly engaging coming-of-age novel that offers a wealth of topics to discuss in high school classrooms: issues of drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, rape, abortion, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and depression. In spite of all these issues, the novel manages to present a family in which people love and care about one another and through which the main character learns that while life is hard, one needs to be resilient, and one needs to be a full participant in life.

Since we were teaching a common text, we were able to share the particular lessons and strategies that helped move students *into*, *through*, and *beyond* the text (see appendix G). Together we brainstormed ways to engage students and develop their critical-thinking and writing skills. We didn't know what we would encounter as we taught this unit, so having other study-group members available to support us and help us think through our practice proved invaluable. When Deborah shared her idea of having students write to Charlie (the protagonist of the book), all of us quickly adapted the idea for our own particular classes. In one class, students drew the name of a character out of a hat and wrote to him or her throughout the unit. In another class, students chose the character and wrote just one letter.

As part of the study-group experience, participants kept journals of their journeys in teaching *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and were able to share student responses and issues that students were bringing up in class. It was at this point that we all felt ourselves very much a community of learners and also what Wenger has called a community of practice. We all engaged in a "shared endeavor," and the opportunity to benefit from multiple perspectives about our work in progress was exhilarating (Wenger 1998, 72–85).

We know that teaching this text has helped us provide a forum for students to discuss the issues facing them, to form and voice their own opinions, and to sup-

port those opinions with knowledge rather than with fear or stereotypes. Through the study group, our UCLAWP intentionally created a space where teachers could prepare to engage students in meaningful, carefully planned conversations about LGBT issues—issues that most likely would not otherwise have been explored.

Writing Event on Matters of Race

The Matters of Race study group also felt compelled to move from study to action. The original study-group flyer advertising the Matters of Race study group promised that participants would explore how writing could be used to address racial tensions in the classroom. First, though, participants needed time to study and talk about race and racism at a personal level. By year four, the group felt it was important to give writing a more prominent place in their learning and teaching. As part of our move to action, we decided that the UCLA Writing Project would sponsor a “writing event” to encourage teachers to make writing about race a part of their curriculum. Designing such an event was a challenge.

THE ROLE OF A STUDY-GROUP FACILITATOR

Facilitating a study group is somewhat different from facilitating other writing project groups. Study-group facilitators must resist the temptation to be the teacher/presenter, and they walk the line between being a leader and being a member of the group. Certainly a study group is not a forum for the facilitator to expound on his or her knowledge while others listen passively. The following tips may help facilitators of study groups to grow into the leader/learner role. Some of the best study-group facilitators are leaders who are able to

- set an agenda that allows for flexibility if the group wants or needs to change its direction.
- take care of logistics.
- get the group started and ended on time.
- help the group make transitions from greetings to discussions of the readings to writing and other activities.
- keep the more vocal members of the group from monopolizing the conversation and provide space for quiet members to enter the conversation.
- find ways to help the group stay connected and feel “cared for” from one meeting to the next. This might include bimonthly emails that capture highlights from the last session and set the agenda for the next (see appendix F).
- keep up communication with teachers who may need to miss sessions. This is both a generous and practical way of keeping teachers involved. Few teachers ask to be deleted from the email lists, and some of them may become loyal participants in the next year’s group.

After some discussion, we ultimately decided to invite only writing project fellows and their students to participate in our pilot year. Knowing that this exploration would arouse strong emotions, we wanted teachers to be able to do a good job of facilitating classroom conversations, and we were confident that writing project teachers who invited their students to write would be up to this task. We would advertise more broadly once we developed some guidelines to offer others.

Next we developed topic choices for the event. When potential topics were shared at the first study-group meeting of year four, participants agreed they were “fine.” It was not until half way through year four that the group took a deep look at these topics. We each wrote on a different proposed topic. At the end of the writing time, we shared and talked about how we felt about our writing. After actually writing about the topics, the group decided to eliminate some, combine others, and create one new prompt.

Looking back at that meeting, we understand now why the group was able to craft the topics that day. First, each person had time to write on a topic of his or her choice. Having done so made that person the “expert” on the topic. The group trusted the writer’s judgment: the topic was either clear or confusing, engaging or dull, thought-provoking or limiting. After months of talking about race and doing quickwrites, we were willing to write and share stories that were personal and sometimes painful, trusting that we could be open with one another.

USING ANTHOLOGIES AS INSTRUCTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Each student and teacher featured in the Matters of Race and the Issues of Homophobia anthologies receives a hard copy. However, these anthologies serve a deeper purpose than celebration of writing for teachers and site leaders at the UCLA Writing Project.

Teachers make use of the anthologies by incorporating selected pieces into their classroom curricula in a variety of ways:

- The writing can serve as a starter to initiating classroom dialogue. The honesty of the pieces makes an impact.
- Some of the pieces are written by teachers. While students are interested in their peers’ thinking, they also take notice when teachers share autobiographical accounts, poems, and dilemmas.
- The pieces vary a good deal. Some are deeply heartfelt, others have a lighter touch. Some take the form of stories, others are essays or poems. This suggests to students that they, too, have choices about tone and genre when they write.

UCLA teachers and site leaders also draw on the anthologies as a professional development tool:

- Select student works serve well as companion pieces when paired with professional literature for workshops at schools that have contracted with the site for professional development.
- Selections from the anthologies are used to prompt professional conversations with teachers during continuity meetings and the invitational summer institute.
- Excerpts from the anthologies engage teacher audiences at conferences. The content of the anthologies raises awareness of the impact of important social issues that serve as backdrops for student learning and teacher instruction.

We titled our event “Matters of Race: Writings About Life in a Multicultural, Multiracial World: A Writing Opportunity for Students in Grades 4–12.” Each teacher would select five student pieces and one teacher piece and submit them to us. We would select a number of pieces for inclusion in an anthology, which we would publish.

We announced the event (see flyer in appendix H)² and submissions arrived from writing project teachers within and outside of our study group. We have now published two Matters of Race anthologies. The publications present pieces that are honest and thoughtful. Some will inspire future class discussions. Others will challenge teachers to engage in self-examination and think about their own attitudes toward race. Our next steps are to open the Matters of Race event to all Los Angeles area teachers. We believe the event will draw teachers to our site and serve as a rich recruitment tool for our invitational summer institute.

CREATING AND SUSTAINING STUDY GROUPS THAT FOCUS ON ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Choose a focus based on local teacher needs.
- Choose group facilitators who are passionate about the focus and are willing to learn along with the group.
- Remember that the positionality of your leadership sends a message to group participants.
- Calendar regular meeting times at the start of the study. Provide both an adequate number of meetings and adequate amount of time during the meetings for teachers to discuss resources, grapple with personal feelings about topics, and make connections to their classroom practices.
- Consider starting with texts. Books and articles build up everyone’s knowledge base and may also serve to deflect feelings of personal attack. One is disagreeing with the text, not a colleague.
- Be politically and legally astute. Know federal and state laws and use them to your advantage. Prepare as best you can for the hard conversations that inevitably will happen.
- Think about ways in which the site can support and engage the new leaders that will emerge from the groups.
- Expect that the study groups will feel compelled to take action. Support their plans.
- Prepare to go public with your learning-in-progress. This might mean sharing what you know with teachers in your school, with teachers inside the local writing project community, or with audiences at regional or national conferences.

IMPACTS OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDY GROUPS

The social justice study-group work has had an exponential impact on our site. As we share this work with the larger educational community, we feel that our “outside face,” the view others have of the site, more closely matches our “pure face,” what our writing project site really values and the actions we take to express these values (Patmon 2009).

2 For the purposes of this monograph, only the writing event and anthologies from the Matters of Race group are discussed.

Impact of the Study Groups on the Invitational Summer Institute

Our work on race and homophobia has made its way into our invitational summer institute. During our pre-institute orientation, we give our new fellows choices of books to consider for their summer professional book club, a major component of our summer institute reading. We now include Tatum's *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (2003) and Marion Dane Bauer's *Am I Blue?* (1995) among the choices. We give brief introductory book talks so that all teachers can make an informed selection. Each year since the books were included, eight to ten teachers have chosen these titles for their weekly small-group discussions, which culminate during the final week of the summer institute when each book club shapes an activity that gives all summer fellows entrée into the heart of the texts (see appendix I).

