



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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SUMMER INSTITUTE: A NATURAL HIGH

by Nancy MacElwee

What an experience! I left the Summer Institute on an incredible high. I wanted to tell everyone about my experience there but found it difficult to really make anyone understand how I felt about PAWP.

I thought back to the first time we all met on an evening in May and heard about the required readings and assignments from "Dr. Bob." If anyone had second thoughts at that time, they were quickly dispelled by the group feeling generated during dinner when everyone had a chance to play the "Where are you from?" and "Do you know?" games. The conversations continued as we re-assembled for the remainder of the meeting and left us with anticipation of what was to come in our five weeks together. I don't believe anyone was disappointed.

One of the best things about our group was how much we enjoyed each other. We came from very different teaching backgrounds--novice to experienced, kindergarten to high school, language to math and science--but we were all able to find common ground in our writing. As we shared our thoughts and experiences a group of strangers became like a family. We accepted each other for what we are and in five short weeks became an incredible support system. We supported each other through the work load, through our presentations, and through a number of family crises which occurred during the five weeks. Perhaps the best indication of the goodwill generated was the voluntary formation of two regional response groups which plan to hold monthly meetings. No one wanted what began at the Institute to end.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the Institute was the opportunity to write and share our daily freewrites. We were not a shy group and this was evident every morning when we shared our writing. By the end of the first week everyone had shared something, and this continued throughout the remaining four weeks. To my surprise, I found that I really enjoyed sharing my writing whenever I could.

We were visited by four outside speakers who each added their own particular expertise to the Institute. It

seemed that each of us was able to find something that spoke to us in the presentations. It started with a visit from Jana Staton who helped to increase our understanding of how we can use dialogue journals to encourage student writing. Meridith Sue Willis kept us involved and showed several ways that we can use dialogue to tell a story. Bobye Goldstein, author of Bear In Mind, kept us amused with a look at the lighter side of writing. Finally, in the last week, we heard from Randy Bomer who focused on the question of literacy and the many types of literacy there are.

Most enjoyable for those watching were the individual presentations by the fellows. Here again the wide ranging diversity of the group was evident. I was constantly impressed by the talent which was assembled in this small group of eighteen. Just when it seemed that there wasn't another way to view writing, someone found a new aspect to explore. Our presentations ranged from computers to poetry, critical thinking to cooperative learning, and writing in math to publishing our own works. As nerve-wracking as it was for the presenter, it was that enjoyable for those listening and participating.

We couldn't have enjoyed our time in the institute nearly as much if it weren't for the excellent staff who led us through the five weeks. Lois Snyder and Bob McCann guided us through each day with humor and grace, setting an example we would do well to follow. Andy Fishman helped to shed light on PCR2 so that we could return to our districts feeling somewhat enlightened on the subject. Finally, Robert Weiss ("Dr. Bob") inspired us with his commitment to PAWP and showed us what fun writing can be.

We all left on the final day with plans to meet again and with the feeling that this was only the beginning. As expressed on the cake our final day—"What a prewrite! Thank you, PAWP."

Nancy McElwee, a 1990 Fellow, teaches kindergarten in the Central Bucks School District.

1991 Summer Institute
Application on pages 6 & 7





EDITOR'S CORNER

We all know that teaching is like no other job in the world. The beginning of each new school year reminds me of this again.

By June of 1990 my senior high students knew what to do in almost every situation. They knew how to answer many different kinds of essay questions, both transactional/informational and expressive/personal styles. They could tackle most imaginative assignments with very little hesitation but with good confidence.

I know from my elementary teacher friends that their students clamored for Silent Sustained Writing time after lunch, that their students published by reading aloud, even the first graders, or published using a word processing program to make a book.

September of 1990 is another story, however. The 'firsties' have never heard of Silent Sustained Writing (and can't find the way home, missing the bus every afternoon for the first full week of school); the incoming tenth graders think research means copying from as many encyclopedias as they can find in one library period. Neither group knows where the cafeteria is or how to get to the library. Neither group knows the school's rules about anything or what the new homeroom teacher expects for morning opening exercises.

Of course, in just a few weeks everyone will have settled in and teacher and student alike will remark, "What happened to the summer? I feel like I've been here forever."

Before that happens, though, those few weeks will have taken a lot of stamina out of the teacher and the student. In the first few weeks, there's far more to be learned about what the school's rules are and what the individual classroom rules are than there is actual educational material.

This phenomenon raises two points. Maybe the first quarter of each year should be a little longer than the other three to help everyone get organized and back into the swing of things. Or maybe a more European-style system would be more efficient, keeping students from forgetting so much over the summer. Many European schools have shorter summer vacations but longer spaces between semesters. This time would certainly help teachers getting grades together and organizing the next semester. Some even have what's called a mid-term break of several days. The ramifications of a change like this are endless, including such things as when would teachers have time for graduate courses or part-time jobs needed to supplement their salaries.

The second point harks back to my opening thought, teaching is like no other job. I can't think of any other managerial position where the personnel changes completely every year, as it does for most teachers. Where else done the entire work force change yearly? The school itself suffers from this same turnover. If a junior or senior high has three grades, a third of the students leave each year and a new third enters. In an elementary school of kindergarten through sixth grade, a seventh of the students change each year. Administrators and teachers spend most of their time dealing with these new workers or making the leaving ones ready to go on. Sixth grade teachers worry about how well their students will do in the new world of junior high, ninth grade teachers worry about the new world of the senior high, twelfth grade teachers worry about how the students will do in college, on the job, or in the armed forces.

