Continuity

The Challenge of Change: Growth Through Inquiry at the Western Massachusetts Writing Project

by Susan Connell Biggs, Kevin Hodgson, and Bruce M. Penniman

Western Massachusetts Writing Project
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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

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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.

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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.

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INTRODUCTION

While National Writing Project sites across the network face many challenges in their work to improve writing and learning in the nation's classrooms, we at the Western Massachusetts Writing Project (WMWP) faced some challenges that left us scrambling to respond to sudden gaps in leadership and a loss of funding sources.

Between 1999 and 2003, the Western Massachusetts Writing Project experienced a series of changes that made it question whether it could even survive as a writing project site. The first was the unexpected death of the founding co-director, Pat Hunter. Pat's death was not only a great personal loss but also a loss of the knowledge and the important connections that supported inservice work, leaving the WMWP with a large gap in its leadership structure.[1] Shortly thereafter, the site lost two-thirds of its overall budget—the $100,000 in state support that it had received annually for six years. At the same time, the founding director, Charlie Moran, announced his upcoming retirement. This convergence of events forced the existing leadership to develop a process to look deeply into the work of the site and the people who supported that work. The result was the development of a set of tools that served as a guide toward broadening the leadership base, offering more purposeful programming, and creating a more sustainable site structure.

This monograph will describe how the losses experienced by the site forced site leaders to examine fundamental questions about the site such as, "Who are we?" and "Why do we do what we do?" As the leadership team at the time probed these complicated questions of identity, they realized that certain tools, such as the WMWP's site map and website, offered some ready-made information to help site leaders assess the strengths of the site and develop a plan to address their challenges. These questions turned out to be the starting point for a focused inquiry that led to a site reorganization, which addressed the precipitating challenges while creating structures for facing future challenges, an experience that many sites are likely to have.

What emerged from the assessment and planning process underscores the paradox of sustainability. Sustainability troubles the idea of the status quo. Realistically, the site must be dynamic in order to preserve its purpose and existence as an ongoing

1 An essential element of the National Writing Project model is the partnership between each site's sponsoring institution and regional K–12 faculty. This partnership is affected in part by the collaborative work of the university site director and the K–12 co-directors. Charlie Moran was the founding director and June Kuzmeskus and Pat Hunter were the founding co-directors. When June left to work for the Field Center in 1994, Charlie and Pat asked Bruce Penniman to take her place. Diana Callahan joined the group as a third co-director after co-facilitating the 1995 summer institute. The three co-directors remained in place until Pat's untimely death in 1999.

professional home for teachers. And at the same time, it must be elastic enough to address the changing needs of a service area. Other writing project sites may not experience the convergence of so many challenges at once, but any site will experience at least some of them on occasion. By utilizing a focused inquiry approach along with such simple tools as the ongoing analysis of site maps and a site's Web presence, WMWP learned not to take existing leadership structures for granted and to constantly assess the assets and needs of the site. Other sites may face different kinds of challenges, but having a process in place for constant renewal helps them be better prepared for new challenges.

Susan Connell Biggs, site co-director and inservice coordinator, Bruce Penniman, site director (2003–2007), and Kevin Hodgson, technology liaison, are the authors of this monograph. They offer a collaborative analysis of how the losses experienced by the site led to the tools that helped to establish more purposeful programming, a shared and rotating leadership structure, and a mentoring task force system that allows for greater access to leadership.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE: GROWTH THROUGH INQUIRY AT THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WRITING PROJECT

by Susan Connell Biggs, Kevin Hodgson, and Bruce M. Penniman

WMWP HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Even before WMWP endured its overlapping losses in leadership and funding, the site was facing geographic and cultural challenges. Most of our service area lies two hours or more west of Boston, the Massachusetts state capital, and is far enough outside of the Interstate 495 economic corridor to be easily ignored by state leaders. School districts in our service area receive less educational funding than those around Boston.

Like many writing project sites, WMWP serves a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas. The service area includes Springfield, a city of 152,000, which has the third highest child poverty rate (of cities with populations over 100,000) in the nation (Ali 2007). In contrast to this diverse urban center is Berkshire County, spanning an area of 932 square miles (which is nearly one-third our service area), whose total 2006 population was 131,000, 95 percent of which was white (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). This county consists of thirty-two communities whose school districts average fewer than 100 students per grade (Massachusetts Department of Education).

Other contrasts include the Amherst/Northampton suburban area, home to five colleges and vast cultural resources; isolated former mill towns such as Montague; and smaller urban centers like Holyoke, where recent waves of Latino immigration have created both friction and opportunities in a community built on 19th-century European immigration.

When WMWP was founded in 1993, it already had a strong leadership corps. The site grew out of an established professional development program begun twenty years earlier by University of Massachusetts English Department faculty and initially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This pre–writing project program included faculty members working with teachers from Springfield, our largest urban school district, on developing writing programs consistent with emerging writing process theory and research.

Our process of becoming a National Writing Project site was, therefore, a relatively smooth and easy one. We began with a large cadre of teachers, an enduring inservice relationship with our service area's largest school district, a strong connection with our host university, and, within a few years, substantial support from our state legislature: $100,000 a year in funding from the state.

Although this good fortune made the early years easy going, when faced with a series of losses, we realized these advantages had also kept us from doing some of the work necessary to sustain a site. We had relied on our preexisting relationship with the Springfield school district for our inservice work, which kept us from getting to know the rest of our service area and its needs. We had relied on our state funding, which enabled us to fund initiatives such as a $15,000 student writing and publication program, a minigrant program for study groups led by teacher-consultants in their schools, technology-training projects with hardware to lend to teachers for their classrooms, and heavily subsidized teacher writing retreats.

Given this relative level of comfort, we felt no need to question the purposes behind these programs and the reasons for serving these audiences. We had also relied on our early site leaders, who were always there, willing to plan and facilitate every program, making it unnecessary, we assumed, to build an expanding leadership base that would continue the work of the site when these leaders moved on.

EXPANDING THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

In realizing that we needed to think about how to respond to the challenges and plan for the future, we began to create and establish a structure built on expanded leadership that would help ensure the sustainability of the site, even in the face of current and future changes. We have continued to use the leadership structure we first developed in 2003, consisting of three main groups:

The Leadership Team

This includes the director; the three co-directors, each of whom heads a task force—continuity, inservice, and outreach—and who serve on a three-year rotating cycle; the summer institute coordinator; the professional development coordinator; and the technology liaison. More recently we have added the Project Outreach site coordinator to the team. This group meets monthly after each executive board meeting.

The Executive Board

The board includes the leadership team, the leaders of all programs (such as our ELL Network and retired teacher program[2]), a teacher-consultant representative from the most recent summer institute, and partners at the university (school of education, English department, and Five Colleges[3]). This group meets monthly during the school year.

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2 Currently in its sixteenth year, the site has developed a "critical mass" of retired teachers, many of whom are interested in staying active in the writing project but aren't sure how best to do so. The idea of forming a retired teachers group was explored at a luncheon meeting of several teacher-consultants in early 2007 and has been bandied about in various contexts ever since. As a next concrete step, two teacher-consultants organized a writing-and-response day for retired teachers and hope to create other possibilities for retired teacher-consultants, e.g., visiting/mentoring summer institute fellows in their schools, making presentations about the writing project at faculty meetings, and doing professional development presentations at times when full-time teachers are unavailable.

3 In the Amherst area, there is a five-college consortium that shares some resources: University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Amherst, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, and Hampshire Colleges.

The Task Force

This group consists of the three co-director–leaders of the inservice, continuity, and youth and family outreach task forces and meets with the executive board every other month. Membership in a task force is open to all teacher-consultants interested in thinking through and informing the work of the site.

