In attendance: 22 English teachers and administrators from Orange County high schools, O-U BOCES, SUNY Orange and Mount Saint Mary College

**TOPIC: THE RESEARCH PAPER**

- **Michelle Bulla, Chairperson, English Department, Monroe-Woodbury High School, “The Research Paper and the Common Core”**

  Ms. Bulla gave an overview of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and also discussed the types of research projects assigned in Monroe-Woodbury English courses in grades 9-12; various components of the research paper are phased in at each level. Ms. Bulla, who is the website coordinator for the New York State English Council, offered information about the group and its annual conference. She recommended the book, *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, as a resource for teachers.

- **Tony Cruz, Assistant Professor, SUNY Orange, “Planning the Topic”**

  Professor Cruz spoke about finding topics that are compelling and relevant enough to create and maintain students’ interest. Discussion focused on student-generated research questions, integrating the use of sources, viewing literature as both a mirror and window, and research paper topics relating to students’ career goals.

- **Anne Sandor, Assistant Professor, “The Research Paper Process”**

  Professor Sandor discussed the research paper process she employs in her Freshman English II class at SUNY Orange. She noted that the assignment’s focus is a story that the students have discussed in class and worked on in an earlier assignment.

- **Pat Sculley, Chairperson, English Department, SUNY Orange, “A Sample Rubric”**

  Professor Sculley presented an example of a grading rubric for a research paper in an introductory English course. The rubric awards points for correct formatting (15 points), documentation and citations (30 points) and presentation and content of the essay (55 points). Points are deducted for sentence skills errors (e.g., spelling run-ons, verb tense, lack of parallelism).
Diane Bliss, Professor, SUNY Orange, “Current Trends in Freshman Composition”

Professor Bliss reported on the findings of her sabbatical project, which examines English programs and expectations at four-year colleges in the region. She discussed the trend toward essays and assignments that employ argumentation and also the interest in writing across disciplines at these institutions.

Attendees offered “best practices” suggestions to their colleagues. These included:

- Highland Falls attendees Bridget Smith and Philip Yosso suggested assigning topics of local interest, which leads to better papers and less plagiarism;
- Mandatory instructor/student conferences to discuss papers;
- Goshen English Department Chairperson Roger Kalin allows students the option of turning in a rough draft of a paper for review before the due date; and
- The assignment of a number of shorter papers instead of one long paper.