PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 4 SUMMER 1987

PAWP ONE-CREDIT COURSES ATTRACT A FOLLOWING

PAWP's one-credit courses continue to grow in popularity. This summer the Pennsylvania Writing Project is offering a variety of introductory workshops in poetry, writing in the content areas, holistic scoring, and personal writing. Teachers can take all the courses for graduate credit and some for in-service credit. The short courses offer an opportunity for intense concentration or an introduction or review.

For the sixth time, Bob Weiss led a late June workshop on **Holistic Assessment of Writing.** Seventeen participants learned about and provided scoring with the general-impression, analytic scale, developmental scales, and primary trait methods. They practiced writing rubrics, compared each other's scores and considered applications to classrooms at different grade levels. Workshop evaluations showed that participants benefitted from the two full days of work. Many comments echoed what one teacher wrote: "I am leaving this workshop with something that will help me in my classroom and in my understanding of writing in general."

The **Process-Centered Writing Class** provides basic awareness. It introduces key issues and methods of teaching writing as a process. The individual workshops demonstrated successful methods and strategies involved in the teaching of writing including such topics as: teachers as writers, prewriting strategies, implementation of the writing process, revision strategies, and the reading/writing connection.

Mary Ellen Giacobbe, a guest consultant from New Hampshire, visited the Summer Institute and the Process-Centered Writing class.

A group of teacher-writers confer during the Writers Workshop.

PAWP presenters were Marilyn Sandberg from the Woodbury (New Jersey) School District, Gail Capaldi from the Upper Darby School District, and Chuck Jones from the Exeter Township School District. The 32 participants welcomed guest consultant Mary Ellen Giacobbe from New Hampshire, formerly a teacher at the Atkinson Elementary School where Donald Graves did his original research. Mary Ellen emphasized the importance of reading to students of all ages, that reading aloud to students can be a prewriting activity, for students may model their writing after published pieces, and that the published piece can be used to illustrate qualities of good writing.

Jolene Borgese has taught, presented, and coordinated this course since its beginning in 1982. Her perspective illuminates the growth and the success of the program. "I feel as if we've all come a long way to help teachers ease into the writing process. This course went off without a hitch and that only comes from efficient planning with input from both the participants and the project staff. My hat goes off to both!"

(Continued on next page)

Martha Menz conducted a three-day **Writers' Workshop** on June 23 through June 25, 1987. A group of eleven teachers met for full day sessions. All worked together trying various prewriting strategies, free writing, sharing, and responding to each other's work. The group used Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* and excerpts from *Writing With Power* as prompts for their personal writing. Martha stated that this course "turned out to be one of the most intensive and rewarding teaching experiences I have ever had . . . What was apparent immediately from the beginning was that sitting in the room were some very experienced writers who looked forward to submitting their work to a national publication and some very inexperienced writers who felt great apprehension about writing but also felt that it was time to do something about it."

During the workshop each participant wrote a personal piece which will be published in a booklet to be distributed to course members later in the summer.

On Tuesday, June 30 through Thursday, July 2, twenty-three teachers and administrators met to learn more about the role of writing in the teaching of their discipline(s). This workshop, **Writing in the Content Areas**, was coordinated by Martha Menz with Bob Tierney, a high school biology teacher from the National Writing Project as guest consultant.

Writing across the curriculum, according to Martha, involves much more than content area teachers using writing intermittently in their classroom to assess student learning or command student attention. Bob Tierney elucidated this point even further in two days of presentations. Bob feels that writing is a better way to teach concepts and that through writing students get involved in their own learning. Process writing, according to Tierney, is analogous to process learning: think it – do it – fix it. A process approach is critical to lesson design as well and Tierney insists that teachers use a process approach in designing lessons and thinking about their teaching.

The last day of the workshop focused on practical implementation. Participant reactions reflect the tenor of the course: ". . . interesting, stimulating, enthusiasm-generating . . ." "I have spent these three days being bombarded by new methods that I am anxious to employ." "Being with a group of people willing to risk a change for the improvement of learning is uplifting."

Doris Kirk and poet-teacher Len Roberts conducted a workshop in **Teaching Poetry** July 6 through July 10. Fourteen teachers met each morning for five days to learn about writing poetry and to write it. Doris reflected, "In the three days that Len was with us and the two days on our own, we did all the things that breathe life into a classroom. Len taught and we listened to him; we wrote and read and read aloud and talked. The classroom, under his skilled and subtle direction, became a workshop of writers of poetry. Involvement, active participation, and even commitment were evident."

"The writing process, here used in the writing of poetry, created an atmosphere in which a literate environment could develop. As the skilled teacher, Len listened and responded to the needs of the learners before him and led them through their own writings to new discoveries."

When it comes to teachers, administrators and quality writing programs, it's the old story of "Who's on which side of the fence and how do they view things from there?" Sometimes teachers, especially those who see writing as a process, sense some insensitivity or lack of understanding on the part of administrators. And, sometimes, administrators find themselves at a loss to understand, let alone deal with the logistics of, process-centered writing classes. Sensing those issues and all of their consequences, Ed Bureau and Bob Weiss decided a year or so ago to put together a three-day workshop for administrators of writing programs. With the assistance of Dave Morgan (Great Valley School District), they conducted **Administering Writing Programs** on July 14, 15, and 16. Attended by principals, supervisors, central office persons, and a handful of teachers, the program received highly favorable reviews (even though it was in first draft form).

Participants learned about the primary aspects of writing programs: needs assessment, premises, curriculum design and management, staff development, finding resources, and evaluation of program. Besides Ed, Bob, and Dave, presentations were given by Martha Menz on writing processes, by Jim McCall on child development as it relates to writing, and by Elaine Jarchow on computers and writing.

Because the primary goal of the workshop was to help participants understand the parts of programs and their interrelationships, the staff linked the topics through a larger writing program scheme; for example, writing-to-learn pieces were done and used as the basis for discussion. Developing an action plan for conducting a program, however, was the primary written activity. Working on prepared format sheets, participants generated comprehensive writing program plans appropriate for their districts.

If the three-day workshop was judged by the quality of the plans written by participants, it was successful (despite rain delays and power outages). The plans evidenced comprehension of key program components and the ability to adapt them to specific districts. In both oral and written evaluative comments, participants affirmed their understanding that an effectively designed and managed writing program brings support for writing teachers and success for developing writers.

So start informing your administrator now, because the workshop will return in a second draft format in Summer 1988.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

1. I learned about aspects and components of writing programs. Yes – 22 No – 0
2. I learned the steps for designing an effective writing program from assessment to evaluation Yes – 22 No – 0
3. Developing the action plan gave me direction for using the material presented. Yes – 20 No – 1
4. Presentations were useful, well-planned, and easy to follow. Yes – 23 No – 0
5. I am leaving the workshop with useful resources and ideas. Yes – 23 No – 0

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PAWP FOR TEACHERS OF SCIENCE AND MATH

The Project has received a small grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to host two concurrent writing workshops for secondary teachers of science and mathematics. On September 28-29, 1987 at West Chester University, these limited-admission workshops will be led by NWP teacher-consultants Bob Tierney (biology teacher) and Bill Kennedy (math teacher). The focus will be on writing as a tool for learning.