RESPONDING TO CHANGE: INQUIRY AS A TOOL FOR ANALYSIS

Each of our three directors, Charlie Moran, Bruce Penniman, and now Anne Herrington, as a faculty member of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, has played an active role in site leadership, working side by side with the co-directors as a member of the leadership team, planning and supporting programs in addition to conducting all university relations and budget business. More and more, the director tries to involve at least one other person from the leadership team in the thinking behind all site decisions; our theory of action is that the more members of the site who hold this site knowledge, the more sustainable the site will be in times of challenge and change.

There was a moment in 2001 when our leadership team, which had yet to fill the gap created by the death of our co-director, gathered around a table to hear the grim news that we had lost our state funding. Charlie Moran, our director, asked the first of many questions: "Can we do this? Can we survive as a writing project site?" It was a quiet moment that followed, but it was only a moment. Before we left that table, we had turned the question around from "Can we survive?" to "How can we survive?" These first tough questions began surfacing other questions that continued to resurface over time.

Eventually, we realized we could capture those questions and use them deliberately as an inquiry protocol when looking at the work and leadership of our site. These questions that emerged from our moment of crisis continue to guide our work today at leadership team meetings, executive board meetings, and task force meetings:

- Who are we? The question of identity emerged during these difficult years and remains a focus for us today as we continue to examine the ways in which our site reflects, or does not reflect, the region that we serve.
- What is our mission/purpose? Finding the balance between focusing on our strengths and expanding our reach is a difficult job for any organization; referring to our overall mission statement and understanding the purpose behind every piece of work we do have helped to keep us on track.
- Who is our audience? We understood early on that we had to keep tabs on the ever-changing landscape of education in order to make WMWP an indispensable organization to teachers and administrators. So the question of whom we are actually serving is a never-ending query designed to keep us viable and vital both now and into the future.

- How do we expand leadership? The more people involved in making decisions, the more investment there is from a wider array of talent, and, as a result, the more diverse the program offerings and ideas.

MAPPING OUR IDENTITY: THE SITE MAP AS A TOOL FOR PLANNING

Who are we? The topic of identity became central to our leadership team meetings, quickly leading us back to the core mission of our writing project site: We were—and are—a professional development network that serves teachers of writing at all grade levels and in all subjects, and our purpose is to improve student achievement by improving the teaching of writing in our schools. This redirection to the core work of our site—developing teacher-leaders through the summer institute and supporting teachers through inservice—made it clear that it was time to let go of our previously state-funded student programs, at least temporarily.

We needed some sort of tool to both focus and guide our inquiry. Having experienced the power of constructing a site map during a National Writing Project Annual Meeting session, one teacher-consultant suggested we try using this tool—a site map—in our own inquiry process. The director and co-directors brought a draft of the site map to a leadership team meeting, and we tested its validity as a tool (see figure 1).

Western Massachusetts Writing Project
Site Map, 2002-2003

Satellite Programs or Mini-Networks	Communications	Student Programs	Teachers as Writers	Summer Institute and Alumni Programs
Co-Directors: Diana Callahan, Paul Oh, Mary-Ann Palmieri	**Co-Director: Paul Oh**	**Co-Director: Mary-Ann Palmieri**	**Co-Director: Diana Callahan**	**Co-Director: Bruce Penniman**
Inservice Susan Biggs	**WMWP Publications** Leif Riddington Leslie Skantz-Hodgson Mary Farrin	**SummerWrite!** Lisa LaMothe Leif Riddington	**Teachers' Publication** Mary-Ann Palmieri	**Summer Institute** Bruce Penniman Diana Callahan Charlie Moran
New Teacher Seminars Bruce Penniman	**State Network Liaison** Mary-Ann Palmieri Charlie Moran	**Student Writers' W'ksp** Lisa LaMothe Diana Callahan	**Writing and Response** Diana Callahan	**First-Year Programs** Tina Browne
ELL Programs Karen Sumaryono Wilma Ortiz	**Political Action** Sherril Willis	**Student Publications** Joanne Wisniewski	**Writers' Retreats** Diana Callahan, Mary-Ann Palmieri	**Best Practices** Sara Just Bruce Penniman
Teacher Research Anne Herrington Bonnie Moriarty	**Web Site** Paul Oh		**Teachers as Writers** Charlotte Lak	**Advanced Institutes** Anne Herrington
Rural Sites Mary-Ann Palmieri	**NWP Liaison** Charlie Moran			
Urban Sites Charlotte Lak	**Record-Keeping** Pam Howes			

Figure 1. WMWP's Initial Site Map

FINDINGS

The site map provided a quick visual representation of leadership distribution as well as the naming of projects yet to be developed. Whose names appeared frequently? Why? Why were some names attached to projects that were not being developed? These observations surfaced new questions: How is leadership developed at our site? And how do we make decisions about the programming we offer? How do we invite and prepare new leaders to lead?

We held these new questions loosely at our side to help guide our work, hoping to focus on them more directly in the future. The site map became a tool both to reflect on what was currently in place at our site and to plan for the way we might restructure our site for the future. A set of questions we asked ourselves began to emerge from our work with our site map:

- What is the work of our site?
- What is the purpose and goal of each program?
- Whom does each program serve?
- How are these programs related to each other? How do they fit together?
- Who does the work of our site?
- How are leadership and work distributed in our site?
- How does our site handle transition to leadership?
- What do we do to build leadership?
- How can one program serve more than one purpose?
- What inservice possibilities exist within our other programs?
- How can we create continuity elements for our inservice programs?
- How can our inservice programs build capacity at our site?

Looking at the site map with these questions in mind made it difficult for us to ignore the obvious: a handful of people were responsible for the bulk of our work, and with the loss of state funding and the programs it had supported—all run by teacher-leaders—we faced the reality that our leadership structure had dwindled even further. Reenvisioning ways that more people could become involved in leadership roles led to our creating the role of inservice coordinator and establishing a rotating co-director structure.

HELP WANTED: INSERVICE COORDINATOR

Revisiting our site's mission and understanding our identity more clearly as an inservice provider made it easier to make the decision, in times of reduced funding, to invest in a part-time, paid inservice coordinator position. Our hope was that revenue brought into the site through inservice work would both pay the teacher-

consultants for facilitating the work and cover the cost of the inservice coordinator position. Our goal was that the position would pay for itself within five years. We were pleased to find that it did so in three. What we soon learned was that it also helped us reenvision our leadership structure.

The role of inservice coordinator (see appendix A) allowed the site to make a much-needed change: to move from a one-shot two-hour workshop model to a more in-depth, sustained model of inservice. The site now had someone with both the time to invest in helping administrators understand the value of more sustained inservice and the time to sit down and plan and design these programs with teachers. We began contracting with schools for thirty-five-hour courses with titles such as Writing Across the Curriculum, Teaching in a Diverse Classroom, and Teaching English Language Learners. (Go to www.umass.edu/wmwp/administrators.htm for a copy of the WMWP Professional Development brochure.)

This change to more sustained, over-time inservice offerings allowed us to serve teachers better, with professional development offerings that went more deeply into their topics, and to implement a "mentoring" model that meant two teachers together facilitated programs. This team approach not only allowed for another layer of learning to take place—that between the two facilitators—but also allowed us to pair a seasoned teacher-consultant with one who had less inservice experience, thus expanding our pool of teacher-leaders.

The role of inservice coordinator also helped our site respond more quickly to changes in the needs of our service area. When state laws dictated a change in the way teachers could work with English language learners, we were able to modify our existing professional development offerings in this area to meet the new state requirements because there was someone in place to adapt our programs in a timely way.

