

WMWP

Western Massachusetts Writing Project

**Quality Professional Development
for Massachusetts Educators**

*Improving Student Literacy and Learning
A Teachers Teaching Teachers Initiative*

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Western Massachusetts Writing Project

An Introduction

WMWP is a non-profit K-13 professional development provider licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is a local site of the National Writing Project and a part of the state-wide Massachusetts Writing Project. WMWP is an aspect of the English Department supported by the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

No Child Left Behind Funding: As an affiliate of the National Writing Project, Western Massachusetts Writing Project is:

- authorized under **NCLB, Title II, Part C** as a provider of standards-aligned professional development for teachers and administrators
- eligible for funding under the following sections:



Title I, Part A

- professional development and mentoring programs for Title I schools and teachers

Title II, Part A

- professional development for helping teachers meet NCLB teacher requirements
- professional development in subject-matter knowledge, improving teaching skills, assisting teachers to use Massachusetts' academic content standards and student achievement standards, and state assessments to improve student achievement

Title II, Part D

- professional development focused on enhancing education through technology

Title III, Part A

- professional development focused on improving instruction for English learners.

Title II, Part A, specifically authorizes use of funds for the following activities related to improving teacher quality:

- Partnerships with non-profit entities through grants or contracts to provide professional development activities, coursework, test preparation and testing
- High quality professional development and training in core content knowledge and effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills
- Teacher mentoring, induction, and support programs for new teachers
- Training in the use of technology for instruction and analyzing achievement data
- Bonuses and reimbursement for coursework for advanced degrees or certification
- Bonuses and reimbursement for coursework for teacher certification in areas of high need.

National Writing Project

The National Writing Project is the premier effort to improve writing in America. Through its professional development model, NWP builds the leadership, programs, and research needed for teachers to help their students become successful writers and learners.



Every student deserves a highly skilled teacher of writing. To that end, each of the 195 NWP sites conducts an annual summer institute, attended by the most experienced teachers in the area. Together, these teachers prepare for leadership roles by demonstrating their most effective practices, studying research, and improving their knowledge of writing by writing themselves.

After the institute, writing project teachers conduct project-sponsored programs in their own schools and in neighboring schools and districts. They attend to two purposes: developing teacher knowledge and leadership in their home communities and putting this knowledge and leadership to work to improve student achievement. Collectively, across 50 states, Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands, NWP sites conducted 7,288 programs in 2005.

This model of summer and school-year programs, designed and supported by the National Writing Project, is validated by NWP research. Studies of student achievement, both local and national, show positive results. Importantly, NWP sponsors research directed by local sites as well as research targeted at key educational concerns, for example, how to support new teachers or how to support teachers, grades 4–12, in their efforts to improve students' reading and writing for academic purposes.

NWP sites, all located on university campuses, serve over 141,000 teachers annually. NWP continues to add new sites each year with the goal of placing the writing project within reach of every teacher in America.

Reprinted from *About the National Writing Project*
www.writingproject.org

Massachusetts Writing Project

The Massachusetts Writing Project (MWP), a statewide non-profit learning and literacy network of four writing project sites, is the local initiative of the National Writing Project (NWP). As a network, MWP aims to serve teachers and administrators in their efforts toward improving writing and learning in Massachusetts' schools. MWP offers professional development, spearheads educational initiatives, and works closely with the Massachusetts Department of Education, such as facilitating its recent statewide program *Understanding Open Response: Working with NCS Mentor*. **For state-wide programs, visit www.masswritingproject.org.**



Boston Writing Project

Central Massachusetts Writing Project

Buzzards Bay Writing Project

Western Massachusetts Writing Project

Because Writing Matters

The National Commission on Writing, in its report *The Neglected “R” (April 2003)*, suggested ways to create and launch a writing revolution in today’s educational system. The following points are taken directly from the report:

- Writing is everybody’s business, and state and local curriculum guidelines should require writing in every curriculum area and at all grade levels.
- Writing opportunities that are developmentally appropriate should be provided to every student, from the earliest years through secondary school and into college.
- Common expectations about writing should be developed across disciplines through in-service workshops designed to help teachers understand good writing and develop as writers themselves.
- Universities should advance common expectations by requiring all prospective teachers to take courses in how to teach writing. Teachers need to understand writing as a complex (and enjoyable) form of learning and discovery, both for themselves and for their students. Faculty in all disciplines should have access to professional development opportunities to help them improve student writing.
- University-school partnerships should encourage greater experimentation and the development of new model programs to improve teaching and learning for English-language learners.

