PAWP COURSES THRIVE

Computers and Writing
by Bob McCann

This past fall, West Chester Area School District continued its practice of offering no-cost Writing Project courses to its teachers. When twenty-six teachers enrolled in Computers and Writing, we decided to split the class to allow more individualized attention. Bob McCann and Mark Ruppel each coordinated a "section" of the class which met at the East and Henderson High School Writing Centers. These are Apple Computer Laboratories.

Guidance, business, Science, Reading, Music, English—many teachers came together to write about themselves, to learn the jargon and to use the technology. For many of the teachers it was their initial foray into the world of word processing. We worked with both FrEDWriter and AppleWorks, requiring that all work for the course be completed on a word processor.

Elementary teachers were at a marked disadvantage here, in that a number of their schools do not yet have computer labs. Still, because West Chester schools provide evening hours for the public in the high school computer labs, equipment was available to those not having access to computers or printers in their workplace.

Middle and high school teachers, feeling the tug of underused computer equipment in their schools, are more confident in bringing their students to the Writing Centers because now they have written all their own course papers using word processors. Also, since West Chester is in its first year of a technology re-assessment, teachers in the course are now better able to return to their schools asking the right questions and asserting their computer needs so they may incorporate computers into their writing curriculum.

Rich Joseph and Karen Klingerman, fresh from the 1988 Summer Institute, delighted the participants with presentations on using telecommunications, creativity tools, and AppleWorks. Others who brought their computer medicine shows to West Chester are Judy Yunginger, Brenda Hurley, Marge Joire and Chris Kelly. (If your students have been

SPRING
by Marilyn Sandberg

The god of nice days was indeed perverse, mercurial and easily bored. As he hovered in the heavens above the sand castle towers of the Apthorp Hotel, he smiled down on New York's West Side, not benignly, but with mischief and perhaps a touch of malice. It was Spring, and with his pantheon of crazies he set the universe of upper Broadway spinning.

Most of the regulars harmed no one, these minor deities of Broadway. They emerged from their transient hotels on the first nice day in spring just as surely as Persephone returned from the land of the dead. They existed almost unnoticed amidst the shoppers, loiterers, and mothers busy with their children. New York tolerates its own. The pen lady, a wizened black woman whose face looked like the unwrapped mummy in the Natural History Museum, appeared on 94th Street. She fashioned her hat, a spring bonnet that never paraded on Fifth Avenue, from twelve multicolored ball point pens. Six pens clipped to the bows of her sunglasses covered each ear. With a square of aluminum foil resting on top of her head, she completed her Egyptian helmet which she wore proudly as the foil reflected the first warm rays of sun. She stood in front of Mancy's Drug Store wearing her hat and speaking in tongues: the oracle of 94th Street revealed secrets to all who could understand.

But not everyone reflected the wisdom of the ages, some were satyrs, mischievous tricksters. Like the suspicious policeman dressed in full uniform guiding pedestrians across 99th Street. For a moment, the walkers of Broadway were taken in until the realization came to them. Who helps anybody across the street? Take a look at this guy. And indeed—although his uniform was official, his shoes official, even his gun official, it was the badges that tipped us off. They were official, but there were ten of them. Too many. This was an ersatz Charon guiding his subjects to God knows where. Better to take our chances with the traffic than keep company with a street crazy—his badges

1

BASAL READERS AND THE STATE OF AMERICAN READING INSTRUCTION: A CALL FOR ACTION

A Statement of the Commission on Reading,
National Council of Teachers of English

The Problem

As various national studies suggest, the problem of illiteracy, semi-literacy, and aliteracy in the United States appears to be growing, due at least in part to escalating standards of literacy in the workplace and in the civic area. And at a time when our information-age society demands increased literacy from all citizens, reading instruction is locked into a technology that is more than half a century out-of-date.

Basals: Part of the Problem

There is a significant gap between how reading is *learned and how it is taught and assessed in the vast* majority of our classrooms today. This gap is perpetuated by the basal reading series that dominate reading instruction in roughly 90 percent of the elementary classrooms in the United States. Such textbook series are often viewed as complete systems for teaching reading, for they include not only a graded series of books for the students to read but teachers' manuals telling teachers what and how to teach, workbooks and dittos for students to complete, sets of tests to assess reading skills, and often various supplementary aids. Because of their comprehensiveness, basal reading systems leave very little room for other kinds of reading activities in the schools where they have been adopted. This is all the more unfortunate because current theory and research strongly support such conclusion as the following:

• Basal reading series typically reflect and promote the misconception that reading is necessarily learned from smaller to larger parts.

• The sequencing of skills in a basal reading series exists not because this is how children learn to read but simply because of the logistics of developing a series of lessons that can be taught sequentially, day after day, week after week, year after year.

• Students are typically tested for ability to master the bits and pieces of reading, such as phonics and other work-identification skills, and even comprehension skills. However, there is no evidence that mastering such skills in isolation guarantees the ability to comprehend connected text, or that students who cannot give evidence of such skills in isolation are necessarily unable to comprehend connected text.

• Thus for many if not most children, the typical basal reading series may actually make learning to read more difficult than it needs to be.

• So much time is typically taken up by "instructional" activities (including activities with workbooks and skill sheets) that only a very slight amount of time is spent in actual reading—despite the overwhelming evidence that extensive reading and writing are crucial to the development of literacy.

• Basal reading series typically reflect and promote the widespread misconception that the ability to verbalize an answer, orally or in writing, is evidence of understanding and learning. Thus even students who appear to be learning from a basal reading series are being severely shortchanged, for they are being systematically encouraged not to think.

• Basal reading series typically tell teachers exactly what they should do and say while teaching a lesson, thus depriving teachers of the responsibility and authority to make informed professional judgements.

• "Going through the paces" thus becomes the measure of both teaching and learning. The teachers are assumed to have taught well if and only if they have taught the lesson. Students are assumed to have learned if and only if they have "given" the right answers.

• *The result of such misconceptions about learning and such rigid control of teacher and student activities is to discourage both teachers and students from thinking, and particularly to discourage students from developing and exercising critical literacy and thinking skills needed to participate fully in a technologically advanced democratic society.*

Recommended Actions for Local Administrators and for Policymakers

For Local Administrators:

• Provide continual district inservice for teachers to help them develop a solid understanding of how people read and how children learn to read and how reading is related to writing and learning to write.

• Provide time and opportunities for teachers to mentor with peers who are trying innovative materials and strategies.

• Support teachers attending local, regional, state, and national conferences to improve their knowledge base, and support continued college coursework for teachers in reading and writing.

• Allow/encourage teachers to use alternatives to basal readers or to use basal readers flexibly, eliminating whatever their professional judgement deems unnecessary or inappropriate; for example,

—encourage innovation at a school level, offering teachers a choice of basals, portions of basals, or no basal, using assessment measures that match their choice
—discuss at a school level which portion of the basal need not be used, and use the time saved for reading and discussion of real literature
—provide time for teachers to work with one another to set up innovative programs.

- Give teachers the opportunity to demonstrate that standardized test scores will generally not be adversely affected by using alternatives to basal readers, and may in fact be enhanced.

- Provide incentives for teachers to develop and use alternative methods of reading assessment, based upon their understanding of reading and learning to read.

- Allow/encourage teachers to take charge of their own reading instruction, according to their informed professional judgement.

For Policymakers:

- Change laws and regulations that favor or require use of basal, so that
  –state funds may be used for non-basal materials
  –schools may use programs that do not have traditional basal components
  –teachers cannot be forced to use material they find professionally objectionable.

- Provide incentive to local districts to experiment with alternatives to basals, by
  –developing state-level policies that permit districts to use alternatives to basals
  –changing teacher education and certification requirements so as to require teachers to demonstrate an understanding of how people read, of how children learn to read, and of ways of developing a reading curriculum without as well as with basals
  –mandating periodic curriculum review and revision based upon current theory and research as to how people read and how children learn to read.
  –developing, or encouraging local districts to develop, alternative means of testing and assessment that are supported by current theory and research in how people read and how children learn to read
  –funding experimental programs, research, and methods of assessment based upon current theory and research on reading and learning to read.