PLANNING STRATEGICALLY FOR EXPANDING LEADERSHIP: ROTATING CO-DIRECTORS

Further inquiry into our site map helped us realize that we had no clear mechanism for replacing co-directors who left or retired. Up until then, there had never been a need to plan for transitions—the original co-directors were still serving—nor any way to ensure that new leaders would emerge from our growing pool of teacher-consultants. What evolved from these findings was a proposal that each co-director would serve for three years and then rotate off for at least one year before being eligible to serve again. However, the co-director who rotated off would remain on the executive board for the following year. This rotation would ensure that one new person (most likely from the executive board, we imagined) would become a co-director each year, providing a fresh perspective; the two remaining co-directors, along with the site director, would provide continuity and mentoring.

We quickly questioned our assumption that co-directors would have to come from those teacher-consultants already on the executive board, which consists of everyone

currently leading site programs. Although it seemed that someone with this experience might be best prepared for the co-director role, we wanted to open up this leadership possibility to all teacher-consultants, not just those with experience leading site programs. This conclusion led to the decision that the co-director position would be advertised to all teacher-consultants, which in turn led to the creation of a job description (see appendix B) and a selection process: teacher-consultants submit applications; the director and co-directors interview applicants and make a recommendation to the executive board; and the board votes on whether to approve the recommendation or not.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

We are always mindful of the university's crucial role in providing leadership for site programs. When, as a public school teacher, Bruce Penniman took on the role of director, he knew it would only be temporary. For the long-term health and well-being of the site, the WMWP director needs to be a university faculty member. University support provides many reciprocal benefits. The university gains access to working with a well-informed group of teachers and can be responsive to the issues local schools face; the writing project site can benefit from the scholarship of university faculty and offer credit-bearing courses.

During the year following his retirement, Charlie Moran, the outgoing director, helped Bruce maintain and sustain the important relationship he, Moran, had created with the university. And Anne Herrington, then chair of the English department and already serving on our executive board since the site's first year, had committed to becoming our next director after her term as chair of the English department ended. So, two years before she took on this official role, Anne began looking at the work and people of the site through the lens of a future director. And then, even when she began her work as director, she had her eye out for the site's next university director—knowing that it's never too early to begin to plan for leadership transition.

We realize that the collaborative relationship we enjoy with the university includes but goes beyond financial support. Anne, as the new site director, is working toward making the writing project site more visible, more known, and more needed throughout the university through the formation of partnerships and shared work. In addition to Anne's leadership, another member of the English faculty serves on our executive board and technology team. Members of the faculty regularly teach professional development courses in the summer, and the WMWP offers a graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing through the English department. WMWP also collaborates with the English department's MFA program to offer summer youth writing programs.

More and more, other university departments and College of Humanities and Fine Arts programs see the WMWP community as an asset to the university because of its strong relationships to schools and to the large network of teachers.

CLARIFYING NEW CO-DIRECTOR ROLES

This leadership structure is far from perfect. We continue to put into place procedures and documentation to help with the mentoring process of new co-directors. Our new leadership structure—a director and three rotating co-directors, one of whom was the inservice coordinator—evolved at the same time that the National Writing Project began providing funding to sites for the creation of a technology liaison position. Paul Oh, our first technology liaison, was one of our site's first new co-directors to rotate onto the leadership team, a circumstance that allowed us to envision from the outset the technology liaison position as an important leadership role, a role that gives a site leader the opportunity to lead the site in viewing all of our work through a technology lens. From the very start, our technology liaison contributed to site planning and decision making. Paul's involvement in the technology liaison network also brought important information and resources from other writing project sites into our work. We created a job decription for the technology liaison to help capture our vision for this role (see appendix C).

A DIRECTOR'S VIEW ON SITE–UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIP

Anne's description of the site–university relationship illustrates their symbiotic rapport:

WMWP's relationship to the university goes beyond the English department. For example, the site participates in a loose confederation of programs that represent Writing@CHFA (http://www.umass.edu/hfa/writingchfa/index.html), housed in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. With them, we have created a website that represents our collective presence. In addition, we are presently collaborating with the Center for the Study of African American Language on a proposal for summer youth writing programs in two local urban areas.

Situating WMWP with these other college programs is not only symbolically important, it helps foster collaboration among programs. We in WMWP keep these links strong through intentional efforts to collaborate on programs, and maintain them among teachers as well as students. So, for instance, undergraduates taking Introduction to Teaching Writing during the fall semester are invited to the WMWP Best Practices conference. Graduate students and faculty in composition and rhetoric are also invited to specific events. In 2006 the English department and WMWP cosponsored a conference: Writing, Teaching, and Technology. In 2008, with K–college teachers across the state and the University of Massachusetts, we are planning a conference called Reenvisioning Writing Assessment.

We are also fortunate to have the strong support of the current chair of the English department and the dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. They recognize the value of collaborative partnerships with K–12 educators, specifically the model of the WMWP.

We also began to see the inservice coordinator role as a leadership position that allowed for strategic thinking at the site through an inservice lens. When our technology liaison and inservice coordinator were ready to rotate out of their co-director roles to make room for new co-directors, they remained a part of the core leadership team, thus broadening that team's capacity (see appendix D).

The new structures and leadership roles helped us respond to the difficult changes we faced. The site held a summer institute each year and offered professional development in schools. However, it was clear that, more than these new structures and roles, it was the process of collaboratively looking deeply into the site's organization and dynamics that allowed us to sustain our work and maintain an involved group of teacher-consultants. The writing project site, after all, exists to serve as a professional community for its teacher-consultants, and we realized that the tools would be useless unless we passed on our collaborative process as well.

USING TECHNOLOGY FOR INQUIRY: WEB PRESENCE AS A TOOL FOR OUTREACH

Inspired by an NWP Annual Meeting session on Web presence, Paul Oh, our technology liaison, discussed with Bruce Penniman the notion of focusing the planning for our website on who the various audiences were that used it and what they might be seeking or needing when visiting the site. Bruce suggested that the leadership team—he, the three co-directors, and the inservice coordinator—engage in a half-day retreat at his house, fueled by good food and led by the technology liaison.

This leadership retreat, which is now held each August, has become an important structure in the ongoing inquiry process into the work and leadership at our site. At this retreat we reflect on the previous year, determine the current needs of the site, and make plans for the upcoming year to respond to them. The inquiry questions introduced at the beginning of this monograph (page 7) help guide these retreats.

The goal of this first gathering in 2003 was to go through a process of arriving at the website's content, based once again on familiar questions: Who are we? Is our identity clearly represented by our website? Who is our audience? Whom do we serve? What are their needs? And, therefore, what is the purpose of our work?

Before making final decisions about our new Web design, we strategically considered the presentation of content on the website through the lens of audience. For instance, the group realized that a person arriving at the website might not know exactly what he or she wanted, but that person would know who he or she was—a teacher, administrator, or service provider.

Different audiences would likely look for different things on the website. For that reason, we decided to place navigation buttons identifying the different constituencies toward the top of the screen page. This navigation setup, we felt, allowed for various portals into the content that might best meet varied needs (see figure 2).

