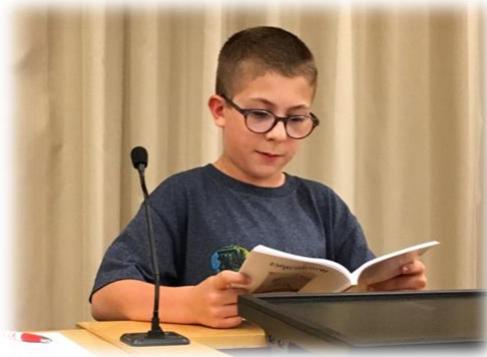


Oregon Writing Project
at Southern Oregon University

2017-18 Site Report



Cover photos

Upper left: Phoenix-Talent Teachers Celia Johnson and Koko Petitt at 2017 Digital Argument workshop

Lower left: Medford teachers collaborating at a 2017 C3WP workshop

Upper right: Young authors' reading and reception 2017

Lower right: C3WP co-facilitator Amy Sayre leads a 2017 workshop

Oregon Writing Project at SOU 2017-18 NWP Site Report

Author of this report:

Margaret Perrow

Dates covered by this report:

September 15, 2017- September 15, 2018

I. Overview and Current Context of the Site

Southern Oregon University (SOU) is a small regional public university serving an extensive, mostly rural, geographic area of the state. 2017-18 was our sixth year of re-affiliation with the National Writing Project¹.

Highlights from 2017-18 include:

- 6 workshops or open classes
- 3 intensive institutes (45 hours or more)
- 135 teachers attended an OWP workshop or open class
- 38 teachers attended an OWP intensive institutes (45 hours or more)
- 11 teachers taught seven OWP summer young authors' camps, attended by 145 students
- Young authors' reading and reception in fall 2018, attended by 120 people
- 10 teachers gave presentations at professional development workshops or regional conferences
- 5 teachers testified to the Oregon State Joint Committee on Student Success about OWP impact

Explicitly aligning our work with the university's mission statement has strengthened our partnership with the university. In 2017-18, the university undertook a lengthy process of revising the institution's vision and mission statements. President Linda Schott's energy and focus have helped the university articulate a clear mission that includes community connections, and supports active engagement with our K-12 colleagues. Dr. Schott continues to express enthusiastic support for the work of the OWP; she clearly understands how we directly contribute to the university's mission of being a "regionally engaged learning community" that promotes "responsible global citizenship" by supporting teachers' professional development in their classrooms *and* as leaders in their schools. By fostering relationships with teachers and administrators, providing a variety of teacher-led professional development, expanding our line-up of affordable young-authors' camps, and maintaining active partnerships with a wide range of institutions and organizations, in 2017-18 the OWP contributed directly to the university's mission as a thriving regional university with strong, active, and sustainable connections to K-12 teachers and schools.

The OWP plays a key role in linking SOU with teachers in our extensive geographic region, supporting their development throughout their careers. Many of these teachers begin their careers as undergraduate English majors at SOU, enroll in the MAT program, and complete their student teaching in classrooms of OWP teacher-consultants. The OWP directors teach in both the English program and the School of Education, working closely with student teachers in secondary schools and with the cooperating teachers who mentor them. Their overlapping roles help facilitate SOU's outreach to teachers as they move through their careers,

¹ From 1992 to 2010, the OWP at SOU was an active site supported by a combination of federal NWP grants, and course releases allocated to the site director by the university. From 2010-2012 we were an 'inactive' site, due to lack of university support in the wake of the loss of federal funding to the National Writing Project.

continue their professional development as required by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, and become mentors to pre-service teachers. The connectivity, or sense of professional ‘home’ throughout their careers that the OWP offers teachers, is part of the vision we hold for the OWP — and a clear example of the “regionally engaged learning community” serving learners throughout their lives that is promoted in the institution’s mission statement.

