The Massachusetts Writing Project (MWP) is a state-wide non-profit professional development network of four local National Writing Project sites whose mission and goal are to improve the quality of writing in our state’s schools. For the past 25 years, NWP has been making a difference in Massachusetts schools. Its “teachers teaching teachers” model develops teacher knowledge and leadership and promotes improvement in student achievement.

Because writing matters for success in the schools and the university, in the community and the workplace, MWP’s core mission is to improve student writing and learning by improving the teaching of writing.

Massachusetts and the nation have recognized that writing must be a central focus in all classrooms, if schools are to improve student performance.

We must put writing at the center of the school agenda ... Schools that harness writing as an essential tool for learning know the benefits of giving students the skills and confidence to be better writers.
—The Neglected “R”: The Need for a Writing Revolution
The National Commission on Writing

Goals of MWP

To address these challenges, the Massachusetts Writing Project pursues the following goals:

- Improving the learning and achievement of students across the state by improving the teaching of writing through research-based programs.
- Serving Massachusetts teachers, students, schools, and districts through a model of university/school collaboration.
- Supporting teachers as they prepare their students to meet state and national standards.

In 2005-2006, educators in Massachusetts spent 48,474 hours in MWP programs.
Why Writing Matters

The National Commission on Writing (2003) stated that . . .

“American education will never realize its potential as an engine of opportunity and economic growth until a writing revolution puts language and communication in their proper place in the classroom … of the three ‘Rs,’ writing is clearly the most neglected.”

- The amount of time and resources devoted to student writing should be at least doubled.
- Writing should be taught in all subjects and at all grade levels.
- All teachers should be required to take courses in how to teach writing. New technologies should be developed to improve the teaching and assessment of writing.

In its most recent publication, Writing and School Reform, the Commission recognized the National Writing Project and its local sites as a professional development model that encourages instructional practices whose aim is to meet these goals.

What Teachers Gained from NWP Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concrete teaching strategies</th>
<th>85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up-to-date research and practice</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to assess student work and plan teaching</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to teach more diverse students</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to help students meet standards</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NWP teachers learn effective teaching strategies

Student writing in NWP classrooms exhibits ...

“high levels of construction of knowledge, organization and coherence, and control of the conventions of English.”

Academy for Educational Development (2001)

Teachers Teaching Teachers

www.masswritingproject.org
Impact on students’ writing performance

Benefits of Writing Project Involvement for Participants’ Students

- Students grasp conventions and editing skills: 78.80%
- Students write more often and longer pieces: 83.80%
- Students are able to explain thinking and learning in all subjects: 83.80%
- Students enjoy writing and are proud: 87%
- Students understand value of writing for discovery and communication: 88.50%
- Students understand qualities of good writing: 89.60%

Inverness Research Associates 2005

POSITIVE GAINS FOR STUDENTS
National studies confirm significant gains for students of teachers who have participated in NWP programs.

In research conducted during the 2004–2005 school year, studies with comparison groups show statistically significant gains in writing performance for students of Writing Project teachers.

In an independent national scoring of student writing, NWP students’ improvement outpaced those of students in carefully constructed comparison groups. Particularly noteworthy were the quality of students’ ideas, organization, voice, and use of conventions in their writing.

A national study conducted by the Academy for Educational Development found that third- and fourth-grade students of Writing Project teachers showed significant improvement in writing achievement over the course of every school year during the three years of the study (1999–2002). Overall, 82 percent of third graders and 85 percent of fourth graders reached “adequate” or “strong” achievement for effectiveness in persuasive writing.


Massachusetts Writing Project
www.masswritingproject.org
Writing Project teachers prepare for leadership roles by

- Learning how writing improves learning by engaging in their own writing.
- Reflecting on and deepening their own teaching practice by sharing their best practices with other teachers.
- Exploring sound theory and current research in education to further support and improve their own teaching practice.

### Professional Development in Schools

Our professional development programs for teachers are based on research, shared practice, and continuous reflection on teaching. Our “teachers teaching teachers” model engages teachers in their own learning process and introduces them to the latest research in writing theory and most successful teaching strategies.

### School-based Models

- College credit courses
- After-school workshop series
- Professional development days
- Coaching, mentoring, and demonstration teaching
- Research and study group facilitation
- Curriculum alignment facilitation

### Topics

- Writing across the curriculum
- English language learners
- Reading and writing connection
- MCAS: Open response and essay
- Teaching to the standards
- Writing in math and science
- Diverse learners
- Technology and teaching
- Benchmarks and assessment
- Literacy coaching
Summer Institute

Our core program, the Summer Institute, offers four weeks of intensive exploration into the practice of teaching.