I've never heard anyone discuss this change-over and I've never seen a study on how it affects the individual child's education or the teacher's planning or the K-12 curriculum.

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ALASKAN NEWS

by Patty Dietrich

Editor's Note: Patty, a 1987 Fellow, moved to Alaska with her husband in late Spring of 1990. As a middle school science teacher, she had been instrumental in helping plan PAWP's PCRP2/Framework course and had been a presenter in the first round of the course. The following is an excerpt from a letter she wrote to Jolene Borgese, PAWP Co-Director.

I think about you guys a lot. I miss you all very much. I am happy to report that the Alaska Writing Consortium was like coming home for me. I called Annie Clakins, the former head of the project, when I first got here. She was very nice and she got me involved in the Alaska Teacher Research Network.

I took a week-long summer institute and I am now part of that network. Bob Tierney ran the institute last year and this year we worked with Pat D'Arcy. That was neat because I went to her workshop in Doylestown in the Spring. We had a laugh about that.

The consortium is very active up here but they don't have the university affiliation, like West Chester. Therefore, they don't have anything like the strategies courses. I've been telling them about the classes and they are interested because they need more teacher education. They are super cautious about university involvement. I always assumed that universities were always part of the project sites.

I went to a workshop in Anchorage. It was the consortium's tenth anniversary and they had a banquet and a day of workshops. Bob Tierney, Keith Caldwell, Mary Kay Healy and others were here and gave the workshops. Bob gave me a big hug and said he told the science coordinator in Anchorage they were crazy if they didn't hire me. That made me feel good. He said to tell you guys hi. He is very busy enjoying the ranch.

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR PAWP

In the recent past the state convened a Writing Assessment Advisory Committee to help develop a new direct assessment for the Educational Testing and Evaluation division. Unlike so-called writing tests which really tested editing skills of other people's writing, this assessment was to follow such states as California and Virginia in assessing real writing samples.

Among people gathered from around the state to work on this committee are Judy Yunginger-Gehman (1982 Fellow), Gail White (1988 Fellow), Karen Russo of the Allentown Writing Project, Don Wolf (Director of the Capital Area Site), Andy Fishman (PAWP Associate Director), Nick Spennato (Delaware County Language Arts Coordinator), Sharon Althouse of the Lancaster County Intermediate Unit, and Patty Dietrich (1987 Fellow).

After much decision making, often based on the state's financial and political concerns, the assessment plan dealt with sixth and ninth grade students in approximately 100 volunteer districts, for a total slightly over 10,000 students in each grade. Although the writing sample was to be given in a two-hour time period including a short break, Bob Weiss, one of the chief readers, believes some of the remarkably short samples show a "shortage of fluency."

The scoring guide was a familiar one with two scorers reading each paper and a table leader ready to adjudicate problems. Although focus, content, organization, style, and mechanics were discussed, readers judged holistically. Participating districts did not receive individual scores but did receive building and district-wide scores.

Since there were 20 prompts in three different modes, in a class of 20 students writing the sample no topic would be repeated. Even larger groups would see few repetitions. Andy Fishman points out the use of three modes—persuasive, personal, and informational—might encourage different types of writing instruction since "tests [tend to] drive instruction."

Reporting on the scoring experience itself, Bob Weiss, who shared chief reader duties for the first of two weeks with John Meehan of the PDE and Bob Egolf of the Allentown School District, says the mingled papers from all the sixth and ninth graders were scored by Pennsylvania teachers while an independent testing service analyzed the results.

Money and time constraints suggest the state will continue the assessment on a volunteer basis with school districts being reassessed every three years so that the same students who wrote in sixth grade can be compared with their own ninth grade papers.

Following the March testing, the chief readers and two members of the independent testing service collected training packets in a process which Bob says "needs to be refined."

During the May scoring, the chief readers first trained their table leaders in a two-day session and then trained the approximately 200 scorers (100 each week) for the three

day reading session. Some districts were very gracious in granting three days release time for the experience and gained well-trained teachers who, according to a draft of the Writing Assessment Handbook, "are aware of the 'what,' the 'how' and the 'why,' [and] they can incorporate this awareness into their writing instruction."

The first week's readings were accomplished at Mt. Laurel Lodge where each chief reader led his three table leaders and approximately 30 readers in the assessment process. Readers came from widely disparate backgrounds and districts: Philadelphia and highly rural schools, special education teachers, writing process teacher-consultants, and superintendents. Among PAWP people were Gerry Eisenstein (1987 Fellow), Diane Dougherty (1989 Fellow), Karen Klingerman (1988 Fellow), and Sue Field (1988 Fellow). Bob reports a high reliability in scoring. He also found the top scoring papers to be good, confident, and able to explore possibilities.

Andy is chairing a committee of Judy Yunginger-Gehman, Gay Hill, and Sharon Althouse to produce a handbook for instruction for the volunteer districts so that teachers know what the standards look like in practice.

The implications for classroom teachers are obvious: what will volunteer districts expect from their teachers' classroom instruction and how soon will non-volunteering districts volunteer? Will this be another case of teaching to the test, as so frequently happens in TELLS or SAT testing situations, or will the very nature of writing assessment keep that from happening?