An illustrative example of the leadership that teacher consultants develop through our institutes and workshops is Amy Sayre, a former SOU student and MAT graduate who went on to become a high school English teacher in 2010. Amy participated in a three-week Literacy Leadership Institute in 2014. Eager for more leadership opportunities, Amy served as C3WP co-facilitator in 2017-18, leading the summer institute and follow-up Saturday sessions. She recently accepted a position as staff development coordinator for the Medford School District, the largest district in our region. Her leadership development over the years with the OWP was key to her professional advancement, and we are happy to have a teacher consultant working with Medford district teachers on a regular basis.

In addition to fostering individual teachers’ leadership development, the OWP plays a key role in linking teachers with their colleagues. Summer institutes and classes, as well as workshops throughout the year, create opportunities for teachers to learn from each other’s experience and practice – both as participants in colleagues’ workshops, and as facilitators themselves. Summer young-authors’ camps give teachers opportunities to collaboratively develop and try out creative, engaging writing lessons.

Securing university support for the site directors’ course-release time continues to be a challenge, in a fiscally uncertain period at our university, statewide in higher education, and nationwide in public education. The OWP site director and the new co-director were each granted one (10-week quarter) university-supported course release in 2017-18. These two releases comprise approximately 8% of each site director’s academic loading. This support is due in part to ongoing efforts to keep the provost, the associate vice provost for academic resource management, and the president informed of the OWP’s ongoing work. It is also due to the OWP’s strong relationships with other programs on campus, including the School of Education, the Division of Humanities & Culture, Advanced Southern Credit (SOU’s dual-credit program), and University Studies. The two university-supported course releases are provided by the Division of Humanities & Culture, and the Division of Education, Health & ROTC respectively. This joint support reflects the OWP’s long history of productive inter-departmental partnerships on campus.

In fall 2017, the OWP welcomed new site co-director Dr. Merrilyne Lundahl, Assistant Professor of English. A teacher consultant and former program coordinator for the Missoula, Montana Writing Project, Dr. Lundahl has joined Margaret Perrow as co-director of the OWP at SOU. She has already been instrumental in much of the work described in this report, and single-handedly oversaw the work of the OWP in spring and summer 2018 while Dr. Perrow was on sabbatical leave. We are excited about the competence, collaborative spirit, energy, and ideas that Dr. Lundahl is bringing to SOU, to the OWP, and to our community of teachers.

II. The Work of the Writing Project

The work of the Oregon Writing Project (OWP) in 2017-18 focused on several priorities identified in [the 2016-17 site report](#)²:

- Strengthen and broaden site leadership;
- Document and disseminate the work of the OWP especially the ways it directly supports the university’s mission;

² Download [annual reports from previous years](#) from the OWP website.

- Plan and implement a variety of workshops, institutes, and open classes that meet the needs of multiple constituents;
- Develop possible/promising partnerships with institutions, organizations, and individuals in the broader community.

To these ends, the OWP at SOU offered a variety of workshops, camps, and other activities in 2017-18. Modest fees charged for some of these events made them largely self-sustaining, and provided sufficient revenue to cover part of the site directors' travel costs to the annual NWP director's meeting in St. Louis, the annual site affiliation fee, and miscellaneous site expenses. Financially, we tend to just break even, balancing revenue and expenses.

Teaching Argument-Writing Collaborative (TAWC)

Launched in summer 2016, the [Teaching Argument-Writing Collaborative](#) (TAWC) was an ambitious professional development initiative funded by a \$163,000 Title IIA University-School Partnership Grant. TAWC brought together 29 middle/high school teachers and seven SOU faculty, in a yearlong collaborative dedicated to improving the teaching of argument-writing across subject areas and grade levels. The project included 90 hours of professional development in 2016-17, culminating in a teacher-led conference "Good Argument!"