Prepared for the Commission on Reading of the National Council of English by the present and immediate past directors of the Commission, Connie Weaver and Dorothy Watson, and based on the Report Card on Basal Readers, written by Kenneth S. Goodman, Patrick Shannon, Yvonne Freeman, and Sharon Murphy and published by Richard C. Owen, Publishers, 1988. See also the Commission on Reading's Position Statement "Report on Basal Reader's"; one copy is free upon request from the National Council of Teachers of English if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is sent with the request. Write NCTE, 111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS...

The idea of putting together the SPRING Newsletter did little to inspire our chilled minds and pens as we sat stalled in "prewrite" staring blankly into snow-covered space. but, as we worked, sitting and sorting, reading and reading, we came across general items that reminded us that indeed spring (and the end of yet another school year) is just around the corner.

Marilyn Sandberg's charming celebration of spring, aptly entitled Spring, was one of them. So was the information regarding SUMMER COURSES.

We hope that they and this Newsletter do the same for you. In fact by the time all of you receive this Newsletter, spring will officially have sprung.

In addition to helping get everyone into the spirit of spring we included several articles that deal with reading: Basal Readers and The State of American Reading Instruction: A Call for Action, Beyond the Basal, and the book review on What's Whole About Whole Language.

Many of us have been struck by similarities between "writing processes" and "reading processes" that we have discovered in our own educational practice. It is therefore fitting that this publication reflect current ideas in the broader field of language teaching and learning.

Current research on language reflects these parallels as well. Over the past several years, reading like writing has seen a shift in the paradigm from a narrower to a broader view of the contexts in which children become literate (PCRP being a perfect use in point).

It seems high time that the artificial barriers between reading and writing be removed. These two processes are inextricably bound and as such reading enhances reading and reading enhances writing. An awareness of the similarities and connections between reading and writing would seem to serve all of us well.

This maturing awareness may well become a theme for the 1989 year, which marks the tenth year of the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Quite a celebration is planned for this anniversary of a decade of teachers and students writing.

As always, we welcome your questions, comments, reflections, words of wisdom, etc., and look forward to hearing from you.

In closing we would like to extend special thanks to Mickey Bolmer, from the New York Writing Project and West Chester University, for joining us as Assistant Editor and helping to get this issue to the press.

Gail Capaldi and Lois Snyder
Co-Editors

BEYOND THE BASAL

In an attempt to accommodate schools and teachers who wish to depart underline periodically from the basal reader and to provide more balance to current reading programs the Delaware County Reading Council has recently developed 18 literature units of whole language activities based upon well-known children's books. In response to the current trend toward literature based reading programs and the need for pupils to spend more time with authentic and extended texts, the Reading Council designed some model units, in order to train classroom teachers to develop other literature units of activity.

Seventy-five teachers participated in two full days of workshops at which Reading Council members reviewed the current research, and teachers then used the finding to develop whole language activities related to the themes and major focuses of each book. Dr. Nicholas A. Spennato, President, Delaware County Reading Council and project director said, "The workshops probably did more to change teachers' thinking about connecting reading–writing–discussion–thinking than any formal inservice program could have done. As a result of the development of the literature units, kids will now read, discuss, write and reflect about books which will lead them to other books of the same ilk."

The units (see list of titles and suggested grade levels below) are now available at no cost to the Delaware County Schools. Delaware County schools borrow a literature unit from the Council, copy it and return the original. Each unit contains several themes or focuses related to the book such as survival, interdependence, perseverance, character development, plot analysis, literary devices (simile, metaphor, idiom, ect.) which are developed in before, during and after reading activities. Teachers select one or more of the themes or focuses based on class need and pupil/teacher preference.

Other features of the units include special vocabulary presented in context, multi-level questions, other books by the author and other books related by theme, and blackline masters related to the reading, writing and discussion activities.

Schools outside Delaware County may obtain units ($17.50/unit) by writing to Dr. Nicholas A. Spennato, Delaware County Intermediate Unit, 6th and Olive Streets, Media, PA 19063 or by calling him at (215) 565-4880.

Title	Grade Level	Unit #
*Lemonade Trick	3-4	1
*Sign of the Beaver	5	2
*Tuck Everlasting	6	3
*Whipping Boy	4	3
*Little House	2	5
*Sylvester and the Magic Pepper	3	6
Leo the Late Bloomer	2	7
Corduroy	2	8
Where the Lilies Bloom	6-7	9
*Stone Fox	4	10
Fat Men From Space	4	11
*Trumpet of the Swan	5-6	12
Cat Walk	3-4	13
One Eyed Cat	6	14
Mixed Up Files of Basil E. Frankweiler	6	15
A Crocodile's Tale	2	16
Sarah Plain & Tall		17
Wish Giver		18

*   Completed and ready for distribution

• •
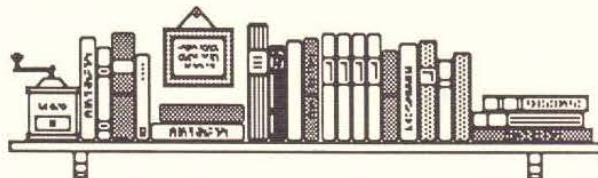
BOOK REVIEW: WHAT'S WHOLE ABOUT WHOLE LANGUAGE
by Sue Wright

Kenneth Goodman's 79-page book is an overview of holistic language and teaching holistically. Goodman defines the concept of whole language, discusses examples of whole language classes, and exhorts teachers to become whole language teachers.

Kenneth Goodman is known (with his wife Yetta Goodman and Carolyn Burke) for miscue analysis—a diagnostic tool for evaluating the types of digressions from printed text when a student reads aloud. He has long been a proponent of more holistic reading evaluation and instruction.

To answer the title question, Goodman says "whole language learning builds around whole learners learning whole language in whole situations." Goodman develops a useful metaphor for thinking about whole language teaching: "Language is inclusive and it is indivisible. Whole language teaching recognizes that words, sounds, letters, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs are like the molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles of things. Their characteristics can be studied but the whole is always more than the sum of the parts. If you reduce a wooden table to the elements which compose it, its carbon, hydrogen and some other bits may be studied and so help us understand how a table can be, but we don't build a table with them."

For someone new to the concept of whole language, this book stimulates questions. For those already converted, the discussion of whole language curriculum implementation is illuminating. Unfortunately, there is no bibliography.

Sue Wright (PAWP '84) is a reading specialist in the Philadelphia School District.

PAWP COURSES THRIVE
Computers and Writing
(continued from front page)

working with computers and you could help with future computer presentation, please let the Writing Project office know.)

We experimented in one of the classes with the following changes:

1. A critical-thinking paper was required based on a computer problem or "ethics" issue (e.g., viruses, copying of software), an educational issue (e.g., when to teach keyboarding) or a professional journal/magazine series review.

2. A brief software demonstration was included in lieu of one written review so that others would have a chance to see highly recommended software packages.

3. Twice students "published" their work for the group and received thoughtful, informal, written reactions from others in the class. Coordinators wrote responses to each student.

This last innovation was particularly well-received. Like all students, these teachers welcomed reactions, questions, comments, probes and praise for their writing.

From the course journals we learned that "I love this writing process. When I was in school we had no idea how to get started, revise, etc. I remember getting stuck on any piece I started because...it was expected to be finished the first time down. I always thought I was a bad, unimaginative writer. Now I think I have a chance anyhow."

Diane McManus, a music teacher, delighted us with her announcement that "To me the pre-writing is a new skill. The only prewriting I ever did was with note cards for major reports or papers...Except for typographical errors, I was taught to produce the finished product the first time through. Such ideas as lists, time lines, and guided imagery are exciting to me and very enjoyable." McManus describes how she used Judy Yunginger's guided imagery idea with her fifth grade "for our 'Witch's Gathering' from Macbeth. We studied the vocabulary list, learned pronunciation, and practiced the chant. We added mouth sounds, unpitched and pitched percussion, a pot and ladle, ingredients and black hats. Then I set the mood by the guided imagery and we performed the piece."

