



Designing Writing and Technology Summer Camps for Youth



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Planning Document: PLWP Middle School Writing Camp 2006

Make the Write Choice = Camp Title Thematic Strand = Choices

Metaphoric Brainstorming related to choices – paint palettes, architecture, cooking, fashion models, daily planners, awards ceremonies, fan clubs, menus,

Mundane Details:

Need to pick up roster sheets from Margaret Bangerter at TMC
Establish a daily schedule so students know what to expect when
Find out right away, students level of comfort with computers
Figure out a couple of good icebreakers and community building activities
Get release forms distributed and returned ASAP

Elements of the Camp/Ideas for Camp:

“Window on My World” introductory piece? Select a picture of you at a younger age (try to go back at least 3 years) that you could write about and that would shed some light on your personality, your interests, your family life, your history etc.

Start off each day (after the first orientation day) with a different type of musical selection and have students write what they associate/imagine in their heads by listening to that music.

After Week One – Scribe notes and Open mic time immediately following musical segment.

On Friday – Found Poetry with Ross Barnett and Jill Thevenot –examples and a start at doing them with follow-up

On Friday of Week One we need to talk about the anthology and the t-shirt and get to work on generating ideas for those right away.

DaVinci Journals (?) journal writing that combines writing with sketching ideas

“Choice” Menus for Free Writing Time Activities – Create (and go over the first week) various short writing exercises that students can engage in during work time.

Reading Choices	-	Non-Fiction/Essays	Poetry	Short Stories
		Mr. USA Chapter	The Raven	Misc.

(Need to collect some of these for reading choice time)

Discussion centering around choices in writing/in reading/in visualizing etc.
Integrate in some “reading of visuals” and talk about choices with those, too: movie clips, commercials, websites, print ads, posters etc.

Perhaps “Make a Magnet” day using a quote and online clip art to orient students to think in terms of words and images coming together.



March 1, 2006

Name of Teacher
Name of School

Dear First Name of Teacher,

We hope that you will nominate up to three students in your class with strong writing skills and/or interests to be a part of our 2006 “Make the Write Choice!” middle school youth writing camp.

Every summer for the last decade, Prairie Lands Writing Project—northwest Missouri’s National Writing Project site jointly supported by Missouri Western State University and the St. Joseph School District—has sponsored youth writing camps conducted by Teacher Consultants who delight in transforming students into exuberant writers and publishers of their writing. **This year, our “Make the Write Choice” campers must have completed grades seven or eight and be nominated by their classroom teachers.**

We will hold our youth writing camp at Western, during the same dates as the St. Joseph School District’s secondary summer school (June 6 through June 29). We have scheduled our opening and closing times (8 a.m.-12 noon) so that families can drop students off at the college and still deliver other family members to their SJSJ sites for other classes.

Application and camp details are provided in the accompanying flyer and letter to parents—inside the nominating envelopes addressed to Donna Klein at Coleman Elementary School. **To recommend your students for “Make the Write Choice” camp, simply fill in the information requested in the upper-left hand corner of the envelope (name of student you are nominating, your name, your school) and give the envelope packet to parents of qualified potential campers before or during third quarter conferences.**

Completed application forms need to be returned no later than April 21st. (In the SJSJ, we appreciate your forwarding any completed applications you receive via inter-school mail to Donna Klein.) We will send you “Make the Write Choice” camper acceptance certificates in time for you to include in your end-of-year awards assemblies.

Thank you again for assisting us by nominating students. **Prairie Lands will provide you with a \$5 gift certificate to Hastings Bookstore or Pigtails ‘N Inkwells (your choice) for each of your students who applies for and attends the “Make the Write Choice” camp.**

Sincerely,

Valorie A. Stokes, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant and 2006 Middle School Camp Co-Director
(vstokes@missouriwestern.edu)

Donna Klein, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant and 2006 Middle School Camp Co-Director
(donna.klein@sjsd.k12.mo.us)



March 1, 2006

Principal's name
School

Dear _____,

Enclosed is a copy of a nominating packet and letter about our "Make the Write Choice" camp which we are distributing to all of the seventh and eighth grade Language Arts teachers in St. Joseph. The letter invites teachers to nominate up to five of their students to apply for this youth writing camp to be held at Missouri Western State College this summer.

We hope you will encourage your teachers to nominate [name of school] students for this wonderful experience and assist us with one other matter. We want to waive the camp's \$20 materials fee for students whose families have financial difficulties. If you could complete the form below and return it via intra school mail or snail mail to _____ we will grant \$20 scholarships for the nominated students you have listed in need of financial aid.

Again, this letter is to simply inform you of this terrific summer opportunity for students who enjoy writing and to encourage you to give a little nudge to your teachers who will be making the nominations.

