

DEEPENING AND GROWING THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE WITH MEMOIR WRITING



Grades 3-8 December 3, 2008: Saddle Brook, NJ

While many of us are experts at teaching students how to write a “Personal Narrative,” we may be stumped at how that kind of writing is similar to or different from the “Memoir.” Katherine will provide us with definitions of each and show us how to take the narrative structure to a new level of depth and sophistication. The narrative form might be thought of as simply a story, with a beginning, middle and end, where something happens to the character (in this case, the writer) that affects or changes the character.

Memoir, on the other hand, is a genre that can include narrative, but may often be energized by the creative uses of time, tense, person, and character. The memoir also includes a self-reflective quality not usually found in strict narratives.

Participants will have the opportunity to read short excerpts from a number of published memoirs, for adults and children, and will experience several short writing experiences that could lead to their own memoirs or could be used for demonstration teaching in their classrooms. Additionally, teachers will learn how writing good memoir vignettes can help increase writing performance on state tests.



Katherine Bomer has taught primary and intermediate grades in New York City, Bloomington, Indiana, and most recently, in Austin, Texas. Her classrooms have been featured in video productions by public television stations, Annenberg/CPB, and the New Standards Project. She worked as a professional developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project with Lucy Calkins, from 1989 to 1994, and she continues to consult for that community as a keynote speaker, and a teacher of advanced courses in reading and writing genres and topics.

Katherine is the author of *Writing a Life: Teaching Memoir to Sharpen Insight, Shape Meaning, and Triumph Over Tests* and *For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action*, with Randy Bomer (both Heinemann books). She is writing her third book that will teach us how to notice and name the art and craft of all students’ writing, even the most spare and struggling. Currently, Katherine consults across the country and abroad, presenting workshops in school districts as well as demonstrating and coaching inside K-8 classrooms about ways of teaching reading and writing. Schools also invite her to coach them in creating visions for year-long curriculum in reading and writing and help them form teacher and administrator study groups to continue their learning.



KATHERINE BOMER

About the Presenter