



COURSE REPORT

Multicultural Women Writers Salon 2025
Funded by New Bedford Creative Art is Everywhere

ARTIST STATEMENT

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During this era of open public conversations, I propose using our “Power of Voice” to inform and focus dialogue to create a series of charrettes in New Bedford, because of its unique history of giving hope, freedom and cultural acceptance to scores of people regardless of race, color, gender, age or creed. Toward that end, I’m establishing an intercultural writing group, thanks to the Art is Everywhere grant from New Bedford Creative. The idea was to teach multicultural women how and why they can and should include themselves in written history. At its best, writing is a solitary activity where one tends to postpone their practice, lose direction with their subject or not know how they should create their finished product. This project was proposed as the Manifest Voice Intercultural Writing Club. French history inspired me to rename it the Multicultural Women Writers Salon to simplify a community awareness campaign. “A salon is a gathering of women held by a hostess. The salons of early modern France were polite social and intellectual gatherings that played an integral role in the cultural development of the country. In contrast with other early modern institutions, women played an important and visible role within salons, which became a center of intellectual conversation, as well as a debate stage for social issues,” - Wikipedia.

My goal, to help writers find their voice and solve ‘writers-block’ issues by providing a social environment with weekly lessons and feedback. We come together as women to articulate ideas with those of other cultures, and in doing so find we have similar ancestral experiences and preservation interests. We provide a safe space for cultural expression without judgment. Multicultural women writers often face pressure not only to accurately represent their families while portraying complex social issues from scrutiny to stereotyping, both within their culture and those unfamiliar with the culture. Multicultural women writers also have a more difficult time in publishing their work because cultural competency is not a requirement for industry gatekeepers. That includes prospective outlets for finding audiences interested in the work across cultures. We emphasized the term ‘intercultural’ as part of the writing group title to define the requisite description of diversity and equity expected and to be expected for those joining the group. We wanted an open-door policy when discussing culture among the people in the group. Our emphasis is on communicating a desire for writers to empathize and interact with each other, rather than to merely tolerate or work\live alongside each other. We are an example of what happens when women interculturally in society. We share and learn from each other as ambassadors and teachers of our cultures, who ensure our stories are written to inform local to global human world history. Our schedule strengthened to provide time for sharing, bonding and discussion, followed by a two-hour workshop combining lessons and reviewing writing samples. We began with 20 weeks of story development lessons\practices, and 5 weeks of journal anthology production and publication. Participating writers also helped with all phases of journal product development and editing.

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OUTREACH

In order to meet the goal of providing multi-ethnic women interested in writing a place to come together, I sought the support of Fort Rodman Marine Educational Association managers of the Low Tide Yacht Club in New Bedford's Fort Taber National Park. I have had the support of the Yacht Club in the past. I served on the New Bedford Parks Board, which referred me to the Yacht club where I held communications literacy classes at the Low Tide Yacht Club from 2019 through 2022. ACCESS (Another Course to College Educational Service Solutions), was a 20 hour per 5-day week program totaling 40 weeks over ten-months each year. The ACCESS series comprised 200 classes per year over four years, totaling 800 classes. This ACCESS program trained out-of-school youth to become leading scholars while developing a passion to grow into change agents with a commitment to leadership and service. The four years were individual contracts underwritten by New Bedford MassHire as part of the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Opportunity Act grant for Out of School Youth. I started developing projects like these as an MIT Urban Studies and Planning Fellow back in 1991. The Low Tide Yacht Club was crucial in offering a safe, serene and healing space for women making themselves vulnerable through sharing their personal stories.

