

Field Notes - Volume 8, Number 1

West Tennessee Writing Project Fall 1999

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Writing Club

by Sheryl Alford

"I missed the first meeting can I come next time?" Meagan asked.

"Sure," I replied.

I have started a writing club for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Dresden Middle School. I was inspired to do this by one of my fellow participants in the summer '99 WTWP writing institute. I knew that I would miss the writing and the social interaction that I experienced in the West Tennessee Writing Project. I wanted to share my enthusiasm for writing with my students. I am the librarian at the middle school, but I had taught Language Arts for seven years. I do not miss the paper work, but I do miss helping my students connect to writing.

The excitement generated by the writing club has been wonderful. I had about seventy students register for the club. When we had our first structured meeting I did a mini literate life history with them.

I asked them about twenty five questions. The questions ranged from what is your favorite possession to who do you admire the most.

Then I had them select one of the topics generated by their responses to the questions I

had asked. We took that topic and then we developed it a little by filling in details about sights, sounds, feeling, and smells that might have been associated with the topic. Then I had the students write for 5 minutes on that topic.

The topics included nintendos, tramopolines, fish, sprained ankles, house cleaning, sleepovers, puppies, and cloning.

They really enjoyed the activity. Some of the responses were:

"Cool."

"Neat."

"Wow, this is great."

Those are pretty heady comments for Middle School students to make about the topic of writing.

I was expecting some of the students to be disruptive, but they were too absorbed in their task to even fidget.

I'm writing with them. It's great. I have to keep it up because you can't lose face with middle school students. It keeps me focused and on task. I would not be writing if I was not sponsoring the club.

I'm expecting great things from my students. Several of them have brought stories to me to read. One has even dropped by my house with a story. (She is a neighbor.) I know that the enthusiasm will die down as the year progresses, but I'm thrilled. They are writing.

Sheryl Alford, a teacher consultant of WTWP, is the media specialist at Dresden Middle School.

Events coming up

March 2000: Annual writing workshop of the Tennessee Writers Alliance. Be looking for brochures and newspaper announcements.

April 28, 2000: "S'mores: S'more Reading, S'more Writing"

3rd Annual Workshop for teachers K-8 Sponsored by the West Tennessee Writing Project and The Benton County School System and to be held at Briarwood School in Camden.

This workshop is for teachers grades K-8. The keynote speaker will be Suellen Alfred, associate professor of education at Tennessee Tech and associate editor of the Tennessee English Journal. Suellen will be sharing practical, comfortable writing approaches that participants will be able to take back to their classrooms and use. In addition, Teacher Consultants of the West Tennessee Writing Project will lead breakout sessions in which

they demonstrate their best writing activities. Look for registration forms in your school in February. Cost will be \$10 to include morning snacks, lunch, and a certificate. This workshop has been approved by many counties for inservice credit. Check with supervisors of instruction.

June 5-29, 2000 Intensive summer writing institute of the West Tennessee Writing Project, for selected teachers, at UTM. Applications will be available from WTWP Jan. 3.

August 12, 2000: "Writing and Standards, Doing Two Things at Once." Annual 9-3 p.m. Saturday workshop for K-12 teachers, to be held at The University of Tennessee Agricultural Research, Extension, and Public Service Center at 605 Airways Boulevard, Jackson. The program includes interactive demonstrations by Teacher Consultants of the West Tennessee Writing Project, box lunch, and Literacy First, distributor of books for teachers from publishers including the National Council of Teachers of English, Heinemann, Christopher Gordon, and Stenhouse. Be looking for information from supervisors in February, registration and program brochures in late April, and announcements in the newspaper in spring and summer.