PAWP, of course, already has Strategies and PCRP2/ Framework courses ready to help in future staff development.

Curious as to what the assessment showed? The state report is no surprise: "Ninth grade students scored higher than sixth grade students, females better than males, and Caucasian and oriental students outperformed other ethnic groups."

Here's a sample personal/imaginative prompt for grade six: Think of a place you have been. Imagine that you are writing to a friend. Tell your friend why you liked or dislike this place. As you write and rewrite your paper, remember to name the place and fully explain your reason or reasons, present your information in an ordered way, check your sentences and words to see if they are the best choices, check your grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

...he kept looking at me, so I said: "I'm a 'writer.'"

He nodded his head slowly. "Had a cousin was a rider. Rodeoed all over this country till he ruint his leg. Bull that done it. You ride mostly horses or mostly bull?"

"Mostly bull," I said. "I will get on a horse now and then, but I mostly do bull."

"We all got to do something he said," he said.

-Excerpt from 'The Trucker Militant' by
Harry Crews.

STEPHEN MARCUS PRAISES PAWP

In the September/October 1990 issue of The Writing Notebook, a magazine devoted to creative word processing in the classroom, Stephen Marcus uses Bob Weiss and PAWP as an example of technology and the National Writing Project.

Associate Director of the South Coast Writing Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, frequent author on technology and writing, and the designer of the software program called "Compupoem," Stephen Marcus has been a workshop leader for PAWP's summer institute and the Computers in Writing course.

In his article, Steve retells PAWP's technology history by pointing out that some of the earliest 1980's summer institutes included sessions on computers. By 1984, PAWP offered the first three-credit Computers in Writing course with presentations on "using specialized software at all stages of the composing process, classroom management software, and creating computer-based writing activities."

He also mentions the two-week summer writing on computer courses offered as part of the Youth Writing Project and PAWP's multiple copies of a student word processing/publishing program used to teach workshops as well as provide teachers with copies for classroom use.

Explaining the computer programs successes, Steve quotes Bob as saying, "Computers are tremendously alluring...fascinating...but they're not everything." With this knowledge, Bob knows that "workshops need to focus on the teaching of writing as much as on the technology." Therefore, participants are encouraged to start by taking Strategies for Teaching Writing I.

Steve remarks that "the diverse make-up of most of the computer courses provides challenge and opportunities for the more experienced technology users to help their less experienced colleagues."

Before ending, Steve reminds his readers that the computer courses follow the NWP model by providing "conference tables, break-out rooms...where [participants] won't be distracted by the common urge to keep tinkering with their text instead of getting responses from a real audience."

Frequently during the article, Steve points out that courses are staffed by trained PAWP teacher-consultants who also give presentations at district-wide meetings and regional conferences. Participants, too, often carry the information to their districts.

Steve finishes with "The Pennsylvania Writing Project is a good example of how a successful professional development model can be further enriched by the fascination and allure of technology used by talented teachers in classroom-tested ways."

BOOK REVIEW: FORMS OF WONDERING

by Vicki Steinberg

It's easy to say I wonder how Forms of Wondering got published so I won't use that as an opening.

When I received Forms of Wondering: A Dialogue on Writing for Writers, a 310 page book by William A. Covino, published by Boynton/Cook/Heinemann, I was delighted. I'm one of those people who pick a book to read by leafing through it looking for dialogue. I'm not enamored with pages of dense print, describing the characters' emotions or the look of the mountain as the sun sets on its golden autumn splendor. I need action, to see how the characters behave and to decide for myself why. I need white space to think and to reflect in.

Therefore, a book that uses dialogue to "introduce students to knowing-through-writing" seemed just my cup of tea. Covino, who teaches in the Language, Literacy, and Rhetoric Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, had already "presented the theoretical foundations...in numerous journal articles, book chapters, and conference presentations." Unfortunately, this pre-writing and revising has taken all the joy and flow from the ideas and the interior dialogues in the book.

In his preface, Covino says the book's purpose is to present "writing and reading as ways to keep thinking, and wondering...so it offers a discussion of the forms of writing—dialogue, drama, and the "open" essay—whose purpose is to present multiple perspectives." To this end the book has no table of contents, no index, no chapters.

The text is designed to lead college students to their own writing through reading dialogues among Covino the Sophist the Expediter, The epistemologist, the Writing Teacher, the TV Watcher, the Radical, the Administrator, and the Textbook Writer. He also includes the complete transcript of a Phil Donahue show on why women wear makeup, a Forum from Harper's magazine on the place of pornography, a dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus on the issues of definition and dialectical writing, Susan Sontag on AIDS and its metaphors, and examples from his students in reaction to these pieces.

I'd like to say I didn't find the book useful because I was bored with lying on my living room sofa and keeping my broken foot elevated when I should have been up and down the East Coast visiting Poe's grave and exploring the Ephrata Cloisters, but I don't really think the boredom came from the foot.

Now, weeks later, I still don't think I needed an entire book to get the dialogue idea. One good magazine article with interesting student examples would have shown me how to use the concept with my senior high students. Of course, the book wasn't intended to help classroom teachers; it was intended as a college text. I haven't been the average college student for longer than I like to think about but, when I was the average college student, I would have had a heck of time following this text.

