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# Professional Development Opportunities

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An introduction to resources offered by...

The National Writing Project at Kent  
State University



The National Writing Project at Kent State University

[www.nwp-ksu.org](http://www.nwp-ksu.org)

# National Writing Project at KSU:

## Core Principles of teacher professional development

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Since 1997, the National Writing Project at Kent State University has offered the Summer Invitational Institute and school-based in-service programs to allow teachers and university faculty to collaborate in ways that promote student achievement in writing and learning.

Grounded in a professional development model emphasizing teacher knowledge, expertise, and practice, the National Writing Project operates with the following guiding principles:

- Teachers are the best teachers of teachers; successful practicing teachers have greater credibility with their colleagues than outside experts.
- Writing is as fundamental to learning in science, mathematics, and history as it is to learning in English and the language arts.
- As the process of writing can best be understood by engaging in this process, teachers of writing should write.
- Effective professional development programs are ongoing and systematic, bringing teachers together throughout their careers to examine successful practices and new developments.
- What is known about the teaching of writing comes not only from the research but from the practice of those who teach writing.

### Who we are...

The National Writing Project site at Kent State University offers professional development on the teaching and assessment of writing and reading. The annual Summer Invitational Institute and school-based in-service programs initiate collaboration between university faculty and classroom teachers aimed at improving student achievement through writing and reading instruction.

### NWP-KSU Site Leaders:

Dr. Alexa Sandmann, Ph.D.  
Project Director  
Dr. Deb Debenedictis, Ph.D.  
Co-Director

### Who we serve...

Spanning 13 counties in Northeast Ohio, the National Writing Project at Kent State University has sponsored over 300 teachers through the Summer Invitational Institute. Teachers invited to the Summer Institute become NWP Teacher Consultants who share their professional knowledge and skills with teachers in their buildings. Additionally, NWP-KSU continually coordinates school- and district-level in-service programs tailored to the specific needs of classroom teachers, both of which involve teachers across professional environments, from every grade level and content area.

# National Writing Project at Kent State University

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## Summer Invitational Institute

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In partnership with the Ohio Writing Institute, the National Writing Project at Kent State University offers a four-week Summer Invitational Institute. Teachers from all grade levels and content areas may apply to participate.

The Summer Institute enables teachers to work with colleagues across the region towards their development as writers and as teachers of reading and writing across the curriculum. Collaborating with teachers from a variety of backgrounds – kindergarten through college-level – Summer Institute participants actively engage in creating their own professional development plans, design and demonstrate new classroom activities for teaching writing and reading, and extend their breadth of knowledge by practicing writing for themselves.

Admission to the Summer Institute is based on an application and an interview. Special consideration is given to those educators whose schools have been underrepresented in previous years.

## *Write Here! Write Now!*

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Participants in the Summer Invitational Institute also take part in NWP-KSU'S annual *Write Here! Write Now!* Conference – a one-day workshop featuring presentations from recognized educational researchers and writers. NWP-KSU Teacher consultants also present on a variety of topics related to the workshop's theme. *Write Here! Write Now!* is open to all teachers, not just Summer Institute participants.

For more information on the Summer Invitational Institute, Write Here! Write Now!, or any of our professional development resources, please visit [www.nwp-ksu.org](http://www.nwp-ksu.org).

## Join us for Summer 2011!

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Save the dates! Planning for the 2011 Summer Invitational Institute is underway, and we are looking forward to another stellar summer!

### Dates to remember:

**March 4-5, 2011:** NWP-KSU at OCTELA Spring Conference

**March 18, 2011:** Application deadline for Summer Institute

**June 13-July 8, 2011:** Summer Invitational Institute

**June 24, 2011:** Annual *Write Here! Write Now!* Conference

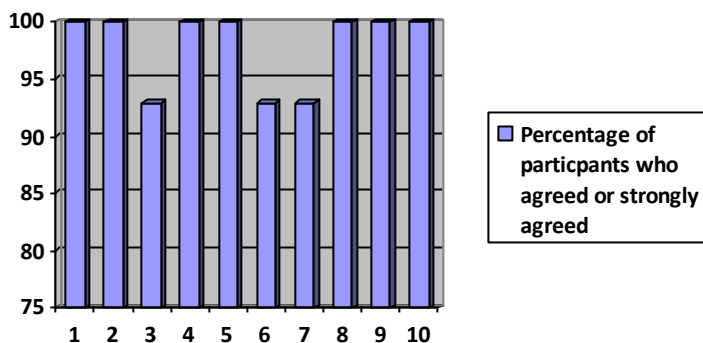
Applications and informational brochures available online at [www.nwp-ksu.org](http://www.nwp-ksu.org).

# Tracking Growth in Professional Development: What our data show

Below are survey data from teachers' self-reports of growth in their readiness and preparation for teaching and writing. Summer Institute participants were asked to respond to a Likert Scale survey (1-5), indicating their level of agreement with various statements reflecting their perception of what the Institute did for them.