Teacher Consultants Make a Difference

Joy Deming, WTWP Teacher Consultant and third grade teacher at Ripley Elementary, has received a second Bank of Ripley mini-grant for school year 1998-99. Joy writes: "This \$290 grant allowed me to compile and publish a writing anthology of my third graders' creative work. The money allowed me to buy paper, binding system, and spell checker. Each student received a copy of the anthology and a copy was donated to our school library. The title was "Writing Pioneers." This project involved twenty third graders, regular and Title I students. Joy also has received a third grant to support the project, "Star Book Critics." Writes Joy: "Students will read, star, and write critiques of books read. Then, students will record parts of books for students to use in our 'listening library' center. Star books will have titles and stars in the reading center as a guide for students in book selections. Regular education and resource students will participate. Nineteen students will benefit. Parent volunteers will participate on days that we 'showcase' our center for other grades and adults--to see us in action."

An essay by Richard Mann, WTWP Teacher Consultant and English and journalism teacher at Jackson South Side High School, has been published in the Quarterly of the National Writing Project, Spring 1999. "Just Give Me a Chance," began as writing in the 1998 intensive summer writing institute and was first published in a slightly different version in the Fall 1998 issue of Field Notes.

Essays by Glenda Arant, WTWP teacher consultant and reading teacher at Martin Middle School, and Margrethe Ahlschwede, director of the West Tennessee Writing Project, have been selected for reprinting in the 10th anniversary edition of the Tennessee English Journal, the journal of the Tennessee Council of Teachers of English. Glenda Arant's

essay, "Pumping Lead: Students Build and Exercise Their Writing Muscles," originally was published in Vol. 7, 1996, and Margrethe Ahlschwede's essay, "Signs in the Dark: Students Who Teacher Their Teacher," originally appeared in Vol. 5, 1994.

Judith Russell's article "A Writing Treasure Trove" appears in the latest Ideas Plus: A Collection of Practical Teaching Ideas: Book 17, 1999. Ideas Plus is published periodically by the National Council of Teachers of English. Judy, a teacher consultant of the West Tennessee Writing Project, teaches at Page Middle School, Franklin.

Let's Make a Deal

by

Sheryl Alford

"Mama, is **** a cussword?"

How come they always ask these questions when I'm going sixty-five?

"Yes, it is."

"I thought so. Robert said it on the playground today and I thought it sounded like it would be a cuss word."

Good old Robert, he keeps us supplied with life lesson material.

"It is and I don't want to hear you say it. Understand?"

"O.K., but Mama how will I know what words are cuss words and what aren't?"

"Well, Sarah, let's see. I tell you what. I'll make a deal with you. The first time you say a cuss word you won't get in trouble. I'll tell you it is a cuss word and then if you say it again you will be punished. Does that sound fair?"

"Yes, Mama. I want to know so I won't get in trouble."

"Hey, Mama?"

"Yes, Anne?"

"I know the a word, the s word, and the b word, but I don't say them."

"I'm proud you don't say them."

"Mama?"

"Yes, Sarah?"

"Why don't you just tell us all the cuss words you know and then we will know all of them, but we won't say them. How's that?"

"No, we will stick to our deal."

"Why?"

"Well, I might not know all the words that you could hear and have questions about. So, let's just stick to our deal."

I have a pretty long list of words running through my head right now and I would like to share them all with Robert. But, he probably already knows them all and several more that I haven't ever heard. He has an impressive repertoire for a second grader.

"So, I can say the word once and not get in trouble?"

"Yes, Sarah."

"O. K., Mama. What's for supper?"

"I don't know."

"Can I help cook?"

"Sure."

Some people live life in the fast lane. I have to survive the conversation zone.

Sheryl Alford, a teacher consultant of WTWP, is the media specialist at Dresden Middle School.

Supporting the West Tennessee Writing Project

The West Tennessee Writing Project welcomes financial contributions to its program. Private giving is coordinated through the UTM Office of Development and the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association Annual Giving Program. All gifts are acknowledged and gifts of \$100 or more qualify contributors for gift recognition club membership. Checks may be made payable to The University of Tennessee at Martin and designated for the UTM West Tennessee Writing Project. Gifts may be tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Mailing address: UTM Development Office 314 Administration Building The University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, Tennessee

38238-5028.