If you know a possibly interested colleague, pass the word. Registration is by mail only, and the deadline is September 18.

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THE 1987 PAWP FELLOWS

Lisa Armstrong	Springfield (Delco)
Teresa Cesarz	Berks Co. Intermediate Unit
Daniel Condon	Southeast Delco
Melanie DeBouse	Southeast Delco
Patricia Dietderich	Northampton Area
Susan DiGregorio	Southeast Delco
Donna Dingle	William Penn
Giovanna Eisenstein	William Penn
Harriet Emmanuel	Southeast Delco
Nadine Emmanuel	Southeast Delco
Paul Esposito	Southeast Delco
Lisa Feerrar	Octorara
Bernadette Fenning	Cardinal O'Hara High School
Paul Forberger	Rose Tree-Media
Nancee Goldstein	Pennsbury
Richard Halsey	Phoenixville Area
Jeanne Hill	West Chester Area
Kathleen Laird	Wallingford Swarthmore
Louis Pomeroy	William Penn
Lucy Portland	Pottsville Area
Carol Reigh	Gov. Mifflin
Ruth Sklar	Williamsport Area
Arlene Smagala	Penn Delco
William Stumm, Jr.	Ridley

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EXCELLENT—INSPIRING—PRACTICAL: THE SPRING WRITING CONFERENCE

"The workshop was the shot in the arm which I needed to get me through the last few weeks of school." So said one teacher representative of the 212 attending the 2-day May conference of the Pennsylvania Writing Project and the National Capital Area Writing Project, with Boynton/Cook Publishers. Titled "The Composing Process Revisited," and held at West Chester University on May 29 and 30, 1987, the conference brought together teachers at all levels throughout the region to hear presentations given by noted teachers and authors, to examine Boynton/Cook's latest publications on writing, and to share camaraderie with other teachers of writing.

All participants attended the morning presentations and in the afternoon chose specific workshops from several alternatives. The morning program offered the following presentations by nationally known authors:

James Moffett — Bridging from Autobiography to Essay
Dan Kirby — On Matters of Mind: Teaching for Thinking
Ken Macrorie — The Meaning Position in Writing
Peter Stillman — The Centrality of Narrative in English Instruction: You Can't Tell a Story Wrong
Mary Ellen Giacobbe — Revision in an Elementary Classroom

In the afternoon, the guest consultants and several writing project teacher-consultants offered these workshops:

James Moffett — Starting from Scratch Without Having to Scratch Your Head
Dan Kirby — Mind Probes: Experiments in Thinking
Julianne Yunginger (a Chapter 1 Coordinator in the Eastern Lancaster Area School District and 1982 PAWP Fellow) — Computers and Writing in Elementary Grades
Margaret Hoagland (an elementary special education teacher in Maryland, NCAWP) — Disabled Students, Able Authors
Sue Thomas (an English teacher at Valley High School in Sacramento, NCAWP) — A Collaborative Learning Workshop in Writing About Literature
Ken Macrorie — Help Without Criticism in Peer Response Groups
Peter Stillman — The Place of Mythology in the Secondary School Curriculum
Mary Ellen Giacobbe — A Time for Skills Instruction in the Writing Classroom
Robert McCann (a 1981 PAWP Fellow in the West Chester Area School District) — Computers and Writing in Secondary Grades
Sharon Austin (a writing resource teacher in Maryland, NCAWP) — Sentence Combining and Beyond
Lois Taylor (an English teacher in the Sharpe-Roosevelt Satellite Program, NCAWP) — Motivating the Special Student

At the close of each day the authors, presenters, and participants gathered in the lobby of Main Hall for wine and cheese, a discussion of the day, and purchase of more books. In spite of a May heat wave and faulty air-conditioning the teachers enjoyed the conference.

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A VERY BRIEF POSITION PAPER

by James Meginnis

It's Tuesday morning at eight. I am listening to Howard Stern (my initial experience) as I observe the countryside flying past on my way to Doylestown. I've enrolled in the PAWP WORKSHOP on "Writing in the Content Area". Between bad jokes and plain bad taste, many questions run through my mind. Some are easy to answer. Because I need the credit. Yes, I'm sure I turn left at the stop sign. Others are a bit more tricky. I have no idea what I'm going to learn—or if I'm going to learn. I hope that the IU is in the cement fortress across from Conti's. I'm not sure how English fits into the "content area" which is the focus of the workshop. I am about to be enlightened.

I suppose that enlightened teachers are among the five most dangerous creatures on the planet. Along with fundamentalist preachers and dieticians, we promulgate the latest fads with the fervor of moslems in a "jihad". In the course of eighteen years of teaching in public schools, my students have sat in rows, circles, squares, and "U's". They have been open, relevant, humanized, and alphabetized. They have experienced SQ3R, ARMS, SSR, and PAG. They have been acronymned to death. And yet I am dubious. Filled with a noble purpose, STUDENT IMPROVEMENT, I am setting out on a quest to get a grip on that elusive "method" which will enable me to inspire each and every student in all my classes to "be the best they can be" to "maximize their potentialities" and so forth.

Teachers, by and large, appear to be very moral beings. Most of the ones I have met are genuinely concerned about doing a good job, but few have any idea of what that is. We seem to lack specifics. Generalities abound. "I want to improve my students' learning." That's commendable. But just how do you propose to do that? Obviously by attending in-service workshops. So off we go once more to visit the wonderful wizard of workshops who will give us the key to get the learning balloon off the ground.

After reading educational prose couched in jargon from Adler to Zimmerman, obviously we are all aware that facts are only a part of a process—the educational process. I am here in Doylestown to learn how better to assist my students acquire skills that will enable them to enjoy the process of life. Perhaps this is the most gross generality of all. And what the hell does it mean? Well, in my curricular area, English, this means helping them acquire skills like understanding, appreciating, analyzing, expressing, synthesizing. I suppose Bloom would be proud.

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And a new tool, a new lever, a new thought is awaiting me here. I have participated in enough workshops to learn the "writing process." Pre-write, draft, revise, edit, publish. I can recognize the difference between a formal outline and a Venn diagram. I can recite the terms for the acronymn "ARMS." I do modelling. I do student evaluation. Yet these old steps are moved in the mosaic here to create a new pattern for me. I have never considered these as anything other than steps in the process of learning to write. I have never considered these steps as tools in a second process. I have always seen them as phases in the production of a "good piece of writing." I've never thought about them as having a secondary function.

