

The Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project (GPAWP) was founded in the English Department at Arizona State University in 1978. GPAWP is part of the National Writing Project, a growing network of university-school programs based on the model of the original Bay Area Writing Project. Each year, approximately 85,000 teachers across the country participate in summer and school-year programs like those offered by the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project.

*"The National Writing Project has done more than anything else in this country for the teaching of writing."*

– Peter Greer  
Department of Education

## The Program

The Writing Project is firmly committed to the belief that teachers are the key to educational change. GPAWP, like Projects across the country, works toward improving the teaching of writing through:

- 1) intensive Summer Institutes and
- 2) school year inservice programs.

The heart of GPAWP is the Summer Institute, which brings together 20—30 master teachers to:

- develop and share their most successful classroom practices;
- study current theory and research in the teaching of writing;
- have time to write and to explore, share, and develop their own writing abilities.

Participants in the Summer Institute return as Teacher Consultants to their districts to conduct inservice programs during the school year.

*"Respect for the classroom teachers is the central building block that generates everything about the writing project that is important."*

– The National  
Writing Project Model

## The Summer Institute

GPAWP has run a full summer program every year since its inception. With the advent of state testing programs and the growing emphasis on writing across the curriculum, however, the openings for the Summer Institute fill more quickly each year. Here is an overview of the Summer Institute and how to become part of it:

- Participants sent to the summer program must be full-time teachers in grades K-College. The Writing Project seeks teachers who are enthusiastic, open to new ideas, eager to work with other teachers, ready to be leaders for writing in their schools and districts.
- Selections of teacher-participants for each summer's program are made from nominations by their school districts. Districts are encouraged to screen applicants and nominate their best teachers to the institute.

- Districts commit \$1,200 per teacher they wish to send to GPAWP
- Teachers who are selected to be in the summer program receive an \$800 stipend from the Writing Project. They also earn 6 semester hours of graduate credit in English (for which they must register and pay tuition).
- The Summer Institute runs for 5 weeks, usually concurrent with ASU's first five-week summer session. Daily sessions meet from approximately 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday for the five weeks.
- Participants who successfully complete the Summer Institute become Teacher Consultants and direct writing across the curriculum inservice programs in their districts and do presentations for other Phoenix area districts.

*"I watch what is happening among my friends of the GPAWP, and I see what I have dreamed of all my life as a teacher: a caring community of learners sharing what they know, taking the risk to reach out and touch one another."*

– Lee Atonna  
Kennedy Elementary School,  
Roosevelt District



In reverence and respect, we invoke the spirit of the Native American feather circle as the guiding metaphor of GPAWP. Too often in the dominant culture, we are trained to use language to lie, cheat, manipulate, and pose. The feather circle asks us to speak in openness and honesty from our hearts. In this way, we are enabled to discover again the power of language as “an instrument of creation.” May it be so . . .

*“We want a language of that different yield. A yield rich as the harvest of the earth, a yield that returns us to our own sacredness, to a self-love and respect that will carry out to others.”*

—L. Hogan, *Dwellings*

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## *The Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project*

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