



VOLUME 11 NUMBER 3

# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Spring 1991

## PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE HELD AT WCU

On January 17, West Chester University and PAWP hosted a one-day conference on the Pennsylvania State Writing Assessment. Conceived by Bob Weiss and Bob Egolf (English/Language Arts Coordinator, Allentown SD), the conference drew nearly 80 participants from across the state who wanted to know more about the test. These participants included teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists, along with members of the Writing Assessment Advisory Committee that worked with PDE to develop the assessment.

Bob opened the conference by introducing Leann Miller, from the PDE Division of Educational Testing and Evaluation, who is in charge of the assessment. Her presentation, "The Pennsylvania Writing Assessment: The First Year and Beyond," reviewed the nature of the test, the procedures used to develop and field test it, and the ways districts could become involved in this voluntary assessment.

The test itself is a direct writing sample assessment, similar to those used by 35 other states. It is administered by teachers to classroom groups in two 40-minute sittings with a break in between. The first sitting is for rehearsing and drafting; the second for revising and editing. Each student receives a prompt in one of the three modes tested: narrative/imaginative, informational, or persuasive--with the three modes randomly assigned.

Over 200 districts volunteered for last March's field test, Leann explained, but only 93 were chosen to actually participate. This yielded over 40,000 student samples from small, medium, and large districts--urban, suburban, and rural--all across Pennsylvania. These districts received reports showing how their students had fared at the building and district levels as compared to others across the state (individual student results are NOT reported because this is an assessment of a district's writing program, not its writers).

The field test was scored by Pennsylvania teachers and administrators who had volunteered for one of two three-day scoring sessions held in the Poconos last May. This scoring procedure--which involved participants in large-scale holistic assessment--was agreed to be one of the

most intense and intensely interesting professional development experiences participants had ever had, according to Leann, and this view was corroborated by many of the conference attendees who had also been scorers.

This year's writing assessment is scheduled for March 5 & 6 (the same dates as TELLS). One hundred districts may participate. Districts not chosen for the field test will be the first chosen for this year's actual assessment if they are still interested. Though there are some questions precipitated by Governor Casey's budget freeze as to how the scoring will proceed, a caucus of Assessment Advisory Committee members at the conference agreed that teacher involvement is crucial and that scoring at sites in different locations might well substitute for the single site procedure of the field test. This year, though, a graduate credit option through WCU may be available for scoring participants in addition to the inservice credit option offered by the state.

After Leann's presentation, participants moved into two breakout groups. They could choose either "An Introduction to the Scoring Guide and the Modes of Writing to be Assessed," led by Bob Weiss, or "About the Scoring Procedure and the Report of Scoring Results," led by Bob Egolf. After lunch, they chose either "Classroom Implications of the Writing Assessment," led by Andy Fishman (PAWP Associate Director), or "Administrative Implications of the Writing Assessment," led by Sal Luzio (Curriculum Specialist, IU 19). Both Andy and Sal are members of the Assessment Advisory Committee. The conference ended with round table discussions, feedback and recommendation from conference participants. Response was overwhelmingly positive, with participants emphasizing the value of an assessment that not only reflects what we know about writing and the writing process, but which brings together people from across school districts, grades, and curricula to provide the kind of professional development and stimulation teachers can really use and enjoy.

**K-8 Literacy/Whole Language Conference**  
Moves to Upper Darby High School  
June 18-19, 1991  
Watch your mail for the conference flyer.

## EDITOR'S CORNER

I don't want to get too excited but I think the day has come. What day? The day where teachers at the end of the line--senior high school teachers--can see the results of all the writing process/Whole language/PA Framework work which the students have been exposed to.

In class after class I see students who tackle reading, writing, and thinking as though it's not the first time anyone ever asked them to read, write or think.

It may be that I'm feeling rested after my sabbatical. It may be that my teaching schedule is the best one I've had in 25 years. It may be that I have exceptional classes this semester. But I prefer to think that the day has come.

When, after an introduction to "satire," I asked students to search their minds for any satirical scene they've seen on T.V. or a movie or read in a story or book, they thought of one. When, I asked them to write a summary of the incident, they did it quickly and efficiently, with no whining. When I asked students to write a sentence or two explaining the satire in the scene, they wrote clearly and shared with a partner to make sure they had been clear. No, each youngster did not have a perfect explanation. After all, this was a short moment at the beginning of a semester. But each student had a good example and was able to handle the assignment.

"It's a fluke," I thought. So I experimented in Research Paper class where we start with peer interviewing. By the time seniors take this course, they've done several oral and written interviews in English and other classes, so I suggested that they immediately narrow the interview down to one topic. Then I asked each student to choose a form based on the information. Among the forms selected were rhyming quatrains, a series of different styles of stanzas, a speech in the praise of a retiring teacher, a short story set in the "Cheers" bar (with the "Cheers" characters interacting with the interview subject), a television report, a travel diary, a short story of the first day on the job, an essay on how the subject feels about being Jewish. My students worked in independent groups on the interviews, on which form to use, on the actual form, on revising for accurate information, on editing, and on proofreading. I never saw their papers until the final typed drafts appeared on my desk five days after we started. And the papers were good.