Teachers from the study groups introduce matters of social justice to the summer fellows early in the institute, sharing their experiences with teaching for social justice and offering summer fellows a glimpse into the larger professional community available to them through the writing project. In the summer of 2008, Marlene visited the summer invitational group and posed the question "How do we talk and write about race in our classrooms?" She shared personal experiences, including the fact that she's been called a racist by her students. At that point the room became very quiet. Then Marlene explained that her students used the word *racist* to mean "unfair." She led us in the activity she and her students had engaged in, a look at the word *racist* from four perspectives: their own personal definition, their group's definitions, Webster's, and the definition Beverly Tatum offers: "a system of advantage based on race" (2003, 7). The summer fellows appreciated the opportunity to talk further about labels, language, and how they might facilitate classroom conversations and writing about race.

Social Justice Study Groups and Site Growth: Providing a Space for What Matters

The two study groups of five to ten teachers per year, funded modestly, have had significant impact at our site. Now, one of our goals is to weave our focus on race and homophobia into additional UCLAWP programs: professional development at school sites, Young Writers programs in the summer, and our very popular Young Writers Retreat at Lake Arrowhead for high school students. This is risky business, clearly, and districts, schools, and parents will notice. Is it worth the risk? Yes, but it's not one of those endeavors where you "jump in with your heart" in an unprepared way. Our study groups are building repertoires and expertise to offer colleagues who share our belief that sexual orientation and race sit under the social justice umbrella side by side with gender, language, and class.

Impact of Study Groups on Teachers and the UCLAWP

What differences have these particular learning communities—study groups on matters of social justice—made in the teaching lives of our writing project fellows? Study groups have given participating teachers the courage to take more risks and the impetus to do things "now" rather than at some vague time in the future. A study-group member noted that working with social justice issues and literature in the classroom requires interest, planning, and a certain willingness to take risks, real or perceived. The study group helped her act on a long-standing interest by giving her a community to help with the planning and a group momentum that overrode any hesitations she had. The UCLA Writing Project's "seal of approval" made it easier to explain to her colleagues what she was doing in the piloting of materials. Monthly meetings and due dates pushed her to find time to do whatever was promised because others were counting on her.

And teachers experienced great pleasure drawing on one another's expertise. As one teacher wrote, what he learns "from creative and dedicated teacher-artists . . . never fails to enrich and inform student learning." Often teachers don't have opportunities for this kind of collaboration in their schools. The difference in participating in a long-standing learning community is palpable. As one participant stated, "Study group helps remind us that our work is a mission, not a burden."

These groups have been extraordinarily meaningful for us these past six years. A wider range of teachers have reinvested in our site. Study-group participants have acknowledged their growth as teachers and teacher-leaders, and they have shared their learnings and experiences through presentations at local, state, and national conferences. The current study-group leaders are now a part of our local UCLAWP Advisory Board. When budgets are cut and local testing frenzies assume too important a focus, their voices remind us, should we forget, that our writing project site is here to pay attention to the needs of teachers and all of their students.

REFERENCES

Bauer, Marion Dane. 1995. *Am I Blue?* New York: HarperCollins.

Carter, Marlene. 1998. "The Best of Both Worlds." In *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development*, edited by Enid Lee. Washington, DC: Network of Educators on the Americas.

Carter, Marlene. 2005. "Helping African American Males Reach Their Academic Potential." In *Going Public with Our Teaching: An Anthology of Practice*, edited by Thomas Hatch, Dilruba Ahmed, Ann Lieberman, Deborah Faigenbaum, Melissa Eiler White, and Désiré H. Pointer Mace. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Chbosky, Stephen. 1999. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York: MTV Books.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: HarperCollins Academic.

Cooper, Camille Wilson. 2006. "The Detrimental Impact of Teacher Bias: Lessons Learned from African-American Mothers." *Teacher Education Quarterly* 30: 101-116.

Coville, Bruce. 1995. "Am I Blue?" In *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence*, edited by Marion Dane Bauer. New York: HarperCollins.

Montaño, Theresa, Anne Powell, Faye Peitzman, Jody Priselac, Camille Wilson Cooper, Eloise Lopez Metcalfe, and Leslie Kapner. 2008. *Making Connections:*

Anti-racist Pedagogy and Social Justice Teacher Education. Los Angeles: UCLA Center Xchange. Available at www.uclawp.org.

Patmon, Denise. 2009, forthcoming. Project Outreach Initiative Resource. www.nwp.org.

Rothenberg, Paula S. 2008. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*. 3rd edition. New York: Worth Publishers.

Tatum, Beverly. 2003. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity*. Rev. ed. New York: Basic Books.

Wenger, Etienne. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE UCLA WRITING PROJECT'S CONTINUITY PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Continuity is the umbrella term for the way we continue to nourish and learn from our writing project fellows. We do our best to listen to what teachers say about their next focus for professional growth and create opportunities for all to remain connected to our learning community. The range of opportunities is broad, including one-day, multiple-week, full-year and multiyear engagement. It used to be the case that a majority of our continuity effort revolved around teachers offering continuity workshops at school sites. Clearly this is still a major effort, but we now also concentrate on providing arenas in which teachers have time to delve deeply into specific issues of teaching and learning. And, because we are a writing project site, we offer several settings in which teachers can continue developing as writers.

Building Knowledge

- **Advanced Institutes.** Usually on Saturdays, three times a year. Time to get together with other writing project fellows to learn new approaches, share ideas, and hone presentation skills. Also an opportunity to delve more deeply into issues and build/share understandings.
- **Thursday-Night Study Groups.** Open to all writing project fellows. Currently we run study groups on race and on homophobia. An exceptional opportunity to immerse yourself in significant areas for social change.
- **Second-Time Arounder.** After a few years, let us know that you want to return to the invitational summer institute, participate along with the new fellows, and coach them in shaping and refining their demonstration lessons.
- **What Language Has to Do with It.** This new inquiry/study group will look at students through the lens of language. Why do some second language learners succeed in school, and others not? Those interested in close readings of theory and research concerning second-language acquisition, immigrant English learners, and speakers of African American vernacular English are welcome to apply.
- **Participate in the Larger NWP Network:** Participate in opportunities offered by the California Writing Project or the National Writing Project. These include special focus online discussions and resources as well as annual events and conferences.

Teachers as Writers

- **Malibu Writing Retreat.** Once a year in the fall, begins on a Friday evening and ends Sunday noon. Lots of quiet time to write and good people to respond to your writing and offer encouragement.
- **Young Writers Retreat at Lake Arrowhead.** Once a year at Lake Arrowhead, teacher to student ratio about 1 to 7, for high school students and writing project fellows. A wonderful opportunity to write with students “side by side.”
- **Writers Anonymous.** Meets on Saturdays once a month from October to May. Another opportunity to write and get feedback from other writers.

Writing Project and State Conferences

- **With Different Eyes.** A Conference for Teachers of English Learners Across the Disciplines. Attend or present a workshop at this conference that has been ongoing since 1991. Always the first Saturday in November.
- **Chancellor’s Conference on Composition and Literature.** Attend or present a workshop at this conference that showcases the work of writing project fellows. Ongoing since 1977. Always the first Saturday in December.
- **California Association of Teachers of English (CATE) Annual Conference.** Attend our state conference and propose to present a workshop in the writing project strand.

Sharing Your Expertise in Professional Development Settings

- **Professional Development Workshops at School Sites.** An opportunity for fellows to present workshops. Also an opportunity to coordinate a series of workshops.
- **Coaching.** Become a full-time writing project literacy coach at one of our partnership schools. Something to consider when you want to make a career change or when you retire.

Teaching a Class/Facilitating Open Institutes

- **Young Writers Classes.** Teach a section in one of our summer Young Writers classes.
- **Open Institutes.** Teach/facilitate a workshop in one of our summer Open Program offerings. Each summer we run one- and two-week institutes that need facilitators.

More!

- **Advisory Board Member.** We ask teachers who have assumed major leadership positions to join in planning the course of writing project work.

