



February 2024 Newsletter

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WHITEFISH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY WORK SESSION

Coaches worked with students on Whitefish Growth Policy proposals in Wesley Webb's high school class. Enjoy this video of students presenting their policy ideas to city council!

Coaching update

WCM just trained 21 new community members to become volunteer coaches!

Below are the coaching opportunities for all trained coaches. There may be additional sessions added to our coaching calendar in February and March. As soon as those details are solidified, coordinators will inform trained coaches via email.

Flathead

Kalispell Middle School

6th grade, poem

- [Friday, Feb. 16, Single Draft](#)
 - 8 coaches at 8:00 - 8:55am
 - 7 coaches at 9:00 - 9:50am
 - 7 coaches at 9:55- 10:45am
 - 8 coaches at 1:15 - 2:05pm

5th Grade, research

- [Monday, Feb. 26, Edgerton Elem. Kalispell](#)
 - 3 coaches at 11:00 - 12:30

5th Grade Research

- [Monday, March 4, Edgerton Elem. Kalispell](#)
 - 3 coaches at 11:00 - 12:30

Missoula

CS Porter Middle School

8th grade, Choice Writing Assignment 2022, MacFarland

- [Wednesday, March 27, Single Draft](#)
 - 7:50-9:20, 9 coaches needed

Sentinel High School

Argumentative Essay, Allison (more information on assignment available soon)

- [Wednesday, March 27, Single Draft](#)
 - 2:25-3:55, 7 coaches needed
- [Thursday, March 28, Single Draft](#)
 - 12:50-2:20, 4 coaches needed
 - 2:25-3:55, 8 coaches needed

Not a trained coach yet? Learn about our upcoming workshops, below.

Questions regarding coaching in the Flathead can be directed to Jeanne Wdowin (jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org) or in Missoula/Ravalli to Kat Jackson (kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org).



biasbrewing
KALISPELL, MONTANA

Bias Brewing Pint Night

Join us at [Bias Brewing in Kalispell](#) on Thursday, February 29th for a pint night fundraiser!

From 5-8pm, \$1 of every pint purchased will be donated to WCM. Bias Brewing is also donating a "Friends with Benefits" membership to be raffled off, which includes:

ONE FREE GROWLER FILL PER MONTH

ONE FREE 12OZ BEVERAGE ON BIAS PER MONTH

DRINK FREE ON YOUR BIRTHDAY!
(UP TO 48OZ IN THE TAPROOM OR A GROWLER FILL TO GO)

10% OFF ALL MERCHANDISE AND GLASSWARE

Tickets can be purchased in advanced now through 4pm on February 29th. Email admin@writingcoachesofmontana.org to purchase: \$5 for 1 ticket, \$20 for 5 tickets. Tickets can also be purchased in-person at the event from 5-8pm on February 29th.

Writing Matters, podcast update

We are excited to announce that WCM's podcast, Writing Matters, will be unveiling a new episode within the month! This episode, about seasonal storytelling, had so much great content that we decided to split it into two parts. Part I will highlight local business owners, Chapter One Bookstore customers, and a burgeoning young writer's voice. Part II is an in-depth interview with Professor Emeritus of Native American Studies at University of Montana, Dr. Kate Shanley.

Look for Part I next week! In the meantime, make sure to enjoy Writing Matter's first episode: [The AI Bots Are Coming!](#)

Spring Meet-Up's

WCM is hosting two virtual Meet-Up's during the spring semester, each highlighting an expert guest speaker. All are welcome to join!

Shareen Grogan, University of Montana Writing Center Director, will be discussing how to coach students at opposite locations in the writing process--already-excellent papers and underdeveloped papers: Friday, March 1st, [attend via this Zoom link](#). Note: this training is a shared virtual space with UM Writing Center tutors.

Kathy Dunnehoff, Flathead Valley Community College Adjunct Faculty, will be leading a workshop about how to offer critical feedback in a positive and supportive manner. April 11, 5:30-6:30pm. [More details and Zoom link here](#).



Thank you to [Chalet Inn](#) in Whitefish for supporting Writing Coaches of Montana's mission!

If your company also wants to invest in local students' literacy, contact admin@writingcoachesofmontana.org.



Growth Mindset: a coaches' blog

Above: Coach Heidi (left, in blue) works with a student at Florence-Carlton Middle School in fall 2024.

Ravalli coach, Heidi Veneman, joined Writing Coaches of Montana in 2020. Below she describes an important interaction with a recent student regarding the use of AI (artificial intelligence.) Coach Heidi did a great job with the situation: not making assumptions, communicating supportively, and informing her coordinator about the interaction.

A Coaching First

When working with students, after a brief chat, I always start by asking them to read me their work. This gives me the chance to get to know them a bit as a writer: I get a feel for voice, organization, and content and then make a quick plan for proceeding.

On a coaching day last November, I was assigned a student new to Writing Coaches. Although a bit nervous, he seemed a willing participant. As he began reading his paper to me, I was struck by his impressive word choice and the overall flow of his writing. He seemed to have a good command of the prompt, yet I had a nagging feeling something was off.

Moving forward, we began to look more closely at his main points. I had him go back and read aloud again. When he stumbled over one of his “impressive” words, I wondered: was his paper AI-generated? It made sense then, the gnawing feeling I had of something being off. His speaking voice and his writing voice were not at all in sync.

Gently, I went back and I asked him what he meant. He hesitated briefly and then, looking sheepish, he admitted that the writing was not his. Not wanting to make it worse or judge in any way, I just asked him what he was trying to say. Immediately, he launched into a long and wonderfully descriptive explanation. My eyes got big and my smile even bigger as I told him that’s what writing was all about, that his stories, his opinions, his words were important. And that is what his teacher and every teacher wanted: HIS voice. Completely astonished, he responded with, “Really?” “Yes, really,” I repeated.

Since it was the end of our session, he quickly jotted down some of his ideas and left in an eager rush. I don’t know exactly what he did with that small nugget of advice. But I have to believe that he walked away knowing his words, his voice, his writing mattered.

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