Here in Doylestown I learn that each step in the writing process can branch off into a different aspect of the learning process. Pre-writes can become closure activities that can help the student become aware of strengths and deficiencies in subject matter. Student evaluation can increase the body of knowledge available to other students. And, upon reflection, this all seems valid. Why can't something I've only considered as a beginning activity, a pre-write, be a closure activity, a review? Why can't student evaluation become an exchange of information, fact or opinion, which in and of itself helps students to "understand, appreciate, analyze" content material? I am beginning to see the possibility of writing as a multi-purpose tool, something which not only enables students to express thoughts, but something which enables them to acquire those thoughts in the first place. And for me, this is new. And it's exciting. Is it valid? I'm sure. Will it work? I think so. To what extent? I don't know.

But I'm going to take it back. I'm going to emphasize it. I'm going to work at it. It may give my kids an edge, a chance, a new tool. It may be a new piece in the puzzle. Maybe it will end up in the file next to my square seating charts. I don't know. But it's a chance I'll take. Maybe with one of these tools even Howard Stern would have turned out human.

Jim Meginnis teaches 11th and 12th grade English in the Pennsbury School District. He wrote this short piece last summer in a PAWP course in Doylestown.

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WRITING AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF TWO ADOLESCENT WRITERS

The Writing Process

by Doug Lockwood

An idea can happen at any moment, not always at the most convenient time. Images transpire from single thoughts until eventually an entire paper has been thought out. An example of this occurs at the homes of most famous authors. While enjoying a peaceful shower, the author sees a vision, but of course has no paper. It's then off with the water, on with the towel, and streak to the den to get it down in ink. Of course, the neighbor is downstairs borrowing an egg. Engrossed in thought, he fails to even notice her as she catches a glimpse of the half-naked man darting across the hall.

While maybe not in the shower, we here at East go through the same process as even the most established author. It all begins with that one idea, and although writing a paper may be considered a very simple process, it is a very drawn out procedure requiring much revision.

Getting these ideas down on paper can be considered the "0" draft. This is simply a list of sentences and thoughts to guide the writer as he works toward the finished piece.

The next step is putting these ideas into words in a form that is open to revision if necessary. This is called the 1st draft or "rough" copy. Double spacing is helpful here, allowing room for the needed corrections to be made.

The paper is then ready to be responded to. In an organized manner, the critics listen as the paper is read aloud in response groups. These critics then fill out response sheets, offering helpful hints in making a good paper a great one.

After receiving this feedback, the 2nd draft, or "good" copy can be written. This final product should reflect an attempt to use the suggestions of others along with new ideas of your own. The feeling of completing a finished work is one of accomplishment and pride.

This entire project is called the writing process. Sure, it is possible to just sit down and write a good copy of a paper without these preliminary steps, but in doing this, you know in your heart that it could have been better.

In Search of the Writing Process

by Tim Fredericks

"Hello, friends, this is Period 3's own roving reporter, Brad Burlap, here in the bustling metropolis of West Chester to find out what the Writing Process is. Excuse me sir, what is your name?"

"Ralph Godfrey Studdermen."

"I'm Brad Burlap."

"You mean the frustrated, young boy who is destined to be an English teacher?"

"Shut up, sir."

"Well, I never!"

"That doesn't matter sir. I was wondering if you knew what the Writing Process is?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, would you kindly share your vast knowledge with our readers?"

"The Writing Process is an ancient art which was developed by the Greeks. It involves two aspects of language: writing and speaking."

"That is startling information, sir. Please continue."

"Well, the writing part involves 5 steps of skill: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading, and publishing. In response groups all members incorporate the 5 above mentioned steps. While reading aloud you find spelling mistakes, incomplete sentences, or maybe just something that sounds all jumbled and wrong. With this process completeness of ideas and expression plus good grammar is guaranteed."

"Amazing! Please go on about the oral part of the process."

"Well, the oral part includes a lot of communication. This allows others to add unbiased input and offer suggestions to enhance one's work."

"Thank you, Mr. Studdermen. Well, there you have it, folks, a process which by ingenious creation works for you and me."

Doug and Tim study at East Senior High School in the West Chester Area School District. Their teacher was Jolene Borgese, co-director of PAWP.

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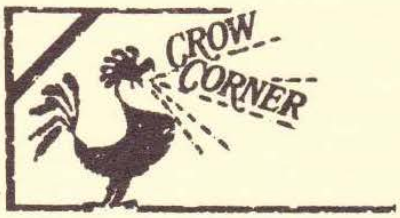
Books on every facet of gardening fill the bookstores. They even have a book on remedial weeding.
—Frank Tyger



CHRISTINE KANE, 1981 PAWP Fellow, has been appointed Acting Reading/English Language Arts Supervisor for Philadelphia's School District Six.

The Tenth Annual Language Arts Exhibit was held in Philadelphia's School District I from April 27 to May 15, 1987. MARY ELLEN COSTELLO, Supervisor of Reading/English Language Arts for Philadelphia School District I described this year's event as a "profusion of writing!" There were writings everywhere showing various stages of the writing process.

The staff development sessions for principals, teachers, aides, parents included:

—Holistic Scoring led by BOB WEISS

—Proofreading and Editing: Polishing for Publishing led by CECELIA EVANS, PAWP newsletter editor

—Analytical Evaluation led by CYNTHIA JENKINS, 1982 PAWP Fellow.

Over 2,000 teachers and other educators and interested persons viewed the exhibit at the Locke School in Philadelphia.

Next year's exhibit is being planned and you are invited to call MARY ELLEN COSTELLO or CECELIA EVANS at EV6-8540 if you are interested in leading a workshop.

ROSEMARY BUCKENDORFF brings to our attention that a number of PCTE (Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English) award winners have been taught by PAWP Fellows. Last year the Exeter Township High School had a winner—CHRIS SCHWAB. This year DEBBIE ROSELLE from the Kennett Consolidated School District had a winner and there were several from the West Chester Area School District, also taught by Writing Project Teacher-Consultants.

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A CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEW OF THE WRITING PROCESS

by Honey Levin

For the first eleven years of my teaching experience I struggled with existing educational philosophy of reductionist-mechanistic learning. During those years, I never felt comfortable with the belief that learning could be reduced to "breaking down a content area or skill into component parts, and ordering these parts into a hierarchy to be taught from simplest to most difficult"[1] and accumulating over the years a neat package of knowledge. In this system, the children are inevitably the mechanical recipients of this learning. They are to be motivated, taught, and rewarded or punished for their efforts.

So, I found myself searching for better ways to teach my students. At first I looked for any method which would make learning a more meaningful experience. We engaged in project-oriented activities, creative writing and using learning stations to break the monotony of workbooks and seatwork. The more I taught, the more I was convinced that there had to be another way. Something was very wrong with this system, and I grew tired of struggling to compromise with its demands.

