

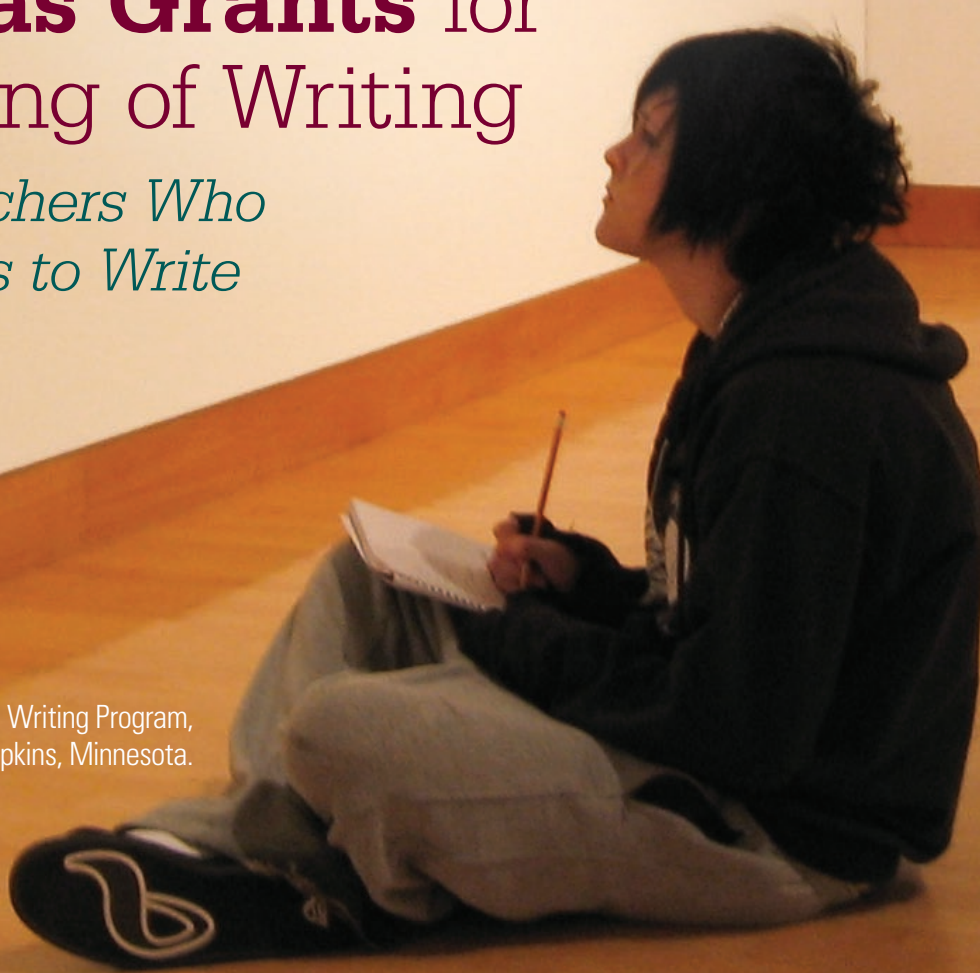
“The honorees are remarkable teachers who are creative and successful in their approach to get young people excited about writing and learning. I’m honored to be associated with this national program recognizing such noble work.”

—*Bob Costas*

The College Board

Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing

*Supporting Teachers Who
Inspire Students to Write*



The Artful Writing Program,
Hopkins, Minnesota.

Recipients of the 2006 College Board **Bob Costas Grants** for the Teaching of Writing



John Cornillon after accepting his award at the College Board Middle States Regional Forum. His student **Darrell Wilson** appears at left.

John Cornillon Middle States Region

John Cornillon, a teacher of English at Harbor City High School in Baltimore, Maryland, an inner-city alternative public high school, is a tireless promoter of creative writing. Four years ago, he set out to tap into what he observed as powerful peer influences. He believed that through writing, a new kind of student—"the creative person"—could emerge and exert a positive influence on his or her peers.

