

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**ENGH 699/EPDP502.6R1: NVWP Invitational Summer Institute (ISI)**  
**July 6 - July 31, 2015 (Fairfax)**  
**June 22 – July 17 (Spotsylvania)**  
**Monday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm**  
**Location TBD**

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**DESCRIPTION**

An affiliate, from among more than 200 sites, of the National Writing Project, the Northern Virginia Writing Project offers its Invitational Summer Institute, a four-week intensive program of professional development for educators at all levels pre-K through university in all subjects and curricular areas. Following the proven model of the National Writing Project, participants write daily and for specific purposes, share their writing in peer groups, read and discuss research of interest to them and to the field of education, and share best practices. All elements relate to the two tenets that are the foundation of every Writing Project site:

- Teachers Teaching Teachers, and
- Teachers of Writing Must Write

In addition, the NVWP ISI will focus on four dimensions through which participants will explore their roles as both teachers and writers. These four dimensions will provide a framework for weekly thinking, discussion, reading, and writing.

1. Writing for Self (Writing as Reflection/Reflexivity, Writing as a Process of Learning)
2. Writing for/with Students (Writing as Modeling, Writing to Communicate)
3. Writing for Colleagues/Administrators (Writing for an Internal Audience)
4. Writing for Public(s)/Publication (Writing for an External Audience)

## LEARNING GOALS

- Increase competence, confidence, and fluency as a practicing writer under the premise that teachers of writing must write: their authority as teachers of writing must be grounded on their own personal experience as writers, persons who know first-hand the struggles and satisfactions of the writer's task.
- Challenge, validate and enhance their authority as teachers by familiarizing themselves with current and past research, and gathering evidence to support the effectiveness of their own teaching practices.
- Understand and take part in the shared professional challenges that are shared by the interdependent, collegial community of writing instructors, and build leadership abilities to address these issues through collaborative efforts based on mutual professional respect.

## ACTIVITIES

Daily activities include demonstration lessons (i.e., teaching presentations) from experienced classroom teachers, panel presentations and discussions led by national experts and Mason faculty members, and peer reading and writing groups. Participants will receive coaching and peer review of presentations and writing. As a culminating activity, they will create a portfolio of work that includes book reviews, publishable pieces of writing, demonstration lesson handouts, and reflections on course activities.

## EXPECTATIONS

Participants are encouraged to keep a journal/learning log during the Institute to record thoughts and reactions to presentations, readings, discussions, reading/writing groups, and visiting consultants. We encourage participants to re-read their journal regularly. Program activities, to be shaped by participants, will include the following:

**READING:** Participants will read widely, both individually and in a reading group, to support their professional interests and engage in the public conversation related to NVWP.

- **Public Writing & Blogs.** To familiarize themselves and engage with the public community of teacher-writers, participants will read public pieces written by other teachers in the form of blog posts, Op-Ed articles, etc.
- **Professional Reading & Research.** Guided by a Statement of Inquiry submitted prior to the start of the program, participants will, with the guidance of the program directors, compile a bibliography of professional reading (books, peer-reviewed articles) to support their research, writing, and/or practice. These readings will inform discussions in reading groups and may support the research basis for the Demonstration Lesson.

**WRITING:** The first 30 minutes of each morning is allocated for Morning Pages, during which participants will write freely of their own choice. This time is intended for writers to meditate and prepare for the day; participants may choose to work on personal and professional writing as described below:

- **Personal Interest Writing.** Participants are encouraged to select personal interest topics that are important to them, which they will enjoy spending considerable time and effort on. Participants are encouraged to experiment with their writing so that they will learn more about the subject matter and their writing processes.
- **Public/Professional Writing.** Each participant will be asked to write, revise, and submit one piece intended for publication to a wide audience. This piece may draw from topics that arise on the online discussion community, through the participant's professional research, discussions with project participants and/or other professionals in the field, or driven by the participant's own Statement of Inquiry. Upon conclusion of the ISI, participants are encouraged to submit this piece for publication, and they are encouraged to consider some of the following publication venues:
  - *Journal of the Virginia Writing Project*
  - The NVWP blog, or another professional blog (as a guest writer)
  - Newspaper: Op Ed article
  - Professional conference proposal
  - Letter to a policymaker
  - Proposal to a program director or administrator

Other ongoing writing tasks related to the ISI include:

- **Statement of Inquiry.** Drafted prior to the start of the program, each participant will write a Statement of Inquiry to identify topics, questions, and areas of research for continued consideration throughout the ISI. This piece may guide the participant's choices about Demonstration Lesson topics, reading group selections, and/or public piece topics and publication venues. The Statement of Inquiry will be revisited throughout the ISI, and will culminate in a final reflective piece.
- **Participant Profile.** During the first week of the program, participants will write a profile of another ISI participant as modeled during a demonstration lesson. These profiles will be shared as a way to get to know program participants and build community.
- **Daily Ethnography/Group Journal.** Each day, one participant in the program will be in charge of documenting the day and reading it to the group at the start of the next day. The format is entirely up to that day's ethnographer and can be as traditional or creative as desired.
- **NVWP ISI Online Community.** Extending from the pre-institute online discussion community, participants will be invited, though not required, to continue posting to online discussion threads throughout the institute. The online community will be a space

for incubating ideas, reflection, collaboration, and inquiry between project participants only.

**DEMONSTRATION LESSON:** Each participant will prepare and give a research-based presentation related to the teaching of writing generated from his/her own teaching practice. During the course of the ISI, each participant will have 75 minutes to give a demonstration lesson, but the topic will be one that can be expanded to two to three hours for an external professional development workshops. Each participant will also prepare a multi-page handout to accompany the presentation.

**PARTICIPATION:** ISI Fellows will participate in activities that support their and others professional work as teachers and as writers.

- **Reading Groups:** Based on participants' indicated areas of interest in professional growth and research, they will be assigned to a weekly reading group in which they will read and discuss a selected book. During the last week of the ISI, reading groups will share their books and their discussions with everyone.
- **Writing Groups:** Participants will read aloud and discuss new or substantially revised drafts of their personal and professional interest writing in bi-weekly writing groups. Participants should bring copies for each member of their group each time the group meets, or share digital copies prior to group meetings, as decided upon by the group.
- **Feedback Session.** Each week, participants who have given their demonstration lesson will participate in a group feedback session with ISI staff and the other presenters from that week.
- **Group Discussions.** Each week, we will have invited speakers or panelists. Fellows will be expected to participate actively in these discussions.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation is based on presentations, writings contained in the final portfolio, and class participation.

**Institute Anthology:** At the end of the course we will publish an in-house anthology of the best writing from the course. Each person will be allocated four pages.

**Portfolio:** During the last week of the course, participants will share portfolios to practice portfolio responding and evaluation. Portfolios will include the Statement of Inquiry, the presentation handout, a reflection on the reading group book, a reflection on writing group participation, and one piece that could be submitted for publication.

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:** The Graduate School of Education (GSE) and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gse.gmu.edu](http://gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.