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Teachers as Decision Makers:
Creating Classroom, School, and Systemwide Changes

Marcella Emberger and Clare Kruft, with Sally McNelis and Sharon Robbins

The Baltimore County Public Schools rank as the twenty-eighth largest school system in the United States, with 150 schools and over 93,000 students in grades K−12. Our system is divided into five geographic areas, serving a region covering 610 square miles of urban, suburban, and rural communities with families of diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds: farmers and 4-Hers, middle- and upper-income professionals, the unemployed from our once successful steel and manufacturing sectors, and thousands of immigrants speaking over thirty-five languages.

In 1984 our school system began its writing across the curriculum (WAC) project, which received the Center of Excellence Award from the National Council of Teachers of English in 1989. This chapter describes how and why our WAC staff development process works, the problems encountered along the way, and some methods to overcome the problems. Most important, we will show how teachers, when they are given sufficient time, can be empowered to develop their students' thinking and writing processes and through this empowerment can make positive changes in their schools, school system, and state.

Beginning the Project

In 1984 our county formed a WAC Steering Committee with representatives from across grade and curricular areas. Our superintendent asked this group to study WAC research and present recommendations

to the superintendent's staff for the development of a WAC project. This committee became the base of the WAC network that has grown to include hundreds of educators in our system.

Many of us walked into our first meeting wondering why we were serving on this committee. Vocational education teachers did not usually collaborate with English supervisors within the traditional, content-specific committees our county formed to produce curriculum. We knew that this committee was designed to promote innovation.

While we began as a group of strangers, the collegiality that developed among this group became a model for school teams as the WAC staff development project began. This core group acted as spokespersons for seminars and training sessions and developed the WAC philosophy:

- Writing fosters the development of clear thinking. The writing process is important to the thinking process.

- English teachers teach writing; other teachers use writing as one method to teach their content.

- Writing to learn activities produce first drafts, not edited final copy.

- Writing to learn activities provide an opportunity for individualized instruction.

- Writing to learn activities can be used either in place of or in addition to existing activities.

This philosophy represented a shift in perspective from a product-oriented approach to one that emphasized writing as a thinking process for all teachers across the curriculum. Once the philosophical foundation was in place, our next step was to bring the philosophy to the county. Our staff development began with a "top-down and bottom-up" approach, since successful programs need support both from those in charge of funds and from those responsible for implementation. In May 1985, we held an all-day conference, "An Introduction to WAC," for all administrators, supervisors, and board members. This program provided an overview of the research and practices as well as such workshops as "WAC in the Elementary Classroom" to address specific needs.

At the end of this conference principals were asked to apply to be part of a pilot program by submitting letters of interest. These letters included a guarantee that they had faculty members who were interested in participating and a supportive community ready to accept an inno-vative program. From the forty-two letters submitted, the superin-tendent's staff selected twelve schools to begin the project, representing each of the five geographic areas and different types of cluster partnerships: elementary/elementary; elementary/middle; elementary/

middle/high; middle/high; and elementary/middle/high/vocational.
Because schools were specially selected each year to join these clusters,
the project maintained a deliberate pace, providing time for the devel-
opment of experts within the system. This selectivity also fostered an
interest in the program. People are naturally curious about something
new; a program that wasn't mandated for everyone was new.

The two of us, Marcella and Clare, were designated as project
resource teachers. We were classroom teachers who had expertise in
the writing process, in coaching, and in demonstrating for other
teachers.

Funding issues, which are a constant problem for any staff devel-
opment project, were alleviated in 1985 when our school system received
a three-year grant for seventy-five thousand dollars per year from the
Conrad Hilton Foundation. This money was used for salaries for one
of the two project resource teachers, substitute release time for the
training sessions, funds for a Teacher Trainer Institute, and supplies
and materials. Because of the program's success in its first three years,
our funding was continued through federal block grants and staff
development funds within the school budget.

The Training Model

A well-documented model to design effective staff development
programs is the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) created by
Loucks and Zigarmi (1981). In this model, participants progress from a
level of awareness or interest in the innovation all the way through
collaboration and refocusing (see Figure 2–1).