For another course we purchased a new collection of Saki's writings that unfortunately did not contain my two favorite stories. Taking the International Reading Association and Jim Trelease to heart, I read "Laura" to the class. I instructed the students to use their double entry journals/learning logs as I read and I also gave them a few minutes after I finished to make any additional observations. The discussion, first in pairs then the whole class, showed that they had understood the plot, gotten much of the humor, had a feel for the tone, and heard subtleties.

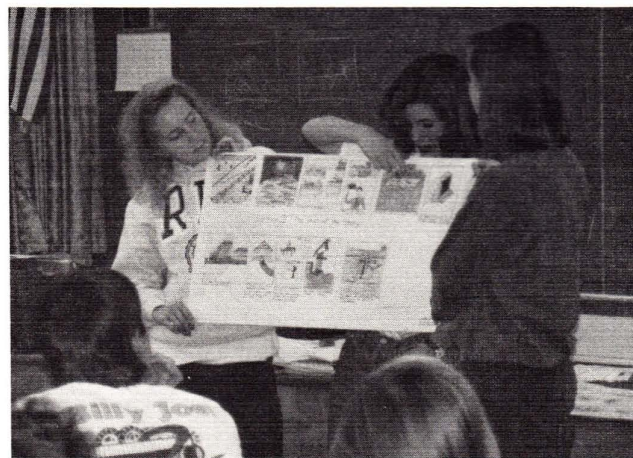
A last example comes from an American Humanities class which I team teach with Alys Robertson, a social

studies teacher who has taken Strategies I and PA Framework courses. She and I showed the film Why Man Creates. Students made preliminary notes in their learning logs on what creativity is and also took notes on the film itself; having discussed their ideas and observations, the class split into pairs. In one two-period session and one night, they had to decide on which scene they'd create for Why Man Creates, II, choose the style, and design either a movie script or a story board.

Alys and I did expect good work because American Humanities is for advanced placement, yet the students surpassed our expectations when they did their oral presentations the next day. Even if I could print their products here, still missing would be the confident tone in their voices, the pride in their work, community laughter, the skill in presentation, the writing ability, the planning, the decision making.

Two boys wrote a movie script and really acted the scene. Although not members of any drama group, they planned their oral presentation to be more than just read aloud with one person as the video and the other as the audio. One played a dog whose thoughts were vocalized while the other played the owner who went so far as to pet his animal. The "dog" did stop short of really licking the owner's face. These two boys had the class in stitches while using all the skills teachers and parents had been trying to foster during the past 11 years. They received six of the short notes of compliment I also assigned. I asked to see the notes and was delighted to see that their classmates had understood the significance of their acting out the parts.

So, right this moment, I'm almost convinced that the happy day has come. I see the results of many teachers' hard work in all my classes. I'm gratified at my colleagues' success.



Three Exeter students demonstrate the end result of many years of education. They are giving an oral rendition of their story board on the events of the last 30 years. Included in the comments were HOT (higher order thinking) skills of why they had made certain decisions and what they hoped for in terms of audience reaction. Linda, pointing out the stage at Woodstock, is discussing the famous Fish anti-war cheer. Interestingly, several of the groups had story boards or movie scripts which circled back on themselves: this one started with building the Berlin Wall and Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech and ended with the fall of the wall.

## NOTES ON PAWP'S 1991 INSTITUTES AND COURSES

Full-length institutes are planned at West Chester University's Exton Center and at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit in Doylestown. Breaking new ground for PAWP, the Bucks Institute is part of a program extending into the Fall semester to provide for specific follow-up.

...this year brings changes in PAWP's summer staff...we welcome the new and miss the old...

...at Exton, the institute will be staffed by PAWP Associate Director Andrea Fishman and by 1985 Fellow Jim MacCall.

...Andy taught middle school and senior high English for many years before becoming a fellow of the Capital Area Writing Project in Middletown; she earned a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania and has specific interests in literacy studies and teacher research (especially ethnography).

...Jim MacCall frequently coordinates PAWP's Strategies I course; he teaches pre-first in the Southeast Delco School District and has taught other elementary grades as well. Jim directed the Youth Writing Project for the past several years.

...at the Bucks Institute, co-directors will be Hilde McGeehan and Shari Stem, both 1988 Fellows.

...With a long background as a teacher of high school English and German and of elementary grades 1 and 5, Hilde now is on special assignment to do staff development in her district, Council Rock; she also serves on the Bucks County committee for implementation of the PA Framework and has run two PA Framework courses for the writing project.