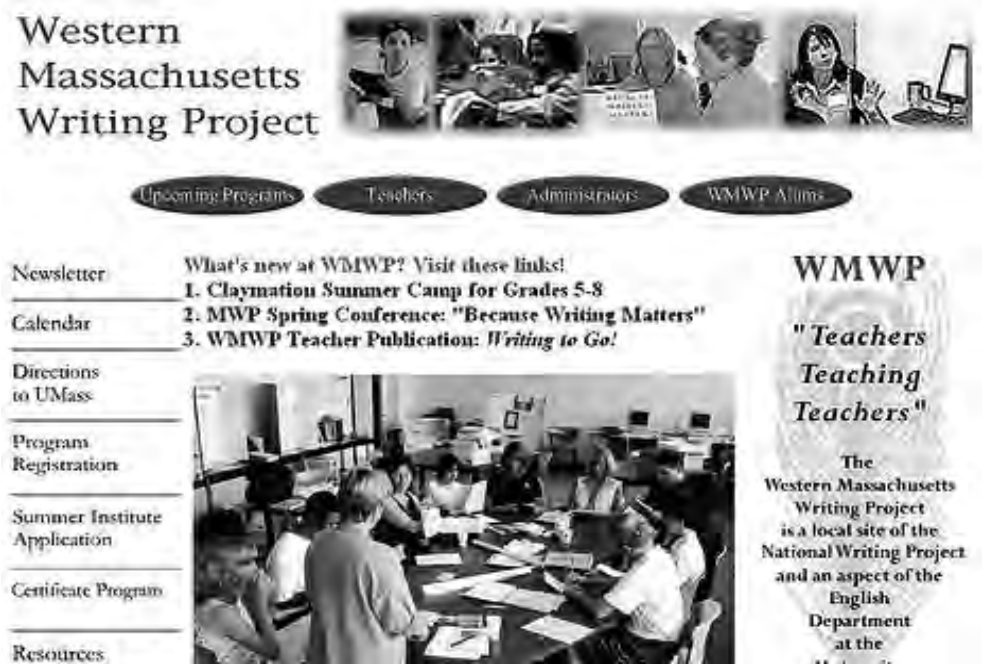

Figure 2. New WMWP Website Design

After researching other Web presences in the NWP network, we shared data on what we liked, what surprised us, and the process of entering into a website and moving around inside it. (For a more in-depth discussion of this Web presence process see WMWP's resource, titled "Revising Our Web Presence: The Re-visioning of a Writing Project-Site," on the NWP website at *www.nwp.org/public/print/resource/2679*.)

Our learning, of course, didn't stop there. Paper in one hand and pizza in the other, Bruce asked an important question, "Shouldn't we really be asking this question of audience and purpose in regard to every piece of work we do at our site?" It was as if a lightbulb went on for everyone gathered around the table. Suddenly we weren't just mapping out our writing project site; we were rethinking who the work was for and why. So the work we did in mapping out our site helped us see the work we do in even more new ways.

SUPPORT FOR LEADERS: TASK FORCES

We had weathered the difficult challenges of losing important leaders and a large percentage of our budget, and we had successfully transitioned to a new director. We now faced the challenge of moving beyond merely stabilizing the site to developing a site structure that could support new growth. We wanted this growth to be both productive and purposeful. We brought to the foreground two questions that had arisen early in our inquiry that we had held somewhat at bay until we had gotten back on our feet:

- How is leadership developed at our site?
- How do we make decisions about the programming we offer?

Of course, leadership transitions continued to happen. Our technology liaison moved on to a full-time position with the NWP, and Bruce, in a temporary university position, was planning to retire after four years. Experiencing these many changes in leadership allowed us to embrace the concept of thinking two years ahead. Our site's new philosophy became "As you step into any role in the writing project, first on your 'to do' list is to begin looking for your replacement." This approach not only helps us be better prepared for unplanned leadership transitions, but also keeps any one of us from thinking that what we do is our individual work, and helps us see it instead as the work of the writing project site.

We felt we needed to reach outside our local resources to move forward. We turned to the NWP network and sent a current and a former co-director to the NWP Directors Retreat. Equipped with our list of guiding inquiry questions, our new site map, and images of our revised website, Susan Biggs and Paul Oh attended the 2004 Directors Retreat at Lake Tahoe along with a cohort of other writing project site leaders interested in inquiring into their sites and learning from each other. It was this opportunity to work together, talk out our thinking with other sites, and receive valuable feedback that allowed us to first imagine a new task force structure for our site. The task force structure was and remains a way to further define the

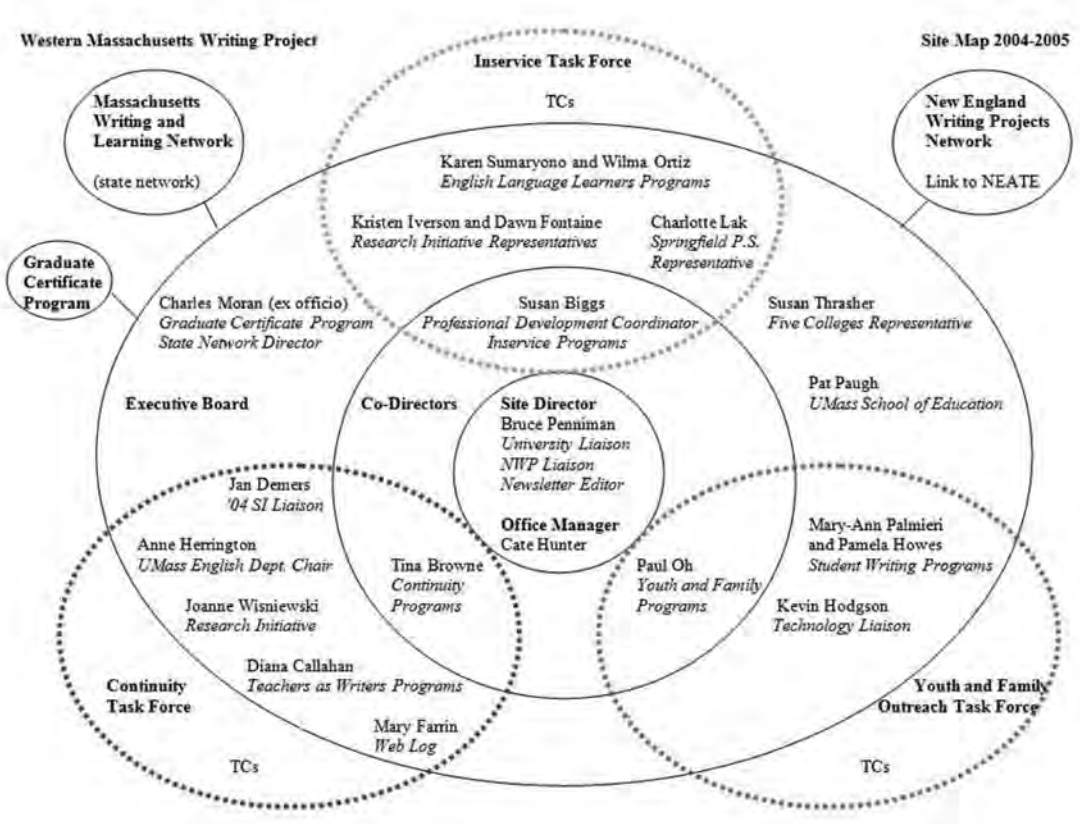

Figure 3. WMWP's Task Force Site Map

different spheres of work at our site (thinking that if teachers better understand how these spheres of work relate to each other, they will feel more comfortable entering into the work) and begin to expand the opportunities of leadership within those spheres of work (see figure 3).

When the co-directors presented this plan to the leadership team, the new structure was adopted, with the three co-directors heading up the task forces: Inservice, Continuity, and Youth and Family Outreach. Beyond defining our work and expanding leadership, the leadership team saw further advantages to implementing this new structure: it would be a way to increase access to leadership and to mentor those in new or potential leadership roles.

This new task force structure created more distinct roles for co-directors; rather than all co-directors being responsible for monitoring all programs, each co-director could focus on a select set of programming. These changes required revisions in job descriptions, which further helped in the documentation of our work and in the effective transfer of responsibilities when co-directors rotated out of their positions. In turn, this process encouraged us to find more ways to document our work and to communicate about it with each other. From among the ideas generated came the monthly task force reports (see appendix E) and the creation of task force binders, which hold timelines for work, co-director responsibilities for projects, and job descriptions for leadership roles (see appendix F). This documentation also helped facilitate important reflection on our work and planning for future work during our yearly leadership team retreats.