Our training model meets the needs at each level by offering
choices at each step, giving participants a significant role in the overall
process. School involvement begins with one year of intensive staff
development for school teams. These teams of three to seven people
attend four full-day sessions, one each academic quarter. During each
session participants are involved in a number of writing to learn activities
that help them understand how the strategies work. We follow up each
training day by visiting schools, demonstrating lessons, coaching team
members, and holding conferences to discuss applications of writing to
learn strategies within each teacher's content area. At the end of this
initial year of training we help the school teams create their own three-
to-five year staff development plans to introduce and reinforce WAC
with their faculties. (See Appendix A for training timeline.)

Choice 1: Entering the Program

"Attending these sessions helped me remember what it's like to be
back in the classroom. I heard a lot from my team that helped me —
I'm a better administrator." *Mr. B., a secondary school principal*

Figure 2–1
Concerns-based Adoption Model

**Stages of Concern: Typical Expressions
of Concern About the Innovation**

	Stages of Concern	Expression of Concern
I **M** **P** **A** **C** **T**	6 Refocusing	• I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5 Collaboration	• I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4 Consequence	• How is my use affecting kids?
T **A** **S** **K**	3 Management	• I seem to be spending all my time getting material ready.
S **E** **L** **F**	2 Personal	• How will using it affect me?
	1 Informational	• I would like to know more about it.
	0 Awareness	• I am not concerned about it (the innovation).

Source: S. M. Hord, W. L. Rutherford, L. Huling-Austin, and G. E. Hall, Taking Charge of Change *(Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1987), 31.*

At the earliest stages of awareness and interest in WAC, principals choose to enter our program by writing a letter to the superintendent's staff. In doing so, they also choose to take on new roles: participating in all staff development training with their school teams, selecting team members who are outstanding teachers and who will become school leaders, creating an atmosphere for risk taking, and observing classrooms to support the change process. These new roles create a different school climate: teachers are empowered as decision makers and staff developers. They are now partners with the principal in this innovation.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"I put that teacher on the team because I thought it would be a growth experience and help her teaching." *Mrs. M., an elementary principal*

While most teachers can benefit from participation in WAC training, some principals selected teachers who were having classroom management problems. Implementing effective WAC activities can help to minimize management problems, but the WAC staff development program is not expressly designed to help these teachers. When discussing potential team members with principals, we needed to emphasize

that every team member should be capable of becoming a "teacher of teachers."

Choice 2: Changing Attitudes and Perceptions

"I appreciate the fact that I had a whole year to try these strategies, and I really appreciated your willingness to model some of the strategies in my room." *Mrs. C., a math teacher*

As teachers become involved in the WAC program, they experience the next stage of CBAM, personal concerns about their own roles in the innovation. Teachers accept new responsibilities as team members: participating in training sessions, selecting new writing to learn strategies to try in their classrooms, coaching with us and each other, and designing and leading staff development projects with their faculties. The first training session begins with clarifying attitudes and perceptions about writing. We use a personal writing history to have participants record their past experiences, especially the feelings associated with learning to write. We discuss how these experiences and feelings influence how they use writing in their classrooms. Teachers learn how past experiences have an impact on their classroom practices.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"Why do you think I became a math teacher? I hate writing." *Mrs. M., a math teacher*
"Why should I teach writing? That's the English teacher's responsibility." *Mr. P., a science teacher*

While the discussion of personal writing history usually takes a great deal of time, the time is well spent because it sets the stage for clarifying concepts, including the damage done by using writing as a punishment and understanding the differences between writing as a product and writing as thinking. Sometimes teachers' past experiences have been so negative and are so ingrained that it is difficult to change their attitudes and perceptions. However, during these initial discussions we note which teachers seem the most negative and direct our attention to trying to change their attitudes during on-site support visits. For example, during a visit to a math teacher's room, Marcella had students record their personal math histories. As the math teacher listened to and read the students' responses, she was able to identify many feelings she had expressed about writing during the personal writing history activity. This recognition helped her see how writing can be used to tap into students' thinking and open opportunities for creating more positive experiences for students.