Why Work with WMWP?

According to its most recent report, *Writing and School Reform (May 2006)*, the National Commission on Writing set out to discover how today’s educational system could meet the goals outlined in *The Neglected “R.”* Through a series of five national hearings the commission discovered the following examples of effective practice and found these effective techniques represented in the practice encouraged by the **National Writing Project**. These practices, as quoted in the report:

- Encouraged students to bring the languages, experiences, and images of their home communities into the classroom to be used as resources in service of student learning;
- Positioned students and teachers as co-inquirers and co-learners, a process that allowed teachers to model inquiry, study, and learning for their students;
- Asked students to use writing to collect, analyze, synthesize, and communicate information and opinions;
- Called on students to draft, compose, and revise a variety of writings for a variety of audiences, purposes and occasions;
- Required students to use all the language arts (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking) all at once and all together in the service of learning and sharing their ideas; and
- Encouraged students to make some of their writing public beyond the classroom, so as to gain a better understanding of how literacy works in the world.

Professional Development Formats

The Western Massachusetts Writing Project offers professional development programs emphasizing a “teachers teaching teachers” model, which engages teachers in the learning process and empowers them with the latest research and with teaching strategies that they can implement in their classrooms immediately.

Our professional development model strives to build a collegial environment where teachers become expert learners and share their expertise with each other and their students. Our aim is to support teacher leaders who will work together toward long-term change to transform school culture and classroom instructional practice. We tailor our professional development programs to the needs and interests of individual schools and districts.

Professional Days

Make the most of your district’s contractual professional development time with custom-designed full-day or half-day interactive workshops for the entire faculty or for a particular group. Professional days are ideal for introducing new initiatives to teachers or for giving study groups a jump start on their work. See the model of an **In-School Conference** on page 13.

After-School Series

The after-school workshop series is the most flexible and effective way to provide sustained professional development to teachers and other staff. A sequence of interactive sessions totaling 10 hours or more meets Massachusetts recertification standards and offers participants the opportunity to develop in-depth understanding, apply what they are learning, and build a network of support.

Credit Courses

Many teachers need and want to earn graduate credit as they pursue their professional development goals. WMWP is prepared to offer one-, two-, and three- credit courses at your site at reduced tuition rates through the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Demonstration Sessions

An efficient way to disseminate knowledge and foster leadership is to have WMWP model effective teaching strategies in demonstration lessons while your teachers observe. This program includes a collaborative planning session, a demonstration lesson, and a debriefing session. By having teachers learn during their regular teaching time and following up during their regularly scheduled planning time, districts avoid the extra expense of substitutes.

Early Release or Late Start Days

These days fit nicely with our Facilitated Study Groups and Teacher Inquiry Groups.

Summer Programs

For many teachers summer offers the best opportunity for in-depth professional development. WMWP is prepared to offer programs at your site ranging from several hours to a week or more.

Procedures and Costs

Step One: Planning

Contact Western Massachusetts Writing Project to set up a planning meeting. This meeting can take place in person or over the phone.

Susan Connell Biggs
Professional Development Coordinator
Western Massachusetts Writing Project
413-545-5466
vseebiggs@comcast.net

Susan will work with you to design a program that best meets your school's and district's goals and to secure the most qualified teacher-consultants available for your chosen topics. She will also assist you in arranging dates, times, locations and program details.

Step Two: Facilitation and Follow Up

After making arrangements with Susan, you will receive a contract. When the professional development program is completed, you will receive an invoice. Make payment to the **University of Massachusetts** and return to:

Western Massachusetts Writing Project
258 Bartlett Hall
University of Massachusetts
130 Hicks Way
Amherst, MA 01003-9269

We always follow up our professional development with feedback from the participant evaluations and feedback from the facilitator. This also allows us to hear feedback from the district regarding the success of the professional development and to begin planning any future or follow-up work.