## -----NWP 2010 SI SITE LEVEL REPORT (n=14)-----

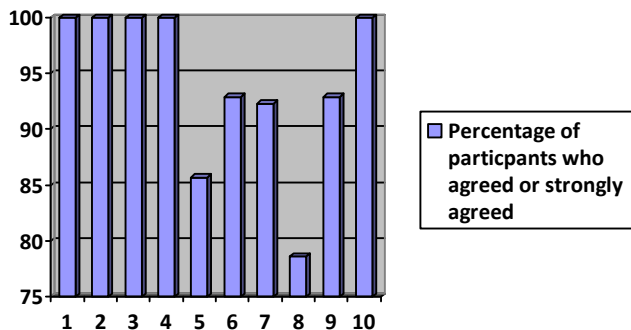
### Personal influence of SI on Participants



#### Participants who agree that they:

- 1: Gained confidence as a writer
2. Learned that they could use writing as a tool for reflecting
3. Are now more comfortable sharing their writing
4. Had the experience of building shared knowledge with their colleagues
5. Were able to form or refine their personal theories about writing and the teaching of writing
6. Developed a deeper understand of writing as a social and cultural act
7. Gained knowledge of particular problem or area of teaching writing that is important to them
8. Gained confidence that they can learn and grow in their classroom practice
9. Are motivated to continue doing their own writing
10. Gained a new respect for themselves as teachers

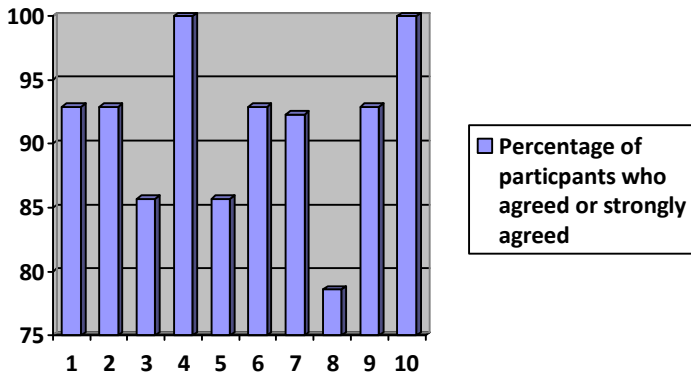
### Influence of SI on Classroom Practice



#### Participants who agree that they:

- 1: Gained teaching strategies that they will use in their classrooms
2. Are motivated to change some aspects of their teaching practice as soon as they can
3. Learned strategies for using writing to learn
4. Expect that they will ask their students to do a lot more writing
5. Will be better able to teach a wide range of students more effectively
6. Feel more up-to-date on the latest research and practice in the teaching of writing
7. Expect to be a more effective teacher of reading
8. Gained technology skills that they can use in their classroom
9. Expect to be more effective in helping students meet local and state standards
10. Are motivated to continue building their teaching practice over the next year and beyond

## Influence of SI on Professional Roles Beyond the Classroom



### Participants who agree that they:

1. Have expanded their understanding of the nature of teacher leadership
2. Increased their expertise in an area of teaching that they can share with others
3. Gained skills that will help them feel more effective sharing their practice with other teachers
4. Are more inclined to advocate for writing in multiple content areas at their school
5. Are motivated to try to publish their writing
6. Feel more prepared to share or present to professional colleagues
7. Are motivated to stay connected with their NWP site and join their site community
8. Are open to taking on leadership roles at their NWP site, in the future if not immediately
9. Are motivated to seek further information or professional development
10. Are motivated to encourage their colleagues to participate in the Writing Project

### Qualitative Data/Positive feedback from participants:

*I learned how to build a community of writers in a classroom setting.*

*Every peer teacher and facilitator made you feel important as a writer and a professional.*

*I gained a wealth of resources, techniques, and strategies that I can use in my classroom.*

-----OVERALL ASSESMENT 2009 & 2010-----

**NWP-KSU Summer Invitational Institute Survey of Participant Satisfaction**

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<b>% of ISI participants who...</b>	<b>NWP-KSU SI participants (n=33) 2009 (n=19) &amp; 2010 (n=14)</b>
Considered the overall quality of the Institute to be “good” or “excellent”	<b>100%</b>
Felt that the institute contributed to or reinforced their understanding of how to teach writing effectively	<b>100%</b>
Felt that they would be able to use and apply what they learned at the institute to their classroom	<b>100%</b>
Felt that they would continue the professional relationships they formed outside the Institute	<b>96%</b>
Felt that they would be able to translate what they learned into improved writing skills for their students.	<b>100%</b>

**Last year, NWP-KSU spent 508 hours providing in-service to 620 teachers at a host of schools.**

## **NWP-KSU school-based inservice programs**

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The National Writing Project at Kent State University works closely with teachers and administrators to facilitate school-based inservice programs. Inservice offerings involve Teacher Consultants, university faculty, and classroom teachers as collaborators to initiate, develop, and sustain teacher professional development. Working in schools affords teachers from multiple content areas the opportunity to teach and learn about writing and reading instruction and assessment.

## **Planning your inservice**

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Inservice programs are tailored to the school- or district-specific needs of classroom teachers. Aligning our programs with teachers' own instructional concerns fosters active collaboration among inservice participants. The NWP-KSU Leadership Team works closely with individuals and committees in charge of planning inservice programs to develop specialized initiatives for schools. Sustaining teacher professional development requires that teachers develop best practices over time. We have found that continual partnership between NWP-KSU and schools or districts enhances professional development; therefore, we suggest that facilitators and participants collaborate for a *minimum of two* inservice events.

Recent inservice partnerships include:

- "Writing Revision and Assessment"
- "Writing Strategies and Assessment"

*For more information on school-based inservice programs, visit [www.nwp-ksu.org](http://www.nwp-ksu.org), or contact Dr. Deb DeBenedictis, NWP-KSU Co-Director and Inservice Coordinator at [ddebened@kent.edu](mailto:ddebened@kent.edu).*