A science teacher who had complained that his students were unable to answer essay questions ("English teachers are not doing their job") reevaluated his attitude after a lesson with his students. The demonstration lesson illustrated that one of his essay questions, "Compare and contrast diffusion, osmosis, and active transport in terms of molecular movement, energy expenditure, and types of molecules moved," required multiple levels of response. Because he was participating with his students, he had the uncomfortable task of trying to answer the question in ten minutes. He not only changed his attitude but also learned the value of writing with his students: "I think I need to write some of these myself."
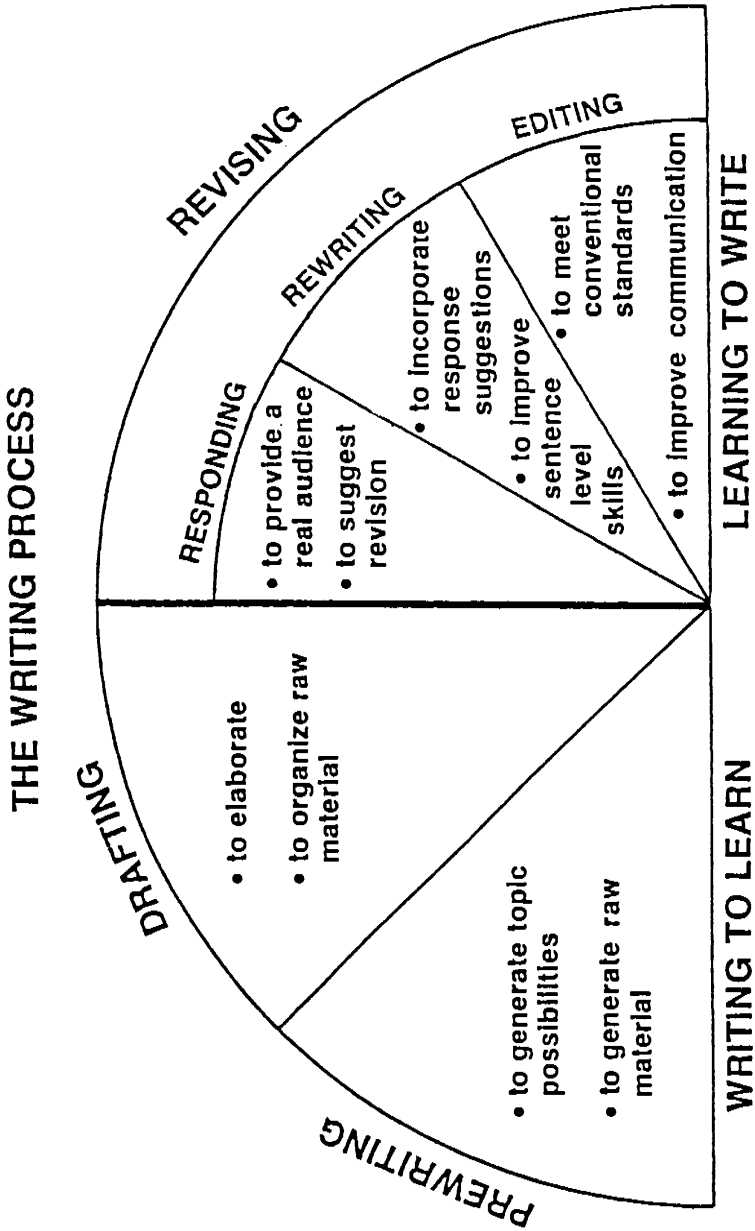
After the discussion of our personal experiences with writing, we share the "Writing Process Pie" that was created to illustrate the differences between steps in the writing process and the recursiveness of these steps (see Figure 2–2).

Choice 3: Selecting New Strategies

"I was so excited when the strategies booklet came out. My creativity was recognized. I felt like a kid again." *Mr. C., a physical education teacher*

Initially we used a list of alternative teaching activities (see Appendix B for "Taking the First Step"). Once empowered, teachers moved beyond these simple strategies to more sophisticated and integrated applications such as learning logs, student-generated graphic organizers, and metacognitive reflections. Teachers decide which strategies they want to try with their students, create classroom applications, and share ideas. In all four sessions participants have time to examine research in writing within specific content areas and to examine different applications. After the ideas are submitted, they are compiled into sharing strategies booklets, including student samples, and are reproduced for the teams. By allowing teachers the freedom to select strategies that they feel fit their teaching styles, we are acknowledging that individual differences are natural, and there is no one right way to use WAC. By providing these ideas in published booklets, we demonstrate the power of publishing. This sharing across grades and content areas stimulates creativity and allows participants to discover commonalities in thinking and writing — concepts that are the beginning of interdisciplinary teaching. In addition, these booklets are used as staff development tools as teachers who were not part of the training sessions read and discover writing to learn activities they can use with their own students.

