Each summer, schools and districts choose to gather their teachers and invite TCRWP staff to teach what we call a Homegrown Summer Institute. These institutes, which happen around the world, in-person or virtually, may support 40 teachers — or 600. They bring teachers in a community together around the teaching of reading, writing, or phonics. We do our best to embed these institutes in the initiatives and experiences of your community. This year, we are also allowing smaller districts to combine together, in order to host homegrown institutes for schools or districts that are too small to put together an institute on their own. Give your teachers the gift of time to think about and re-energize their teaching! They’ll come away with new ideas for texts, more confidence in their methods, and lots of tools for small groups and conferences.

Most of our homegrown institutes are four days, with an optional fifth day focused on a special topic or on support for literacy leaders. You may also request that a homegrown institute be a full five days. Institutes focus either on reading, writing, or phonics. This year we are offering five special topics in grades K-8. If your school or district was hoping for a different topic, or if you were hoping to support secondary, please reach out to us.

Our topics this year include:

- The Essentials of Teaching Writing
- The Essentials of Teaching Reading
- Teaching Phonics in Primary Classrooms
- Creating Teacher Toolkits to Support a Wide Range of Learners (in Reading or Writing)
- Small Groups and Conferring (in Reading or Writing)

If you are looking for a way to renew your school’s commitment to education that is deeply personal and interpersonal, and that engages teachers and students alike, heart and soul, while creating close knit communities within and across classrooms, there are few better ways to accomplish these all-important goals than through a district-based or school-based institute.

Homegrown Institutes are available for scheduling from the week of June 13 through the week of August 29. However, during TC Institute weeks (June 21-July 1, and July 11-22) we may have less availability. For this reason, please select 3 possible weeks (1st, 2nd, 3rd choice) as soon as possible. To schedule a homegrown institute, please write to Kathy Neville at kathy@readingandwritingproject.org.
In this institute, you will dive into the research and practice of teaching writing. We know that writing as a force of expression is more important to young people than ever. Our students need to be heard, they want to develop powerful voices, they long to be confident writers. And we’ve also seen that writing volume, fluency, and engagement have all suffered from the fragmented and chaotic education caused by Covid.

At this institute, you can expect to harvest the Project’s newest and deepest insights into the teaching of writing, and to learn with intensity from the community of practice at Teachers College. You’ll re-energize yourself as a mentor writer and writing instructor. You’ll study progressions and toolkits, conferencing and small group work. You’ll learn about formative assessment, and how to use tools to not only find out more about your writers, but also to learn how to teach inside a spiral of skill development, so that your teaching builds on and supports instruction that happens before and after you. Whether you are using the Units of Study from pre-2022, or you want support with our newest Writing Units of Study, we’ll make sure that you have at your fingertips all the magic of this toolkit, so that you can plan more efficiently, personalize the units, and harvest their vast array of resources.

You will also learn ways that the teaching of writing can be as culturally responsive as possible. Writing is an opportunity for kids to tell their stories, to teach others, to advocate for themselves and others. You’ll experience the risks and joys of writing in a community, so you can bring this sense of courage and commitment to your classroom.

In the year ahead, small group work will be especially important; at this institute, we’ll help you plan all-important small groups that give your writing curriculum extra scope, and we’ll help you become adept at designing and leading your own assessment-based small groups. You’ll also become familiar with the range of resources offered by the Reading and Writing Project, from curriculum to mentor texts to student exemplars. You’ll leave ready to start your year with more confidence and energy, with a toolkit of resources at your fingertips.

Across this 4-5 day institute, you’ll learn that you are never teaching alone — and you’ll have a better awareness of what teachers before and after you are teaching. Join each other and the Reading and Writing Project as we pour all of our research, shared knowledge, and love into making writing instruction vibrant, accessible, and transformative.
We have seen, over the last two years, the power of reading as an antidote to loneliness, a pathway to knowledge, and a portal to imagined worlds full of humor, adventure, and possibility. We have seen young readers discover the magic of print and begin to see meaning all around them. And we have seen that this power has not been equally distributed. It falls on us, as educators, to move heaven and earth to be sure that all young people feel welcome in the world of literacy. This is urgent and beautiful work.