Vicki Steinberg, a 1983 Fellow currently on a half-year sabbatical, teaches senior high English at Exeter Township outside of Reading.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REVEALS STUDY

Andrea Fishman, PAWP's new Associate Director, was guest speaker at October 13th's PAWPday at Oakbourne Estate outside West Chester. Before Andy discussed her experiences with the Amish, Bob Weiss started the meeting with background information on the summer's programs and on the upcoming fall and winter programs.

In a round robin, Rich Werkheiser (1990 Fellow), special education 5-6, New Hope-Solebury, said, since his students are mainstreamed, he is teaching their teachers new methods while teaching the students. He's setting up a publishing area but since the students only write with him one or two times a week the pace seems to drag.

Gretchen Maysek (1990 Fellow), Bucks County IU special education teacher in Quakertown, 5th grade socially and emotionally disturbed, does writers workshops with her seven students who are mainstreamed with 27 other students. She uses cooperative learning groups and found it only took ten minutes to psych up the 'regular' kids to accept and work with others. Parents have helped with a freewrite, a response log, and a dialogue journal.

Eileen Larken (1990 Fellow), Sleighton School for juvenile offenders, wrote letters and sent them, did Desert Shield Letters and 'Dialogues with Delinquents.' The students are rewriting the end of a play which she will videotape.

Pam Kernen (1990 Fellow), Avon Grove, grade 1, said she did writing last year but made mistakes. After the institute she started on Day 1 and writes every day. Kids conference together. Pam's principal has asked her to run a writing course for new teachers and their mentors.

Marcia Rodenbaugh (1990 Fellow), Central Bucks, grade 1, has given presentations to parent groups and is a member of BUXMONT's teachers' response group meeting at Nancy MacElwee's: Nancy, Ruby, Lynn, and Rick.

Judy Fisher (1982 Fellow), Philadelphia, K-4 reading specialist at Morton School, has set up school-wide Desert Shield letter writing, is starting a spelling project in which kids select the words they want to learn to spell, and will develop spelling triad/partnerships to avoid spelling tests by the teachers.

Priscilla Maughn (1990 Fellow), seventh grade reading/eighth grade English, Kennett Middle School, is doing a reading workshop/writing workshop. She says, "You put your head down and pray that they write and —they do." Her principal is quite supportive having taken PAWP's three-day course in Administering Writing Programs.

Vicki Steinberg (1983 Fellow), Fall Sabbatical from Exeter Township Senior High School, 10-12 English, broke a bone in her foot on the second trip of her sabbatical and has spent the enforced leisure time reading and rereading about writing. She has also hobbled to do some presentations.

Pam Hertz-Hibert (1986 Fellow), Exeter Township, grade 1 at Lorane School, uses whole language and writing process approach in a heterogeneous class. She had developed and demonstrated writing lessons for the other

teachers in her first grade team as well as for anyone in any grade or any curriculum in her building.

After the round robin, Andy explained how she became interested in the Amish many years ago when her former husband handled some legal work for an Amish family. Years later, when working on her doctoral thesis, she discovered this interest could lead not just to a thesis but also to a book called Amish Literacy: What and How It Means. Andy was fortunate, through her friends, to be allowed to visit an Amish one-room school for almost one complete school year.

Those PAWP members attending were fascinated to see how clearly the Amish school does what all schools try to do: continue the culture. This is much harder in a country like the United States where the culture differs from family to family, from local school to local school, from district to district, from state to state. It is, however, relatively easy to do in a small school where all the children and their parents believe in the same culture and the same rules.

Also interesting was the information on how literate the Amish are, having their own newsletters with local correspondents and even circle letters among the families. The teacher-consultants who attended PAWPday are trying their own circle letter with Andy sending the first letter to the next person in alphabetical order and so on. Writers are to add to the letter and send it on within three days.

COORDINATORS AND PRESENTERS MEET

Several Saturday mornings a year, the PAWP Coordinators Council meets to keep in touch by discussing current course offerings and planning the next series. The most recent get-togethers have been held at the new Anderson Hall offices where, after a whole group sharing, the teacher-consultants break into smaller groups. These have included PA Framework/PCRP2, Strategies I, and presenters groupings.



Nancy MacElwee and Patricia Maughn (both 1990 Fellows) discuss their presentations with Judy Fisher (1981 Fellow).

AN INVITATION TO APPLY TO 1991 SUMMER INSTITUTE JUNE 24 TO JULY 25, 1991 AT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

The summer institute is an intensive five-week program approved by the National Writing Project for demonstrating specific teaching strategies, examining research and key texts in the field of written composition, writing in several different modes, and meeting regularly in groups to share and examine manuscripts with one another. Up to 25 Fellowships are awarded to selected teachers who represent all grade levels and all areas of the region. The Fellows may subsequently serve as teacher-consultants in in-service workshops and programs.

Structure of Summer Institutes

Participants meet four days each week for five weeks. Usually mornings are spent sharing knowledge and classroom strategies through participants' presentations. Presentations by noted consultants and writers are also part of the program. Afternoons are devoted to writing and editing sessions.

Content of the Institute

- Phases of the writing process
- Varying forms, purposes, and audiences for writing assignments
- Writing to learn/writing across the curriculum
- Evaluating writing
- Dealing with writing apprehension

Who should apply?