With the new task force structure, all teacher-consultants, whether they are leading current programs or not, can contribute as thinking and planning partners. This opportunity has helped many teacher-consultants, such as Sara Palmer, to take on program leader roles and even apply for co-director positions. The teacher-consultant timeline in figure 4 illustrates how having structures that enlarge participation possibilities can nurture and support new teacher-consultants, like Sara, in a leadership trajectory.

The task force structure itself is a work in progress. Although it has drawn a few more teacher-consultants into thinking and planning for the site, it has not drawn the crowds we had initially hoped it might. Simply creating the structure does not mean it will be used. We hope our current work as part of the Project Outreach initiative will help us implement the task force structure.

Another challenge is that programs do not always fit neatly into one category. The difficulty of situating some programs within particular task forces suggests that we have implemented more learning at our site. NWP, specifically Mike Mathis, the director of grants and contracts, has challenged us to develop programs that can serve multiple audiences and therefore multiple purposes. This thinking inspired us to reinvent our student programs, initially cut from lack of state funding, into programs that also include an inservice component—thus allowing us to once again draw teachers into our site through working with their students.

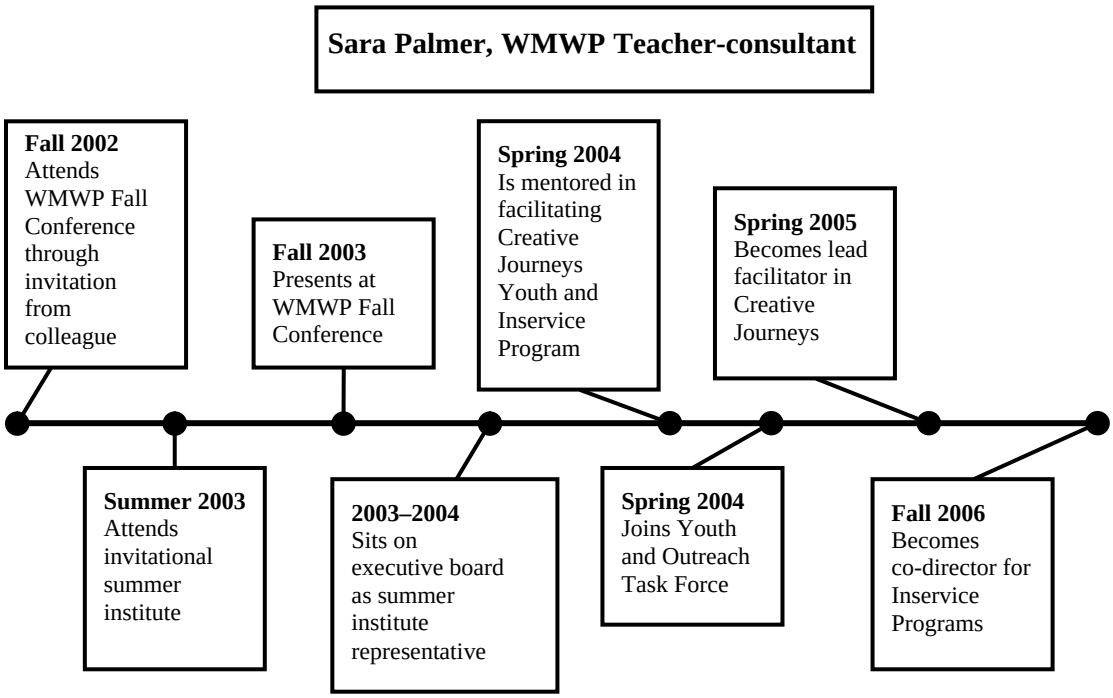

Figure 4. From Summer Institute to Expanded Leadership Role

Our site's programs are constantly evolving. Moving the technology liaison from one task force to another each year allows us to focus on implementing the thinking that technology has to offer into all of our programs. Looking to the future, we imagine developing a technology team, with each member of the team serving on each one of the task forces.

As we continue to find ways that our programming circles can inform each other, the same kind of thinking has influenced our leadership development. Not only do we try to send experienced and new teacher-consultants out together to facilitate inservice programs, we use this same mentoring structure for all of our programs. An experienced teacher-consultant mentors a newer one as they lead together. Eventually the teacher-consultant being mentored can step into the main leadership role, and the mentoring leader can move on to a new program. This system leaves us better prepared for those times when teachers are unexpectedly called away from their program leader roles by family obligations or increased responsibilities at their schools.

NO END TO THE INQUIRY, NO END TO THE LEARNING

It's important to reiterate that some of our site leadership team's most important learning came about from using the site maps as an inquiry tool. One such discovery was that the summer institute was "missing" from our site map. Realizing this helped us recognize that as we had focused on growing our site, we had assumed that our summer institute was strong and vibrant. A core program of all writing project sites from which leadership for inservice and continuity grow, the summer

institute, too, needs constant attention to make sure it is relevant and in tune with our service area's changing needs. We created the position of a year-round summer institute director (see figure 5) to make sure that the summer institute stays front and center in the site's thinking. This position is beginning to evolve into another leadership team position and seems to be growing its own task force membership.

We have come to view our site map as a living, ever-changing document. We do need to be patient to allow the learning we've gained through the writing of this monograph and the reflection we've gained through Project Outreach to inform our thinking before we make more changes. We are comfortable with the fact that our site map no longer accurately reflects our site for more than a year at a time. For although our site map and our site's Web presence help us communicate who we are to others, it is just as important that they communicate who we are to our our own teacher-consultants and the university community.

Throughout the process of responding to changes in funding and leadership at our site, our concept of continuity expanded from offering the occasional program that engaged teachers in writing or continued learning to involving teachers in the planning, visioning, and leadership of the site. As teachers contribute to the work of the site, they not only create a broader leadership base and therefore a more sustainable site, but inform their own leadership roles in their schools and their classrooms.

