

The logo for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is displayed in a large, white, serif font on a black, tilted rectangular background.The text "ON THE CUTTING EDGE" is written in a white, serif font on a black rectangular background.

Improving Writing, Improving Outcomes:
The Cal State Northridge Writing Project
by Kathleen Rowlands, Ph.D., and Jenn Wolfe, Ed.D.

November 2017

Imagine spending four weeks, from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon, of your summer vacation with a group of K-university educators, from many different content areas, who you don't even know. You spend those four weeks reading about writing instruction, writing and sharing your writing, presenting a model demonstration lesson, researching an inquiry topic, and presenting your findings. You explore different aspects of educational leadership such as coaching colleagues, designing curriculum, publishing professionally, and attending and presenting at conferences. You graduate from the Invitational Summer Institute as a Teacher Leader of the Cal State Northridge Writing Project and join company with Teacher Leaders from nearly 200 affiliated National Writing Project (NWP) sites nationwide (www.nwp.org).

Established in 1974 at UC Berkeley, NWP provides a model of professional learning that is both unique and transformative. It is unique in its respect for teacher professionalism. The Invitational Summer Institute is not a class; the directors facilitate the experience, but the focus is on teachers teaching teachers. Curricular foci often emerge from participant interests and needs. Currently, the site is supporting a renewed interest in social justice and issues of local advocacy. The experience is transformative in that participants leave with a renewed sense of energy, a clearer understanding of effective writing instruction, of writing's role in improving reading, and of writing's importance for the nation's wellbeing as noted by the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2004).

In 2009, the Cal State Northridge Writing Project (www.csun.edu/writingproject) became an affiliate of NWP and one of the California Writing Project's 16 sites (www.californiawritingproject.org). Directed by Kathy Rowlands, Jenn Wolfe, and Pamela Holguin-Brown (a LAUSD K-1 teacher), our mission is to increase student achievement by improving the teaching of writing. Recent funding cuts at the federal level hamper efforts to provide extensive research on the impact of Writing Project teachers on student achievement. However, Lieberman and Wood's (2003) book-length case study traced how teachers' experiences in NWP institutes translated into effective classroom practices, comparing one year gains in writing scores made by students in NWP teachers' classrooms to gains made in non-NWP classrooms. Consistently, NWP teachers' students showed greater writing gains in a year than the students of comparison teachers.

Following the model of sister projects nationwide, the Cal State Northridge Writing Project had a direct impact on the learning of teachers from seven counties during 2016-2017. We worked with teachers in five different schools, held five Open Institutes focused on writing instruction, the ELD standards, and the ELA-ELD Framework, and provided professional learning focused on the CSU's Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) for all middle school teachers from Temecula Unified School District. Our 9th annual Write to Literacy Conference is November 4, 2017. By providing area teachers access to effective, reasonably priced professional learning, we help them develop effective writing instruction to take back to their students.

Dr. Kathleen Rowlands, a professor of Secondary Education, has a Ph.D. in composition and rhetoric and has been affiliated with the Writing Project since 1980. **Dr. Jenn Wolfe**, an assistant professor of Secondary Education, has an Ed.D. in teacher education in multicultural societies and has been affiliated with the Writing Project since 2012.

The Cal State Northridge Writing Project

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT?

The Cal State Northridge Writing Project provides the following services to teachers and schools. See www.csun.edu/writingproject for specifics, follow us @NorthridgeWP, or like NorthridgeWP on Facebook.

Offering	Times and Dates	Additional Information
The Invitational Summer Institute	June and July	15 participants, K-college earn a stipend for completing the 100 hour program and becoming Teacher Leaders.
The Write Stuff: Young Writer's Camps for Students Entering Grades 1-12	Three weeks in the summer. Individual sessions for targeted student groups are offered throughout the year.	Various offerings for different age groups and different interests. Cost includes all materials, a juice and cookie snack, and the student publication.
ISAW (Improving Student Academic Writing) Workshops for Teachers in Grades 6-12	A series of informational sessions.	Registration includes a continental breakfast and all materials.
Open Institutes	Summer and throughout the year as scheduled. TBD	Seminars have included: <i>Writing a Conference Proposal</i> , <i>Action Research</i> , <i>Grant Writing for Teachers</i> , <i>Teach-nology</i> , and <i>Demystifying the ELD Standards</i> .
Book Groups, Study Groups, and Writing Groups.	As requested by participants.	Two to six sessions as determined by participants. Prices vary depending upon length and cost of materials.
Professional Development for Schools or Districts*	Developed to suit the needs of individual schools and districts.	As an affiliate of the California and National Writing Projects, we are authorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the California State Board of Education to provide professional development.* Prices vary based on services provided.

*The Cal State Northridge Writing Project's professional development programs are designed to suit the needs and interests of individual schools and districts. We can provide hands-on, interactive workshops during or after the school day, as well as on-site coaching, and assistance with curriculum and planning. Our teacher consultants work collaboratively with school and district personnel to ensure that the professional development offered addresses the teachers' concerns and contributes to the long-range plans of the school or district. For detailed information about our professional development workshops and consultations, as well as information about potential funding assistance, contact Kathleen Rowlands: krowlands@csun.edu or 818-677-2556.

The 9th Annual Write to Literacy Conference

November 4, 2017

For additional information, visit

https://www.csun.edu/writingproject/Content/Write_to_Literacy/Conference_2017.html

REFERENCES

- Lieberman, A., & Wood, D. R. (2003). *Inside the National Writing Project*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. (2004). *Writing: A ticket to work...or a ticket out: A survey of business leaders*. Retrieved from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf

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