TAWC's impact continued throughout 2017-18. In May 2017 we learned that approximately \$4,500 of additional funding was available to TAWC, to extend professional development into the beginning of the 2017 school year. This funding was deployed in three ways:

- Mini-grants were offered to participants, who applied for summer curriculum-planning or classroom supplies to support the teaching of argument-writing. Twelve teachers received mini-grants ranging from \$300-\$500 each. For example, a team of teachers from McLoughlin Middle School led two days of professional learning in summer 2017, for colleagues from their school interested in developing cross-content-area curricula.
- At the Medford district's back-to-school professional development day in August 2017, five TAWC teachers presented workshops or demonstration lessons to middle and high school colleagues. These workshops, based on their past work in TAWC, were enthusiastically received. Presenters received a stipend funded by the grant extension.
- In September 2017, the grant extension also partially funded a daylong workshop with Troy Hicks, author of *Argument in the Real World*. TAWC participants' substitute costs were covered by the grant extension.
- In April 2018, five TAWC teachers presented demonstration lessons at the Oregon Council of Teachers of English spring conference in Ashland. These presentations grew out of the 2017 TAWC conference. The site director coached the presenters and worked with conference organizers to assemble a coherent program around their presentations, which were well received by attending teachers. Presenters' conference fees were covered by the grant extension.

A formal evaluation of TAWC was completed in November 2017. Southern Oregon University Research Center (SOURCE) took the lead on this comprehensive evaluation process, which included surveys, interviews, pre/post questionnaires, institute and conference feedback, and student writing samples. (In May 2017, the final Saturday workshop was devoted to scoring pre- and post-project student writing samples from both TAWC and control group classes.) [The final report](#) showed growth both in TAWC teachers' instruction and their students' writing. In collaboration with SOURCE, we plan to turn the final report into a research article for publication, to share the story and results of this successful university-school partnership.

College-Ready Writers Program (C3WP) Advanced Institute

The OWP was awarded a \$20,000 grant for a College-Ready Writers Program (now C3WP) Advanced Institute for 2017-18. We used this grant to launch an institute for a second teacher-led cohort of College-Ready Writers. Two years of independent research show statistically significant gains in the writing of students whose teachers participate in C3WP, especially students' reasoning and their use of evidence in arguments. This advanced institute supported 17 teachers across grade levels (elementary school, middle school, high school, and first-year college instructors from SOU) interested in collaboratively developing their skills in teaching argument-writing. This 45-hour OWP institute was facilitated by two teacher-consultants who were 2016-17 TAWC participants (see above), and who attended the C3WP training in Washington, DC in March 2017: Andra Hollenbeck (6th grade teacher), and Amy Sayre (high school teacher).

At an orientation session in May 2017, the participants were introduced to C3WP resources, which are developed by National Writing Project teachers and emphasize the teaching of source-based argument writing. The heart of the program was a four-day launch workshop June 27-30, 2017. Five follow-up Saturday sessions were held throughout the academic year, for teachers to assess student writing formatively, and plan strategically for ongoing instruction. Participants earned PDUs or optional graduate credits. [Read the full C3WP report](#) (pdf) here.

Partly based on the success of this 2017 C3WP institute, we were awarded a second \$20,000 C3WP grant for the academic year 2018-19. A second cohort of 15 C3WP teachers was recruited. Two teacher consultants who had been participants in the 2017 institute stepped up to plan and facilitate the 2018 institute at their school, North Medford High School. Held an orientation and four-day launch institute in summer 2018, and have five Saturday workshops scheduled through the academic year 2018-19.

Open classes and workshops

Teaching and writing argument in a digital world. September, 2017. This Saturday workshop was led by Troy Hicks, author of *Argument in the Real World*. 35 Teachers (grades 4-college) attended this introduction to reading and creating digital arguments. Participants received a copy of the book *Argument in the real world*, lunch, and 7 PDUs. One graduate credit (ENG507) was also available.

Young Authors' Camp: Workshop for teachers. February, 2018. This six-hour workshop was free and open to any teachers interested in developing and leading a summer young-authors' camp. Ten teachers attended the workshop led by teacher consultant Cliff Cowley. Several new camps were planned, among them a Spanish heritage language camp at McLoughlin Middle School, and a scifi/fantasy writing camp.

Writing workshop for teachers with author Andre Dubus III. October 2017. This workshop was co-sponsored by Chautauqua Poets and Writers. 20 teachers.

Poetry workshop for teachers with author Richard Blanco. April 2018. Co-sponsored by Chautauqua Poets and Writers. 40 teachers and future teachers attended. This workshop was co-sponsored by Chautauqua Writers and Poets.