...Shari teaches 2nd grade in the Central Bucks School District and runs a publishing center in her classroom; she has led a series of district workshops for other teachers and is a frequent presenter in PAWP programs.

...the new director of the Youth Writing Project is Craig Fenimore of the West Chester Area School District. Craig, a 1981 Fellow, teaches senior high school English and served last year as YWP assistant director.

...some of the visiting consultants to the institutes and YWP are familiar faces.

...Randy Bomer will work with both institutes; 1990 Fellows recollect fondly his enlightening ways to link reading and writing. Randy is a former high school teacher who has spent the last several years working as a colleague of Lucy Calkins at Teachers College; he has a book manuscript in preparation.

...Poet-teacher Julia Blumenreich will be the visiting writer at the Exton Institute, will visit each YWP session, and will lead our one-week late July workshop on Teaching Creative Writing. Julia, who currently teaches at the Morton School in

Philadelphia, plans to get participants excited about poetry.

...Claudia Reder also returns to the YWP for another year; she recently earned a doctorate in Educational Theatre from New York University, with a specialty in story-telling.

...a writer new to YWP, Daily Local News feature columnist Jim Giuliano will be working with high school age youngsters. Jim's columns are noted for wit, humor, and pungency.

...a writer new to the institute is Philadelphia poet Jane Todd Cooper, whose book Entering Pisces was published in 1985. Jane, who has nine years of experience doing residencies in PA and NJ schools and who also worked with PAWP's 1987 NEA grant on Teaching Creative Writing, will be the visiting writer for the Bucks Institute.

...Roberta Camp of Educational Testing Service will be speaking to both institutes on Portfolio Assessment. She has experience with large-scale and classroom uses of portfolios, especially the reflective portfolio used in the Pittsburgh School District's noted ARTS PROPEL project.

...the two-day course in Holistic Assessment continues into its 11th year, again taught by PAWP Director Bob Weiss. This year, in response to inquiries about evaluation of writing, Bob is also offering the comprehensive three-credit course in Writing Assessment in mid-July. Bob is a member of the Writing Assessment Advisory committee for the Pennsylvania Department of Education and a Chief Reader for the PA Writing Assessment, has participated in the PDE workshop on "High-Quality Classroom Assessment," and has made numerous presentations on evaluation of writing.

...the three-day Workshop on Administering Writing and Language Arts Programs continues in its fourth year, with Marion Dugan of the Downingtown Area School District returning as a consultant. We always recommend this workshop for principals, coordinators, department heads, and curriculum directors--and we hope that after they attend they will be better able to support high quality in writing instruction...

...two familiar programs return to the Exton Center for three weeks beginning June 24: Strategies for Teaching Writing I, and the Pennsylvania Framework: Writing, Reading, Talking Across the Curriculum. Both courses have proved highly successful over recent years.

...in cooperation with the Upper Darby School District's Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, PAWP is providing two courses in that district: Computers and Writing will be coordinated by Gloria Williams, a 1988 Fellow from the Chichester School District, and Writing in the Content Areas, coordinated by Martha Menz. Martha, a 1980 Fellow and assistant director of PAWP, taught Social Studies and English before becoming Upper Darby's supervisor of staff development.

## EVALUATION REPORT ON STRATEGIES COURSES, FALL 1990

### CHANGES IN STUDENT WRITING BEHAVIORS

(48 Course Participants Responding, 4 courses)

Specific comparisons with past student writing behaviors were reported by 48 teachers in four Fall 1990 offerings of the Pennsylvania Writing Project course on Strategies for Teaching Writing, K-12 (Level I). As a result of this course, the students of these teachers:

- spend a longer time writing (41 out of 47 respondents)
- do more writing of various kinds (43 out of 48 respondents)
- do more self-sponsored writing (44 out of 47 respondents)
- do more pre-writing (37 out of 48 respondents) and re-writing (28 out of 46 respondents)
- do more reading and writing activities in class (43 out of 48 respondents)
- take more pleasure with the written products (43 out of 48 respondents)

### WOLVERINE BOOTS OFFERS PRIZE

Barbara Reznick (1990 Fellow) says, "Even barbarians can write," and offers this news her husband found in a hunting magazine.

Keith Jones won an all-expense-paid trip for two for four days, three nights to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Retail value up to \$10,000 • one pair of Wolverine boots • Walls Mastermade Coveralls • Coleman cooler • Remington 870 Wingmaster 12 gauge shotgun • Zebco 33 classic combo rod & reel kit • 10x Gore-Tex rain gear.