APPENDIX B: LAW AND POLICY SAFETY AND FAIRNESS FOR LGBT STUDENTS

California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000 (AB537)

This state law makes it illegal for public schools to discriminate against students and education employees on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or to allow the school environment to become so hostile for students who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), that they are, in effect denied equal access to an education:

It is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their sex, ethnic group identification, race, national origin, religion, mental or physical disability, or regardless of any basis that is contained in the prohibition of hate crimes . . . [this includes actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender], equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state. California Education Code §200.

The regulations implementing this law state that

[No] person . . . shall be subjected to discrimination, or any form of illegal bias, including harassment. No person shall be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of any local agency's program or activity on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion color or mental or physical disability. Title 5, California Code of Regulations, §4900(a).

The regulations define *gender* very broadly:

***Gender* means a person's actual sex or perceived sex, and includes a person's perceived identity, appearance, or behavior, whether or not that identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with a person's sex at birth. Title 5, California Code of Regulations §4910(k).**

See the Department of Education website for more information and resource materials at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety>.

California Constitution

Provides for a right of privacy for all persons, including children (Article 1, Section 1). This right includes the right to keep sexual orientation private. Therefore, without the student's consent, school staff do not have the right to disclose the student's sexual orientation to others. In addition, federal and state laws (20 U.S.C. section 1232g; California Education Code section 49073 *et seq.*) protect the confidentiality of student records. School staff may not disclose information from student records to unauthorized persons.

Provides for a safe school environment for all students and staff (Article 1, Section 28). To meet this requirement, school staff must ensure that any incidence of violence, harassment, or discrimination that threatens the safety of students or staff is addressed appropriately.

Federal Law—Title IX

No person...shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Equal Access Act

This federal law requires that, if a public secondary school provides a meeting place during noninstructional time for any voluntary, student-initiated, and student-led group that is not directly related to the curriculum, then it must provide the same meeting facilities and equal privileges to all non-curriculum-related groups:

It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school...to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting...on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. 20 U.S. Code §4071(a)

Secondary schools include both middle schools and high schools. This law protects students' rights to form Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and similar groups, if the school allows other noncurricular student groups.

1st Amendment: Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Association

This federal constitutional amendment protects students' rights of free speech, though these rights are somewhat limited in the school setting. Students have the right to be "out" at school, speak about LGBT issues, wear symbols of pride such as triangles and rainbow flags, dress according to their gender identity, etc., so long as their speech and other expression are not disruptive.

Hate Crime Laws

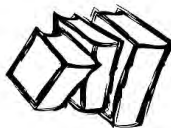
A hate crime is a criminal act or attempted criminal act against a person, property, or institution that manifests evidence of hostility toward the victim because of her or his actual or perceived race, religion, disability, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation.

A hate incident is an act or attempted act that is not a crime but that expresses hostility against a person or property or institution because of the victim's actual or perceived race, religion, disability, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation. Examples of hate incidents would include distribution of leaflets containing bigoted comments or slurs; or use of bigoted insults, taunts, jokes, or caricatures.

APPENDIX C: INVITATION TO JOIN A STUDY GROUP

2006 Brochure

Thursday Night Study Groups



4:30 pm - 7 pm
Moore Hall, UCLA

09/14/06
10/12/06
11/09/06
12/07/06
01/11/07
02/15/07
03/15/07

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



UCLA Writing Project
1320 Moore Hall
Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521
EED5 WTG

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
UCLA

SIX EASY STEPS TO A STUDY GROUP

- Step 1.** Choose a study group you would like to attend from the three described inside the flyer.
 - Step 2.** Call Bettye Scott **310.206.3544** or email her bscott@gseis.ucla.edu. Let her know which one interests you.
 - Step 3.** Leave her your email and home address and she will send you the room and parking information.
 - Step 4.** Come to UCLA on Study Group Thursday and join us for light refreshments in the Reading Room in Moore Hall 3340 at 4:30pm.
 - Step 5.** Go to your assigned room for intellectual, significant discussion and dialogue.
 - Step 6.** Go home with books and materials for the next meeting.
- Hope to see you there. Space is limited. Call or email early.
- Please e-mail Bettye Scott at bscott@gseis.ucla.edu or call **310.206.3544** to sign up for one of the study groups.
- Complimentary parking, books and materials will be provided.
- Optional: Two quarter units of UCLA Extension credit are available for \$115.00

RACE FOR IDENTITY AND RESPECT

MARLENE CARTER, DORSEY HIGH SCHOOL
ALFEE ENCISO, LAUSD

In the race to improve student achievement, educators should remember that attitudes can propel students toward success or drag them toward failure. Having a positive climate in the classroom and on the campus includes having adults and students who respond positively to people of all races. Join us this year as we examine professional readings and share our collective knowledge.

Group members will receive a collection of professional articles and a CD with lesson ideas for addressing matters of race.

Guiding Questions

- How can teachers address matters of race when they are of a different racial group than their students?
- How can we celebrate the diversity in our multi-racial schools and communities while also acknowledging the challenges?
- How can we address racial tension in the classroom?
- What kinds of texts and writing opportunities might help students gain a deeper understanding of matters of race?

Whether you have had a lot of experience in working on this topic or if you are just beginning, this study group needs you.

Culminating Task: This group will help develop a "writing event" that invites students to write on matters of race for the UCLA Writing Project's new anthology *Justice Matters*.

TEEN POP CULTURE: A CLASSROOM EXPLORATION

DAVID DOTY, UCLA WRITING PROJECT TEACHER-CONSULTANT
KATHRYN GULLO, T.S. KING MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teen pop culture is of immediate and relevant concern to our students. Connecting this relevancy and classroom curriculum is a fascinating challenge. What do teachers need to know about pop culture, so we can use this knowledge to engage students in literate lives?

- What is "pop culture?" What definition can be developed that is accurate and appropriate to the classroom?
- How can we help students connect curriculum to their world? How do we meet the requirements of Standards-based lessons and still engage students in relevant learning activities?
- Can we match the "canon" with paired readings and activities to help students gain a broad knowledge through themes and topics of interest?

Together we will explore these questions, work with traditional texts as well as blogs, MySpace, music and television to broaden our own understanding of the teenage world. Come prepared for a series of lively meetings.

Books:

Linking Literacy and Popular Culture: Finding Connections for Lifelong Learning. Ernest Morell. 2004
Various readings handed out in class.

Culminating Task: By March we will have a collection of lessons to share amongst ourselves, the Internet and other relevant media.

USING LITERATURE AND WRITING TO BREAK THE SILENCE AND COMBAT HOMOPHOBIA

NORMA MOTA-ALTMAN, SAN GABRIEL HIGH SCHOOL
JOEL FREEDMAN, KING/DREW MEDICAL MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

Do you want to be a better resource and ally for your lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students? Do you want to join a group of Writing Project fellows who sense the urgency of putting safety, respect and inclusion center stage? Would you like to teach *Perks of Being a Wallflower* this year (and/or other works that include LGBT themes and characters) and document your students' interaction with texts?

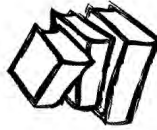
If so, please join us as we

- Engage in a "focus group" discussion where we explore our own positions and views
- Construct and share thematic units that include LGBT themes
- Examine how students respond to *Perks* and other selected literature in a range of classrooms
- Contribute to an annotated bibliography of literature

Culminating Task: For March 15 we will collect and present our findings and writings to date.