About WTWP

The West Tennessee Writing Project is a program of professional development for teachers who believe in the power of writing as a learning tool and as an approach to implementing standards across the curriculum. Located in the Department of English at The University of Tennessee at Martin, WTWP is one of 160 sites of the National Writing Project. WTWP was established in March 1993 and currently is the only affiliate site of the National Writing Project in Tennessee. The purpose of WTWP is to improve writing and writing instruction in our schools. It operates under these principles:

writing will improve as writing instruction improves the best teacher of a teacher is another teacher, and teachers of writing must be writers themselves.

The heart of WTWP is its annual intensive summer writing institutes held on the UT Martin campus for selected West Tennessee teachers, all subject-matter areas, all grades K-12. The institute is offered as a graduate seminar, English 700-701. To receive an application for the 2000 institute, write or call the WTWP office in the Department of English at UTM. WTWP extends its work beyond the summer institutes by contracting with area schools and systems for inservice. WTWP Teacher Consultants--the teachers who have participated in annual summer institutes--present interactive demonstrations that work toward more and better writing in school. WTWP also plans and carries out other programs of professional development for West Tennessee teachers, including annual workshops for K-8 teachers, each April in Camden, and the annual August workshop, in the year 2000 at the UT Ag Center in Jackson.

WTWP is supported by grants from the National Writing Project, matching funds from The University of Tennessee at Martin, and for the last four years, by Eisenhower Professional Development Funds administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

The director of WTWP is Margrethe Ahlschwede, associate professor of English at UT Martin. Co-directors are Paula Cox, 3rd grade teacher at Camden's Briarwood School, and Mary Lou Marks, librarian at Camden Central High School. WTWP Advisory Council members include the project directors and Pat Johnson, Jackson Trinity Christian Academy; Margie Lowe, Jackson Northeast Middle School; Richard Mann, Jackson South Side High School; and Angela Russell, Ripley High School. For further information contact: WTWP, Department of English, UT Martin, 38238; (901) 587-7290, (901) 587-7300 or e-mail: margahls@utm.edu Or check the WTWP website: <http://fmc.utm.edu/~mahlschw/Wtwp0.htm> or access through UT Martin home page: www.edu.utm to Academic Programs, scroll down to WTWP

A Teacher's Story

by Andrea Russell

I have a thug in my class. He knows he is a thug. I know he is a thug. Everyone knows he is a thug. In the midst of all this knowledge, no one seems to know what to do with a thug. I had never even met a thug. Do I scream and shout? Try to force him to conform? Be a b---- to him as was suggested by one of the supervisors? What would I do with a thug? I had encountered Carl on other occasions. He had been in a class when I had watched it for another teacher. He was not a very big kid, as you might have thought. He had curly, wet-look hair that just brushed his collar. A couple of earrings shined brightly in one of his ears. The most distinctive feature about Carl was his smile, for two reasons. One was, despite being a thug, he had a really great smile. The other was his gold-covered front tooth, emblazoned with the capital letter "C." I secretly hoped that Carl would never be in one of my classes. I cringed when the second-semester class rosters were handed out and there was his name. What would I do with a thug? Consulting the only resource available, I went to guidance and checked his permanent record. Slow learner, slow reader, below average, held back two times, socially promoted, failure to pass competency test. These were some of the things I found. He could not or did not want to do the work. Now he was assigned to my class. My Southern Baptist, private school education had not prepared me for this. What do I do with a thug? As the first day of class began, Carl came into my room, late of course. He did not have anything with him. No paper. No pencil. No desire to be there. I finally realized that he was simply marking time until his eighteenth birthday next year. Then he could quit school and would not be forced to come to this "bogus" place any more. What do I do with a thug? The semester began. Textbooks were passed out and assigned. Carl never took his book out of the room. He did not have any intention of reading or studying so why carry the book out. He just left it there. He never brought anything to class. I gave him paper and something to write with everyday. About the second week of school, I took a leftover notebook, filled it with paper and handouts, and gave it to Carl. There was a slight glimmer in his eye. He left it in my class with the textbook he never took out. What do I do with a thug? As the semester proceeded, Carl was not really a discipline problem. Just like other teenagers, he did occasionally talk too much or would get too loud about the wrong things during class and group work. Mostly, he just sat and did nothing, or slept. He did work for me when he sat right by me at my desk or lectern. He would look at me with questioning eyes to see if his work were correct. I praised him when it was and helped him when it was not. When someone made fun of his sitting near the teacher, he stopped. Stopped sitting by me for help and stopped doing the little work he was capable of. When I went to him while walking among the other students, it was not the same. What do I do with a thug? Between his skipping school and being suspended, Carl did not attend enough days of school to get credit for the semester, even if he did do the work. He knew the routine. I tried conferencing with him. Talking to guidance, his other teachers and even the principal, gave the same results.