Here's what he wrote: "Bowhunting for deer, what a challenge! October, falling leaves, a bite in the air. Arrived at five, my favorite deer management area. A great frost, acorns underfoot everywhere. Exciting! Slashed left hand on broad head while exiting car, found first-aid kit in trunk and slammed trunk lid on coverall sleeve. Trapped, keys in ignition. Almost had right leg out of coveralls, Warden drove up. Checked license, freed me and treated wound. Hiked to stand. Found four hot scrapes and BIG tracks. Exciting! Climbed stand, shivered, drank coffee. Heard loud snorting sound through thicket, brush cracking. Heart pounded. Spied huge yellow bulldozer aimed at my tree. Camo worked perfect, dove from stand with seconds to spare. Slunk off into bushes and discovered seed tick convention. Exciting! Stripped, picked ticks for an hour. Finally found car. Another friendly Warden checked license again, warned of seed ticks. Went home and enrolled in woodcarving class."

## WAVE OF THE FUTURE

Invited back to Highland Park Elementary School, Upper Darby School District, Olivier Dunrea took over the library with his enthusiasm. As author of many children's books and a book which uses examples and pictures from the Highland School to show how to use his teaching methods to encourage children to write, Olivier had many suggestions to offer.

He reiterated the International Reading Association's stand that children in all grade levels need to be read to. "Don't stop at sixth grade," he stressed, but read something that affected you at that age, a piece of advice he picked up from a Harleysville teacher.

As a Whole Language advocate who has worked in many schools and PAWP's Youth Writing Project, Olivier says, for him, a "book always starts with a picture first." In fact, he illustrates in miniature to get the creative juices flowing.

After a slide show of his work and working areas, Olivier complemented the Whole Language movement, calling it the "wave of the future" because it encourages "creative explorations of thinking" by giving time to prepare in prewriting and prethinking. He admires the movement, too, as it advocates accepting failure because it shows the child is trying and is making progress.

Group work also came in for praise. Olivier believes it helps by spreading the responsibility among the kids. He recommends that work be based on prior knowledge, not on the teacher's expectations. Try to remember, he suggests, how hard it is to try something for the first time.

Personally, his style requires he "show how to do it, not what to do." Writing with the students is necessary to show community spirit and teachers should avoid the "young writer" term because it hints the student is less than a "real" writer. Teachers should behave like an editor, one who encourages the writer to get the ideas down, not using terms like "sloppy copy" but real terms like "rough draft." To this same end, the students' books should look as much like real books as possible. coming

### PAWP TO OFFER WORKSHOPS AT PDE WRITING ASSESSMENT

In 1990, the PA Department of Education offered one in-service/certification credit to teachers and other educators who participated in scoring the Writing Assessment samples. At the scoring session this coming year (May 8-10), in addition to this in-service credit option, scorers will be able to earn graduate credit through either of two options offered by PAWP through West Chester University:

- a) a 1-credit Workshop in Writing Assessment
- b) a 3-credit Workshop in Writing Assessment

Questions about requirements and registration for the graduate credit options should be addressed to the Pennsylvania Writing Project office (215-436-2297).

**PAWP SUMMER COURSES 1991**  
Exton Center

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WRITING I

(PWP 502-31) 3 Graduate Credits or 3 In-service Credits

- The Pennsylvania Writing Project "first course"
- Explore practical and imaginative approaches to the teaching and learning of writing
- For teachers in all subjects and at all grade levels
- Offered successfully over 100 times: designed to fit the PA Framework (PCRP2)

WCU-Exton Center June 24-July 12, 1991 8:30 am-12:00 pm

WRITING, READING, TALKING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

(PWP 510-76) 3 Graduate Credits or 3 In-service Credits

- Defines the 5 "critical experiences" for language use and learning according to the PA Framework (PCRP2)
- Integrates reading and writing
- Research and practical implications for all subject areas and grade levels

WCU-Exton Center June 24-July 12, 1991 8:30 am-12:00 pm

WRITING ASSESSMENT

(PWP 511-75) 3 Graduate Credits

- Pennsylvania assessment goals and methods compared with other large-scale evaluations
- Assessment systems in relation to effective instruction
- Formative assessment and feedback at all grade levels
- Summative assessment and grading

WCU-Exton Center July 15-24, 1991 8:30 am-3:00 pm

**PAWP PROGRAMS AT UPPER DARBY- SUMMER 1991**

COMPUTERS AND WRITING

(PWP 508-75) 3 Graduate Credits

- Computers at all stages of the writing process
- Demonstrations and evaluation of computer courseware
- Hands-on experience (Apple II) in workshops and labs

Drexel Hill MS Computer Lab June 24-July 12, 1991 8:30 am-12:00 pm

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

(PWP 505-75 and 76) 2 Graduate Credits or 2 in service credits

- Using writing to teach content
- Differences between writing to learn and to improve writing
- Effective practices K-12