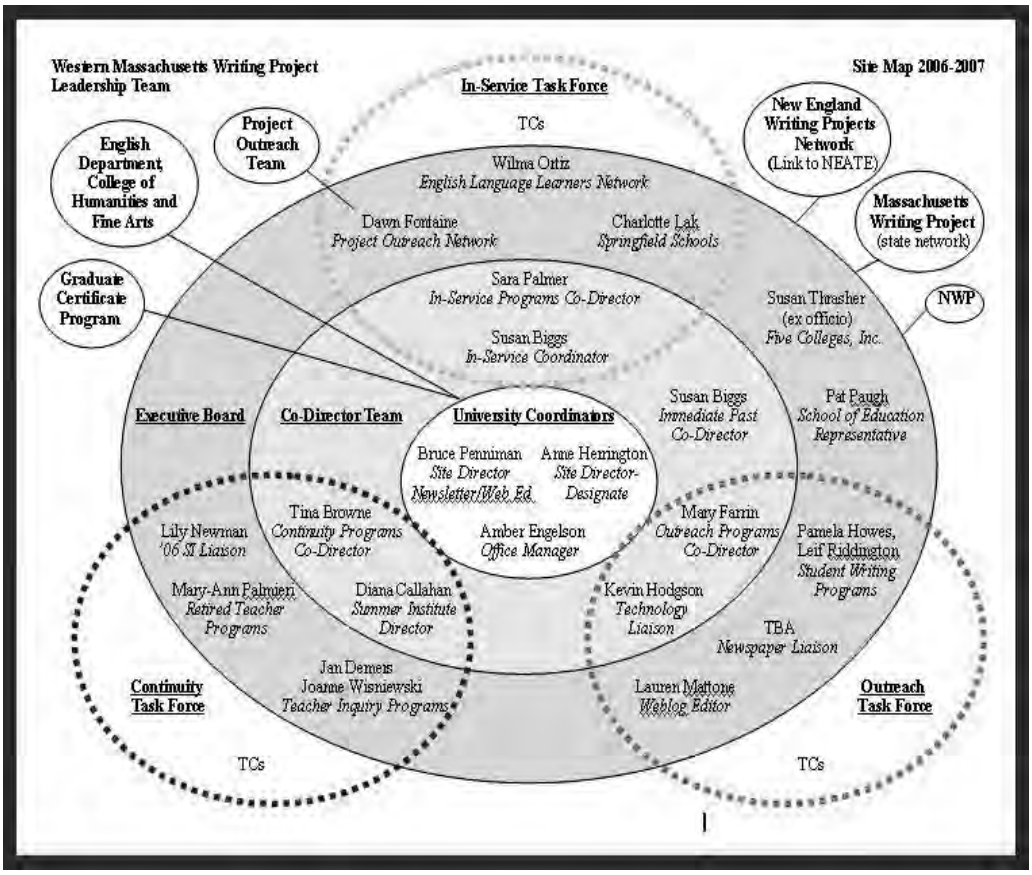

Figure 5. WMWP Site Map with Summer Institute Director

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The possibility of future challenges is always imminent: changes to the student and teacher population in the service area, increases in state requirements for teachers, decreases in school budgets; and the greatest of them, probably, are the unanticipated turns in people's lives. A leadership structure, after all, isn't a diagram on paper but a network of people working together. And real people get sick, suffer losses, change jobs, and move away. No organization is ever really "prepared" for such changes, but it is possible to have processes in place—habits of mind, perhaps—that make such changes less wrenching and more survivable.

Sites can reap both planned and unplanned benefits from taking stock. For example, inquiry as an ongoing stance coupled with long-term planning and anticipation of changes not only helped WMWP to determine next steps but had the added benefit of creating more leadership channels. Additional leadership positions alone, however, are not the answer to creating a sustainable site. The positions need to be coupled with mentoring and a rotation plan. Utilizing visual aids such as the site maps provides a tangible method of ensuring that all of the site's three components—summer institute, continuity, and inservice—are being attended to. Thinking through the representation of the site's Web presence helped WMWP realize that it needs to address a range of audiences, from classroom teachers to administrators to the general public. All of these audiences contribute to the sustainability of the site. Recognizing and addressing their needs and expectations remain ongoing challenges. Awareness of the interests and needs of the various stakeholders in the service area will, undoubtedly, also be an impetus for strategic planning at the site.

Together, leaders at WMWP have fine-tuned inquiry tools to build a more sustainable writing project site, one that can not only respond to change but also welcome it. As the pool of contributors to the future of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project site has increased, so, too has thinking, acting, and questioning collaboratively created a sense of investment and shared ownership that will keep the site relevant, accessible, and sustainable in the years to come.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INSERVICE COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Develop and coordinate Western Massachusetts Writing Project (WMWP) inservice programs. This includes:

- Designing inservice programs and formats
- Writing inservice booklet and other marketing materials
- Contacting schools (administrators and curriculum coordinators)
- Meeting with administration and Curriculum Coordinator to plan and implement inservice
- Matching teacher-consultants with inservice programs
- Planning and debriefing with teacher-consultants leading programs
- Following up with schools after inservice programs

Administrative

- Writing and sending contract to school
- Writing and sending contract and information to teacher-consultants
- Making billing requests of office manager
- Making payment requests of University of Massachusetts billing office

Meetings

- Attending executive board meetings
- Attending leadership team meetings
- Attending local community meetings such as Holyoke Youth Task Force (HYTF)
- Attending yearly Massachusetts Writing Project State Network (MWP) Retreat
- Attending monthly MWP meetings
- Attending NWP Annual meeting

Reporting

- Keeping records on all inservice programs
- Collecting data on inservice programs and making monthly reports to executive board
- Writing inservice report for the continuation of annual funding to NWP

Networking

- Networking with inservice coordinators of other NWP sites, especially those of MWP
- Networking with other education organizations, such as the Pioneer Valley Reading Council, the Massachusetts Reading Association, and NCTE
- Forming working partnerships with other education organizations, such as: Holyoke Youth Task Force (HYTF), Wisteriahurst Museum, Emily Dickinson Museum
- Maintaining communication with state department of education about our program and relaying inservice trends and changes in requirements to teacher-consultant membership

Presentations

- Making presentations to organizations and university programs about WMWP inservice programs
- Presenting at important education conferences to help spread the word about WMWP
- Encouraging and supporting other TCs to make similar presentations.

APPENDIX B: WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WRITING PROJECT CO-DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

The co-directors of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project (WMWP) serve, together with the site director, as the organization's leadership team. Co-directors participate in the work of establishing goals, formulating policies and plans, developing budgets and calendars, supervising programs, fostering teacher leadership, and evaluating the work of the site.

Responsibilities

Co-directors perform a variety of duties throughout the year, some predictable and specific, others as needed. The total time commitment for the co-director position is variable, but in the neighborhood of eighty to one-hundred hours per year (an average of two hours per week during the school year plus an additional work session or two in the summer). The responsibilities of the co-director include the following activities:

- Promoting the National Writing Project model of effective professional development
- Participating in regularly scheduled meetings of the co-directors and the executive board, and meeting with other committees as needed
- Representing the Western Massachusetts Writing Project at National Writing Project, New England Writing Project, and/or Massachusetts Writing Project meetings and other events
- Coordinating and assisting in the implementation of Western Massachusetts Writing Project programs and events and attending as many as possible
- Advising the site director on matters of policy, planning, and budget
- Assisting the site director in development of the annual report to the National Writing Project.

In addition to these general responsibilities, each co-director serves as the coordinator for one major type of Western Massachusetts Writing Project programming:

- Continuity—teachers-as-writers programs, teacher-research programs, advanced institutes, leadership programs, and other opportunities for teacher-consultants.
- Inservice—best practices conferences, school-year workshop series, open institutes, English Language Learners programs, and other opportunities open to all teachers. (Note: coordination of school-based professional development is a separate job.)
- Outreach—student publication programs and writing workshops, family programs, public relations, local grants, and other opportunities for community involvement.

The job of the co-director is not to run all of the programs in his or her area, but rather to recruit and coach teacher-leaders, to facilitate planning, and to assist the director and office manager with logistics. The co-director for each area should recruit and lead a committee of teacher-consultants who will serve as program leaders and assistants and report regularly to the site director about program design and implementation. Since the three areas of WMWP activity overlap, co-directors should regularly coordinate their plans and calendars.

The co-director's most important role is to serve as a thinking partner for program leaders. In this role, the co-director should be in regular contact with program leaders in his or her area, providing the following types of support:

- From the initial idea for a project through the planning stage, the co-director helps clarify the program goals, identify the audience, and develop key strategies.
- As the program is implemented, the co-director helps design the schedule and agenda, advises about publicity, assists with implementation, and serves as a sounding board if problems emerge.
- When the program ends, the co-director assists with the required documentation and initiates a discussion of the program's effectiveness and future direction.

Support

Perhaps the most important support for co-directors is the advice and assistance provided by other (current and former) co-directors, whose experience and wisdom are often the best guides. Regular meetings, as well as e-mail and telephone contact, provide opportunities to exchange ideas.