In the Reading Institute, you’ll hone your essential methods. You’ll study ways to make read aloud more strategic, more inclusive, and more responsive. You’ll hear about our latest research on small group instruction, including high-leverage structures and methods. You’ll sharpen your minilessons, as we learned during months of virtual instruction, so that they are both more concise and more engaging. You’ll get to participate in demonstration instruction, and practice yourself. It is almost impossible to work on methods while teaching during the year. For this week, you’ll be able to reflect on your practice, glean tips we’ve gathered from teaching in hundreds of classrooms, and learn from each other. We’ll also make sure that you know how to get the most out of the Units of Study toolkit, so that you harvest this vast array of resources, and feel confident in personalizing the curriculum for your classroom.

You’ll also sharpen your understanding of the reading process and experience the work your students need to do in order to read with fluency and accuracy, as well as high levels of comprehension. You’ll study text complexity, and explore ways to help students access increasingly complex texts. You’ll learn approaches to increase reading volume, and ways in which we can enhance literary discourse.

The truth is, for reading workshop to be effective, you need a deep toolkit of reading strategies, so that you are ready to celebrate and support English learners, children with learning differences, and reluctant readers, as well as avid and fluent readers. We’ll build that toolkit this week, and make sure that you know where resources are when you need to refill it.

Join us to learn, plan, and prepare, so that you are ready for a year of teaching reading with joy and confidence.
TEACHING PHONICS IN PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

Grades: K-2

There is literally a mountain of research that supports all kids receiving explicit, systematic phonics instruction as well as coaching to draw on phonics as they read and as they write. Although most schools across the nation have adopted a phonics curriculum — including TCRWP’s Units of Study in Phonics — teachers have often not had the time to study resources, plan curriculum, and prepare for the year ahead. This is that time to take a deep dive into the curriculum. For phonics instruction to work its magic, what’s necessary is a combination of informed curriculum and high quality professional knowledge.

This institute is designed to provide you with a knowledge of how kids progress in their knowledge and skills with phonological awareness, concepts of print, letters, and sounds, decoding, fluency and vocabulary. That knowledge of development will be especially important now, as children will come to our classes with strengths and gaps that won’t match those from previous years, and it will be all-important for you to be able to conduct on-the-run, informal, litmus-paper-like assessment that allow for rapid responsiveness and clear prioritization.

It is also important that you have a strong command of methods for teaching and coaching phonics. To accelerate kids’ progress in the year ahead and to ensure that all kids develop a strong foundation for reading and writing, it’s important that you know the fine points of how to help kids learn their ABCs, their short and long vowels, vowel teams, cumulative blending, and the like. You’ll study this content as you take a deep dive into TCRWP’s Units of Study in phonics, so your teaching can be responsive and effective in the upcoming year.

This institute will also help you to provision kids with the reading materials that match their needs. You’ll want to know how to sort through leveled books, identifying those that are decodable enough to be helpful, and those that are best set aside. TCRWP has developed lots of resources, including recommended book lists, and can help you provision your classrooms with the materials that support your early readers in the work they need to be doing.

Never has small group work been more important than it will be in the year ahead. You’ll learn some go-to small groups that will allow you to teach, sing, rhyme, and play games as you channel kids to do the work that will help them practice, master, build upon, and apply all-important skills.

Join us to learn how to make the teaching of phonics playful, rigorous, and effective. Learn and plan now, and you’ll go into your year prepared and confident.
CREATING TEACHER TOOLKITS TO SUPPORT A WIDE RANGE OF LEARNERS

Gather your markers and post-its, your tape and glue sticks. Get yourself an art notebook or a binder, and get ready to create a toolkit to support your confering and small group work. We’ll provide a collection of progressions, mini-charts, checklists, and other tools as well as a handful of predictable methods and structures for you to put these tools into play.

