

NEW

MWP Is Growing!

Since 2001, MWP has increased the number of its participant contact hours by 35%.

In January, MWP moved to the University of Minnesota's newly renovated Nicholson Hall, giving us added visibility on campus and allowing us to create a stronger writing network between Minnesota public schools and the University.



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Serving Minority Students

By 2018, 30% of high school graduates in Minnesota will be students of color – a dramatic increase from the 13% recorded in 2004. According to the results of the 2005 eighth and tenth grade Basic Skills Test (BST), significant reading and writing performance gaps exist between groups defined by ethnicity. Each ethnic group, especially those that have a high percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) students, requires culturally sensitive instruction that Minnesota teachers must be equipped to provide in order to improve the literacy of all of their students.

Percent of 10th grade students who passed the 2005 Minnesota Basic Skills Test on writing, by ethnicity:

White	95%
American Indian	83%
Asian	81%
Hispanic	73%
African American	70%

The Minnesota Writing Project works hard to meet the needs of minority and ELL students through its youth programs and its teacher consultants, several of whom specialize in teaching English as a second language.



Policy Board Members, 2005-2006

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Minnesota Writing Project

2005-2006
annual update

An active site of the National Writing Project since 1991, the Minnesota Writing Project (MWP) is committed to improving the writing of all students, strengthening university and school collaborations on writing instruction, extending writing instruction to all fields, and increasing the professional power of classroom teachers. We are a statewide organization that aims to serve the educators and students in Minnesota's 2,500 schools.

In the past year, MWP has strengthened and expanded its programming to meet the changing needs of both teachers and students. MWP is...

Creating new opportunities for youth

Designing new opportunities for teachers

Growing to serve a larger population of writing teachers and students

NEW Opportunities for Teachers

After years of research, planning, and networking with the University of Minnesota's Department of Curriculum and Instruction, we are proud to announce that the Regents have approved our **Certificate in Teaching Writing and Critical Literacy**. This 15-credit graduate program for degree and non-degree seeking students will begin in the fall of 2006, giving writing teachers a much-needed opportunity for high-quality professional development at the postbaccalaureate level.

To increase the number and diversity of the schools that we serve, MWP will award **scholarships to two 2006 Summer Institute fellows** who teach in underserved urban or rural areas of Minnesota. These scholarships may be used to defray travel, lodging, and food expenses or simply serve as incentives to attend the Summer Institute.

For the first time, MWP will **co-sponsor the spring conference of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English**, held this year on April 28-29 in Rochester, MN. Our teacher consultants will run sessions on creating literacy networks, performing spoken word poetry, and much more.

Furthering our mission of increasing the professional powers of educators, MWP has invited a select group of our teacher consultants to attend a 3-day **seminar on individual leadership skills**. This group of teachers and principals – who are already leaders in their educational communities – will hone their skills in solving problems, making decisions, having difficult conversations, and facilitating, managing, and influencing institutional change.

Core Programs of the Minnesota Writing Project

Summer Institute for Teachers



MWP offers a 3-week, intensive Invitational Summer Institute where pre-K to college writing teachers energize and improve their teaching strategies by writing poetry and prose, watching guest speaker presentations, planning demonstration lessons, and conducting classroom research projects. Held every year since 1991, the Institute includes the following:

A strong writing component involving collaborative writing groups and practice using writing prompts and constructive feedback

Guest speakers – often poets, visual artists, actresses, scholars, or university librarians – who share their expertise and model innovative teaching and writing strategies

Demonstration lessons, which fellows design and present to colleagues in order to generate new teaching ideas that they will share in their own schools

A classroom research project, which fellows carry out during the school year

An anthology, in which each fellow publishes at least one piece of polished writing

All Institute fellows receive a stipend and graduate credit.



“I had never given myself permission to write, and when I did for this Institute, the flood gates were opened and my work was received in constructive and supportive ways.”

–MWP Summer Institute participant

Youth Enrichment Programs



Photo courtesy of Stillwater Courier

Families All Matter

Supported with desegregation funds and led by the Stillwater School district, Families All Matter has established partnerships among schools in St. Paul and Stillwater, MN. MWP has organized several events for this student cultural exchange program, including field trips for 4th-6th grade students to the Weisman Art Museum and the Andersen Library and a two-day workshop on storytelling and bookmaking for 1st-4th grade students.

Young Writers' Conference

MWP hosts the annual Young Writers' Conference, held at the University of Minnesota campus. At this year's 3-day conference, 60 students from St. Paul middle schools viewed exhibits at the Weisman Art Museum, wrote poetry and prose, and participated in a workshop on bookmaking.



School District Support

MWP teacher consultants offer the following services to Minnesota school districts:

Curriculum review and consultation

Workshops on topics such as writing at particular grade levels, writing across the curriculum, reading comprehension strategies, 6-trait assessment and instruction, and state writing assessment preparation

Institutional Memberships encourage long-term collaboration between school districts and MWP. These two-year memberships provide services to school districts, schools, and individual teachers, and are customized to meet each district's needs. With its current district members, MWP indirectly reaches over 100,000 students.



NEW Opportunities for Students

With their student workshops for Families All Matter last fall, **MWP teacher consultants worked directly with more than 300 students** – a dramatic increase from previous years.

At this winter's Young Writers' Conference, MWP facilitated an unprecedented level of **collaboration between university and middle school students**, as University of Minnesota students from the College of Architecture & Landscape Architecture, the College of Education & Human Development, and the Center for Writing mediated small-group discussions with the young writers.

This summer, MWP and the Center for Writing will introduce the **Gopher Writing Camp**, an all-expenses-paid, week-long summer writing camp for 15-20 low-income middle school students and their teachers. Campers will engage in the process of writing – creating, sharing and seeking feedback, and revising – in a supportive and collaborative environment. Each teacher-participant will select three students and accompany them during the entire camp experience, which includes overnight stays in the University of Minnesota residence halls.