



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 3 SPRING 1993

FOUR AUTHORS AND TEACHER-SCHOLARS FEATURED IN PAWP'S SUMMER K-8 CONFERENCE

The roster of keynote speakers and presenters for PAWP's annual summer Literacy/Whole Language Conference for K-8 teachers is nearing completion. The 1993 conference features keynote addresses by two noted authors and two nationally recognized specialists in the field, as well as 15-20 concurrent sessions led by teacher-consultants and other presenters on a broad variety of topics intended to interest teachers of writing and reading in the primary and intermediate grades.

This year, the conference again highlights Literacy Opportunities and emphasizes sharing classroom ideas and strategies that work, as presented by successful local teachers and workshop leaders. Conference participants will be able to attend four of the concurrent sessions held on over 15 topics, tentatively including: Getting Started in Whole Language, Portfolio Assessment, Reader Response, Reading Multicultural Literature, Writing in Theme Units, Explaining Your Program to Parents, From Writing to Spelling, "Kid Watching," Reading-Writing Connections, Revision Conferences in a Reading & Writing Environment, and Using Literature and/or Writing for Social Studies/Science.

The August conference is the seventh in an annual series that PAWP has co-sponsored with publishers, beginning with Boynton-Cook/Heinemann, then Scholastic, and now Houghton Mifflin, which has been the co-sponsor for four years. The focus is always on improving the teaching of writing and reading. Conference registrants have the option of earning a graduate credit or of registering for A Week of Whole Language, which includes the 2-day conference and earns three credits. The conference and course fees include continental breakfast and lunch both days. Arrangements are made with vendors for on-site purchase of trade and professional books.

The Conference is one of the highlights of PAWP's summer and is well regarded by area teachers, with over 200 attending in 1992 and with 93.7% of the evaluations collected giving it a rating of very useful or substantially useful. Some typical comments from last year: *"This conference was the best that I have attended in many years."* *"The presenters were well prepared and very enthusiastic."* *"Excellent opening speakers both days."* *"Many creative and new ideas gained."*

"I found the conference useful and informative last year, and I wasn't disappointed this year."

And more: *"The keynote speakers each day were dynamite."* *"In general the sessions were very useful."* *"I am eager to get into my classroom."* *"This was one of the best conferences for useful classroom techniques I've been to in a long time."* *"Presenters were great not only in expertise, but in their delivery."*

The 1993 Conference is being held on the main campus of West Chester University.



Lois Lowry

LOIS LOWRY

This Newbery Medal winner, the creator of Anastasia Krupnik and other notable characters in children's and adolescent fiction, will address the conference on Wednesday, August 11, 1993. Her topic will be "The Patchwork Craft of Fiction," describing her transition from an author for adults to an author for children. Lowry will share the day-to-day frustrations and joys which accompany the craft of writing fiction for young people.

A Summer to Die, which Houghton Mifflin published in 1977, was her first children's book. She received wide

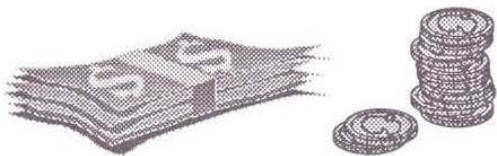
(Continued on page 6)

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

In the movie version of *Cabaret*, Liza Minelli and Joel Grey perform a very amusing and satirical song called "Money." Whenever I want to try something new in my classroom I perform the same song but it's not quite so amusing or satirical.

You know what I mean. You've been reading articles and attending workshops and presentations on literature circles where the students work with self-selected books. You decide you're going to try some of the ideas when the class is finished reading *Charlotte's Web* together. Where do the books come from? If you're lucky enough to work in a district with an excellent library the problem is solved. Well, it's solved if you didn't care what books the students used but not if you wished them to read in a certain theme or setting. "OK," you tell yourself, "we'll do literature circles next year after I order the books." Then, when you ask the librarian, she says she'd love to help you but her budget's been cut again and she really needs to replace the 1978 edition encyclopedia. Before you even have a chance to check with the principal for extra money, next year's budget for your grade level arrives and, of course, it's been cut too. You could replace something in your order with the literature circle books but you're already down to one notebook per child per semester.

My latest experience in needing a few extra dollars to try something new didn't come with anything as expensive as a whole book. I'd been thinking about notetaking because I'd noticed that my senior high students were no better at taking good notes in a reflective journal than they had been at knowing which were the important facts in a lecture on Shakespeare's theater. I knew how to point out the important facts (write on the board, say them 12 times, say them louder, pound on the desk) but I was having trouble with the newer style. Combining all sorts of notions I'd heard, I decided to hand out little post-it notepads so the students could write their reflections, questions, thoughts, insights right in the book. Where to get these notepads? Our supply closet at school actually had some but the individual sheets were larger than I wanted to use and if my students took them all there'd be none left for other teachers. I remembered I'd seen just what I wanted at Staples; probably seeing them at Staples was one of the things which gave me the notetaking idea in the first place. Although I absolutely do not approve of teachers spending their own money on the classroom (After all, steel workers don't bring their own iron ore to the plant.), I've spent a small fortune over the years and, of course, I ended up at Staples buying the notepads. Luckily, most students not only liked using them but were successful in moving from the notes to good class discussions and projects.



THE ADVANCED INSTITUTE IN WRITING-READING CONNECTIONS

In past summers the Pennsylvania Writing Project at West Chester University has selected a topic as the focus for an Advanced Summer Institute open only to Fellows of the project. This year, participants will have an opportunity to explore connections between reading and writing.

Institute participants will be able to hear presentations on "Writing about Literature" and "Reader Response" by Bob Probst, noted author of *Response and Analysis: Teaching Literature in Junior and Senior High School*. Bob's ideas on teaching literature have been part of a nation-wide K-12 revitalization movement that replaces basals with trade books and dignifies the literary responses of students.

Available for study will be recent books by other Heinemann authors, including Atwell, Cairney, Gallo, Graves, Hansen, Harste, Harwayne, McConaghy, and Stires. In addition, participants will select areas of interest for individual projects and presentations which link writing and reading. Their discoveries from the latest publications will be integrated with their ideas for classroom experiments.

This advanced institute is scheduled for nine days in late June and early July at the Exton campus and carries 3 graduate credits. The coordinator is Karen Nina Klingerman, a 1988 Bucks County Fellow, who teaches eighth grade Communications, social studies, and reading in the Bensalem School District. Karen, who has coordinated many courses for the Writing Project and has participated in the state writing assessment, was the first to earn PAWP's Certificate in Writing Instruction.

