

**summer****institute**

Thirty years ago, at the first writing project summer institute in Berkeley, California, James Gray, founder of the National Writing Project, advanced a revolutionary idea: Teachers—not “experts” long removed from the classroom, not representatives selling a publisher’s packaged program—are the best teachers of teachers.

Now in 2003, this once radical notion has become part of the accepted wisdom of professional development. This summer, at 175 writing project sites throughout the nation, participants in summer institutes will demonstrate their best practices for other outstanding teachers of writing. But they’ll also write (probably more than ever before), share their writing with their colleagues, and, in many cases, work toward writing and publishing professional pieces.

This is the summer institute model, but it is not a model cruising on overdrive. As the articles in this special section demonstrate, writing project leaders continue to find ways to enhance the summer institute experience and to help those who participate in it explore their almost inevitable question. “Okay. The writing project changed my life. What do I do now?”