Sincerely,

Valorie A. Stokes, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant and 2006 Middle School Camp Co- Director
(vstokes@missouriwestern.edu)

Donna Klein, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant and 2006 Middle School Camp Co-Director
(donna.klein@sjsd.k12.mo.us)

Robidoux Middle School

The following students nominated for "Make the Write Choice" camp should be awarded \$20 scholarships:

Your Signature:

(Please return this form to _____ at _____ before
_____.)



March 1, 2006

Dear Parent,

Congratulations! Your child's teacher has recognized your child's strong writing skills and/or interests by nominating him/her to participate in our 2006 "Make the Write Choice" camp for young writers.

Every summer for the last decade, Prairie Lands Writing Project—northwest Missouri's National Writing Project site jointly supported by Missouri Western State College and the St. Joseph School District—has sponsored youth writing camps conducted by Teacher Consultants who delight in transforming students into exuberant writers and publishers of their writing. Because we are limiting participation to no more than 30 campers this year, our "Make the Write Choice" campers must be among the top five writing students nominated by their classroom teachers. Our 2006 camp details and application procedures are included in the accompanying flyer.

We will hold our youth writing camp in the air-conditioned comfort of the Eder Hall and Janet Gorman Murphy buildings at Missouri Western, during the same dates as the St. Joseph School District's secondary summer school (June 6 through June 29). We have scheduled our opening and closing times (8 a.m. – 12 noon) so that families can drop students off at the college and still deliver other family members to their SJSD site for other summer school classes. Campers must provide their own transportation and pay a \$20 materials fee (check payable to Prairie Lands Writing Project) to cover daily snacks, a camper tee shirt, and camp book publication costs).

We sincerely hope that you will encourage your child to apply for this wonderful, fun-filled learning opportunity. Experiencing a writer's life and being part of an accepting, encouraging writing community is an experience students will not soon forget.

We will need to receive your child's completed application packet (student letter, materials fee, and completed application form) **no later than Friday, April 21st**. Mail the completed application materials in the envelope provided. Campers will be notified by letter whether or not they have a spot in the 2006 session by May 5.

If you have any questions about our "Make the Write Choice" camp, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to receiving your child's application.

Sincerely,

Valorie A. Stokes, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant and 2006 Middle School Camp Co-Director
(vstokes@missouriwestern.edu ; 816-233-7603)

Donna Klein, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant and 2006 Middle School Camp Co-Director
(donna.klein@sjsd.k12.mo.us)

Writing Survey

Name _____

Date _____

1. Are you a writer? _____
(If your answer is YES, answer question 2a. If your answer is NO, answer 2b)
- 2a. How did you learn to write?

- 2b. How do people learn to write?

3. Why do people write? List as many reasons as you can think of.

4. What does someone have to do or know in order to write well?

5. What kinds of writing do you like to write?

6. How do you decide what you'll write about? Where do your ideas come from?

7. What kinds of response help you most as a writer?

8. How often do you write at home?

9. In general, how do you feel about what you write?

Computer Survey

Name _____

Date _____

1. If you had to rate your comfort level with computers on a scale of 1-10 (1 = very uncomfortable and 10 = very comfortable) where would you rate it?

2. Why did give the comfort rating you did?

3. How do you feel about your keyboarding skills? Why?

4. Please check whether or not you have had the opportunity to do the following on a computer:
 - _____ Visit Internet Sites
 - _____ Read or Use a blog
 - _____ Use word processing programs
 - _____ Use drawing or graphic programs
 - _____ Use social networking sites such as MySpace or Facebook
 - _____ Send and receive e-mail

5. Up to this point, what kinds of things have you done on a computer in school?

6. Up to this point, what kinds of things have you done on a computer outside of school?

Professional Development Benefits

The youth camp model can provide a space for “risk taking”

- For teachers to explore the pedagogical implications of using various digital tools in the classroom
- For students to explore multiple ways of representing their thinking and in turn themselves
- For both teachers and students to work together outside a typical school setting; debriefing face-to-face about projects—celebrating the learning potential in mistakes and involving children in the debriefing process

The youth camp model also allows for embedded professional development opportunities:

- TCs have time to explore and experiment with tech tools relevant to classroom teaching and possible classroom applications
- TCs can practice facilitation and leadership skills with minimal risk
- TCs can serve as guests in presentation, instruction and observation roles during the camps
- TCs have opportunities for parallel learning alongside student campers
- TCs review camp evaluations and make recommendations for future camps and further potential PD experiences

Funding and Sustainability Issues

NWP offers federal aid for teacher PD only; no NWP funds can be used for student camps

Camps need to design models that generate and sustain renewable funding sources

- Solicit help from local businesses
- Charge fees for camps
- Raise money to fund scholarships
- Create partnerships with school districts