III POGIL Regional Network Writing Collaborative ideas/thoughts:

Benefits of participating in a writers’ collaborative

Writing activities in a group offers a number of benefits compared to writing activities on one’s own. These benefits include the ability to spread work and responsibilities among multiple people as well as the ability to take advantage of the expertise and insights of your collaborators. Opportunities and needs for activities can be identified, and writing with a partner/group can provide support from and connections with other writers to help overcome obstacles. Your activities can be tested with a broader audience, and you can obtain richer feedback regarding your activity.

Recommendations for participating in a writers’ collaborative

It is more productive if the writing group is based on disciplinary interest rather than locality. Sharing ideas with faculty of similar interests can produce feedback that is richer than sharing writing samples with local faculty from different disciplines. Additionally, careful attention needs to be paid to the structure of the activities. Learning cycle activities must have clear learning cycles, which a collaborative group can help to point out. Finally, attention must be paid to ensure that the activities are inclusive in their outlook (but I’ll need to talk to the diversity and inclusivity group to get the wording right.)

Benefits of writers’ collaborative for The POGIL Project

Development of collaborative writing partners/groups offers the POGIL Project the opportunity to help support instructors and their POGIL practice, especially those instructors in areas where appropriate activities are not available. These writing partners/groups offer opportunities to provide structure to help writers craft high quality POGIL activities, to help POGIL practitioners broaden their own knowledge and skills, and to potentially increase the quantity of activities that could contribute to other Project efforts (such as the POGIL Activity Clearinghouse).

Potential drawbacks of participating in a writers’ collaborative

Writing activities with a partner/group does come with potential disadvantages. The writing process may be slower, especially if you are waiting for information, materials, or feedback from others. There may be differences in expectations among group members, and you may find that some control is lost in the activity writing process.

Starting a writing group

* Connect with the efforts of the POGIL Activity Clearinghouse
  + Participants need to have prior writing workshop experience (1-day workshop, 3-day workshop, writer’s retreat). This could also include delivery of portions of the activity writing track, such as Activity structure, or the organization of facilitated local writing workshops to get started.
  + Submit ideas or indicate interest through PAC to help facilitate connections among interested authors
* Resources for writing groups:
  + POGIL Writings Guidelines (<https://pogil.org/authoring-materials/writing-guidelines>). Topics include:
    - Author guidelines for classroom activities
    - Characteristics and types of POGIL materials
    - Writing content learning objectives
    - Writing process skill goals
    - Basic POGIL implementation
    - Elements of a POGIL activity
  + Activity templates
    - HSPI
    - Clif Kussmaul’s ‘Template for a POGIL Mini-Activity’: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/17W5l4ALpo52J862yWTW9Ej7_BeG7-KYcvuAmGOvPFGc/edit>.
  + Help match partner’s/group’s needs to the appropriate support resources
  + Writing groups can be started or cultivated from in-person interactions at regional workshops or local meetings (summits)
  + Existing POGIL writing activities: Writing track at 3-day summer workshop, 1-day writing workshop, Writer’s retreat
* Writing partners/groups can be encouraged to think through the elements of a group contract to better align expectations at the outset of their process:
  + Expectations: What exactly does the group want to work on and accomplish?
    - Subject area / topic objectives for the activity
    - Prior knowledge
    - Level
  + Accountability, Deadlines, and Check-ins: How will group members remain accountable to each other?
    - Work habits - do partner/group members prefer working intensely on one task, or do they prefer to spread things out over a longer time period?
    - Will writers meet and write together collaboratively or work individually and then share?
    - Frequency and type of meetings and check-ins
      * Bi-weekly, Monthly, etc.
      * In person, videoconference
      * In person meetings can be attached to other existing meetings
    - In person meetings can be infrequent
  + Products: What specifically is each member writing? How do these products support or depend on other elements being produced?
  + Roles and responsibilities: What exactly is each group member being asked to do? This could include:
    - Activity writing
    - Activity editing
    - Activity testing
    - Alignment of activities to standards (e.g. NGSS)
  + Feedback: Feedback can be provided informally within the writing group or formally through the POGIL office (<https://pogil.org/authoring-materials/activity-feedback>.)

Future possibilities:

* Mini online workshop through POGIL e-Series