Experienced, talented teachers are eligible to be selected for Project Fellowships. Applicants may be teaching on the elementary, secondary, or college levels in language arts, communications, and English or in other content areas. Teachers may be nominated by their schools or school districts. The project staff interviews applicants. Teachers interested in writing across the curriculum or writing to learn are encouraged to apply, as well as teachers who are interested in improving the skills of their students.

Responsibilities of the Writing Fellows

1. Attend the Institute and present one classroom method or approach that has proven successful.
2. Write periodically in several different modes during the Institute.
3. Make in-service presentations and contribute to other activities during the following year as requested and as mutually agreed between teacher and school or district officials.
4. Adopt methods gained from the Institute and participate in evaluation activities as needed.
5. Serve on one Writing Project committee for one year.

Cost to schools or districts and participants

A school/district endorsement fee of \$1045 per participant supports operating expenses of the project. It is payable in May after participants enroll. Stipends will be awarded during the Institute. Participants or their employers are responsible for paying tuition and fees for six hours of graduate credit (approximately \$770) and for personal expenses. Some schools and districts contribute to these costs in addition to the endorsement fee.

What will be gained by participating teachers and schools districts?

For Teachers:

1. A stipend of \$800.
2. Recognition as Fellow of the West Chester University/Pennsylvania Writing Project.
3. Six hours of West Chester University graduate credit.
4. Improved skills in the teaching of writing.
5. Training as an in-service "teacher/consultant."
6. Relationships with other writing teachers who seek to improve their teaching and writing.
7. A one-year sponsorship of the National Writing Project which includes the Quarterly of the National Writing Project.
8. A library of textbooks and articles.
9. Additional credits available for follow-up work in Fall & Spring.

For Schools and/or Districts:

1. Trained specialists in writing to assist in staff development.
2. In-service programs to improve the teaching of writing.
3. Participating in the National Writing Project network for exchange of information about school writing programs in Pennsylvania and the nation.
4. A one year sponsorship of the National Writing Project which includes the Quarterly of the National Writing Project.

HOW TO BECOME A PAWP FELLOW

Today: Tell your administrators of your interest so they can arrange for the school district's financial commitment.

February: Complete the application form on the next page. Follow all directions carefully and be sure to get the necessary approval.

March: Submit your application materials.

April: You will be contacted for a personal interview.

May: If you are invited into the Institute, you will receive an invitation to the preliminary supper meeting on May 15, 1991.

June: Do reading and writing to prepare for the Summer.

PAWP APPLICATION FOR SUMMER INSTITUTES

Important Information:

This application form must be endorsed by a district or institution official and be accompanied by: (A) a brief description of your background and experience teaching writing, including current and planned assignments; (B) a one-page statement presenting one aspect of your classroom teaching of writing that you would be willing to develop at the institute and present to the Fellows. Send the application and (A) and (B) to the Project Director by March 29, 1991. Interviews will be held and notification of Writing Fellows selected will be accomplished by April 19, 1991.

Return Application to: Pennsylvania Writing Project, c/o Robert Weiss, West Chester University,
West Chester, PA 19383.

Teacher Application:

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Phone: Home _____ School _____

Grade(s): _____ Subject Area (if applicable): _____

I have enclosed required supporting materials and agree to accept the responsibilities of a Writing Fellow.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

School or District Endorsement by Official Authorized to Commit Funds:

I endorse the above application for a position as a Summer Fellow in the PAWP Summer Institute. I certify that this endorsement is supported by school/district willingness to contribute \$1045 (per participant) to the PAWP and to conduct future inservice activities.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

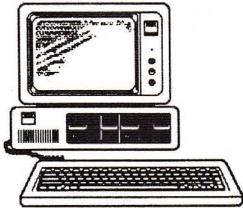
School District: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Please enclose a brief supporting statement for applicant.



COMPUTERS AND WRITING UPDATE

by Karen Nina Klingerman

I think I have something of interest which was a part of PAWP's Computers and Writing Class at Palisades High School this summer. It was the second summer I coordinated the course in that Upper Bucks County school district (it's actually closer to Easton than Doylestown). Both sessions, I used a writing lesson idea I read about in the February 1989 issue of *English Journal* ("Let Found Poetry Help Your Students Find Poetry" by Nancy Gorrell, Vol. 78, No. 2). The *Journal* article suggests using news articles as a source of poetry writing.

This summer I added a new twist. In addition to having the class members each write a poem from a news article (I randomly give everyone a section of the newspaper to include a variety of topics), we published them in a booklet. Gloria Williams, an '88 Fellow, did a presentation on desktop publishing with a Macintosh and we all entered our poems onto her disk. The class then did some of the preliminary work for making it into a booklet. Gloria did the rest and I think she did a wonderful job.

Karen Nina Klingerman, a 1988 Fellow, teaches at Shafer Middle School, Bensalem School District.

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PCRP2/Framework Update: Survey of Teacher Practices

Bob Weiss has released the results of a participant survey from the Pennsylvania Framework for Reading, Writing, and Talking Across the Curriculum course which teachers were just getting used to calling PCRP2. He developed the survey "to measure teachers' classroom practices related to the critical experiences before and after an extended 45-hour course on the PA Framework." Using 40 key indicators of preferred teaching practices, Bob found their frequency range ranging from absence of use to daily use.