Whether you are a newer teacher or an experienced teacher, creating toolkits is a way to re-energize yourself and your colleagues and to share resources so you are each better prepared to support your wide range of learners. Expect to see pictures and examples galore that will spur your imagination, and to spend time creating the tools you’ll use in your own school and role-playing how you’ll use them. Above all, expect to leave this institute feeling inspired and with a renewed energy that will fuel your teaching!

Join us to make toolkits to support your instruction, to share and collaborate with colleagues, and to hugely increase your sense of preparedness and joy.

If you choose to focus on toolkits to support the teaching of writing...

You’ll develop toolkits that include charts, exemplars, mentor texts, demonstration writing, practice materials and a score of other tools from which you can create and adapt flexible and responsive teaching. You’ll learn about tools that enable you to teach in ways that are asset-based and inclusive, and that promote independence and autonomy.

Most importantly, you’ll practice concrete ways to help students move their writing forward. You’ll practice on-the-run assessment. You’ll learn to adapt demonstration writing for various levels. You’ll consider tools that are helpful across the writing process. You’ll have the chance to see these tools in action and practice using them yourself, as well as the time to make tools that are right for your particular students. It is important for your students to become strategic and independent as writers, recognizing when tools will help them, which tools to choose, and when and how to develop their own tools. This institute will help you teach writers to work with greater agency and independence and to embrace revision and editing within their writing process.

If you choose to focus on toolkits to support the teaching of reading...

You’ll develop toolkits to support your wide range of readers, in both fiction and nonfiction reading. This institute is about helping you and your readers feel more prepared and more powerful. We define reading toolkits broadly to include the charts, mentor jots, micro-progressions, practice texts, and other tools that make your teaching more concrete, specific, and more responsive to each student’s needs.

When you have a few tools ready, you enter conferences and small groups with a sense of power. The same is true for readers. When they have a few tools they know how to use well, they read with more power. Inside this work, we’ll help you develop a deeper understanding of the bands of text complexity, as well as ways to help kids move up levels of text complexity. As you learn the key challenges that are present in texts at each of these bands, this can inform the reading tools you’ll want to have on hand.

As part of this, you can expect to develop ideas for how to engage students in designing their own tools and in using these to support themselves and their peers. The goal will be self-directed, engaged learning, and always, always reading growth.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 3-8; Writing or Reading
We know that you, as teachers, are experiencing a wider range of readers and writers in any single class than ever before. Any teacher starts to worry if their curriculum is going to perfectly support each of these learners. The truth is, no single curriculum will — but as your curriculum gathers in your learners to introduce them to grade level work, your small group work and conferring can be the way you offer regular, responsive instruction.

We’ll begin with ways you can focus on improving and deepening relationships with students and between students, so that kids want to learn with you and each other. Building on Tyrone Howard’s work, we’ll focus on asset-based language, on seeing kids’ strengths, and on developing a strong sense of community. We’ll help you with powerful classroom structures so that your classroom is one where kids can sustain reading and you can lead quiet conferences and lead small groups!

Then we’ll look at methods and structures for small group work and conferring, so that you have on hand a few high-leverage ways to go about this work. We’ve come to understand that having four or five go-to methods can make the work of planning and implementing small group instruction much more sustainable. We’ll also look at a variety of ways to gather data, including on-the-run data collection that is part of the everyday instruction, and ways to plan teaching that is responsive to data.

Finally we’ll support you with developing a deep knowledge of content and tools — the learning progressions, the TCRWP resources, the skill progressions that you can turn to when planning responsive instruction for a wide range of learners — balancing personal, responsive instruction that meets individual kids’ needs with units of study that move the whole class forward and build community.

Expect to emerge more planned for the upcoming year, more aware of resources that are at your fingertips, and confident of your methods.