I continued my search for answers. Finally, after several years of more intensive reading and searching I have discovered a philosophy which makes sense because it's based on the observations of real children (not animals) in natural settings (not laboratories) in everyday incidental learning situations (not clinical experiments). After some forty years of observing children and interpreting what he saw, Jean Piaget has left our society with a brilliant legacy of how humans acquire knowledge. Within these last few decades, the academic community has been busy discovering practical applications of these theories for classroom implementation. Those who apply Piaget's theory say in order to learn, we must construct our own knowledge of the world for ourselves. "Philosophically, constructivists assert that we can never know the world in a 'true' sense, separate from ourselves and our experiences. We can only know it through our logical framework . . . which is constructed and evolves through development as we interact with our environment and try to make sense of our experiences."[2] As a result, they see learning as "an organic process of invention rather than a mechanical process of accumulation."[3] The constructivist is one who creates a learning environment which nurtures the intellectual growth of children acting as the facilitator in this process. Always the process of learning rather than the product is of utmost importance.

At the same time (and I suspect, not coincidentally), people such as Donald Graves, Lucy McCormick Calkins and Donald Murray were busy observing how children learn rather than how they can be taught what society thinks they should learn. The process approach to writing is evolving as a product of this intensive investigation.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the writing process approach as a perfect complement to a constructivist curriculum. It is certainly an organic form of learning. The child is the initiator of his own learning. He sees from his point of viewing the world. He creates the world as he knows it through reflecting upon his own experiences. During the writing process the child reconstructs past experiences initially to recall memories, but eventually to interpret in a new way what has occurred. Thus he reconstructs meaning not previously realized. This often causes the writer to reorganize his original thinking to arrive at new conclusions. This process of reflecting upon an idea and changing it as a result is one that is basic to Piaget's theory of learning which he refers to as "reflective abstraction."

Since I am not in a situation to teach reading this year, I refer to a hypothetical example to illustrate the dynamics of this process by showing the child involved in a constructivist method of learning!

Eight-year-old Kevin writes about his experience clamming during the previous summer at the shore. At the time, he didn't really think much about the significance of what he was doing; however, as he writes about this memory, he begins to gain insights not previously realized. For example, after peer response and discussion, he realized how hard it must be to have to find your own food in order to survive. "Gee, what if we have a bad day and don't catch any clams? My family goes hungry that night. I never looked at it that way before!"

He makes another observation after rereading his story out loud to his teacher in a conference. "I just realized something really neat. While I was clamming, my brother and I didn't fight at all. The two of us were so caught up in the job of catching clams, we never had time to think about fighting. We actually got along great. Maybe if we are fighting in the future, we should think of something neat to do to keep us busy, so we don't fight."

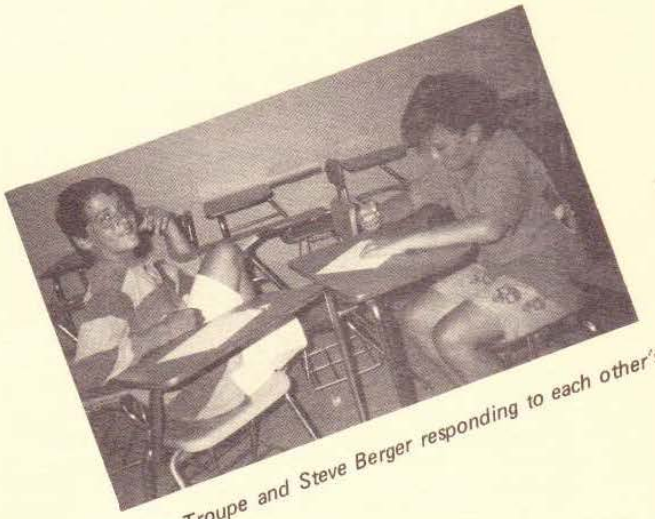
(Continued on page 8)

YOUTH WRITING PROJECT EXPANDS IN THIRD YEAR

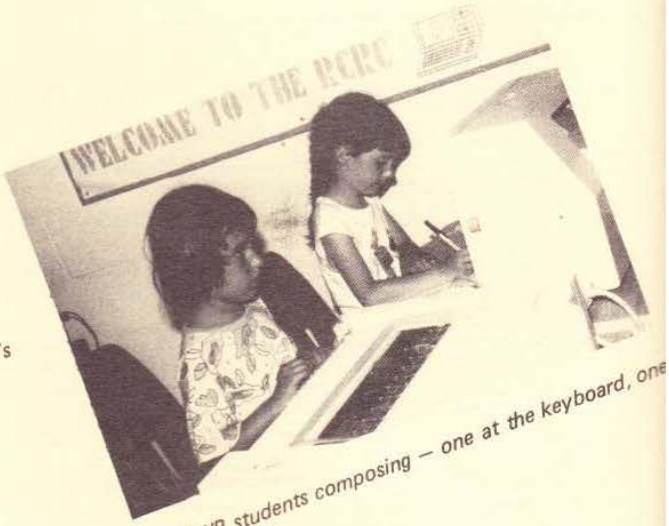
They came from a variety of backgrounds and in a variety of sizes — 131 students ranging in age from six through eighteen — to become the newest community of writers of PAWP's Youth Writing Project.

Begun in 1985 by Bob Weiss and Jolene Borgese after learning of similar youth programs run by other NWP sites, the West Chester version was planned to provide students with varied opportunities to write, work together, and share their ideas. All the writers would work with one or two published authors and spend some time on word processors; in 1986, a special group was formed to do all of their writing on word processors. The young writers are always divided into groups of 10 to 12, each with its own teacher. Naturally, the teachers are all experienced PAWP teacher-consultants.

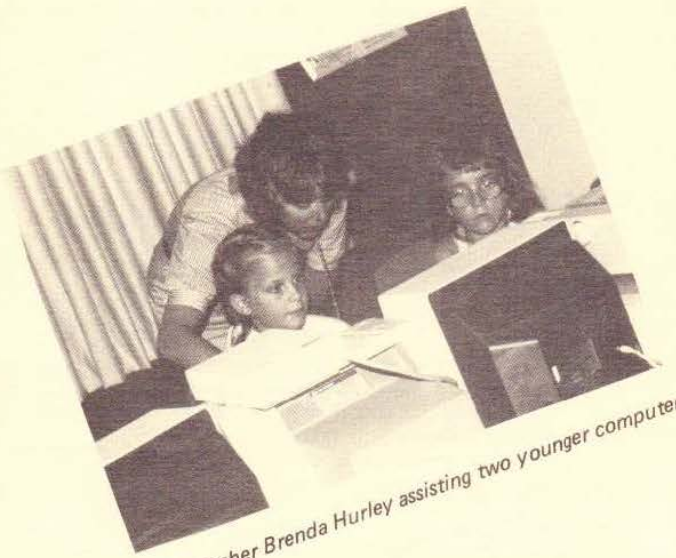
This year, in addition to Jolene Borgese's competent and caring direction and the support of Bob Weiss, secretary Alice Weygandt, and student aide Amy Darr, the YWP staff consisted of Guy MacCloskey, Sue Smith, Kevin McAneny, Chris Cardamone, Chris Kelly, Martha Menz, Gail Capaldi,