Drexel Hill MS June 25-28, 1991 8:00 am-12:00 pm, 1:00 pm-4:30 pm

**PAWP SUMMER WORKSHOPS 1991**

Exton Center

HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WRITING

(PWP 504-31) 1 Graduate Credit

- Learn to assess writing using 3 scoring methods
- Theory and practice of rapid, reliable assessment of large numbers of writing samples
- Prepare for the writing sample of the Pennsylvania Assessment

WCU-Exton Center June 20-21, 1991 8:30 am-4:30 pm

WORKSHOP IN ENGLISH: TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING

(PWP 599-76) 1 Graduate Credit

- Explore methods of teaching diverse kinds of poetry to students of all ages
- Practical suggestions on working with poetic form, imagery and figurative language
- Activities for pre-writing, drafting, responding, revision, editing, publishing, and evaluating poetry

WCU-Exton Center July 29-August 2, 1991 8:30 am-11:30am

ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS

(PWP 515-75) 1 Graduate Credit or non-credit

- Identify critical components of a successful program
- Program management, organization, evaluation
- Practical plans and ideas to improve programs
- Needed administrative skills and resources
- How to link writing process, critical thinking, writing across the curriculum, whole language, and PCR2

WCU-Exton Center July 9-11, 1991 8:30 am-2:30 pm

**PAWP SUMMER CONFERENCE AT UPPER DARBY - 1991**

WHOLE LANGUAGE CONFERENCE FOR K-8 TEACHERS

A program developed in conjunction with the Houghton Mifflin Co. Graduate credit option available (PWP 501-31)

- Lectures by well-known educators followed by hands-on sessions for teachers and supervisors
- Topics include: fitting whole language into your curriculum, practical suggestions for the whole language classroom, relations with Pennsylvania Framework (PCR2), ways to present literature, writing and skills in a whole language framework
- Includes continental breakfast each day at 8:00 am, luncheons, banquets.
- Must register by June 1, 1991

Upper Darby H.S. June 18-19, 1991 8:30am-5:00pm

SUMMER REGISTRATION FORM

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT

Return completed form by mail or in person to:

OFFICE OF THE BURSAR  
E.O BULL CENTER, RM 114  
WEST CHESTER, PA 19383

PROGRAM/COURSE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Course number: PWP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Credit type \_\_\_\_\_  
 PROGRAM/COURSE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Course number: PWP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Credit type \_\_\_\_\_  
 PROGRAM/COURSE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Course number: PWP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Credit type \_\_\_\_\_

Credit types: G graduate credit I in-service credit N non-credit

PERSONAL INFORMATION: Data required for University and program needs

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a first-time WCU graduate student? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

Residence county: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship country: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

Check one: Black/non-hispanic \_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_ White/non-hispanic \_\_\_

Bachelor's Degree from: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Awarded: \_\_\_\_\_

Your School District: \_\_\_\_\_ Building: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Certification Status: L1 level 1 \_\_\_ L2 level 2 \_\_\_ TE temporary \_\_\_ PE permanent \_\_\_

Grade Levels Taught: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT: TOTAL AMOUNT YOU ARE REMITTING (see fee schedule): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment types:

A. VISA \_\_\_ Mastercard \_\_\_ Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Cardholder name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Check or money order #: \_\_\_\_\_ Check Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Make sure that your phone number and social security number are on the check or money order.)

C. Third party. Note: Payment must be made in full unless your registration is sponsored by a third party.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3rd party name) \_\_\_\_\_ (contract or P.O.#)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (address) \_\_\_\_\_ (phone of third party)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (amount of third party billing)

TO REGISTER for Inservice and Graduate Credit, complete both sides of this page and mail with your payment to Office of the Bursar - PAWP, Bull Center, Room 114, West Chester. You may charge all costs to Visa or Mastercard.

DEADLINE: Register by June 8, 1991 to avoid late fee of \$25.00. Register by June 1 for Whole Language/Writing Process.

RESIDENCE RATES are approximately \$140.00 per person per week for room and board. Apply directly to University College, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383 (215-436-2190) before May 15, 1991. Identify yourself as a participant in a PAWP program.

LOCATIONS and PARKING: Exton Center programs are located at the University's facility at the West Whiteland Corporate Center in Exton, 10 minutes from main campus. Upper Darby School District programs are offered in the High School and the Drexel Hill Middle School. Ample parking is available at all locations. We will send a map when we acknowledge your registration.

TRANSCRIPTS: Grade reports are mailed to participants in mid-August. Arrangements for official transcripts must be made directly with the Records Office by the participant.

QUESTIONS: Call the PAWP office at (215) 436-2297.

