

What Are You Doing this Summer?

By Barbara Bass T-C'88



Try a picture blog! Not sure what's involved? Read on...

Hi everyone,

In early May, I was at the MWP writing retreat in Sharpsburg MD, where I learned from Diane Curry about a fascinating program called "Project 365." The project focuses on your taking one picture a day for one year and writing a short journal piece about each one. I started over that weekend, and now I'm looking forward to seeing which pictures I take today and which one I will write about.

The link below focuses on a Project 365 blog, but I'm doing mine in my regular journal, leaving a place for the picture at the top half of the page and doing my journal entry on the bottom half. The website also offers Project 365 items, such as a special notebook to use, but, again, you can make the project "yours." You don't need any special equipment except for a camera and a way to print pictures.

Website quote: "Imagine being able to look back at any day of your year and recall what you did, who you met, what you learned... (Often we find it hard to remember what we did just yesterday or even last night, let alone a whole year ago!)"

<http://photojojo.com/content/tutorials/project-365-take-a-photo-a-day/>

If you decide to try it, let me know. I'd love to hear what you think. bbass@towson.edu. I'm thinking of introducing Project 365 to my students when school starts up again in the fall.

Thanks again to Diane Curry. And thanks to all of the fabulous MWP T-Cs who participated in our annual retreat.



Back row: Sheila Cunningham, Lori Youse, Lucy Hoopes, Susan Strasser, Diane Curry, Judy Reilly

Front row: Cindy Waugh, Cheryl North Coleman, Sarah Njeri

Editor's Notes

By Angela Vann T-C '03,
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A year and a half ago I left the classroom after teaching students who were dually diagnosed as learning disabled and seriously emotionally disturbed. I wasn't exactly sure where I wanted to go, or what I wanted to do, but realized that I was heading towards burn out. That dreaded place that many of us have visited for short periods of time, but Spring Break, or an unexpected snow day came along and we were able to resist the pull and return to the wonderful world of teaching. For me, I feared that I would reach this fearful place, find that I couldn't resist the pull and be lost! What would I do without the desire to teach, to touch young minds and see that spark become a flame when students realize that, they can do it!

What I found was Verticy Learning Academy, a place where I could combine my two loves, teaching and writing. I was hired as a Language-Based Learning Difference Curriculum Specialist. Quite a mouthful isn't it! When you get past the title, you come to my new reality. During the first twelve years of my career I taught reading, language arts and English to students who struggled with reading and writing. Now I sit in a cubicle and write curriculum for students with language-based learning differences throughout the world. My body still has difficulty embracing the notion of sitting all day, but my mind and heart are on fire. Life is amazing.

Many of us are teachers and writers, neither of which is an easy career choice, and both of which come with numerous frustrations and obstacles. At times, I feel that I may have lost my mind combining two rather challenging careers into one, but then I read letters and emails from students saying how happy they are to be learning to read and write, and from teachers and parents saying that there is a new love for reading and writing in their classrooms and homes. Isn't that why we do what we do—to make a difference, to touch lives, to know that we as teachers and writers have an amazing gift to share? The icing on the cake comes when you love what you do. I love what I do!

The Maryland Writing Project helped to cultivate me into a writer, and encouraged me to share my experiences and knowledge from the classroom. I share this because I've found that following unexpected paths has opened the door to possibilities that I never imagined.

I hope that whether you are a writer, a teacher or a student, you are embracing all that MWP has to offer, and enjoying how it is shaping your life. I am, I truly, truly am!