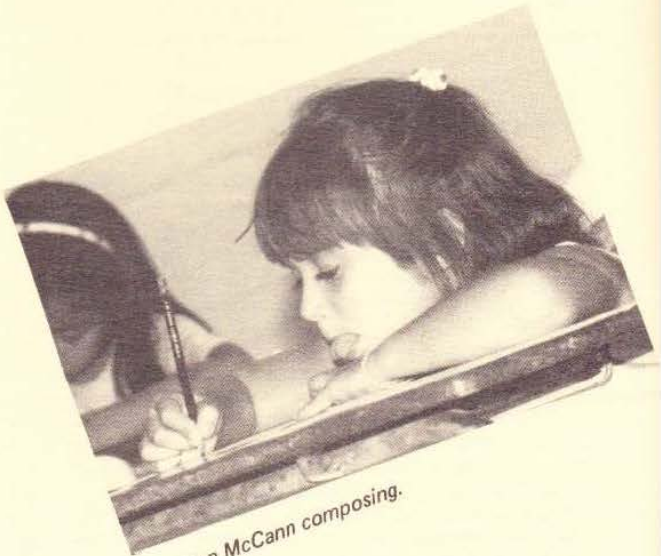
Brian Troupe and Steve Berger responding to each other's writing.



Two YWP students composing — one at the keyboard, one conventionally.



YWP teacher Brenda Hurley assisting two younger computer students.

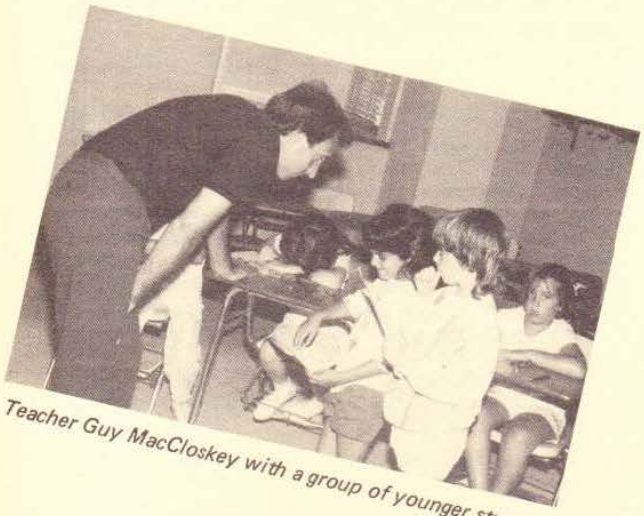


Meghan McCann composing.

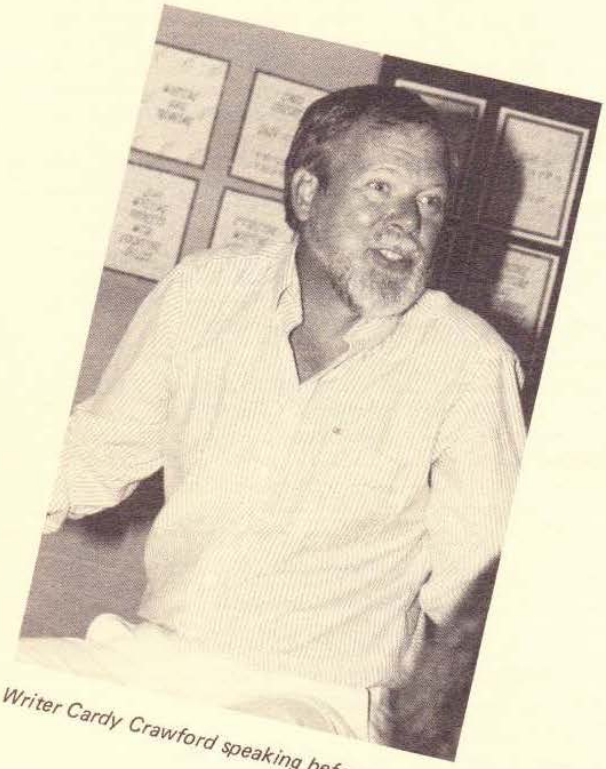
Jim MacCall, Mark Ruppel, and Brenda Hurley. To complement the "community of writers" even further were area poets Len Roberts, Rosalyn Pace, and Frank McQuilkin, and authors Charles "Cardy" Crawford and Olivier Dunrea. The visiting writers shared their work and their methods, led workshops, and inspired the young writers.

July 17, the final day of the session, was a Young Writer's Conference. Introduced by an exciting slide show called "Putting it Together," which was a "musical documentary" of the young writers' experiences during the two-week session, the conference was attended by all 131 students and their parents and friends. Each student group then went on stage to share something of their work. A book compiled with each writer's choice of his/her own favorite composition was displayed and distributed. The audience was naturally enthusiastic and proud of what had been accomplished in so shoart a time.

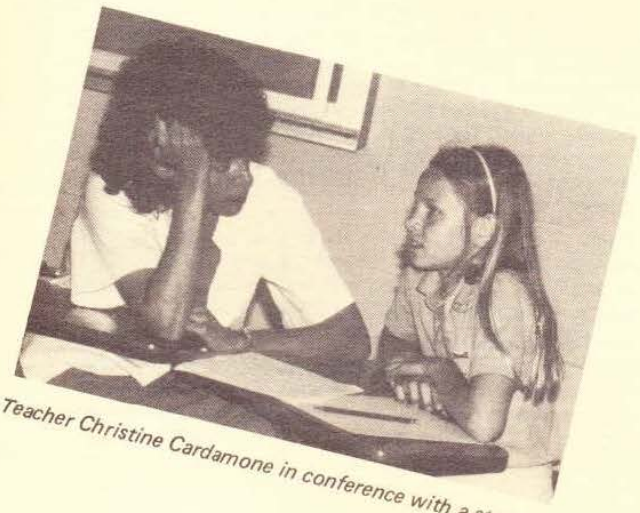
Gail Capaldi, one of the YWP teachers, produced the slide show and is revising it for publicity purposes. Some well deserved media attention came this year with features in *SKIP,* a community service magazine for the Main Line, the *Coatesville Record* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer.*



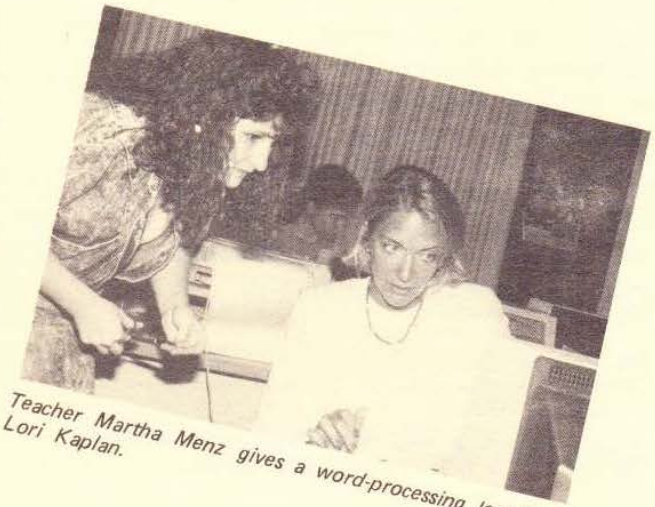
Teacher Guy MacCloskey with a group of younger students.



Writer Cardy Crawford speaking before a group.



Teacher Christine Cardamone in conference with a student.



Teacher Martha Menz gives a word-processing lesson to Lori Kaplan.

A Constructivist View of the Writing Process (Continued)

After sharing his first draft with the class, a student asks him about getting a license for clamming. Because he is unsure of the answer, he decides to investigate by writing to the Chamber of Commerce of his shore community. Another student asks whether there is a "best" season for clamming. The writer must now research this answer by calling the man who rents his family their boat.

He must solve many problems as he revises and edits. For example, he must consider his audience as he writes about the pathetically sad look on his dog's face when they left him home to go clamming. He anticipates what his peers may need to hear in order to picture this in their minds. So he must predict what wording is appropriate to describe this scene. He must decide how to conclude this story to leave his readers satisfied. Of course, he must make many decisions as he edits to prepare for publication. Proper punctuation and paragraphing must be available to his readers to give structure to his ideas. Also, words must be spelled correctly to readers will know what he intends to say.

As he drafts, revises, confers, and edits, the writer solves problems posed by content and mechanics. Investigating, researching, hypothesizing, predicting, anticipating and inventing are common behaviors in this process. As a result, the writer creates new solutions to problems, and new ways of seeing the world. Through this active, "organic" process, the writer "invents" new ways to understand his world as he tries to "make sense of his experiences."

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[1]Catherine Fosnot, "Curriculum: A Dance of Construction", *The Constructivist Newsletter,* 2 (1986).
[2]Fosnot, p. 4.
[3]Fosnot, p. 4.

★★★★★★

DIVEST

by Barbara J. Marshall

Proud Zulu warriors-king of the veld

green cards, curfew, prisoners of the baas

Wipe your feet with goat entrails—
Quell the fighting spirit

homelands, whiteonly, coloredherethere

Night comes, recant the stories of old: Chaka, Noliwe/Zulu Nation

policemen, dogs: school dismissed

Red day funeral, fighter's burial

hot, fetid breath, cool ebony night

capetown, soweto, johannesburg

Nala: The beast with red spots and white spots

apartheid, forwhitesonly, afrikaners, natalafricanlandownerassociation

Our blood is infected with the germ: FREEDOM!!!

southafrica, SOUTHafrica, south AFRICA,
SOUTH AFRICA!!!

Weavers begin
Cast the thread of our future
The tapestry is OURS!!!

Barbara Marshall, a 1982 PAWP Fellow, teaches at the Forrest School in the Philadelphia School District.

A PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT TALKS ABOUT THE WRITING PROGRAM IN HIS DISTRICT

During the annual Reading/Language Arts Exhibit in Philadelphia's District #1 the editor of this publication had a chance to interview Walter J. Scriven, Superintendent of the District. The interview follows:

Cecelia Evans: Mr. Scriven, you have seen the "profusion of writing" displayed during the annual Language Arts Exhibit. What are some of your thoughts regarding the Writing Program in the District?

Scriven: I am impressed with the quantity and quality of the writing that is visible throughout the District, not only during the Language Arts Exhibit but throughout the school years. It is truly overwhelming!

Evans: To what do you ascribe this wide emphasis on writing?

Scriven: I ascribe this emphasis to many factors: dedicated teachers and leaders who are in tune with the needs of students in our District and also those of students over the country. Additionally, I have learned that since 1981, many of our teachers have been influenced by Fellows of the Pennsylvania Writing Project. The collaborative efforts of these leaders in involving their peers in the implementation of the process approach to writing has certainly been exemplary. In helping teachers to minimize their fears about writing, the students have benefitted and they are becoming more and more fluent. We are proud of this leadership these Fellows have provided for other groups such as the Philadelphia Alliance for Teaching the Humanities in the Schools (PATHS).

Evans: What predictions would you make for the Writing Program in your district as we approach the 90's?

Scriven: From the plans that I have viewed with our English/Language Arts leaders I predict a wider participation of our teachers and pupils in improving their writing for purposes of publishing. I have seen some of the writings of our pupils in your *Newsletter.* This is an excellent way to motivate our pupils to sharpen their skills in writing; children like adults need to see what they have written published. We have gone through and emphasized the prewriting, drafting, and revision steps of the writing process; now we are going to emphasize proofreading, editing and publishing. We are headed toward being a District known for writing and appreciating good writing. I further foresee the writings displayed so widely that our Language Arts Exhibit will spread out from one location to many locations.

Evans: Mr. Scriven, I thank you for your time and thoughts on your District Writing Program. I sense excitement and commitment from you and that will certainly play a great part in helping your predictions become a reality.

PAWPers who have contributed to the development of the Writing Program in the District are: Mary Ellen Costello '84, Cecelia Evans '81, Judy Fisher '82, Faith Green '84, Cynthia Jenkins '82, Grace Linkmeyer '84, James Mann '84, and Allie Mulvihill '81.

★★★★★★

WRITINGS FROM DISTRICT #1 SCHOOLS

The Spring 1987 issue of the *Newsletter* featured writings collected by Mary Ellen Costello and Cecilia Evans as they "made their rounds" through some of Philadelphia's District #1 schools. Additional pieces follow.

After reading to the following classes Dr. Seuss' "And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street", each class wrote its own version of an imaginary walk to school.

"AND TO THINK THAT I SAW IT ON LEMON STREET"

When I leave home and walk to school,
I always remember to be careful as a rule.
Today I saw a regular dog.
It was a little bigger than a hog.
Now that is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Lemon Street.

What if this dog croaked like a frog,
After it walked through a blue fog.
Now a dog with an elephant's nose would be queer.
Especially if it cried a red tear.
A Limousine should carry this fine beast,
While he's eating a huge turkey feast.
His company would be a two legged cat,
Who would be eating with a bat with a blue hat.
Now that is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Lemon Street.

I ran through the school door,
And fell on my classroom floor.
I went up to my teacher to tell what I've seen,
But all that I said was, "I saw a dog that was mean."

Room 221
Daroff School
2nd Grade Class Poem
Grace Linkmeyer, Teacher and 1984 PAWP Fellow

"AND TO THINK THAT I SAW IT ON MERRY STREET"

On my way to school I saw something great,
But I was chased by boys and came in late.
I saw a squirrel that was just plain.
I'll make him old and using a cane.
Now that is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Merry Street.

I'll have it take a bus ride
While tieing it's shoe inside.
The bus driver will be a fine young squirrel,
Who will have a red tail and be named Earl.
An orchestra playing in the back seats would be nice.
Especially if the violin players were two fat mice.
Now that is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Merry Street.

I ran into school to tell everyone.
They may not believe, but I had fun.
I tried to tell the teacher something great,
But all she said to me was that I'm late.

Room 218
Daroff School
2nd Grade Class Poem
Grace Linkmeyer

"AND TO THINK THAT I SAW IT ON FUNNY STREET"

When I walk to school I look to see,
If the world looks very free.
But all that I saw is a plain car go by,
And a quiet little girl eating a pie.
Now I'll change the car to red, black, and blue.
I think this car will look nice and new.
That is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Funny Street.

Now a fine car like this needs a monkey to drive.
A singing monkey will make the car come alive.
A great car like this needs a big trailer
With an elephant juggler and a sailor.
Now I'll change the car into an airplane,
Which will fly through a candy cane rain.
That is a story that no one can beat,
When I say that I saw it on Funny Street.

I ran into school to tell the teacher about
All the things that I saw with a shout.
I was ready to tell the teacher about my sights,
But all I said that I saw was a plain car with lights.

Room 117
Daroff School
Grade 2-3 Class Poem
Grace Linkmeyer

THE SMOKE MONSTER

The smoke monster kills people. I hate the smoke monster because it gets people's lungs black. He gets people's teeth yellow. I hope the smoke monster dies because he kills lots of people. I hope my mom stops smoking.

Duwon Barnes
3rd Grade
Belmont School
Mrs. Carole Statham, Teacher

THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution was originally conceived by James Madison. The completed draft was written at Independence Hall in Philadelphia by Governor Morris, Alexander Hamilton, Rufus King, William Samuel Johnson, and James Madison. It explains the rights people have. It also explains the laws of the United States.

There were 55 delegates at the Constitutional Convention and 39 of them signed the final document. The Constitution provides that a president should be elected every four years. The first election was held in 1789 and the first President was George Washington. He received every vote.

George Washington was chosen chairman or presiding officer of the Convention. At last the new plan of government was finished. It was called the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution was signed in May of 1787.

Today, we celebrate the 200th birthday of the Constitution. The theme is "We the People". I am glad we have the Constitution because if we didn't we would not have the protection we have today.

Shanita Ray
Room 310, Grade 6
Locke Elementary School
Donald Peirce, Teacher

THE SONG I CHOOSE

When I turn on the radio I like to hear songs that are encouraging, songs that have messages, songs that you can get down to.

"The Greatest Love of All" – that is a very encouraging song by Whitney Houston. She has a beautiful voice.

But there is one thing I disagree with. In the song when she says, "People need someone to look up to. I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs." I look up to God and HE has fulfilled my needs.

I wish one day Whitney Houston and I will come face to face. That will be an exciting day. Until then, I'll just listen to her songs.

Maurice Graves
Edwin Forrest–Dist. 8
Grade 5
Mrs. Barbara Marshall, Teacher

(Continued on next page)

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO VOTE

Are you registered to vote? Many people who are eligible to vote do not even bother to come out. Less than half the people who were eligible to vote in the last presidential election did not fill their responsibility. They are giving up one of their most valuable rights. Voting is so important, because it gives you a chance to express your opinion on certain issues and candidates.

When you go to the polls to vote you can always feel secure that no one else will know your choice. The voting machine provides an absolute secret ballot.

Many years ago women were not allowed to vote, because they were regarded as inferior. It was a man's world, and women were to be homemakers.

Women and Blacks should especially take advantage of the right to vote because so many people struggled long and hard for their cause. In 1869 the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution made Negroes free to vote after many years of being deprived of this right.

After the Fifteenth Amendment was passed, slaves were free to vote, but not the women of America. In that same year the National Women's Sufferage Association was founded. Susan B. Anthony worked with many women who were fighting for their rights such as: Carrie Chapman Catt, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, and others. These women were brave and were arrested time after time for trying to cast ballots in elections that were only open to men. By 1920 women did get the right to vote.

We should all be proud of the gallant women and Black activists who gave us this right. Show them that we appreciate their struggle by voting!

Get involved with politics! Find out what is happening in your community! Get to know the faces of the candidates and the important issues!

Jolita Smith
Grade 6
B. B. Comegys School
Faith Green, Reading Teacher, PAWP 1984

★★★★★★

MID-ATLANTIC NWP RETREAT REPORTED A SUCCESS

Thirty-two "writing project types" from 12 of the 16 NWP sites in the Mid-Atlantic region met May 18-20, 1987 in Cape May, New Jersey for a directors' retreat. Five Pennsylvania sites were represented, including PAWP, which sent Bob McCann, Jolene Borgese, and Bob Weiss. The purposes of the retreat were to share ideas about project leadership, to establish linkages among regional sites, and to provide networking and training for project people who might not be able to attend the annual directors' meetings held at the NCTE convention.

The agenda, which included writing and response groups, focused on the NWP model for summer institutes and how much or little it can be modified, on how much writing to assign in an institute and what kind, on our teacher-centerdness, on in-service program development, on how we relate to and offer more than "writing process" advocates, and on a variety of other large issues. The group's energies were very positive – people found the retreat discussions to be "very informative and diverse," so that "every conversation was valuable."

All participants responding to the evaluation survey liked the Cape May setting and the retreat in general. Further networking was encouraged and has begun.

REVIEW: Rhetoric and Composition (2nd ed.)

Ed. Richard Graves, Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1984

Rhetoric and Composition, A Sourcebook for Teachers and Writers, edited by Richard L. Graves addresses all teachers of writing. In this second edition, an updated version of the original published in the 1970's, Graves divides the essays into six sections describing abstract concepts, principles, techniques, and implementation of ideas in the teaching of writing. A few of the highlights may give an impression of the extensive content.

In the introduction James McCrimmon describes writing, not as a means of expressing, but of discovering or knowing. He suggests pre-writing be used as a means to clear the mind as well as a preparation to write. Charles Cooper, describing "A Writing Program Certain to Fail," criticizes the traditional writing program by stating that students write almost always to the teacher as examiner; the teacher as a reader who always knows more than they know. Students write to display command of new facts or concepts or to offer proof of completion of a reading task. Only rarely do they write to learn.

In the section on "Motivating Student Writing," Ken Macrorie's essay "To Be Read" lists thirty practical ideas including suggestions for training students to evaluate peers, to write to different audiences, and to keep journals. Donald Murray gives a good definition of the writing process which promotes increased teacher sensitivity to the student.

In a section on "The Sentence," several authors suggest helpful exercises in open sentence combining, repetition of a message using a variety of grammatical forms, and creation of symmetrical form within the sentence. Valerie Krishna in "Syntax of Error" gives tips on teaching students what to do, thus avoiding the common litany of what not to do.

In the section on paragraphs, A. L. Becker describes two patterns for expository paragraphs and Frank D'Angelo presents a good analysis of a classification paradigm which teachers could use in a classroom composition lesson.

In the section on pedagogy, the editor negates the idea that "young people already know how to write, and that the teacher's primary job is to make assignments."

As a teacher of high school composition, I found the essays giving me a renewed sense of direction to reinforce my own past discoveries and techniques as well as a new confidence to dismiss the ineffective traditional methods which emphasize the product rather than the process. I'll easily create lessons based on many of the ideas and principles and adapt the practical ideas to my own use.