BIPOC women of all ages and abilities were specifically targeted as they have the least access to the publishing market. In 2024, low-literacy rates for adults in the United States were about 21% of the population, and one third of those were women. The National Institutes of Health says that a mother's reading skills are the biggest factor in a child's future academic achievement. "Writing and literacy are two subjects that are deeply intertwined; so much so that success at one depends entirely on the success of the other," The Literacy Project Foundation reported. The American market is the largest commercial and competitive book market in the world, and the state of diversity is considered rather homogeneous. The largest multicultural children's book publisher in the United States is based in New York City, Lee & Low Books (LLB). LLB began producing a new "Diversity Baseline Survey" report every four years because they saw a real and deep-seated need for diversity in the publishing industry. The findings of Lee & Low's study surprisingly revealed that over 70% of American writers are white women. However, their overall findings were: 8.4% of writers are biracial/multiracial; 7.8% of writers are Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander/South Asian/Southeast Indian; 5.3% of writers are Black/African American/Afro Caribbean; 4.6% of writers are Hispanic/Latino/Mexican and 1% of writers are American Indian/Alaskan Native/First Nation/Native American (Diversity Chart attached). The World Literacy Foundation states, "Approximately 496 million adult women worldwide cannot read and write (Readingpartners.org) – this is 2/3 of the illiterate population around the world. The long-term impact is staggering - from reducing infant mortality, increasing women's agency, leadership skills, and employment; literate women contribute to their countries' economic prosperity and security."

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Experience

Paula Robinson Deare (MIT Urban Studies Fellow '91, '02, MIT Sloan '12) brings communications, technical knowledge and training from the print, radio and television industries. Prior to entering public relations with Fox Broadcasting, she served as a newspaper graphic designer, magazine columnist, radio talk show host and producer/host for cable TV in Boston, MA. After building a variety of media communications production labs and a lecture hall in Boston, Paula received recognition awards from the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts. She grew her place-based media classes into a web-based institute. Paula holds a Strategy and Innovation Certificate from the MIT Sloan School of Management. The MIT Urban Studies & Planning Community Fellows' alumni granted Paula its Excellence in Media and Technology award. Paula established Eworkstyle Institute in 1995, and was CEO and Communications Media Instructor for three decades.

"I resigned from my position as administrator for various reasons. While I studied business management, I really missed the personal connection of teaching. Although I am a skilled illustrator, it took three decades to return to drawing and painting because of administrative work. Last but not least, I've been writing a book for the past few years, but have had to keep delaying completing it to handle administrative duties. "Power of Voice," my book, centers on teaching multicultural women to enhance their ethnic truth and self-identity. It gives examples of different communication methods, experiences, and best-practices, which are the foundation of what the Multicultural Women Writers Salon is about. The book helps me explore personal and civic issues like, "Do multicultural individuals feel overlooked by the omission of comprehensive ethnic descriptions across institutions? Even though I started with illustrations, which segued into radio, video production, and web design, I have added writing and publishing to my creative repertoire. Multicultural voice refers to my belief in the co-existence and acceptance of multiple cultures within our society. My journals are proof that different cultural groups can co-exist peacefully and contribute to a richer, more vibrant world. The salon and journal are intercultural - acknowledging with respect the values, traditions, and beliefs of women across different cultural groups. Publishing these voices is bringing women's stories out of the shadows and into the world. *As we share stories of personal evolution, fundamental equity, healing and community-building left untold in broadcast & web media, we make a stand for diversity, equity and inclusion. This is important because when news spreads crises, or movies and TV shows spread violence, people need to balance those negatives with informative, helpful and inspiring stories; important to human development. These journals are mapping the long road toward cultural and economic equity, beginning with multicultural communications. Through my website, I am also donating showcase space for human-interest stories of compassion, as well as the fantastic work being done by individuals dedicated to creating positive change around the world.*"

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PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE - AUTHORS' FEEDBACK

The personal stories in each volume are sacred because they cross human boundaries and transcend race and time. Each of these stories brings us closer together because they help us remember our shared humanity. Publishing these sacred stories in a journal creates swells of peace and love far beyond what one can experience in any single presentation. This journal has the potential to spread hope around the world. Just as continuing the Multicultural Women Writers Salon can reach more women to write their own stories of life and love.

