

Massachusetts Writing Project 2007 Spring Conference

Because Writing Matters

May 5, 2007 • 8:30 – 3:30 • Crowne Plaza Hotel • Worcester

Writing is “the neglected R” in NCLB and many other school reform efforts, but numerous studies – and classroom experience – have shown that writing is central to student learning at all grades and in all subject areas. **Because Writing Matters** will explore topics ranging from working with English Language Learners and family literacy to responding to student writing and MCAS open response with the power of writing as the central theme. All workshop presenters are experienced teacher-consultants from the four Massachusetts Writing Project sites. Workshop descriptions are included inside this brochure.

Who should attend this conference:

- K-12 teachers who are responsible for teaching language arts
- Content area teachers who use writing as a learning tool
- Literacy coaches, coordinators, and specialists
- Principals and professional development coordinators
- Teacher educators and pre-service teachers

Registration for this full-day conference is only \$80.

The fee includes a continental breakfast, luncheon, and parking. Participants will receive 6 PDPs. The conference qualifies for funding under NCLB Title I, Title II, and Title III.

Workshops, keynote, and ... discount book sales!

ALRAN Books will be on hand with Sonia Nieto's books and many other relevant professional titles. Conference participants will receive a 10% discount on all book purchases.

Keynote speaker:



Sonia Nieto

Professor Emerita of Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Author of *Why We Teach*, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* and *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*

Book signing after keynote!

Schedule for the Day

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 Opening session
- 9:30 A sessions
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 B sessions
- 12:15 Lunch, keynote, and book signing
- 2:15 C sessions
- 3:30 PDP pick-up

About the Massachusetts Writing Project

The Massachusetts Writing Project (MWP), a statewide non-profit learning and literacy network of four writing project sites, is the local initiative of the National Writing Project (NWP), the premier effort to improve writing instruction in America. The Massachusetts Writing Project uses the NWP “teachers teaching teachers” model to develop teacher knowledge and leadership, which promote improvement in student achievement. MWP is on the Web at www.masswritingproject.org.



- Boston Writing Project
- Central Massachusetts Writing Project
- Buzzards Bay Writing Project
- Western Massachusetts Writing Project

Concurrent Workshops

A Sessions (9:30 – 10:45)

A1: Including ESL Students in Our Content Lessons.

Jenny Hertel, Worcester State College. Discover how adapting content lessons to include English language learners will make them more effective for *all* students. This workshop will explain some unique needs of second language learners and introduce strategies that stimulate deep learning. The presenter will demonstrate how she revised her lesson on business letters from boring to interactive using “sheltered instruction” principles.

A2: Doing Teacher Research: Nurturing Craft Identity and an Inquiry Stance.

Dave Russel, McKinley South End Academy, and Steve Gordon, UMass Boston. What happens when reflective practitioners meet to support each other’s deepening investigations to improve teaching and learning? Participants will be asked to identify issues in their teaching lives that they wish to examine, discussing the significance of the issue for themselves and their students. The presenters will share their process of working with teachers to create a Boston Writing Project teacher-research community.

A3: Casting Your Voice Out to the World: Audiocasting in the Classroom.

Kevin Hodgson, William E. Norris Elementary School, Southampton. This presentation is designed to introduce educators to the world of audiocasting/podcasting via the Internet, using “voice” to connect students through a Weblog site and a national Youth Radio site. The workshop will feature a hands-on demonstration as participants observe the creation and posting of an audiocast.

A4: Writing across the Curriculum.

Diana Grady, Joseph Case Junior High School, Swansea. This workshop will present strategies that focus on using writing as a tool for learning in social studies, science, and mathematics. These strategies help students, including reluctant writers, to organize, interpret, and assess their knowledge.

B Sessions (11:00 – 12:15)

B1: ELLs and the Writing Workshop: The Benefits of Partnership and a Community of Caring Readers.

Michael Silverstone, Wildwood School, Amherst, and Tracy Walker, Baird Middle School, Ludlow. Teachers will explore ways to facilitate inclusive writing workshops for English language learners in the mainstream. Focus points will include helping students to generate ideas, give and receive effective feedback, access content, and revise writing.

B2: The Joys and Challenges of Teacher Inquiry.

Judith Doherty, Clark University and Worcester State College. This workshop will examine how to start teacher research

groups and ways to sustain interest in light of competing demands on teachers. The workshop will look honestly at inquiry, and teachers should bring their questions about both teacher inquiry and continuity.

B3: Responding to Writing: Moving Students Forward (Elementary).