Another participant, Trish Wittig, described how her students "had just come in from recess...and they were getting a kick out of me having a panic attack because of the [disk drive not "saving" my work]. I was panic-stricken because it was due today. Finally...it saved. One good thing came out of all of this. One of my kids got the idea for a story. He is calling it 'The Murder of the Disk Drive.'"

Perhaps the nicest thing about having a course with participants from the same school system is that it allows the coordinators and the district greater flexibility in tailoring the course to the particular computer needs of that district. Also, it allows colleagues of a large district (700

teachers) who have virtually no other professional contact with each other, to see themselves as part of a team to help the same children.

• •

Holistic Assessment

For the ninth year, the two-day workshop on Holistic Assessment of Writing continues to interest teachers. In this short course, participants gain awareness of several types of large-scale assessment methods and how they can be applied to individual classrooms. Before teachers can do anything with holistic assessment, they of course have to learn it, and we at PAWP believe that the best way to learn something is through doing it. So by mid-morning our holistic assessment workshop has participants ranking and scoring samples of student writing, and comparing their assessments with others'. The workshop contains enough theory to merit graduate credit and enough practicality to keep up a steady audience of teachers year after year.

Bob Weiss offers this workshop annually, and teacher comments encourage him to continue:

"I have enjoyed this workshop tremendously. I am leaving with a great deal of information on holistic assessment that I must sort through and then put into application."

"I had no idea that there were so many different ways of scoring that are considered holistic."

"I now have a relatively quick way to evaluate my students' work. It was interesting to see the samples of student writing as I am usually locked in the primary grade level."

"I found the 'hands-on method' where the participants actively took part in scoring papers to be very effective. My confidence in scoring has increased during the last two days. The course was direct and to the point. It will be applicable to my classroom."

• •

Strategies for Teaching Writing

For nine years, "Strategies for Teaching Writing," the Pennsylvania Writing Project's first course, has been available for teachers, and during this time we have run it 66 times. (We really did not start counting until recently!) At an average of 18/class, that's almost 1200 teachers in and around the Delaware Valley who have—as their evaluations tell us—learned more about writing instruction than they had thought possible. This Spring we are offering nine such courses and three computers-and-writing courses to teachers in six counties, and in all of these our teacher-consultants are presenting their teaching ideas as

developed in or through their summer institute experience.

The "Strategies Course," as we call it, is our best framework for teaching teaching teachers and is as much a part of the National Writing Project model as an intensive five-week summer institute. For both sets of teachers involved in the course—presenters and audience—the sharing experience is crucial. Our presenters are not university theorists with all the right methods and supporting research; rather they are practitioners who inquire about and experiment with many methods, and who explore and create the supporting research. They are living answers to the questions posed by teacher audiences.

Here is a typical comment – this one by a secondary teacher – about one of our presenters in a Spring version of the "Strategies Course:"

"I think you did a wonderful job. I am not an English teacher and quite frankly I am tired of hearing about the glories of teaching expository writing. I was "taught" the expository methods and have no confidence in my writing ability...I really wish someone had used writing process when I was in school. I am very happy that you never backed down when questioned. I am also very glad my own kids go to your school district. I think you had some great ideas, and my students will love them. My students now love to freewrite, and they love to write..."

Responses like this and the following from a course in Northampton School District coordinated by Gail Capaldi, confirm our faith in the PAWP model and its teacher-consultants.

A third grade teacher: "I have gained insight into so many strategies to teach/use in my classroom. Thank you for the encouragement and motivation to write."

A special education teacher (K-4): "Though I feel a bit overwhelmed with information right now, I feel that once I have time to sort through it all and apply it, everything will fall into place. I will recommend this course highly to any teacher."

A reading specialist (1-4) teacher: Once again I have recharged my battery and am ready to go; it's been 6 years since I've taken a course and I'm especially pleased that I chose this one."

A principal: "Far more important, however, was my understanding of the work that needs to be done to develop a "writing across the curriculum effort" and of the support teachers will need in this significant task."

• •

Administering Writing and Language Programs

The third annual "Administering Writing and Language Arts Programs" workshop will be held from July 11-13, 1989. This workshop is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Writing Project and can be taken for one West Chester University graduate credit or for non-credit.

Educators who have found this course to be useful include elementary, middle school, and secondary principals and assistants, curriculum directors, language arts supervisors and coordinators, reading and writing specialists and superintendents and assistant superintendents.

During the three days, participants will learn about aspects and components of writing language arts programs, including theory, program management, and evaluation. To help transfer learning into practice in their districts or building, participants will have the opportunity to work with the institute staff in developing three-year action plans for successful program development, maintenance, and improvement.

Conducting the "Administering" workshop will be Ed Bureau, Karen Steinbrink, and Bob Weiss.

Ed is the Supervisor of Language Arts/Reading in the Springfield School District. Associated with PAWP since 1980 Ed has helped create, revise, and teach this workshop since 1987. Ed's doctoral study at the University of Pennsylvania focuses on how understanding change can lead to more effective reform of language programs. An upcoming NCTE book contains his chapter on computer-based writing programs.

Karen is Assistant Executive Director at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit responsible for Educational Services. Formerly the Special Projects and Curriculum Coordinator and Right to Read Director for the Lancaster/ Lebanon Intermediate Unit, Karen has also been a reading coordinator and classroom teacher. She has given workshops and presentations and served as a consultant for ASCD and PASCD, the National Staff Development Council, the IRA and KSRA, the Pennsylvania Educational Research Association, and Educational Testing Service about writing, reading, staff development, models of teaching, peer coaching, and leadership training.

Bob has been the Director of the Pennsylvania Area Writing Project since 1980, which has grown to include numerous institutes, inservice courses, youth writing programs, and expansion sites throughout Pennsylvania. A professor of English at West Chester University, Bob is the author of numerous articles and a textbook on writing instruction. With his assistance, many school districts have improved writing instruction and performance.

Following are some comments by former workshop participants:

"There is no doubt that our curriculum has been dramatically influenced by your outlook, materials, and training."

"As our students write more frequently and receive improved instruction, the quality of their writing is improving. Parents comment favorably on the writing program in our school."

"My action plan has worked...thank you for coaching me."

"This workshop has given shape to our staff development programs—an extensive theoretical base and exciting ways to buy in, to translate ideas into meaningful classroom practice."

"I now understand what's going on in the field."

SPRING

sparkling in the new spring sun. The rabbit man also returned to earth every spring. I first met this harbinger of sunshine on my way to the supermarket. He carried a black valise and a cane and wore a sun yellow button on the lapel of his black suit that said "Smile! Have a nice day!" Right away I knew to keep an eye on him. And I was right. As we entered the market he indeed was smiling, rather idiotically, but smiling as he chose his shopping cart and opened the baby seat with many careful shakes and adjustments followed by a few patronizing pats. The seat was ready, but I wondered for what. For the rabbit, that's what! As he unzipped the black valise, he pulled forth a stuffed purple and yellow Easter rabbit. And the earth was reborn until he placed the bunny in the baby seat and whacked him with his cane.

"Take that," he shouted, eyes turning to a glassy fixed glare and jaw firmly set. "That will teach you." He was beating up the Easter bunny! This was definitely not a regular god in charge of a regular rebirth of the world.

But there were Messiahs, admittedly not regular ones, in that neighborhood of Matzoh balls and Cuban take out. There were Messiahs. Did they rise from the dead or just newly appear? It doesn't matter. They were there. The self appointed saviours of mankind, the organizers of Broadway, the settlers of fights, the ones who kept the crowds back when a poor pedestrian, perhaps unguided by our Charon, was hit by a car.

"Get back. Give him room to breathe. You, call the police, and you get his mother."

Yes, we were always in the hands of the ones who took on the foibles and accidents of the world. These protectors appeared in the spring, reborn after the long winter when ice cream calls the faithful to flock to Baskin Robbins. As we mulled over the pink and green and yellow choices one fine spring day, the world seemed to explode in front of that store.