Figure 2–2
Writing Process Pie

THE WRITING PROCESS

REVISING

EDITING

REWRITING

RESPONDING

RESPONDING
- to provide a real audience
- to suggest revision

- to Incorporate response suggestions
- to Improve sentence level skills
- to meet conventional standards
- to Improve communication

LEARNING TO WRITE

DRAFTING
- to elaborate
- to organize raw material

PREWRITING
- to generate topic possibilities
- to generate raw material

WRITING TO LEARN

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"Why are these elementary teachers here?" *secondary teachers*
"Why are these secondary people here?" *elementary teachers*

Our training days include teams from elementary, middle, and high schools. After they got to know each other, most participants found the cross-curricular and cross-grade level sessions an enriching experience. But we had to overcome the stereotypes of elementary and secondary educators that are often unspoken, yet underlie much of our thinking about each group: "Elementary teachers only care about the kids and secondary teachers only care about their content." Developing a respect for the work done by teachers at all levels and in all content areas was a welcome by-product of the WAC staff development sessions. This respect grew naturally as the teachers shared their ideas. For example, Joanne, a third-grade teacher, created many applications for cognitive maps, and when she shared her ideas the secondary participants copied them down. Her comment at the end of the session was, "I didn't believe that I had ideas high school people could use."

Choice 4: Selecting Appropriate Support

"I'd like you to watch me teach this. I'm not sure if I'm giving them enough time during think-pair-share activities." *Mrs. M., an elementary teacher*

Team members at this stage are concerned with managing the innovation in their classrooms and seeing how WAC will affect student learning. They select the type of support they want from the two resource teachers: a conference to discuss an application, demonstration of a technique, or team teaching and coaching. Teachers are introduced to the concept of coaching on the second staff development day (see Appendix A for training timeline). We use a diagram that is designed to show the steps from sharing ideas informally to collegial coaching. Our diagram uses a picture of an alligator to mark the step of inviting someone in to watch a lesson, as this always connotes being observed and evaluated. In this project it is particularly frightening because teachers are using the writing to learn strategies for the first time. However, they quickly develop a trust in the strategies and themselves as they experience the power of increased thinking and communication skills that the WAC activities unlock. As team members gain trust, they begin coaching us and each other on the WAC strategies. This successful coaching builds the self-confidence that allows teachers to become effective staff developers for others in their schools.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"This will never work with my basic or special education students."
Mr. K., a secondary teacher

We work in special education classrooms where teachers have
created multiple adaptations for their students. The expertise and
energy of the special educators helped the project throughout the
school system. After one team-teaching session, we keyed in on an
extremely effective strategy that one teacher of learning disabled
adolescents was using to help her reluctant writers. She just stamped
each blank paper with the word "DRAFT" before asking the students
to do any writing on the paper. The risk-free environment that this
simple strategy created worked wonders, and we shared this and other
adaptations with elementary and secondary teachers.

Choice 5: Creating a School Plan

"You mean that we can create our own plan for our school?" "What if
we decide to just keep coaching each other?" "Do we have to have a
faculty meeting?" *team members*

On the fourth staff development day teams begin to develop long-
range plans for their schools. Team members discuss a range of possible
directions: continuing coaching partnerships with fellow team members,
forming new coaching partnerships with faculty members who had not
been team members but had expressed interest in learning about WAC,
or planning open house demonstrations so that members of their faculties
could watch WAC applications. After the first year of staff develop-
ment we were able to use the experience of first-year team members to
help our new teams. Although school teams share ideas, all school
plans are unique.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"I'm sorry to tell you that half our team members won't be in our
school next year." *Mr. D., a team leader*

Once teams have their plans in place by the end of each school
year, we are faced with the "network nightmare." Transfers, illness,
promotions, and retirements of administrators and WAC team members
put a strain on the long-range plans of every school. We are still
struggling with this problem and have begun a computer network
system that we hope will help us keep track of the expertise people
take with them when they move to new positions.

