



VOLUME 2 NUMBER 1

# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1981

## POSITION PAPER

by Sister Regina Noel, IHM

To teach writing is to teach thinking. All young people who come before us for an education deserve to be taught how to write. Some students are naturally gifted and will become better writers; however, all students can learn many of the basic skills needed for clear and effective writing.

Donald Murray reminds us that the student lives in a plastic, mass-produced world. The writing course can give him a chance, perhaps his only chance, to be a craftsman. When he writes, he has the opportunity to take his time to do the task right. He also reminds us that although writing may make students better writers, better readers, better thinkers, more sensitive seers, more psychologically integrated human beings, the only answer to the question, "Why teach writing?" must be, "To give my students a basic intellectual skill so that they can become themselves." In J. R. R. Tolkien's memorable story, *The Hobbit*, the aged Gandalf continually reminds Bilbo Baggins, the adventurer, "There is more to you than anyone can guess." It is the privilege of the teacher of writing to lead the student to the important discovery — I am someone; I have a voice; I have something to say.

The attitude and enthusiasm of the teacher of writing influences the attitude of the learner. Isaac Asimov, a contemporary prolific writer, comments on this attitude toward learning in his recent autobiography, *Memory Yet Green*.

"My father once looked through one of my information-crammed books and asked, 'How did you learn all this, Isaac?'

'From you, Pappa.'

'From me? I don't know any of this.'

'You didn't have to, Pappa. You valued learning and you taught me to value it. All the rest came without trouble.'"

The student who learns to write must do that learning in an environment in which he feels comfortable. He becomes familiar with the entire writing process, knowing that first drafts enable the writer to place his experiences and ideas in a concrete form. He knows that there will be many opportunities for revision and that these will be

provided for him according to his needs. The student learning to write has a need for a high success rate. He needs frequent applause from his audience which consists of other students and members of the school and local community as well as the teacher. He frequently hears comments from his audience about a precise description, successful conveyance of feeling, and identification with his own emotions. The student assumes responsibility for his own writing. Once he claims ownership for a piece of his work, he makes valuable decisions about it. He responds to questions such as: "Do you have enough information?" "Are you happy with the beginning and ending?"

The teacher of writing is a person who does much writing himself in many modes and for many audiences. He believes that writing is a worthwhile endeavor and an asset. The teacher is aware of the many opportunities for pre-writing and has experienced the joys and frustrations of bringing personal experience to life through his writings. He shares not only his writing, but the struggles he undergoes in the process. He shows students his messy notes, lists, and rough draft copies.

The teacher believes that a good route for the writing journey leads from fluency to form to correctness. Fluency provides the range and the repertoire as writers start seeking form. Likewise, he knows that ideas come from experience so the writer begins with experience.

The writing teacher knows that grades on a paper do not tell the student what to do. The teacher role is to identify, not that the student is writing poorly, but why the student is writing poorly so that he can guide the student to discover ways to improve the writing. The teacher explores many possibilities for grading and also carefully discerns how often grading is necessary. One satisfactory method of grading is to allow the student to choose a selection of papers from his cumulative writings or a single best paper which he would like the teacher to use as a criterion of his work.

The teacher remains interested, enthusiastic, and informed. He makes extended efforts to communicate and share with colleagues. He follows recent research on the composing process and makes applications to his own teaching procedures.

The student is led through many steps in the pre-writing

### Position Paper (Continued)

process. For anything to happen in the mind of the student, he must first be in the state of susceptibility. He must be exposed to many techniques which stimulate his senses, such as media, discussion, games, and reading.

The student makes daily entries into a journal or a source book. In addition, he does much free-writing for longer periods of time. He becomes familiar with many forms of discourse, such as stream of thought, sensory monologue, dramatic monologue, and dialogue. The teacher gradually introduces all the forms of discourse developed for student writing by James Moffett.

The student is led from free-writing into focused free-writing in which he locates a center for his writing. This makes his writing tighter and more coherent. He then moves from the concrete to the abstract, using the ascending order of abstraction which is discussed by Moffett in *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*.