I initially quit because life overwhelmed me outside the program. Paula generously said, "Go to the ocean, take a deep breath, and consult the ancestors about quitting, then get back to me in a few days." Of course, I called Paula and told her I wanted to finish what I had started. The entire experience was cathartic. I cried, and others cheered me on; we laughed together at the ironies women face, and I found myself cheering others on when they were stuck. I finished, and I am so proud of this accomplishment. - Keiko-san Nakamura, Itoman, Okinawa

Perfect timing – one of those God moments where exactly what you need appears when you need it most. But here's the thing about finding your voice; it's terrifying. The thought of others reading my thoughts, judging my writing, questioning whether I had any business telling my story - those fears came flooding in. Then through this class I discovered something profound; the courage running through the women in my family isn't learned behavior, it's in our DNA. – Lena Galloway Reddick, Sarah Lennox Remond.

I want to thank Paula and Paul Deare for the amazing opportunity to write this story and for being the best intellectual and excellent mentors a young person can have. This experience has given me valuable time to revisit, dig deeper and celebrate my culture. Because of this writer's salon, I have learned from other strong women, which has shaped my future as a social worker. I can't wait to share this story and offer insight intricate complexities of being biracial. - Jessica Melbourne, Connecting to Vietnam.

When Paula explained this project, I hesitated, but as we talked; she put me at ease and has made this experience very illuminating. As we talked, she suggested I write about my experience of being raised in the Barros household. Her listening made it easier to tell my story, and her amazing skills as a researcher enlightened me and substantiated my childhood memories. Paula is passionate about showing women like me that my story is worth telling. Her work gives those who don't know how to voice their stories the ability to do so, through these journals. I want to thank Paula for this experience but, more importantly, for becoming my friend. – Naia Barros, Cabo Verde Dynasty

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July 19 *Primary Voice in Your Story*, Your Main Character, Filling in Meaning & Points; Completing the Context & Reasons within your Whole Short Story with Assignment Due Saturday

EWORKSTYLE INSTITUTE CLASSROOM

CLASS 6 WRITING

COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT OF MAIN CHARACTERS

<p>SELECT A COURSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PUBLIC SPEAKING KNOWLEDGE WORK MARKETING POWER OF WRITING E-PUBLISHING PUBLIC RELATIONS PRESENTING SLIDES PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO EVITES & NEWSLETTERS COMMUNICATIONS ONLINE MEETINGS WEB SPACE PROMOTING YOUR WORK CREATING FOLLOWERS PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS BROADCAST & WEB RADIO BROADCAST & WEB TV CONSULTING ADVERTISING 	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">OVERVIEW: WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Most stories have heroes and villains or good people and bad or at least one in charge and one under the charge of another. These stories also have moving parts where one who is unequivocally good does something questionable but necessary or another may do something for the wrong reason. These are the stories that make up our lives. Characters can be a person, animal, or figure represented in a part or throughout your story. They can behave a certain way with distinct personalities, traits, and roles within the story or they can disappear after the first section</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>like a guard at an airport or a taxi driver on the way to somewhere. As you develop your story's characters, work to define their uniqueness. Have fun and base them on people you have interacted with in the situations you are describing, if they help move the story forward. Don't worry about editing until its time.</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>CLASS 6 OF 12</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">  1. Introduction Quarter: opens the subject of the class by sharing perspectives to consider and respond to in several ways.  2. Critical Consciousness Qtr: Intelligence, self-awareness & fortitude to create next steps toward developing your story.  3. Competitive Intelligence Qtr: grows your skills, talents, experience & critical thinking into viable, useful solutions to work with others.  4. Conclusion Quarter: creates next steps toward developing an idea, project or venture framework and strategic plan for completion. </div>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">EWORKSTYLE INSTITUTE</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small;">new bedford creative</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS arts.gov</p> 	
GET SYLLABUS EXAMPLE - MY STORY CLASS TUTORIAL GET PRODUCER TOOLS GET DESIGN RESOURCES POST CLASS EVALUATION			
<h2 style="margin: 0;">WRITING CLASS 6: REQUIREMENTS</h2>		<h2 style="margin: 0;">THE POWER OF WRITING CLASS 6 LESSONS</h2>	
<p>STORY PUNCTUATION SAMPLES</p> <p>R. Douglass - on A.M. Douglass Indira Gandhi - Wikipedia Slave Property Early Catastrophe - Words by Age 3</p> <p style="background-color: #000080; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">FURTHER READING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kane Tanaka Turns 117 • E. Roosevelt - 10 Million Women • E. Roosevelt - 14 Years Post Vote • E. Roosevelt - Women Must Learn • Web Space - What to Consider • William Kamkwamba TED Global • How to Write a Marketing Plan • Storyboard Model • How to Format a Screenplay • How to Run Your Own Live Stream <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small;">Samples & References</p>	<p>STORYBOARD HANDOUT</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">CREATING A BACKSTORY</p>	<p>WRITING PRESENTATION</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small;">13 Slides 20 Minutes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define Your Story: intro, middle, close. 2. Research settings, photos, art, & audience. 3. Write who, what, where, when, why, how. 4. Storyboard what you have, what's missing? 5. How have you included the story purpose(s)? 6. Complete development of main characters. 7. Bring the story conclusion to a solid finish. 8. Edit sequences, sentences & punctuation. 9. Encourage story previews & use suggestions. 10. Complete all story edits to publish on time. 11. Final art, photos, edits, approvals to printer. 12. Prep, ideas, etc. Author's celebration party.
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ZOOM MEETINGS SAMPLE RECAP

