

Programs for School District Support



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.

Minnesota Writing Project

University of Minnesota
10 Nicholson Hall
216 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-625-6323

Fax: 612-626-7580

mwp@umn.edu

<http://mwp.umn.edu>

Policy Board Members 2007-2008

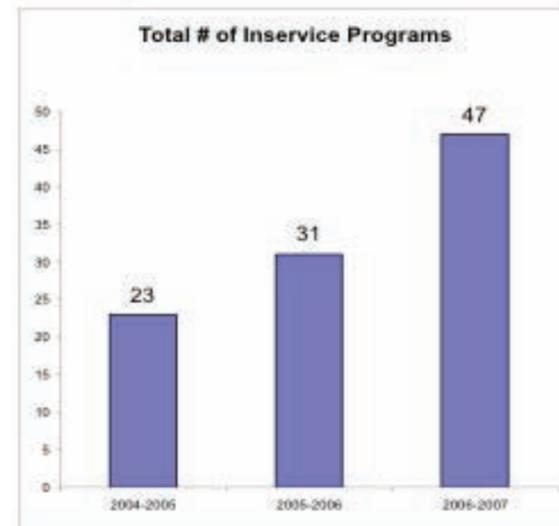
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MWP teacher consultants offer the following services to Minnesota school districts:

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 Partnerships encourage long-term collaboration between school districts and MWP. These two-year partnerships provide services to school districts, schools, and individual teachers, and are customized to meet each district's needs.



Collaborating with Administrators

Currently twelve metropolitan districts hold institutional partnerships with us. Our site has nurtured a growing relationship with these school districts. We invite administrators from these districts to join together throughout the school year to discuss issues of concern. This past year's topics included

- effects of eliminating the 6th grade state writing assessment
- impact of state's changing student demographics
- connections between visual arts and writing

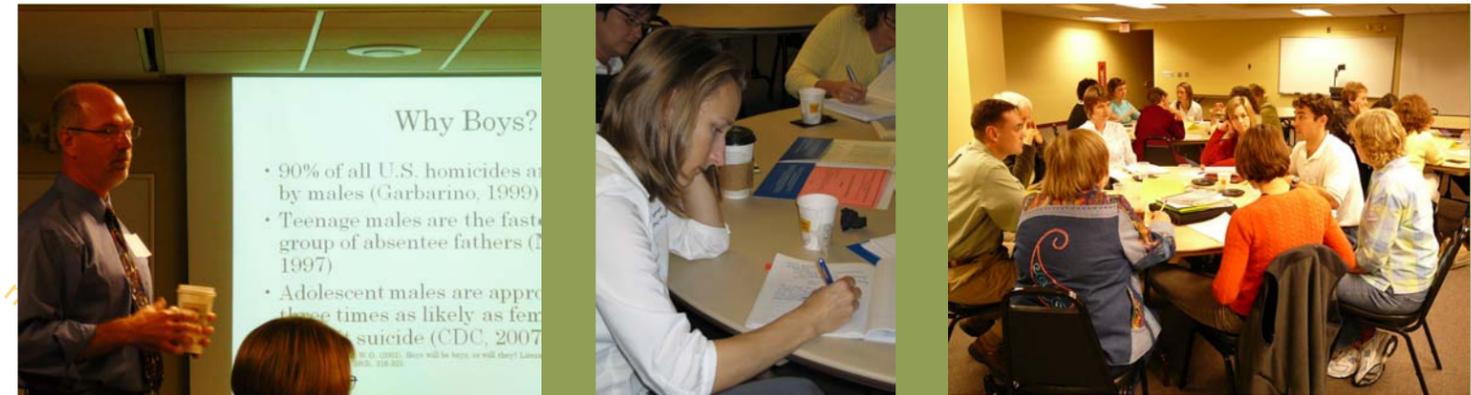
Our site relies on these discussions to create meaningful inservice and continuity workshops, and our administrators appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively.

