



**The Teacher Center of Broome County  
Teacher Study Group Grant Award  
2014**

**FINAL REPORT DUE BY APRIL 7, 2014  
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

**STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Professional Learning Community-Writing group:  
Writing from the students' Point of view**

**List of group members: Dan Kozlowski, Alexandra Roma, Renee Condon, Karon Bielenda**

**The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and through e-mail using this form. Send print copy Teacher Center @ WSKG, BOCES Mail Drop #22 and e-mail file to [btc@btboces.org](mailto:btc@btboces.org). This report will be posted on the Teacher Center web page at <http://teachercenter.info>.**

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

The group initially wanted to explore different writing assignments that are given to students at various grade levels (5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades) and disciplines by asking themselves to write as if they were students.

As the group progressed, we did adapt how much writing was done individually **during the sessions** to discussing the obstacles to the tasks and actual student responses.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

Each week, a participant presented to the group a typical writing task given to their students. The group discussed the draw-backs, vocabulary issues, necessary schemata, as well as special education population needs with the writing tasks.

As a result of seeing the 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing samples, 11<sup>th</sup> grade writing tasks and the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global preparation materials, the participants understood some of the redundancy of our teaching. Students are expected to write well developed paragraphs at all levels.

After each session, the participants reflected on their teaching approaches to writing tasks as well as holding students accountable for their previous knowledge.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We looked at the Common Core standards-focusing on the writing standards.

Using the tests that are provided as models for the up-coming Regents exams, we looked at the writing prompts and what is expected for the students to understand as they develop their responses—in ELA and Global.

With group discussion and sharing of anecdotes, the group decided that since students have heard the same or similar instruction over many years and disciplines, they may have stopped focusing on the prompts.

As a result of this discovery, the participants looked at their own assignments and students and looked to adjust their use of writing strategies to coax students to write with more sophisticated style.

Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance. How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

Individuals in the group from week to week shared how they had re-evaluated questions they asked their students. Group members shared that they had held their students to a higher level since sharing the same skill is necessary to respond to DBQ's as in English class research papers or essays.

We realized that we can and do support each other as teachers.

We also understood, as we shared HOW each of us approached each the writing task we were given, that our students have similar responses as we did: “What do I do?” “I can do this—I’m just going to start,” “What are they asking?” “Should I write about that very personal experience or go with the safe answer?” Some of these emotions were because some felt comfortable with the task and knowledge and others felt less comfortable. (We could understand why some students shut-down when asked to write)

From this session we especially realized that we want students to take chances when writing—use the more complex vocabulary as the Common Core suggests, but that when taking tests, this is extremely dangerous.

What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

This is a more difficult question to which to respond. The teacher-writing group participants valued the experience of “feeling like a student” when given these writing prompts, and therefore said that they looked at the assignments more carefully because of this.

It is hoped that students will experiment in their writing because their teacher understands the emotions of writing.

What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

**The participates shared over and over that topics that had been discussed in one meeting influenced what they did in their classrooms the next week.**

**The group wishes to continue to meet!**

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

The Professional Learning Community model with this study group worked well with this group of individuals. They wanted to share, learn and understand other perspectives.

How can we make this study group program better?

The program itself was too short! We had some difficulty meeting on a strictly regular time since our required meeting dates were from January to April where there are snow days, and several holidays among which we tried to arrange for the writing group.

If we could have started in September, maybe we could have had less weather related interruptions in the meeting times.

The paperwork required (understandable amount), was a little confusing—for example, this document was asked to be double spaced, but it is difficult to do that! We were not sure which documents needed to be returned for the final meeting. And, we had issues with the IRS forms.

A final report is due two weeks after the last meeting or by **April 7, 2014**, whichever date is first. The report must be typed and double-spaced using the provided form. One copy must be submitted in print and the file must be submitted through e-mail to [bctc@btboces.org](mailto:bctc@btboces.org). Return to the Teacher Center (Mail Drop #22), 601 Gates Rd., Vestal, NY

