

Establishing Cultures of Writing

Ravenswood Writes Program

“Everything we know about writing development tells us that students who write frequently and get responses from caring and knowledgeable adults or peers progress most rapidly. Ravenswood Writes rests on this principle as well as on a strong belief in and commitment to student abilities.”

—*Andrea Lunsford, Professor of English, Stanford University & Co-Director, Ravenswood Writes*

“Schools that support the development of successful writers are those that provide an environment in which students write fluidly and frequently on topics that bridge their home, community, and school interests and demands. Ravenswood Writes is built on this principle and on the belief that all students can be successful writers.”

—*Arnetha F. Ball, Associate Professor of Education, Stanford University & Co-Director, Ravenswood Writes*

Developing good writing skills at the high school level is critical to students’ success in college and the workforce. In addition to effective instruction in all high school classes, one-on-one conferencing is particularly effective in helping students become better writers. Building on this insight, the Stanford University School of Education, in partnership with the Stanford Writing Center, launched the **Ravenswood Writes** program in fall 2005. The program enhances the culture of writing at selected Bay Area high schools through the creation of school writing centers that will provide individual conferences or tutorials for student writers.

Initially financed by a grant from Teachers for a New Era, Ravenswood Writes aims to establish an enduring partnership between Stanford and East Palo Alto High School, Summit High School, and Hillsdale High School by providing continuing long-term support for writing instruction. According to Clyde Moneyhun, Director of the Stanford Writing Center, the goal of Ravenswood Writes is to establish one-on-one tutoring of writing as a regular practice in the writing lives of students through the writing centers. At first the program will provide tutors who are Stanford students, but eventually teachers and students from the schools will help staff the centers. Each school’s writing center will be tailored to meet the particular needs of the school, and the Ravenswood Writes team will offer professional development to the teachers on staff.



East Palo Alto High School (EPAHS) senior Shamika Walker (left) and her brother (in the background) listen attentively as senior Rosa Ayala shares her poetry. EPAHS is one of the schools participating in Ravenswood Writes.

Stanford undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in tutoring are invited to enroll in the Stanford seminar “Tutoring with Adolescents” before beginning to tutor. Designed for working with diverse student populations, the seminar challenges old assumptions and paradigms of tutoring and writing; in it, students investigate what is now known about teaching writing across cultures and communities. Following completion of the seminar, Stanford tutors tutor at least twice per week.

For more information, contact Clyde Moneyhun, Director of the Stanford Writing Center, at moneyhun@stanford.edu or (650) 723-0045.