Costs

The Western Massachusetts Writing Project's standard program rate is \$150 per hour.

Specific Programs:

12-hour Workshop Series:	\$1,850
20-hour Workshop Series:	\$3,000
One-week Summer Program:	\$3,500
3-credit Course:	\$4,500

Professional Development Offerings

Writing today is not a frill for the few, but an essential skill for the many.

—*The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges*

The Western Massachusetts Writing Project's professional development programs are designed as inquiry-based learning for educators. Participating in, reflecting on, and discussing with other colleagues the newest and most successful learning strategies, theory, and research allows educators to understand their content areas and their teaching philosophies and strategies in a deeper and more meaningful way. These in-depth experiences allow educators to build the strong foundation needed to meet today's ever-changing educational challenges. Because our programs are facilitated by educators with years of classroom experience—learning is authentic. Our relationship with the National Writing Project allows for access to the newest research and the most innovative teaching practices. All of our programs include special attention to issues of diversity and access.

Key Audiences for WMWP Programs

- Administrators
- Teachers, K-16, across all curriculum areas
- Support staff
- Special education educators
- English Language Learner educators
- Family outreach coordinators
- Title One teachers
- Literacy coaches
- Professional development coordinators

Writing across the Curriculum

Making Writing Work in All Classrooms focuses on making writing an integral part of the learning process in all subject areas. Topics will include writing-to-learn strategies, reading and responding to student work, assessing student writing, mastering the details of managing a writing program, and updates on the latest research on writing across the curriculum. The program includes time for the sharing of ideas, the designing of writing techniques to immediately implement in the classroom, and personal exploration into writing and reflection.

Other Writing Topics:

- Writing Workshop
- Writing with Computers
- Response and Revision
- Publishing Student Writing

Reading across the Curriculum

Engaging Minds Thinking: Reading and Writing Strategies for Open Response is designed for teachers who wish to deepen the learning experience of their students by improving reading and writing strategies. This program will look at current reading and writing theory, instructional strategies that work in all curriculum areas with a variety of texts, and common reading and writing processes that students find improve access to curriculum materials. *Includes introduction to the use of NCS Mentor.*

Reading in the Content Areas focuses on reading as an integral part of the learning process in all curriculum areas. Topics will include successful reading strategies in a variety of genres, using writing to improve reading, understanding structure and genre, and responding to students. This program has unique access to the latest research and learning of the National Writing Project's Reading Initiative.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction is designed to broaden and deepen knowledge of differentiating instruction for a wide variety of learning styles. Teachers will be introduced to a variety of teaching strategies they can implement in their own classrooms. Topics covered include scaffolding instruction, cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, and accessing and evaluating student progress. The latest research will inform participants' understanding in differentiating instruction in accommodations, content, process, and product.

Access to Success: Working with Diverse Learners is designed for teachers in all subject areas who wish to better prepare themselves to teach diverse learners in the mainstream classroom. This program looks at how a universal classroom design can accommodate many different kinds of learners. This guided study group model asks participants to observe and reflect upon their own students in response to research, readings and workshops.

MCAS Preparation

Essentials in MCAS Preparation Courses is designed to work with teachers on the essentials for working with students in MCAS preparation, including seeing standardized tests as a genre, understanding test vocabulary, and using think-alouds, writing to read, and content-specific approaches.

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

Transforming STEM Education is a program based on the premise that writing disciplines the mind and brings an academic rigor to the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math. Writing allows students to take their learning in these areas broader and deeper, making connections across curriculum areas and out into the real world. This program focuses on successful strategies in the teaching of STEM such as cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, educational technology, and alternative and authentic assessment.

English Language Learners

These courses meet the requirements of Category 1 & 2 SEI PD, as delineated in the Commissioner's Memo of June 15, 2004. These hands-on interactive seminars are for teachers in all subject areas who wish to better prepare themselves to teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom.