"What was that?" someone screamed after spotting a quickly falling object and hearing a crash.

"Everybody back. Back!" our leader commanded. Two minutes before he had been an ordinary ice cream customer like ourselves dwelling on not very cosmic questions such as should it have nuts or chocolate chips. But now adversity had transformed him. Suddenly he had majesty. He was a prince among men. We obeyed him as we huddled at the back of Baskin Robbins, no longer eyeing the candy colored array of ice creams, but hunched into frozen stillness.

"Stay back," our self-appointed leader ordered, his arms blocking the group against danger. He inched toward the open door at the front of the store past the pistachio and the mocha nut. This was dangerous. He and only he would go first. He crouched near the smiling ice cream cakes decorated for springtime birthday parties. Humpty Dumpty grinned at him as he crept into the open doorway. This man was definitely ready to give his life for mankind. No one of us would make a move to go out there.

"It's a T. V. set!" he screamed. "They threw it down from upstairs. They're having a fight up there," he shouted to his followers cowering in the back. The last few screams of anger from the former T.V. owners turned into muffled accusations punctuated by choking sobs.

"It's okay," he yelled to us. Apparently he was also a judge of human nature and knew it was now safe for us to resume our lives and with a magnanimous sweep of his arm motioned us all back into the street.

There were sounds of spring, not the chirping of birds of the rustling of breezes through the new green leaves, but the plaintive wailing of a saxophone. The saxophone would sit on the hood of a car and play tunes never known to man – poignant sounds form other worlds with no known rhythm – melodies never heard except on some damp melancholy New York evening in April when those tuneless sounds, that sad foghorn voice would herald another rebirth of the earth.

"It's the saxophone man," we'd say with amazement, always astounded at the rhythms of the universe. The Florentines had led white oxen through the streets – oxen decorated with garlands of flowers and gilded horns. The rest of the world had lilies and daffodils, Easter baskets and the dove descending. But we had the saxophone man.

Marilyn Sandberg (PAWP '86), a frequent contributor to the UNDERLINE NEWSLETTER, teaches high school English in Woodbury, New Jersey.
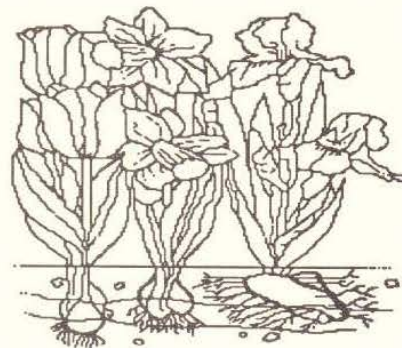
FAIRY TALES DO COME TRUE
by Alice H. Kurtas

Once upon a time in the land of YASSE (which is not too far from here) there lived a group of people ruled by the sometimes irrational King Principal. Now this king fancied himself to be the new Charlemagne and, like his great forebear, he was dedicated to the education of his people. However, he had a very bad habit of wanting to dictate EVERY detail of that educational process. Sometimes this got him into quite a bit of trouble as well as made for serious unrest among his subjects.

One of the groups which really bristled with every order handed down by King Principal was a significant part of the educational elite in YASSE. These individuals were know as the SREHCAETS, and they became especially incensed when the King ordered that students in the royal schools would be obliged to engage in some type of writing activity each day. Unfortunately, while King Principal was an outstanding administrator, he was painfully ignorant in matters that involved what the SREHCAETS called the "writing process." He therefore decreed that a piece of writing must be done by EVERY student EVERYday and must, in turn, be evaluated by a SREHCAET. The SREHCATE must then report to the King concerning the progress each of the "little subjects" had made in their major subjects, especially writing.

Now you can well imagine what went on in the GREAT WAILING HALL of the castle. SREHCAETS grumbled secretly (and quite publicly, too) that they were being treated like servants, like mere chattel; that their lives were bound up in the King's new writing project; and that all of them would soon need bifocals (if not back and neck braces) as a result of the hours they were spending pouring over the children's writings. Not only were the SREHCAETS becoming cranky due to the lack of sleep, but nothing else was getting done as a result of the time being spent correcting papers and circling every error in boar's blood. So the more children wrote, the less they learned, and the less they learned the more unhappy their parents became. This vicious cycle continued until all of the members of the royal board of education were afraid to show their faces in public.

Just when things seemed to be at their worst and the SREHCAETS were planning a revolt, there came some good news from a nearby kingdom. Some one had learned (through the castle grapevine, no less) that PRINCE WISE (a royal personage of some reknown, if not fortune) had been educated at a large university in the East and had returned to his people to free them from the oppression of the writing curse. While the SREHCAETS were rejoicing in this wonderful event which seemed to be the answer to all their problems, they were suddenly forced to face reality. How would they tell KING PRINCIPAL about their discovery? Surely no one was brave enough (or quite dumb enough) to tell KING PRINCIPAL that he had this writing thing all wrong. And what would they say, "Your Highness, Sir, we know something you don't…" That just didn't seem to be the right approach. No, they would have to try getting

things done by involving those who advised the King on educational matters. They would start with the King's minister in charge of royal personnel.

It took a little time but when the minster was threatened with a writing strike, he began to listen more closely. Finally he decided that what the Kingdom of YASSE needed was to set aside a day when all of the SREHCAETS could come together to learn about how other kingdoms were handling this writing problem. Clever man that he was, the MINISTER OF ROYAL PERSONNEL sold KING PRINCIPAL on the idea by convincing him that the SREHCAETS would not be wasting any time but would really be spending time "in service" to the kingdom by learning how to do things better. (Now I told you he was clever!)

And when that glorious day dawned, the SREHCAETS sat very still and listened very carefully for several hours (with only one or two breaks for grog) to the tale of how PRINCE WISE and others like him had learned, and were now applying, a new and totally magical formula obviously devised by the gods themselves and consequently known as "holistic."

Well, the SREHCAETS were unconvinced but they did agree to give it a try. To that end they began to work out a plan utilizing some of the writing already assigned and turned in by the children. They would soon know if this new plan really was too good to be true!

The SREHCAETS decided on the following guidelines:
1. One grade level would be used as the test subjects; the SREHCAETS agreed that this would be PRIMARY - 3. Student names would be deleted for this process.
2. Writing samples from as early as PRIMARY - 1 would be reviewed and used for holistic scoring.
3. Samples would be scored using the GENERAL IMPRESSION method first; these same samples would then be evaluated using the FEATURE-ORIENTED method.
4. The PRIMARY TRAIT method would be used to evaluate writing samples completed as part of a testing situation.
5. A conscientious effort would be made to gauge progress made by the PRIMARY - 3 students in the area of writing.
6. Finally, the SREHCAETS would meet to discuss the merits of each of the methods to determine whether any or all should be considered as a serious replacement for the tedious analysis they were so used to using in the evaluation of student writing.

The results of their experiment are summarized below:
1. Writing samples of 85 students in PRIMARY - 3 (Grade 3) were used.
2. Writing samples from as early as PRIMARY - 1 (Grade 1) were available for 72 students; 7 students had writing samples from PRIMARY - 2 (Grade 2); the remaining 6 had transferred from other kingdoms and had only PRIMARY - 3 samples.
3. Of the 72 students with PRIMARY - 1 writing samples which were evaluated using the GENERAL IMPRESSION method, 45 students (62.5%) showed gradual improvement in ratings ranging from 1's and 2's at PRIMARY - 1 to 3's and 4's at PRIMARY - 3. Seventeen students (ap-

WHOLE LANGUAGE MINI-INSTITUTE FOR K-8 TEACHERS
A program developed in conjunction with Scholastic, Inc.
One graduate credit option available (PWP 599)

FORUM PRESENTATIONS
by nationally known teachers and writers including:

- ☐ Priscilla Lynch, whole language/reading specialist, author of <u>Using Big Books and Predictable Books</u>

- ☐ Adrian Peetoom, author of <u>Safe Risks With Whole Books</u>

- ☐ Rosemary Lonberger, nationally recognized for presentations on whole language and literacy.