Choice 6: Creating Content-Based Staff Development

"What are people who are the experts in my subject area thinking
about WAC?" *Mr. S., a foreign language teacher*

As teachers trained in WAC move throughout the county, they need a stronger network, especially within their own disciplines. Therefore, we plan WAC conferences with a team of teachers from the curricular office and the curricular supervisors. Offices reflect the individuality of the subject just as each school plan reflects the individual needs of each faculty. The Office of Foreign Language held a conference on April 21, 1988, that featured June Phillips of the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute as a keynote speaker. Her keynote speech, "Critical Thinking or Trivial Pursuits," was followed by small-group sessions led by foreign language teachers who were WAC team members at their schools.

The English office selected coaching as its theme and has held coaching conferences every year for five years in order to institutionalize the concept. Each year participants receive information on coaching, and coaching partners attend demonstrations selected from a variety of sessions, each focusing on a different aspect of writing. These content-specific conferences have a rippling effect, influencing changes many years after they occur. The project that Sally McNelis and Sharon Robbins describe below, for example, had that kind of impact.

Sally McNelis, English department chair, and Sharon Robbins, Spanish teacher, have been coaching each other for two years at Golden Ring Middle School, a school located in a working-class neighborhood. Sally has learned that "in order for coaching to be successful, each partner must have unassigned time to enter the classroom of the other partner and be an on-the-spot observer as well as coach in the planning stage. This is a tremendous time commitment, and when matched with the departmental responsibilities and interdisciplinary team processes, it can at times be perceived as an overload."

Sally and Sharon have administrative support for their partnership, which combines coaching and the use of learning logs — a way of keeping track of what and how students are learning. Logs are marvelous tools for finding out what we know, and what we need to know. They are organizers and great morale boosts for the students who do not know what they think until they write it down:

> "I like using learning logs in English and Spanish classes because I am learning to express myself in more detail and explain what I am learning. Usually I have a real audience, either one of my classmates, or my mom, who wishes she had done things like this when she was in school." *Mike J.*

All eighth graders are part of the team, and parental involvement is a key factor, as students and parents communicate about the two subjects in the student log. The process involves Sally and Sharon coaching one another as they prepare at least one activity a week in which students use learning logs; attending the class during which the logs are used and coaching each other on clarity, purpose, and

implementation; introducing various uses for learning logs in both classes; encouraging parental response to entries as well as entries originated by parents; coaching each other on responses to log entries and student-to-student responses; evaluating the use of learning logs to help students write to learn; sharing their project with Golden Ring staff, English department chairs, and foreign language department chairs to encourage duplication.

In the following samples Sharon Robbins had just given the assignment, "*una persona interesante*," and students were to complete a log entry in which they explained in their own words what they understood about the task and began to define the steps they would take to complete it.

> *Juan (John)*: Oh, no! Another long range assignment, and I am so bad at deciding what to do and getting down to it at all. By the end of the week, I need to interview a person I consider to be a role model ... and I don't have anyone like that ... and prepare an article for the next issue of an imaginary newspaper. If I know Señorita Robbins, she will want to publish this stuff. She gets too excited.
>
> First, I'll come up with some good questions. Then, I will ask my dad for an idea of some person to interview who will give me some good stuff. Maybe after I do my questions, Domingo will tell me if they are good or not. He always has good ideas. Here goes. ¿Quién es usted? ¿Cuantos años tiene usted? ¿Cuantas personas hay en su familia? ¿Quién es tu persona favorita en tu familia? ¿Cuál es tu programa favorita en la televisión? ¿Cuál es tu deporte favorito?
>
> Boring! Domingo looks like he is on a roll. I am going to trade this entry for his and see if he can help me.
>
> *Domingo's response*: Good start, buddy. I'm glad you asked me to look at your entry, cause I needed some of your stuff for my questions. Have you thought about interviewing your uncle who works at Westinghouse? I think you talk about him alot, so should be able to call him up and do this assignment. I am going to use your last two questions and think you should add one like ¿Cuál es tu grupo de música favorito? or ¿Qué estación de radio te gusta?
>
> *Juan's home assignment*: Domingo and I came up with pretty neat questions yesterday, so now I need to get started. Maybe Mom will read my entry yesterday and give me some help. I sure hope she doesn't think I am having her do my work like she said before. Here goes.
>
> Dear Mom,
>
> When you get time before Sunday night, would you please read my entry and Domingo's response on page 17 and see if you can help me decide about other questions and tell me who to interview. Dad may have an idea, but he will be gone until Monday, won't he? Write back soon.
>
> > Your star son,
> > Juan