PAWP MODELS FOR AASCU

PAWP has been selected to be part of the Model Programs Inventory co-sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and ERIC.

The AASCU/ERIC project collects program information on almost 260 unique efforts at the state colleges and universities across the United States. This information is maintained in a database at AASCU and indexed and abstracted in the ERIC database on higher education. It is available as resource to AASCU staff and other organizations, including foundations, wishing to launch initiatives in specific program areas.

The desire to write grows with writing. Erasmus

TEACHER AS WRITER : A GUEST EDITORIAL

by Kathy Mahoney

In light of the many recent changes in education, I have begun to rethink my role as teacher. Each year I have attempted to focus on one aspect of the role. For the past several years I have concentrated on the literature-based reading approach and am feeling very pleased and comfortable with the changes I have made. It was very easy for me to make these changes in the reading area because I have always loved children's books. I still have and use many of the stories and poems from my own childhood and have enjoyed sharing these classics, as well as newer selections, with my own children. While I have always felt at home with literature, writing has been a struggle. My focus this school year is to better understand the role of the writer and writing teacher.

When I began to formulate plans for the approaching year, I felt that I needed to experience the expectations and demands that I place on my students. What better way to understand this process than to make myself write the same assignments at the same time that I expected my students to write? Hence, I began to keep a journal and/or writing folder.

During the first few days of the new year, I asked my students to write about their feelings on the first day of school. Prior to writing, we discussed such feelings as nervousness, excitement, anticipation, sleeplessness, and worry. I began to write my first assignment as a student in my own classroom. At first I felt awkward. What should I write about? As I looked around the room, most children were busily putting the words into their journals. I picked up my pencil and let the words flow. This was not an easy task for me, since I had recently completed three years of graduate study where all of my writing experiences had been formal and confined to "academia's standards." My pencil soon became my stream of consciousness as I laid out my hopes and goals for our community of writers. A sense of accomplishment enveloped me as I continued to express my inner thoughts with the flow of the pencil. I began to feel a part of the group, rather than a separate entity walking around the room monitoring everyone else's progress. I had taken my first step.

Throughout the next two weeks I continued to add to my writing folder when my students wrote. The highlight of this experience came when my students asked me to share what I had written. Our Chapter I teacher had instructed the children to use their imaginations to plan a special weekend to anywhere desired. She reminded them to include description and detail. As they wrote I began to write about a magnificent weekend in Hawaii. I pictured the shimmering blues and brilliant greens, tasted the luscious, sweet pineapple and coconut, and listened to the sizzling eruption of a volcano. As I visualized this place I could only imagine, the words flowed rapidly and smoothly. When writing workshop ended, and we were instructed to finish our last thought I did not want to stop! Perhaps some of my students also shared this feeling. I was very excited about my piece and

secretly hoped that someone would ask me to share. I felt like a child again.

The opportunity presented itself during the next writing workshop. My excitement grew as we took turns sharing our writings. Finally I was asked to share my special weekend plans. My voice quivered as I began. I was not playing the role of teacher now but was exposing myself as a writer, feeling very vulnerable. I was no longer the judge. My anxiety decreased, however, as I heard the "Oohs" and "Aahs." I had captured my audience. Their positive feedback made me feel accepted as a writer. As we continue to establish our community of writers, I hope to develop a better understanding of myself as a writer as well as a teacher of writing.

Kathy Mahoney, a third grade teacher in the Exteter Township School District, wrote this reflection on her own experiences for an Advanced Framework Course.

TEACHERS AS WRITERS: GETTING IT DOWN AND SENDING IT OUT

What can teachers write? What might teachers want to write? Do some teachers have (suppressed) urges to see themselves in print? PAWP offers two opportunities this summer for those who have felt the need to answer such questions for themselves. TEACHERS AS WRITERS, a new PAWP course, will be held solely for the purpose of enabling teachers to experience writing in several modes and to further develop their writing skills. We can't guarantee that you'll have your work accepted by an editor, but we can warrant you a framework for developing and practicing your "writerly" skills and some guidance in seeking a market.

The course has been designed for K-12 teachers who would like to grow as writers. The first part of each class session will be a reading/writing workshop. Thereafter the PAWP coordinators and published authors will instruct in different genres, including poetry, fiction, professional articles, and personal essays. Tentatively slotted as visiting authors are Judith Baldwin Toy, Bev Stoughton, Karen Blomain, Len Roberts, Julia Blumenreich, and Peter Catalanoto.

TEACHERS AS WRITERS is scheduled twice this summer, at two different locations. From June 23-July 2, 1993 at Tohickon Valley Elementary School in the Quakertown School District, Bucks County, the coordinator will be Pat Carney-Dalton, who originated the concept for PAWP and who has now begun getting her poems and essays accepted for publication. From July 19-30, 1993 at the WCU Exton Center in Chester County, the coordinator is Linda Baer, who has taught a similar course for PAWP and whose review of Toni Morrison's award-winning novel *Song of Solomon* appeared in our winter Newsletter. Both coordinators are eager to get started, because they intend to write along with the other participants and to produce something acceptable for publication.

NWP SPEAKER STRESSES REFLECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

by Mary Lou Kuhns

Last November, I attended my first National Writing Project Directors' meeting, held in conjunction with the National Council of Teachers of English Fall Conference in Louisville, KY. The keynote speaker for the audience of National Writing Project directors, co-directors, and summer institute coordinators was Mary Ann Smith, a high school teacher who directs the California Writing Project and who co-authored *Writing Portfolios: A Bridge from Teaching to Assessment*.

Since I found her book to be a helpful guide for designing portfolios, I looked forward to hearing her in person. I was delighted to hear her speak eloquently on the crucial importance of student and teacher reflection in the classroom. To Smith, reflection gives perspective, analyzes meaning, and provides a rationale for learning. She quoted Graves and Vygotsky for additional support: "Students learn more from reflection than process" (Graves) and "Only when we detach ourselves from experience can we learn" (Vygotsky).

Smith emphasized the need for students to be more aware of their learning. School should not be what one of her students called, "A place where young people can see older people work hard." While she, no doubt, works hard as a teacher, Smith suggested that in order for students to learn best, they need to participate in "hard" reflection.

In calling for more student reflection, Smith mentioned her own youthful experiences, including cutting school, to illustrate that since she did no reflection about her learning, she had little purpose in attending school, except for social reasons. She noted that when she was growing up, learning processes looked one-directional: classes moved from point A to B to C. There were no exceptions, and the educational motto teachers professed sounded like "Trust me, it's for your own good."

