

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Kim Patterson, Director

Mississippi State University Writing/Thinking Project

662-325-7777 kpatt@colled.msstate.edu

**Thousands of Teachers Focus on Writing over Summer Vacation**

MISSISSIPPI STATE, MS – Mississippi teachers are among the more than 3,000 Kindergarten through college teachers across the country who dedicated four weeks of their summer break to learning new strategies to improve their students' writing skills.

During a summer institute, teachers at the Mississippi State University Writing/Thinking Project (MSUW/TP) studied the latest research and effective classroom practices, as did teachers at more than 200 National Writing Project (NWP) sites on college campuses in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The select teachers to complete the summer institute at MSUWTP in June were: Kellie Atkinson, North Pontotoc Middle School; Susan Jackson, Julia Faulk, and Sylvia Stevens, Choctaw Tribal Schools; Tassie Rosamond, Ward-Stewart Elementary School in Starkville; Annette Glover, Caledonia High School; Loretta Lee, New Hope Middle School; Lanell Thornton, Fifth Street Junior High in West Point; Gavis Mosley, Noxubee County School District; Lakia Westerfield, Carver Middle School in Raymond; Minadene Waldrop, Rankin County School District Administration, and Dalvia Mitchell, Weir Elementary School.

The majority of Americans view good writing skills as essential to success in college and the workplace, according to a recent national public opinion survey, *Writing, a National Pastime, Takes New Forms* (PDF), by the research firm Belden Russonello & Stewart. However, they fear that our public schools and our children are falling behind. Just 17 percent believe that when students graduate from high school they have the writing skills they need for college, and 75 percent say that our K-12 education system should put more emphasis on the teaching of writing.

"Teachers who attend NWP summer institutes return to their classrooms with new strategies for teaching writing and with experience using digital tools," said Sharon J. Washington, NWP Executive Director. "Eighty percent of Americans believe there is a greater need now than 20 years ago for a person to be able to write well in order to succeed. Summer institutes are one of many writing project programs that address this need."

National research studies confirm significant gains in writing performance among students whose teachers participate in NWP programs.

The National Writing Project is the most significant coordinated effort to improve writing in America. NWP sites, located on more than 200 university and college campuses, serve over 135,000 participants annually. NWP continues to add new sites each year with the goal of placing the writing project within reach of every teacher in America. Through its professional development model, NWP develops the leadership, programs, and research needed for teachers to help students become successful writers and learners.

For more information, go to [www.msuwtp.mwti.msstate.edu](http://www.msuwtp.mwti.msstate.edu) or [www.nwp.org](http://www.nwp.org).

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Attached photo