

WE WERE HERE: WRITING OUR LIVES TO MEET A LRNG INNOVATION CHALLENGE THROUGH TEDTALKS, RADIO PLAYS, BLOGGING, AND ETHNOGRAPHIES

BASSICK, DARIEN, STAPLES, BARLOW, CENTRAL, & GLOBAL STUDIES HIGH SCHOOLS

TedTalks

Students at Joel Barlow and Staples High School benefited from the expertise of Megan Zabilansky, Kim Herzog and Robert Galinsky in creating curriculum and supporting Teen TedTalks to feature at their schools and at the *Writing Our Lives* Conference.

Radio Plays

Shaun Mitchell directed Radio Plays with students at Central High School. Inspired by Matt De La Peña's *We Were Here*, playwrights wrote scripts, turned them into radio plays, and performed them as original pieces.

Blogs & Maps

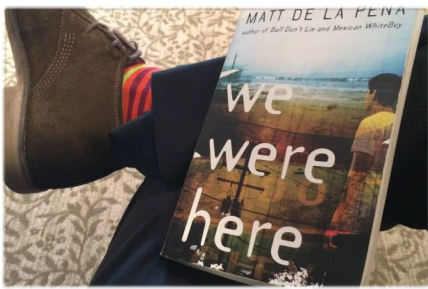
Two high schools, Global Studies and Darien, collaborated on blogs to promote inquiry and cyber-connectivity under the guidance of Jen von Wahlde and Paula Fortuna, while Kate Bedard led the charges of Bassick High School students to do a digital mapping project of Bridgeport.



Writing Our Lives-Digital Ubuntu

CWP-Fairfield met the LRNG Innovation Challenge by spreading the power of partnership and expanding audience with digital writing across six high schools. Participating teachers were inspired in the 2014 ISI to compose OpEds featured by the CT Mirror's *Special Report: Education, Diversity, and Change in Fairfield County*. They wanted the same inspiration for students. Each school was given copies of Matt de la Peña's *We Were Here* and technological tools (voice recorders, web cams, microphones, iPad stands, speakers, etc.) were purchased to promote digital writing. Inspired by *I Too Am Harvard*, the teachers asked students, "Why are you here? What is your Connecticut?"





I Am, Because We Are

Built upon the philosophy of Ubuntu and Writing Activity Genre Research, teachers set out to assist individual compositions within a larger community of southern Connecticut to assist responses to:

- Why are you here?
- How are your CT communities viewed by others?
- How can you *Write Your Life* in a 21st century way?

The six teachers involved collaborated on ways to expand space and time from a single classroom of one high school, into several classrooms across Fairfield County, Connecticut. In-school curriculum assisted out-of-school composing that resulted in hundreds of student products that were shared with one another during the *Writing Our Lives-Digital Ubuntu* conference.

Over 130 students attended the conference which also featured author Matt de la Peña and TedTalk personality Robert Galinsky. It enhanced the *teachers teaching teachers* philosophy of the *National Writing Project* to promote *students teaching students*.

Links To Some Of The Work

Special Report: Education, Diversity, and Change in Fairfield County: <http://projects.ctmirror.org/fairfielded/>

Matt de la Peña's Website: <http://mattdelapena.com>

Robert Galinsky's Website: <http://www.galinskyplace.com>

Sample of Central High School's Radio Plays

- The Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FeFnjAPsz0>
- Super Love: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUyypkNpQZk>
- The Family Dinner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1okxbQNFGIw>

Sample of Global Studies 9th Grade Blogs

- It's Whatever: <https://itzwhatever.wordpress.com>
- Chemical Hemingway: <https://mychemicalhemingway.wordpress.com>

Sample of Darien High School's Blogs

- The Voncuatro: <http://www.voncuatro.blogspot.com/p/welcome-to-mrs.html>
- The Vonwordites: <http://www.vonwordites.blogspot.com/p/home.html>

Sample of Joel Barlow's TedTalks:

- https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B2hTEZNSNddLVUxXUms4eW1OdkE&usp=sharing_eid

A Sample of Staples High School TedTalk

- The School Event: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w5CSU4MMRmpG5piR7GS5EYTyc1BEDDcPaqJgy2IrEOw/edit>

Sample of Bassick High Schools WebMapping:

- We Too Are Connecticut: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zPHH079EHTD4.kYjYz6ALxFJc>