- ☐ implementation sessions led by notable teacher-practitioners

TOPICS:

- ☐ fitting whole language into your curriculum

- ☐ practical suggestions for the whole language classroom

- ☐ literature, writing, and skills presented in a whole language framework

WCU-Exton Campus June 28-30, 1989

Added features:
Wednesday evening barbecue
Thursday evening banquet
Continental breakfasts Thursday and Friday
Luncheon forums

Cost: $80 per person (non-credit)
$163 (graduate credit) plus graduate fees

Dormitory rooms available at nominal cost.

Call or write for details. Brochure available April 15.

COURSES -- Register by June 9

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WRITING
(PWP 502-31) 3 Graduate Credits or 3 In-service Credits
June 26-July 14, 1989   9:30 am-12:30 pm
        -The Pennsylvania Writing Project "first course"
        -Explore practical and imaginative approaches to
         the teaching and learning of writing
        -Lecture-demonstrations and workshops with applications
         across the curriculum
        -For teachers in all subjects and at all grade levels

COMPUTERS AND WRITING
(PWP 508-31) 3 Graduate Credits
June 26-July 14, 1989   9:30 am-12:30 pm
        -Using computers at all stages of the writing process
        -Using, developing, and evaluating computer-assisted
         instruction in writing
        -Demonstrations of computer courseware
        -Hands-on experience (Apple II) in workshops and labs
        -Limited to 30 participants

WORKSHOPS -- Register by June 9

HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WRITING
(PWP 504-31) 1 Graduate Credit
June 21-22, 1989   8:30 am-4:30 pm
        -Improve your ability to assess writing
        -Theory and practice of rapid, reliable assessment of
         large numbers of writing samples
        -General-impression, primary trait, and other scoring
         systems

ADMINISTERING WRITING AND LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS
(PWP 599-31) 1 Graduate Credit or non-credit
July 11-13, 1989 9:30 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-3:30 pm
        -Identify critical components of a successful program
        -Program management, organization, evaluation
        -Practical plans and ideas to improve programs
        -Needed administrative skills and resources
        -Putting it all together: writing process, writing across
         the curriculum, critical thinking, whole language, and
         PCRP II

TO REGISTER for Inservice and Graduate Credit, complete both sides of this page and mail with your payment to Pennsylvania Writing Project, Philips 210, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

Make your check payable to West Chester University. You may charge all costs to Visa or Mastercard (forms on reverse side).

DEADLINE: Register by June 9, 1989 to avoid late fee of $25.00.

RESIDENCE RATES are approximately $110-$130 per person per week for room and board. Apply directly to University College, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383 (215-436-2190) before May 15, 1989. Identify yourself as a participant in a PAWP workshop.

LOCATIONS and PARKING: The Computers and Writing course will be held on the main campus at the Regional Computer Center. Parking is available in any campus lot, and no permits are required in the summer. There is no on-the-street parking except as indicated on street signs.

All other programs will be at the University's facility at the West Whiteland Corporate Center in Exton, PA, 10 minutes from main campus. This is a well-appointed building with plenty of parking. We will send a map when we acknowledge your registration.

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

VISA/MASTERCARD PAYMENT

Return this form along with the top part of your invoice. Payments made by credit card must be for a minimum of $50 and are subject to approval by the regional card authorization center.

Please charge: (   )VISA   (   )MASTERCARD   Charge amount: $_____

Card number (13 or 16 digits):_____   Exp. Date:_____

Student's Name and I.D. #:_____

Cardholder Name:_____

Cardholder Signature:_____

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES

GRADUATE COURSE REGISTRATION

Session: ☐ Spring ☒ Summer ☐ Fall
Year: _1989_

This card is for students who wish to enroll in a graduate course(s) for personal or professional growth only, and does not imply formal admission to the graduate school. Students wishing to pursue graduate credits toward certification or a degree program must complete the **Application for Admission to the Graduate Curricula** and submit the required accompanying materials. A fee of $10 is required for all first-time students and will be applied to the fee charged if the student, at a later date, makes formal application for admission.

NAME: _____
     Last   First   M.I.

ADDRESS: _____
     Street

_____
City   State   Zip   Sta County (Required)

PHONE: (home)_____ (work)_____

COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP: _____

BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM: _____ Year _____

Social Security No: _____

Date of Birth: _____

First-time graduate student at WCU? ☐ Yes ☐ No

COURSE DATA: Dept. Abr./Number/Section:

__ __ __ __ __ __ - __ __

Course Title: _____

TO COMPUTE YOUR FEES:

COURSE/WORKSHOP	TUITION/FEES (audit fee=graduate fee)	YOUR COST
Holistic Assessment (504-31)	$141 graduate	$ _____
Administering Writing Programs (599-31)	$165 graduate	_____
or	$ 80 noncredit	_____
(optional)	$ 25 luncheons (3)	_____
Strategies for Teaching Writing (502-31)	$348 3 graduate	_____
or	$150 inservice	_____
Computers and Writing (508-31)	$408 3 graduate	_____
Whole Language Mini-Institute (K-8)	$163 1 graduate	_____
	$ 80 non credit	_____

ADDITIONAL FEES for Graduate Credit participants:
First-time graduate students at WCU add $10   _____

Educational Services Fee (all graduate students) $ 5.00

Out-of-state resident add $17 per credit   _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE WCU $ _____

QUESTIONS: Call 215-436-2297 Mon-Fri 8:00 am
to 4:30 pm or leave a message on our answering
machine.

STATISTICAL DATA: West Chester University is in compliance with the Office of Civil Rights, the National Center for Educational Statistics and the PA Dept. of Education. Each applicant is required to indicate his/her race/ethnic classification and sex. Please check one in Section A and one in Section B

A. **Racial/Ethnic Identity:**   B. **Sex:** ☐ Female   ☐ Male
    ☐ Black/Non-Hispanic   ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
    ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander   ☐ Hispanic   ☐ White/Non-Hispanic

C. (optional) Handicapped: ☐ Yes   ☐ No
    If "Yes": ☐ Hearing   ☐ Visually   ☐ Mobility
    Other _____

I certify that I have answered all applicable questions and that all
information submitted is correct to the best of my knowledge.

GRADUATE OFFICE APPROVAL:

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Signature _____

Date _____   Dean _____

proximately 25.5%) identified for the most part as "THE KING'S ELITE," maintained scores of 3's and 4's consistently from PRIMARY - 1 through PRIMARY - 3. Approximately 13% (10 students) showed scores which fluctuated (without regard to grade level or instruction) between 1's and 2's, never indicating that any measurable progress was made.

4. As a result of FEATURE-ORIENTED scoring, major mechanical problems surfaced at all levels. Those who had scored 3's and 4's based on general impression turned up with spelling and punctuation errors equal to that of the 1's and 2's. Usage errors were less common in the 3's and 4's which were also rated higher in ideas, organization, and wording. "Flavor" was an intangible in most of the samples.

5. Only one sample was judged on the basis of PRIMARY TRAIT. In this writing sample students had been asked to describe the feelings they would have if they awoke one morning to find themselves part of a futuristic society. Eighty-five samples were evaluated; thirteen students were unable to describe personal feelings, but talked instead of what they saw around them. More than 50% of the students were able to fulfill the assignment as given, but most of the descriptions were trite and unimaginative.

6. When the SREHCAETS met to discuss the evaluations, they were able to reach consensus on several points: progress was indicated for at least 85% of the students; daily writing which did not provide feedback to the students was not effective in dealing with the 13-15% who were not making progress; circling mechanical errors in boar's blood had not helped students become careful writers. In the matter of whether to adopt holistic scorings as a means of dealing with the evaluation of writing, the SREHCAETS were of one mind. This was indeed, a better "mouse trap" and all of them were willing to devote the time and effort needed to learn to use the process.