The student discovers the many facets of the revision process. Through the use of response groups he begins to write for an audience and he learns to identify his own voice. He becomes audience for others in his class and develops the technique of asking questions that will lead to clarity of expression. He begins to assume responsibility for his own writing and synthesizes responses and suggestions from the group, using them in continued revision of his work. Periodically the writer records what he has learned from the revision process.

Conferencing is another vital component of the revision process. Student conferencing and self-conferencing accompany teacher conferencing and the combination provides many opportunities for evaluation between drafts.

Cumulative individual folders of student writing are available at the writing center located in a section of the classroom. Students keep first drafts and succeeding revisions as well as the finished paper in the folder. Some writings appear only in first or second drafts because the writer usually selects papers that he wishes to revise into a publishable piece of writing. The Writing Center contains tapes, slides, pictures from magazines, photographs, and handbooks such as *The Art of Writing* by Lucille V. Payne and *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. Some student and teacher writings through several drafts are also available.

The teacher provides opportunity for publication of student writing as often as possible. This may include classroom bulletin boards, hall bulletin boards, letters to the school newspaper, and school literary magazines.

Finally, the teacher develops an image of himself as a teacher of writing and frequently recalls his adherence to that image. Presented below is the image of myself as a teacher of writing.

GARDENER	TEACHER OF WRITING
plant seeds	assist in pre-writing experiences
provide water	encourage free-writing
watch for growth	believe in potential of writer
weed	establish comfortable environment for writer
wait	draw back at appropriate moments while writer produces

choose best area for certain plants	help writer identify voice and audience
fertilize and transplant	teach group response
wait	conference and encourage writer to assume responsibility for his own work
prune	step in at appropriate moments with suggestions
take pride in result	offer applause

*Sr. Regina Noel Dunn teaches at Villa Maria Academy and was a Fellow at the 1980 Summer Institute.*

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### PROJECT NEWS

"I didn't believe it would work, but it did." "This is one of the best presentations — if not the best we've ever had at one of our meetings."

These comments were a sampling of the positive feedback Doris Kirk and Jim Norton received after they presented a PWP program to all the administrators of the Coatesville Area School District late in August. The meeting was arranged by Nancy Hadfield, Reading/Language Arts Supervisor in the district. In an 80-minute presentation following the pattern established at the luncheon culminating the 1981 Summer Institute, Doris and Jim took the administrators through a short history of PWP and the writing process. Using a memory chain, the participants wrote and then shared their writings with each other. Although no administrators shared their writings with the entire group, some did share ideas that had been generated while they were sharing with each other.

The Coatesville administrators were informed about what they might expect to see upon entering a classroom where the students were engaged in the writing process. The administrators concluded by discussing how a large number of teachers might be able to benefit from the PWP training Doris and Jim had received, and how funding for in-service and participation in the 1982 PWP Summer Institute might be guaranteed.

In September, Doris and Jim made a presentation to the Coatesville Area school board. The unofficial summary of the meeting, distributed throughout the district, notes that "They surprised everyone at the Board Meeting by involving them in a writing activity similar to what might take place in the classroom."

Four in-service sessions using PWP Teacher-Consultants are planned by the Coatesville school district in 1981-82.

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On October 7 Cheryl Nichols and Peg Kelly ran a half-day faculty in-service at Wallingford Elementary School. Cheryl gave an overview of the steps in the writing process, involving the group in a memory chain and then in sharing their writing. Peg assisted with the modeling of responses and later spoke about how to teach the writing process in a classroom beginning from Day 1. The faculty was very receptive to the presentation.

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## PROJECT NEWS

(Continued)

The following resolution was passed unanimously by the English Association of the fourteen Pennsylvania State Colleges and University (EAPSCU) at its inaugural meeting at Lock Haven State College, September 26, 1981:

"EAPSCU recognizes the significance of the National Writing Projects in fulfilling objective 6 of its Constitution, calling for the development of lines of communication with primary and secondary teachers of English and Language Arts,

"EAPSCU strongly supports the Pennsylvania Writing Project (PWP) as a validated staff development project in improving student writing, and

"EAPSCU encourages the efforts of individual state colleges to establish a cooperative network of writing project sites throughout Pennsylvania."