The site director also serves as a mentor, starting with an orientation meeting after the co-director is selected. The site director's primary roles in implementing WMWP initiatives are to muster the necessary resources and to coordinate programs within the master schedule, but he or she can also be helpful in matters related to University of Massachusetts or WMWP policies and personnel issues.

The office manager assists with logistics: scheduling rooms, ordering and copying materials, sending out e-mails, processing program registrations, receiving and relaying messages, setting up refreshments, making signs, printing Professional Development Point (PDP) certificates, and much more.

Qualifications

Candidates for co-director must be alumni of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project's (or another National Writing Project site's) Invitational Summer Institute. A history of participation in and some leadership experience of Western Massachusetts Writing Project activities are critical, as is a strong interest in sustaining and developing the site.

Selection Process and Term of Office

Applications and nominations for the position of co-director are solicited each spring. Each candidate should submit a letter of interest and a resume (indicating Western Massachusetts Writing Project involvement) by May 1. Candidates will be reviewed by the current co-directors, who will make a recommendation to the executive board, which must approve their selection by majority vote. The co-director serves for three years, beginning immediately after selection. At the end of his or her term, the co-director remains on the executive board for one year. A co-director may not be reappointed immediately after serving a full term but may be considered for the position again after one year.

Compensation

Each co-director will receive a stipend of $2,000 per year, payable in two installments (fall and spring). (Co-directors may receive additional compensation as leaders of particular Western Massachusetts Writing Project programs.) In addition, co-directors' travel expenses to National Writing Project Annual Meeting (and other meetings as appropriate) will be substantially subsidized.

Revised: June 14, 2006

APPENDIX C: WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WRITING PROJECT TECHNOLOGY LIAISON JOB DESCRIPTION

The technology liaison, along with the site director and co-directors, serves as a member of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project's (WMWP) leadership team. According to the National Writing Project's description of the position, the technology liaison provides local leadership to the site and serves as a link between the local site and national programs. The local role of the technology liaison is designed to reflect the needs and interests of the site and may include providing support for local institutes and inservice programs; moderating local listservs; supporting online reporting for the NWP Site Profile; developing and maintaining a site database and website; and facilitating the local aspects of national online projects such as the summer E-Anthology and teacher-consultant participation in NWP special-focus network online discussions. The technology liaison also works with site leadership to design a plan for using technology to support the work of the site. Nationally, the technology liaison serves as an additional conduit through which information between the local site and the NWP can flow electronically. The technology liaison is expected to assist the site in accessing communications and fulfilling expectations for online work.

WMWP Responsibilities

The WMWP technology liaison performs a variety of duties throughout the year, some predictable and specific, others as needed. The technology liaison is responsible for helping the site's leadership team plan strategically the integration and use of technology with regard to site infrastructure, continuity programs, inservice, youth programs, and the invitational summer institute. The total time commitment for the technology liaison is variable. The responsibilities of the technology liaison include the following:

- Leading strategic thinking on website design and functionality
- Assisting with the maintenance of office hardware and software
- Leading the strategic thinking and planning for, and making explicit to site leadership, the ways in which technology might support the core goals of the site
- Attending professional development opportunities offered by NWP (such as the Tech Matters Institute, technology liaison–specific sessions at the annual meeting, etc.)
- Helping to expand the leadership at the site on technology-related issues
- Distilling national initiatives and information for site leadership
- Planning for and coordinating weblog work by teacher-consultants and site leadership

- Leading technology-related workshop(s) for the invitational summer institute and assisting participants with technology-related work
- Attending the NWP Annual Meeting
- Attending executive board and site leadership meetings.

The technology liaison position also may include these responsibilities (but does not necessarily need to):

- Facilitating a Technology Institute and/or conducting inservice on the uses of technology in the teaching of writing
- Supporting teacher-consultants in their classroom implementation of technology tools and pedagogy
- Writing and implementing technology-related grants
- Attending national functions targeted for site leaders (e.g., Rural Sites Retreat)
- Troubleshooting hardware, software, and networking problems in the office.

Qualifications

Candidates for technology liaison must be alumni of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project (or another National Writing Project site) Invitational Summer Institute. A history of participation in, and some leadership experience of, Western Massachusetts Writing Project activities involving technology are critical, as is a strong interest in sustaining and developing the site.

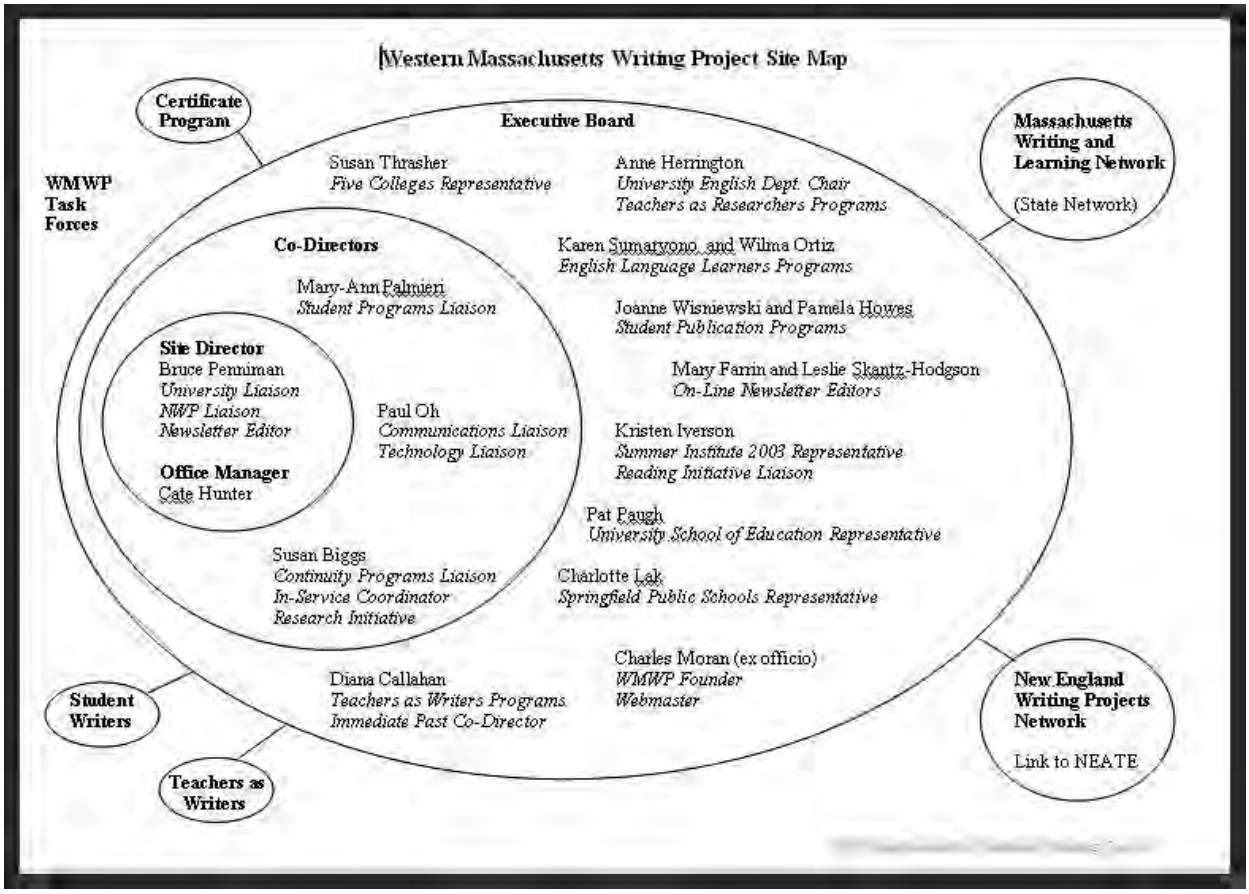
Selection Process and Term of Office

Nominations for the position of technology liaison may be made by any member of the executive board or the site leadership. Candidates are reviewed by the co-directors, who will then choose a technology liaison. The technology liaison will serve an open-ended term, dependent upon the mutual satisfaction of the technology liaison and the site leadership.