"He's a lost cause."

"He'll never amount to anything."

"He just can't do the work."

"He'll end up as someone's girlfriend at Fort Pillow before he grows up."

What do I do with a thug?

The resounding question followed me all day and usually into the night. I worried about Carl. Did he have a place to sleep or enough to eat? Who took care of him or was he on his own? What could I do for him? What do I do for a thug?

Mid-spring I heard a song on the radio. One line in it says something like, "In the end, only kindness matters." Carl immediately came to mind. Academically for Carl, it was all over in my class. I had tried and worried. He had not. He had not done classwork, homework or projects. He had not attended school, or he slept when he did come. I decided that I could not change him or his situation. He may not ever be able to tell a gerund from a participle, or a sonnet from a shape poem. What do I do for a thug?

What did I do for my thug? My final decision was I could just be kind to him. In the grand scheme of school, I realize that this may be a risky statement. However, in the grand scheme of life, how else could I do better by Carl? I might be the kindest person that he encounters all day. I can only imagine a bad home life where no one there is nice to him. I may not have taught him anything. He may not have learned anything about grammar or literature.

On the final day of school, Carl was the last to leave the classroom. I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Carl, you know I tried to do the best I could for you. You know what you did for yourself."

"Yes, Ma'am. I know.

"You know what is going to show up on your report card, don't you?"

"Yes, Ma'am. I know."

"Maybe if you're in my class next year, we can do a better job. OK?"

"Yes, Ma'am. Have a good summer, Mrs. Russell." "Thank you, Carl. You have a good summer, too."

Andrea Russell, a teacher consultant of WTWP, teaches ninth graders at Ripley High School.

Teacher

by Richard Mann

In *The Miracle Worker*, Helen Keller lives her life in a cage built from the fear and ignorance of her family. Eventually, her father agrees to allow someone to come and attempt to reach through. The stranger arrives and begins the struggle both physically and mentally to help the blind, deaf, and mute Helen overcome her problems by teaching her sign language. Once Helen realizes the relationship between the palmed signs and individual objects, she immediately wants to know whom the woman is who has reached through to her. The woman simply fingerspells "t-e-a-c-h-e-r."

Although not in as dramatic a fashion, I have a teacher who has reached through to me. He saw to it that I started the learning process positively. He hovered near to encourage and sometimes demanded that I move forward, and now, five years into my teaching career, he is still a catalyst in the constant reformation of my teaching philosophy. He is my father.

Daddy expected me to be a strong student, and he did everything in his power to assure that I would be. While I was in the first grade, he discovered that I was not learning to read. After a conference with my teacher gave him little assurance that I would progress under her instruction, he determined that I would learn to read at home. As a high school English teacher my father frequently taught remedial reading classes. He borrowed some materials from his school, and my mother taught me to read. The two of them succeeded not only in teaching me to read, but also in creating in me a desire to read. I read everything I could find. I now realize that it was that reading foundation that began propelling me to where I am.

Some years later in my academic adventures, I encountered my father in a more formal manner. My eighth grade English teacher recommended that I be placed in honors English in high school, and since my father was the only ninth grade honors English teacher, I would have him.

