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

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.

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Policy Board Members, 2006-2007


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.
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 designed 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.