Juan's mother's response:

Dear John,

I just found this entry and am glad that I did before the assignment is due. Please hand these things to me so that they do not get lost on my desk.

I think your assignment is interesting, but you know, I can't read most of your questions. Read them to me. I think you should take James's [Domingo] suggestion and call Uncle Harris tonight. You can ask your questions on the telephone and may even want to use the extension with a tape recorder set up to get his full answers. You know how he is when he gets going!

Dad will be home tomorrow and will make time to help you with your writing assignment. I am glad we are able to be part of this. I think it is good that you get so much help from your classmates and adults at home. I hope your interview gets printed in the newspaper.

Mom

Sharon Robbins's response: I read all your entries to check the process you have used in completing the interview assignment. You are right, by the way. I am going to actually make a newspaper with some of the interviews.

Be careful to listen to your mother's advice and put your source-book in her hands. It would be a disaster if this got lost!

Your writing is due Tuesday, January 21. What do you need to do yet? Did you revise any of your questions as you talked to your uncle? Will Domingo assist you with your draft?

Sharon Robbins sums up how she feels about the project: "Time is a real problem. But the hook for me was the added interest students developed in studying the Spanish culture, knowing that instead of fill-in-the-blanks and true-or-false exercises, they would be working with writing, using sourcebook entries back and forth to each other, or writing about the history and culture of Spain for an adult audience at home, who would then respond with comments and questions requiring additional research."

Student Lynn L. summarizes part of the process and her perception of its value: "We got our sourcebooks out yesterday and described how we were going to study for our unit test in Spanish class. When we finish the test on Friday, we will go back to that entry and talk about how we feel about the test and how we did on it. If Miss Robbins and Miss McNelis do what they did before, we will add another entry when the test is returned. I am learning about English and Spanish and about myself."

Choice 7: Empowering Teachers Through New Roles: Teacher Trainers

"I love the fact that I can do both. As a Teacher Trainer I can still have my students but I can also work as a staff developer." *Mrs. M., a teacher trainer*

The concept of using teachers as staff developers has been effectively used to support writing instruction by the National Writing Project. Teacher-consultants from the Maryland Writing Project (MWP) are valuable as additional resources for our staff development. When our WAC program began, we hired MWP teacher-consultants to be instructors and guest presenters at in-service courses we sponsored to help teachers understand writing to learn. During 1986 we designed our own training program for teacher trainers. Teachers develop presentations based on their successful classroom practices and present material, coach, and team teach with other teachers. They design and polish their presentations during a one-week summer workshop for which they are paid. Because the teacher trainers are experts in their disciplines and in using writing to learn activities, they can convince other teachers to try the innovative practices. Teacher trainers in the field of music, Barbara Huesman and Martha McCoy share their applications of student note taking using cognitive mapping to list characteristics of operas, oratorios, or other musical performances. Content-based applications like these enable other teachers to generate their own ideas more quickly. Teacher trainer presentations are one of the options that schools and offices use as they design staff development plans.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"I hate to say no, but I just can't leave my kids one more time this year." *Mrs. G., a teacher trainer*

A major problem is overuse of presenters. We hold many staff development sessions during the school day, using substitutes or closing schools early to release teachers and our teacher trainers. The computer network we designed to help us keep track of team members will also help us track information on staff development presentations: the presenter and current assignment, the types of presentations, and the dates the presenter has been scheduled to work in other schools.