In many ways I faced my father's class just as other students did: I was scared. Mr. Mann's reputation as a freshman English teacher reached ominously down into the junior high classrooms. He was thought to be both strict and rigid. No one would receive any breaks from him. As a result, "Please don't let me get Mr. Mann," was a common prayer. When those prayer requests were not granted, many others went up in their place.

Year's end found me with an "A" in English, and I can honestly say that the grade was not difficult for me to earn. But as I reflect back on those days, I discover that the ease of my success was not based solely on my father's strong classroom instruction but on the fifteen years of individual, informal instruction I received at home. Just as Helen lived in total immersion with her teacher, I lived in total immersion with mine.

Helen's leap into learning did not come easily or quickly. Her teacher struggled both physically and emotionally to help Helen grasp that first word. My father, now retired for eleven years, has just reached me, and he has done that through his writing. He published a book for our family that includes both his works and those of his mother. In reviewing the book recently I discovered his section devoted to teaching. That was when I learned about the real Mr. Mann, and my teaching philosophies began to transform.

In one story my father tells of his most unforgettable student--Leroy, a Native American of the Cocopah tribe. Leroy was courteous and willing to listen, but he had great difficulty grasping the mechanics of the English language because there was little that corresponded to his native tongue. Mostly, he remained silent.

One day, though, my father was captivated by one of Leroy's themes. In absorbing the strong hope and emotion of the ideal father-son relationship portrayed in the piece, my father simply overlooked the grammatical errors. A conference with Leroy led to even more pieces, all filled with strong imagery and symbolism--the language of his people. Leroy eventually voiced that language through publication.

In recalling Leroy's story my father shared this idea: ". . . he is a constant reminder that many a silent, impassive, and courteous student to whom grammar is utter confusion has a potential for self-realization if it is encouraged." What a lesson. How many students enter my classroom each year with a story to tell but are hindered by traditionalism in the classroom? I hope, very few. After student experiences of my own, I have tried to work on my openness. But still I need to be reminded that the potential of self-discovery exists even when basic grammar skills do not.

My father's writing has also challenged me in another area of teaching. What constitutes success for a student? Based on my perceptions of my father's classes, I decided immediately in my career that I would be tough and rarely yield by passing a student who had not made the grade. Fortunately, I softened in the cases of some students, and I am glad my father's lessons support those decisions.

What some criticize as social promotion may not be that simple. Every student who walks into a classroom must be evaluated on what constitutes success for that individual. Success for one student might be completing a seven-page literary research paper. Success for another student might be completing a one-paragraph book report over a book three or four years below grade level. Should there be standards for each class? Yes. But how can I hold a student to those standards if that student does not have the same educational foundation or abilities that the other students have? If I do, I have defeated that student from the beginning.

My father's experiences bore this out many times. One student in particular caught my attention, though, because his name was Richard. My father worked with Richard for three years. All of those years were in a remedial reading class. As a non-reader Richard struggled hard to learn even short, simple passages. He put forth more effort than many honors students, but still his success was limited. At the end of the three years, though, Richard was proud that he could at least read almost all of some specially selected passages. That was his measure of success, and he passed the class and eventually received a diploma because he had earned it.

Years later, Richard paid my father a visit. He told of his continued struggle to read and how that struggle had led him into autobody rather than automechanics work--mechanics are required to use many manuals. Through loyalty and hard work Richard was now earning a salary larger than my father's. Even more important than the work, though, was Richard's determination to read to his daughters and provide many books for them to read on their own.

How could any teacher not pass a Richard? He had done everything asked of him. He simply had not been able to do them as well as some others. My father notes that in passing such students, ". . . theologians call it grace; veteran teachers recognize it as avoiding the repetition of a shattering experience." I find myself looking back through the memories of students who have failed my class, and I wonder if maybe I missed something--not with all of them, but some.