Today, Smith says, when teachers stress learning processes they pay more attention to student behaviors; and instead of hard rules, there are hard questions. Investigation and making decisions about one's learning, not regimented responses and linear paths, are essential to developing a reflective approach to learning.

She explained that invitational Summer Institutes ask teachers to reflect, so a model does exist for reflection. Unfortunately, that model is missing in most school cultures. The Institutes invite debate about classroom strategies, but at the same time teachers too often treat classroom practices as artifacts rather than as extensions of themselves. After experiencing the Summer Institutes, teachers could enrich classrooms if they would reflect more and expect more reflection from their students. Helpful tools for teachers and students might include learning logs, journals, periodic review of portfolios, and class discussions on learning.

Smith observed that since institute co-directors challenge themselves to reflect--to "walk the talk," "record the journey," ask "who's on first?"--they must see reflection as the antithesis of final and absolute answers on how to learn or

how to teach. It then follows that the co-directors must aid teachers to encourage thoughtful and critical reflection from themselves and from their students. In fact, teachers must be challenged to ask the hardest questions they know how--in institutes, in classrooms, of themselves, and of their students.

Teachers have the model for classroom practice; she believes, but have not used it or extended it sufficiently. When they do, students who are like Mary Ann Smith when she was young will find fewer reasons for cutting school. In addition, these students might see themselves and other students, not just the teachers, working hard.

Mary Lou Kuhns teaches at Conestoga High School, Tredyffrin/Easttown School District, and co-directs PAWP's Summer Institute. She recommends Smith and Murphy's book for teachers seeking dozens of questions which lead to student reflection.

FIRST CERTIFICATES AWARDED TO EIGHT PAWP FELLOWS

Since the PAWP Certificate in Writing Instruction was developed in 1990, it has been earned by eight teachers. The certificate is earned through completion of 15 credits of course work with West Chester University through the Pennsylvania Writing Project.

We are pleased that the PAWP Certificate has been of interest. The first set of certificate awards, all made in 1992, went to:

Marion (Gable) Barrage	Richard Halsey
Diane Bates	Pamela Hilbert
Patricia Carney-Dalton	Karen Klingerman
Judy Fisher	Vicki Steinberg

All of these teachers have worked closely with the Pennsylvania Writing Project for several years and have been able to contribute to and benefit from participation in our network. This participation, we all hope, has brought their students to meaningful growth as writers and learners.

In addition to the PAWP Summer Institute, programs applicable to this Certificate in Writing Instruction are Strategies I and II, several Writing Assessment programs, Writing in the Content Areas, Computers and Writing, Writing/Reading/Talking Across the Curriculum, and a variety of other PAWP writing workshops. Courses may be offered in sponsoring school districts or intermediate units as well as at the University. For more information about the Certificate in Writing Instruction or an application, address questions to PAWP, West Chester University, Room 105 (Carter Drive), West Chester, PA 19383, (215)436-2297.

Writing is not a profession, occupation, or job, it is not a way of life; it is a comprehensive response to life.

Gregory McDonald

THE WRITING PROJECT WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY

Speaking at the 1992 Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), noted educator Grant Wiggins addressed leaders in the field of English and urged them toward greatness in teaching. In the midst of his talk, Wiggins referred to the National Writing Project and praised it for enabling teachers to take the necessary risks of modelling what they were trying to teach: writing. Just because teachers model passion and interest about writing (and literature), people will not get it. This assumption is an "egocentric fallacy of teaching."

"The Writing Project," said Wiggins, "understood this. The Writing Project will go down in history as one of the most successful efforts in the teaching profession, because the Writing Project understood that if kids are going to become writers, teachers had damn well better write, and get out of the fallacy, and recognize that just because they're teachers of writing doesn't mean that they're modelling writing. Just because they're teaching ABOUT something doesn't mean they're modelling that thing that they're teaching about."

"Only when writing teachers themselves take the risk of writing can they take their students inside writing and accomplish great teaching."

Grant Wiggins, who taught secondary English, social studies, and math for 14 years, is director of programs and research for the Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS), a non-profit educational research and consulting organization. He is a frequent speaker across the United States.

CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION IS UPDATED ON TEACHING WRITING

Writing is "the real back-to-basics movement," according to a newsletter of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) devoted entirely to the subject. "Teaching Writing," ASCD's January 1993 Curriculum Update, reviews for supervisors and curriculum directors the past, present, and future of writing instruction. It looks favorably at process approaches, whole language, writing across the curriculum, and portfolios; it summarizes the results of the 1990 NAEP Writing Assessment (see elsewhere in this Newsletter) showing dubious student achievement; and it emphasizes the historic accomplishments of the National Writing Project.

For copies of this ASCD Curriculum Update newsletter, contact ASCD, 1250 North Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1403 and ask for Stock no. 611-93014.

Respect for the classroom teacher is the central building block that generates everything else about the writing project that is important. Respect for teachers is present in spirit as well as deed in all local site programs and activities. A basic principle of the National Writing Project

1992 NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT INFORMATION

Number of Sites: 162 Sites; 149 sites within the U.S. including 1 site in Puerto Rico; 13 sites outside the U.S.

Location of Sites: 44 states and six foreign countries (Japan, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Norway, and Finland) plus sites overseas serving U.S. teachers in Department of Defense dependent schools (European, Pacific, and Atlantic Regions) and independent schools (East Asia Writing Project and The Athens Writing Project)

Numbers of Teachers Trained: 1990-1991 programs

Invitational Summer Institutes

Elementary	1,198
Junior High	722
Senior High	758
College	149
Other	72
Total:	2,899

School Year Programs

(serving teachers in 2,302 schools and districts)

Elementary	30,248
Junior High	16,070
Senior High	15,512
College	2,354
Other	6,063
Total:	70,247

All Other NWP Programs: **Total:** 37,940

Total Teachers and Others Trained in 1990-1991 Programs: **111,086**

Total Teachers, Administrators, and Others Trained in NWP Programs to Date, 1974 to the Present: **944,427**

(K-8 CONFERENCE, continued from page 1)

acclaim for her sensitive portrayal of Meg, who at 13 must come to terms with her sister's fatal illness. Shortly thereafter she published *Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye*, the story of an adopted girl's search for her true parents, which was made into an NBC afternoon TV special. Lowry turned to humor in her third novel, *Anastasia Krupnik*, a story of a precocious 4th grader, and continued laughing through *Anastasia Again* and *Anastasia at Your Service*. There are now 20 titles by Lowry and many well-deserved awards and recognitions from "kids' books people." The Newbery Medal was awarded for *Number the Stars*, the story of a 10-year-old Danish girl whose bravery is tested when her best friend is threatened by Nazis in 1943.