★★★★★

On October 17 Bob Weiss, Cathy Powell, and Peg Kelly drove to Harrisburg to attend the annual convention of the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English. The Fall scenery along the way was sparkling and uplifting, and a stop at Paradise, Pa. on the way up provided appropriate refreshment.

The convention was held at the new Marriott Motel outside of Harrisburg. Cathy and Peg attended a workshop on how to take children through a "foolproof five-step process of writing" given by Drs. Decker and Broheim of the Education Department of Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts. Afterwards they joined Bob and a dozen or so convention participants to discuss particulars of the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Response was very enthusiastic.

★★★★★

Eileen Lynch is conducting a course for special education teachers in the Upper Darby School District. For in-service sessions, the special education teachers were given a choice of about four mini-course topics for the year. One of the choices was Eileen's "Writing In the Special Education Class." She developed this 16-session course out of her experience as a PWP Fellow and is being assisted by presentations made by seven other Fellows, four from her own district. She has been enjoying teaching the course, and teacher enthusiasm so far has been high.

In addition, Eileen is collecting writing samples from special education students and regular education students to see if their writing does in fact differ qualitatively.

Finally, she reports that her students are writing and *loving* it. They have published their first book. She is giving them word cards for the vocabulary words they use in their own writing and notes how children who test at low level of reading instantly recognize words such as *transformer*, *electricity*, *power*, etc. because these words came from their own writing.

Her students have begun Dialogue Journals (they write to her and she responds with a letter, then they write back, etc.). They have been excited to write personally to her and to receive their letters from her.

★★★★★

On October 21, 1981, Stan Dull (Octorara School District) gave a presentation to the eleven members of the English Department at the Owen J. Roberts High School. The departmental curriculum encourages writing, and the teachers have felt overwhelmed with the resulting paper load. Most of the three-hour workshop dealt with developing techniques for evaluating writing, both by teachers and by student peer groups.

★★★★★

An item of interest to Project teachers: Bob McCann, of the West Chester Area School District, recommends an article in *Writer's Digest* for a list of twelve magazines which actively seek writing from students 13 and under, 16 and under, 18 and under, etc. The article specifies the type of writing and length of manuscripts each magazine encourages.

Ludmilla Alexander, "You're Never Too Young To Be a Published Writer," *Writer's Digest*, September, 1981, pp. 28-31.

★★★★★

### TWO-DAY WRITING WORKSHOP IN HARRISBURG

"The biggest stumbling block [in teaching writing] is time. We keep adding things to the curriculum but never subtracting."

"In the writing process the writer meets himself on the page. It's like looking at oneself in the mirror."

Donald Graves

On July 1 and 2, while the second PWP Summer Institute was in its second week, Dr. Donald Graves and Mary Ellen Giacobbe from the University of New Hampshire Writing Process Laboratory conducted a workshop in Harrisburg for elementary level teachers. Five Project Fellows participated. For two days, they and the 50 or so other participants had an opportunity to ask questions, share their own experiences, and get practical suggestions for ways of turning their classrooms into writing labs.

In response to the questions directed to him by the teachers from grades four, five, and six, Graves spent much of his time discussing effective classroom organization, conferences, and the integration of skills instruction into the writing process. A well established routine that can be carried out by the students with a minimum of teacher direction was just one of his suggestions to save minutes for productive writing time. Ultimately the learner must take responsibility for his own use of time, but classroom organization may help to make the most of the time available.

Conferences should not be haphazard, either in scheduling or in structure. Give students tasks to complete on their writing before they come to a conference with the teacher. For example you might direct them to circle all words they think are misspelled. Deal only with the most important aspect of the student's writing in a conference. And most important, be sure you have conferences with

each student regularly. Do not leave it to chance to give help to the student. Use folders not only to hold papers but to keep records.

Graves is currently working on a book, *Children Write*, which should be published in Spring 1982.

