



Central Arizona Writing Project

ASU, Tempe

The Impact of the Central Arizona Writing Project

EVERY DAY, ACROSS OUR STATE, in every kind of community, Central Arizona Project (CAWP) teachers are making a difference in the lives of students—early childhood through university. By teaching students not only how to write well but how to learn through writing in all disciplines, these educators are increasing their students’ chances of academic and career success.

The Annual Summer Institute: Building Teacher Leadership

The CAWP Annual summer institute prepares teachers for local, regional and national leadership. These teacher-leaders return to their schools and districts to conduct professional development programs that promote core principles of effective instruction. These leaders are tremendously loyal, and over time, put their expertise to work in professional development programs that spread effective practices and impact student achievement in the service of schools and districts in their region.

Over the past three years, since the inception of the Central Arizona Writing Project, we have supported 37 teacher leaders through the Invitational Summer Institute. In 2009-2010, institute participants taught 1,609 students across the greater Phoenix area. Teachers have reported positive impact from the invitation summer institute for their teaching and for student learning. For example, in 2010,

- **94% of the teachers served in the Invitational Summer Institutes rated the ISI as valuable to their work;**
- **89% of the teachers reported the Institute contributed to their understanding of how to teach writing affectively;**
- **100% reported gaining knowledge from the ISI to help students expand their writing repertoire; and**
- **94% reported feeling more prepared to teach a wide range of students more effectively.**

One CAWP teacher leader shared what she gained as a teacher of writing after her participation in the 2010 summer institute: “What I valued the most in participating in the summer institute was the exposure to so many wonderful educators from primary, to middle school, to high school, to college, and across the curriculum. I now have a better grasp on the “big picture” of the writing process. This institute provided me with new tools and support to be even more informed and effective.”

CAWP teacher leaders have presented their innovative practices and teacher research at local, regional, and national conferences. Our teacher leaders have disseminated their work on the teaching of K-12 writing at the Arizona English Teachers Association Annual Conference and, through this venue, presented directly to **405** teachers from across the state. Three of our teacher leaders have presented their work for the last three years on the national level at the National Writing Project Annual Conference, Rural Sites Network Conference, and the National Council for Teachers of English Annual Conference.

CAWP Professional Development and Outreach Programs

CAWP Young Writers Camp (rltxt) has served 128 students in the last three years from schools across the greater Phoenix area.

CAWP Family Writing Project has served 48 students, 45 parents, and 25 K-6 syblings in the Phoenix Unified School District, Alhambra School District, and Glendale School District in the past three years.

CAWP Dia de los Ninos at Arizona State University served 300 K-12 students in 2010.

CAWP Teaching Writing with Technology Study Group has supported 10 teachers at Barcelona Middle School in the Alhambra School District in Phoenix, Arizona.

CAWP is Part of a National Network

Our site is part of a national network. Across the National Writing Project, there have been studies of the impact of our programs: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/3208>

Key Findings

- In 16 studies conducted in seven states, 103 of 112 comparisons show positive results in writing achievement favoring students in classrooms of NWP participants.
- Student results are strong and favorable in those aspects of writing that the NWP is best known for, such as development of ideas, organization, and stance.
- Students in Writing Project classrooms gained more often than their peers in the area of conventions as well, suggesting that basic skills also benefit from the NWP approach to teaching writing.
- In the overall or holistic measure, in every case the improvement of students taught by teachers who participated in NWP programs exceeded that of students whose teachers were not participants.

TEACHERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE in leading sustained efforts to improve learning in our schools. CAWP teacher-leaders study and share effective practices that enhance student writing and learning; work collaboratively with other educators; design resources; and take on new roles in effecting positive change for students in communities across Arizona and the U.S.