FEE SCHEDULE (subject to change without notice)

| COURSE/WORKSHOP   | TUITION/FEEES   |                          | YOUR COST |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------|
|   | Graduate credit | Other                    |           |
| Strategies for Teaching Writing I (PWP 502-31) June 24-July 12          | \$381 3 cred.   | \$225 3 in-service cred. | \$ _____  |
| Computers and Writing (PWP 508-75) June 24-July 12 (Upper Darby)        | \$381 3 cred.   | n/a                      | _____     |
| Writing, Reading, Talking across Curric. (PWP 510-76) June 24-July 12   | \$381 3 cred.   | \$225 3 in-service cred. | _____     |
| Writing Assessment (PWP 511-75) July 15-24                              | \$381 3 cred.   | n/a                      | _____     |
| Writing Across the Curriculum (PWP 505-75 and 76) (Upper Darby)         | \$254 2 cred.   | \$150 2 in-service cred. | _____     |
| Whole Lang./Writing Process Conf. (PWP 501-31) June 18-19 (Upper Darby) | \$182 1 cred.   | \$ 75 non-credit         | _____     |
| Holistic Assessment (PWP 504-31) June 20-21                             | \$152 1 cred.   | n/a                      | _____     |
| Administering Writing Programs (PWP 515-75) July 9-11 (lunch incl.)     | \$183 1 cred.   | \$110 non-credit         | _____     |
| Workshop in English: Tch. Creative Wrtg. (PWP 599-76) July 29-August 2  | \$127 1 cred.   | n/a                      | _____     |
| ADDITIONAL FEES for Graduate Credit participants:                       |                 |                          |           |
| First-time graduate students at WCU add \$20                            |                 |                          | _____     |
| Part-time graduate student fees add \$5                                 |                 |                          | _____     |
| Out-of-state resident add \$33 per credit                               |                 |                          | _____     |
| TOTAL AMOUNT DUE WCU  |                 |                          | \$ _____  |

wpbq04  
3-15-91



## VALIDATE YOUR TEACHING METHODS

One of the guest presenters that Summer Institute fellows recall most fondly is Marian Mohr, the author of Revision: The Rhythm of Meaning. Today, she has expanded her expertise to teacher-researcher which she shared with PAWPerS on Saturday, January 19, in the Philips Library, a semi-cozy carpeted and comfortably chaired area on the West Chester campus.

Following Bob Weiss's welcome, Jolene Borgese introduced Marian, who said she's been working in classroom research for the past ten years. If teachers want "authentic voice" they need to hear another teacher tell what she really did, a philosophy which directly correlates with National Writing Project thinking. As a Hayfield High School tenth grade teacher, Marian has used her Fairfax, VA school as a research center.

She began the workshop by asking the participants to formulate questions about two specific things: What intrudes on teaching? What makes me nervous when the class goes well?

After a short pair-sharing period, Marian invited the participants to voice their concerns as a way to find a research topic. Marian points out that being a teacher-researcher is a mixed blessing because she sees the subjects each day and so has plenty of material but has no time to reflect on it. One interesting aspect of research is that it validates teaching methods. This is quite different from teachers hiding from each other, perhaps afraid they don't really know what they are doing.

Attempting research on the classroom level requires the backing of the building principal and other administrators, so Marian suggests showing them the research will help them, maybe in their annual reports.

As past and, unfortunately, recent publications have shown, most classroom research is done by university people. The encouragement of such people as Marian Mohr and Nancie Atwell, who just won a National Council of Teachers of English Award for research for In the Middle, should start others thinking of undertaking the research they've had in the back of their minds.

### Possible Research Questions

Which comes first: liking it or doing it? How do we make the students see that classwork has anything to do with their "real" life? Why, if we taught it, didn't they learn it? Can honors students handle the responsibility of reading, writing, and discovering instead of "teaching"? How long should an independent project last? How do we have the students write about literature but not overwhelm ourselves with papers? Why does a two-week summer writing project work so well? When do we ignore the baggage the students bring to class and how much are we enabling them? How do we make a strategy we read about ours? Why is teaching so personal and how does one learn to teach? How can we allow students to work where they're comfortable? Why's it take so long for students to get focused on the task? How do we get reflective time? How do we get students to develop ideas with examples? How do writing residencies affect kids? Why do teachers allow the bad class to ruin the whole day? How do college teachers arrange to know their students as well as high school teachers do?



Marian Mohr shares information from research she and a reading teacher did in her own high school. They discovered that ninth graders know exactly what the strategies are for studying, learning, and improving grades; they just don't want to do them.

## TEACHER = RESEARCHER

TEACHER RESEARCHER--buzz term of the '90s. Everybody's talking about it because lots of people are writing about it, and the rest of us are reading what they write. But who's really doing it?