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## NO SAILORS WE

by Freema Nichols

One cold winter night over a year ago, I saw an ad for a Windjammer Cruise in the newspaper. A full-masted schooner was pictured and the copy read, "a tradition of great sailing ships . . . with unique barefoot vacation tempered with modern comfort." A cruise sounded exciting and romantic to me. My husband read something about "informal" and "minimum costs" and thought that it might be just right for a family vacation. There seemed to be plenty to do for two college-age boys — swimming, sailing, snorkeling, and scuba diving. We all liked the idea of the other passengers (young and female, my boys were sure) who would love the outdoors and have a real spirit of adventure. With the feeling that there would be something for each of us, we signed up for an Out Island Bahama Cruise leaving on December 25. The small print said that there were no refunds. That should have been a warning.

We arrived at the dock in Freeport, Grand Bahama Island at 9 p.m. to board the ship the night before sailing. Dinner, drinks, and a stowaway overnight before a morning sailing had been advertised. The first problems arose when the captain informed us that dinner was no longer available and that due to the breakdown of another ship there was a shortage of cabins. The boys would have to sleep on deck. I was instantly angered at such treatment, especially with no refund forthcoming, but the boys thought sleeping under the stars might be fun. It was our cabin that was overcrowded with luggage for four. One problem was solved and one to go. The captain informed us that there was food and music and dancing on another ship docked nearby. It looked as if things might work out after all.

The next morning we faced the bathroom. The ad had said "private bath". What it didn't say was that although it was a double cabin it was a single bath. There was only enough floor space for one with very little moving. When you entered, you could sit, shower, and shave without moving your feet. It was compact and convenient. However, when you flushed the toilet, the bathroom floor flooded. We learned that flushing was the last dry activity in the bathroom. The shower also presented an interesting problem. The fact that the whole bathroom was the shower and nothing could remain dry when you turned on the shower was simply a nuisance. But the fact that it was a push button shower and you had to continue to push the button to have a shower was more inconvenient. When you pushed with your left hand, the shower washed the front of your body. When you turned around and pushed with your right hand, the shower washed your back. However, no matter which way you turned or what you pushed with, there was no way possible to wash under your left arm. The shower was made more devastating by the fact that the water was ice cold. It might have been refreshing in 90 degree weather; however, the temperature never even

reached 70 degrees on this trip and most of the time it was about 60, with cloudy days and cool breezes.

The "private" bathroom wasn't our only problem with the cabin. Although the small bunk beds were adequate, because luggage for four had to be kept on the floor, there was no way anyone could get into the cabin to make the beds, change the linen, or even bring fresh towels. At least, I think that is the reason we had such a mess. Fortunately, I didn't realize the last problem until near the end of the trip, when the "old salts" began discussing what they would do at home to get the roaches out of their clothing and luggage. It seems that some of the luxury first class cabins had so many roaches that the floor was black at night with them. Anyhow, everyone advised that we not bring our luggage into the house until it had been sprayed, fumigated and thoroughly protected against the friendly little fellows that we were bringing home with us as souvenirs. So much for "first class cabins with private bath."

I was so excited with anticipation of the romantic journey, I was unable to sleep. I was up very early expecting to see full sails. It was a cool and breezy morning — perfect sailing weather, I thought. I soon discovered if you wore jeans, shirts, sweaters and jackets, the shivering would stop, but I really didn't mind because all my attention was focused on the masts and sails. It seemed like hours before the captain announced that we would get underway at noon. To kill time until we were to sail, we went for a long walk around the harbor, visited two other ships, and met lots of people. Noon came and went and we were still at anchor. Finally, about 2 p.m. I heard the engine start. But the sails didn't go up. We motored out of the harbor. About an hour later the sails were hoisted for a short time. Before I realized they were even up, the sails were taken down never to be seen again. My romantic ideal of riding the seas in the manner of Sir Francis Drake had died on the first day of the trip. The wind was out of the Windjammer for me.