Advanced Southern Credit professional development

The OWP provides professional development workshops for approximately 36 high school language arts teachers of Advanced Southern Credit (ASC) courses (ENG 104/105, 121/122). As part of ASC program accreditation, these teachers are required to participate in annual professional development with SOU faculty in order to maintain their ASC eligibility. In 2016-17, OWP site director Margaret Perrow and English program chair Alma Rosa Alvarez began to formalize and strengthen the relationship between the OWP and ASC. Beginning in 2017-18, both OWP site directors now also oversee ASC professional development, allowing for better integration of the two, and more consistent oversight of ASC.

The fall daylong ASC workshop, held on the statewide professional development day in October 2017, centered around argument-writing, using CR3P approaches. Over the summer, ASC teachers were mailed a copy of the book *Rewriting* (Harris); [their assignment](#) was to come to the fall workshop with a lesson idea to share, building on that book. The workshop was designed and facilitated by teacher consultants Amy Sayre and Matt Moreali. SOU administrators were invited to attend and meet the teachers; the English chair clarified the guidelines for teachers wanting to propose new ASC courses, and faculty from the English department shared lunch with the ASC teachers.

The winter ASC winter workshop in February, focused on writing arguments about literature. OWP teacher consultants Nancy Martin and Camille Schuler were among the presenters, sharing demonstration lessons with their ASC colleagues. 14 teachers.

Phoenix-Talent summer institute: SEED grant

Last year the OWP was awarded a \$15,000 SEED (Supporting Effective Educator Development) grant for building teacher leadership. We originally planned to hold a yearlong ‘vertically collaborative’ institute for SOU faculty and teachers from the Phoenix-Talent school district. When this proved logistically unfeasible, we shifted the focus of the institute to content-area literacy with an emphasis on support for English language learners (ELLs).

Ten middle and high school teachers from schools around our region, including a team of teachers from Talent Middle School, participated in 65 hours of professional development in summer 2018, co-facilitated by Dr. Merrilyne Lundahl and OWP teacher consultant Sandra Tringolo, a teacher at Talent Middle School. Teacher participants contributed to an anthology of their writing. The institute culminated in a family literacy day, in collaboration with the Pirates to Raiders program, where teachers, families and students worked together on writing.

Young Authors’ Camps

A young authors’ reading and reception was held on October 27, 2017 on the SOU campus, officially kicking off the 2017 Ashland Literary Festival in the Hannon Library. Author Molly Tinsley welcomed campers, who then read a selection of their writing and received a free copy of the [2017 Wordscapes](#) anthology. 120 people attended to celebrate the young authors.

In summer 2018 our young authors camps expanded to include three middle school camps, an elementary camp, a sci-fi/fantasy writing camp, a Spanish heritage language camp, and a college application essay camp. 145 campers, ranging from elementary school to high school, participated in one of seven weeklong writing camps. Camps cost \$110/week with need-based scholarships available.

A significant contributing factor to the camps’ expansion in 2018 was the role of teacher consultant (and newly retired middle school teacher) Cliff Cowley. In his role as Camps Coordinator, he provided teacher leadership, oversight, and communication with the school districts that enabled the camps’ expansion.

Two other significant factors enabling expansion of our camps were the outreach and recruitment efforts, and financial and in-kind contributions, from a variety of partner institutions and organizations: the Medford School District, the Ashland Literary Arts Festival, Southern Oregon University, the Advanced Southern Credit English program, College Dreams, Migrant Education at the Southern Oregon Education Service District, the Grace and Kindness Foundation, the Rotary Club of Ashland, Southern Oregon Public Television, and multiple individual donors. These partnerships helped significantly increase camp enrollments, as well as the linguistic and cultural diversity of our campers.

University partnerships

The School of Education asked the OWP site director to design an OWP “**Writing for Teachers**” **workshop for 2017-18**, to support Elementary Education students and others who have difficulty passing the Essential Academic Skills (EAS) test. This one- or two-credit writers’ workshop focuses on real-world genres that teachers must be able to write. Longtime OWP teacher consultant (and now-retired middle school teacher) Rick Taylor now teaches this workshop for education students. (The OWP consulted with the School of Education so that his National Board certification could replace the MA-degree requirement for SOU instructors.) The site director mentored him in creating a syllabus for ED399, and also as he took on responsibility for supervising two MAT students teaching with restricted licenses in middle school language arts classes. This sets a good example of the OWP connecting experienced teachers in the field with new/future teachers at the School of Education.