I would hope to avoid the pitfall of believing a totally new solution to the problems of teaching composition has been discovered since the 1970's, and that I could thus disregard all of my past practices. Only a few authors expressed such a pretentious attitude. In fact, the editor avoided giving this impression by including several articles written by or about pre-20th century authors. Quintillian in an essay written in 93 A.D. advocates almost every idea in the "new wave" of "process, not product." Edward Corbett, who researched the teaching of composition in 16th and 17th Century English schools, examines the advantages of the traditional memorizing, translating, and paraphrasing as writing aids and adapts them to the modern classroom. Gayle Price, in her "Case for a Modern Commonplace Book," advocates keeping a notebook (a common place) for a personal collection of ideas, drafts, brainstorming sessions, and reaction to external events as every Tudor schoolboy did to provide a source for his own compositions. Teaching of composition must be revised and renewed, but the valuable process must not be vulnerable

to criticism from sceptics by inviting misinterpretation. For instance, teachers must take care when advocating the non-editing approach to evaluation that they do not convey the idea that they will ignore all usage, spelling, or knowledge of grammatical structure. The following quotation from the book's final section, "New Perspectives, New Horizons" exemplifies the balanced approach of the editor in retaining valuable past practices while adding new concepts.

> Within the new paradigm, old terms, concepts, and experiments fall into new relationships one with the other. (Thomas S. Kuhn)

Reviewed by Marilyn Sandberg, a 1986 PAWP Fellow, and an English Teacher in the Woodbury Public Schools (N.J.).

★★★★★★

DISCOVERING HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT AT LAST

by Cheryl K. Cobb

Language means what people agree it means; and though I knew that, I didn't realize that I had lost the sense of some of the basic language of my former field of teaching English until neither this course nor Paul Diederich's book turned out to be what I expected. As I saw it, "Holistic Assessment of Writing" promised to teach me new and better ways to "grade" papers, meaning in my private lexicon, to "correct" and "guide" students' writing progress. That "assess" should mean "rank" or "score" did not occur to me. Similarly, a year ago when I bought Diederich's *Measuring Growth in English* from the NCTE booklist, I expected the "measuring" to be more efficient ways to do the same old thing that had made student papers the burden they were fifteen years ago. What else could it mean? Testing writing progress in a broader context than the individual class was simply never done then. Fifteen years ago we did what we could, held fast to the conviction that hard work must accomplish something, and believed without much hope of proving it that we were making a difference.

So at first I was disappointed. I read a few pages of Diederich's book, then put it away until it showed up on the reading list for the Holistic Assessment workshop in June. I listened with interest and a little astonishment to the lessons on general holistic assessment, believing the statistics, believing that the system was reliable as well as fast, but not seeing—that first day—what relevance the concept could have for me if I should find myself again in the classroom.

The first inroads into my attitude came from the same idea expressed by both professor and book. Diederich dislikes grades and is convinced that classwork is immensely over-evaluated, that it is *destructive* rather than helpful to mark every error and fill the classbook with grade after grade, "like squirrels gathering nuts." Bob Weiss in turn asserted that it is better not to give grades—but, since we must, here is a better way to do it. Both declarations had the ring of a truth long suspected but never before uttered aloud. I choose to believe that my lack of perception sprang more from the want of any suitable alternative than from cowardice in the face of formidable tradition.

The necessary suitable alternatives showed themselves during the second day of class, beginning with the introduction of Diederich's Analytic Scale. Here was a way to provide more windows into the holistic score, so that student and teacher might know what particular skills had limited the paper's success. This, we were told, was "formative" evaluation, leading growth as well as measuring it. We received a sample evaluation form, adapted from Diederich, which could be the cover sheet to students' writing assignments. In addition to the points awarded in seven categories of performance, the sheet asks for good points and weak points, then advises the student what needs working on most. This was what I had hoped to find. Then yet another method, "primary trait" assessment, addressed the same need, similarly evaluating for particular skills while ignoring or giving secondary importance to others. These formative assessment methods clearly take more time than general impression assessment, but take *less* time than the old, "atomistic" methods of marking every error until the paper bled and the student gave up hope of ever straightening such a mess.

Diederich's reported results in several junior high schools suggest what major changes in the daily tasks become possible when accurate periodic tests of writing skills are used. What interests me is the possibility that such tests could provide a large, if not total, component of the marking period grade in writing, enabling the teacher to eliminate letter or numerical scores on individual assignments. The writing papers could be read for strengths and weaknesses; further work could correct those weaknesses; both students and teacher could see the writing to be "practice," like rehearsal—not the concert, not the test. In this way, minimal grading and maximum practice improve the psychological climate of the classroom. Just as virtuous conduct isn't taught best by scolding but by praising good behavior, lacerating a student's writing unmercifully does not encourage better work. Removing the grading from the daily work enables the teacher, as Diederich says, to be "the student's friend and guide, never his taskmaster and judge." It all makes wonderful sense to me.

The old atomistic way of grading, the only way I knew those years ago, made every writing assignment a test, every performance intimidating. What was as bad, if every page was to be fine-tooth-combed, the immense time demands on the teacher with 150 writing students made the number of writing assignments given necessarily fewer. There was less practice and more anxiety for the student, more frustration and probable burn-out for the teacher.

Of course, the furor this other sort of program would create among the students and parents, not to mention the English staff, can be imagined. Trained for generations to collect grades like Diederich's provident squirrels, people would need to be taught the methods and merits of the system before it could have a hope of a fair trial. In my mind it would be a worthy battle. The old way had little more than tradition to recommend it.

I am delighted to learn how much has happened in the field of teaching English since I left. Fifteen years ago, when I read everything I could about teaching English, all I had were textbooks, issues of *The English Journal* and *Hooked on Books*. Last year when I signed up again for *The English Journal,* I was bombarded with booklists. The importance of writing skills to the success of students in most if not all areas of study seems finally to have become generally accepted. Writing has always been an essential skill, a close cousin to thinking. At last it's getting the attention it requires.

★★★★★★

TWO ALL-DAY CONFERENCES PLANNED FOR PAWP FELLOWS

Attention: PAWP Fellows! Mark Wednesday, Oct. 28, 1987 and Wednesday, March 16, 1988 on your calendars.

On Oct. 28, PAWP Fellows and administrators from their school districts will be invited to attend a full day Teacher-Consultant Conference. Participants may choose from a variety of workshops on new research in teaching writing, upcoming programs, making in-service presentations, coordinating PAWP courses, and other topics of interest. More information will be mailed to all Fellows.

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 area. The *Newsletter* features articles on the teaching of writing, information about writing courses, conferences, project meetings, reviews of books, and events relating to the writing process.

We seek articles from all teachers of writing at all grade levels and from anyone else interested in writing and the teaching of writing. All articles will be considered. Please send all articles, questions, and comments to: Robert H. Weiss, Pennsylvania Writing Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

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