Bob had data from 95 teachers enrolled in PAWP Spring 1990 programs in the Bucks County IU and the Norristown Area, Upper Darby, Exeter Township, and Palisades School Districts. The results of the tabulation and analysis using a correlated t-test show "statistically significant increases in preferred teaching practices in each critical experience and in all critical experiences as a whole."

Bob's findings show "the hypothetical teacher in PAWP's programs, then, significantly increased his/her uses of indicated reading practices (from three to four times monthly), writing practices (from one to three times monthly), extending reading and writing (two to four times monthly), investigating language (two to three and one-half times monthly), and learning to learn (two to four times monthly)."

SUMMER NIGHTMARE

by Joan Keller

In Iran
Summer began with a bang and a jolt
Seven-point seven quaked the ground before anyone
could bolt
Toppling homes while a million Persians slept
Destroying homes while the survivors wept
Killing and maiming all around
Demolishing scores of villages and towns

Creating a midsummer's nightmare for those who
remained
But drawing the world closer as countries proclaimed
Help and cooperation
For this once hostile nation.

UVA

by Carol Kerr

The beaches are clogged
with bodies bogged
down with lotion

I once had a notion
to be a tan beauty
but foiled my own pecunity

The wrinkles began
on my raging rattan
I was forced to abandon UVA

To avoid a carcinoma
I had to lay low
and avoid all sunoma.

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STRATEGIES II COMES TO LIFE

Lois Snyder (1980 Fellow) and Gail Capaldi (1986 Fellow) coordinated PAWP's first Strategies for Teaching Writing II course last spring at Upper Darby. In their final report they praise the strong bond which already existed among the teachers who had been together in a fall Strategies I course. Gail and Lois say, "It was a bond that would get stronger as this course progressed and which came to symbolize the power of writing—how we learn both from and through writing."

Along with presentations by Martha Menz (1980 Fellow) on graphic organizers, Joy McClure (1988 Fellow) on voice, Lois on conferencing, Gail on the reading and writing connection, Bob Weiss on grammar, and Rich Joseph (1988 Fellow) on computers to accompany the reading of *Through Teacher's Eyes* by Sondre Perl and Nancy Wilson, the participants regularly shared their classroom research. The major projects for the course included a case study and a personal piece.

TO TOUCH THE STARS

by Linda Baer

On August 6, 1990, I faced the seventeen teachers who comprised the first Strategies I course I have ever coordinated. Some I knew well, some I knew only by name, some I knew not at all. As I looked around, I could see that they appeared expectant, sleepy, a bit apprehensive, or some combination of these. It was difficult to tell, really, what they were all feeling and thinking. As for me, I knew what I was feeling: scared! What if they didn't share their writing? What if I flubbed everything and was a total failure? What if...

Other coordinators had told me, "Don't worry...You'll do fine...The Process really sells itself." Sure. That was reassuring, but what if...

I needn't have worried. From the moment after our first freewrite when four of the teachers volunteered to share, I knew I was about to be part of something very special, something that would revitalize me and send me back to my own classroom in September with a renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm.

During the intense ten 4 1/2 hour sessions that followed, we became a group of teachers with a common belief in the power of writing to help kids learn and make sense of their lives. And we also experienced first hand the power of our own writing to help us grow as people and as teachers.

These teachers agonized over their personal pieces. Since most of them were inexperienced writers, they came to see what students had felt as teachers assigned writing in a sterile atmosphere on topics chosen by them for the teacher as audience and the grade as arbiter. As they found "stories of their own" to tell, they worked in response groups and ultimately arranged to meet in response groups after the course was over. And they recognized the power of a supportive classroom atmosphere and immediate response to the written word to help all writers learn and grow.

Three teachers cried as they read their writing. What was especially moving was that they were surprised at their own emotion. They had tapped the depths of their feelings. What a powerful lesson to be learned about writing, for all of us.

I came to realize in a very short time what an impact this course was having on our lives. In ten short days I saw teachers bloom and grow. I saw their confidence increase and their enthusiasm blossomed beyond all my expectations. I heard their vocabularies take on the words of the writing process: voice and audience and response and groups and prior knowledge. I felt a sense of camaraderie develop and saw them encourage and help each other. How wonderful to have been a part of that.

I suppose every coordinator feels this way after coordinating a course. Or maybe I was just in the right place at the right time. The seventeen teachers in the course were wonderful: open, enthusiastic, willing to risk. And the presenters I had scheduled, the nine other "voices" from the Writing Project, did a marvelous job. Without exception they were knowledgeable, exciting, committed teachers

whose presentations spoke volumes about their dedication to the students they teach.

When the last day of class arrived, I was exhausted, and not a little sad. We sat together to read each others' personal pieces and nibble on snacks. We laughed and shared, and then finally we sang together a song one of the teachers had composed as part of her book report. We were all, I think, a bit reluctant to leave.

This experience was one that I had never had before in such intensity. I am proud to have been a part of something so special. Proud to work with teachers in my district who are committed to providing the best education possible for their students. And proud to be part of the Pennsylvania Writing Project and the teachers in it who also strive to excel.

There are moments in teaching when everything clicks. Moments when "the walls fall away and it is possible--just possible--to touch the stars." That's what coordinating this course did for me. It made it possible to touch the stars.

