



## Eastern Illinois Writing Project Fall 2017 Newsletter

The Eastern Illinois Writing Project  
<http://castle.eiu.edu/~easternnwp/>



### Summer Institute 2017

The 2017 EIWP Summer Institute continued our hybrid version of English 5585, the writing workshop summer institute. We met online for one third of the class, sharing readings and gaining a foundation in literacy across the curriculum. Then we met on campus in CH 3130 and 3210 for the remaining two thirds of the class.

The 2017 Invitational Summer Institute kicked off with 9 dedicated teachers and 3 coaches/co-directors coming together to learn, teach, and celebrate writing. The Summer Institute provided opportunities for these teachers to celebrate writing and

reading across the curriculum at all grade levels, while helping to teach and build a community of peers. Teachers designed and developed writing and reading programs to meet their and their colleagues' needs. Activities included formal and informal writing workshops, teaching demonstrations, reading and research, small and large group discussions, coaching sessions with directors and teaching consultants, and celebrating reading and writing for all of the power and potential they possess.

As a way to introduce our year's focus on argument writing, teachers read and responded to three books during our online portion of the class: *Crafting Digital Writing*, *Content-Area Writing: Every Teachers Guide*, and *Reading Nonfiction: Notice & Note Stances, Signposts, and Strategies*. For these discussions, teachers were divided into three groups, and each group provided slideshows or other digital presentations on selected readings. The rest of the group (including coaches) responded to the presentations. During this online portion, teachers also began to blog about their classroom action research projects and teaching demonstration ideas. These blogs served as starting points for their iSearch research papers (an alternative to traditional research papers), as well as brainstorming for their teaching demonstrations. They also worked with their coaches online during this period

During the face-to-face portion of the ISI, teachers wrote every day during morning sacred writing time, implemented their teaching demonstration, worked on their research iSearch projects in their groups, and enjoyed out-of-classroom mini-writing marathons on the square in Charleston, in the campus greenhouse, and in the Doudna Fine Arts Center for a tour and writing/discussion time. Author's chairs were included at least once a week. For our final writing marathon, we celebrated together with former co-director Carol Smith in Sullivan and on her lovely houseboat on Lake Shelbyville.

Culminating projects included the teaching demonstration write-up, iSearch paper, and a creative piece gleaned from sacred writing or writing marathons. These were collected in three anthologies shared with the teachers. Hard copies of the demonstration anthologies were also provided for peers and administrators who attended the post-ISI Celebration luncheon. We look forward to celebrating with all of you next summer when we host a Renewal Potluck at Lincoln Log Cabin as our final celebratory writing marathon.



## **Feedback from Past ISI Attendees**

**Casey Crowhurst**  
**About the experience:**

“While attending the SI, I was able to create and share personal writing in a comfortable atmosphere of my peers. Teachers rarely take the time to write, and I loved the ability to create and share with others. Since most attendees are teachers, I was able to connect with professionals from a variety of districts across Central Illinois. Along with writing, we also shared and modeled some of our favorite lesson plans. The SI has allowed me to bring back different strategies, ideas and lesson plans that were shared during the summer. I've implemented some of these in my classroom.”

### **Summer Institute Recommendation:**

“If you're contemplating the possibility of attending the institute, just go for it. I needed something engaging to do during the summer, and I loved the experience. The Institute is open to teachers of any subject and grade level, which opened my mind to perspectives on writing instruction I hadn't considered. Every member had something to add to the program. It's also free, and as an English M.A. candidate, worth six credit hours. After the summer institute, I decided EIU was where I wanted to continue my English studies.”

### **Carol Smith**

#### **About the Experience:**

“I have been with the institute since the EIWP started. I was a coach for several years. Now I help with planning and do a presentation about chronologies each year. I am retired, but I used many lessons from both the EIWP and Illinois State's Writing Project in my classes. My students benefitted greatly from lessons I learned through the Writing Projects. The summer institutes changed my teaching strategies and made me a much better creative writing teacher. My students experienced using

many different genres to express themselves creatively.”

**Recommendation:**

“I already recommend the institute to all English teachers I meet. My other advice is that those considering becoming a fellow should do it. "Don't be intimidated by the syllabus. You will soon become absorbed in all you are learning and in the camaraderie that permeates the institute. The research you do is of your own choosing, and you will leave the institute with many new lessons your students will enjoy!”