The powerful and raw style of the resultant student work has not only motivated students to write, but has also created a new enthusiasm for reading. Other teachers began using the anthology of student work in their classrooms, and *Voices* became a source of pride within the community. One mother stopped Cornillon in a neighborhood store to tell him that *Voices* had saved her daughter from becoming an academic dropout.

Student Work:

Voices, Harbor City High School

Attitude

by Darrell Wilson

I have a real bad attitude.
One word could change my mood
Waking up in the morning
Can be rough
But holdin' in my anger is very, very tough
If I let it all out
Somebody might get hurt
So instead of being mad
I walk around with a smirk
Sometimes I smoke weed
To put it all inside
Cause I refuse to let the anger
Take over my pride
From the comments of my peers
The cover-up starts to tear
I tune them out to keep from snapping
But on my nerves, they keep on tapping
Life is a struggle, this I see
No one knows how much anger is in me.

Classroom

by Sierra Conaway

In the classroom
She sits alone
She is not as intellectual
And beautiful as most
She wishes she could be
dressed in the latest clothing
And have the best hair
She never smiles
To cover up
how she's really hurting
She tries to be like everybody else,
But it's really not working.

John Cornillon's Tips for Teachers

- **Give students freedom:** "Keep the writing assignment simple. Avoid too many rules. Allow for as much freedom as possible. Tell them to be real and honest in heart and mind and true to what they believe and know." Also tell students, when they write, "Don't cater to others. Try to please yourself."
- **Encourage students to write about what they feel deeply,** identifying the conflicts in their lives, "because like the conflicts in literature, the drama of a conflict sparks interest in readers."
- **Write for publication:** "The ultimate aim of this whole process [writing] is publication," whether it be sharing written work with other students in class for review, projecting it for a class discussion, putting it on a poster in the hall, reading it aloud in class or at an assembly, or including it in an anthology.



Smith's students **Joan** and **Kaitlin** (left) share a laugh as they prepare to read each other's writing samples. **Kristina** (right) works on her poem.

Billie J. Smith

Southern Region

Billie J. Smith is chair of the English department at McKinley High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A Title I school, McKinley has experienced significant growth since Hurricane Katrina, accommodating hundreds of displaced students as well as teachers. Smith guided her students to write poetry and make journal entries about the storm and its aftermath. She is using the Bob Costas Grant to help her students interview storm survivors and create an anthology of writing to document what Smith describes as “the loss and renewal, the past and the future of our lives and our region.”

Billie Smith's Tips for Teachers

- **Be flexible and have a backup plan** if everything does not go as you had planned.
- **Participate and get excited!** Students take their cue from you.
- **Give students choice** and the opportunity to publish and share their writing. Work to come up with topics that are of major interest to students and to you.
- **Give students multiple opportunities** to prewrite, write, revise, edit, and proofread the same piece.

Student Work:

“I teach American literature to juniors. I partnered with the American history teacher at my school to complete an oral history assignment. We had students locate a person directly affected by Hurricane Katrina. Each student created a written product based on their interviews,” Smith explained.

Alone

by *Kaitlin Locascio*

I woke up and heard my alarm clock buzzing loudly. I had overslept again. I felt a sharp pain in my head, left over from last nights partying. This was just a normal morning for me, I was always tired.

I turned on the TV, which happened to be on the news station. My roommate, Bob, watches Leno at night. I was expecting to see Martha or some cheesy soap opera, instead I saw water. That seemed to be all there was on TV. A guy was talking in a helicopter and flying over what looked to be rooftops. This was my city, my hometown underwater. I knew there was going to be a storm, but I had no idea that it would be this bad. Is my house OK? How are my parents handling this?

I sat abruptly on the floor and let my toothbrush slowly slip from my mouth. I had class in an hour, but I knew that I wasn't going. I watched it all morning, the cameras flying by the Superdome, rooftops, what was left of the 9th ward, and what was left of the city. Bob tried to comfort me, but he didn't know what I was going through. Nothing he said helped me, he had absolutely no idea, no one here does.

My mom called later that day, asking if I was OK. I didn't say much, I couldn't say much. She couldn't tell me anything about our house, except that we got a lot of water. I was in denial about the water. I knew that we lived close to the 17th Street Canal but I didn't believe that anything could happen. She said that they wouldn't be able to get inside until the water goes down, and who knows when that will be. It could be a month until they get inside to assess the damage.

