

Research Brief

KENTUCKY WRITING PROJECTS

2010



*IMPROVING WRITING AND LEARNING
IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S SCHOOLS*

WRITING PROJECT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPROVES TEACHING, PROMOTES LEADERSHIP

A recent study of the effectiveness of the Kentucky Writing Projects indicates that participation in the KWP Summer Institute has a strong impact on teachers' abilities to teach writing effectively.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS stands at the core of the Kentucky Writing Projects' (KWP) work to improve the teaching of writing in our schools. Seven Kentucky Writing Project sites—affiliates of the National Writing Project—provide programs for teachers of all grade levels, primary through university, and in all subjects.

Fellowships are provided for strong teachers who agree to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and regions. These teachers participate in an intensive four-week institute, then return to work with their colleagues to improve writing instruction and student achievement. Writing Project sites engage these teacher leaders in a variety of outreach, in-service, and ongoing professional development opportunities designed to further their skills and support them in sharing new knowledge with colleagues, P-12.

Additional findings are provided on pages 2-3.

KEY FINDINGS

In a comprehensive follow-up survey of 399 Kentucky teachers who participated in the 4-week summer institute between 1982-2008, researchers found that participants improved in the following ways:

Ability to teach writing	98%
Level of professional knowledge	98%
Personal writing skills	87%
Confidence in ability to teach	93%
Leadership skills	83%
Positive professional reputation	82%

The teachers attributed their growth to their participation in a Kentucky Writing Project site. The sample represented rural, urban, and suburban areas of the state and teachers working with students with diverse economic, language, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

KENTUCKY WRITING PROJECT SITES:

Eastern Kentucky University Writing Project
Louisville Writing Project
Morehead Writing Project
Mountain Writing Project
Northern Kentucky Writing Project
Purchase Area Writing Project
Western Kentucky University Writing Project

Writing Project Participation Increases Teachers' Knowledge and Implementation of Best Practices

<u>Before the Institute:</u>	<u>After the Institute:</u>
60% of teachers felt confident in their ability to implement a standards-based curriculum.	96% felt confident in their ability to implement a standards-based curriculum.

Teachers reported an increase in the use of practices that improve achievement:

Pre-writing Activities	94%
Teacher-Student Conferencing*	93%
Peer Conferencing	92%
Writing-to-Learn Strategies	92%
Journaling/Writer's Notebooks	90%
Revision Practices	89%
Mini-lessons Focused on Skills	89%
Publishing Student Work	87%
In-Context Grammar Instruction	85%
Writing Workshop	82%

*Conferencing involves one-to-one coaching and individualized instruction.

In the past decade, Kentucky Writing Project Sites have provided Professional Development for an average of 7,860 Kentucky teachers each year:*

- *2,619 programs provided to improve writing instruction in Kentucky;*
- *928,367 contact hours with Kentucky teachers;*
- *\$1,671,000 in federal funding supported KWP programs.*

*The total number of teachers served between 1999 and 2008. is 78,599. Figures are provided by Inverness Research Associates and the National Writing Project.

Kentucky Writing Project Participants Report Dramatic Increases in Teacher Leadership and Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activities	Before participating in a Kentucky Writing Project	After participating in a Kentucky Writing Project	Points of Increase
Provided writing instruction support at my school	28%	88%	60
Led professional development at my school	31%	88%	57
Provided writing instruction support for pre-service teachers	12%	69%	57
Participated in a study group in my discipline	26%	77%	51
Presented at a conference or workshop	15%	69%	54
Earned an advanced degree or Rank I	27%	66%	39
Followed current legislative developments in education	54%	91%	37
Engaged in journaling or personal writing	57%	92%	35
Engaged in self-directed professional reading/study	67%	97%	30
Attended professional conferences	64%	91%	27
Attended non-mandatory professional development	70%	97%	27
Served as a writing cluster leader	13%	39%	26
Submitted professional article for publication at the local or national level	4%	28%	24
Began pursuing or subsequently earned National Board Certification	5%	17%	12

What Do Kentucky Teachers Say About The Writing Project Experience?

The Writing Project was so beneficial to me as a new teacher. I gained knowledge and confidence that translated into the classroom.—*Amber Stewart, Knott County Schools*

The Writing Project was, without a doubt, the most beneficial part of my graduate program. It also provides some of the most relevant PD that I have had.—*William Dooley, Madison County Schools*

The Writing Project was the most beneficial professional development I have done in the nine years I have been teaching.—*Carrie Bunch, Barren County Schools*

My participation in the Writing Project has been the best professional experience of my career. I recommend it to every teacher!—*Christy Rhodes, Jefferson County Schools*

My writing project involvement literally shaped the rest of my educational career. —*Vicki Kloke-Smith, Henderson County Schools*

Attending the summer institute was a turning point for me in my teaching career. I became a literacy leader in my building and it opened many doors for me and for my students.—*Amy Berry, Meade County Schools*

Nothing has impacted me more, professionally, than my work through the Writing Project. Nothing.—*Donna Vincent, retired from Muhlenberg County Schools*

Summer Institutes are offered at the following seven Kentucky universities:

Eastern Kentucky University Writing Project
Sally Martin, Director
467 Case Annex, Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, KY 40475
859-622-2922

Louisville Writing Project
Jean Wolph, Director
CEHD 105, University of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40292
502-852-4544

Morehead Writing Project
Deanna Mascle, Director
150 University Boulevard/UPO 1224
Morehead State University
Morehead, KY 40351
606-783-2426

Mountain Writing Project
Lisa Maggard, Director
Hazard Community & Technical College
Hazard, KY 41701
606-487-3162

Northern Kentucky Writing Project
Sara Runge, Director
Northern Kentucky University
COEHS / BEP 259 / Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, KY 41099
859-572-6126

Purchase Area Writing Project
Paul Walker & Debbie Bell, Co-Directors
Murray State University
Murray, KY 42071
270-809-4533

Western Kentucky University Writing Project
John Hagaman, Director
1906 College Heights Blvd., #11086
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101
270-745-5760