**Traci Becker**

**About the experience:**

“My experience during the summer institute was professionally reinvigorating. It provided me with an opportunity to meet myself again as a writer, and as a teacher through learning from other teachers and their exciting curriculum ideas. I have been able to add many of the ideas from the summer institute into my classroom. Additionally, creating a new network of friends and professionals to share ideas with has been greatly beneficial.”

**Recommendation:**

“This is one of the best teaching courses I have ever taken. It is practical immediately to my classroom. I would recommend it to all teachers, of all subject areas and age groups. There is nowhere that you can go for such a short time that produces such great results.” Don't wait! Apply to the summer institute today to secure your spot in this educationally rewarding Summer Institute at Eastern Illinois University.

<https://castle.eiu.edu/easternnwp/machform/view.php?id=1>

**Ninth Annual Fall Institute Day  
October 13, 2017**

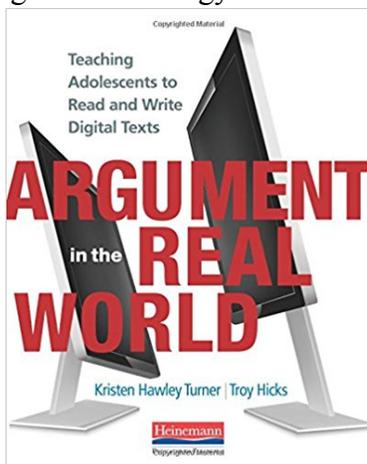


The 2017 Institute Day will focus on teaching argument in the real world across disciplines, including math, science, history, social studies, and technical subjects. Teachers from across disciplines and grade levels will share their teaching ideas in multiple breakout sessions, maintaining a teachers teaching teachers model to creatively meet the Common Core Standards.



To highlight this interdisciplinarity across grade levels, we are also pleased to announce our virtual keynote speaker, Dr. Troy Hicks, co-author of *Argument in the Real World* (2016). His workshop will highlight new ways of approaching argument that consider the digital

information inundating students on their devices and provide ways to craft and analyze arguments in a digital world. Dr. Troy Hicks (@hickstro) is a professor of Literacy and Technology at Central Michigan University and focuses his work on the teaching of writing, literacy and technology, and teacher education and professional development. A former middle school teacher, he collaborates with K–12 colleagues and explores how they implement newer literacies in their classrooms. Hicks directs CMU’s Chippewa River Writing Project, a site of the National Writing Project, and he frequently conducts professional development workshops related to writing and technology.



In addition to *Argument in the Real World*, Hicks is author of *Crafting Digital Writing* (2013) and *The Digital Writing Workshop* (2009), as well as a co-author of *Because Digital Writing Matters* (Jossey-Bass, 2010) and *Create, Compose, Connect!* (Routledge/Eye on Education, 2014). He blogs at Digital Writing, Digital Teaching. Most importantly, he is the father of six digital natives and is always learning something new about writing and technology from them.

His workshop and discussion will highlight new ways of approaching real world argument. Every day, our students are inundated by information – as well as opinions and misinformation – on their devices. These digital texts influence what they buy, who they vote for, and what they believe about themselves and their world. Crafting and analyzing arguments in a digital world could be our greatest possibility to improve dialogue across cultures and continents... or it could contribute to bitter divides. In this workshop, Hicks will draw from real world texts and samples of student work to share a wealth of insights and practical strategies in teaching students the logic of argument. Whether arguments are streaming in through a Twitter feed, a Facebook wall, viral videos, Internet memes, or links to other blogs or websites, we will explore how to engage with and create digital arguments. The Institute Day will also include teacher-driven presentations and workshops that allow both attendees and presenters to share effective ideas and confer with one another, emphasizing the belief that the best teachers of teachers are other teachers.

Workshops will include “Finding a Topic and Researching the Conversation,” “Op-Eds in Middle and High School,” “Using Article Of The Week to Practice Argumentative Writing and Prepare for the SAT,” and “Talking to Students about Validity (and Lack Therof) in the News: Tools for Creating Civil, Media-Savvy Learners,” “These workshops will help teachers better meet their students’ literacy needs across the curriculum and grade levels, facilitating ways for students to explore argument writing at every stage of the writing process.

