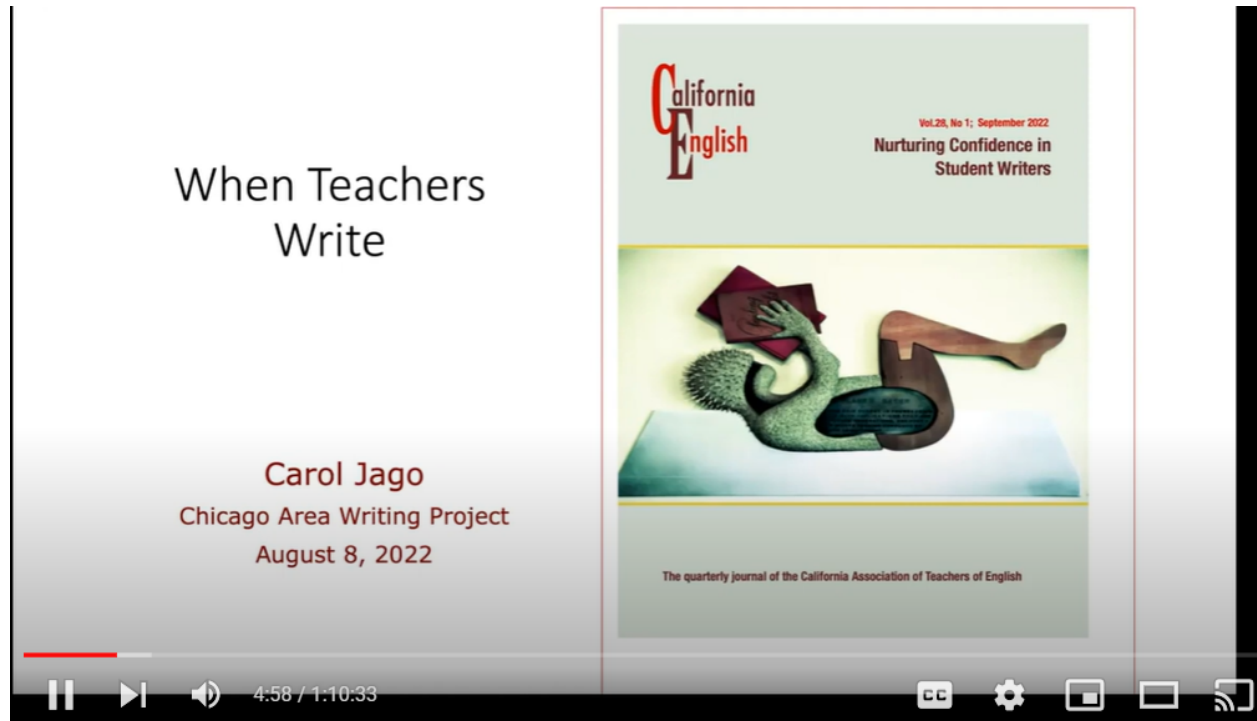


Join the Chicago Area Writing Project for a chat with Carol Jago. This meeting took place in August, 2022, and is a wonderful introduction to how and why to publish your writing.

Before watching, please read this article by [Mike Rose](#). We reference it throughout the course of Carol's talk.



Part I: Sharing Our Stories

Activity:

Let's build on the writing exercises from the previous sections of this post, and start to write more deeply. As we know, every piece of compelling writing tells a story. The Chicago Area Writing Project worked on the writing project below as we continued to develop our public-facing writing.

Supplies:

Pen/Pencil
Paper or Google doc.

Time Needed:
About 60 minutes

Step I

What are the best ways to write for civic engagement? As we know, storytelling is a wonderful way to engage audiences with the issues that are so important to us – stories of planning, teaching, students, parents, ourselves. As a first step, let's continue to think about the stories in our hearts.

1. Is there an issue that gnaws at you?
2. What is a story from your teaching/classroom that you reflect on regularly?
3. Tell a story about a student who was difficult for you. What did you do?
4. Describe a disastrous lesson or classroom moment. How did you handle it? What did you learn?
5. Is there an idea you want to analyze or think through?
6. Describe an issue with educational or social implications. How did you experience this issue in your classroom?

Step II

Once you decide on a story to tell, home in on a singular part of it. Remember the example Carol Jago shared with us, written by Mike Rose:

Two men are installing a washer and dryer into a narrow space behind folding doors in my kitchen. Between them there is ongoing verbal and nonverbal communication to coordinate the lift, negotiate the tight fit, and move in rhythm with each other. They have to be quick—mine is the first of 15 deliveries—yet methodical and careful to avoid damaging the washer and dryer or injuring themselves. All the while, they are weighing options—how do they get these damned machines into this cramped space—and solving problems, the big one emerging when it becomes clear that the dryer doesn't match up with my gas outlet. As they are finishing up, I compliment them on the speed and skill of the installation. They thank me, and one of them walks over a few steps wiping his hands and says it is rare that customers talk to them this way. "They treat us like mules," he says. [Mike Rose http://mikerosebooks.blogspot.com/2018/01/writing-our-way-into-public-sphere.html](http://mikerosebooks.blogspot.com/2018/01/writing-our-way-into-public-sphere.html)

Here's another example from Mike Rose. This one is about his mother, a waitress at a diner.

Rosie took customers' orders, pencil poised over pad, while fielding questions about the food. She walked full tilt through the room with plates stretching up her left arm and two cups of coffee somehow cradled in her right hand. She stood at a table or booth and removed a plate for this person, another for that person, then another, remembering who had the hamburger, who had the fried shrimp, almost always getting it right. She would haggle with the cook about a returned order and rush by us, saying, *He gave me lip, but I got him*. She'd take a minute to flop down in the booth next to my father. *I'm all in*, she'd say, and whisper something about a customer. Gripping the outer edge of the table with one hand, she'd watch the room and note, in the flow of our conversation, who needed a refill, whose order was taking longer to prepare than it should, who was finishing up. [Mike Rose https://theamericanscholar.org/blue-collar-brilliance/](https://theamericanscholar.org/blue-collar-brilliance/)

What is a 'small' moment from your story that you could write into to truly express your classroom and/or teaching experience? What about Mike Rose's (beautiful) writing can you imitate? Begin to draft your moment.

Step III

Edit with someone who cares about you. In CAWP, that's everybody. We broke into meeting rooms to share our drafts. You can employ someone in your house, a sympathetic relative, or interested co-worker. After reading a draft, editors should offer one thing they love and one question they have. (Along with any other constructive ideas, of course.)

Part IV

Put the final touches on your small moment.

Congratulations! You have a story to add to writing currently underway – or you have the beginning of a brand new project!

Part II: Sharing Our Stories

Activity:

Your writing is coming along and getting close to finished. Now what do you do? How do you get your work into public-facing outlets? We've included two resources below – one that focuses on OpEd writing, another to guide you toward scholarly journals. Of course, these are not your only options. Civically engaged writing can take almost any form.

Supplies:

Computer
Pen/Pencil
Paper or Google doc.

Time Needed:
About 60 minutes

MoveOn is a politically-oriented site that offers very clear and helpful guidelines for writing an OpEd for a local publication. You can also sign up to receive a free sticker!



Our Reflections on Writing for Publication

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Writing for Language Arts

Rebecca Ballenger,
Sandy Kaser,
Gloria Kauffman,
Jean Schroeder, and
Kathy G. Short

Members of the Language Arts editorial team reflect on their insights about writing a manuscript for submission to a journal.