Marvin Terban

MARVIN TERBAN

Featured on the second day of the conference will be author-teacher Marvin Terban, who has written 12 lively books on word-play, including the recent *Funny You Should Ask: How to Make Up Jokes and Riddles with Wordplay*. Terban brings a light and joking touch to such subjects as idioms and homographs. Many of his books began as learning games in his classroom where he delights his students by finding new ways to teach language skills. He gets readers thinking about the mechanics of language and the meanings of words in general as well as about a variety of ways to play with sound and sense.

Terban has been teaching middle school English in New York City for 25 years and is also an actor in films and community theatre productions. He has made appearances all over the country where audiences respond enthusiastically to his presentations on making language fun. In addition to his keynote address in the morning, Terban will lead a workshop later in the day on "Classroom Games."

CHRIS BAKER AND BEVERLY ARMENTO

The conference will begin and end with keynote speeches by notable teacher-scholars who will address issues of what to teach and how to teach it. Chris Baker, an Australian now on the faculty of Salem College in North Carolina, will return to the conference after an absence of two years to open the conference by helping participants gain a perspective on "The Whole Language Revolution: Where It Is Now." Intended for teachers who have not yet and teachers who have already begun to integrate reading with writing and to teach through literature, Baker's presentation will show the excitement, potential, and troubles of "whole language" instruction.

Closing the conference on Thursday will be Beverly Armento, of Georgia State University, whose background as a teacher and historian qualify her to speak on the theme of "Diversity and Democracy: Implications for the Curriculum."

WEEK ON WHOLE LANGUAGE INCLUDES AUGUST LITERACY CONFERENCE

To provide a forum for those K-8 teachers who want more "processing" of the ideas presented in the Summer Literacy Conference, PAWP has scheduled A Week of Whole Language. For two days before the conference and one day afterward, several PAWP teacher-consultants will conduct a workshop that addresses key issues of teaching writing and reading. Participants will focus on ways to implement whole language instruction. The workshop leaders are Cynthia Muse (Philadelphia SD) and Nancy McElwee (Central Bucks SD). A Week of Whole Language carries three graduate credits; participants complete an independent project afterward and submit it by mail.

Last year's Week of Whole Language was evaluated highly by 40 participants, whose comments included:

"I have completed 20+ years of teaching and Master +45 credits--yet this certainly has been one of the best courses I've taken. It is practical, most useful for what I need, and full of information."

"An excellent course to get me started."

"More enjoyable and beneficial than I could ever have imagined."

"I will most definitely be back for more."

"Excellent...a "whole" new approach for teaching reading with enthusiasm."

"I learned a tremendous amount...was very professionally and creatively done."

Anyone who can improve a sentence of mine by the omission or placing of a comma is looked upon as my dearest friend.

George Moore

NEWS FROM THE YOUTH WRITING PROJECT

The 1992 Youth Writing Project summer sessions boasted high enrollment and another rewarding summer for young writers of all ages. Over 300 children participated in the eighth annual YWP and associated special program on writing and acting.

Surveys from the children always reveal so much about how the program is running, and a theme is prevalent. Many of the children remarked about the freedom that they experienced, a freedom that fits the philosophy of writing projects across the nation. "Lab time" to work through and explore pieces is available at the Youth Writing Project and is a key element in the philosophy of the programs.

Rebecca Neville (age 10) says, "I could write more freely than at school."

Nicki Atkinson (age 13) writes that she enjoyed the "freedom to write what I want."

Katie McVey (age 9) notices, "It helped me to use my imagination."

We thought you'd also enjoy the letter we received this fall from a 1992 YWP participant and covers from YWP publications.

Nancy
Franks

Dear Writing Project,
I got my T-shirt,
and I wanted to
tell you that people
have really been asking me
questions about it! I think
they want to go next
summer. Please thanks
everybody else from the
Writing Project. Thank you,
Nancy Franks

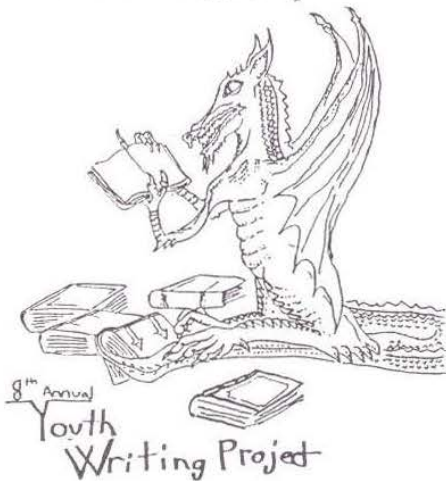
P.S. I'm going next year

Writing Project Fellows interested in working for the Youth Writing Project should call the YWP message line (215) 436-3089, or contact Director Bruce Seidel at (215) 494-4215.

The Youth Writing Project's Fall Reunion for Summer 1992 participants was held on Saturday, November 7 on West Chester University's campus. The day was a big success, attracting approximately 50 children including participants from the summer and their friends interested in finding out more about the program. Students gathered in groups to brainstorm, write, and share their writing with their friends.

The 1993 ninth annual Youth Writing Project adds a few changes to the program. The computer sessions (grades 5-12) will be using a new word processing program with hopes of its being easier for all age groups, especially the younger children. This mouse-operated, menu-driven program should help kids to move more quickly into their writing. We will also be offering computer sessions to 3rd and 4th graders in the last session.

WEST CHESTER 1992
UNIVERSITY



MacAnseliz



1993 SUMMER PROGRAMS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT

Summer Institute in the Teaching of Writing (6 credits)

National Writing Project Fellowships of \$450 available to qualified applicants
Participants become teacher-consultants of the Pennsylvania Writing Project

June 28 - July 29, 1993
Monday-Thursday 8:30 - 4:00

(Parallel programs are held for the Bucks County Intermediate Unit and North Central Pennsylvania)

PAWP Assessment Modules (1 to 6 credits) WCU Exton Center

- I. Writing Outcomes/Summative Evaluation (1 credit) June 29-July 1 8:30-2:30
- II. Conferring and Feedback/Formative Evaluation (1 credit) July 6-8 8:30-2:30
- III. Assessing Other Literacy Skills: Speaking/Listening (1 credit) July 13-15 8:30-2:30
- IV. Portfolios in Assessment (2 credits) July 19-23 8:30-3:30
- V. Assessment Seminar (1 credit, for persons completing all assessment modules in 1993)

Pennsylvania Literature Project (6 credits)

Summer Institute in Teaching Literature, K-12
June 28 - July 22, 1993
Monday - Thursday 8:30 - 4:00

(Offered at Exton & Berks Co. Intermediate Unit)

To request further information, contact the PAWP office, 215-436-2297.

