Fourth Annual English Faculty Exchange
November 3, 2010

In attendance: Teachers and administrators from Orange County high schools, OU BOCES, SUNY Orange and Mount Saint Mary College

Subjects Discussed:

• Early Assessments

OEP Director Mary Ford updated attendees on the progress of SUNY Orange’s Early Assessment Project, which grew out of ideas shared at previous English Faculty Exchanges. During the 2010-2011 academic year, OEP continued to work on the College’s Early Assessment Project. This initiative was launched by former OEP Director Rosana Reyes-Rosello and OU BOCES Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Mary Ann Wilson, Ed.D., to reduce the number of freshman placing into remedial writing at SUNY Orange. Juniors at local high schools wrote practice SUNY Orange placement essays, which were evaluated by SUNY Orange English department faculty. OEP Director Mary Ford and Associate Vice President for Liberal Arts Mary Warrener have met with students, teachers and administrators at the high schools to share information about the college’s writing assessment and the rubric used to evaluate assessment essays.

• Common Core Standards

Dr. Wilson reported that New York State will be among the states adopting the national Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy and Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. Dr. Wilson suggested that attendees can send comments on the revision to the New York State Education Department (NYSED). For additional information about statewide implementation of these standards and the development of P-12 curricula models, see www.corestandards.org. Changes in the New York State English Regents Exam were also discussed.

• Teaching Tips:

Attendees shared tips on teaching writing.

1) Paragraph templates, which are graphic depiction of the components of a well-crafted paragraph;
2) Early conferences. Students must meet with English instructor during the first weeks of the semester and discuss their first essay in terms of the course’s grading rubric;
3) Photos and cartoons as essay prompts;
4) Career-specific essay topics for CTEC students;
5) Writing sense poems as a creative exercise and way to familiarize students with dictionary and thesaurus skills;
6) Digital tools such as blogs and My Access to encourage writing and develop skills; and
7) Books suggested for inspiration included I am a Pencil, by Sam Swope, Because Writing Matters by Carl Nagin, and Looking Back, A Book of Memories, by Lois Lowry. Favorite authors mentioned were Billy Collins and Sandra Cisneros.