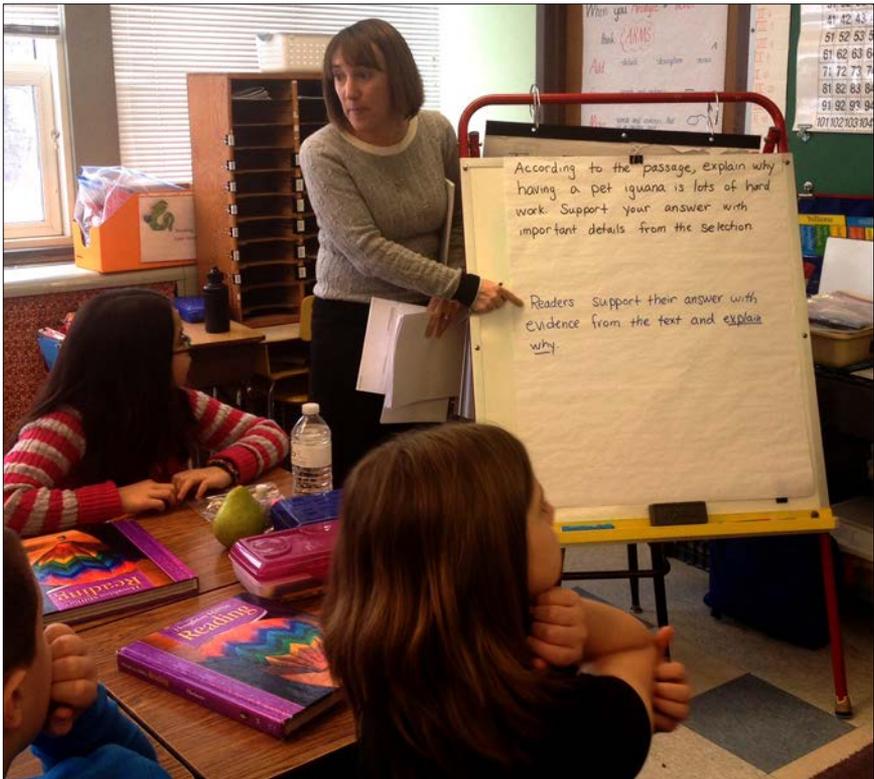




Western Massachusetts
Writing Project
**Professional
Development
Program**

Teachers teaching teachers since 1993



Literacy coach Karen Diaz presenting a demonstration lesson



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WMWP is supported in part by the Department of English and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, University of Massachusetts Amherst

WMWP Professional Development

The mission of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, a local site of the **National Writing Project**, is to create a professional community where teachers and other educators feel welcomed to come together to deepen individual and collective experiences as writers and our understanding of teaching and learning in order to challenge and transform our practice. Our aim is to improve learning in our schools—urban, rural, and suburban.

Professional development provided by the Western Massachusetts Writing Project values reflection and inquiry and is built on teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership.

Central to our mission is the development of programs and opportunities that are accessible and relevant to teachers, students, and their families from diverse backgrounds, paying attention to issues of race, gender, language, class, and culture and how these are linked to teaching and learning.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to design and implement professional development programs tailored to the needs of teachers in your schools.



—Jane Baer-Leighton, Professional Development Coordinator
Contact: 413-545-5466 or wmwppd@english.umass.edu

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A Proven Model of Professional Growth

Based on the successful National Writing Project model, WMWP professional development programs provide:

- customized designs that meet the needs of schools and districts
- research-based methods in the teaching of writing and reading
- standards-aligned curriculum development opportunities
- intensive support for improving student achievement
- special attention to the academic needs of diverse learners
- strategies for effective writing instruction in all content areas
- strategies for using technology as a tool to improve learning
- an approach that values student and teacher diversity
- presentation styles that honor teacher knowledge and expertise.