“The effect of the Summer Institute has been to disseminate to thousands of teachers, inside and outside the Writing Project, new understandings of learning and writing strategies from dialogue journals to multi-genre papers to inventive uses of writing in science, math, and other disciplines.”

—Art Peterson

Advanced Programs

- Content Institutes in Writing in Science
- Content Institutes in Literary Criticism
- English Language Learner Leadership Institute
- Reading in the Content Areas Institute
- Teacher-Research Seminar
- Diversity, Access, and Relevance Institute
- Revision Institutes

State and Regional Partnerships

Working with others in meeting the needs of students and teachers in Massachusetts allows us to accomplish more. MWP is proud to work in partnership with the following organizations:

- New England Writing Project Regional Network
- Massachusetts Department of Education
- Massachusetts Reading Association
- New England Association of Teachers of English
- The Juniper Institute
- Center for Youth Development and Education
- Commonwealth Corporation
- Center for University, School, and Community Partnerships
- Title One Dissemination Project, Inc.
- The Calderwood Institute on the Teaching of Writing

“Common expectations about writing should be developed across disciplines through in-service workshops designed to help teachers understand good writing and develop as writers themselves.”

The Neglected “R”: The Need for a Writing Revolution

Massachusetts Writing Project

www.masswritingproject.org
At Work

National English Language Learners Network
Floris Wilma Ortiz and Karen Sumaryono, middle and high school Massachusetts Writing Project ELL teachers, have improved their teaching strategies through their work with the National Writing Project’s English Language Learners Network. Together with other MWP teacher leaders, they now offer Category I and II courses to meet new ELL requirements as set forth by the DOE’s Commissioner of Education.

National Technology Initiative
Kevin Hodgson, a sixth-grade Massachusetts Writing Project teacher, is using technology in many ways to improve learning in his classroom. He includes audiocasts, digital storytelling, and a youth radio project. His work with the National Writing Project’s Technology Initiative allows MWP to offer such programs as Making Connections, a weblog project engaging rural and urban youth and their teachers in a social network community that introduces them to new technologies and their own diverse voices. Kevin and other teacher leaders work with teachers across the state on implementing new technologies into their classrooms.

National Reading Initiative
Deana Lew, an elementary Massachusetts Writing Project literacy specialist, incorporates National Writing Project Reading Initiative techniques and strategies in her work with teachers and students. She began her current teaching position after working as a MWP teacher-consultant at the school, which recently won the International Reading Association Exemplary Reading Program Award for Massachusetts.

Family Outreach and Involvement
Gail Gilman, an elementary Massachusetts Writing Project teacher, extends learning beyond her classroom with family outreach and involvement programs such as the Family Writing Workshop and parent teams to help students in the classroom. Through MWP, she and other teacher leaders help schools across the state design and implement similar family outreach programs.

New Teacher Initiative
Shelly Jittiam, a Massachusetts Writing Project UMass Dartmouth Lecturer, works with new teachers and preservice teachers exploring ways to teach reading in the content areas. MWP’s new teacher programs are informed by the latest research and the latest coaching strategies developed by the National Writing Project’s New Teacher Initiative.

Teachers Teaching Teachers
www.masswritingproject.org
Funding for Professional Development with the Massachusetts Writing Project

The Massachusetts Writing Project is an authorized provider for NCLB and included in the catalog of reform models for Comprehensive School Reform.

No Child Left Behind Funding: As an affiliate of the National Writing Project, Massachusetts Writing Project is authorized under NCLB, Title II, Part C as a provider of standards-aligned professional development for teachers and administrators eligible for funding under:

**Title I, Part A**
- Professional development and mentoring programs for Title I schools and teachers.

**Title II, Part A**
- Professional development for helping teachers meet NCLB teacher requirements.
- Professional development in subject-matter knowledge, improving teaching skills, assisting teachers to use Massachusetts’ academic content standards and student achievement standards, and state assessments to improve student achievement.

**Title II, Part D**
- Professional development focused on enhancing education through technology.

**Title III, Part A**
- Professional development focused on improving instruction for English learners.

The following activities related to improving teacher quality are eligible for funding under Title II, Part A:

- Partnerships with non-profit entities through grants or contracts to provide professional development activities, course work, test preparation, and testing.
- High-quality professional development and training in core content knowledge and effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills.
- Teacher mentoring, induction, and support programs for new teachers.
- Training in the use of technology for instruction and analyzing achievement data.
- Bonuses and reimbursement for course work for advanced degrees or certification.
- Bonuses and reimbursement for course work for teacher certification in areas of high need.

**Massachusetts Writing Project**
www.masswritingproject.org