Klamath Falls Community College contracted the OWP for a workshop on teaching argument-writing in fall 2017. Teacher consultants Amy Sayre (high school teacher) and Matt Moreali (SOU instructor) agreed to design and co-facilitate the workshop. A contract was prepared in consultation with Joanne Preston in SOU’s Office of Grants and Contracts. Unfortunately, this contract was subsequently cancelled due to low enrollment; we are exploring ways to make this a viable partnership in the future.

Grant-writing, scholarship and presentations

Writing and presenting about our work is a way to share the work of the site and the National Writing Project more broadly, while also bringing national recognition to the university. Some examples from 2017-18:

- In November, 2017 both site directors attended the annual NWP site directors meeting in St. Louis. Margaret Perrow led a **round table discussion for site leaders on the work of the Teaching Argument-Writing Collaborative (TAWC)**, as part of a session on innovative partnerships that engage universities in the work of the writing project site.
- Site director Margaret Perrow submitted an article to *College Teaching* (“**Designing Professional Learning to Support Student Success: Lessons from the Faculty Writing Fellows Seminar**”) which has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of the journal. The data show that the overall objectives of the yearlong seminar for university instructors of first-year writing classes at SOU were met: *to develop instructors’ skill and confidence in writing instruction, so that they in turn could better support students’ success in academic writing*. The seminar afforded opportunities for faculty to try out new approaches, reflect on their successes and challenges using evidence from their classrooms, and engage in constructive conversations to revise their instruction based on theory and best practices in writing pedagogy. The notably higher scores on the 2016 final essays by students in FWFS participants’ classes point to the power of professional development that is intensive, sustained, and focused on effective instructional design.
- Site director Margaret Perrow organized a panel of four site directors from around the country (Richard Louth, David Franke, Amy Lannin, and Margaret Perrow) which was accepted for presentation at the November 2018 National Council of Teachers of English conference. National Writing Project Executive Director Elyse Eidman-Aadahl will serve as respondent. Panel title: **Professional Development for Faculty as Writers: Modeling the Process of Finding Voice**. As part of that panel, Margaret’s individual presentation “Awkwardness and Empathy: Lessons from a Faculty Writing Fellows Seminar” will share lessons from the OWP seminar for university faculty at SOU, described above.

- Five teacher consultants including site co-director [Dr. Merrilyne Lundahl testified](#) before the Oregon State Joint Committee on Student Success in June 2017. Their testimonies spoke to the powerful impact of the OWP on teachers' professional development and student success in our region.

Summer writing engagement for college, career, and community. The OWP at SOU was one of four sites nationwide invited to apply for 4-year program funding (\$70,000) from the Rural Research and Development Center, Institute for Education Sciences (for summer writing camps to support students' academic success, and teacher workshops to support writing instruction. We assembled a team: Merrilyne Lundahl (co-principal investigator), Matt Moreali (SOU writing instructor), Jennifer Wagner and Sara Kinstler (Hidden Valley HS teachers). In September we submitted an application for this \$70,000 grant in partnership with teachers and administrators from Hidden Valley High School in Murphy. Unfortunately, this grant proposal was not funded at the national level, so we did not get the opportunity to implement the project. However, we were pleased to receive the invitation to apply, and proud of our ability to quickly assemble a team in partnership with Hidden Valley High School.

Site "continuity" activities

The annual renewal meeting was held at SOU in February, 2018. Fifteen teacher consultants attended this meeting, building camaraderie and generating ideas for future professional development.

Initiated virtual meetings by phone involving directors from all four Writing Project sites in Oregon (George Fox, Lewis & Clark, Pacific, SOU). Began talking about the possibility of seeking shared state funding. Margaret Perrow and Merrilyne Lundahl met with State Representative Pam Marsh in winter 2018, to explain the OWP to her and get her input on how to go about seeking state funding as a group.