Linda Baer, a 1984 Fellow, teaches English at Conrad Weiser High School.

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T.G.I.F.

By Judy C. Fisher

Cecelia, a friend, asked me to read a children's story that she had written. Cecelia said that she was preparing the piece to be sent to a publisher. As one who would like to write stories for children also, I admired her courage.

I've shared my own aspiration to write children's stories with few people. It takes courage to struggle through the writing process and expose your writing to other people, perhaps to discover that you don't have the ability. Thinking about being a published writer of children's stories is safer.

The incident of Cecelia's story was unique. It was about a little boy who had an unusual reason for being late for school. As I read her story, though I had not read it before, it seemed familiar. She must have told me about the story idea previously. This was important to her.

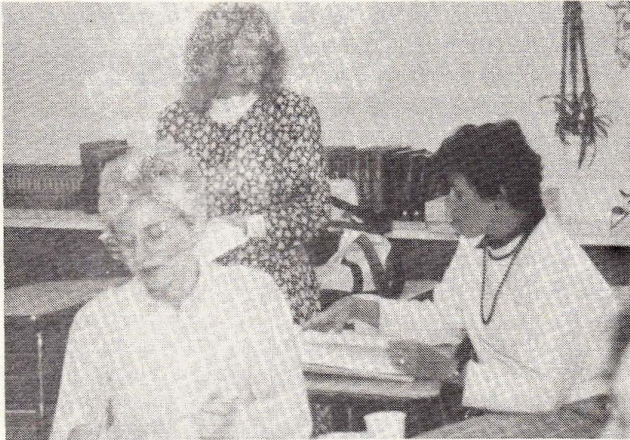
Since she was planning to rewrite her story, I felt compelled to make helpful comments. I was pleased with the skill to help others that I have gained from a recent writing class. The feedback that I have been getting is also helping me to find my own voice. Being a part of this writing support group has activated my aspiration. I searched for concrete suggestions and questions. I pointed out that the main character in the story was the teacher. Did she want to develop children as characters or might the piece be written for adults? As we were walking in the corridor, we stopped to talk to two teachers. A little boy standing with one of them, having been reprimanded, was chewing the string of the hood of his jacket. The little boy in her story is not fully described, which she had recognized. I pointed out the boy in the hallway. How would he enter the room if he were late for school? What would his classmates be doing? What would they say to him?

Cecelia's last comment was, "I'm glad it's Friday." Tired also, I agreed. She corrected me saying, "No, I mean, that I'm glad it's Friday, so that I have the weekend to write."

I knew I had been helpful.

Judy C. Fisher, a 1981 Fellow, and Cecelia Evans, also a 1981 Fellow, both teach in the Philadelphia School District.

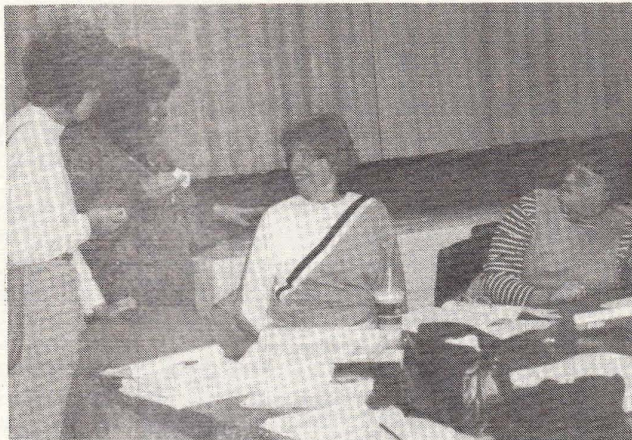
PAWP FALL COURSES



Holly Clark (1988 Fellow) helps Strategies I participants at Rose Tree Media with their final papers.



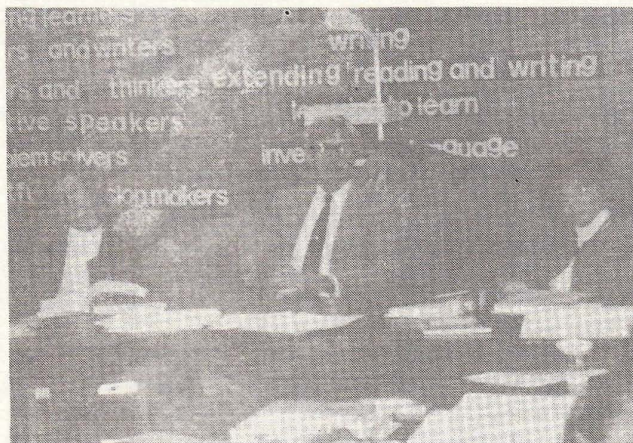
An interboro elementary teacher brings her students' books to share with her fellow participants.



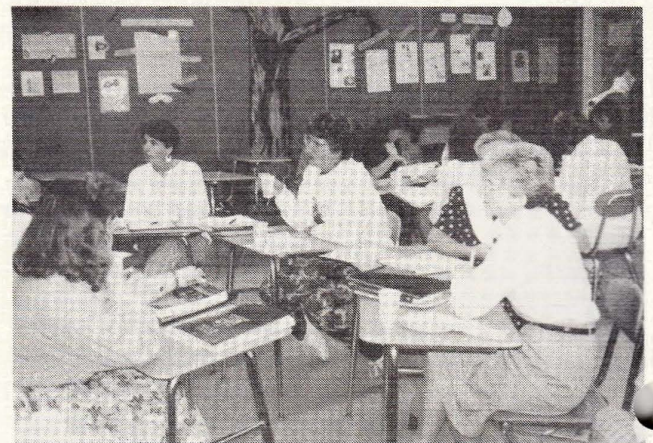
Interboro teachers talk for a few moments before starting the session.



As Nick Spennato introduces presenter Pam Hertz-Hilbert, Interboro teachers prepare to hear about "Extended Reading and Writing."



Coordinator Nick Spennato Begins a PA Frameworks/PCRP2 class at Interboro by asking for examples from the previous week's classroom research.



Members of a Strategies I Course at Rose Tree Media share their readings before hearing an I-Search presentation.

THE "TAILECTOMY"

by Wayne Kauffman

Inky was black alley cat with a splotch of white, just for color. Yvonne, my sister, spent many hours dressing him up in doll clothing. Many times he really looked adorable in a pink nightgown and an Amish bonnet. No one ever recognized him for the killer that he was when they saw him in one of these outfits. He would sleep like a baby in her play carriage. Lethargy was his middle name during the day, because he always prowled at night.

One afternoon Yvonne had imprisoned Inky in her room, probably to perpetrate some dress-up torture on the poor feline. Inky was wired that day and was howling at the top of his lungs. I decided that a rescue operation was in order. Stealthily I crept up the stairs to her bedroom door. When I heard Inky by the door, I quickly pushed it open. Inky bounded out. That is, most of Inky bounded out. Yvonne, seeing her prisoner escaping, had lunged against the door with all of her strength. The last six inches of Inky's tail did not make it into the freedom of the hallway. The door had latched.

Such a howling I had never heard in all of my life. Inky was nowhere to be found. But I didn't have to be a Sherlock Holmes to follow him. He left a trail of blood that anyone could have followed. The two of us bounded down the steps following the bloody splotches. The trail led to the basement. Inky was cowering under an old table that was in the darkest corner of the cellar. Nothing would coax him out. By approaching him from both possible routes of escape, Yvonne and I were able to capture him. Since we both knew the basics of first aid, we quickly applied a handkerchief to the bloody tail. Blood soaked through the cloth in less than a minute. Closer examination revealed that the last six inches of tail had been stripped clean of not only the hair, but the skin. Wild Indians could not have scalped him more effectively.

All of the commotion woke up our Dad. Since he worked the graveyard shift, waking him up did not make either of us very popular, but our primary concern was Inky.

Dad yelled, "What are you two doing to the cat?"

"We're trying to stop his tail from bleeding," Yvonne cried back to him.

"What happened?"

I figured that I better say something, so I exclaimed, "He sort of caught his tail in the door when Yvonne slammed it on him."

Dad analyzed the situation and said, "From the looks of that tail, I believe that could be listed as the understatement of the year."

Then Yvonne asked the question that was burning in both of our minds. "What can we do with a tail that is scalped like that?"

Dad thought for a minute. "I guess we will have to perform a 'tailectomy'?"

Dad summoned his uncle, who was our next door neighbor. Uncle Herb had many years of experience working with animals. Uncle Herb examined the wound and came to the same conclusion. The bloody stump had to be removed. Dad carried Inky outside. A meat cleaver

and a claw hammer were procured. The tail was laid across a block of wood. Yvonne did her best to calm the cat. With a meat-cutter's precision the cleaver was placed on the tail. Crack. The mutilated half of Inky's tail was dismembered from the sound portion. Inky took all of this in a surprising calm manner. Half of his tail was gone, but somehow we got the feeling that he was actually relieved.

It was difficult to bandage the bloody stump. We used about a roll of gauze and a yard of adhesive tape to accomplish the task. After a few days we figured that he could take care of it better himself, so we did not wrap it up any more.

At this juncture of the tale it would be nice to say that we all lived happily ever after, but that would not be an accurate account of what transpired. A week passed. Inky continued to lick his stump, but it continued to ooze. After ten days it still had not started to heal. We were all worried about the safety of our pet. Checking with a veterinary journal, we learned that if an animal's tail is cut off it has to be removed right next to one of the tail joints. If that is not done, it will never heal correctly. This could cause death of the animal.

Out came the hammer, cleaver, and block of wood for an encore performance. This time Inky was not as calm. I think he remembered the last time. After pinning him down, we managed to place the remaining tail in the proper position. The cleaver was placed next to the knuckle. The hammer descended.

Inky lived for five years after his ordeal. Of course, he only had a six inch tail. For the remainder of his life Inky really understood that everyone should always watch out for his own tail first. This is a lesson we all should heed.

Wayne Kauffman teaches sixth grade in the Wilson School District. He wrote this personal piece for a Strategies I course.



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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The purpose of the *Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter* is to link together all teachers of writing in our geographical area or southeastern Pennsylvania. The **Newsletter** features, but it is not limited to, articles that deal with writing and teaching of writing. We seek articles from all teachers of writing at all grade levels and in all subject areas and from anyone else interested in writing. All articles will be considered for publication. Comments, questions, etc., are also welcomed. Please send all communications to: Vicki Steinberg, Editor, Pennsylvania Writing Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

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