

**Trumbull Public Schools &  
Bard College Institute for Writing & Thinking**

**June 22 PD: “Writing to Learn: Best Practices for a Writing-Rich Classroom”**

The PD was fantastic – at least in our group. Our facilitator engaged us across disciplines in meaningful ways – it was truly inspirational. Imagine a group of educators from diverse disciplines and experiences, all critically looking at war casualty statistics outlined in a congressional report. Then imagine us examining language and the stories that numbers tell. Throw in a sequenced writing activity followed by peer feedback and discussion, and there you have it! What an amazing activity! We spent roughly 30 minutes on this but could have spent a couple of hours. I loved it.

I told our facilitator at the end of the day that it was the best PD I’ve ever had in my 20 years of teaching, and I meant it. If I were to be critical at all, I would say doing those types of meaningful activities that truly generate student thinking would be very difficult to do in courses with pacing guides and highly condensed material. It’s not just about memorizing facts, figures, dates and events. It’s about thinking, and thinking takes time. It also takes an experienced educator who has time to discover new material and is willing to structure multi-tiered lessons for students. The work would be intense but extremely beneficial for all involved in my opinion. I would say more, but I’m typing this on my phone! LOL

~ THS English teacher

The presenter in my group was first rate . . . an intellectual, a true professional and treated us the same way . . . not a salesman or a guy with some newfangled theory of how kids learn . . . THE BEST PD in my 34 years and I WILL be using her suggestions . . . cannot recall her name unfortunately, but I’m sure you have it . . . hope she comes back in the Fall.

~ THS social studies teacher

The training on Friday from Bard was the best in-house professional development I have received, quite possibly, in my career! Everything about the Workshop was perfectly executed: – just enough research presented – immediately applicable to the classroom — addressed school and district goals — ideal class size – we even began to develop new writing relationships with one another.

I am excited to see that our relationship with Bard will continue next year and am definitely interested in the September opportunity to attend more workshops!

~ THS literacy consultant

I came away from today’s workshop with a few great mentor text resources and affirmations of practices that are already happening in my English classroom. Our facilitator, Bryan, was engaging and adapted to the needs of our diverse group.

I recently read *180 Days* by Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle and found that much of what was presented today coincides with the information in that professional text. If you have not already done so, I would recommend reading it. Both Gallagher and Kittle offer unit overviews (so that you could see what these writing practices look like in a “real classroom”), and reflect openly about their successes and setbacks. It is truly a great resource for the secondary level.

~ THS English teacher

I feel compelled to document my sincere appreciation for today's PD. Maureen, our facilitator from Bard, was incredible. Our cohort engaged in such valuable writing and discussion. Maureen's instruction and methodology in conveying the Institute's approach toward thinking and writing was inspiring. Our session today was packed with lots of challenging, collaborative and creative possibilities to implement within my classes. Thanks again for bringing THS such an engaging day of PD.

~ THS English teacher

I just wanted to drop a quick note to let you know that I'm hearing AWESOME feedback on today's PD with the Bard people. People really loved the opportunity to write, talk about and experiment with practices and get to know each other better as writers and learners. Many people have left today saying it's the best PD they've had in 20+ years. Happy to share more in person but I just wanted to send you into the weekend with that.

~ THS English teacher

### **July Writing & Thinking Workshop: "Writing to Learn"**

Words honestly cannot provide adequate justice for the opportunity and experience we had this week at Bard. Truly it is one of the occasions in life that words cannot provide adequate justice for; one needs to be immersed in the practice. The institution provides a mindset and approach to teaching and learning which affords the students to become active learners while providing ownership for their own learning and education. This approach would make learners on all academic levels feel empowered, successful, and to become deep thinkers and problem-solvers. What a gift! This by far was the best PD I have experienced in my 25 years as an educator. Not once did I look at my watch or wonder when a session would end which is amazing. My leader, Abby Lader, had incredible passion and was able to provide an environment which made all of the learners feel valued and important to the learning community. This was impressive being that she has taught for over 35 years and is approaching retirement. She also has become my pen pal, prefers written letters, and has become a valuable resource. I was surrounded by some of the most intelligent and dedicated teachers I have ever encountered from Harvard graduates, to an Arabic female principal who leads a school in Israel, to a Russian professor from St. Petersburg. The discourse was thoughtful, deep, and left an incredible impact. This was also a week which afforded me to get to know my colleagues and for the majority of the hours that we were out of the classroom, we discussed our new learning, educational practices, and theories. I am grateful that Bard will be continuing a partnership with us in the fall. Thank you again for making this experience possible.

~ THS literacy consultant