Minnesota Writing Project

2007-2008
annual update

Having experienced another successful year, the Minnesota Writing Project (MWP) located at the University of Minnesota enters its eighteenth year as a National Writing Project site with increased stability and credibility. Established in 1990, our site identifies its mission as serving educators in the entire state, which consists of approximately 300 school districts, over 50,000 teachers, and more than 800,000 students. Because of our state's geography and demographics, MWP primarily serves the metro area.

Given our belief that the best teachers of teachers are other teachers, we continue to provide opportunities for educators to ...



learn from one another,

write together,

and share their learning.

In 2007-2008, we focused many of our efforts toward strengthening our network of teachers. Through stronger networking we hope to better support Minnesota educators. Some of our network continuity events this year included

- Renewal/Reunion Workshop
- Attending and Presenting at Professional Conferences
- Professional Writing Retreat
- Visionary Retreat
- Professional Book Study

NEW Opportunities for Teachers

We held our **First Annual MWP Reunion/Renewal Workshop Day**. The day centered on improving student writing. Topics discussed included gender in writing and writing for test prompts. MWP Teacher Consultants (TCs) attending the event expressed strong approval of the event and indicated the desire to make the event an annual occurrence.

MWP makes a conscientious effort to **encourage more TCs to present at local and national conferences**. We offer financial assistance for TCs to attend conferences at the local, state and national levels. MWP co-sponsors the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English Spring Conference where this year five of our TCs offered literacy sessions. Attendance at these events has encouraged our TCs to become more involved and to influence many other educators.

We were awarded a minigrant to offer **MWP Professional Writing Retreat** conducted by John Albright and Jen Budenski. Ten TCs had the opportunity to practice expressing their ideas and observations—in essay form—about writing in the classroom, writing across the curriculum, and other successful instructional practices and to gain awareness of potential venues for the publication of professional writing.



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, teaching demonstration lessons, and conducting classroom research projects.



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 TCs carry out during the school year

"The Minnesota Writing Project is a unique learning opportunity for teachers of writing. It allows teachers to feel valued as they learn about the latest research and methodologies. This Project provides a safe atmosphere in which teachers can write, create, and learn."

"The stance this project takes on reflective practice and the resources it places in supporting such critical reflection by teachers is crucial for continued professional growth. Teachers teaching each other, sharing ideas as professional colleagues – this is where real school improvement and student learning starts."

–2007 MWP Summer Institute participants



Young Writers' Conference

The Young Writers' Conference is offered through an expanded partnership with the St. Paul School District. What does the Young Writers' Conference involve?

- 60 students
- 3 days at Weisman Art Museum
- Cross-disciplinary writing experience

This year's conference was centered around the exhibit "Picturing Power: The Photography of Paul Shambroom, which allowed us to incorporate elements of visual literacy along with writing. To inspire writing and reflect on issues of power, students took photos of their neighborhoods and school communities and then wrote about these experiences. Final writings were shared with the larger group and then published in an anthology.



MWP TC Mara Corey partnered with the University of Minnesota to provide an **ACT/SAT preparation workshop for high school students**. More than 150 students from the Twin Cities metro area attended the review session.

MWP TC Ann Lindsey organized a **writers' workshop conference for 250 middle school students** from the Anoka school district. The conference started with a keynote speaker and was followed by break-out sessions related to writing and literacy. Of note was a session put on by the University of the Spoken Word, which facilitates spoken word writing and performances.

As a participant in our Institute last summer, MWP TC Ann Thompson began writing a script entitled "A Different You" This past fall that beginning expanded into **an opportunity for her 6th grade students to collaboratively write and perform** the play. Ann plans to expand the script with the help of her students.

When asked what insights they gained from participating in the conference, students wrote

"I learned that besides expressing myself through writing, I could also use to photography and it would be just as powerful."

"I always used my writing for school assignments and not for myself. I learned new styles and ways to convey a message."

"Sharing thoughts and writing with people who I never would have spoken to before"