Richard and many others were fortunate not to have been missed. They experienced my father in a way that I and so many other students never recognized--as a teacher not just an instructor. Now that I recognize him as a teacher, I choose to learn from him. Helen Keller didn't stop at learning just one word or even ten words. She kept asking the teacher for more. My teacher has already given me more--thirty years of teaching wisdom.

Richard Mann, a teacher consultant of WTWP, teaches journalism and English at Jackson South Side High School.

Quilting Lessons: Bordering on a Conversation

by Amy Vaughan

The phone tells me that it is time. But I am not ready. With the second ring, I gaze at the clock and it is time. But I am still not ready. With the third ring, I know that 3:30 has arrived and I must face the call.

"Hello?"

"Hello. Well, how was your day?"

"Oh, Mama, it was a long, long day." With that simple statement the barriers fell and the tears began to flow. Those hot, moist, salty tears had been building since last night but I was not able to release them then. I had to be the positive, smiling wife, mother, teacher for all to see. I had to be the example for my children. I had to be the role model for other parents. I had to be the strong pillar of support for my husband and boss, the principal.

With a simple pause in my statement, she knew about those tears. She knew they had to come. But she also knew I still was not ready to discuss my fears, my actions, my long, long day. With that she began the conversation, as she does so many times, for me to experience my emotional outpouring and at the same time to be her sounding board. "Well, my day has been full of decisions. I am really going to need your help on Julie's quilt."

Until I had my own children, I could never understand how she heard my tears. Now that I have three children of my own, it has become increasingly clear how you can hear tears. Not sobs, not cries, but tears. My mother heard my tears and knew before I could speak the first word about this long day, I had to release those small drops of emotion. She continued her conversation with me. A conversation that only allowed me a brief "Yes," "Well," or a faint "Uh-huh." That was all I managed to say and that was all she needed from me in this conversation.

"You know I have been working on Julie's quilt with these morning glories. Well, I have come to the decision that I have cut out far too many blocks. After placing it on the bed today I found that if I add another row of blocks, it will be too wide for the bed."

"Uh-huh." More tears.

I heard her words but I was caught up with the events of the past evening. The week after the Columbine School shooting, we had our own scare in our town, as many other schools did. While it took time to spread, the rumor of a bomb in our school developed and while we were all at the ballpark watching the innocent game of baseball, the police came to find my husband. They had numerous phone calls from concerned parents that there had been a bomb threat at our school. They felt they must do something to ease the fears of these concerned parents. Jackie left the ballpark in the police car. My mother and father were sitting next to me and the concern in their eyes was as obvious as the color of their eyes. We knew that this was just a rumor; however, it must be acted upon.

"The number of blocks in this quilt should be determined by the height of the bed. I think Julie's bed is the same size as one of my beds. I have been studying my other quilt books and I think I need to stop making blocks with the morning glories and start around the edge with some type of border."

"Yes." More tears.

After a night of discussion from the parents and students at the ball park, countless phone calls to our home and very little sleep by anyone in our house, we were awakened to a morning with more phone calls and a great deal of apprehension from our own children concerning what to do. "We are going to school," their father stated in a calm, clear, caring tone. There was no discussion, no whines, no whimpers, no response at all. We knew that we must set the example. We proceeded with our morning rituals. I still had fears and concerns but I tried to deliver my smiling, positive face at every turn.

"I have been considering a border with some type of vine on it. This vine would wind around the edge of the quilt on a border with the morning glories and the leaves and add unity to the quilt."

"Well." More tears.

Upon our arrival at the school, police greeted us at the few entrances that remained unlocked. The students, few in number, proceeded to class. I asked the students to come closer to the front of the room and sit together. They were scattered in the large room isolated from each other and from me. We had a brief period of discussion about the safety features that we were observing on this particular day. The door to our room was

locked. No one could enter unless we opened the door. The police were to remain with us all day. No one could enter the building without their knowledge. I asked the students to respond to any concerns they had. The small group seemed so young and so anxious to hear anything I had to say. After a brief discussion with very few questions, one student asked the obvious, "Aren't we going to have class?" I always had class. We always had some sort of learning. They became aware of this on the first day of school. They knew me and expected it from me. This was my signal to go ahead. "Yes, we are going to have class now. No one can take away your opportunity to learn."