2007 Brochure

Thursday Night Study Groups



4:30 pm - 7 pm
Moore Hall, UCLA

09/20/07
10/11/07
11/08/07
12/06/07
01/10/08
02/21/08
03/13/08

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



UCLA Writing Project
1320 Moore Hall
Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521
EED5 WTG

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
UCLA

SIX EASY STEPS TO A STUDY GROUP

- Step 1.** Choose a study group you would like to attend from the three described inside the flyer.
 - Step 2.** Call Bettye Scott **310.206.3544** or email her bscott@gseis.ucla.edu. Let her know which one interests you.
 - Step 3.** Leave her your email and home address and she will send you the room and parking information.
 - Step 4.** Come to UCLA on Study Group Thursday and join us for light refreshments in the Reading Room in Moore Hall 3340 at 4:30pm.
 - Step 5.** Go to your assigned room for intellectual, significant discussion and dialogue.
 - Step 6.** Go home with books and materials for the next meeting.
- Hope to see you there. Space is limited. Call or email early.
- Please e-mail Bettye Scott at bscott@gseis.ucla.edu or call **310.206.3544** to sign up for one of the study groups.
- Complimentary parking, books and materials will be provided.
- Optional: Two quarter units of UCLA Extension credit are available for \$115.00

<h3>RACE FOR IDENTITY AND RESPECT</h3>	<h3>USING LITERATURE AND WRITING TO BREAK THE SILENCE AND COMBAT HOMOPHOBIA</h3>	<h3>Shaping New Boundaries: Expanding Writing Through Technology</h3>
<p>LaSonja Roberts, Santa Monica High School</p> <p>In the race to improve student achievement, educators should remember that attitudes can propel students toward success or drag them toward failure. Having a positive climate in the classroom and on the campus includes having adults and students who respond positively to people of all races. Join us this year as we examine professional readings and share our collective knowledge.</p>	<p>DEBORAH LOWE, ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL JOEL FREEDMAN, KING/DREW MEDICAL MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p>You, neophyte or veteran, are cordially invited to join a group of Writing Project fellows who sense the urgency of putting safety, respect and inclusion center stage. Help find ways to be a better resource and ally for your lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students. Enable other teachers to do the same.</p>	<p>Lynne Culp, Northridge Academy High School Valerie Sorce, Revere Middle School</p> <p>From an “information superhighway” to a read-write connection, the use of technology has changed purpose, techniques, and the confines of what writing can do.</p>
<p>Guiding Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can teachers address matters of race when they are of a different racial group than their students? • How can we celebrate the diversity in our multi-racial schools and communities while also acknowledging the challenges? • How can we address racial tension in the classroom? • What kinds of texts and writing opportunities might help students gain a deeper understanding of matters of race? • How and why should we include more writers of color in the literary canon? 	<p>To date we have piloted an English Language Arts unit of study with Stephen Chbosky’s <i>Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>. This year we plan to expand to other works that include LGBT themes and characters. We document our students’ interaction with texts. We examine and process our experiences. We share what we’ve learned with teachers who want to teach all children responsibly but don’t know where to start, or are afraid. We seek to take the fear out of “doing the right thing.”</p> <p>In this effort we meet with teachers and students at conferences, locally and nationwide, write and compile material for a book, and develop an annotated bibliography of selected literature for a range of classrooms; you can, too.</p>	<p>How can we teachers keep up? Join us as we explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tools of Web 2.0, including social bookmarking, blogs, wikipedia, podcasting, and new forms of digital storytelling • Sharing of ideas for teaching, monitoring, and counseling students in this “brave new world” • Critiques of new methods for self-expression, conducting research, analyzing output and sources on the Internet • Insights and information in a constantly changing world
<p>Whether you have had a lot of experience in working on this topic or if you are just beginning, this study group needs you.</p> <p>Culminating Task: This group will help support “writing event” that invites students to write on matters of race for the UCLA Writing Project’s anthology <i>Justice Matters</i>.</p>	<p>Culminating Task: For March 13, we will collect and present our findings and writings to date.</p>	<p>Culminating Tasks: We will engage in selected online projects to inform/assist members of the UCLA Writing Project.</p>

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE BIBLIOGRAPHIES FROM THE STUDY GROUPS

What follows are books that study-group members have used in their high school classrooms—though not always with the suggested pairings. Most of the books on this list are typically taught in high schools. *Am I Blue?* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* are the two exceptions.

From the Issues of Homophobia Study Group

BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina*.

Bastard Out of Carolina is Dorothy Allison's coming-of-age narrative about Bone, who deals with explicit physical and sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather, and the emotional turmoil that she feels when her mother remains loyal to the perpetrator of the violence she endures. In addition to child abuse, Allison deals with the themes of poverty and gender inequality in the rural South. Lesbianism is not a major theme but rather an undercurrent that runs throughout the novel. If approaching this novel from the viewpoint of poverty (or hunger), then Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* may be an ideal pairing. Since *Bastard Out of Carolina* is a female coming-of-age novel, any of the following may be suitable pairings: Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Judith Ortiz Cofer's *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*, Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*.

The Handmaid's Tale is Canadian Margaret Atwood's dystopian story concerning citizens of a not-so-future theocracy potentially near collapse. This society's hope lies in an underground movement represented above ground in the spirit of the lesbian character Moira. Her dissident spirit, a motif threaded throughout the tale, remains indomitable in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. It is Moira's insistence upon thinking and acting independently that will undermine and ultimately topple the repressive governing regime. Pairing this novel with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is an invitation to examine the effects of a repressive society. Kurt Vonnegut's short story "Harrison Bergeron" and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* would be promising pairings.

Baldwin, James. *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.

James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* depicts the life of 14-year-old John Grimes as he grapples with questions of sexuality and morality. Written in three parts, the book chronicles the inner toils and hardships of four characters: Florence,

Elizabeth, Gabriel, and John. Set in Harlem during the period following the Great Migration, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* deals with issues of race, immorality, domestic violence, and religion. Possible discussions and explorations include biblical allusions, race relations, personal choice versus familial and societal expectations, domestic violence, sin, and sexuality. Coupled with readings about Baldwin's own life, as well as literary criticism, this text makes the perfect fit for literary response and analysis.

Bauer, Marion Dane, ed. *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence*.

Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence, an anthology of sixteen stories written by prominent writers of young adult fiction, tackles issues such as “coming out” and growing up with LGBT parents or friends. Interwoven within the main LGBT theme of this book are other issues such as family love, friendship, losing a parent and acceptance. Unlike other titles on this list, *Am I Blue?* focuses entirely on LGBT topics. The stories range from the humorous “Am I Blue?”, a story about a young gay boy who makes a wish to a fairy to turn gay people blue and is amazed to see how many people (including the town bully) change color, to the heart-rending “Winnie and Tommy,” a story about a young couple whose relationship is interrupted when Tommy confesses to his girlfriend Winnie that he is gay. Some other books that tackle delicate teen issues are Sara Shandler's *Ophelia Speaks*, Francesca Lia Block's *Weetzie Bat*, and Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

Charlie is a sweet, sensitive, detached boy beginning his freshman year of high school. Luckily he is adopted by a group of seniors who are also outsiders. They introduce him to friendship, intimacy, drugs, and sex. Charlie's friendship with Patrick, who is gay, leads to his own exploration of his sexuality. This book has an extraordinary hold over teenage readers, who (jock, rocker, gay, straight, male, female) all seem to feel a kinship with Charlie. This coming-of-age novel explores questions of identity, alienation, and relationships. It could work well in classroom units on identity, the nature of groups, and internal conflict. Some suggestions for pairings: *Catcher in the Rye* (alienation), *Of Mice and Men* (qualities of friendship), or *House on Mango Street* (questions of identity and writing to make sense of the world).

Knowles, John. *A Separate Peace*.

Subsequent to his book's success, John Knowles came out as gay and stated that his characters, Finny and Gene, are indeed in love. This, however, is not explicit in the novel. Rather the story focuses on deep friendship, on not necessarily knowing oneself, and on the struggle that is self-discovery. “Paul's Case” by lesbian author Willa Cather is akin to *A Separate Peace* in that the protagonist Paul struggles to realize his true self.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

The Color Purple, Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, deals with themes of sexism, racism, and sexual abuse seen through the eyes of Celie, who is raped (and impregnated twice) by her father, separated from her sister, and forced to marry a physically abusive man. Alice Walker, who is bisexual, depicts lesbianism in the love affair between Celie and Shug as natural and freeing—a pathway to self-love for a woman who has known sex only to be a brutal and painful endeavor. Some ideal pairings for this novel include Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

BOOKS FOR PROFESSIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

Jennings, Kevin. *One Teacher in 10*.

This anthology of LGBT teachers' personal stories was compiled by the director of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network (GLSEN). Whereas the contributors of the historic first edition mostly used pseudonyms, this edition's authors are out and proactive, a testament to our times.

Heron, Ann. *Two Teenagers in 20*.

Two Teenagers in 20 is a classic collection of short personal narratives by lesbian and gay teenagers who share their experiences—urban, rural, out, closeted, lonely, connected. The narratives, which focus on their own feelings, reactions of friends and family, and first meetings with other gay teenagers, were written in the 1980s and early 1990s. Though not contemporary, they are still powerful and resonate with teenagers today.

