NWP at Work Monograph Series Up and Running

by Joe Alberts and Liz Simons

In the November-December 2001 issue of The Voice, we announced the launching of the National Writing Project at Work monograph series. Although no monographs had yet been released, it was a launching of sorts: NWP at Work authors offered a session of eight workshops on professional development at the 2001 NWP Annual Meeting, and copies of what will be the first set of monographs were distributed in draft form...all in anticipation of what was being planned for this ambitious series.

So, you might ask, what has happened with these monographs between November and now? The answer is "a whole lot." The series, in fact, while still in its formative stages in some respects, has grown to include three cohorts, each of which finds itself at a different point in its production process.

Soon to Be Released!

Cohort 1: Models of Inservice

Printed volumes of the first group of monographs will debut this spring. These information-packed, highly readable, warts-and-all narratives of four successful models of inservice will soon be available to all sites and interested readers. (Watch The Voice and E-Voice for updates on release dates and how you can get copies.)

This group of papers covers a range of interesting topics. In The Johnston Area Writing Partnership: The Capital Area Writing Project Model for Building District Capacity to Offer Quality Professional Development, Rue Pritchard, Sandra O’Berry, and Patsy Butler have written a guide for starting and sustaining an NWP satellite site in a district. From Mississippi sites, Lynette Herring-Harris and Cassandra Henshaw provide a model of how a writing project can mobilize to develop the content, then plan and administer the inservice for a new statewide initiative in The Story of SCORE: Secondary Content Opening to Reading Excellence. In Lessons from the First Four Years of the National Writing Project in Vermont, Tish McGonegal and Anne Watson offer advice on how to get professional development going at a new NWP site. And writers from the New York City Writing Project, which for over 20 years has focused on combining intensive on-site coaching with graduate seminars, share what they have learned in On-Site Consulting: New York City Writing Project. With an introduction by Marcie Wolfe, the piece includes Whole School Reform by Alan Scin and Developing Collaborative Relationships in a School Setting by Nancy Mintz.

Cohort 2: Models of Inservice from Project Outreach

Even as the first four monographs appear, the next four, based on initiatives developed as part of Project Outreach, are nearing the final draft stage. Currently moving back and forth between Basin Writing Project in Nevada are documenting The Soulside Project, an elementary school teacher group that designed and implemented a writing curriculum and assessment and put it adopted and institutionalized in the school.

Cohort 3: Summer Institute

The third NWP at Work cohort just began their work in January 2002. Writers of this group gathered at the national office in Berkeley, California, for a writing retreat organized to get their monograph work off the ground. This group, like its predecessors, spent a concentrated weekend exploring the aims of the monograph series, meeting each other and the series editors, and distilling their ideas about the chosen topic—NWP summer institutes—before heading off to their respective sites to begin their writing.

Within this cohort, one group is writing about standards, examining how they are integrated into summer institutes and how they continue to inform professional development and work at NWP sites after the summer institute. Writers on standards include Janet Swenson and Diana Mitchell of the Red Cedar Writing Project in Michigan; Laura Roop, Dick Koch, and Gail Setter of the Oakland Writing Project in Michigan; and Nancy McCracken, Anthony Manna, and Darla Wagner of the Northeast Ohio Writing Project. Groups from other sites within this cohort will consider the work that happens before the summer institute begins: recruiting, interviewing, and pre-institute meetings. Authors of this monograph are Tim Johnson of the Louisville Writing Project in Kentucky and Roger Shanley and Flora Simon of the Southern Arizona Writing Project. Joining the project later this spring, Tom Fox of the Northern California Writing Project and Linda Hanson of the Indiana Writing Project will begin work on monographs that take a comprehensive look at summer institutes.

Busy-ness as Usual

So it's business—or busy-ness—as usual for this growing monograph series. Looking at the series as a whole, it is exciting to imagine each of the parts in motion, each moving at a particular pace and all simultaneously moving...
forward. As writers in the third cohort gear up, envisioning all that their part of the project could be, writers of the second are hard at work making their part a reality. And at the far end of the continuum, writers of the first set—like many others in the network—eagerly await the release of the first of the monographs as hard evidence of everything that has gone into this exciting project to date.

*The titles cited are working titles.

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