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Calderwood Writing Initiative

Charlestown High School

Another Course to College

Snowden International School

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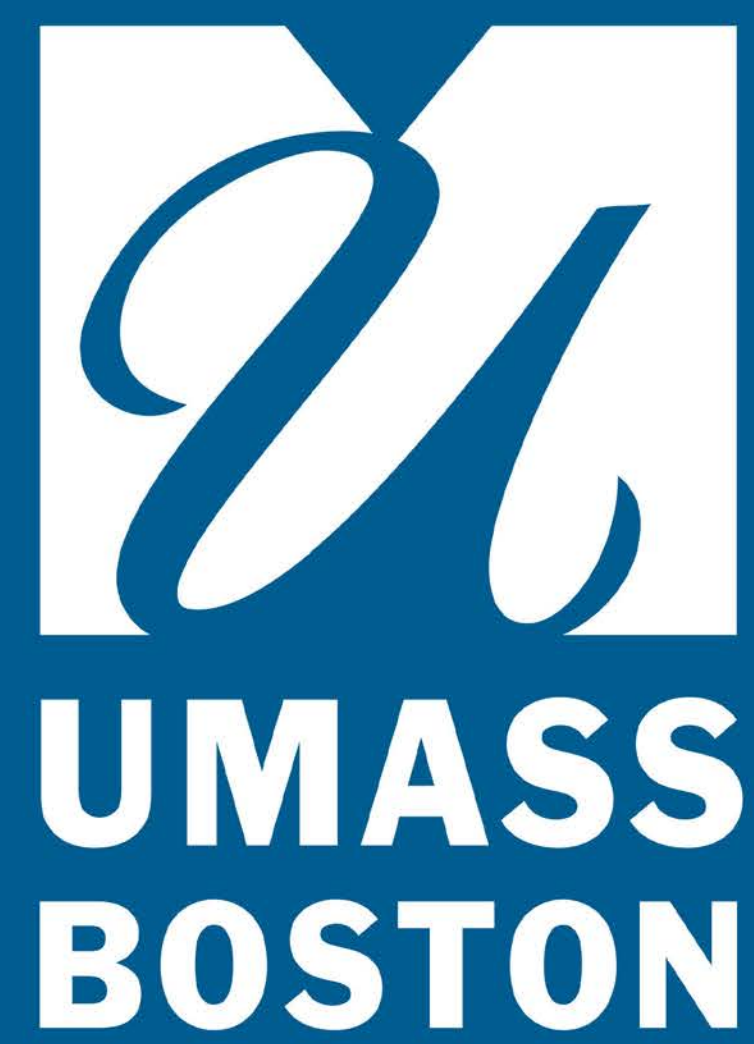


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Calderwood Writing Initiative

Charlestown High School, Another Course to College (ACC), Snowden International School
Denise Patmon, PhD - College of Education and Human Development

Program Overview

Since 2010, UMass Boston has received funding from the Calderwood Writing Initiative to improve the quality of the teaching of writing in Boston area schools through two major programs that constitute this collaborative work.

The Calderwood Fellowship in Writing Instruction

These two-part graduate level courses are designed to equip teachers at all grade levels and academic disciplines with knowledge and skills to effectively teach writing, particularly expository writing. The courses provide teachers with opportunities to study research, to read composition theory, to question and investigate the current instructional practices and current trends in the teaching of writing to all students. The Fellowship is a competitive process open to teachers K-12+ from schools in the Greater Boston area. Selected Calderwood Teaching Fellows take an inquiry stance to develop a classroom-based research study, which they subsequently explore throughout the school year.

The Calderwood/UMass Boston Writing Center

This program seeks to improve student writing and its instruction by creating structures, shared discourse, processes and activities focused on the personal craft and academic uses of writing. The grant funds three Boston Public Schools writing centers at Charlestown High School (CHS), Another Course to College (ACC), Snowden International School. Trained UMass Boston tutors who are enrolled in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Teacher Licensure program are deployed to work with students and teachers at the writing centers. The Writing Center Coordinator organizes and oversees the trained tutors' schedules in the school so that the tutors can best guide students to effectively compose and revise their writing, fulfill their academic assignments and master written language for themselves and their school subjects.

School Involvement

Writing Centers are established with partner high schools where headmasters, administrators, and teachers are eager to engage in the improvement of students' writing abilities through the school-wide use of the writing center. Each proposal must include a letter from the school headmaster that discusses the school's reasons for choosing to partner with Calderwood UMass Boston Writing Center Initiative, the possible impact the Writing Center will have on the academic climate of the school, and the resources that the school will contribute to support the Writing Center program.

Reciprocity

- Tutoring in the Calderwood UMass Boston Writing Centers becomes a paid pre-practicum for students working towards accumulating 75 pre-practicum hours in a secondary school setting.
- Tutors and writing center coordinators along with Dr. Patmon take an inquiry stance about the work they are doing.
- Cadre of teachers who bring their students to the writing centers are provided with additional support for struggling student writers.

Impacts

The number of students using ACC and CHS Writing has steadily increased over the past three years:

2010-2011 = 2,081
2011-2012 = 2,598
2012-2013 = 2,903

Three UMass tutors have been offered full-time teaching positions at schools where they tutored after successfully completing their student teaching.

"Calderwood UMass Boston pre-service teachers arrive equipped to help students achieve. They have solid theoretical knowledge and practical application strategies that work." – Writing Center Coordinator

"The opportunity to do focused thinking in an intentionally collaborative environment was a gift in the middle of summer." - Calderwood Teachers as Writers Fellow

Next Steps

- Institutionalization by schools
- Contribution to text "Writing Centers in Urban Schools" - Denise Patmon author/editor, with contributions from tutors, teachers, and foundation officer
- Professional Development for Teachers – Inquiry Stance for the Integration of Writing Center in One's High School
- Call for Proposals for New Writing Center Sites
- Establishment of Writing Center Network in the Greater Boston Area for High Schools/Secondary Schools

Making Our Work Public

<http://calderwoodwritinginitiative.org>

2011 – University of Hildesheim, Germany "Writing Centers at High Schools in U.S.A." (Dr. Patmon and 2 Calderwood UMass Boston Tutors)

2012 – NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) Annual Convention "Teacher Research & Co-Research to Improve Student Writing and Build Professional Development Communities" (Dr. Patmon, Dr. Gordon, 3 Calderwood Teachers as Writers Fellows – Cohort 2)

2013 - Universite Paris – Est Creteil, France "Teaching Writing and Whole School Change to Teach All Students" – U.S. Context/The Value of Teacher Inquiry in the Teaching of Writing (Dr. Patmon and Dr. Gordon, retired Boston Public School Teacher)

Partnership Information

Another Course to College High School

Lisa Gilbert-Smith, Headmaster
Pata Dibinga, Writing Center Coordinator
UMass Boston Tutors – Pratna Kem, Ryan Plasko, Carl Sidney Oliver

The Muriel Snowden International School at Copley

Cara Livermore, Headmaster
Brendan Roach, Writing Center Coordinator
UMass Boston Tutors – Benjamin DeCoste, Arielle Gray, Sarah Lynch, Sarah Williams

Charlestown High School

William Thomas, Headmaster
Helaine Sanches, Writing Center Coordinator
UMass Boston Tutors – Sarah Abdalla, Obie Abo-Sido, Lourdes Albarracin, Arielle Gray, Nick Wood