After a week of people telling me that they were sorry, I had had enough. Yea, they were sorry, but that doesn't mean anything to me. I was the only person at Belmont whose house was screwed up by the storm. There is a girl from Mandeville, but her house was fine. Another girl lived uptown, but her house was also fine. At first sympathy from the students and teachers was nice because I could use it as an excuse to get out of things. It pissed me off though when people who weren't affected used the excuse that they were “refugees.” Other people started cracking jokes about it, assuming that I would be OK with them.

“At least my house isn't under water.”

“Hey, how are you getting home? Oh wait, swimming.”

I was alone in a sea of superficial people that felt sorry for me at first, and then forgot. The first week I felt that people were looking, staring at me, “That's that kid from NOLA. I heard his family got airlifted out of his house!” After a week of that, people totally forgot about it. They superficially cared because they were interested in good stories. When I didn't have a good story and my family wasn't actually airlifted out of our house, then they didn't care anymore. They were right. I don't have an interesting story, it's not unique. I'm just a regular kid trying to get back to a normal life.



The Artful Writing Program, Hopkins, Minnesota

Jennifer Budenski

Midwest Region

Jennifer Budenski is a language arts teacher and co-creator of the Artful Writing Program at the Hopkins Alternative Program Off-Campus Pavilion in Hopkins, Minnesota. Many of Budenski's students are acquiring basic literacy skills. Others have strong literacy skills, but have not felt motivated to demonstrate them in school. Visiting an art museum is an unfamiliar event for most of Budenski's students. One objective, she says, is to build bridges from their current experiences to the world of art. In collaboration with Teens Rock the Mic, a group of young spoken-word artists, Budenski brings her students to a local museum of contemporary art, the Weisman Art Museum, where they participate in writing activities that are inspired by their reaction to the artwork. The goal, Budenski says, is to translate literacy skills from visual to written to spoken.

Jennifer Budenski's Tips for Teachers

- **Creative and analytical writing go hand-in-hand:** "After building their confidence in creative writing, ask them to write a short analytical essay each week instead of saving it for the end of the term as a final project."
- **Writing and the visual arts:** "Connect what they are doing in class with art in the community. We painted with a local artist and visited a museum several times, but we also noticed public art on a walking field trip and applied critical response protocol (our method of viewing art) in situations as simple as playing Pictionary. I invited a speaker from a local college that specializes in the arts so that students could imagine that what we were doing in class could be a job someday. I could have done all the same things with writers and writing instead of artists and art, but there was something about using visual images that seemed to make students more willing to think a bit harder."
- **Students as artists/students as writers:** "My hypothesis throughout the project was that if students could see themselves as artists, whether painting or writing, then they would feel inspired and empowered to make more choices and worry less about following 'the rules.' And they did... Students need to be taught to think like writers instead of filling in blanks."

Student Work:

Assignment: Students were asked to create a monologue for a figure in an artwork.

Assignment: Students visited "The Pedicord Apartments," an interactive installation at the Weisman, and were asked to create a narrative based on that setting.



Lewis Hine. *Young Boy Coal Miner*, 1909-13. Photograph, Weisman Art Museum.

I Stand Before You

by Stephenie Jackson
—after "Young Boy Coal Miner"
by Lewis Hine

During the days of the Great Depression,
I stand before you, in steady posture,
My hands at my hips.
I'm looking at you with a message—
A stern look on my face.
I wear my working hours on my sleeves.
I stand before you,
With dirt on my face,
My feet slightly dug in the ground.
I am tired.
I'm exhausted.
I hold my head up high.
I stand before a railroad track
That holds the future of coal.
I stand before you with a message.

The Pedicord Apartments

by Chris Vosick
—after "The Pedicord Apartments"

Should I call it home,
or is it just the place you might imagine
in a nightmare?

As I walk into the lobby it's bright,
the smell of stale cigarette smoke
tingles my nose a bit,
and cigarettes overfull the ashtray
that seems to always be full.
There is a reflection of the life I half live,
I round the corner into the hallway
I can't see at first.

My eyes adjust to the familiar dimness,
the dimness that seems to envelop the place,
all while it half envelops you.

I can feel the dampness in the air,
the walls like they're alive, perspiring.

As I slowly make my way to the door
I pass all the others
to hear the all-so-familiar sound and
voice penetrating from behind each,
creating this image of what you think
they're like.

Do they wonder the same as they pass
by mine?

I reach my door and jimmy the key in
the lock. Turn it.

Enter into my apartment to be just
A voice and an image behind a door.

Recipients of the 2006 College Board **Bob Costas Grants** for the Teaching of Writing



Students (from left) **Pedro Perez**, **Jorge Delgado**, and **Gladys Juarez**, with Taylor's fellow Mission High School teacher, **Rodolfo Aceves**, at Asilomar, the annual writing retreat in Monterey.

Student Work:

An excerpt from a play written by student Eva Jiang, which was performed by professional actors through Magic Theater.

Act I, Scene I

Time: Saturday, 10 o'clock

Place: San Francisco

At Rise: On the Bart

[So Lina decided to forgive that S.O.B. Anonymity and graciously extended her invitation to him. It is better when things are cool between friends.]

Lina: What a nice day today! San Francisco is such a cool city.

Anonymity: Hey, aren't you from the city of angels?

Lina: So that means I cannot give compliment to San Francisco?

[Anonymity smiles embarrassingly.]

Lina: You guys know something? I think CNN was somehow stirring up troubles. They got a new survey to ask people if China's protests were justified. So many people misread the question and just voted straight on "NO."

Howard: Yeah...I heard of that. Because they thought that it was another anti-Japan attitude survey like asking you: "Should Japan become a member of the Security Council?"

Lina: This is totally an insult. I mean, they just stereotype Chinese as weak in English.

Anonymity: Can we still cast a vote?

Lina: It's over. At first more people thought the movements were justified and the percent shot ahead, but till the end, the result totally turned to the other side. They say CNN was manipulating behind.

[The conversation falls in silence.]

Callen Taylor Western Region

Callen Taylor is a history teacher at Mission High School in San Francisco, California, and leads the Mission Writing Project. On any given day her students engage in a wide range of writing activities, from preparing for a poetry slam to writing and producing their own plays or composing nonfiction articles. It is all part of what Taylor calls a "multilayered, real-world approach to writing." Seventy percent of Mission's juniors and seniors participate in writing groups where students "give voice to their stories, learn to revise their work, and reflect on what they have learned and accomplished." They meet for after-school workshops in local cafes, participate in public readings, and visit with well-known authors at local library events. Students also learn how to use the Internet to conduct research and use software programs that help them organize their ideas and create a finished product. Each school year ends with a three-day writing retreat on California's Monterey Peninsula.

Callen Taylor's Tips for Teachers

- **Plan ahead:** Have a specific plan ready before the school year starts, with a list of participating teachers, organizations, and parents; a calendar of dates set out for the year; and three well-defined goals.
- **Focus writing beyond the classroom:** "It seems like when the kids have another audience to write for besides the teacher who is grading them, they often get more excited about the writing."
- **Reach out:** Once outside organizations start working with a school, and see benefits, they are willing to come back each year thereafter.

Sandra Williams-Hamp, chief educational manager for the College Board Western Region (left) and **Callen Taylor**.





Student **Kenny Martinez** with his collaborator, **Marian**.

Student Work:

From *Serafin Vigil*
by Victoria Ortiz

The 1930's

"The lack of money; no money," are the words that come to mind when I think of the 1930's. My family and I lived on a 200-acre farm just outside of Trinidad, Colorado. My father and older brothers worked in the coal mine in Madrid, Colorado. It wasn't a deep mine but it was big, and the work was backbreaking. The coal was sent to Pueblo, Colorado, to be used in the steel mills.

Because we lived on a farm, we didn't suffer as much as others did during this time. We were able to grow edible crops, and we raised animals for meat, eggs, and milk. There was a small store where we could trade farm items for other things we needed. But there was no money and there were really no jobs.

The Social Security Act of 1935 and the New Deal both helped, and miners did work for food. There were bread lines where people could get a piece of bread, but any money that came in went to bare necessities.

People think of Oklahoma when the dust storms of the 1930's are mentioned, but Colorado was affected by them, too. I remember having to wear masks because of the dust and that lots of crops were lost during this time.

I was a senior in high school during this time. Because we had no money, I was pretty much isolated from the rest of the world. But I do remember that there were YMCAs in the surrounding communities, and sometimes I'd get to go there for entertainment.

... I was the only one of five children who went to high school and, of course, the only one to get a college degree. I hold a Master's degree in public education from the University of Michigan. My brothers and sister always used to tease me about having so much book knowledge but never really knowing much about working on a farm. That's probably true, but I was blessed in other ways. High school was the greatest time of my life, and the memories of the farm and the coal mines are also good ones.

After high school, I went on to meet my wife of 67 years at Trinidad Jr. College. We had four boys and a girl together, 6 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

My wife died in May 2005, but we had a good, long life together. We both grew up in coal mines, had similar backgrounds, and loved life in very simple ways. I guess you can say, I've come a long way from those simple beginnings.

Mary Beth Britton Southwestern Region

Mary Beth Britton is a language arts teacher and National Honor Society sponsor at Pecos High School in Pecos, New Mexico. Two Sunday afternoons a month her students travel to Santa Fe to meet with senior citizens and record their life experiences. The students conduct interviews, discuss drafts of their work with the seniors, and collaborate on a book of their life stories. Students and seniors perform together at the end of each school year with a reading of the finished product.

Mary Beth Britton's Tips for Teachers

- **Establish a regular schedule emphasizing the importance of the project:** "The more important and valid they [students] believe the project to be, the higher the level of participation."
- **Give students individual choice** in writing projects; this creates student buy-in.
- **Share:** "I share my own writing efforts with my students and talk to them about the struggles I encounter as I try to write poetry or a short story...Above all, I share good writing with them on a daily basis."

Student **Sofia Chavez** shares her writing.



About the Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing



Each year the College Board recognizes exceptional teachers of grades 6 through 12 for the innovative methods they use to develop their students' writing skills. Grants of \$2,000 each are awarded to teachers who are doing an inspiring job of teaching their students to write and who will benefit most from a grant to enhance a successful project. The grants are designed to support not only literature and language arts teachers, but also teachers who include writing instruction in the teaching of the sciences, math, history, and the arts. Any project qualifies if it turns young people onto the joy of writing.

The College Board created the Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing to support teachers and to thank Bob Costas, the Emmy Award–winning broadcaster and author, for his dedication to the craft of writing and his generous public service work on behalf of the National Commission on Writing.

"Teaching in Revere, Mass., for 11 years, [Nancy] Barile has built up a reputation—as a feminist with a voice that more than fills a room; as a stalwart supporter of the school's sports teams, plays, and community-service activities; and as a mentor to students and fellow teachers. It all feeds into her ability to turn kids into writers, which garnered her one of this year's six Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing from the College Board, a national nonprofit association in New York."

—*The Christian Science Monitor*, March 15, 2006

"[John] Cornillon was recognized for helping students develop an annual anthology of their writing. He wrote in his grant application: '...Many of my students have...armored themselves against a world that shows little concern for their feelings or well-being. My goal is to help students examine and refine the expression of the true voice that resonates behind the mask and beneath the armor.'"

—*Baltimore Sun*, February 1, 2006

"The program, initially begun as a service project for MaryBeth Britton's National Honor Society students at Pecos High School, has just been nationally recognized....The College Board grant program—named for broadcaster Bob Costas—looks for teachers doing something above and beyond the call of duty."

—*The Albuquerque Journal*, February 20, 2006

For more information and to apply visit
www.collegeboard.com/costasgrants



"[Callen] Taylor was one of six recipients nationwide of the newly created College Board Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing.... Kevin Truitt, the principal of Mission High, said Taylor's devotion to her students is infectious. 'Every high school should be so lucky to have a Callen Taylor,' he said."

—*The San Francisco Chronicle*, March 20, 2006