The Minnesota Writing Project’s Collaboration with Teacher Educators in Norway

The collaboration begins:

In 2010, based on the recommendation of Anne Andersen, a long-time teacher consultant of the Minnesota Writing Project (MWP) and former school principal in Trondheim, Cherise Storlie-Kristoffersen attended the MWP Invitational Summer Institute.

Impressed by what she had experienced, Cherise conducted an MWP-like workshop when she joined the faculty at Sør-Trøndelag University College (HIST) in Trondheim. Staff at the National Center for Writing Education and Research (Skrivesenteret) took notice.

National Center for Writing Education and Research (Skrivesenteret)

- Established 21 August 2009 by the Norwegian government
- Housed in Sør-Trøndelag University College (HIST)
- Located in Trondheim, Norway

It functions as a national resource center for

- Stimulating writing, the teaching of writing as a key competence, and writing research
- Working with classroom approaches, learning strategies, and forms of assessment in order to improve the teaching of writing from kindergarten, primary, secondary, adult, and teacher education.

Skrivesenteret’s activities are knowledge- and research-based, and it contributes to information and dissemination of experience from research, trials, and development projects.

Cherise and Synnøve Matre, founding director of Skrivesenteret, applied for and received a grant to collaborate with MWP, which is part of the Center for Writing, in order to acquire more ideas about the teaching of writing, support for teachers of writing, and research into the teaching of writing.

The grant: 100 000 NOK ($18,000) for Writing Education in Teacher Education from the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) through Project Funds for North America 2011

The goals within the first year of the collaboration are to conduct initial site visits at HIST and the Center for Writing at the University of Minnesota to learn about the similarities and differences between teacher education and how the teaching of writing is addressed within teacher education in each country. HIST is interested in developing a model that focuses on the following MWP goals:

- To establish and sustain a network of teachers who write, teach, and learn with other teachers
- To support teachers as writers and researchers
- To develop and disseminate best practices in the teaching of 21st century literacies
- To strengthen collaboration between higher education and school districts

Minnesota Writing Project visits HIST:

MWP director Muriel Thompson, co-director Kirsten Jamsen, technology liaison Debra Hartley, and teacher consultant Anne Andersen traveled to Trondheim in September 2011 to share information about how MWP and the Center for Writing serve K-college writing teachers.

MWP invited the MWP-Sør-Trøndelag HiST Project Funds for North America 2011 to apply for and receive a grant to collaborate with MWP, which is part of the Center for Writing, in order to acquire more ideas about the teaching of writing, support for teachers of writing, and research into the teaching of writing.

HIST visits the Minnesota Writing Project:

Based on what they have learned about the MWP’s outreach to all of Minnesota and TWV’s support for university teachers, HIST and Skrivesenteret staff have a model for how to expand their work with teachers throughout all of Norway.

In order to obtain more first-hand knowledge of how MWP and Center for Writing programs support writing instruction here in Minnesota, HIST teacher educators Cherise Storlie-Kristoffersen, Synnøve Matre, and Torunn Klemp spent a week in Minnesota in March 2012. They visited local public schools, took part in a TWV Engaging Controversies discussion, and attended the MWP 2011 Invitational Summer Institute Follow-up Retreat.

2013 and beyond:

In July 2012, two Trondheim school teachers and a HIST staff member will attend the three-week MWP Invitational Summer Institute, at which they will share best practices, engage in critical discussions, conduct research into current theories of literacy and pedagogy, and improve their own skills as writers.

In August 2012, three HIST educators will attend the Center for Writing’s five-day TWV seminar for faculty members and instructors. In the seminar, they will focus on strategies for integrating meaningful writing instruction into their courses.

Skrivesenteret

- will offer workshops in Trondheim to promote their 2013 summer institute.
- will conduct a one-week summer institute for teachers (grades 1-10) in June 2013, which will be twinned with a one-week institute in Minnesota. An MWP consultant will assist the facilitator in Trondheim.
- is investigating the offering of a Certificate in Teaching Writing and Critical Literacy like that offered by MWP in conjunction with the College of Education and Human Development.
- will pursue staff and graduate student exchanges with University of Minnesota programs.
- will offer workshops for college faculty patterned on the Center for Writing’s TWV program; a TWV consultant will co-direct their seminar modeled on the five-day seminar.
- is applying for a three-year, 2 000 000 NOK grant for higher education cooperation with the Center for Writing and University of Minnesota.