Each day we visited a different island. All were small, isolated, and usually uninhabited. However, we managed to find something or someone noteworthy on every island. As you have guessed by now, whoever or whatever, it didn't please me. On the first island it was a ferocious dog keeping people within ten feet of the shore. On another, it was beach bugs that gave large and painful bites. One island was so cold that the cold shower felt warm. The final island we visited had such a bad storm that I thought we would never get back to the ship.

Five long days later I was delighted and relieved when we arrived in Nassau at midnight. The bright lights, people, and solid ground never looked so good. I will find adventure somewhere else in the future. Mountain climbing, anyone?

*Freema Nichols teaches 7th grade in the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District and was a Fellow of the 1980 Summer Institute.*

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## PWP VALIDATION

The Pennsylvania Writing Project applied this fall for validation of its work in staff development in writing instruction. The Pennsylvania Diffusion Panel for Validation will announce its decision in Spring 1982.

Citing as objectives a decrease in teacher apprehension

about writing and an increase in appropriate instructional activities, the application report describes the Project's summer institutes and its in-service courses and programs using teacher/consultants. Two kinds of data are presented as evidence of effectiveness in meeting the two objectives. First, reduction in writing apprehension (as measured by the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale) is demonstrated to be statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) for participants in both the summer and academic year programs. Second, the proportion of participants implementing appropriate instructional behaviors is shown to have increased significantly from beginning to end or aftermath of all Project programs. The PWP Questionnaire listing these instructional behaviors is a modified version of the Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs developed in 1979 by the National Council of Teachers of English.

The Project also presented evidence of its capability and intent to diffuse and disseminate. The report noted in-service courses and programs of at least four sessions provided to the Intermediate Units of Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties and eight school districts, affecting 525 teachers. The report also noted the Project's cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to establish writing project replication sites at California State College, Pennsylvania State University (Capitol Campus), Millersville State College, Temple University, and Muhlenberg/Cedar Crest Colleges.

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### PWP AT DELAWARE VALLEY WRITING COUNCIL CONFERENCE

by Doris Gabel  
(Octorara School District)

"What is so rare as a day in October?  
Then, if ever, come perfect days."

The October 17 meeting of the Delaware Valley Writing Council had to compete with the allure of one of those perfect days. It took real determination, if not dedication, to turn one's back on the colorful outdoors and enter the more subdued halls of Upper Merion High School on a Saturday.

The program, arranged by Jane Kershaw of Upper Merion and Jerome Zurek of Cabrini College, managed to make the attending members forget the day for six hours. Each of five panels dealt with some aspect of the conference theme, "Implementing Change in Writing Instruction in the Classroom and in the School." The panelists represented all instructional levels from the primary grades through college. After lunch, Allen A. Glatthorn of the University of Pennsylvania gave the keynote address on "Maintaining Momentum: Preventing the Concern for Writing from Becoming One More Fad." He mentioned the National Writing Project as the only major national effort to improve the teaching of writing. Panel members were available in the afternoon sessions to share their ideas further with small groups.

Among the panelists on the day's program were Bob Weiss, Janet Greco, Doris Gabel, Joan Flynn, and Charlotte Roede. Other Fellows attending were Jolene Borgese, Janet Smith, Debbie Roselle, Jay Olexy, Lee Drizin, and Steve Zelnick.

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### POEMS FROM PROJECT IN-SERVICE COURSES

Nancy  
My wife, my life  
Mom extraordinaire  
Sustains, loves, cares for, feeds us all  
Special

Our Niles  
Bronze curly locks  
Atop shining brown eyes  
Glances aside with impish grin  
Prankster

Nicole  
Friendly, alert  
Involved in everything  
Devours life relentlessly  
Unique

Myself  
Active, away  
Share with them all I can  
Enriched by their firm devotion  
Lucky

By Jim Norton,  
Coatesville Area School District

### FOR PAUL AND SCOTT

When I take stock of my assets  
I am grateful  
I am blessed —  
A loving husband  
Two beautiful children  
Both parents living  
The home of my desire  
A sense of order.