Summers, Claude J. *The Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage: A Reader's Companion to the Writers and Their Works, from Antiquity to the Present*.

A breathtakingly broad range of essays illuminate gay and lesbian literary contributions by addressing literary movements, national literatures, ethnic literatures, special topics pertinent to gay and lesbian writers, and author studies. The overview of American literature includes essays on the colonial period, the 19th century, the 20th century, and the post-Stonewall era. This is an essential reference for teachers who wish to have a clear understanding of canonical writers' contributions to gay and lesbian literature.

VIDEOS

***I Just Want to Say: Parents, Students, and Teachers Talk About Anti-Gay Bias in Our Schools*.** Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educational Network, Publications Dept., 122 W. 26th Street, Suite 1100, New York, NY 10001. GLSEN@glsen.org

I Just Want to Say is a candid and moving discussion of the anti-LGBT climate faced by youth in schools. It offers suggestions for how teachers can work to teach respect for all.

It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School. Women's Educational Media, 2180 Bryant Street, Suite 203, San Francisco, CA 94110. www.womedia.org

It's Elementary is an excellent overview of teacher, student, and parent reactions to talking about lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues in schools. A variety of schools (elementary, middle, high school) and school settings are featured. This video makes the case for intentionally and honestly addressing the lives of lesbian and gay people in ways that are developmentally appropriate for students of different ages.

Live to Tell: The First Gay and Lesbian Prom in America. Charley Lang, Producer. DakotaFileworks@aol.com

This video presents gay and lesbian high school students in a joyous setting—their prom. So much of what is written about the realities for LGBT youth focuses on problems. Although this film includes protestors and other signals that the fight for equality is very much in progress, *Live to Tell* shows the beginnings of significant progress.

Trevor. A Film by Peggy Rajski. www.thetrevorproject.org/thefilm.aspx

Trevor is a young teen infatuated with Diana Ross and attracted to a new male friend. Outside peer observers soon make the friend too self-conscious to continue the relationship with Trevor. Trevor's response to rejection is a suicide attempt. The potential tragedy ends hopefully. Created for HBO, the film has a hilarious introduction by Ellen DeGeneres and is the inspiration for the nation's one and only national teen suicide hotline set up with LGBT teens in mind. Free study guide materials are available.

WEBSITES

<http://www.glsen.org>

GLSEN, a national organization fighting to end antigay bias in K–12 schools, offers resource guides and workshops for safe schools and professional development, curricula, and law and policy guides.

<http://mathewshepard.org>

This is the official site of the Mathew Shepard Foundation, with some excellent links, bibliographies, and resources.

<http://www.pflag.org>

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) is a national nonprofit organization. Their website offers resources for family, friends, and educators of LGBTQ people.

From the Matters of Race Study Group

PROFESSIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES

Carter, Marlene. 1998. "The Best of Both Worlds." In *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development*, edited by Enid Lee. Washington, D.C: Network of Educators on the Americas.

This teacher-research article looks at how a high school teacher helps African American students learn mainstream American English without losing respect for their community language. Strategies include using literature that is written in both mainstream American English and African American dialect to show students the value of both languages.

Carter, Marlene. 2005. "Helping African American Males Reach Their Academic Potential." In *Going Public With Our Teaching: An Anthology of Practice*, edited by Thomas Hatch, Dilruba Ahmed, Ann Lieberman, Deborah Faigenbaum, Melissa Eiler White, and Désiré H. Pointer Mace. New York: Teacher's College Press.

In this teacher-research article, Carter explores the possible reasons for why some African American males in advanced-placement (AP) classes underperform and examines the role that teacher and students' attitudes, as well as curricula and pedagogy, play in helping those students become high achievers.

Cose, Ellis. 1994. *The Rage of a Privileged Class*. New York: HarperCollins.

"A Dozen Demons," chapter three of Ellis Cose's *The Rage of a Privileged Class*, uses the metaphor of twelve demons—invisible, yet pernicious nonetheless, that plague African Americans and many other minorities. Cose identifies twelve demons, among them the inability to fit in, self-censorship, low expectations, coping fatigue, pigeonholing, and others that many African Americans feel as they navigate the world. Examination of "A Dozen Demons" is especially valuable for the urban educator in that the demons Cose identifies reflect the experiences of the minority student whose culture is not acknowledged by their teachers, curriculum, or school culture.

Delpit, Lisa, and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, eds. 2002. *The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press.

A welcome addition to her two invaluable works *Other People's Children* and *The Real Ebonics Debate*, Lisa Delpit's *The Skin That We Speak* extends the discussion (sparked a few years ago by the Oakland School District's *ebonics* bonfire) of what it means to judge children because they do not speak standard English. Teachers, parents, and other stakeholders will encounter rich and deeply thoughtful offerings by notable scholars in the field, including Delpit herself, Herbert Kohl, Gloria Ladson Billings, Geneva Smitherman, and, especially notable, Shuaib Meacham, whose chapter follows two novice African American teachers, one who speaks "standard English" and one who speaks in school the language she was taught at home.

Noguera, Pedro. 2008. *The Trouble with Black Boys: And Other Reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pedro Noguera examines the effects of race in school and society. Tackling complex issues and invoking the necessity to restore faith in public schools, he looks closely at the connection between students' behavior in school, racial identity, and the racial achievement gap. He also focuses on the educational future of Latino immigrants.

Perry, Theresa, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III. 2003. *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African American Students*. Boston: Beacon Press.

This book presents three thought-provoking essays that examine theories and research to give a more complete picture of the factors that influence African American students. Perry argues that “there are extra social, emotional, cognitive, and political competencies required of African American youth precisely because they are African American” (4). She goes on to relate a history of philosophies of black education and examines the validity of them. Steele reports on research about stereotype threat, “the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype” (111). He found that black students who took tests under stereotype threat were inefficient test takers. Hilliard challenges the definition of “achievement gap” as the gap between the achievement of African American students and European American students and urges us to focus upon the gap between African American students and excellence. Finally, he examines school attitudes and practices that create the gap in African American students' opportunity to learn.

Rose, Mike. 1995. *Possible Lives: The Promise of Public Education in America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Public schools are often considered the scourge of American society. Mike Rose combats the media and the public's flogging of public schools. For four years, he traveled across the nation, visiting over three hundred classrooms—blue-collar communities, border towns, urban, rural, and in between. What he found were dynamic, passionate, lively, and committed teachers, and, more importantly, involved, talented, eager, and bright students. In short, he found classrooms that exemplified the “thousands of possibilities” of public schools. He concludes that society's faith in education must be restored if we are to survive as a democracy. This seminal work offers ample evidence for believing that there is much more to hope for than we suspected.

Tatum, Alfred. 2005. *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

This text offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the literacy needs of African American males. Reading specialist Alfred Tatum presents the needs of African American male students as seen through multiple lenses, including his own experiences as a black male student, middle school teacher, staff developer, and reading specialist. Tatum argues that African American males have “multiple literacy needs” including a curriculum of “must read texts” which are culturally

relevant and empowering, and offer realistic and diverse portrayals of the African American male experience. Tatum proffers that a balance can be struck between texts that are culturally relevant “must reads” and lessons that reinforce skills and lead to improved test scores. The book includes sample curriculum units, graphic organizers, and other literacy scaffolds to help teachers create balanced, engaging literacy programs that lead to measurable reading and writing achievement.

Tatum, Beverly. 2003. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* Rev. ed. New York: Basic Books.

Tatum’s book lays a foundation for discussing race, including definitions of racism, the advantages of white privilege, and the reasons why people tend to group themselves according to race. She uses layman’s language to explain the impact that race has on us as children and how it impacts our thinking and actions as adults. This is an excellent book for beginning a conversation about race with colleagues, and sections can also be put to good use in the classroom.

WEBSITE

http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/collections/castl_k12/yhutchinson/index.html

A Friend of Their Minds: Capitalizing on the Oral Tradition of My African American Students

On this website UCLA Writing Project Fellow Yvonne Hutchinson includes video clips from her classroom, teacher commentary, classroom materials, and student work. Teacher education programs across the country use the website with new teachers in their study of culturally relevant teaching.

VIDEO

Color of Fear, directed by Lee Mun Wa, available at ***www.stirfryseminars.com***.

This powerful videotape records an intense conversation of a multicultural group of men who share their feelings and frustrations about racial issues in the United States. Because of the intensity and use of strong language, you may not be able to use it in the classroom, but it is a “must see” for adults who are studying race and racism in America.

BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Below are some titles and authors, without annotations, that members of the study group and other writing project fellows have used with their students. Reading literature by authors of a variety of racial and ethnic groups helps students to see that the voices of these groups are valued. We are well aware that we have focused on African American and Latino texts more than others. Please view this as a list in progress and as a starting point for teachers looking to expand reading lists for themselves and their students.

Suggested Readings Reflective of the African and African American Experience

AUTHORS	TITLES
Bakari, Kitiwana	<i>Hip Hop Nation</i>
Bennett, Lerone Jr.	<i>Before the Mayflower</i>
Beah, Ishmael	<i>A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier</i>
Butler, Octavia	<i>Kindred</i>
Carson, Ben	<i>Gifted Hands</i>
Achebe, Chinua	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>
Davis, Sampson; Jenkins, George; Hunt, Rameck;	<i>The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream</i>
Douglass, Frederick	<i>The Narrative of Frederick Douglass</i>
Fisher, Antoine	<i>Finding Fish</i>
Gaines, Ernest	<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i>
Hansberry, Lorraine	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
Hurston, Zora Neal	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>
King Jr., Martin Luther	<i>Letter From Birmingham Jail</i>
Mathebone, Mark	<i>Kaffir Boy</i>
Morrison, Toni	<i>Song of Solomon; The Bluest Eye</i>
Olaudah, Equiano	<i>The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano</i>
Robinson, Randall	<i>The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks</i>
Wilson, August	<i>The Piano Lesson; Fences</i>
Wright, Richard	<i>Black Boy; Native Son</i>

Suggested Reading Reflective of the Latino Experience

Anaya, Rudolfo	<i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>
Alvarez, Julia	<i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>
Baca, Jimmy Santiago	<i>The Importance of a Piece of Paper; A Place to Stand</i>
Cisneros, Sandra	<i>The House on Mango Street; Woman Hollering Creek</i>

Esquivel, Laura	<i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>
Gaspar de Alba, Alicia	<i>Desert Blood</i>
Grande, Reyna	<i>Across a Hundred Mountains</i>
Greene, Michele Dominguez	<i>In Search of the Jaguar</i>
Limón, Graciela	<i>Song of the Hummingbird; Erased Faces</i>
Mora, Pat	<i>My Own True Name</i>
Munoz Ryan, Pam	<i>Esperanza Rising</i>
Nosario, Sonia	<i>Enrique's Journey</i>
Rodriguez, Luis	<i>Always Running</i>
Saenz, Benjamin Alire	<i>Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood</i>
Seros, Michelle	<i>Chicana Falsa</i>
Vea, Alfredo	<i>Gods Go Begging; La Maravilla</i>
Villasenor, Victor	<i>Rain of Gold; Burro Genius</i>

The Asian / Asian American Experience

Chin, Frank	<i>Donald Duk</i>
Crew, Linda	<i>Children of the River</i>
Criddle, J. D., and T. B. Man	<i>To Destroy You Is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family</i>
Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee	<i>Arranged Marriage; The Mistress of Spices</i>
Kingston, Maxine Hong	<i>The Woman Warrior</i>
Lee, Li-Young	<i>Rose; The City in Which I Love You</i>
Mukherjee, Bharati	<i>Jasmine</i>
Tan, Amy	<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>
Yep, Laurence	<i>Dragonwings</i>

The American Indian Experience

Ortiz, Simon	<i>The End of Old Horse; My Father's Song</i>
Sarris, Gregg	"Battling Illegitimacy: Some Words Against the Darkness"

The Middle Eastern Experience

Hosseini, Khaled	<i>The Kite Runner</i>
------------------	------------------------

APPENDIX E: HARD TALK WITH A PARENT

Teachers in the Issues of Homophobia study group spent some time discussing the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000 (AB537), which specifies how teachers are responsible for keeping classrooms safe for all students. After these discussions, we all felt more confident about speaking and making reference to the law in our discussions with administrators, parents, and students. The importance of this preparation was made apparent to Norma Mota-Altman when a parent became upset that her son was reading *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and phoned the high school principal to complain about the curriculum. The principal, in turn, asked Norma to call the parent. What follows is an excerpt from the account Norma wrote in her journal.

When I called Mrs. H regarding *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, she explained how she was a good Christian, how she raised her children with morals, and how she couldn't understand why I was discussing homosexuality in the classroom. I explained that we were discussing homosexuality as one of many topics that the class had identified as issues teenagers had to deal with. As the conversation got more animated, Mrs. H got more and more agitated.

By listening closely I was able to “hear” her issue, i.e., as the teacher, I was not telling students that homosexuals were “perverts” and that homosexuality was “wrong.” I was able to address this concern by stating that it was not my job to tell students what to think. As a teacher, my job is to help students think about issues that they face in the world around them. I reassured Mrs. H that I respected her beliefs, but that under California law, it was my duty as a teacher to provide a “safe and tolerant environment for all students, including gay and lesbian students.” She was amazed! After discussing the law and reassuring her that my duty was to all my students, I asked Mrs. H what she would like to have happen? What would make her feel better about the situation?

We agreed that her son would read another book, but that he would remain in the room during discussions and present a Christian perspective. We ended the conversation feeling that we had both been heard. Mrs. H and I spoke again—about her son, his behavior, but never again about *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* nor about homosexuality.

Norma's story pushed all of us to focus on what we might do when any vocal parent challenges his or her child's teacher on the content of our lessons. Our group realized the importance of listening closely to parents and to their concerns. Not every state will have laws that specifically address the protection of gay and lesbian students, but every state does have laws that require schools to provide a safe environment for all students. Norma had listened to the parent and realized that the mother's main concern was that she felt the teacher should tell students that homosexuality was wrong. Once Norma explained the law, emphasized the need

for tolerance, and stated her firm determination to protect all students, the mother left the topic alone. This is not to say that all stories will go this way. But certainly we, as educators, must be clear about the laws that protect teachers and students; we must find the words to express our rationale for meeting our responsibilities to all students.

We offer the following suggestions for preparing for hard conversations with parents:

- Familiarize yourself with your state education laws regarding LGBT issues.
- Form a study group or identify colleagues who will be interested in discussing your lesson. For Norma, the members of her study group provided support, a knowledge base about the law and LGBT issues, and a place to role-play different scenarios.
- Discuss your curriculum plans with your administrator and, if possible, secure his or her support.
- When a parent voices concerns, listen. Parents may be angry and upset, but by listening you may hear what the real issue is.
- Voice belief in your own practice along with the research to support it. Norma was able to refer to AB537 as the law that calls for safe environments for all students.
- Ask parents what they would like to see happen to resolve the situation.
- Give parents options. What else could their son or daughter do? Although Norma's student was given another book to read, he still participated in class discussions and felt safe offering his perspectives to his classmates.

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE EMAIL COMMUNICATION TO GROUP MEMBERS BETWEEN SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Well, gang,

If you weren't there (all but Faye, Darryl, Deborah, Joel), here's what you missed:

We met; we ate (and you missed a good one); we conferred.

We developed what we consider a start, a few questions to ask of us in a focus group discussion with "who we are" the focus. The accepted assumption is that any guest conductors of this discussion would want to contribute their own line of questions or spin on the following:

1. Who are you (positionality)? Race? Class? Language? Gender? Sexual orientation? Region of origin? Marital status? Age?
2. How do you come to this table?
3. Why did you choose literature and writing to teach?
4. What do you hope to accomplish by including LGBT literature in your curriculum?
5. How does your sexual orientation and others' awareness or lack of awareness of it give you an advantage in the classroom and on the school site?

Oh, also, we looked at responses to questions given to attendees to a workshop of ours at a San Diego WP conference. The desire to be inclusive in the classroom exists, it seems, but teachers are looking for—waiting for—the "how to."

That's it in a nutshell... well, an email, actually.

Next meeting is Thursday, June 15. Come with strategies/lesson ideas for teaching *Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

Hope you can make it.

Joel

APPENDIX G: LESSON PLAN FOR *THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER*

Lesson Plan for teaching *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

Into activities:

- Students brainstorm the problems that teenagers face today and then prioritize the problems in groups and explain their reasoning.
- Students respond to two prompts: “What Every Teenager Wants” and “How to Survive Freshman Year in High School and Still Be Cool.”
- Students learn about the characters in the novel by participating in a “Tea Party.”¹ They use quotes about each of the main characters and generate questions they would like to ask or learn about the characters.

Through activities:

- Students write to Charlie, the protagonist of the book. Alternatively, they write to another character or choose a different character to write to after each chapter.
- Students write an “interior monologue” as one of the characters after an event in the story, i.e., Charlie cries in the principal’s office. What is he feeling? What is he saying to himself?

Students have *Philosophical Discussions* regarding some of the issues brought up in the text, ie. Charlie’s sister accepts physical abuse from her boyfriend.²

Beyond activities:

- Students research one of the topics brought up in the book—drug and alcohol abuse, depression, abortion, rape, physical abuse, sexual abuse, resiliency.

Students pose their own topic related to the text and write an essay. For example: Discuss why some teenagers choose to “come out” or not in high school. Students write a final letter to Charlie sharing what they have learned.

1 Tea Party is a social activity that encompasses reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visualizing. While the activity is most often used as a prereading strategy, it can be modified and used to prompt discussions after reading. Content area teachers also find this technique useful because it helps students gain insight into the texts they use for specific concepts and topics. A Tea Party might focus on understanding characters, predictions, cause and effect relationship among given phrases and words, or what specific vocabulary means to students. A more complete description of the Tea Party as a reading strategy can be found in *When Kids Can’t Read—What Teachers Can Do* by Kylene Beers (Heinemann, 2002).

2 Philosophical Discussions engage students in social learning through periodic guided discussions. As the students collectively gather the information they have accumulated to a given point in the text, they are encouraged to collaboratively construct meaning. They then use their combined knowledge and opinions to build a foundation for greater understanding of the text. These discussions often start with general probes for meaning intended to help students make sense of ideas found in the text. Philosophical Discussions are not about debating and winning but about listening to others’ opinions and modifying your own when someone makes a strong, valid point.

During these discussions the teacher or students pose questions such as: “What is the author trying to say here?” “How does this connect with what the author told us before?” “Why do you think the author wants us to know this?” “Why do you think the author chose this point in the story to give us this information?” “What does this tell us about the characters? About ourselves?”

APPENDIX H: MATTERS OF RACE AND ISSUES OF HOMOPHOBIA

WRITING EVENTS: ANNOUNCEMENTS; TEACHER WRITING



The UCLA Writing Project Presents

Matters of Race: Writings About Life in a Multicultural, Multiracial World

A Writing Opportunity for Students in Grades 4–12

While the scientific community dismisses the existence of race as a means of classifying human beings, most of us understand that matters of race continue to impact our culture and our sense of self. They deserve our attention as teachers, speakers, thinkers, and writers. To this end, we have developed a writing event for teachers and their students. Our topic: “Matters of Race: Writings About Life in a Multicultural, Multiracial World.”

We don’t think of this writing opportunity as a contest, and it’s certainly not a test. Rather, the purpose is to provide students with a rich and safe environment to talk about race. By “breaking the silence” around matters of race, we hope that students’ hesitations and fears will diminish and their abilities to take positive action will increase. We encourage you to support students in their writing by providing readings and having discussions that give students a chance to think, talk, and write.

Polished Submissions

Please work with your students so that their submissions are final products. Certainly writing groups can support students in polishing their writing—as well as your commentary on drafts. Please encourage English learners to participate.

Teachers and Students Writing Side by Side

We hope that you will make this writing opportunity part of your curriculum, with all students participating. We encourage you to write along with your students—side by side. Please select five student pieces to submit—as well as your own. Here are a few topics teachers have used that have elicited thoughtful discussions and writing.

- To what extent does race play a part in how you see yourself and/or how others see you?
- How old were you when you first became aware of race? Describe the experience. How have you grown in your understanding of race?
- Write about a person with a racial background different from your own who has made an impression on you.

Please note that writing may take any form: an essay, poem, narrative, letter to the editor, etc. It should show an honest, thoughtful consideration of race and race matters.

Writers may draw from personal experience, literature, history, and current events. Any secondary sources used should be cited.

Entries must be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Each teacher may submit five student entries and one teacher entry. A small UCLA Writing Project committee will select the pieces to include in this year's *Matters of Race* anthology.

Deadline: March 31, 2008

To Submit Writing:

After you've selected your five student entries, please email submissions to Faye Peitzman at peitzman@gseis.ucla.edu. Send them as one attachment. Label the attachment with your name and the name of your school. In the body of the email, please include your name and the name, address, and phone number of your school—so we'll know how to contact you. We will only accept electronic copies, and students should not submit their work directly.

All students (and teachers!) whose entries we receive will be mailed a certificate acknowledging participation. Each anthology author will receive an individual copy, and one copy will be mailed to each participating class. We will acknowledge receipt of submissions immediately.

Example of Teacher Writing

Monsters & Ownership

by Joel Freedman

I invited playmates inside my house for cookies and milk.

We were all elbows and knees, panting breath, sweating brows, sneakers with untied laces, our autumn jackets open to emit body heat working overtime, but remaining on, too cold to go without. We were racing, tagging, escaping monsters: Godzilla, The Creature from the Black Lagoon, Mothra, Frankenstein, The 40-Foot Woman, Dr. Cyclops, King Kong, Gorgo, Rodan, The Blob, Them, It, It Came from Two Million Miles in Space, from Beneath the Sea, Invaders from Mars...ahhh!

Someone trips and falls... the girl, usually... someone else at the risk of his own life pauses to help her resume her flight. Chasing, being chased, screaming for joy, for fear, just to hear our own voices soaring, and slicing the chill air with laughter and teeth and words and clapping our hands while dancing around in circles.

This was our after-school pleasure, mine and my newfound friends'. We played on the balance of one-eighth of an acre not occupied by my house atop the gentle downward slope of East Egg's Steamboat Road. Down that slope was a neighborhood slightly different from these two blocks upon which my house stood. Down that slope was from where my newfound friends came. Down that slope, just north of my house, were a few blocks somewhat economically depressed, predominately African American occupied.

Were you to continue north, you'd roll past the Italian restaurant with the sawdust on the floor and the pinball-like machine where you had to slide the puck forward down a slick surface toward pins that fell up if you managed to direct the puck in a certain way... in a way I never quite understood. My brother and I, when we weren't scraping the cheese off of our cheese pizza or otherwise annoying our parents, would thrust that puck forward as hard and as destructively as we could manage without ever putting in a dime. Further north and just shy of Long Island Sound, you'd come to the United States Merchant Marine Academy where my father used to take me to football games before I was old enough to know I had no interest in spectator sports of any kind.

I, naturally, in my elementary-school-age persona, had fallen in with some children from my area of town. Now that I was a bit older than before, my world, my area was widening and was no longer confined to Gilbert and Robin Hill Roads. I had a bike with the training wheels long gone, and now I had my newfound friends running with me around my house, around my backyard; we were chasing each other aimlessly.

I, naturally, invited my friends inside my house for cookies and milk.

However, my mom served us as we stood on her patio. She smiled as if in pain. My friends and I clutched the collars of our coats juggling glasses of milk and two store-bought chocolate chip cookies. We hopped from foot to foot chilled by the bitter bite of the autumn air as we stood at the back door of my parents' house; that structure, in those moments, clearly had become theirs with my mother standing guard at the gate.

I was young, but I was old enough to be mortified. I envied my friends their dark complexions; that could have helped me hide the blushing red splashing across my face billboarding my shame, my humiliation and my embarrassment.

I saw no discernable difference; yet, my newfound friends from down that slope were being barred; whereas, my friends from these two blocks had all seen the inside of my house. Mindy, and Leslie, Richard, Beth, and Howard had all seen the inside of my house. Todd and DeeDee, Hope and Robert, even Steve Halim had seen the inside of my house... play dates, birthday parties... babysitting, borrowing things for their mothers... Marcy and Lynn, but not ... well, I don't remember their names. I only played with them that one day.