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The writing workshops focused on story development and character building
- Discussion of how to structure personal narratives and cultural identity stories
- Emphasis on timeline organization and emotional storytelling
- Guidance on incorporating supporting characters without overshadowing the main narrative

DISCUSSED TOPICS

Story Structure and Development

Paula led discussions on how to structure personal narratives using the SMART goals framework.

- **Details**
 - Paula: Introduced framework for introducing characters through behavioral information
 - Paula: Emphasized importance of timeline organization and emotional storytelling
 - Jessica: Planning to write about Vietnam trips and cultural identity
 - Lena: Working on historical narrative about civil rights figure
- **Conclusion**
 - Stories should have clear beginning, middle, and end
 - Personal experiences should be balanced with historical context
 - Cultural identity stories need proper pacing and development

Character Development

Discussion of how to incorporate supporting characters and maintain focus on main narrative.

- **Details**
 - Paula: Advised on balancing supporting character roles
 - Jessica: Planning to include family members' perspectives
 - Lena: Working to incorporate historical figures without overshadowing main character
- **Conclusion**
 - Supporting characters should enhance but not overshadow main narrative
 - Family perspectives add depth to cultural identity stories
 - Historical figures should be referenced appropriately within context

Cultural Identity and Heritage

Exploration of writing about cultural experiences and family history.

- **Details**
 - Jessica: Discussing Vietnamese heritage and multiple trips to Vietnam
 - Paula: Shared experiences about discovering Cape Verdean roots
 - Lena: Working on historical narrative about civil rights
- **Conclusion**
 - Cultural stories should balance personal experience with broader context
 - Important to address both challenges and growth in cultural identity
 - Family history plays crucial role in personal narratives

CHALLENGES

- Difficulty in receiving emails from Paula
- Balance between personal story and historical context
- Language barriers in cultural stories
- Time management for story development