Category I: 10-15 Contact Hours

Second Language Learning

Participants review the current research on second language acquisition and use case studies to explore issues relating to multicultural children. They also look at how the DOE Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners can be used to address the needs of language learners. Participants observe and reflect upon their own students in response to readings and workshops, and they create portfolios that documents their insights. Topics include **Second Language Acquisition Theory, Understanding Multilingual/Multicultural Children, Using the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks & Outcomes.**

Category II: 30-40 Contact Hours

Sheltering Content Instruction

This course explores specific strategies to help diverse English language learners participate meaningfully in the content areas. Participants observe and reflect upon their own students in response to readings and workshops, and they design curriculum pieces that make content more accessible to ELLs using the principles of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and the DOE Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners. Topics include **Instructional Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners in the Content Areas, Differentiating Lessons for Sheltered English Instruction, Using the Sheltered Instruction Instructional Protocol (SIOP Model) for Curriculum and Lesson Planning, Assessing Content Learning of ELL Students.**

Assessment

Improving Teaching and Learning through Collaborative Analysis of Student Work

Looking at student work together, whether it be classroom samples in writing, math, science, or social studies or school-wide writing assessments, exploring this data together allows educators to better understand student learning, improve their own instruction, and influence school-wide curriculum initiatives. Educators are guided through looking at student work together by protocols they can also use in their own teaching, reflective writing, and current research and theory.

Assessment: From Standards to Practice is designed for teachers to further explore the meaning of assessment. This seminar explores the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and how they inform and drive teaching practice. Topics covered are essential questions, student-generated rubrics, exemplars and benchmarks, and using student work as data to inform practice. The format of the seminar includes teacher discussions, workshops on best practice, analysis of student work, and curriculum design.

Technology

Technology in the Classroom is designed with the premise that technology and literacy go hand in hand. Teachers will have the opportunity to try out technologies such as PowerPoint, desktop publishing, digital storytelling, and on-line tools such as Web logs to enhance writing instruction in their classrooms. Teachers learn ways to publish student writing, to conduct Internet research, and to use presentation tools to give voice and movement to the written word. Along with opportunities to experiment with these tools, participants are asked to read and discuss articles that represent current research and thinking on the effective integration of technology in classroom instruction.

Programs on specific technology and literacy areas also available, such as:

- **Digital Storytelling**
- **Classroom Websites**
- **Blogs, Wikis, and Podcasting**

Teacher Inquiry and Research

Inquiry into Our Teaching: Connecting Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment is a program in which teachers design their own inquiries into areas of education with their own classrooms as texts. This collaborative inquiry model guides educators through the latest research in their topic areas, demonstrates strategies to apply their new learning in their own classrooms, and teaches them how to use reflective writing to expand their teaching and learning. As members of a collaborative learning community, educators benefit from each other's research and learning.

New Teacher Programs

New Teacher Seminar is especially designed to support first- and second-year teachers. The seminar models best practices and emphasize reflective writing and discussion. It includes workshops on instructional strategies, provides valuable support groups for discussion and sharing of ideas, and provides mentoring by experienced teachers. Topics covered are classroom management, writing to learn, strategies for diverse learners, assessment and grading, technology, curriculum frameworks, MCAS, and professional standards.

Foundations of Mentoring is a program for teachers in a formal or informal mentoring role. This program provides resources for mentor teachers through a process that allows for professional growth in their own teaching.

- Using student work to guide instruction
- Observation strategies
- Building a learning relationship for professional growth
- Modeling reflective practice
- Planning and debriefing conferences
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Coaching
- Issues of equity.

Literacy Coach Programs

Literacy Coaches Institute. This program explores the way the NWP’s “teachers teaching teachers” model can help literacy coaches support effective classroom instruction in reading, speaking, listening, and writing in their schools. Coaches explore current literacy theory, research, and practice as well as the ways reflective practice, learning communities, and demonstrations can support teachers in their learning.

Literacy Coach Workshops Series. This workshop series on specific areas of literacy can be designed to meet your specific needs. Choose from a variety of topics.

Family Literacy and Family Involvement

The following programs are just some of the ways we work with teachers, family outreach coordinators and Title One directors in creating programs to improve learning for students through understanding family literacy and involvement and by introducing them to the essentials of programming in these areas.