NWP’s research results demonstrate that professional development programs designed and delivered by NWP sites have a positive effect on the writing achievement of students



across grade levels, schools, and contexts (complete research report available at www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/3208):

- In 16 studies, 103 of 112 comparisons show positive results in writing achievement favoring classrooms of NWP participants.
- Results are strong and favorable in aspects of writing NWP is best known for: idea development, organization, and stance.
- Students in Writing Project classrooms gained more often than their peers in the area of conventions as well.
- In holistic measures, in every case the improvement of students taught by teachers who participated in NWP programs exceeded that of students whose teachers were not participants.

As an affiliate of NWP, WMWP is authorized under No Child Left Behind as a provider of standards-aligned professional development for teachers and administrators under Titles I, II, III, and VII.

“Like all WMWP courses, [Reading and Teaching Literary Nonfiction and Informational Texts] constantly pushed me to think about myself as a reader and writer and to think about how I teach my students.”

Writing and Teaching Writing

Believing that teachers who write are the best teachers of writing, WMWP teacher-consultants include opportunities for participants to write in all professional development offerings. Teachers become more comfortable using writing as a learning tool themselves and gain understanding of their students' needs.

WMWP offers Common Core-aligned professional development on a range of writing topics, from workshops on managing the elementary writing workshop and using the Write Traits rubrics effectively to courses such as **Teaching Expository and Persuasive Writing**.

"I appreciate that we were allowed to become familiar with rhetorical concepts and new approaches to argument and use them in class before we introduced them to the students. What a confidence builder! The course was challenging, but I think [Teaching Expository and Persuasive Writing] was the best professional development I have ever participated in."

Lori Gaw, left,
and Gloria
Davis sharing
their writing
in a WMWP
professional
development
course



"[Effective Writing Instruction in the Elementary Grades] gave me the support I needed to implement Write Traits. The in-class presentation and discussion afterwards has helped me in my classroom."

Promoting Content-Area Literacy

The Common Core and common best practice both say that literacy development must be a shared responsibility across content areas. Recent shifts in literacy standards place increased emphasis on close reading, writing from texts, mastering academic vocabulary, engaging in research, and synthesizing information to create logical arguments *across the disciplines*.

Meeting these expectations is very challenging, especially for teachers who are also responsible for addressing numerous content standards, and many understandably ask, "How can I find the time?"

Drawing on insights gained from the **National Reading Initiative** (an NWP content literacy inquiry) WMWP offers professional development that (1) respects content-area teachers as the experts in their fields, and (2) recognizes that *reading, writing, evidence, and text* have different meanings in the various disciplines. In workshops and courses such as **Principles and Practices of Effective Content-Area Literacy Curriculum Design** and **Reading and Teaching Literary Nonfiction and Informational Texts**, WMWP aims to help participants be better teachers of social studies, science, math, and other subjects (including English language arts) *through* literacy by focusing on the reading and writing practices of their respective disciplines and engaging students in authentic work.



Science teacher Jack Czajkowski
leading professional development

"[Principles and Practices of Effective Content-Area Literacy Curriculum Design] made me much more aware of the need for content-area literacy. It isn't just trying to 'fit in' more standards. I am really beginning to appreciate what it means to utilize reading and writing to show students how to be literate in my discipline."

Supporting English Language Learners

WMWP has been supporting teachers who work with English Language Learners since 1997, when the site's first **Writing for All** institute was offered. Working closely with DESE and responding proactively to state mandates and district needs, WMWP has built a network of teacher-consultants, most of them RETELL certified, who put the literacy needs of ELLs, the fastest-growing subgroup in Massachusetts schools, at the forefront of their work.



ELL co-director Floris Wilma Ortiz leading a group at a summer institute

WMWP's professional growth programs help teachers move from a deficit discourse to one valuing ELL students' cultural

backgrounds and capitalizing on their funds of knowledge. Participants learn and implement research-based strategies focused on English language proficiency and academic language development.

WMWP offers **workshops focusing on the skills and knowledge that teachers need to work with ELLs in their classrooms**, as well as **advanced training for ELL teachers and supervisors**. Topics include understanding the cultures and backgrounds of ELLs, sheltered instruction, SEI lesson planning, vocabulary acquisition, SIOP, developing WIDA MPIs, RTI for ELLs, family literacy/parent engagement, WIDA/CLIMBS, ACCESS tests, alternate ACCESS for ELLs, differentiated instruction for ELLs and ELL/SPED students, curriculum development, second language acquisition, and teaching ESL to youth and adults.