Other summer programs

- Strategies for Teaching Writing - The Pennsylvania Writing Project's First Course (3 graduate or in-service credits) June 28-July 16 8:30-11:45 Exton
- Advanced Institute in Writing-Reading Connections (3 graduate credits) (Open only to Writing Project Fellows) June 28-July 9 8:30-2:30 Exton
- Writing in the Content Areas (2 graduate credits) July 12-15, 1993 8:30-4:30 Upper Darby
- Administering Writing and Language Arts Programs, K-12 (1 credit or non-credit) July 13-15 8:30-2:30 Exton
- Teachers as Writers (3 credits) July 19-30 8:30-2:30 Exton
June 23-July 2 8:30-2:30 Bucks Co.
- K-8 Literacy Opportunities Conference/Course (1 credit or non-credit) August 11-12 8:30-5:00 WCU Campus
- Week of Whole Language (K-8) (3 credits) August 9-13 8:30-4:30 WCU Campus

Pennsylvania Writing Project PAWPDAY Seminar Series West Chester University: Sykes Student Union

PAWP's Saturday seminar is a free service for teachers and other interested participants. The Saturday seminar series may be taken for university credit. School districts may credit participants with a contracted in-service obligation.

Information is available from the PAWP office, 201 Carter, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383 (215-436-2297). NO OTHER NOTICE WILL BE MAILED. CALL TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT.

Donations for coffee and refreshments are collected at the door. Book sales are a regular feature.

April 24, 1993 Program

- 9:00 - 9:25 Registration. Coffee by PAWP. Book sales.
- 9:30 - 11:00 "Igniting Writing: Turning On So We Don't Turn Off Our Students," Janet Ruth Falon, writer.
Sykes 243c
Janet Ruth Falon holds an M.L.A. degree from Temple University, is a teacher of writing and the creative process, as well as an award-winning poet, journalist, and essayist whose work has appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES, the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, the BOSTON GLOBE, and many other national and local publications.
- 11:00 - 11:25 Coffee break. Book sales continue.
- 11:30 - 1:00 Choose one
- Sykes 243c "Working with Creative Vision," Janet Falon, writer. Using the ideas presented in her keynote presentation, Janet shows how to stimulate students' creativity as writers and thinkers. Grades 3-college.
- Sykes 114 "Portfolio Assessment in a Studio Classroom," Mary Lou Kuhns, Conestoga High School, Tredyffrin-Easttown SD. Mary Lou, who co-directs PAWP summer institutes, recently offered an inservice course on portfolios for teachers in her district. Grades 3-college.
- Sykes 113 "A Living Portfolio of Learning: Videotaping Elementary Students," Barbara Reznick, Twin Valley Elementary Center, Twin Valley SD. Barb is in the midst of a National Writing Project mini-grant to support a video/portfolio of her pre-first students as readers and writers. Grades K-4.
- Sykes 112 "Elijah McCoy and My Writing Process: What Goes into Making a Book?" Wendy Towle, Nether Providence Elementary School, Wallingford-Swarthmore SD. Wendy's book, *THE REAL MCCOY*, just published by Scholastic, Inc., was begun during a PAWP summer institute. All grades.
- 1:00 - 1:30 Book sales continue.

Directions: From the PA Turnpike or Schuylkill Expressway, travel south on Route 202 from the Valley Forge Interchange or south on Route 100 from the Downingtown Interchange. From the south, Route 202 from Wilmington and Routes 100 and 52 from US 1 all lead to West Chester. The April 24 program is held in Sykes Student Union, located on Rosedale Avenue, west of High Street. On-street parking is free on Saturdays and all campus lots are unrestricted. Park behind the Student Union; access is approached on Church Street or Roslyn Avenue.

ABOUT NAEP AND ITS WRITING ASSESSMENTS

At the meeting of the NWP Board of Advisors, I heard Claudia Gentile of ETS speak about her experience as Writing Coordinator for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP is mandated by Congress to measure the academic achievement of US students over time: it is the nation's report card. Every 2 years, math and reading are tested; every 4 years, science and writing; other subjects occasionally. Claudia will develop the NAEP writing assessment to be administered in 1995 and 1996. It is Claudia who reported the news from the 1992 writing assessment that is featured in the public media and chewed over by educators' associations. A personable woman with a background as a writing teacher and a doctoral degree in English Education, Claudia has been approached by reporters looking for what to deplore regarding the NAEP results. Her own report is not at all as negative as what has already appeared in print; rather, it focusses on what youngsters *can* do.

I read this report, titled *Exploring New Methods for Collecting Students' School-based Writing*, and found it informative but depressing. It is not based on timed writing samples but on portfolios, and results should be better.

Characteristics of the Writing Submitted.

The samples received do not indicate variety in mode or audience, the presence of process-based instruction, self-selection of topics, or fluency in the products. About 2200 students participated, half 4th graders and half 8th graders, volunteering themselves in classrooms where teachers also volunteered. The piece submitted was to be a best effort "that had involved the use of writing process strategies." In other words, what was sought was students' best work as evaluated by teachers and by students themselves.

(A) Types of writing submitted: 88% were either informative (51% at 4th and 55% at 8th grade) or narrative (36% at 4th, 30% at 8th). Very few were persuasive or poetic.

(B) Almost all (93% of 4th and 96% of 8th grade) appeared to be written to an unspecified audience.

(C) Less than 45% showed evidence of the use of writing process strategies, and of these only a meager one percent showed any evidence of major revision.

Table 1: Percentages of Papers Showing Writing Process Strategies

	Grade 4	Grade 8
Evidence of major revisions	1	1
Evidence of minor revisions	21	31
Evidence of other process strategies including prewriting, conferring	16	11
Evidence of writing process, total	38	43

(D) For most of the papers submitted (76 and 87 percents), the students' own ideas were the major resource, rather than their reading or something they studied in school.

(E) Length of 4th grade papers ranged widely from 8 to 1250 words, with a median of 84 words. Length of 8th grade papers ranged widely from 5 to 4440 words, with a median of 140 words. Only 2% of 4th graders submitted a computer print-out; 6% at 8th grade.