Our Institute Day will end with a catered luncheon and a Post Conference Luncheon Conversation. Please bring your questions and ideas from the keynote straight into this follow-up conversation. Here we can discuss some of the argument writing tools in more detail, connect more directly to your classroom practice, and look at more examples of student work. You will help make this session happen, so please come prepared to interact, learn some more, and create your own argument writing resources. Participants can earn up to five Continuing Professional Development Units toward teacher certification renewal. All attendees will receive a certificate of completion.

The event is free and open to the public. Registration is now open at <https://castle.eiu.edu/easternnwp/machform/view.php?id=1232>. The registration deadline is Oct. 9.

For more information or to inquire about being a presenter at the conference, please contact EIWP Director Robin Murray at [rlmurray@eiu.edu](mailto:rlmurray@eiu.edu).

## The Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing at EIU

This certificate is available to any already certified teacher across the curriculum and grade levels, and builds on the work completed during the EIWP Summer Institute. To meet the requirements for the certificate you must complete only 18 hours of graduate work in the Teaching of Writing. The only six hours required for this certificate are those earned during the summer institute, ENG 5585. This certificate (which appears on transcripts) professionally recognizes the accomplishment of completing 18 hours in

the teaching of writing. These courses that you complete can also be applied toward an MA in English or other discipline. The following outlines the current requirements for the graduate certificate: All students must complete the following **six-credit** course:

- ENG 5585 Writing Project for K-12 Teachers\*\*

Students should choose at least **four** of the following **three-credit** courses:

- ENG 4760 Studies in Professional Writing\*
- ENG 4801 Integrating the English Language Arts
- ENG 4906 Problems in the Teaching of English\*
- ENG 5007 Composition Theory and Pedagogy



## Proposals for the Advanced Institute Grant and New Leadership Grant Funded!

It is no secret that institutions of higher education are hurting for funding right now with the current budget crisis in Illinois which is why obtaining funding from other sources is incredibly important. We are pleased that we were honored with funding from two National Writing Project grants this year.

The first grant is the National Writing Project's College-Ready Advanced Institute Grant. The central goal of the College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP) is to help

students become skilled at writing arguments from nonfiction sources. The program includes scaffolded teaching and formative assessment resources created by a team of NWP teacher-leaders that support the development of students' argument writing. CRWP's teaching resources focus on reading and analyzing multiple perspectives on important issues, developing thoughtful and precise claims, and effectively using nonfiction texts as evidence. These resources are designed as models that teachers can adapt for and integrate into their curriculum. The program features systematic formative assessment to inform next steps in instruction, including the Using Sources Tool, which supports teachers in analyzing how students make and support claims using evidence from sources.

The purpose of the Advanced Institute to Scale Up the CRWP is for participating sites' teacher-leaders to:

- study CRWP curricular and formative assessment tools;
- plan for using CRWP curricular materials in their own classrooms in 2017–18;
- read and discuss articles and books about source-based argument writing;
- use CRWP formative assessment tools to look at student writing together at least twice during the school year; and
- plan with others at the site to offer professional development in high-need schools in 2018–19 and beyond (e.g., identifying existing strengths and needs of teachers and students, preparing to model and debrief teaching strategies in classrooms, identifying where CRWP cycles of writing fit within existing curricula, facilitating the analysis of student writing to inform instruction, coaching teachers,

building relationships with teachers and administrators).

Our advanced institute is underway after a face-to-face launch in August. We are pleased with the twelve wonderful teachers participating in this yearlong class and professional development opportunity. Thanks also to Kristin Runyon for co-teaching this new institute.

The second grant is the NWP Invitational Leadership SEED Grant. As part of the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) funding awarded to NWP by the U.S. Department of Education, funds are available to NWP sites for the purpose of investing in developing **new** teacher-leaders through invitational institutes. Invitational institutes engage K–16 teachers in building leadership skills and creating knowledge across the disciplines, as well as focusing on specific areas of need, such as teaching English Language Learners. These leadership skills equip teachers to lead work at their sites, in their schools and districts, and as active participants in an educational landscape of rigorous standards and technological innovation. The purpose of this grant is to offer each eligible NWP site funding for an invitational institute that will invest in 12 or more new teacher-leaders at each site. With this grant, we funded our 2017 summer institute, and will be able to fund our 2018 summer institute, as well. Thank you NWP!

