

Teachers Head Back to School with New Tools to Teach Writing Through Social Media, Teachers Connect and Continue Learning

For Immediate Release

Union, NJ, August 16, 2010 – As the 3,300 teachers who attended National Writing Project (NWP) professional development institutes this summer start school this fall, they will be returning with new ideas to help students improve their writing. They will also be better connected with colleagues—and therefore better equipped to teach their students how to write in this digital age.

Teacher-leaders from all grade levels and disciplines attended the professional development sessions held at the more than 200 university-based Writing Project sites across the country. Staying connected through online professional communities and using tools like Twitter, Facebook, Nings, and blogs, these teachers join the ranks of thousands of others who have participated in NWP's annual Invitational Summer Institutes over the past 36 years. Throughout the school year, teachers nationwide will be able to continue learning and sharing ideas and practices presented at the four-week summer sessions.

"Thousands of teachers will return to school this fall with more than their batteries recharged," said Dr. Sharon J. Washington, NWP Executive Director. "These educators have enhanced their knowledge of theory, research, and practice to help students become better writers and learners. They are also equipped with new ways to stay connected—and share ideas—with one another, so their professional development never stops."

After the Invitational Summer Institute (ISI), Writing Project teacher-leaders conduct workshops for other teachers in their communities. Early childhood to university educators come from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to attend the NWP Invitational Summer Institutes to enrich their teaching practices and learn various approaches for improving student writing and learning.

As part of its mission, National Writing Project supports the development and use of innovative approaches that are vital to teaching and learning in today's technological environment.

Jameelah Wright, a Kindergarten teacher at Wahlstrom Early Childhood Academy in East Orange, New Jersey and Kean University Writing Project (KUWP) 2010 teacher participant, shares: "Prior to my experience at the KUWP, I had never heard of [Prezi]. My use of [this online application] demonstrates my comfort with exploring new technologies and finding practical uses for them," regarding her exposure to new digital tools through the Writing Project ISI experience.

Kate Sullivan, a language arts teacher at Seagirt Elementary School in Seagirt, New Jersey, and fellow KUWP teacher participant, discusses the importance of personal technological skill growth: "Through my work in the institute I have developed a passion for exploring technology as an essential tool for instruction, and look forward to creating effective professional development opportunities for practical incorporation of digital tools in the classroom."

The National Writing Project (NWP) is a nationwide network of educators working together to improve the teaching of writing in the nation's schools and in other settings. NWP provides high-quality professional development programs to teachers in a variety of disciplines and at all levels, from early childhood through university. Through its network of more than 200 university-based sites located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, NWP develops the leadership, programs, and research needed for teachers to help students become successful writers and learners. For more information, visit www.nwp.org.