"This border will need to have some strips of color around it because the border will be white like the blocks. But this will need to be separated and balanced out with the colors from the quilt."

"Uh-huh." Fewer tears.

I took my lead from that first class. That group wanted to have a normal day. They wanted me to be their leader and teacher and to make everything all right again. For the remaining part of the day, we had class. With each class period, the faces were less tense than the period before. But now, at the end of this day I needed the time to release all those fears and anxieties I had during the day. I needed to have someone tell me it was going to be all right.

She knew I had to shed those tears before I could talk and she continued with the description of the quilt. "I think that I should add a light green strip to the quilt. Then, a dark mauve strip, then the border with the vine. Next, I think I should add another strip of green and of mauve. What do you think?"

How had she known I was ready? She heard that the tears were gone. I responded with a complete sentence that didn't have a single sob included in any phrase. "I think you are right. The border will add a unity to the quilt. It will tie all the blocks together and give the finished design to the piece."

Had she planned this conversation about the quilt? I saw how this quilt represented my day. I needed to piece together all the classes like blocks and fit a border of conversation on the end of it to bring unity to it all. I needed to bring it all together to have a finished design to the piece to bring peace.

"Well, I just needed your opinion on this. I have been studying on it all day and wanted to see what you thought. Now, how was your day?"

The tears were gone. She heard that. Now she knew I was ready to tell her about my long, long day.

Amy Vaughan, a teacher consultant of WTWP, teaches students in Spanish and business classes at Greenfield High School.

Participants in the Summer '99 Intensive Writing Institute held on the UT Martin campus:

Linda Lee, Martin Westview High School

Andrea Russell, Ripley High School

Tracy Decker, Big Sandy School

Penny Switzer, Dyersburg High School

Susie Irons, Waverly Junior High School

Jackie Wester, West Carroll Primary School

Cynthia Bush, Jackson Northeast Middle School

Margie Lowe, Jackson Northeast Middle School

Stacey Stewart, Camden Elementary School

Jane Ingram, Dresden Middle School

Deborah Criswell, Dyersburg High School

William Leachman, Freedom Middle School, Franklin

Sheryl Alford, Dresden Middle School

Veronica Fowlkes, Waverly Elementary School

Amy Vaughan, Greenfield School

Richard Mann, Jackson South Side High School

Tim Hacker, UT-Martin Department of English

Glenda Arant, Martin Middle School

Mary Lou Marks, Camden Central High School

Margrethe Ahlschwede, WTWP Director

Guests to the institute:

Ralph Fletcher, author and teacher, Durham, New Hampshire

Paulette Acres, Wartburg Central High School, Wartburg, TN

Courses for Teachers and their Friends

Spring 2000 the Department of English will offer seven upper division courses taught late afternoon, evenings, on-line, or as travel abroad. First day of spring semester classes is January 10, 2000.

All upper division courses can count as points toward teacher recertification (check with supervisors of instruction) or, at the graduate level, as part of the "thirty above" the masters.

A newly-designed masters degree program through the School of Education now allows 18 hours of subject-matter as part of the masters program.

For information about admission to graduate studies at UTM, contact the Office of Graduate Studies, 309 Administration Building, UTM, 38238 (901) 587-7012.

For information about the masters program, contact The School of Education, 237 Gooch Hall, UTM, 38238, (901) 587-7125. Department of English courses offered spring semester 2000 at night, late afternoon, on-line, and/or as travel abroad, meeting dates, times, and professors:

305/505 Advanced Composition Daniel Pigg

6:00 p.m. Monday

Writing is the heart of English 305. We will discuss our individual writings in peer workshops and collaborative groups. The course will give some attention to theories of writing, particularly to creativity and how multiple intelligences inform our individual and collective work. We will consider issues of form, style, and content in writing as we span the range of personal to professional writing. By the end of the course, students will have a small portfolio of a variety of different kinds of writing. English 305 serves students with a variety of majors, and our particular in-class and out-of-class activities will meet individual needs.