It was a very happy day in YASSE, so happy, in fact, that they reversed their old feelings about writing and became the land of ESSAY (GET IT?). The SREHCAET group, which was instrumental in bringing about reforms in the writing program, saw their role changing too, and found themselves being called "TEACHERS." Somehow, turning their name around made them better at their jobs. And what about KING PRINCIPAL, you ask? KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS WAS A FAIRY TALE, NOT A MIRACLE AND, AS YOU MAY HAVE FOUND OUT YOURSELF BY NOW, SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE!!!

The study could not have been completed without reference to the following sources on the subject of holistic assessment:

Cooper, Charles and Lee Odell, eds. Evaluating Writing. National Council of Teachers of English, Illinois, 1977.
Diederich, Paul B. Measuring Growth in English. National Council of Teachers of English, Illinois, 1974.
Myers, Miles. A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills/National Council of Teachers of English, Illinois, 1980.
Spandel, Vicki. Classroom Applications of Writing Assessment. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, 1981.

Author's Note: The information contained in this paper is real, only the setting has been fictionalized. This study used actual writing samples collected from students who completed third grade at Perkiomen Valley Elementary School-South during the 1987-88 school year. Samples contained in their writing folders from first grade (198-86) and second grade (1986-87) were also used. Writing samples are taken in September and again in May during the school year. The test sample used for PRIMARY TRAIT scoring was written in January, 1988.

Alice Kurtas is a K-4 Reading Specialist in the Perkiomen Valley School District. This piece was written following completion of the course Holistic Assessment of Writing, taught by Bob Weiss in June 1988.

A GOAL FOR US: THE KENTUCKY STATEWIDE WRITING PROGRAM

The ability to write, according to the Kentucky Department of Education, is an essential component in a well-rounded education for Kentucky students. Skills such as problem solving and decision-making are greatly enhanced by a student's ability to express ideas in writing. The Kentucky Statewide Writing Program is making a difference across the state by creating student and teacher interest in learning to write and developing writing skills.

The program was created when Governor Martha Layne Collins and the Kentucky General Assembly collaborated to develop an Education Improvement Program, which was enacted as a legislative package during the 1986 Regular Season of the General Assembly. The Statewide Writing Program received $1 million in state appropriations for fiscal year 1987 and $2 million dollars for fiscal year 1988. Widely regarded throughout the state as an innovative success for improving the teaching and learning of writing as an essential skill, the program has been appropriated an additional $4 million in state funds for the 1988-89 biennium.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Need Help Writing an Article?

The National Council of English Teachers (NCTE) Committee on Professional Writing Networks for Teachers and Supervisors is ready to help you. If you are interested in sharing your ideas, but feel you would like some help in writing an article for publication in a professional journal, the Committee is available to give you suggestions and support. Send your partially completed or fully completed manuscript to :

Dr. Gail E. Tompkins
College of Education
University of Oklahoma
820 Van Vleet Oval
Norman, OK 73019

Your manuscript will then be sent to a committee member who will read and respond to it and then return it to you with suggestions, within six to eight weeks. To facilitate the review, please type and double space your manuscript and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with it. Also, in a cover letter list any questions you have about the manuscript or how to submit it for publication and indicate whether or not the manuscript has already been submitted to a journal and rejected.

PARALYSIS OF ANALYSIS

A copy of the Gettysburg Address was submitted to RightWriter, a computer-software program which analyzes writing for style, grammar, and readability. The stylistic analysis was printed in the November 28, 1988 U.S. News.

The computer suggested that the first sentence of the address was a bit long, that "Four score and seven" was wordy and should be replaced by "Eighty-seven," and that the passive voice was rampant "are created," "are engaged," "are met," "be dedicated," and "be here dedicated"). One sentence – – "But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground" — was criticized because it begins with "but." And there seem to be too many negatives: "cannot dedicate," "we cannot consecrate," " we cannot hallow," "never forget," and "shall not perish." The summary reads: "Scores zero on strength index. Writer should use active voice, shorter sentences, fewer weak phrases, more positive wording. Overly descriptive with many adjectives. Readability good. Readers need 10th-grade level education."

WRITING IS GOOD FOR YOU

James W. Pennebaker, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at Southern Methodist University, conducted an experiment involving journal writing. Fifty randomly selected college students were divided into two groups. The first wrote about superficial topics for 20 minutes a day for four days; the other did the same about "unresolved painful events." The researchers took blood samples from the subjects before, immediately after, and six weeks after the end of the experiment.

"At the end of the experiment," according to Pennebaker, "students who wrote about experiences that weighed heavily on them showed an increase in lymphocyte response, which indicates an enhanced ability to fight infection." This was true even six weeks after the experiment ended. This group also visited doctors for illness much less during a six month period. Those who wrote about trivial topics showed no improvement in their immune systems.

Pennebaker concludes that writing is good therapy because it forces people to stay with a subject long enough to gain a new perspective.

—Reported in Delicious! Jan/Feb 1987

DATABASE

COMPUTER CONFERENCES   Robert Weiss, Chris Kelly, and Karen Klingerman are presenting "Now That You Know Word Processing – What's Next?" at the March 14 -15 Eastern Pennsylvania Educational Computing Conference, Valley Forge Convention and Exhibit Center. They will offer strategies for pre-writing, revising, editing, and publishing which are designed specifically for word processors. They will address the difficulties in working with limited, occasional, and full computer lab situations. The entire conference should be interesting. Other sessions involve computers and questioning skills prompts, networks available to students, and a variety of subject areas. One of the featured presenters is Al Rogers who developed FrEDWriter. Registration is $50 for both days. For information contact Marcia Klafter (215) 265-7321.

•   Educational Computing Conferences is sponsoring a national two-pronged conference April 13-15 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Philadelphia. The two prongs are reading and learning difficulties, with over 85 sessions including adult literacy, ESL, writing, learning disabilities, administration, and special education. For details, contact Diane Frost, ECC, Dept. N, 1070 Crows Nest Way, Richmond, CA 94803 (415) 222-1249.

NCTE CONVENTION   The Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (MCTELA) is hosting the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Convention in November 1989. Since Baltimore is the convention site, we look forward to many Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP) teachers attending. Elyse Eidman-Aadahl, an active Fellow of the Maryland Writing Project, is organizing volunteers who are willing to help with planning arrangements and participating in the convention itself. All kinds of people interested in all kinds of jobs are needed. Please contact Elyse at 1718 Langford Road, Woodland, Maryland 21207.

EDUCATION REFORM
by James Gray

We hear calls for educational reform from many sources these days. The reformers call for global action – the restructuring of schools, or an entirely new curriculum, or reduced class size and teaching loads. While the debate on school change is going on we can either sit and wait for changes that may never come in our lifetime, or we can go to work on our own.

From the beginning, the National Writing Project (NWP) has consistently held its own particular approach to school reform, namely, that it goes about its business of doing what it does best: identifying and promoting effective teaching practice by puttting a premium on what is working in the nations' classrooms.

The National Writing Project believes that the classroom teacher must be at the center of any reform movement in education and that real reform will always be more than simply revising curriculum or "toughening" standards or developing more tests of student performance. While reform can begin with one teacher's effort to improve classroom practice, it is a process that is ongoing and continuous, that takes place over time. Reform is a constant search for best practices, a constant process of discovery, experiment, qualification, and refinement through programs, such as the National Writing Project, that are always open to whatever is working.

As instruction improves, as teachers begin to come together regularly to learn from one another and to work with project-trained Teacher Consultants, often other issues begin to fall into place and other problems begin to be resolved. Teachers no longer complain of burnout as their morale improves. As teacher attitudes improve so do student attitudes. The quality of student work improves, and more and more students beginning to see the possibility of a future in school. We have seen that teachers, as they come to be recognized and celebrated for their classroom success, begin to be offered positions of leadership, and the reform movement, because of teacher participation, begins to take on a new and more focused directions. This, too, is the ripple effect of the National Writing Project.

The National Writing Project recognizes the seriousness of the many problems facing American education, but while the debate over what needs to be done and what can be done continues, the National Writing Project does its job of training successful teachers to teach other teachers how they too might become more successful. This particular Writing Project approach can be an important contribution to the current reform movement.