Building Family Literacy to Support Your Teaching

Family Writing Workshops

Family Curriculum Nights

Designing and Facilitating Family Involvement Programs

District- and School-wide Curriculum Alignment Projects

Redesigning Curriculum is designed to build a professional culture within a school while working together to redesign or align curriculum. Inspired by the National Writing Project model of teachers teaching teachers, this series of workshops offers supportive professional experiences in which teachers can question, analyze, and change instruction. This in-depth study into the art of teaching allows teachers the opportunity to align curriculum across grade levels and across content areas.

Teachers have this to say about Western Massachusetts Writing Project Programs

“This experience has far exceeded my expectations. I walked away from each class with a solid background in each topic along with practical suggestions and strategies that I could implement tomorrow. As a science teacher, I see tremendous potential for the use of writing to improve learning in my classes.”

--High School Science Teacher

“I now have a better understanding of why certain classroom practices work and why others don’t. I feel better equipped to make decisions about how to use writing for learning in my own classroom. I’m a more effective teacher already.”

--Elementary teacher

Recent Professional Development Programs and Partners

Massachusetts Department of Education NCS Mentor Leadership Training

Title One Dissemination Project Engaging Minds Thinking and Family Writing Workshops

Pioneer Valley Reading Council 3-year, Links to Literacy Workshop Series: Writing Across the Curriculum (2004-2005), Writing and Reading (2005-2006), and Writing and Math (2006-2007)

Juniper Institute Young Writers Program Workshops

Center for Youth Development and the Commonwealth Corporation Teacher as Writer

Amherst Regional School District Partnership: Writing Task Force, Making Writing Work in All Classrooms, and Access to Success

Amherst Regional High School Conference “Access, Relevance and Diversity: Best Practices in Narrowing the Achievement Gap”

Athol Public Schools Writing and Reading Institute, English Language Learners, Reading and Writing Open Response

Chicopee Public Schools Technology Institute, Diversified Instruction, English Language Learners, and Engaging Minds Thinking

Holyoke Public Schools 3-year Partnership, Working with English Language Learners

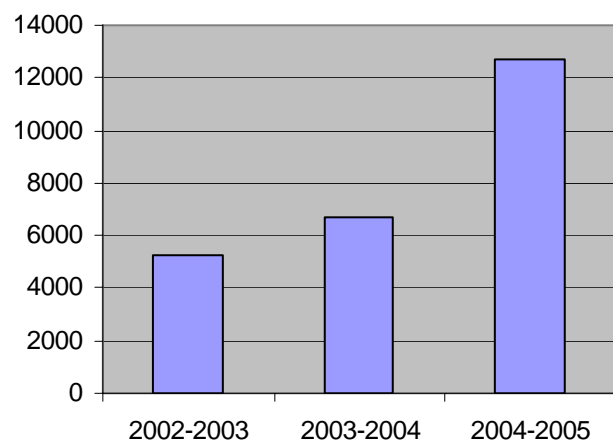
Southwick-Tolland Regional High School Making Writing Work in All Classrooms

Smith Vocational Regional High School Differentiated Instruction and ELL

“Working with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project was a positive and powerful experience for the teachers in our district.”

--School Administrator

Figure 1. Teacher Contact-Hours



Student and Teacher Programs

SummerWrite! is a summer program for students that gives them the opportunity to grow as writers under the supportive leadership of teacher-consultants from the WMWP. Summerwrite! also serves as a professional development opportunity as these WMWP teachers-consultants mentor other district teachers in the teaching of writing throughout the program.

The Western Massachusetts Writing Project's young writers program offers students the time and opportunity to explore their writing interests, discover their strengths, and learn more about the craft of writing. The program provides in-depth writing instruction, structured workshop time, flexibility in writing assignments, and daily opportunities to share writing with peers. SummerWrite! may also include, at the school district's option, instruction in technology.

Students in the program will:

- Write in a friendly and supportive setting with other young writers.
- Share and critique writing with fellow writers in small-group settings.
- Experiment with revision, style, and presentation.
- Explore a variety of genres that may include fiction, poetry, essay, and autobiography.
- Learn to use technology as a part of the writing process (at school district's option).

Teachers in the program will:

- Learn a variety of strategies in the teaching of writing including methods of teacher response, peer response, conferencing, and revision.
- Receive stipends and PDPs for their leadership of the summer writing camps.
- Receive automatic acceptance in our 2007-2008 Get Published! professional development program, which assists teachers in developing student publication projects for their schools.

Get Published! Presenting students' work to a larger audience increases their interest in writing and helps them to develop engaging topics. Knowing they have a real audience to write for, they are also willing to invest their energy in the revision and editing processes. Get Published! brings WMWP to your school to work with teachers on the theory, research, and "nuts and bolts" of bringing publication projects to your school, team and classrooms. We will look at high-tech and low-tech forms of publishing and discuss the pros and cons of publishing options. In addition, we will discuss the practical issues of publishing. Teachers will be mentored through their own publication productions.

Creative Journeys and Writing Matters

Creative Journeys offers a unique program aimed at providing teachers with the resources, guidance, and *time* to plan writing workshops bringing their love of poetry, fiction, or non-fiction to students in their classrooms, in their school and beyond. Teachers gain a deep understanding of essential elements necessary for making writing successful in their classrooms. Teachers will also be mentored through the process of designing their own writing workshops. They will facilitate this workshop at a school-wide full-day conference on writing for students and other teachers called **Writing Matters**, which will be planned and coordinated in partnership with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project.

School/District-Based Conferences

Produced in Collaboration with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project

This Professional Development program consists of two parts:

1. **Conference Design and Planning:** WMWP will design, organize and facilitate a conference on the topic of your school's choice. Design and coordination includes:
 - creating the presentation schedule
 - scheduling keynote
 - communicating with the school for space, technology, and equipment needs
 - designing protocol for evaluation and teacher feedback
 - supporting presenters' needs on the day of the conference
 - implementing and processing evaluations
 - debriefing with presenters after the conference
 - submitting a final report to the school administrator
2. **Presenter Training:** WMWP will provide professional development for teachers whose workshop proposals are accepted for the conference participate in a six hour workshop series focusing on:
 - Session One: A Model Interactive Workshop
 - Session Two: Planning and Designing an Interactive Workshop
 - Session Three: Revising Our Work to Make it Stronger

Sample program from one school's conference

Access, Relevance, and Diversity: Best Practices in Narrowing the Achievement Gap

General Session: Keynote Speaker

First Round of Workshops

1. Allons-y! Using Creative Projects to Teach Complex Foreign Language Concepts
2. Drawing Out the Quiet Voices: Using Writing to Help Students Access Lecture
3. Restorative Meditation Practices to Jump-Start Lessons: Reaching in to Diverse Learners
4. Digital Storytelling: Building a Writing Community through Technology
5. Sounding It Out and Making Sense of It: Decoding and Comprehension Issues in Reading
6. Reflections, Assessments, and Grades – Oh, My!

Second Round of Workshops

1. Out-compute Your Students: Using On-line Data Bases for Research
2. Explode the Text! Active Reading, Authentic Writing, and Passing the MCAS
3. Criteria for Creating Multicultural Classrooms
4. Meeting the Needs of Students with Receptive and Expressive Challenges: How to Maximize the Benefit of Classroom Lectures and Discussions
5. Writing to Learn: Low-Stakes Writing across the Disciplines
6. Learning from Each Other: Practical Problem-Solving through Collaboration

The Writing and Learning Institute

A Summer Program for Teachers On-site in Your District

The Writing and Learning Institute is a one-week summer program that gives teachers in all curriculum areas the time to reflect on and expand their use of writing in their teaching practice. This unique opportunity gives teachers the chance to engage in dialogue with other teachers, explore current theory and practice, and design new or redesign current curriculum. Led by teacher-consultants from the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, this hands-on interactive seminar will review the fundamentals of writing process theory and ways to put this theory to practice in the classroom to enhance learning.

Teachers in this program will:

- Reflect on their own practices in the teaching of writing.
- Set goals, design and sequence curriculum, and align curriculum to standards.
- Share approaches to the teaching of writing and learning in all subject areas that have been successful in real classrooms.
- Explore ways in which writing can enhance learning in all curriculum areas.
- Examine their own writing process to better help use the process of writing in their teaching.
- Explore current research in the field.

Your school district can design this week to focus on a specific curriculum area by choosing two workshops from any of the following areas:

- Assessment and Rubric Design
- Integrating Reading and Writing
- Essential Questions
- Establishing Writing Benchmarks
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Differentiated Instruction
- Reading Open Response: NCS Mentor
- Responding to & Grading Student Work
- State Frameworks and Standards
- Working with Six Traits + 1
- Technology for Teaching Writing
- Teaching Diverse Learners

This one-week program can be taught on-site in your school district for \$3,500 for up to 20 teachers. Teachers can receive 30 PDPs for this program.

“Each day I found myself learning innovative practices to enliven me and my students and hours to read, research, and share ideas with my colleagues.”

—Program Participant

School Partnership Program

Creating a Culture of Writing in Our Schools

“We must put writing at the center of the school agenda . . . Schools that harness writing as an essential tool for learning know the benefits of giving students the skills and confidence to be better writers.”

—The Neglected “R”: The Need for a Writing Revolution

The Partnership Program

The best way to achieve lasting change in literacy instruction is to participate in our partnership program. Partnerships are long-term commitments toward school improvement. WMWP works closely with administration and teachers to design a program that best meets the needs of your district.

WMWP Research Base

Studies showing the writing project’s impact on student performance and behavior are numerous. Often using a controlled comparative achievement . . . The writing project provides efficient and effective staff development to teachers who wish to improve their students’ performances in writing. As a long-standing program with rigorous, on-going evaluation, the writing project is a model of focused staff development that can be altered to accommodate the specific needs of schools and districts.

National Staff Development Council, 1999

Goals of WMWP’s School Partnerships

- Improve literacy skills of all students in participating schools
- Increase the use of writing as a tool for learning in all subject areas
- Expand the knowledge-base for teaching literacy by providing continuous professional development on-site
- Build the leadership capacity of teachers
- Expand school literacy programs to include families and the community
- Encourage the sharing of effective teacher practice through a network of schools and districts

“It’s about valuing teacher knowledge, re-experiencing the learning process to better inform our teaching practice, and pointing us in the direction of current research to broaden and deepen our teaching practice.

This professional development changed my teaching!”

—Elementary Teacher

Key Elements of a Partnership

1. Needs Assessment

A Writing Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the district's teacher community, the district's central office, and WMWP is formed to create and implement a needs assessment of the district's current practices in the use of writing in teaching and learning. This process not only collects essential data to inform future work but also acts as a vital professional development experience for both teachers and administrators. WMWP provides an executive summary to the superintendent including a list of recommendations based on the data collected from the Needs Assessment.

2. Action Plan

Based on the executive summary and recommendations, the Writing Advisory Committee and the superintendent create a 3-5 year Action Plan consisting of any of the following:

A. Classroom-Based Professional Development

- Consultants provide group lesson planning, classroom observation and feedback, lesson revision, and demonstration lessons

B. Professional Development

- Leadership Seminars
- Action Research Groups
- Graduate level courses such as "Making Writing Work in All Classrooms" and "Access to Success: Working with Diverse Learners"
- Curriculum day programs

C. Grant Writing Seminars

- Programs that inform teachers and administrators of state and national grant opportunities and advice in the writing of grants, including NCLB
- Joint application opportunities for additional funding

D. District-wide Network of Teachers

- Fosters collaborative work and connects the district to statewide and national initiatives that brings resources and increased visibility and recognition to the district. This includes opportunities with the Massachusetts Writing Project, the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the National Writing Project.

E. Writing Project Resources

- Teachers from your district receive invitation to and priority acceptance into the Western Massachusetts Writing Project programs such as the Summer Institute, our Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing program, and other conferences and programs offered across the state and the New England area.