Katherine Ventre, Parkview School, North Easton. This workshop will feature video clips of whole class mini-lessons where second graders discuss pieces of successful student writing. Strategies for helping children expand their writing, revise their work, and provide specific compliments to fellow writers will be discussed. Teacher-child conferences will show how responding to students on an individual level can move them forward as writers. Student work from the draft stage to the finished product will be shared.

B4: Responding to Student Writing (MS/HS).

Peter Golden, UMass Boston. This workshop will explore the “whys” and “hows” of responding to student writing in a way that encourages growth and teaches students how to talk about their own and each other’s writing effectively.

C Sessions (2:15 – 3:30)

C1: Family Writing Workshops.

Pamela Howes, Michael E. Smith Middle School, South Hadley, and Leslie Skantz-Hogdson, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Northampton. This workshop is designed to help teachers bring parents back into their children’s school experience. Participants will learn how students, family members, and teachers come together to write, share, reflect, and respond to each other’s work; how to organize one- or two-part writing workshops at their schools; and send parents home with ideas on how to encourage writing at home.

C2: And The Answer is—Demystifying the MCAS Open Response.

Sara Palmer, Coburn School, West Springfield. The MCAS open responses are a big part of our students’ MCAS scores, but sometimes we’re not sure what they need to include or how to teach the “have-to’s” to our kids. Let’s take the guesswork out of the MCAS open response with rubrics, benchmarks, and a healthy dose of humor.

C3: Sweet Cacophony: Blogging to Create a Community of Writers.

Matthew Matera, Murdoch Middle School at Innovation Academy Charter School, Chelmsford. This workshop will give participants hands-on experience with the emergent technology of Weblogs, as well as concrete ideas about how to use this technology to improve student writing. Participants will learn some advantages of using blogging in the classroom, view examples of blogs that students have created, and look at some of the many exciting kinds of writing and discussions new technology can inspire.

Writing Marathon

The Massachusetts Writing Project invites you to experience the power of writing in the community by joining the **Worcester Writing Marathon**. The marathon will begin in the Crowne Plaza during the "A" sessions. After a brief introduction we will move to the streets to engage in personal writing in small groups in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings. We will return to the hotel for the luncheon and keynote. Following that we will meet during the "C" sessions for a voluntary read-around and a workshop on the classroom implications of the writing marathon: how writing in different environments can enhance student interest and performance. Limit 15; please register below.



The marathon leader is **Kit Dunlap**, Site Director of the Buzzards Bay Writing Project, who has facilitated numerous writing retreats for students and teachers.

Crowne Plaza Worcester

10 Lincoln Square
Worcester, MA 01608
Phone: 508-791-1600
<http://www.cpworcester.com/>

Driving Directions

- Take Route 90 (Massachusetts Turnpike) to exit 10 (Auburn)
- After the tollbooth, bear left at the fork
- Take Route 290 east and get off at Exit 17
- Turn left at the top of the ramp at the traffic lights
- At the second set of traffic lights, at the bottom of the hill, make a left onto Major Taylor Boulevard (formerly Worcester Center Boulevard)
- The hotel is on the right; park in the garage.

Hotel Reservations

To reserve a room Friday night at the special discount rate of **\$99**, call the Crowne Plaza reservations desk toll-free at 800-628-4240 by **April 10** and ask for the Massachusetts Writing Project conference rate.

Because Writing Matters Registration Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

School: _____

School Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Writing Project Affiliation (if any): _____

Conference Registration Fee: \$80

Fee includes parking, continental breakfast, luncheon, conference packet, and admission to all conference activities. Check should be made payable to the **University of Massachusetts**.

Please send this form with payment to:

Bruce Rettman, MWP Registration Chair
65 Colonial Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

To help us with planning, please indicate your **workshop choices**:

A1___ A2___ A3___ A4___

B1___ B2___ B3___ B4___

C1___ C2___ C3___

Worcester Writing Marathon___

MWP Massachusetts Writing Project

A local initiative of the National Writing Project

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University of Massachusetts
130 Hicks Way
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Because
Writing
Matters
Conference

May 5, 2007

*Please direct to literacy coordinator
or English Department chair*

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Massachusetts Writing Project

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WORKSHOPS AND STRANDS

- English Language Learners
 - Family Literacy
 - Teaching with Technology
 - Teacher Research
 - Response to Writing
 - Writing in Content Areas
 - Demystifying MCAS Open Response Questions
- plus a **writing marathon** and **discount books!**

Keynote speaker:



Sonia Nieto
*Author of **Why We Teach***

See workshop descriptions and registration form inside this brochure.
