The Story Project

How does the Geography and Culture of the Southern Interior influence Writers?
What is the writing culture of the Southern Interior and how do we support, enhance and celebrate it?
Why would students and faculty want to participate in learning or teaching writing in the Southern Interior?
Why would students and faculty want to write about the Southern Interior?

About Stories
Stories can provide encyclopaedic information about a Peoples.
Stories are the mirror of nature: they are how people make sense of complex environments.
Gathering Stories is a non-linear process that has unanticipated outcomes.
Stories provide information for the listener and teller.
Stories can provide both qualitative and quantitative information.

	Theory	Practice

Getting Ready	**Understand Purpose of the Story Project:**
	
	➢ **Inform Writers, Students, and Faculty about the distinct cultural, geographical, and educational identity (advantage) of the Southern Interior.**
	
	1. Cast a wide net with the questions.
	2. Use an indirect approach (displacement) to flush out subordinate themes.
	3. Use 'best of' and 'worst of' scenarios
	4. Encourage storytelling/anecdotes/example rather than provoking opinions.
	5. All aspects (positive and negative) are important – don't pre-select or predetermine outcomes.
	6. Seek truth
		Understand the Objective of the Story Project:
		
		➢ **To establish an identity for the Writers Project in the Southern Interior and its people through personal experiences and stories.**
		
		Story Triggers: Tell a story…
		1. **Attraction/Repulsion**
		• about the first time you arrived here
		    o what were the circumstances around why you came?
		    o what were your first impressions?
		    o what was the first conversation you had?
		• about what drives you crazy about the place.
		    o If you were going to leave where would you go?
		    o What would you take with you?
		    o What would you leave behind?
		2. **Transformation**
		• about going away and coming back and what changed.

- about some significant changes that have happened while you have been growing up here.
- about a major event (great joy/great sadness) that has happened to you here.

3. **Geography**
- about what it means for you to live in the physical place.
- about a time when you were afraid.
- How would you describe this place to someone who doesn't live here?

4. **Culture**
- about the best/worst party you've ever been to.
- about the most interesting person you have met here.
- about the diversity/lack of diversity in the area.
- about what you do to overcome boredom/agitation.
- about a big secret in your community.

5. **Writing - Students**
- What would you tell your uncle at a family dinner about your creative writing class experience?
- What experience has inspired/inhibited your desire to write?
- Tell a story of a writing assignment that astonished/frustrated you.
- Give an example o f how your perceptions have changed/ have been reinforced about the literary world by taking a writing class.

6. **Writing – Writers/Faculty**
Tell a story
- of a time when you felt supported/discouraged as a writer?
- about the best/worst writing class you have ever taught.
- about how much where you live influences/impedes what you write?
- about your most surprising/tedious moment as a writer.
- about your most surprising/tedious moment as a teacher.

		➢ About what gets in your way o f writing /teaching.
The Circles	**Administrative** MP3 Recorders - provided Log Sheets - attached Settings - classrooms, Bar, Coffee shops, Circle configuration Permission Waivers - attached	**Ground Rules** • Create a relaxed atmosphere so that story tellers can feel safe. • Be good listeners, don't interrupt • Allow only one story at a time • Don't argue or defend • Be nimble and patient. Allow for the silences. • If a question doesn't inspire a story, there are plenty of questions to draw upon. • Groups of 4-12 people (6 or 7 is ideal) • Assure Confidentiality • During story circle take notes on the log sheet – write down story tellers name, use key words • After the story circle, remind story teller of the story, ask 'what is going on?" or "what is this story about?" and ask them to give their story a title. • Read back notes from log sheet, including the leading question and have the group identify three significant stories. • Assign storytellers to rewrite one of the significant stories (whether it is their story or not) using their own ornamentation. • Write about your experience as a facilitator. What changed for you?
Centrifugal Force (when things spin out of control)	**Why this might happen:** Scenario 1: Sometimes people begin to tell a story and in the middle of the story they realize how close they are to the events/emotions of the story. Symptoms: Flushing, agitation, hesitation, tears.	**Intervention** Scenario 1: Ask if the story teller would like to take a break and come back to it later. Assure the storyteller that the circle can come back to the story if and only if they want to tell it. Tell everybody to take a few breaths then turn the story over to another storyteller.

	Scenario 2: Someone other than the storyteller begins to argue the "facts" of the story. "It didn't happen like that, I was there."	Scenario 2: Assure the individual that if they would like to tell a story around the same subject, they can when it is their turn.
Closing the circle	**Transcription of Stories** • Clean for anonymity / determine authorship • Archive recordings	• Have writers re-write their own stories or the significant stories identified by the circle and submit it to amiller@selkirk.ca in msWord. Give it the title decided upon by the circle. • Compare and contrast with recordings for vernacular. • Identify thematic insistencies and collate. • Identify gaps between intention of the Writers Project and what is being said in the stories.