James Gray, of the University of California at Berkeley, founded the Bay Area Writing Project and its extension into the National Writing Project.

THE YOUTH WRITING PROJECT: 1989
Open to students in grades 1-12

All programs run from 1:00- 4:00 PM
Brochures will be available in April.
Registration beings in April and closes on June 1.

General Programs:
- Experience the writing process
- Work in writing groups
- Work with noted Pennsylvania writers
- A final-day Young Author's Conference and publication

Computer Programs:
- Write exclusively on the IBM-PC
- Same activities as General Programs

Program Dates

For youngsters entering grades 5-12:

General Program:	July 10-21
All-Computer Program:	July 10-21
All-Computer Mini-Session:	July 24-28

For youngsters entering grades 1-4:

Mini-Session:	July 24-28

YOUNG AUTHORS
WILL AGAIN SHARPEN SKILLS
IN YOUTH WRITING PROJECT

What do you get when you put young people together during the summer and ask them to write every afternoon for two weeks? Not boredom or resistance, if they are in the Youth Writing Project. Not blank stares wondering how to fill empty pages. Rather, you get enthusiastic responses and high productivity levels like these:

"Fun and educational. I liked everything." (age 11, wrote 14 pieces)

"I liked sharing." (age 9, wrote 8 pieces)

"I liked going to the computers and writing stories." (age 10, wrote 17 pieces)

"Large amount of the time spent with pen on paper, not just talking about it." (age 15, wrote 10 pieces)

Area youngsters are again readying to spend one or two summer weeks of writing on a college campus. As West Chester University and the Pennsylvania Writing Project continue their four-year success record with the Youth Writing Project, about 160 young people from the Main Line and other communities in chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties will come a bit closer to joining the ranks of Ernest Hemingway and Joyce Carol Oates—or at least to becoming more fluent and proficient as writers. "I learned that you change things," said a 7-year-old participant who wrote 27 pieces in two weeks. A 15-year-old who wrote three long pieces felt good about having "learned how to write in different styles."

The Youth Writing Project has attracted such young people (and their parents) with its goal of encouraging area youths individually and as a community of writers. Founded by Bob Weiss and developed by Jolene Borgese, Jim MacCall, and Guy MacCloskey, the program has enrolled over 400 youngsters in its four years of operation. Registrants from grades 1 through 12 are divided according to age and ability and enabled to complete a full range of writing processes: finding ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

The 1989 YWP offers three programs for youngsters in grades 4-12 and one for children in the primary grades. Older participants can come July 10-21 for the regular or all-computer programs, or they can come for a mini-computer program July 24-28. Younger participants have a one-week program July 24-28. All YWP programs run from 1 to 4 PM.

Instructors are teacher-consultants of the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Unlike school, the YWP does not grade students on their poetry, fiction, or expository writing but gives them peer and instructor response at all stages of their writing. In the all-computer programs, composing is done at the keyboard of an IBM-PC. In the mini-session for children in the primary grades, the major emphasis is to encourage fluency. All age groups are coached to explore, stretch, and focus their writing. At the end of each session, participants select a favorite piece, revise and edit it, and place it within an anthology which is duplicated for the whole group.

Youngsters in the two-week sessions meet and work one-on-one with area poets and writers. "I liked having experienced writers talk to us," commented one 14-year-old who wrote 9 pieces. Visiting the Youth Writing Project this summer are three creative writers with many publications to their credit and with years of experience in working with young children and adolescents. Poets Julia Blumenreich, John Brown, and Claudia Reder, guest teachers the week of July 11th, have worked for several years in Pennsylvania's poet's-in-the-schools program.

"The children like being published," says Bob. "It's very rewarding for them to see their work in print. They also enjoy coming to the college campus, working with the computers, and working with people who share their interest in writing. We've had a number of calls from participants who enrolled each year, which proves to us that we have been successful in presenting writing as a process of improvement."

An information meeting for prospective parents and youngsters will be held on Wednesday evening, April 26, on the WCU campus. Discounts will be available to the general public for early registration and to the children of PAWP Fellows and WCU employees. Brochures for the Youth Writing Project will be available after April 1. For further information, contact the Youth Writing Project, 210 Philips Bldg., West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383, or telephone (215) 436-3089.

• •

THE COMMUNITY TRIP
by Richard F. Joseph

I want to teach poetry better. I want to write more poetry and use a variety of techniques. I figure if I can write it better, I'll teach it better. My ultimate goal is to build a portfolio and try to get published. I'm thinking big.

Poems that I did with the kids this past year turned out pretty well. I adapted a technique from the Poetry chapter in Lucy Caulkins book, The Art of Teaching Writing. Georgia Heard says, "For me, poems have to be about something so important to me, I need to have a physical feeling of that topic inside me."

Last spring, I asked my kids to visualize a memory that had a strong emotion—a physical feeling. We wrote their memories as if in conversation with a friend, then re-wrote them with only the "most important" words. Later, we trimmed the lines and added spaces to give visual and verbal balance to each piece. It worked well, and we published many poems in the school paper. This year I want to do much more.

I ask the Fellows, "Does anyone in here write poetry? Wanna share some ideas?" Beth reads me a poem she wrote, and several others come with books or promises of books to help out. What a great bunch of people. This is what I get for opening my mouth—more books to read!

Three high school texts, five collections of poems by four different authors, one anthology and three handbooks

of guided poetry lessons come home with me. Twelve books and I didn't even go to the library!

Some of the core readings also treat poetry, and I search back issues of Harper's and Atlantic for contemporary works. There are ten handouts specifically dealing with poetry spread out before me. I have notes from Chris Buckley's presentations, and I had the brilliant idea to interview my family and neighbors about their experiences with this genre'. Now I wade through this ocean of material.

In Writing: Teachers and Children at Work, Graves discusses Mrs. Anderson's use of poetry with second graders (pp. 70-72). She used Catherine Rose's, "A Parade," on the first day of school to introduce choral speaking. He says that by the end of the week the children had it memorized from oral recitation only—no reading yet. Graves reports that the children memorized many poems that year. In this way, they carried this special language with them everywhere.

Elizabeth Cornell kept a journal of her experiences using poetry to develop language with first graders. It appears as chapter 7 in Seeing for Ourselves, Bissex and Bullock, eds. She relates several times how the children pleaded with her to recite poems again and again. She used poetry daily to help children learn the process of "getting meaning" from written language—to read.

When I work with the younger elementary children this year. I'll use poems to develop language á la Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Cornell. I've already picked some poems from Judith Viorst's If I Were in Charge of the World...And Other Worries. Last year I used Shel Silverstein's "Boa Constrictor" with kindergarten kids. We made our own Boa Banner and filled it with verse. I'll do it again next year. I'm glad I remembered.

Shel Silverstein's work is a lot of fun. I read selections from A Light in the Attic and Where the Sidewalk Ends to my daughter. We had a great time. He has a clear vision of a child's world, but he also demonstrates how often children and adults are alike. Consider "The Little Boy and the Old Man." Much of his work has a simple, clean structure. I am beginning to see how I can use it as a model for making poems with the kids (and for myself, too). I visualize how they would look overhead—drawings are engaging.

As I read The New Kid on the Block by Jack Prelutsky, it dawns on me how great poetry is for developing voice. Now when I read Viorst, Silverstein or anyone else, I make an effort to find a voice to fit the poem. Wait a minute! I can do this with one of my all time favorite writers, Doctor Zeuss. Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories is lots of fun to read this way. I do not have to go farther than my daughter's bookshelf to get great stuff for the classroom. Maybe this is no great insight to most elementary teachers, but is it is refreshing to one who is still gearing down from teaching high school kids. I will be much more comfortable with the K-3 kiddies this year.

I got a truckload of ideas for teaching (and writing) poetry from Tom Liner in chapter 6 of Inside Out: Developmental Strategies For Teaching Writing. Liner calls poetry the "community trip," the kind of writing that you share and experience with your students more than any other. He notes ten general considerations about teaching poetry.

They seem pretty much common sense. One point struck me as so obvious, but perhaps much neglected: "understanding poetry follows most naturally from fooling around with poetry." (p.62).