(F) Half of the participating teachers included brief descriptions of the activities that generated their student's writing. Less than 1% at either grade indicated that students had been asked to select their own topics. Instead, teachers provided general and focussed prompts, content reports, and integrated activities.

Results (see scoring guides on next page)

On a 6-point rating scale for narrative papers ranging from a score of 1 for mere event description to a score of 6 for elaborated story, 26% of 4th graders produced basic story (score pt. 3), 57% produced undeveloped story (score pt. 2), and 11% produced event description (score pt. 1). Only 6% of 4th graders wrote extended or developed story.

For 8th graders, scores were a bit higher, 8% producing developed story (score pt. 5) and 19 % extended story (score pt. 4). Roughly equal percents (34 & 35) produced basic and undeveloped story (score pts. 3 & 2). None of the 4th or 8th grade papers were classified as elaborated stories (score pt. 6).

On a parallel 6-point rating scale for informative papers ranging from a score of 1 for mere listing to a score of 6 for developed discussion, 17% of 4th graders produced undeveloped discussion (score pt. 3), 41% produced attempted discussions (score pt. 2), and 31% produced listings (score pt. 1). The discussion level (score pt. 4) was attained by 9% of 4th graders, with partially developed discussion (score pt. 5) attained by 2%.

For 8th graders, scores were again higher. Eight percent produced partially developed discussion (score pt.5) and 22% discussion (score pt. 4); 27, 30 and 13 percent produced undeveloped discussion, attempted discussion, and listing. Again, none of the 4th or 8th grade entries were classified as developed discussions (score pt. 6).

Table 2: Percentages of Students Producing at Low-competent Levels and Above in Narrative and Informative Writing Tasks

	Low-competent or higher (score points 3 - 6)	
	Grade 4	Grade 8
Narrative	32%	62%
Informative	29%	57%
	Competent or higher (score points 4 - 6)	
	Grade 4	Grade 8
Narrative	6%	27%
Informative	11%	30%

Discussion

I focussed my attention not just on the results of the 1990 NAEP Portfolio Study, which might be presumed to reflect writing performance across the nation, but on ostensible reasons for the rather poor performance. Some

inferences can be made about the classrooms that contributed to this study: they enabled writing and revision, they kept portfolios to house written work, and at least some of them provided for response to written work. Yet these classrooms showed superficiality rather than richness in the writing environment: the modes of writing were traditional, the audience was generally unspecified, little real revision was accomplished, and the students did not grapple with ideas related to their academic or reading programs.

The papers were short, i.e., lacking in fluency or the production and development of ideas. Even though students wrote from personal experience, they did not select their own topics and did not explore these with any apparent sense of personal investment. What can legitimately be inferred, I think, is that the teachers cooperating with the NAEP Portfolio Study were not yet convinced that their classrooms could and should become meaningful environments for writing meaningfully. Such environments are what teachers of creative writing --and Donald Graves following them--call

workshops, or what Dan Kirby and Carol Kuykendall have called studio classrooms.

The characteristics of the written products seen in such workshop or studio classrooms would be different from those found by NAEP. The samples generated in a richer writing environment would:

- *show fluency--writers would fill up the page rather than be stingy with words
- *show a balance of self-selected and assigned topics, with sources being balanced among personal experience, academic areas of study, and student reading
- *include many more persuasive and literary ("poetic") pieces
- *include many addressed to specific audiences other than the teacher
- *show evidence of re-drafting, re-thinking

That the writing itself would be better in such a workshop or studio environment than what NAEP found in 1990 is my expectation and my hope.

Informative Scoring Guide 1990 NAEP PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

1 **Listing.** Paper lists pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic, but does not relate them. A range of information/ideas is presented.

2 **Attempted Discussion.** Paper includes several pieces of information and some range of information. In part of the paper, an attempt is made to relate some of the information (in a sentence or two), but relationships are not clearly established because ideas are incomplete or undeveloped.

3 **Undeveloped Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and attempts to relate some of the pieces of information. The relationships are somewhat established, but not completely. The ideas are confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

4 **Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and, in at least one section, clearly relates the information using rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, suppositions, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking exemplification).

5 **Partially Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information and relationships are well developed, with explanations and supporting details. Paragraphs are well formed but the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose and cohesion.

6 **Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information and relationships are explained and supported. The paper has a coherent sense of purpose and audience, and is free from grammatical problems. An overt organization structure is used (such as the *traditional essay format*).

Narrative Scoring Guide 1990 NAEP PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

1 **Event Description.** Paper is a list of sentences minimally related or a list of sentences that all describe a single event.

2 **Undeveloped Story.** Paper is a listing of related events. More than one event is described, but with few details about setting, characters, or the events. (Usually there is no more than one sentence telling about each event.)

3 **Basic Story.** Paper describes a series of events, giving details (in at least two or three sentences) about some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or problems to be solved). But the story lacks cohesion because of problems with syntax, sequencing, events missing, or an undeveloped ending.

4 **Extended Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes, including details about most story elements (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, problems to be solved). But the stories are confusing or incomplete (i.e., at the end the characters' goals are ignored or problems inadequately resolved; the beginning does not match the rest of the story; the internal logic or plausibility of characters' actions is not maintained).

5 **Developed Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are clearly developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved) with a simple resolution of these goals or problems at the end. May have one or two problems or include too much detail.

6 **Elaborated Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are well developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved). The resolution of the goals or problems at the end are elaborated. The events are presented and elaborated in a cohesive way.

THE PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

(In the Winter NEWSLETTER, we published the scoring guide, definitions of terms, and scoring categories for interpretation of results from the PDE Writing Assessment test. In this follow-up, we explore application of these guides to classroom instruction and responding to student writing.)

Testing drives instruction. It also drives teachers to distraction. The PDE Writing Assessment does not have to have that effect, however. Pennsylvania's "Characteristics of Effective Writing," used to holistically score student papers, can also be used to make writing instruction more accessible to both teachers and students.

* * * * *

Here are two student essays written to the same prompt in a middle school-based assessment. The prompt is: "Think about discoveries or inventions that have affected our lives. Select one and tell whether it has been good or bad for society." Because sixth and ninth grade papers are scored together in the state assessment, the grade level of these writers is omitted. After each essay some discussion appears in terms of the five characteristics of effective writing and instructional implications for classroom use.

SAMPLE #1:

One of the best inventions ever made was the invention of the television. The television is something used for enjoyment as well as education. When the television was invented, that person must have known it would last for years and years.