Choice 8: Empowering Teachers Through New Roles: Teacher-Researchers

"By questioning, observing, documenting, and analyzing, teachers create learning communities where teacher and students are both engaging in intellectual stretching." (Copper 1991)

The teacher-researchers led the way in working through CBAM's top level of concern in refocusing the WAC innovations through the various research projects they are conducting. We held a seminar in 1986 to introduce the concept of teacher research to interested county

professionals. Our speakers included a member of our county's Office of Research and Evaluation, and Sally McNelis who was working on a teacher research project with the Maryland Writing Project involving peer response groups. After the seminar participants were invited to apply to a Teacher Research Institute held that summer. Teachers submit a hypothesis, samples of students' work, or ideas from their teaching journals. The Teacher Research Institutes have been held every summer, and members have developed a collegial atmosphere that is maintained throughout the school year by after-school meetings where participants share works in progress. While publishing is not the main goal of our group, we do celebrate when members are accepted for publication in such journals as *The Reading Teacher*, *School Arts*, *TEAM Magazine*, *Principal*, *Middle Years*, *Journal of Staff Development*, and *Learning*. We have celebrated more than seventy times!

Researchers' topics are widely varied: a cosmetology teacher investigated how cognitive mapping increased student learning when it is used to record notes from a textbook, and a kindergarten teacher wired her room as a radio station, developed a "DJ Talk Show Station," and recorded the students' interaction to determine if the level of questioning increased. These innovative practices, which begin with writing to learn strategies, focus teachers on assessing their classroom practices. By experimenting with writing to learn strategies and reflecting on the student learning that they see, these teacher-researchers are engaged in constant, formative assessment to improve their teaching practices.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

"We need more time to work together." *Baltimore County public school teacher-researchers*

During the 1990 Summer Institute for Teacher-Researchers we discussed the problem of never having enough reflection time to sort through data and observations of student progress in writing and thinking during the school year. We designed a short-term solution, a release-time form that allows teacher-researchers to decide for themselves which full day or two half days during the school year would be best for them. They then acquire a substitute and take release time to gather and reflect on their research.

State Assessments and WAC

We have also gained recognition for WAC by drawing direct connections between success in WAC and success on accountability testing of students throughout the state of Maryland. In 1982 the Maryland State

Department of Education (MSDE) introduced functional tests to ensure that all students throughout the state could meet minimum competencies in various content areas before they graduated from high school. We trained teachers to use WAC strategies to enable students to learn the information they needed to be successful on these tests.

In 1990, MSDE introduced the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP), which is founded on site-based management principles and outcome-based student performance. The outcome-based student performance guidelines include new tests, designed by teachers in our state, to assess students' abilities to apply integrated content knowledge in language arts, reading, math, social studies, and science. These tests, based on the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development's framework outlined in *Dimensions of Thinking*, assess how well students can apply knowledge in various curricular areas. There are few traditional test questions: multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, or true and false. Most of the questions require students to write, either short, focused answers or more extended explanations and narratives, including metacognitive responses: "Explain how you figured out this math problem." The math, reading, and language arts tests, administered for the first time to students in grades three, five, and eight in May 1991 were scored by teachers who had been trained to use holistic scoring grids. Additional tests in social studies and science for these grades were given in May 1992. An eleventh-grade interdisciplinary test was given in 1993. These tests have created a renewed interest in WAC. While our system provides WAC materials, we emphasize that WAC is a philosophy, and needs to be approached as such for teachers to adopt WAC practices. To promote successful change, schools need to consider systematic models like CBAM.

To ensure that innovative practices like WAC are implemented, MSDE educators recognize the need to reevaluate how we assess student learning, and they know that they are on the cutting edge of new assessment measures. Being on the cutting edge has caused mixed reactions among educators in our state. Some fear that these new tests will drive instruction and require too much of teachers and students, while others, particularly those teachers who have been trained to use WAC, reported that their students "felt confident" and enjoyed "this new kind of test." The differences in attitudes may be attributed to the type of training educators have had in WAC.

Public Relations Issues

Developing and sustaining momentum for WAC innovations is crucial. In order to keep WAC in people's minds, we continually seek avenues

for publicizing its significant contributions to education in our district.

Opportunities inside the school system include publishing an annual journal entitled *Teacher to Teacher* that contains articles about classroom strategies and is distributed to all schools and offices in our system; presenting WAC concepts at PTA meetings and curriculum nights; developing a picture display of the writing process that we circulate in our county's courthouse and various schools and offices; and creating short television and interactive video programs about WAC on our county's cable television station. Other publicity includes articles in community newspapers and in our major newspaper, *The Sun*, about WAC programs and their effects on teachers and students. Since our program was awarded the NCTE Center of Excellence award, we have had additional opportunities, hosting visitors from across the country.

