

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Meadow Brook Musings

By John Callaghan

The idea of having a functioning newsletter for the Meadow Brook Writing Project has nagged at me for some time. The summer institute experience is so intense and so inspiring that one doesn't want it to come to an end. I've been involved in Writing Project summer institutes long enough to know that feeling- it isn't unique to any particular summer institute but is, in fact, common to almost all summer institute experiences across the nation.



John Callaghan

Yet at the end of a summer institute I always warn the teacher consultants about what I call "Post-Writing-Project-Syndrome": the teacher returns to school in the fall fired up, armed with multiple ideas and methodologies, geared up to change the curriculum post haste, and then reality hits: the kids say, "We did this writing process stuff in 4th grade and it didn't get me to write then either"; your colleagues look at you as if you are the wild-eyed fanatic who must be avoided at all costs; and your administrator tells you how your curricular ideas are awesome but there is no way the district could afford such changes. And many Writing Project fellows end up gored with the blunt horns of collegial indifference or steamrolled flat with the status quo.

I see the newsletter, therefore, as one way to stay connected with the enthusiasm and the hope the summer institute generates. The newsletter is an opportunity for teacher consultants to keep up with what is going on with their colleagues in other schools and districts, to continue to nurture the ideas they learned and experienced in the summer institute, and to share successes and failures with caring, non-judgmental peers; yes, teacher to teacher! It is also an opportunity to keep writing, to continue to experience the exchange of ideas and experiences with the written word, knowing there are real audiences "out there" for those messages.

I hope you will respond to the ideas and messages this newsletter communicates and that you will let us know what you find interesting and/or helpful. Please feel free to submit an essay, story, poem, memoir, and so forth, so that writer's ink continues to flow in your veins and that we get to experience the results. Even if you have a simple announcement or request, please send it on to us, and we will get that "news" out there for your fellow TCs to see. We welcome your suggestion and will do what we can to implement that idea. This newsletter is your vehicle to continue the stimulating ideas and conversations you initiated in your summer institute.

SUMMARY

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