“What I’ve learned in [ELL professional development] will benefit me and my students by equipping me with outside-the-box learning strategies that will make both my teaching and their learning experience better.”

Serving Students with Special Needs

The Common Core standards place high expectations for literacy on all students. Differentiating instruction to provide access and support for students with special needs and diverse learning styles is a persistent challenge for teachers. WMWP embraces the philosophy and strategies of **Universal Design for Learning**, a system for designing instruction that includes *multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement* (the *what, how, and why* of learning), reducing the need for accommodations and modifications. The UDL perspective is infused into all WMWP professional development offerings, but focused workshops are available as well.

“Persuasive topics are challenging because [autistic] students are concrete learners. However, challenging is not the same as impossible, and I appreciate the instructors’ giving me the tools to reach my students.”



Erik Bjorn and Becky Bryant collaborating on a learning task in a professional development course

ELL and Special Education Recertification Courses

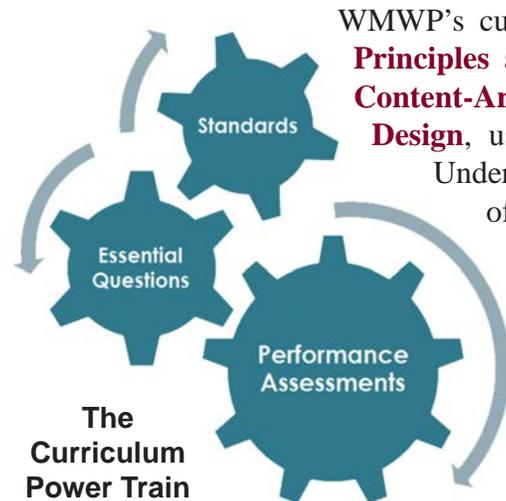
To help teachers meet recertification needs, WMWP can provide districts with 15-PDP courses on **supporting ELLs** and/or **serving students with special needs**. These courses, which can be presented in various formats, meet DESE requirements for relicensure. If offered together, along with a classroom research component, these courses are eligible for graduate credit.

Strengthening Curriculum with UbD

Instead of the kind of piecemeal professional development that happens as we attack each new initiative, I wanted to merge the areas of Common Core, writing, and UbD. ... I knew just where to turn—the Western Massachusetts Writing Project.

—Diana Roy, Director of Curriculum, Ludlow Public Schools

Massachusetts public schools and districts often feel overwhelmed by educational initiatives, which compete for administrators' and teachers' attention and time. One way or another, most mandates and reform efforts must be reflected in the curriculum, and WMWP offers professional development that builds teachers' capacity to create curriculum maps, units, and lessons that integrate priorities such as standards, assessment, and differentiation.



WMWP's curriculum offerings, such as **Principles and Practices of Effective Content-Area Literacy Curriculum Design**, use Wiggins and McTighe's Understanding by Design model of unit development, which is based on backward planning: teachers focus first on goals and performance tasks, then on lessons.

WMWP consultants draw on extensive curriculum design experience from participating in DESE's **Model**

Curriculum Units project, engaging in NWP's **Literacy Design Collaborative** initiative, and creating the ELA Curriculum Guide for the **Department of Youth Services**.

"I appreciate the fresh perspective of designing units with a focus on student learning. I've learned to become a more reflective teacher [in Principles and Practices of Effective Content-Area Literacy Curriculum Design]."

Creating Authentic Assessments

At the heart of almost all reform initiatives—from the Common Core standards to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system—is assessment. To develop effective curriculum units, teachers must be able to design, implement, and evaluate *performance tasks* and *formative assessments* that align with established goals and learning plans. To develop valid District Determined Measures, teachers and administrators must work together to select assessments that are *relevant to the curriculum* and *reliably monitor student outcomes*.

WMWP professional development programs focus on assessment in a variety of ways: designing authentic performance tasks that include real-world application of student learning, using low-stakes writing as a measure of progress toward learning goals, preparing students for high-stakes tests without teaching test preparation, looking at student work as evidence of learning, and doing action research in the classroom to evaluate the impact of pedagogical interventions.

"Focusing on authentic performance assessment [in Teaching Informative and Persuasive Writing] was very valuable. Students were more motivated when writing and speaking for real purposes and audiences."

Teaching with Technology

In the spirit of the Common Core standards and best practice in the field, WMWP not only offers technology-focused workshops but also incorporates digital tools as part of the learning process in all professional development activities. Through online collaboration and experimentation with new applications, teachers build the confidence and capacity to use 21st-century inventions such as the read-

write Web and innovations such as the "flipped" classroom.

WMWP programs focus on how to *add value* to lessons and *differentiate instruction* with digital tools, not just on how to use them.

Sixth-grade teacher Kevin Hodgson teaching with technology



Building Teacher Leadership

While WMWP's ultimate goal is to improve literacy instruction across the grades and disciplines, its strategy is to build teacher capacity for reflection, research, and leadership. The gateway program for teacher leadership is the **WMWP Summer Institute**, in which participants engage deeply in writing, inquiring into teaching practice, and presenting to their colleagues for several weeks in the summer and in renewal meetings throughout the next year. They emerge from this work as *teacher-consultants*, and many go on to facilitate WMWP professional development programs.



Chris Rea engaging in a research project during the Summer Institute

The Summer Institute is free to teachers (by application). For more information, visit www.umass.edu/wmwp/.

WMWP periodically offers advanced leadership development opportunities such as the **Literacy Leadership Institute**, which brings together experienced teacher-consultants and area administrators to develop creative, integrated approaches to educational initiatives.

"I think the most important aspect of the Summer Institute for me was the Teacher Inquiry Workshop—being involved in creating one, as well as getting to experience a range of other presentations and inquiries. I gained lots of practical or new ideas to bring into my teaching in the fall. I also gained a lot as a presenter, thinking about how to structure, prepare for and lead a workshop of this sort. ... This was an opportunity to lead colleagues through my research and thinking process, offer them some ideas for their teaching, and receive feedback. I think schools should encourage every teacher to do a TIW for their staff each year."

Formats, Fees, and Procedures

WMWP works directly with schools and/or districts to design and implement **customized professional development programs** to meet local needs. Formats include school professional development days, early release or late start days, after-school workshop series, classroom demonstrations and coaching, graduate courses (including DSAC-approved programs), summer institutes, and a variety of combinations, including hybrid online/face-to-face offerings.

Presentation fees include ongoing consultation, presenters' preparation and travel time, and presentation materials:

- **Half-day workshop (~3 hours): \$600**
- **Full-day workshop (~7 hours): \$1,200**
- **15-hour workshop series: \$2,500 (multiple sessions)**
- **35-hour graduate course: \$5,000**
- **Full-year partnership including workshops, classroom demonstrations, and consulting: \$10,000-\$20,000**

The standard rate for professional development workshops is \$200 per hour for first 3 hours, with a 3-hour minimum, and \$150 for each additional hour. All rates are based on a 25-participant maximum. Larger groups can be accommodated at an additional \$150 per hour.

Textbooks, if required, are the responsibility of the district. Graduate credit, if applicable, is available to participants at the reduced rate of **\$100 per credit**, plus a registration fee.

The rate for other types of consulting (task force participation, curriculum writing, evaluation studies, etc.) is \$75 per hour, including meetings, online support, writing and research time.

Mileage supplement:

- Beyond 25 miles from Amherst (or presenter's base): \$25/day
- Beyond 50 miles from Amherst (or presenter's base): \$50/day

To explore program options, please call or e-mail **Professional Development Coordinator Jane Baer-Leighton**, who will inquire about your needs, offer suggestions, and develop a proposal. She can be reached at **413-545-5466** or wmwppd@english.umass.edu.



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Professional Development by Teachers for Teachers