

## Practices that Support STRUGGLE

A **STRUGGLE** project typically takes 6 weeks to complete and has 4 phases:

- Gathering
- Collaborative Writing
- Presenting
- Renewing

### **Gathering**

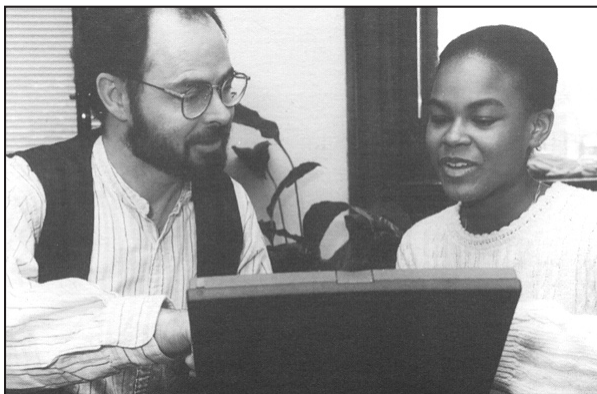
The Gathering Phase begins by inviting a group of teenagers and each one's sponsoring parent or adult to come together to begin the process of talking and writing about their life projects. In order to begin self-understanding and relationships in a new way, parents are not paired with their own children, but instead will meet a new friend. This gathering stage also includes training in which all participants learn collaborative strategies developed at the Community Literacy Center. Special attention is given to forming relationships that honor mutual learning and respect for each person's struggle.

### **Collaborative Writing**

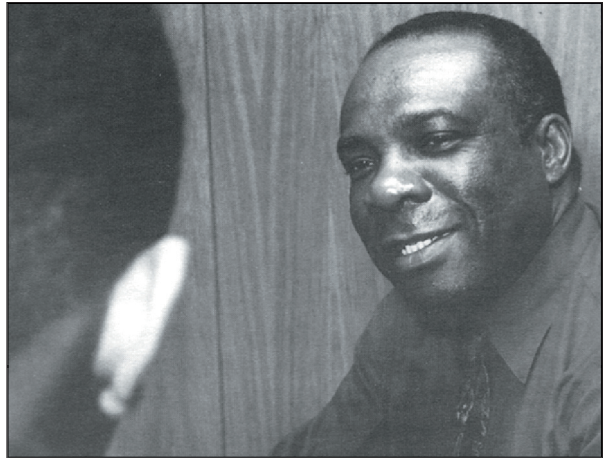
The essence of STRUGGLE combines conversation and writing during the Collaborative Writing Phase. This dialogue moves toward writing in response to four questions:

- *What am I going through? (i.e., my struggle)*
- *What am I up against? (i.e., the barriers)*
- *What am I up to in my life? (i.e., my goals)*
- *What are the ways to be together in this? (i.e., my support system)*

During this phase, teen-adult pairs map their thinking to date regarding their life projects. This initial writing serves as a bridge to ongoing reflection. Pairs work from Macintosh Powerbook computers that house the STRUGGLE multimedia program.



*In STRUGGLE, teen-adult pairs work at computers to do life-project planning.*



*During the Presentation Phase of STRUGGLE, teens and adults share discoveries and commit to new ways of being accountable to one another.*

### **Presenting**

The Presentation Phase begins when all the teenager-and-adult pairs come back together to present their discoveries and their struggles, now named in writing. Rituals of enactment (such as making promises to support each other) are carried out and the promises are then incorporated into the document that each participant has been writing. Two weeks later, the final document – now completely formatted with pictures – is mailed to the participants along with an invitation to participate in the on-going phase of the project, Renewal.

### **Renewing**

The Renewal Phase is simply coming back together to revisit the experience of writing about our lives as struggle and as “life projects.” The goal is to renew conversation between teenagers and adults: conversation filled with struggle and grace, a present sense of solidarity and possibility.

*For an introduction to this process, see STRUGGLE: A Literate Practice Supporting Life-Project Planning, Long. See Community Literacy Bibliography.*