The television has been around for about forty-some years now and it is still going to be used for many more years to come. I am not saying the television is great just because you can watch a terrific selection of television shows, but also you can learn something from it to.

As a kid, I certainly know that most young people these days don't come home after school and pick up a newspaper to find out whats going on in our world, except maybe to read the comics, or to see what superstitious facts we can find out in our horescope. But at night while we are doing our homework, we sometimes sit down to watch the T.V. News. I know I do!

Also, other good uses of the television is to watch the nature programs and wild-life shows. By doing that, we can discover what thousounds of animals there are, and yet, have never heard of them before. You can also find out the hundreds of trees there are in our world.

Another good use of the T.V. is the children's shows. A lot of them can teach you things you never knew. For instance, I learned the alphabet by watching Sesame Street. That doesn't mean I sat for hours in front of the T.V., but just by watching it for maybe an hour a day I learned something that I will be using for the rest of my life.

Last but not least is the television watching used for enjoyment. Everybody has sometime in their life watched a T.V. comedy show. And there fun too.

And thats why I think the television has affected our lives the most.

Discussion:

FOCUS. This paper is clearly focused, from its statement of controlling point in the first sentence, through every paragraph in the body, almost to the final sentence, which shifts the point from television being "one of the best inventions ever made" to the invention that "has affected our lives the most."

CONTENT. The content here is as specific as possible in the discussion of "Sesame Street" and remains just above that level in its other examples.

ORGANIZATION. This is a well-organized essay. An over-all sense of categories--television for news, for nature education, for children's education, and for entertainment--controls the order in which ideas are presented and the paragraphing of those ideas. The paper also has a clear sense of introduction and conclusion, though the introduction is unnecessarily expanded into two paragraphs instead of one.

STYLE. A writer's voice comes through this paper's varied diction, sentence structure, and use of the first person. The style is also a bit wordy and cliched, as evidenced by the redundant, two paragraph introduction and use of phrases like "years and years," "about forty-some years now," "many more years to come," and "last but not least."

CONVENTIONS. Few mechanical errors appear in this paper.

Instructional Implications

Since this writer has control of focus, organization, and mechanics, revision efforts can concentrate on content and style. Pointing out how much clearer the alphabet-through-Sesame-Street paragraph is than those preceding it, the teacher can help this writer learn the importance of specific details, examples, and explanations for effective writing.

The teacher might also use this paper as an opportunity to talk about wordiness and cliches, helping this student recognize instances of each and find fresher, more precise ways to say what she means.

SAMPLE #2:

When I seen a robot for the first time it was a diffrent inspiernce I never felet in side me. the first time I seen a robot inperson was at G ____ V ____ school It is neet seeing some of the stuff a robot could do wat a person couldn't do. some robots could paint and draw some of them could sing some could walk and some don't. A robot could do many bootful stuff. robots could change or lives in the future they could also be men best friend. The end

Discussion:

FOCUS. While this paper has a topic--robots--it does not have a focus; in other words, it does not make a single, controlling point. Is it about the experience of seeing a robot for the first time? About all the beautiful things a robot can do? About the ways robots could change our lives? In fact, it has at least one sentence about each of these robot-related ideas, but it stays focused on none of them.

CONTENT. This paper lists in only general terms some of the things robots can do and comments even more generally on others. The content, therefore, is superficial and underdeveloped.

ORGANIZATION. There is a vague sense of organization here, beginning with what could be an introductory sentence and ending with "The end," but sentences do not follow logically in the body of the piece, and there is no sense of order or transition.

STYLE. This writer's enthusiasm for robots comes through in words like "neet" and "bootful," but there is little sense of control of language or structure.

CONVENTIONS. Multiple spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors make this piece difficult to understand on first reading.

Instructional Implications

The strength of this paper lies in the writer's enthusiasm for robots based on what he saw at Grand View School, and this enthusiasm might provide both the motivation necessary for him to revise this piece and the place to begin that revision. "How many robots were there? And what did each one do?" are questions that could elicit more vivid, specific content. And content is the place to begin: unless a writer--any writer at any age--cares about WHAT he is saying and believes his readers will care as well, he will have no desire, and in fact no need, to care about HOW he says it or to make mechanical corrections.

Once there is a revised, more substantial draft, questions about focus may be in order if the revised draft remains topic rather than point oriented.

The last issue to address is mechanics, and that should happen only after the content has been revised to the writer's and perhaps the teacher's satisfaction. There is no point in correcting sentences that might be revised or deleted or spelling words that ultimately won't be used. If, after the content has been revised, there are still so many kinds of mechanical problems in this piece, the teacher must decide which one to address. (Addressing more than one insures diminishing returns since students often feel hopelessly out of control when confronted by more than they can comfortably process at one time.) Sentence structure might seem most crucial here, so developing sentence sense and inserting appropriate end punctuation and capital letters might be the goal of editing a revised version of this paper, leaving all other spelling and grammar problems for a future piece.

Now we invite NEWSLETTER readers to try their hands at this approach. Here is one more sample written to the same prompt. What do YOU notice about its focus, content, organization, style, and conventions? What would YOU say to the writer if s/he were in your class?

Send your ideas and questions to the Project office, and in a future NEWSLETTER we will publish teachers talking about this kind of assessment and instruction. (Be sure to indicate whether or not we may quote you for publication!)

SAMPLE #3:

The invention I'm going to write about is styrofoam. It is good because we use it for cups, plates, and many other things. We like to use it instead of paper.

The bad side of styrofoam is that it gives off three elements. They are C.F.C's (chloroflorocarbons). The element eats through the ozone layer, like acid. If the ozone layer get's big holes in it, the rays from the sun will enter.

The rays from the sun are harmful because they can give us cancer, and very bad sunburn. People will start to die and the plants will start to dry out. If the holes get bigger, earth will be an unliveable planet, like the rest.

My school is trying to stop the use of styrofoam, but fast food restaurants and factories still use it. If people stop using styrofoam, and other products that contain C.F.C.'s, earth will be a better planet.

COMMUNITIES

by Charles Baker

To Sir, With Love, The Blackboard Jungle, Up the Down Staircase--such are the "stuff" that dreams are made on. Well, maybe your normal, night-time dreams aren't, but my early college dreams of teaching were. In those innocent and egotistical reveries, the students loved me and I inspired them to want to learn like no one else had done before. Then, they'd love me more and I'd inspire them more, followed by more love and more inspiration, and so on, happily ever after. Of course, the exact formula for all this magic was never too clear in the dreams, but that didn't matter, for the loving and inspiring were quite enough for me.