3. Evaluation

Each piece of the action plan will include a process of evaluation that collects data to measure the effects of the implementation of the action plan. The Writing Advisory Committee will receive guidance on using this data to measure the effects of our work together and ways they can use this information for professional publication.

National Initiatives and Partner Programs

WMWP draws on the following national resources in developing the most up to date research driven professional development.

National Reading Initiative

Responding to sites' growing interest in reading, and building on the Writing Project's history of successful professional development in the teaching of writing, NWP has received support from the Carnegie Corporation to launch a National Reading Initiative.

New Teacher Initiative

With the support of the Stone Foundation, NWP has created the New Teacher-Initiative (NTI) for the purpose of learning about and developing programs for supporting new teachers in high needs schools in urban areas.

Technology Initiative

The NWP Technology Initiative (TI) provides opportunities for Writing Project sites to develop programs promoting the wise integration of technology into learning and the teaching of writing in the nation's schools. It is supported by a special supplement to the NWP federal appropriation with the goal of expanding opportunities for teachers to access high-quality resources for professional development in technology.

Project Outreach

Project Outreach supports sites in studying and improving their work with teachers who work in low-income areas. Increasing diversity in local writing project leadership is also a goal of Project Outreach sites.

Local Sites Research Initiative

The Local Site Research Initiative stimulates and supports research efforts that are locally defined and locally responsive while adding to national knowledge about the impact of writing project practices.

WMWP is also a member of the National Writing Project's:

- Massachusetts Writing Project State Network
- New England Writing Project State Network
- Urban Sites Network
- Rural Sites Network
- English Language Learners Network



School-Year Programs 2006-2007

N.E.W. Teachers Collaborative

2nd and 4th Tuesdays, September-June. The Teachers' Loft, Open Square Historic Mill, Holyoke.

A safe, supportive professional development group for first-year teachers. Fee: \$100. Graduate credit available through WMWP. More information and registration form at www.teachersloft.org.

Links to Literacy: The Reading-Writing-Math Connection

Thursdays, 3:45-6:15, October 5, November 2, January 18, February 15, April 5. Chicopee Elks.

A series of workshops by WMWP teacher-consultants sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Reading Council. 10 PDPs. Annual membership fee: \$35. Non-member fee: \$15 per workshop. Contact Meredith Cox at belchertown@juno.com.

Writing in High School and College

Saturday, March 31, times TBA. Westfield State College.

A conference focusing on issues related to the teaching of writing in high school and college, sponsored by WMWP and the CENTER at Westfield State College. Program and fees TBA.

Because Writing Matters

Saturday, May 5, times TBA. Crowne Plaza Hotel, Worcester.

The Massachusetts Writing Project spring conference, featuring keynote speaker Sonia Nieto, concurrent sessions on ELL issues, technology, and more, plus a writing marathon. Program and fees TBA.

SummerWrite

Wednesdays, February 7, March 28, May 2, 4-6 p.m. Summer dates variable. UMass, Bartlett Hall.

Similar to Creative Journeys, this workshop series will provide training and technical assistance to teachers who wish to offer WMWP-sponsored summer writing camps in their schools or districts. Led by WMWP co-director Mary Farrin, the three sessions will include logistics, curriculum, and the use of technology. By application. Two-person teams, including at least one WMWP teacher-consultant, preferred. Approximate weekly stipend for leading SummerWrite camp: \$450 (half day), \$900 (full day).

Summer 2007 Programs

Invitational Summer Institute

Monday-Thursday, July 9-August 2, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. UMass.

An intensive program on writing and the teaching of writing. Includes time for personal writing and response, individual research, and sharing of best practices. Participants become teacher-consultants in the WMWP network. 120 PDPs. 6 credits. \$800 stipend (payable in summer and school-year installments). Application process available at www.umass.edu/wmwp/. Rolling admissions begin October 1, 2006.

Open and Advanced Institutes

Other summer offerings for K-16 teachers and WMWP teacher-consultants will be announced in January 2007. These programs will likely include several of the following:

- English 712, Writing and the Teaching of Writing
- a professional writing retreat
- an advanced literature institute
- an open institute on the teaching of writing
- a technology institute
- a teachers-as-writers institute.