



Executive Summary: Recommendations for 2007 Literacy Academies

Submitted by

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The Missouri Writing Projects Network (MWPN), comprised of the four National Writing Project affiliates in Missouri, offered Literacy Academies to participants in Cohort 1 (defined below) at each of the Missouri Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDC) beginning in summer 2006 and continuing in regroup meetings throughout the 2006-2007 school year. The MWPN is prepared to launch Literacy Academies to participants in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 beginning in Summer 2007. This document provides an affirmation of our Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contractual agreements based on our original Concept Paper (see appendix A) which was developed in consultation with Michael Muenks, DESE Director of Assessment.

This report outlines the scope of work the MWPN recommends for our continued work with Cohort 1 and initial work with Cohort 2. As we prepare to work with two different cohorts, the MWPN suggests that each writing project site collaborate with Sharon Hoge, DESE Communication Arts Consultant, and the local Communication Arts Regional Facilitators (RF) to determine both appropriate dates, locations and times of the Literacy Academies and the level of participation the RF will devote to each cohort's workshops.

Initial evaluation data has been collected for Literacy Academy participants (see Appendix B), and we will continue to provide introductory and exit surveys for participants of each cohort. The MWPN is also prepared to conduct a research study about the impact of the Literacy Academies on teacher learning and student achievement, pending approval by DESE and under the auspices of the National Writing Project's Research Initiative. (Funded in part by grants of at least \$60,000 by the NWP, we will analyze and compare MAP data, student writing samples, teachers' reflections, lesson plans, etc., from Literacy Academy participants in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 versus samples from 'control' groups, for a two-year period beginning June 2007. The research project will, then, provide a state-wide assessment of the impact of the Literacy Academies.)

Early project approval is fundamental in the success of the Literacy Academies. Contracts for 2007 Literacy Academies should be finalized by March 2007 to ensure adequate planning time among local RFs, writing project sites, and teacher participants.

Cohorts

The Regional Facilitators (RFs) select and enroll participants in the Literacy Academies. Participating teachers form cohorts of 15-30 teachers who work together for at least a four-year period: year 1 is led by the Regional Facilitators, years 2-4 are led by the MWPN.

Literacy Academy Structure

Year 1	Led by RFs	Focus: Reading and the GLEs
Year 2	Led by MWPN	Focus: Building teacher's professional knowledge base and skills
Year 3	Led by MWPN	Focus: Improving practice through teacher inquiry Expanding teacher's professional knowledge base and skills
Year 4	Led by MWPN	Focus: Building teacher leadership Improving practice through teacher inquiry Expanding teacher's professional knowledge base and skills

Cohort 1, Year 3

The MWPN recommends that we continue to work with Cohort 1, progressing to our Year 3 agenda in the summer 2007. MWPN Directors and RFs will determine the date of the academies at the various RPDC.

We propose the following Literacy Academy Structure:

4 days (24 hours) of professional development during the summer 2007.

4 days (24 hours) of follow up sessions during the 2007-2008 school year.

Focus Area: Improving practice through teacher inquiry. MWPN consultants introduce a teacher inquiry process. Teachers read extensively and work collaboratively to investigate an approach to teaching literacy. MWPN facilitators will help teachers

- decide on a focus for their classroom research based on the school's MAP data
- develop a plan to gain insights and collect evidence
- examine student writing using protocols that help them determine student progress
- analyze the data
- report their findings

Focus Area: Expanding teacher's professional knowledge base and skills. MWPN consultants continue to work to help teachers:

- link best practices for reading/teaching reading with best practices for writing/teaching writing (i.e. the reading/writing connection)
- acquire a common language to engage in professional conversations about literacy learning
- align individual classroom instruction and assessment in reading and writing with Missouri's Communication Arts GLEs and the school's curriculum
- examine one's own literacy teaching practices for areas of strengths and for areas of improvement
- develop lessons which demonstrate that writing can be used as a tool for learning and critical inquiry
- explore how to use computer technology to enhance literacy instruction
- experience the writing and reading processes as learners, including developing a professional portfolio
- apply protocols for assessing student work to determine strengths and implications for instruction.

Products from the Year 3 Literacy Academy:

Expansion of teachers' professional portfolio that includes:

- A new lesson that addresses GLEs
- Evidence of use of technology (where appropriate)
- A management plan for the start of the 2007-2008 school year and reflection on it
- Samples of teacher field notes and student work analyzed for inquiry project
- An extended reflection about findings from inquiry project

Cohort 2, Year 2

The MWPN recommends that we begin to work with Cohort 2 during summer 2007 using our Year 2 agenda. MWPN Directors and RFs will determine the date of the academies at the various RPDC.

We propose to keep the same Literacy Academy Structure:

- 5 days (30 hours) of professional development during the summer 2007
- 4 days (24 hours) of follow up sessions during the 2007-2008 school year

Focus Area: Build teacher's professional knowledge base and skills. MWPN consultants begin work to help teachers:

- link best practices for reading/teaching reading with best practices for writing/teaching writing (i.e. the reading/writing connection)
- acquire a common language to engage in professional conversations about literacy learning

- align individual classroom instruction and assessment practices in reading and writing with Missouri’s “Communication Arts Grade-Level Expectations” and the school’s curriculum
- examine one’s own literacy teaching practices for areas of strengths and for areas of improvement
- develop lessons which demonstrate that writing can be used as a tool for learning and critical inquiry
- explore how to use computer technology to enhance literacy instruction
- experience the writing and reading processes as learners, including developing a professional portfolio
- apply protocols for assessing student work to determine strengths and implications for instruction.

Products from the Year 2 Literacy Academy:

First stage of a professional portfolio that includes:

- Journal writing
- Revised teaching narrative
- Assignment sequence and rationale
- A plan for starting the school year and reflection on that plan
- Writing piece revised to publish
- Samples of student work; written reflections about classroom practice and student progress as demonstrated in student work