Compensation

The technology liaison will receive a stipend of $1,000 per year, payable in two installments (fall and spring). In addition, the technology liaison's travel expenses to the National Writing Project Annual Meeting (and other meetings as appropriate) will be substantially subsidized.

APPENDIX D: WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WRITING PROJECT'S (WMWP) ROTATING CO-DIRECTOR SITE MAP, 2004-2005



APPENDIX E: TASK FORCE/CO-DIRECTOR REPORT

Task Force: _____

Date: _____

Task Force Updates:

Review of Recent Programs:

Preparation for Future Programs:

Report from Task Force Meeting:

Attending: _____

Questions/Comments:

NWP/Inverness Report Forms to Fill Out:

APPENDIX F: WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WRITING PROJECT PROGRAM LEADER'S GUIDE

The Western Massachusetts Writing Project (WMWP) is dedicated to and depends upon the leadership skills and dedication of its teacher-consultants. To grow as a site and serve the interests of the diverse group of teachers and students in our area, we need teacher-consultants' creativity and hard work to design and implement appropriate programs and initiatives. This guide is designed to assist program leaders by outlining the responsibilities of program leaders and the support WMWP provides.

Responsibilities of Program Leaders

No two WMWP programs are alike, so the program leader's exact duties will vary. Usually, though, the program leader will be expected to perform the following tasks:

- Promote the National Writing Project model of effective professional development
- Communicate with his or her co-director regularly about program design and implementation, with the site director during the planning stage about resources and schedule, and with the office manager early and as needed about logistical support
- Coordinate program planning and implementation with co-leader(s), guest presenter(s), the technology liaison, and/or other teacher-consultants, as required
- Assist the WMWP office in recruiting participants, particularly in target areas
- Establish clear goals, expectations, and activities for program participants
- Prepare readings, handouts, and presentations as required for program implementation
- Create a welcoming, supportive, and challenging atmosphere for all participants
- Maintain accurate records of attendance and expenditures (as approved by the site director)
- Assist the co-director in evaluating the program's effectiveness and suggesting revisions.

Support for Program Leaders

To assist teacher-consultants in their roles as program leaders, WMWP offers three kinds of support: from the co-directors, from the site director, and from the office manager. Their roles and the types of assistance they can provide are described below.

Co-Director

Each of the co-directors is primarily responsible for one aspect of WMWP's work: inservice (programs that offer professional development to all teachers), continuity (programs that nurture writing project teacher-consultants as educational leaders), and outreach (programs that provide growth opportunities and information to students, families, and communities). Most WMWP programs overlap at least two of these categories, but each initiative is assigned to a particular co-director according to its primary audience or purpose.

The co-director's essential role is to serve as a thinking partner for the program leader. The program leader and the co-director should be in regular contact with each other:

- From the initial idea for a project through the planning stage, the co-director will help clarify the program goals, identify the audience, and develop key strategies.
- As the program is implemented, the co-director will help design the schedule and agenda, advise about publicity, assist with implementation, and serve as a sounding board if problems emerge.
- When the program ends, the co-director will assist with the required documentation and initiate a discussion of the program's effectiveness and future direction.

Site Director

The site director's primary roles in implementing WMWP initiatives are to muster the necessary resources and to coordinate programs within the master schedule. Early in the planning process (but after a discussion with the co-director), the program leader should communicate with the site director about funding, location, dates and times, publicity needs, and other such matters. The site director will review the program leader's requests, help establish a budget, outline any constraints, schedule events and resources as needed, and ensure timely publicity.

While the co-director will serve as the primary advisor to the program leader, the site director may also serve as a mentor, particularly in matters related to University of Massachusetts or WMWP policies, financial matters, or personnel issues.

Office Manager

The office manager is a University of Massachusetts graduate student who works part-time during the school year and summer coordinating WMWP programs. The office manager's role is to assist with logistics: scheduling rooms, ordering and copying materials, sending out e-mails, processing program registrations, receiving and relaying messages, setting up refreshments, making signs, printing Professional Development Point (PDP) certificates, and much more. The office manager will handle many of the nitty-gritty details that ensure a program's success.

The program leader should be in contact with the office manager early and often. A face-to-face meeting (or at least a phone conversation) well in advance of a program will help clarify program needs and the assistance that the office manager can provide. Regular e-mail and phone contact as plans develop will help ensure that everything runs smoothly as the program is implemented. Generally the office manager will provide on-site assistance at major events such as conferences.

The office manager can be reached at wmwp@english.umass.edu or at (413) 545-5466. Keep in mind, though, that the office manager works only about ten hours per week—not all day every day—so it's important to plan ahead!

Qualifications and Compensation

To ensure that WMWP programs support the NWP model of effective professional development, program leaders (or at least one co-leader) should be alumni of WMWP's (or another writing project's) Invitational Summer Institute. When possible, WMWP pairs new program leaders with experienced mentors to promote growth in leadership skills. Unfortunately, WMWP can rarely pay program leaders adequately for the time and expertise they devote to the site's initiatives. However, in most cases program leaders receive stipends based on the length and complexity of their programs. In addition, WMWP will, to the extent that funds are available, subsidize some program leaders' travel to the National Writing Project Annual Meeting and to other meetings as appropriate.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Susan Connell Biggs taught middle and high school English and theater arts for ten years before she became the professional development coordinator for the Western Massachusetts Writing Project. Her work with the writing project has also included serving as co-director, coordinator of the Massachusetts Writing Project state network, and member of the National Writing Project's Directors Retreat leadership team and Web Presence Retreat facilitation team. Her article on family writing workshops, "Writing Workshops: Linking Schools and Families," appeared in the May 2002 issue of *English Journal*.

Bruce M. Penniman, a teacher-consultant with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project since 1994, taught English for thirty-six years at Amherst Regional High School, where he also held the positions of department chair and instructional director. In 1999, he was named Massachusetts Teacher of the Year and was a finalist for National Teacher of the Year. A past president of the New England Association of Teachers of English (NEATE), he has also edited NEATE's journal, *The Leaflet*, and the NCTE Assembly on American Literature newsletter, *This Is Just to Say*. He was a co-director of WMWP from 1994 to 2002 and its site director from 2003 to 2007. Now semiretired, he is still active in the National Writing Project, facilitating inservice workshops, co-coordinating the Massachusetts Writing Project, and serving on the State and Regional Networks Leadership Team and the Expanding Our Offerings Facilitation Team.

Kevin Hodgson teaches writing to sixth-graders in Southampton, Massachusetts. He has been part of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project since 2003, when his wife, Leslie, urged him to become part of an organization that had already informed her own career as a high school English teacher. Kevin has been the technology liaison for the Western Massachusetts Writing Project since 2004 and is a member of the WMWP Executive Board. In 2007, Kevin was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award by the New England Association of Teachers of English, and in 2003 he was a recipient of a Harold Grinspoon Award for a new teacher. In his spare time, he blogs (*http://dogtrax.edublogs.org*) and writes songs for his rock and roll band, The Sofa Kings.

Dedicated to Pat Hunter

This monograph is dedicated to the memory of Pat Hunter (1952–1999), an outstanding middle school teacher and professional development coordinator in Springfield, Massachusetts Public Schools and a founding co-director of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project. Pat's commitment to students and her deep-seated belief in teacher leadership helped form the bedrock of WMWP, and her can-do spirit informs our work to this day.

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