This semester PAWP is running a Teacher Researcher course in Unionville/Chadds Ford School District, coordinated by Marion Rosecky Dugan at the insistence of her Framework course participants from last term who wanted to find out exactly what this teacher research business is all about. Meeting eight times through the semester, participants are reading about, planning, doing, talking and writing research in their own classrooms. During the "on" weeks, participants meet as a group to present and respond to research questions and proposals, to discuss readings and research in progress, and to get additional assistance from Marion (and from Andy and Bob, who are functioning as course consultants). During the "off" weeks, they work on their own. Individual projects may focus on writing or any aspect of language arts, on curricula, evaluation, attitudes, or any related concern, and they may be case studies of individuals, groups, or whole classrooms, as well as experimental ones.

In addition, two 1990 fellows and one 1990 Strategies I participant are doing their own teacher research with Andy Fishman, PAWP's new associate director. Eileen Larkin (Sleighton School), Priscilla Maughn (Kennen SD), and Betsy Saffarano's classrooms are part of a WCU research grant Andy received this semester. Her proposal, "It falls between 7th and 9th: A cross-cultural literacy study of four 8th grade classrooms," calls for investigation of "definitions of literacy, teaching, and learning transmitted within...cultures." Eileen, Priscilla, Betsy, and Andy have proposed a session for NCTE next November to report their findings, and Heinemann Books has expressed interest in their work as well.

Watch for a PAWP Day next fall at which participants from both these groups share the teacher research going on right here and tell the truth about what it's really like to be a teacher researcher!

## THE WRITING MACHINE BROKE DOWN

"I am in my own classroom as writer. I am also teacher and student. My writing machine has broken down. I cannot blame any previous teachers, parents, genes, or TV. What should I do?"

Donald Murray presented this image of himself as a blocked writer to open his keynote speech at the Secondary Section luncheon of the NCTE this November. He reviewed his resources for problem-solving: he would think over what has gone right in his past experience as a writer, consider what pieces worked for him. Ten conditions, Murray argued, were needed for him as writer.

1. **Solitude:** this and the next two precede the writing process, coming before anything. Solitude is the root. Collaborative writing is a minor item compared to it. Think of insulation, daydreaming, quiet waits without expectation.
2. **Experience:** at writing. Failure and accident point the way. He uses 3x5 cards to write about a person or event that was important to say.
3. **Faith:** the writer's essential arrogance--that his words are significant. But, you must believe, and believe despite "so what"? In class we listen and share--to show faith.
4. **Need:** this and the next 4 are pre-writing. Need means not just for money, love, or attention but means need to celebrate, explore, persuade; to look at mysteries.
5. **Tension:** usually captured in a phrase, the central tension or conflict in a subject.
6. **Pattern:** gets restructured in the process, but there is a design somehow, and there is a power in design. The destination makes surprise possible.
7. **Voice:** this is the voice "of the text," not the writer. It is adapted to purpose. He has to read aloud when he writes. It is individual, human.
8. **Ease:** do not teach struggle. You shouldn't have standards that inhibit your writing, said William Stafford. Do fast writing (velocity causes the accident of insight).
9. **Productivity:** never spend a day without a line. Be promiscuous (produce much waste). Annie Dillard said: "Spend it all, do not hoard, give it now."
10. **Readers:** writing ends in community. As he drafts, Murray thinks of companion readers.

## TEACHERS AS WRITERS CONTEST

Teachers USA is holding its Second Biennial International Teachers As Writers Contest, 1991. The contest is open to all teachers in all English-speaking countries.

The purpose of the contest is to encourage creative writing by teachers. All types of creative writing in the broadest sense may be submitted: Fiction; Biography and Autobiography; Essay; Criticism; Poetry; History; and Travel. Excluded from the contest are professional, scientific and technical writings and textbooks. There is no restriction on the number of entries. All entries must be received by May 31, 1991.

The prize schedule is: first prize \$2,000; second prize \$1,000; and ten third prizes of \$100 each.

For further information and an entry form, write to: Teachers USA: Literary Forum for Teachers, Box 519, Baldwin Place, NY 10505-0519 USA, enclosing a #10 self-addressed stamped envelope.

## NCTE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PRAISES WRITING PROJECTS

According to Miles Meyers, newly appointed Executive Director of the National Council of Teachers of English, most of the current impetus for school reorganization can be traced to the National Writing Project. Addressing site directors in Atlanta last November, Meyers pointed out that educational leaders need look no further than their local writing projects to learn how to go about re-thinking educational priorities and delivery systems. If the aim is to empower youngsters and teachers to create more learning and more satisfying learning, we've got the model.

NWP, Meyers noted, was the key agent disseminating three revolutionary ideas:

1. that writing can be for learning and discovery,
2. that writing is composition, not a set of skills, and
3. that writing is power, that when it is produced it can influence the world in a fundamental way.

In the realm of assessment, it was NWP that led the way to establishing the use of performance norms. When we embraced holism--arriving at standards for a whole piece without doing feature analysis or check-offs of skills--we changed the emphasis in evaluation from features to cases. This new emphasis has generated most changes in assessment throughout the nation. Meyers indicated such important parallels as hands-on science and Olympic diving.