I think the one girl was the little boy's sister, and the other girl was a friend or a cousin... I just don't know... I never got the chance to find out... I don't remember... when I invited playmates inside my parents' house for cookies and milk.

March 2007



The UCLA Writing Project Presents
Gay-Straight Alliances Speak Out:
A Writing Opportunity for GSA Members and Advisors

LGBT headlines dominated the news this summer and fall—from the joy of 20,000 gay couples married to the disappointment of Proposition 8. How do we make sense of these contrasting sentiments about LGBT people? Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) are where the issues of the outside world and the personal concerns of students meet in a safe environment. It's time for us to hear teenagers' reflections on these matters and to appreciate the ways their involvement in GSAs has inspired and influenced them.

The UCLA Writing Project invites the students and leaders of the LA-area Gay-Straight Alliances to reflect upon the ways gender identity and sexual orientation have impacted their lives.

You do not need to be an English teacher to advise or participate. We will provide you with some suggestions and guidance in order to help your GSA participate in this exciting writing opportunity.

The prompts that follow are *merely suggestions*; pieces about other issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation are welcome. The writing can take many forms; we ask only that participants adhere to page limits and submission guidelines.

Suggested Prompts

Imagine a world where there is no discrimination because of sexual orientation or gender identity.

What role does sexual orientation or gender identity play in your world? Community? Neighborhood? School? Circle of friends? Home? (Please focus on one.)

Imagine your life if you had been born a different gender or a different sexual orientation.

How does your GSA inspire? (political action, self-respect, romance, joy, community involvement, pride, success, intellectual growth...?)

Polished Submissions

Please work with your students so that their submissions are final products. Encourage GSA members and advisors to share drafts with one another and make suggestions for revision. Please select up to 5 student pieces to submit in addition to your own.

Forms Your Writing Might Take

Editorial

Short Story

Personal Narrative/Memoir

Reflection

Poem

Belief Statement/Manifesto

Graphic Story

Deadline: March 30, 2009

RSVP: If you are interested in participating, please email Faye Peitzman at peitzman@gseis.ucla.edu. Emailing your interest does not commit you to participating; we would just like to be able to send you updates and supplementary material that will help you to get your GSA members writing!

To Submit Writing

Entries must be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font. They should not exceed four pages.

For general questions please call Bettye Scott at 310-206-3544. Please email submissions to Faye Peitzman, peitzman@gseis.ucla.edu. Send them as attachments—label each with your last name and the full name of the writer. In the body of the email please include your name, as well as the name, address, and phone number of your school so that we will know how to contact you.

Each teacher may submit up to five student entries and up to two teacher/advisor entries. A small UCLA Writing Project committee will select the pieces to include in this year's anthology. All writers whose entries we receive will be mailed a certificate acknowledging participation. This anthology will be published on the new UCLA/Center X website. Each participating GSA will receive one hard copy. We will acknowledge receipt of submissions immediately.

A Few Resources to Spark Discussions and Ideas for Writing

Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence, edited by Marion Dane Bauer

One Teacher in 10, edited by Kevin Jennings

Two Teenagers in 20, edited by Ann Heron

NPR/This I Believe <http://thisibelieve.org/index.php>

Contains links to essay writing tips for a "This I Believe"-style essay as well as free downloadable curricula.

APPENDIX I: INVITATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL BOOK CIRCLES

(excerpt from UCLA NWP Continued Funding Application)

Five professional book groups formed the heart of our 2007 summer reading. Faye brought eight books with her to the orientation, she and Jane gave brief “book talks,” and participants selected one book. Most texts focused on issues of social justice—race, class, homophobia, or language. We feel that this early “announcement”—that it’s important to break the silence and discuss social justice issues among ourselves as well as with our students—sets the tone for the four weeks ahead. These titles included *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence*, ed. Marion Dane Bauer; *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Tatum; *Literacy with an Attitude* by Patrick Finn; *Tongue-Tied: The Lives of Multicultural Children in Public Education* by Otto Santa Ana; *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* by Gloria Ladsen Billings; and *Linking Literacy and Popular Culture* by Ernest Morrell. A book by Randy Bomer, *Time for Meaning*, which dealt with his experiences and thoughts about teaching, did have the teaching of writing center stage, as did Lucy Calkins’ *One on One: The Art of Conferencing with Young Writers*.

During the last week, all groups presented their books—through skits, graphics, discussion, role-playing—leaving everyone wanting to read every book and to share the books with their administrators and staffs. Some brief notes on the books and/or how they were presented follows:

The group presenting *Literacy with an Attitude* portrayed a teacher treating each of his four student “categories” in a way that valued the creativity and intellectual potential of the elite group and dismissed both scholastic promise and individual worth for the lowest group.

The teachers presenting *Am I Blue?*, a collection of short stories appropriate for middle and high school students with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender themes, gave everyone insight into why these stories have impact and how they could be woven into the curriculum. As one of our fellows wrote in her evaluation: “Instead of just lecturing the whole class when the gay bashing breaks out, I can be proactive by reading a story early in the year and have it as part of the shared classroom culture.”

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? had our group sitting on the edges of chairs. Jason Carmichael, African American, valued the book highly. He shared personal experiences of racism—including a student who used to pretend to sneeze “ha niggety chew.” We already knew that his son is biracial—but Jason put a face on the dilemma of those who are multiracial, noting that there are more colors than white and black. Then Lela Rondeau spoke of the importance for whites as a separate group to dialogue about race, come to terms with their own whiteness, find a positive identity in their whiteness and transform themselves into antiracists.

This was the first year that we included Santa Ana's *Tongue-Tied*, a wonderful anthology that has a brief and insightful introduction defining who English learners are, a section that summarizes the research on language acquisition, and a selection of poetry and story that speaks to a wide audience. At this point, it remains our first choice for engaging colleagues and students in dialogue about language.

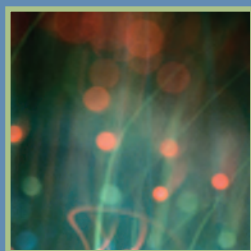
A group that read *A Time for Meaning* conducted a Socratic seminar. They posed the question "How do we create time for meaning in our classroom?" This certainly got to the core of many teachers' dilemmas given the current restrictions on teachers' decision-making powers.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Faye Peitzman has taught at UCLA since 1980 and has co-directed, then directed the UCLA Writing Project since 1983. She gets to participate in the summer invitational institute each year and knows just how lucky she is to collaborate and write with such talented teachers of writing, kindergarten through university. Faye co-edited and coauthored (with George Gadda) *With Different Eyes: Insights into Teaching Language Minority Students Across the Disciplines* (Addison Wesley, 1994) and created and chaired the With Different Eyes Conference at UCLA, which has been ongoing since 1991. She currently serves on the NWP Analytical Writing Assessment Leadership Team. Over time, Faye has come to appreciate how the “backdrop” of schooling—particularly attitudes toward race, sexual orientation, and language—impacts teaching and learning.

Marlene Carter teaches English in Los Angeles. She became a UCLA Writing Project fellow 22 years ago, the summer before returning to teach at her high school alma mater. She is co-director of the California Writing Project (CWP) and an associate director of the UCLA Writing Project. As a fellow of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, she conducted teacher research on the achievement of African American males in advanced placement English. She is currently on the CWP Improving Students’ Academic Writing Leadership Team.

Norma Mota-Altman teaches English as a second language and Spanish to native speakers at the high school level in San Gabriel, California. She has been part of the UCLA Writing Project since 1991, when she attended the summer institute as a middle school teacher. Norma has been an associate director of the UCLA Writing Project since 1995. In 1990 she was a finalist for California’s Teacher of the Year award; CABE’s Bilingual Teacher of the Year award, and a Milken Educator of the Year award. She was the first director of NWP’s ELL (English Language Learners) Leadership Team and she continues to work on local initiatives at UCLA and at the state and national levels of the National Writing Project. Her articles “Con Respeto, I Am Not Richard Rodriguez” and “Academic Language: Everyone’s Second Language” can be read on the NWP website.



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

Tel. 510-642-0963
Fax. 510-642-4545
nwp@nwp.org
www.nwp.org