

MWP Continues to Grow!

Over the last year, MWP has increased the number of its contact hours by 30%.

Some numbers from 2006-07:

- **65** programs
- **19,859** contact hours
- **31** inservice programs to over **1,523** educators



Operating out of the newly-renovated Nicholson Hall on the University of Minnesota campus, our teachers and students now have easy access to a nook for conferencing, a state-of-the-art computer lab, and a classroom space for presenting sample lessons.

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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.

Benefits for Our Schools

MWP initiated another benefit this year for our Institutional Membership schools. Administrative representatives suggested that MWP provide additional opportunities throughout the school year for them to meet to discuss/share topics of common interest. MWP was pleased and excited to facilitate these conversations which are scheduled at about two month intervals. The gatherings are held at our Center for Writing, and MWP guides the discussion by providing relevant reading material and/or guest presenters on the selected topic. Topics/issues of concern have included the problem of embedding purchased reading programs, sustaining staff development, creating writing centers in schools, and discussing the use of digital writing. Participants are discovering that these informal gatherings are providing them with an additional network of educational support.

Policy Board Members, 2006-2007

Marsha Besch~Melissa Borgmann~Jen Budenski~Laura Cochlin~Bob Cudahy~Kendrick Davies~Dawn Harrison Butler~Sandy Hayes~Kirsten Jamsen~Jane Johnson~Ann Lindsey~Anne Lowe~Joyce Malwitz~Kristine Martens~Alex Mueller~Sandra Nesvig~Mary Cathryn Ricker~Micki St. Sauver~Micheal Thompson~Muriel Thompson~Joanne Toft~Mary Verbick~Terri Wallace~Nora Wise

Minnesota Writing Project

2006-2007
annual update

The Minnesota Writing Project (MWP) enters its seventeenth year as a National Writing Project site with a renewed commitment to improving the writing of all students, strengthening university and school collaborations on writing instruction, 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.

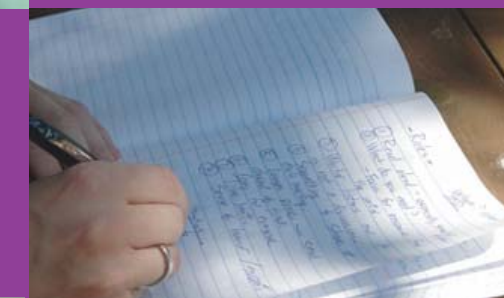
Believing that the best teachers of teachers are other teachers, MWP provides opportunities for educators to . . .

In 2006-07, we launched two new programs: the Gopher Writing Camp for urban middle school students, and the Leadership Seminar for teachers and administrators. We also strengthened our core programs, the Summer Institute and inservice workshops, in which educators learn effective practices for literacy instruction and improve their own skills as readers & writers.



learn from one another,

write together,



and then share their learning.



NEW Opportunities for Teachers

Minnesota Writing Project provides **Outreach Fellowships** to recruit educators from **underserved areas** to attend the Summer Institute. Teachers in urban or rural areas, teachers in areas that are impacted by poverty, and teachers of color are especially encouraged to apply. Last year, one scholarship was awarded to an elementary teacher in St. Paul and the other to a high school teacher from Duluth.

For the past sixteen years, MWP has served as a valuable resource for practicing educators to gain access to the wealth of valuable University programs and resources. This past year saw the approval of a new **Certificate in Teaching Writing and Critical Literacy**, a graduate program that begins with the MWP Summer Invitational Institute.

Through a grant from Education Minnesota this past year, we hosted an enriching opportunity to a select group of educators. To further our mission of increasing the professional power of our teachers, we offered a three-day seminar entitled **Strengthening Individual Leadership Skills**. Participants developed skills in solving problems, making decisions, having difficult conversations, and facilitating, managing, and influencing school and district change.

MWP co-sponsors the annual **Minnesota Council of Teachers of English** (MCTE) Spring Conference. Our teacher-consultants run sessions on boy writers, multi-genre papers, spoken word poetry, using mentor-texts, creating literacy networks, writing in response to visual art, using the arts to support reading and writing, and cross-curricular literacy initiatives.

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 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:

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

A strong writing component

involving collaborative writing groups and practice using writing prompts and constructive feedback

Study groups formed around current research in the instruction of reading

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



“[The MWP Summer Institute] offered me a complete re-evaluation of how I teach writing; now, I feel like I can truly help students be inspired to write effectively in a variety of disciplines.”

–2006 MWP Summer Institute participant

Opportunities for Students

Gopher Writing Camp

A team of our experienced teacher-consultants created MWP's first ever Gopher Writing Camp, an all-expenses-paid summer writing camp for 31 low-income urban youth during the week of June 25-29, 2006. The goal of GWC was to create a meaningful learning opportunity for both



urban youth and teachers, while helping to strengthen our site's capacity to recruit and support urban teachers across our schools and districts. Throughout both the planning and the execution of the camp, we worked (1) to develop our strategies for effective writing and reading instruction (in particular, using visual arts, music, and media technology to motivate and improve literacy) and (2) to deepen our understanding of our diverse student population.

Young Writers' Conference

The Young Writers' Conference is a three-day event for sixty students from the St. Paul Public Schools held at the University of Minnesota. The conference is an opportunity for these schools to inspire some of their best student writers by bringing them to the campus, fostering interaction with student writers from other schools, and encouraging critical response to a variety of creative stimuli at the Weisman Art Museum. The event culminates with a Celebration Day where students share their writings after a bookmaking session.

Partnership Exchange

For the second year in a row, MWP hosted an educational exchange designed to bring St. Paul and Stillwater elementary school students together to build relationships through writing. As part of this ongoing partnership, one hundred and eighty fourth and fifth graders from each district convened at Crosswinds Middle School in Woodbury and Wellstone Community Center in St. Paul to write poems and make books. This event was part of a diversity curriculum designed to provide and promote integrated opportunities for students, families, and staff that expand cultural understanding and support academic achievement.

Writing with Bob Dylan

In February, sixty eighth and ninth grade students from Saint Paul gathered at the Weisman Museum for the **2007 MWP Young Writers' Conference**.

As interested writers, artists, or musicians, these students met with MWP teacher-consultants to write in response to the **Bob Dylan's American Journey** exhibit. Participants sang Dylan's songs, analyzed Dylan's lyrics, and began to write poetry and prose to include in books they made with bookmaker Mary Gotz. These students returned to the Museum in March to complete and celebrate their writing.