315/515 Poetry Workshop Victor Depta

6:00 p.m.

Thursday This course involves the principles of practice in writing poetry, including a text of literary terms and a research paper on a contemporary American poet. The students' work is emphasized throughout the semester.

330/530-001 Dostoevski Duke Pesta

6:00 p.m. Tuesday

"It was not as a child that I learned to believe in Christ and to confess His faith. My Hosannah has burst forth from a huge furnace of doubt." With these autobiographical words, Dostoevski introduces his masterpiece *The Brothers Karamazov*, an epic novel exploring the fundamental questions of suffering, doubt, and faith. Shaped by his own terrifying childhood experiences and a horrific jail term in Siberia, Dostoevski came to understand that suffering and doubt are the necessary precursors to any meaningful faith in God. Matched only by Shakespeare in his knowledge of human nature, Dostoevski's novels are among the most intense, insightful, and compelling ever written. In Notes

From *A Dead House*, Dostoevski provides a brutally factual account of his life in prison, where he encountered remorseless murderers who nevertheless wept like babies before the cross on Easter Sunday. In *The Idiot*, Dostoevski exposes the hypocrisy of Christian Europe by introducing a Christ-figure, Prince Myshkin, into Russian society and demonstrating how quickly he's destroyed by the very "Christians" he came to save. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevski's greatest work, he provides the most compelling reasons ever assembled why God cannot exist, and then demolishes them one by one, offering instead a profound affirmation of God and the human spirit.

350-OL1 Women Writers: Ironic Perspective & Authority Laura Jarmon On-line
This course focuses on selected women writers, especially contemporary American novelists. The goal of the course is to study irony as a device by which women acquire presence, authority, and representation in culture and society. Strategies of voice other than irony and incongruity will also be explored.

365/565 Restoration & 18th-Century English Literature Daniel Pigg
4:00 Tuesday and Thursday
This course considers poetry, prose, and drama written between 1660 and 1798, although we will consider the concept of the long Eighteenth Century that runs from 1640 to 1832, current in many scholarly circles. A period of tremendous change, development, and reflection, the Restoration and Eighteenth Century saw the opening of such topics as authority, gender roles, imagination (mind), nature, social/personal responsibilities, colonialism, slavery, and social reform. Writers approach these topics from a variety of literary directions and with a variety of forms. Reading selections will include Rochester, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Johnson, Boswell, several women writers such as Mary Astell, Aphra Behn, and Eliza Heywood, and some attention to Anglo-African writers such as Equiano and Cugoano.

401-090 Charles Dickens & *A Tale of Two Cities*: Anna Clark
By Arrangement
London & Paris Students in this course read five novels by Charles Dickens—*A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*, and *A Christmas Carol*—and participate in intensive discussions and research prior to a ten-day travel-study trip to London and Paris. (See instructor for details about additional costs for this travel-study opportunity during Spring Break 2000.)

495/695 The Gothic in Film, Literature & Culture Andy Schopp
6:00 p.m. Wednesday (computer assisted)
This course will examine the Gothic tradition in literature, film and culture, while also examining the role fear plays in culture and narrative. Though we will begin by studying "Classic" Gothic novels, the majority of the course will focus on 20th century examples of Gothic and Horror. Literary texts will include: Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Stoker's *Dracula*, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, James' *The Turn of the Screw*, Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, Williams' *Suddenly Last Summer*, O'Connor's short fiction, Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* and King's *The Shining*. Films will include: *Jane Eyre*, *Nosferatu*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *The Haunting (1963)*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Shining*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Alien*, *Scream*, and *The Blair Witch Project*. Please note that all screenings will be outside of class and that many film screenings will supplement novel/play discussions. For more information about the class, check out the website at <http://fmc.utm.edu/~aschopp/english495s00/eng495.htm>

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