The years haven't been that bad to the dream. In fact, they've been good enough for me to say that half of the dream came true, the part about being liked and respected by students.

Still, there's that other half of the dream where I inspire most of my students to want to learn. It never came close to becoming a reality, and I'm not one bit happy about it. So, I ask myself year after year, "Why are most of my students only motivated by a grade?" and "Why, in spite of the good relationship I have with my students, do I still feel that most of them really don't care about what I'm trying to teach them?"

Then, I read the words of Donald Murray, "Far too many teachers blame the students...when the fault lies with the teacher's instructions or lack of instructions" (98), and think, not of the word instructions, but, instead, of instruction. Then, I ask, "How are my instructional practices (or lack of them) keeping my students from wanting to learn for the best reasons and from enjoying literature and writing as much as I do?"

Over the last few years, but especially since beginning the PAWP courses, I've been getting the same general answer--I am a traditional high school English teacher. The Schools Councils Project of 1971 describes one of my characteristics--I primarily use writing in order to test--and another--my students write primarily for an audience of one, me (Martin, et al 21-22). Other experts add that I don't use a process approach to writing, not even for the writing I test. They say that when I do teach writing, I tend to teach it out-of-context, as a sequence of discrete mechanical and grammatical skills and pat formulas, that is, "deductively," an approach that doesn't simulate the way writers write and the way students learn to write (Kirby and Liner 3-4). They say that, for me, the written piece is a "fait accompli" by the time my students get it back (Hillocks 80) and that all the comments required by this "intensive correction" approach are a waste of time because few students have the understanding necessary to put them into practice (Haynes 84, Patchell 187). Moreover, I am the kind of teacher described by Steven Heffner, Lela DeToye and others who neither uses writing to help engage students with the work being studied nor to help them think and learn about the literature. Finally, I am the sole purveyor of knowledge in the classroom, the final judge of what is to be studied and written about. I am the only show in town, and my compulsive and

limited testing at the end of each unit or work of literature is a guarantee that things will stay that way. In short, I am a traditional high school English teacher whose manner of instruction is his own worst enemy, for it limits both the potential of his students to learn and the level of their commitment to their opportunities to learn, which is a contradiction to the other half of my dream.

Before I wear out the whip on myself, let me qualify the overall picture that I've been giving. First of all, I'm not defensive or righteous about my teaching, as are many of my colleagues. I know I've been doing some ineffective things for a long time. Second, I can't be all bad because I never believed that formal grammar instruction improved writing. Finally, I've always tried to become a better teacher, but I just didn't know how and wasn't surrounded by people who could show me. Thus, for a long time my efforts were restricted to the search for the best "gimmick." For the last five years, however, I've been actively tinkering with my instructional habits, and have actually already tried some of the approaches I'll mention later in this paper. My innovations, however, were usually unconnected and did not complement one another, and their impact was fleeting. What I need, what I'm striving for in this paper, is, as Peter Elbow would say of an unfocused paper, a "center of gravity" (31) that I can orbit very specific complementary teaching strategies and classroom organizational structures around.

My goal this year is to create the kind of classroom reality that I believe best gives me the gravitational center to accomplish the second part of my dream. I want my classes to view themselves as communities of learners and writers, not as gaggles of well-behaved and pleasant whiners, flirts, operators, ingenuous saboteurs, and day-dreamers. To create this gestalt in my classes, I searched for strategies and techniques that deemphasize grades in favor of self-improvement. Also, a method of organizing students into communities that could help one another think and write was needed.

Because the way a teacher starts the year establishes the patterns, expectations, climate and mores of a class, I decided to begin with a writing activity that will easily allow me to implement the process approach to teaching writing, which would also assist me in establishing the tradition that students help each other to improve the writing. The assignment, which is based on Jim MacCall's pre-writing presentation in which students produce a personal piece generated by doing a time line, was picked because it involves the students with what should be a personally important topic on which they are also the authorities. Thus, it should be a non-threatening way to implement a process approach to writing into the fabric of the class. This formative model, because it views the process and not the product as most important, and because it measures each student's success in terms of himself or herself, reinforces my effort to develop intrinsic motivations for learning. Response groups will also be employed to assist the students with the revisions and editing of the various drafts. Thus, a structure that can be used to develop the feeling that the classes are communities of writers and learners will be in place. The pin that will join these two teaching "scaffolds" together will be me. As Kirby, Liner, Murray, Elbow and

many other writing process teachers advise, I will write with the students and model all aspects of the writing process and response group work for them. The messages will be very clear: first, I don't start with a finished product, but struggle through a series of stages to reach that end; and, second, I need and value the help of others in my efforts to bring a piece to a publishable stage.

After finishing this writing experience, all classes will begin a required work of literature. As mentioned earlier, in the past when I tried a new strategy or organizational structure, I usually lost the momentum and potential for change it offered by doing something very different after it or by reverting to something I usually did. This year, I'll also teach the literature in ways that promote my goal of developing a community of writers and learners. Capitalizing on their experience with response groups in the early weeks of school, an "invitational" approach, one where students, both individually and in collaboration groups, are responsible for presentations related to the ideas and concepts in the literature, will be also be used (Kuhns 3). Additionally, student collaboration groups will generate appropriate writing experiences based on the literature for which they are responsible. Again, the purpose here is to have the students be more active participants in their education and to enable them to feel that they can become the experts who teach themselves and one another.

While giving grades may be viewed as a contradiction to my goal of developing an intrinsic motivation for learning in my students, I'm still required to rank students through the use of grades. This year, however, after testing occurs or a composition is completed, I'll modify the approach I take to assigning grades on papers. For the sake of my own sanity and in order to guarantee that Donald Murray's admonition, "Things done are not things learned. They are the unlearned opportunity to teach" (61), I'm going to teach my students a modified form of holistic grading so that they can, using the rubrics they establish based on prewriting activities or earlier assignment-related writing activities, learn through the

evaluation of their own writing and the writing of their classmates (Gossard 148, Patchell 187).

Having students be responsible for their own learning, both in literature and inwriting, is a key to their development of an interest in reading and writing. Likewise, stressing a formative approach to writing is an essential way of refocusing student values away from external rewards to the internal ones that last a lifetime. Taken together, these components, successfully implemented in my classroom this year, will hopefully move my classes closer to the center of gravity of my view of the ideal classroom. I will be a teacher surrounded by active and involved learners, and the dream will at last have become reality.

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Chuck Baker, a 1992 Fellow, teaches in the Abington School District.

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

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Pennsylvania Writing Project
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West Chester, PA 19383

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