So when I dream today, it is for my sons  
I worry for them  
Temptations, apathy, violence, cynicism  
Most of all  
I worry about the emptiness of life today  
Mediocrity masquerading as excellence  
Ignorance and aimlessness . . .

I wish for my sons a well-spring of life's understanding  
A beneath-the-surface awareness  
An appreciation of life  
A dignity of purpose  
A depth to relationships  
Above all, peace of mind.

I wish for them  
A smile of serenity  
An unfurrowed brow  
Not a life of ease  
But an acceptance of their own worth  
And that of all men.

By Joan S. Santos  
North Penn High School  
Montgomery County

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### KEITH CALDWELL VISITS PWP

On November 17 and 18, Keith Caldwell, Assistant Director of the Bay Area Writing Project, will visit PWP. Keith was the BAWP monitor-consultant who visited the first PWP summer institute in 1980. His scheduled agenda includes four presentations on "Teaching The Reluctant Writer" and several sessions with PWP Fellows and with school administrators. Fellows are asked to invite colleagues and administrators to the presentations, which are co-sponsored by PWP and intermediate units or school districts.

#### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>
1:30 - 3:00	Media Inn Routes 1 and 252 Media, Pa.	Dr. Nicholas Spennato Delaware County Intermediate Unit Telephone: 565-4880
4:00 - 5:00	Struble Room Chester County Library Exton Square Routes 30 and 100 Exton, Pa.	Dr. Marion Rosecky Director of Project CARES Telephone: 363-2128
8:00 - 9:30	Hillsdale School Upper Pod 725 W. Market Street West Chester, Pa.	Dr. James Lee Supervisor of Language Arts West Chester Area School District Telephone: 436-7156

#### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

9:30 - 11:00	Ridley Senior High School 1001 Morton Ave. Folsom, Pa.	Mrs. Betty Smith Humanities Coordinator Telephone: 534-1900
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#### CALL FOR PAPERS

#### DESIGNING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

SPRING CONFERENCE - MARCH 6, 1982

DELAWARE VALLEY WRITING COUNCIL

AT: LA SALLE COLLEGE, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

WE INVITE ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, AND COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS AND OTHER INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR THREE TYPES OF PROGRAM SESSIONS:

**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS:** (four to a panel) Submit a 200 word abstract of a paper (maximum 5 pages when completed) on such topics as:

- Writing assignments appropriate for specific grades.
- How to sequence writing assignments.
- How to communicate assignments effectively.
- Alternatives to the "five paragraph essay" assignment.
- Journal writing: pro and con.
- The in-class essay.
- The Research Paper: where does it belong?
- Writing assignments 'across the curriculum."

**ASSIGNMENT DISPLAY SESSION:** Submit one copy of an assignment to share with other participants.

**ASSIGNMENT WORKSHOP:** Submit a plan for conducting a workshop in which participants will develop their own assignments.

Details will follow regarding the format of these sessions.

Please send all abstracts, assignments and workshop proposals by January 4 to:

Margot Soven, English Department  
La Salle College  
Philadelphia, PA 19141

The Spring Conference Committee will make every effort to include as many presenters as possible. If you have questions call:

MARGOT SOVEN  
School: 951-1148 or 1145 - Home: 664-0491

**THE PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT: FROM TEACHERS TO TEACHERS**

When one looks at the quality of writing of the average high school graduate one begins to question the effectiveness of the methods of teaching writing currently employed in our schools . . .

The writing process is a constant thinking process. Children need time, not only to express their thoughts, but to work out their thoughts. It is through the writing process that children can develop their thoughts. It is not necessary to know what you are going to write before you start. Writing is not only a mechanical vehicle to convey one's thoughts but an active process through which one develops his thoughts (Elbow). Children need to learn this and have many opportunities to develop their thoughts through writing. Children should write every day . . .

In place of multiple-choice or sentence completion work sheets children should be asked to write down what they have learned at the end of a lesson. This learning-centered writing is a valuable tool to the teacher in helping her to plan for the next lesson and gives her the opportunity to clear up any misconceptions before the unit progresses any further. At the culmination of certain units students could be asked to write a book or a story. The students must incorporate their new knowledge of the subject matter. This demands a much higher level of thinking from the students than worksheets. Learning-centered writing helps the children know what they know.