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EDITING & REVISIONS

S pecific	Brainstorm to complete a draft of your story from beginning to end and then edit for large revisions such as an interesting success before the main feature. Have you demonstrated an introductory hook for your readers by sharing your characters' internal conflict and the time and effort taken/will take to overcome said conflict and what it has cost them? How/why will have they pushed through their fears to realize success? Have you given readers something to cheer for: love, belonging, esteem, recognition, actualization, enlightenment, identity, etc.? Look for discrepancies like left out scenes, names, incidents: make plot notes, map/chart each character, make character descriptions cohesive throughout; similarly with background settings. Create solutions to those discrepancies.
M easurable	Create a ticking clock, complexity and originality with timelines, goals, ages, visitors, etc. As things happen in your story, how long does at least one key factor mentioned above take to happen? Allow that to be the focus of your readers' attention; move it along as an innate measurement of progress. You can also mention how long it took to get there historically and/or in the tempo of the event. Make the middle of your story build with anticipation so the reader gains enthusiasm to continue the story journey with you. Use progress, developments, and important settings/events to bring a satisfying conclusion.
A ttainable	What are the big stakes: home, family, life vs. small stakes: dinner, gifts, etc. Do all the major events contribute to the overall theme in your story? Are the solutions interesting? Are there irrelevant explanation tangents anywhere? Have you defined the purpose of your story in terms of what each of the characters wants, needs and the obstacles or successes in attaining such? Do the stakes escalate as they win or lose their goal(s)? What is going to cause your character(s) to be different at the end of your story and how have they won personal growth? Does this/these feature(s) carry through the entire story?
R elevant	Do all of the layers & character voices move consistently from beginning to middle (for the layer) and end in that layer? Do characters match throughout? Example Main character 1, supporting character 2, temporary character 3. Main character journey starts somewhere in the first 1/3 of the beginning and travels through to the end of the story with a relatable triumph. Character 2 may start before or after character 1 and may or may not travel through the entire story. If their journey is elsewhere, make sure you allow the reader to see where they go and why. Character 3 may start anywhere in the story and may end similarly. Allow the reader to also see what happens with this and any other characters 4, 5, 6, etc.
T ime-oriented	Consider monotony. What is the emerging tempo of your story? Does the overall story start off slow and then quicken as actions happen? Do you use dreams or 'déjà vu' to tell part of the story? Does the tempo change (or names change) with each character? Does the tempo change from past or present to the future? As one or more characters become active say one takes a long/short flight, train, car to a location, how long does the trip take <u>in that era</u> and how do you acknowledge that timeline and place or leaving/returning in the story?

SOFT SKILLS & TIMELINE

Soft Skills & Timeline

The Multicultural Women Writers Salon experience provided a unique opportunity in leadership development, civic engagement and service to community. The salon inspired women writers to model and create future successes using the tools, skills training, and information they needed to enhance their strengths and reach their full potential for expression, discussion, and enlightenment.

As Ambassadors: Participants created stories that develop social capital and help promote sustainable communities that foster pride of culture to empower people underserved by media - an ambassadorial service. The Salon empowered underrepresented women to understand their potential as a center of intellectual conversation and debate for social issues. As authors, these women will continue to be a resource that empowers others to understand and define success for their families and communities.

As Leaders: The Multicultural Women Writers Salon puts its educational stock in building human capital. My first step in building and elevating their value as leaders was choosing a venue that imbued luxury. Site selection was key to this partnering and pilot program. The Low Tide Yacht Club site chosen is a 50-acre waterfront park with over a mile of ocean frontage, which projects into Buzzards Bay. This program received funding from New Bedford Creative, the New Bedford Economic Development Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

As Community Voice: The new age of information warfare isn't new; literacy has always been used to disrupt and polarize critical thinking by disinformation, sensationalism, and misinformation, under-education, burning books, etc. The old way of competing was to provide systematic underdevelopment. Yes, it's still being done, but we cannot allow ourselves to freeze and let it run our families and communities over. We need community voice not only to teach writing and resistance, but to help women stand up for themselves, their families and their communities.

Participation & Responsibility. Research participation and writing during the workshops and during the week following were a part of the process. It is the responsibility of participants to listen and respond respectfully during discussions; to engage in small groups, engage in class activities; and to prepare given assignments. Participants had to understand, request clarification, and/or additional help as needed. The workshop examples were used to discuss plagiarism in this way: "To avoid plagiarizing, participants must be careful when quoting or citing from materials, paraphrasing from other's work, or submitting work prepared in whole or part by someone else without properly crediting the author(s)." Participants could not present an exercise completed by other participants or from another workshop.

ONLINE CLASSES