Freeing Voices

Staff development can change attitudes and practices if the program is designed to allow the time for change and if it empowers teachers by providing opportunities for changing their role in the classroom, in the school, and throughout the school system. WAC is powerful because the strategies free the personal voices of students, as we saw in the sourcebooks of Sharon Robbins and Sally McNelis's students. It is these student voices that have tremendous power to change teachers' attitudes and practices.

Appendix A
Baltimore County Public Schools: Staff Development Training Timeline

1983–1984:   WAC Steering Committee formed
May 1984:   Spring Conference introduces WAC to county leadership
1985–1986:   School Teams begin participating in Staff Development Project

Day/Participants	Purpose
Day #1	Introduce the writing process
(1st quarter)	Discuss applications (research on
Elementary (3 or more)	process and content-specific lessons)
Middle (5 or more)	Prepare for on-site support
High (7 or more)	

Following day #1: Trainers visit school and provide on-site support for team members — coaching, team teaching, conferences

Day #2   Share applications
(2nd quarter)   Introduce peer response/revision
                              strategies
                              Plan for new applications
                              Introduce coaching/select coaching
                              partners

Following day #2: Trainers visit school and provide on-site support
for team members — coaching, team teaching, conferences

Day #3   Share applications
(3rd quarter)   Plan for new applications with
                              coaching partners
                              Introduce adult learning theory

Following day #3: Trainers visit school and provide on-site support
for team members — coaching, team teaching, conferences

Day #4   Share applications
(4th quarter)   Plan with coaching partners
                              Select and attend Teacher Trainer
                              presentations
                              Draft a School Plan for School-wide
                              implementation

Following day #4: Trainers visit school and provide on-site support
for team members — coaching, team teaching, conferences

Years 2, 3, 4, and 5, schools refine and develop implementation plans
to inservice faculties.

Summers 1986–1992: Teacher Trainer Workshops
Summers 1989–1992: Teacher-Researcher Workshops

Appendix B
Taking the First Step: Writing to Learn

Short, focused writing activities are a good place to begin incorporating writing
to learn activities. Although some of these writing pieces might be revised to
produce final copy, many make use of writing as a learning tool without going
beyond a first draft.

IN PLACE OF explaining the   TRY having students list all they
objectives for a new unit   know about the topic to involve
                                    them in establishing unit
                                    objectives.
IN PLACE OF opening class   TRY opening class with a
with a statement of the objective   question, to be answered in
                                    writing at the end of class.

IN PLACE OF reviewing yesterday's class by leading a discussion

TRY asking each student, in one minute, to write down a question based on yesterday's lesson. Use these questions to lead the discussion.

IN PLACE OF using a drill to begin class

TRY having each student prepare a single drill item.

IN PLACE OF asking questions about what the students have studied

TRY giving answers and asking students to create the questions.

IN PLACE OF giving students a problem to be solved

TRY giving the students a situation and asking them to create the problem.

IN PLACE OF giving directions for a project

TRY showing students the finished product and having them list the materials and procedures they think they would use to complete the project.

IN PLACE OF moving right into discussion from a film, story, article, or chapter

TRY giving students a few minutes to jot down reactions or answers to a central question.

IN PLACE OF writing guide questions or fill-in-the-blanks to guide reading

TRY reading the title, subtitle, or opening paragraph and asking students to write several questions they would expect to have answered as they read.

IN PLACE OF asking students to fill out a worksheet about the major concepts of a lesson

TRY webbing or charting with the students to create a study guide.

IN PLACE OF asking students to take factual notes

TRY asking students to write a first person account using the facts.

IN PLACE OF writing quiz or test items yourself

TRY showing students how to do it, and using their items to create the test (essay, multiple choice, true/false).

References

Copper, Linda R. 1991. "Teachers as Researchers." *Kappa Delta Pi Record* (Summer): 115–17.

Marzano, Robert et al. 1988. *Dimensions of Thinking.* Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.