*From a position paper by  
Eileen Lynch  
Highland Park Elementary  
Upper Darby School District*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This course has helped me help them by providing me with a wider variety of means to reach them and draw them out of themselves and into writing and sharing. The rapport and trust between teacher/student and between student/student has increased. To my pleasure, my students' attitudes toward writing have also been positively affected to a significant degree. When I told my classes that I would be accepting the position of counselor, many asked if our writing projects and journal writing would continue. Now, nearly two months later, rarely does a day pass in which I fail to receive a draft or revision of a student's writing. They are not seeking approval only. They take pleasure in sharing something they value and enjoyed doing with someone they know who also enjoys writing . . .

I think if my kids were in a position to do so, they'd give [the course instructors and teacher-consultants] an "A+" because of what *they* got from you. And that's really what matters to me. This semester will probably be my last as a teacher of English, and this course has done much to make it my best.

*From a position paper by  
Linda G. Porreca  
Paxon Hollow Junior High School  
Marple Newtown School District*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The writing process needs motivation or pre-writing of some form. These various techniques I have discovered through the Pennsylvania Writing Project go beyond the usual lessons from my antiquated language textbook. My class has responded to pictures, newspapers, imaginative and current topics. I realize motivation will be the easiest part of our writing; uninhibited third graders are able to find fun and ideas almost anywhere and openly participate and respond to this part of the writing process. They then try to outline their thoughts either on paper or in their heads. They still must think about and pre-write the beginning, middle and end of some of their writing in order to feel comfortable . . .

The need for revision by all writers is the most important idea to convey to my class. They would try to write a paragraph, consider it done and be upset and disappointed when it was returned with "red marks." I have now shown them pre-writing and writing with many scribbles and cross-outs; some of this is my own writing, some is theirs. I have even put stickers on revised work to show them I felt they were really doing a nice job of teaching themselves and some great learning was taking place. Our class now uses partners or groups to pre-read and check papers for revision by the author. This has helped students have immediate reaction to grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes which come when these mistakes are most easily recognized and understood.

*From a position paper by  
Anna Coacher  
Presentation BVM School  
Penn Wynne*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If someone were to tell me that I could get my classes to write willingly, I would have told them it would take a miracle. Now . . . I believe miracles still happen.

When I began this course my classes, which consist of non-readers and non-writers, refused to write. The few times I forced them to write were very frustrating to them as well as myself . . . Once the students realized that I was not waiting with pen in hand to make corrections, they felt freer to write and express themselves . . .

*From a position paper by  
Deborah Townsend  
Chester High School  
Chester-Upland School District*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In short, I believe that the strongest benefits of the Pennsylvania Writing Project are the practicality of the lessons of writing styles presented, and the versatility of the lesson formats, in that they can be adapted to any level of instruction from kindergarten up to and including college level. I firmly believe that this course should be required of all college students preparing to teach English at any level of instruction.

*From a position paper by  
Judith Volk  
Paxon Hollow Junior High School  
Marple Newtown Schown District*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER**

Published bi-monthly during the school year  
by the Pennsylvania Writing Project  
West Chester State College  
West Chester, PA 19380

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*Assistant Director:* Martha J. Menz

*Publishing Committee:*

Doris Gabel

Sr. Regina Noel, IHM

Chris Sundro

Alexis Anderson

*Sponsors:*

West Chester State College

Chester County Intermediate Unit

Delaware County Intermediate Unit

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

Pennsylvania Department of Education

The Pennsylvania Writing Project (PWP) is an affiliate of the National/Bay Area Writing Project and a training site for the nationally validated New Jersey Writing Project. PWP 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.

For additional information on the Pennsylvania Writing Project, contact Robert H. Weiss, Director, The Writing Program, West Chester State College, West Chester, PA 19380. Telephone (215) 436-2281.

**Pennsylvania  
Writing Project**

Philips Memorial Bldg. #210  
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