It was NWP, he pointed out, that showed the educational establishment a truly meaningful school-university collaboration.

It was NWP that legitimized the school as a center of inquiry and thus gave rise to the teacher researcher movement. Before NWP, educational research was exclusively the province of the university. New and refreshing were the concepts that classroom teachers can ask, study, and answer; that there could be school-based decision-making based on such answers; and that teachers themselves could decide if something is working.

To Meyers, the NWP led the field of education to its current emphasis on contexts--getting real writing to real audiences in real forms. In response to decades of phony writing, workbook sentences and paragraphs, basal readers, NWP teachers got kids to write about their lives, their hopes, their learnings.

Lastly, while articles called for a new professionalism for teachers, it was NWP that served as a real (and large) example of teachers as professionals.

## TAKE A MEMO

To succeed in business you need the write stuff. Top corporate executives spend nearly three months a year composing letters, memos and reports but waste much of their time because few can effectively communicate on paper, according to a survey by Motivational Systems of West Orange, N.J., which teaches corporate and government officials how to write.

# CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

## National Council of Teachers of English

The Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English invites educators at all levels -- elementary, secondary, and college -- to submit manuscripts to be considered for the 1992 Classroom Practices publication. This volume will focus on the theme, "*Celebrating Successful Classroom Practices*."

In a time of continued heavy criticism of education, we know that your teaching is making a difference in the quality of your students' learning. We urge you to share your exemplary practices with the readers of this volume. What activity do you use to challenge your students in English language arts? What do you do that really works, that results in excitement, response, learning? Tell us what you want students to do, how do they do it, what happens as a result, and why it works. We encourage the sampling of student work and the use of real classroom anecdotal evidence.

Manuscripts can range in length from two to ten double-spaced pages. Please submit two copies, with the author's name and address appearing only on separate title pages. Manuscripts should be received by September 1, 1991.

Please submit them to: Kent Gill, PO Box 115, Camp Sherman, OR 97730  
*Kent is a Bay Area Writing Project Fellow (1976).*

### NEWS BRIEF

- Bob Weiss (PAWP Director) had a busy time over his winter "break". On the morning of January 11 he made a presentation on "Parents, Teachers, and Innovative Programs," at Fordham University's conference of the Manhattan Council of the International Reading Association; in the afternoon he was interviewed for Greater Media Cable TV by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (Philadelphia). The next day he made three presentations on "Teaching Writing to Adults" to the Joint Pennsylvania-New Jersey Conference on Adult Basic Education. And on January 17 he organized and presented at a day-long educators' conference on the new Pennsylvania Department of Education state-wide Writing Assessment.

- Bob McCann (1981 Fellow and frequent institute co-director) had a poem published in Pompeiana Newsletter (February 9, 1991). Bob teaches English and Latin in the West Chester Area SD; his poem, "Pronoun Rap," combines both professional interests, as this sample shows:

Listen, children, and you shall know  
When you don't use a noun, gotta use a "pro"--  
Like a Dad and a Mom and the house where they live  
Become he, she, and it in the Nominative.

### JANE HANSEN'S GRADUATE STUDENTS KEEP LITERACY PORTFOLIOS

In her graduate-level course for teachers, Jane Hansen, author of *Breaking Ground*, has students keep a literacy portfolio as a way of focussing their learning. The literacy portfolio is announced as "a device that shows who I am as a literate person." You always ask yourself, is this something that I will put into my literacy portfolio?

The literacy portfolios are shared three times a semester. When these sharings occur, people find them fascinating. Not only do they raptly attend to what others have included, but they also get new ideas for what to add to their own literacy portfolios. The guiding principles by which people developed their portfolios are collect, select, and reflect. By the end of the semester in her graduate course, Hansen's students have as many as 17 items in their portfolios, some of which are required.

Requirements for Hansen's class are as follows:

- At least two pieces of writing on anything.
- One Dear Jane letter about who they are as readers, writers, talkers, listeners, learners, teachers, thinkers (not about portfolios).
- Submission of their literary portfolios with one of the two pieces, two-thirds through the course.
- An autobiography of themselves as readers or as writers.
- Some evidence of who they are as readers or writers.
- Some evidence of professional reading (she has a list of books and a box of articles; people choose).

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The 11th Annual International Conference on  
Critical Thinking and Educational Reform, August 2-3, 1991

*Theme: Teaching Students Intellectual Standards They Can Use to  
Reason Persuasively, Master Content, and Discipline Their Minds*

For more information, contact:  
Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park CA 94928, (707) 664-2940

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

The Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP) is an affiliate of the National Writing Project and a training site for the nationally validated New Jersey Writing Project. PAWP was created by the sponsors under grants from the William Penn Foundation and the University of California at Berkeley, with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED