



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2020 (Re)Vision: Looking Backward, *Looking Forward*, **Acting Now!**

Fargo

July 31-August 2, 2020

"If [people] are unable to perceive critically the themes of their time, and thus to intervene actively in reality, [they] are carried along in the wake of change. They see that the times are changing, but they are submerged in that change and so cannot discern its dramatic significance. And a society beginning to move from one epoch to another requires the development of an especially flexible, critical spirit."
~ Paulo Freire

Join Midwest teachers and writers in Fargo, North Dakota, the homelands of the indigenous Dakota and Ojibwe people, for the 3rd annual NWP Midwest Conference, and nurture your critical spirit with guest speaker Cornelius Minor, who believes that "[a]s educators, we know that we find much of our power in collaborative work. When our ways of seeing children, planning for them, facilitating opportunities, and reflecting on those experiences are informed by what we learn from each other, all kids benefit" (Minor, 2019, p. xiii). This year's theme, "2020 (Re)Vision: Looking Backward, Looking Forward, Acting Now!" invites us to (re)vision the work we do (pedagogical, collaborative, community-oriented) by critically perceiving the contradictions "between the ways of being, understanding, behaving, and valuing which belong to yesterday and other ways of perceiving and valuing which announce the future" (Freire, 2005, p. 6).

Looking backward

What do we need to know about our past to fully understand the issues involved in teaching and learning in the present? What do we want to hold on to from our past work at our writing project sites and in our communities? What conversations from previous NWP annual meetings and Midwest conferences do we want to continue? Or change? Why do we seem to have the same conversations over and over again, like those about race and colonization?

Looking forward

In announcing the future, the National Writing Project approaches its 50th anniversary, which occasions several critical questions around the implications for NWP sites, its teacher-leaders, and the communities served. NWP director, Elyse Eidman-Aadahl, will join us in thinking through these implications as well as questions around the nexus of the NWP national network and local communities. In this way, we can collectively act now in our looking backwards and looking forward.

Acting Now

Our call to "Act Now!" acknowledges that what is needed are not just methods, practices, techniques, but dialogues, collaborations, and emergent pathways that engage rigorously with the idea that "to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (hooks, 1994, p. 13). As with any National Writing Project event, all teachers and their expertise are deeply respected—we care for each other's souls as well as those of our students.

Proposal Themes

We seek proposals of 300 words or less that attend to the theme's holistic (future-past-present) as well as its specific points of inquiry (historicizing, strategizing, praxis). Points of inquiry we urge you to consider but to which you are not limited, include:

- equity and empowering change through literacy
- student-centered approaches (empowering student voice, "survance," trauma & grief writing, strategies for healing & redress)
- emergent teaching and learning practices
- civil/civic discourse/argument
- professional growth & development (thriving as an educator, networking, reading widely, teacher-as-learner)
- rural education
- the construction of what counts as knowledge.
- interdisciplinarity (cross-disciplinary teaching & collaboration; disciplinary transgression)
- classroom ecologies and engaged pedagogy (cultivating engaged classroom ecologies)
- geopolitics of knowledge: power, place, pedagogy
- writing process/writing as craft (the *subject* of writing/the *writer* as subject)
- site work (how to re-vision our work, making connections with community and outreach, recruiting teachers, integrating different groups of writers into site leadership)
- understanding the consequences of neoliberalism in education & environments of learning
- Issues of educational "safety" vs. "security" (to what extent do they diverge and why?)

Session formats

Conference sessions are 75 minutes in length.

- **Teaching demonstration:** One or more educators model a lesson from their current teaching practice, engaging participants in the activities and reflecting on how such lessons might work in different contexts.
- **Roundtable discussion:** These sessions feature 3-4 speakers and a moderator, with a discussion organized around a specific topic or question. After presenters speak, the moderator facilitates a discussion among presenters and audience members.
- **Individual presentation:** 15-minute presentation on some aspect of one's teaching, research, and work in education. NOTE: Individual presentations will be grouped together by the conference planning committee and given a moderator to create a full 75-minute session.
- **Panel:** A team of 2-4 educators present aspects of their teaching, research, and work in education organized around a shared topic or theme, engaging the audience in Q&A.
- **Performance:** A presentation involving theater, music, reading, dance, or something else. This may also be participatory. The performance may take the entire session or may include opportunities for the audience and artist(s) to process in some way.

References

- Erdrich, L. (2003). *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Minor, C. (2019). *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Submit proposals (word limit of 300 words) to <https://tinyurl.com/y59hthft>

RRVWP

RED RIVER VALLEY WRITING PROJECT