Fooling around? Why not? Kids learn a lot when they play. He suggests studying song writers that kids are familiar with. I think about how much I've enjoyed Bruce Springsteen, Dylan, the Stones, here's ammunition for the eighth graders. I'll make copies of the lyrics to some of my (and the children's) favorite tunes. We'll fool with them.

I get other tools from Liner. He discusses the Cinquain and includes three variations, each successively more difficult (pp. 71-72). He describes a way to encourage visual images with the Poetic Picture Contest. Children choose a picture from a pile of magazine photos and write a poem about it anonymously (p.82). The class chooses winners. Exciting! Being the The Thing encourages the metaphor. Children write "If I were...I'd..." They choose any "Thing" and write how they would feel or what they would do. Point of view. Personification. (pp.82-83 and 86)

Inside Out also has a chapter titled "Resources." Here, the authors make a recommendation for novice poets. The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses is described as the best source to find realistic publishing opportunities (p. 237). Here is an avenue that I'll explore when I tune up my creative machine.

I learned about a Sijo from Poetry Express, software for writing poems by Carole and Joe Kidder (Learning Well, Inc.). Sijo is a Korean form that is structured in six lines with seven or eight syllables per line. Rhythm is produced by internal rhyme and repeating consonant and vowel sounds which suggest an echo.

I read a poem in The Atlantic called "Mica Country" by Robert Morgan (May, 1988, p. 58). It has an interesting structure. The second and fourth lines of the first stanza become the first and third lines of the second, and so on. Is there a name for this? Who cares?! I want to imitate it.

Chris Buckley introduced us to the catalog poem in his presentation. He used several of Gary Soto's works as models I wrote a couple of pieces in this style, and I'll use them fro my personal piece. He said something about symbols that surprised me. He said that most poets do not try to hide meaning through mysterious symbols. Rather, they speak directly to an image that evokes a feeling. Leaves falling are leaves falling, not dying soldiers. This makes me more comfortable. I think I can do this.

I'll use the styles mentioned above more in my own work. I won't attempt such structures with my students until they are very experienced and comfortable with the freer forms.

I interviewed some of my neighbors and family to learn about their encounters with poetry. A funny thing—most of the adults said they did not enjoy poetry in school, but everyone was very interested and eager to share their tales.

After I read one of my poems to her, my wife said, "I don't believe in these kind of poems that don't have any rhyme to them."

Others stated:

"Do bumper stickers come under poetry?"

"I don't like it, never did. My experiences with poetry ended with high school."

One neighbor remembers trying to write a poem for a college class. He tried to rhyme "screw it" with "blue suit." The instructor did not accept his creative invention.

My son, Rich, tells me about his ninth grade experience: "We went over elements of poetry (which was stupid), and wrote poems in our journal. She kept on going over and over the elements. The only part I liked was writing the poems. They didn't have to have elements.

"We published our poems in a class book. She said to put in your best poem, but I wanted to put all my poems in."

I ask, "Do you think you'll ever write more poems on your own?"

"No. Probably not."

Before he left me he added, "Well...I'll need a little encouragement."

I promise to remember my son's thoughts on elements, publishing and encouragement as I plan my teaching strategies this year.

Finally, I conclude with a sense that I have discovered some valuable ideas and resources for teaching and writing poetry throughout the year. One afternoon, Bob Weiss asked us for a definition of "writing to learn." I responded quickly and unexpectedly with a poem. It's the first poem I wrote during the Institute, and I really like it:

Thoughts come...
Sporadically...
S L O W L Y...

Then, bump - bump
Intoeachother
        pp
then tri   ing, shoving
My pen moves faster, faster,
        I'm getting it!

    Focus
    Focus

The images are
clearer. I see
What I know.

Richard Joseph is a husband and father of three children. He teaches children K-8 in the Community School computer resource room for the Delaware County Intermediate Unit. He helps his kids learn science and language skills through writing. He likes teaching poetry.

FIRST MEMORY

Through the tiled corridor my mother
tugs me.
I grip her thin hand.
The building, black and deep in my memory:
wide doors and archways like
mouths ready to swallow; a mansion
out of El Greco.
Hollow taps of our feet echo
past doors sheltering the mysteries of learning.
We face one pale door
smooth and impenetrable.
Inside, I am Alice dwarfed by boards of black slate,
jalosied windows that touch the ceiling, long fingers of sun
that do not touch me.
In front of neat rows stands
a woman in black with folded hands
and ice blued eyes, their whites
faded from all that blue.
Panic
stalls my feet as her low voice welcomes us
my mother and I.
The woman reaches for my hand -
I hide it behind my back.
Knees pressed tight against
her stockings, my mother bends, kisses me; in her face
a mother's fear.
I listen, unbelieving, as the tap
of her heels on the cool tile
fades.
The creased face appears above me -
powder resides in its lines
blue eyes like agates.
My wails begin - futile protest.
Then
my first teacher's gentle, elderly hands
hold my open, sobbing face
against the soft blackness
of her dress.

Marie Kane
June 4, 1988

Marie Kane wrote "First Memory" in the Workshop in English - Writer's Workshop course. She teaches grades 10, 11, and 12 at Central Bucks High School West.

PAWP CONDUCTS
SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS
by Mary Lou Kuhns

In September, the Writing Project Office mailed the PAWP Questionnaire–Form B to 194 summer participants (Summer Institute Fellows and teachers taking "Strategies for Teaching Writing" and "Computers and Writing" courses). Seventy-two forms were returned. The survey consisted of two parts intended as pre and post-measures of participants' perceptions of their teaching behaviors and situations. Part I was set up as a post-test, using yes/no responses to statements reflecting preferred instructional practices as defined in the NCTE Standards for Effective Basic Skills Programs in Writing. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the preferred practices were "True always" in the classes they taught, or "Not true now," or "True now" (after their summer programs) but not true then" (before the summer courses); Part II consisted of eight self-reported comparative statements indicating whether participants' students now do more of several kinds of writing and take more pleasure with them than in previous classes.

By examining the "True always" columns, we discovered that before taking the course, a sizeable group of teachers were already providing effective writing instructions. Many of the teachers allowed for variety in writing forms, audiences, the purposes, resources, and encouraged student publishing. They also indicated a strong belief that writing should occur in all areas, not just in English classes.

In the column "True now but not true then," we saw the most dramatic changes, with the highest number of respondants for any question, indicating that they now use theory and research in developing their writing programs and offer situations for constructive feedback during the writing process. Other strong responses indicate their changed actions: to recognize student experiences as a rich source for composition topics, to devote more class time to the writing process, to encourage fluency before form and form before correctness, and to use response groups in the classroom.

The "Not true now," column revealed that many teachers apparently lack control over their schedules or have very crowded schedules. The item most frequently indicated in the "Not true now" column indicated insufficient time to assure that the writing process is thoroughly pursued.

Questions on the back of the Form B (answered by 58 teachers) describe activities of a writing process teacher and classroom. Between 42 and 47 of these respondents indicate that their students: do more self-sponsored writing activities, spend a longer time writing, go through a greater number of pre-writing activities, go through a greater number of re-writing activities, spend a longer time contemplating the product, do more reading and writing activities in the classroom, take more pleasure with the written products, and do more writing of various kinds.

Mary Lou Kuhns, a former high school English teacher and department chairperson, is the new associate director of PAWP.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Are you interested in writing:
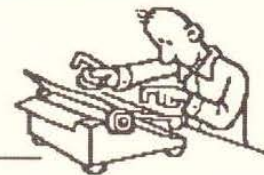
A book review? _____

➡ Name of book: _____

An Article?

➡ Topic or Idea: _____

Send _____

➡ Comments/Questions

_____

➡ Info for PAWP-POURRI
(About you or other PAWP Fellows)

Send to: Gail Capaldi/Lois Snyder (Editors), PAWP
West Chester University, Philips Memorial Building #210, West Chester , PA 19383

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

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
West Chester, PA 19383
PERMIT NO. 309

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED