

International Partnerships



In Nicholson Hall on the University of Minnesota campus, our teachers and students have easy access to a cozy nook for conferencing, an airy computer lab, and a classroom space for workshops.

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Minnesota Writing Project Builds Partnership with Skrivesenteret

We continue to build connections with Sør-Trøndelag University College (HiST), located in Trondheim, Norway, which houses the Norwegian National Center for Writing Education and Research (Skrivesenteret).



Since our initial connection three summers ago, we have strengthened our relationship by visiting each other's sites as well as schools in both the U. S. and Norway. In addition, four teachers from Trondheim participated in our 2012 ISI and are building the Trondheim Writing Project, which will host their first summer institute this year. With our MWP Advanced Institute: A Collaboration with Norway's Trondheim Writing Project in Minnesota taking place during the same time, we are eager to use technology for a cross-cultural exchange of best practices in literacy education. We believe the global aspect of this partnership is extremely important in today's educational world.

Having conducted initial site visits at HiST and the U of MN to learn about the similarities and differences in teacher education and how the teaching of writing is addressed within teacher education in each country, we are now focused on supporting HiST and the Trondheim Writing Project on the following goals:

- To establish and sustain a network of teachers who write, teach, and learn with other teachers
- To support teachers as writers and researchers
- To develop and disseminate best practices in the teaching of 21st century literacies
- To strengthen collaboration between higher education and school districts



Minnesota Writing Project

2012–2013
annual update

For the past twenty-two years, the Minnesota Writing Project (MWP) has been both a vital part of the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities' outreach mission and a portal for practicing educators to gain access to a wealth of valuable University programs and resources. Established in 1990, our site identifies its mission as serving educators in the entire state, which consists of approximately 330 school districts, over 52,000 teachers, and more than 820,000 students.

MWP's month-long Invitational Summer Institute (ISI) is our central program to build teacher leadership. This past summer we offered two additional summer programs: a week-long open institute for educators and a two-day assessment workshop. These workshops were led by MWP's experienced teacher consultants (TCs).



In 2012–2013, we dedicated many of our efforts to offering quality professional development for teachers. Some of these programs and their focuses included

- a fall workshop on American Indian writers
- three Minnesota Department of Education Saturday Sessions on media literacy
- an Open Institute on writing instruction
- a summer workshop on large-scale writing assessments



Programs of the Minnesota Writing Project

Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers

Offered through a special collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education, the MWP offered another three-session series of half-day Saturday workshops. This year we addressed issues of media to enrich Common Core Literacy Standards. Special sessions focused on boys' literacy and social justice.

January 26 – Using Media to Meet the Needs of Struggling Students: Boys and Literacy

February 23 – Incorporating New Genres of Media Production into Current Teaching Practices

March 9 – Using Media to Explore Social Justice and Global Awareness

Invitational Summer Institute for Teachers

MWP offers an intensive three-week Invitational Summer Institute (ISI) in which pre-K to college teachers energize and improve their teaching strategies. The ISI includes

A strong writing component, which involves collaborative writing groups, regular writing prompts, and constructive feedback

Study groups formed around current research in literacy instruction

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

A classroom inquiry project, which the educators carry out during the following school year



"I have never thought of myself as a writer, and that is why being a part of the Minnesota Writing Project has been so meaningful to me. It has been and continues to be an organization embodied by people who are empowering. ... The participants are teachers who bravely share a window into their classroom by showing, not telling, us all about their best practices. Together teachers inquire into what their own practice looks like or areas where they would like to make a change, and together with other teachers they reflect and also go back into their own classrooms with a plan."

—2012 ISI participant

Young Writers Conference

The Young Writers Conference was offered through an NWP SEED grant with North Academy of Arts and Communication in the Minneapolis School District. The conference was an opportunity for the school to provide their students and teachers a writing experience by bringing them to the University of Minnesota campus and offering opportunities to learn from practicing artists.



- 60 students
- 3 days at the Weisman Art Museum
- Cross-disciplinary writing experience
- Focus on multimodal composition

This year's conference centered on the theme of identity, which allowed us to incorporate elements of visual literacy and multimodal composition along with writing. To inspire writing and reflect on how art can help us to understand our own identities, students were given journals to write in and to collect their drawings, and then they were given time to remix images into their own artistic creations. Final writings were shared with the larger group and then published in an anthology.



The Build

By Ty Meusburger

I built this.
I did this, and I fixed this.

I know engines like I know my hands.
I know aerodynamics like I know air.
I know body kits like I know my legs.
I know interiors like I know my bedroom.
I know exteriors like I know my own clothes.
I know car stereos like I know music.
I know exhaust pipes like I know my nose.

I built this.
I did this, and I fixed this.

It feels entertaining and fun.
It takes a lot of thinking.
It takes planning.
It looks messy.
It feels greasy.
It smells like gas.

I built this.
I did this, and I fixed this.

Summer Youth Programs

Summer 2012 continued the momentum of a new partnership between the University of Minnesota Sports and Recreation Program and the Minnesota Writing Project. The partnership offers new opportunities for teachers to design their own youth programs for working with Twin Cities youth. TCs Maria Theissen (ISI 2010) and Alex Papp (ISI 2009) co-taught two sessions: "Digital Originals" and "Campus Eyewitness News." Both sessions offered elementary students opportunities to write and produce media.

A third youth camp was taught by TC Christine VeLure Roholt (ISI 2003). In this session, Christine helped students develop their own Storigami by putting words on each fold of an origami shape until the final shape (and story) emerged.