[Website](#) and [Facebook](#). We did a better job this year posting updates, including announcements about upcoming events and teacher accomplishments.

III. Concluding Thoughts

Several big ideas have emerged out of our work over the past few years:

The importance of designing programming to meet multiple needs simultaneously

A priority continues to be finding ways to meet the needs of multiple constituents simultaneously (e.g., in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, MAT students, the OWP, and the university). Offering a choice of regular graduate tuition or professional development units for a workshop fee creates a win-win-win situation for SOU, OWP, and participating teachers: the course generates enrollment numbers and revenue for the university, MAT students can take electives alongside more experienced colleagues, and teachers who don't need graduate credits for continuing licensure are able to participate at lower cost, simultaneously generating workshop revenue that directly supports the work of the OWP.

Because this approach requires flexibility on the part of administrators, the OWP will continue to work with the School of Education to design courses that are 'flexible:' that are taught as part of a faculty member's regular loading when appropriate; that count as electives in graduate and undergraduate programs; and that are also open to in-service teachers whether they are seeking lower-cost graduate credits, or simply a low-cost workshop.

The importance of engaging creatively and visibly with the needs of the host university

In addition to external grant funding to support programs and workshops, the survival of the Writing Project at SOU depends on sufficient course release time for the site director to plan programming, write grants, and oversee the work outlined in this report. The cost of two annual course releases to support the work of the site

director is relatively small in light of what the OWP contributes to the university, so it is important to raise the visibility of the Writing Project, as we work in alignment with the university's mission.

The importance (and challenges) of distributing site leadership

Collaborating and distributing leadership has not only proved personally and professionally rewarding, but it has clearly allowed us to increase visibility and grow as a Writing Project site. Many teacher consultants have helped expand the work of the site in the past few years by taking on leadership roles including:

- Co-planning and co-facilitating summer institutes in 2014 and 2015 (Andra Hollenbeck)
- Taking on the role of young authors camp coordinator (Cliff Cowley)
- Co-planning and co-facilitating parts of the Teaching Argument-Writing Collaborative, including conference planning (Jamie Hirsh and David Brown)
- Offering to lead summer young authors' camps (Amy Schacht, Amy Sayre, Tonya noon-Toledo, Heather Hutton, Cindy McDonald, Claire Bloom)
- Co-facilitating the 2017-18 College-Ready Writers' Program Advanced Institute (Andra Hollenbeck and Amy Sayre)
- Co-facilitating the 2018-19 C3WP Institute (Jamie Leach and Tonya Noon-Toledo)
- Co-planning and co-facilitating the summer 2018 institute at Phoenix-Talent (Sandra Tringolo)

One of our biggest challenges is finding ways to compensate TCs for their work. Most of the leadership outlined in the list above was compensated (through grants, contracts, workshop fees, etc.). The OWP believes that it is important to compensate teachers for their leadership, as well as their investment in professional development, whenever possible. We continue to seek ways to balance affordable/free professional development for teachers, with the need to compensate teachers for their time and work.

Looking forward

Our specific goals for 2018-19 include:

- Design and implement a summer institute for 2019, to build our network and include more recent SOU MAT graduates;
- Continue to investigate the possibility of developing a graduate certificate in the teaching of writing and/or certificate in teacher leadership aligned with TSPC licensure requirements;
- Investigate STEM-related funding sources that might support an advanced institute focused on writing in the sciences and technical subjects;
- Think about the role OWP might play in supporting teachers, as SB13 is implemented in Oregon schools;
- Build on the momentum of expanded and more diverse summer camps; continue to grow camps both in terms of camp diversity and camper diversity;
- Communicate more effectively about the work of our site to university and community audiences;

The OWP is uniquely positioned at Southern Oregon University to promote connections between K-12 and university programs and instruction, a current priority of both the state of Oregon and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The projects and goals described above reflect the desire and capacity of the OWP at SOU to contribute meaningfully to the mission of the university, as well as the professional development needs of teachers regionally at all stages of their careers, and the field of English language arts more broadly.

For more information, visit www.sou.edu/owp or email owp@sou.edu.