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# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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## PAWP 1983 SUMMER PROGRAMS IN PERSPECTIVE

### 1983 Workshop on Holistic Assessment

On June 22 and 23, Bob Weiss led 17 teachers, elementary through college, in an intensive workshop on holistic assessment of writing. From a general lack of agreement on what scores to apply to the introductory training samples, by the second day the group reached a high level of reliability (.98) in rating over 1000 writing samples on a 6-point scale. The group also discussed other general-impression scales, analytic and developmental scales, and primary trait methods of assessment. As in previous years, Bob was assisted by Dolores Lorenc (Holy Family College) and Lois Snyder (Upper Darby School District).

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### 1983 Workshop on Teaching Composition

Teaching Composition, English 595, was a workshop conducted for 22 teachers from all grade levels and disciplines during the three weeks between June 27 and July 15. Directed by Jim Trotman, the workshop featured a variety of activities to give teachers practical approaches for writing in the classroom. Most of the participants were involved in the three-day workshop which featured Keith Caldwell, Mary Ellen Giacobbe, Don Graves and Jane Kearns. These outside consultants, later joined by PAWP Fellows who made presentations, helped to give Teaching Composition a broad but focused view for all participants.

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### The 1983 Institute Fellows

This year's summer institute brought together teachers from across the curriculum to participate in PAWP on the West Chester University campus. As in previous years, the institute offered a range of consultants and activities that included Don Graves, Mary Ellen Giacobbe, Jane Kearns and Keith Caldwell, Stephen Marcus, Elizabeth Smith and Marian Mohr (see reactions inside). Under the direction of

Bob Weiss, the institute was coordinated by Martha Menz and Lois Snyder, both of the Upper Darby School District.

The 1983 PAWP Fellows are: Lelia B. Anderson, Philadelphia School District, Sayre Jr. High; Jim C. Beaver, Avon Grove School District, Avon Grove High School; Marlene B. Care, Philadelphia School District, Southwark Elementary; Clare M. Ciliberto, Upper Darby School District, Highland Park Elementary; Melanie Cohen-Goodman, Rose Tree Media School District, Penncrest High School; Virginia M. Conover, Wm. Penn School District, Pennwood East Jr. High School; Martha E. Cox, Lehighon School District, Franklin Elementary; Maryellen Darlington, Coatesville School District, Gordon Jr. High School; Barbara C. Giorgio, Wm. Penn School District, Pennwood High School; Patrick W. Hallock, Lancaster School District, Wheatland Jr. High School; Elberta E. Hopkins, Coatesville School District, Caln Elementary; Marlene Ann Kelly, West Chester School District, East Sr. High School; John H. King, Hatboro-Horsham School District, Keith Valley Middle School; Susan E. Long, Octorara School District, Octorara Upper Elementary; Dian S. Margolies, Wm. Penn School District, Pennwood West Jr. High School; Charlena V. Newell, Philadelphia School District, L. C. Cassidy Elementary; Jane J. Nieman, Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, Wallingford Elementary; Richele J. Ricci, Philadelphia School District, T. Fitzsimons Jr. High School; L. J. Richter, West Chester School District, Fugett Middle School; Carol H. Rockafellow, Garnet Valley School District, Garnet Valley High School; Catherine I. Schutz, Line Mountain School District, Line Mountain High School; Joan B. Skiles, Octorara School District, Octorara Area Elementary; Betty Ann R. Slesinger, Wm. Penn School District, Pennwood East Jr. High School; Vicki Steinberg, Exeter Township School District, Exeter Township Sr. High School; Joseph A. Tortorelli, S. E. Delco School District, Academy Park West; Marie Wardynski, S. E. Delco School District, Ashland Middle School; Huberta Wegbreit, Marple Newtown School District, Russell (C. H.) Elementary; Gloria M. Wetzel, Bryn Athyn School District, Bryn Athyn Church School; Constance G. Womer, Philadelphia School District, Fitzsimons Jr. High School.

## The Process-Centered Writing Class

by Elaine B. King

*(This and the following six articles are responses to the Pennsylvania Writing Project's 3-day workshop on the Process-Centered Writing Class.)*

According to Bob Weiss' definition of a writer, I guess I must be a writer, although I never considered myself as such. I come to the writing process as a novice. Perhaps that in part explains my enthusiasm about the happenings of the past three days. As a reading specialist I have had little formal training in teaching writing. I have read some on the subject and discussed it with colleagues in the English Department, but what I have gotten has been rather haphazard. My students do write, although much of it is formalized, such as business letters or reports, but I am frequently at a loss as to how I can best help them. The chance to learn from experts, who not only write and talk about the subject from an academic perspective, but practice it on a daily basis, is indeed a rare experience. In addition, being able to discuss and share with fellow professionals who wish to expand their knowledge of the writing process is an exciting event.

My only negative criticism of the entire three days concerns timing on the first day. . . . This criticism, felt strongly at the time, pales in comparison with the highly positive feelings of the conference in totality.

On Wednesday morning I went to the Novice group in the Schmucker Science Center for my overview of the writing process led by Jolene Borgese, Lois Snyder and Jim Trotman. Since I had spent two days in English 595, some of the material covered was repetitive. However, reinforcement of the terminology used was helpful. The Pennsylvania Writing Project presenters demonstrated several phases of the writing process by having us go through them in brief. If one is going to help students write, then one must write oneself. And write we did. We wrote for fifteen minutes answering questions about our own writing habits. We shared our writing with others. We did not get to the revising, editing, or "publishing" stages, but how much can one do in such a limited time? The questions of the participants were valuable in helping discover their concerns and directing the discussion of the presenters. Another pre-writing technique, that of listing concerns and then listing those who could be helpful in solving them, was introduced. Time limitations prevented us from writing a first draft of a letter to the person who would be most able to offer a solution to our most pressing problem.

On Wednesday afternoon I chose to go to Trotman's presentation on "Writing with the Arts: Music and Painting". It was a good choice. I can see direct application of the techniques demonstrated to my situation. My students would enjoy music such as the Stevie Wonder song. Besides their enjoyment, it would show them that I place value on "their" music as well as "mine". I found it interesting the way Trotman was able to intertwine music, literature, and art and weave the experiences into writing. This session also helped me with a serious worry I have about my students. Their backgrounds are so limited in relation to the world outside their immediate "here and now" that they do not understand even the simplest historical references in their reading. They are so street wise that I am frequently sur-

prised when I assume that they know. Using classical art, music, literature in this nonthreatening way is one method of filling in some gaps.

To try to commit to paper what two days with Keith Caldwell embodied looms up as an almost impossible task. Primarily, Keith Caldwell transmits his love for teaching and his overwhelming love for his students. This is evident in everything he says about his work with them. It is obvious from their reactions that they sense this in his reaching out to be encouraging.

Do students value writing? Why should they write? We tell them that through writing they can increase their intellectual development. However, if one surveys the community one finds that there is not much writing going on out there. Very few people write regularly as a part of their work. Which employers *do* have jobs needing writing skill? Those who have authority and power know how to write. If one wants to be a taker of orders rather than a giver, then one needn't learn.

In school there are basically two kinds of writing: writing to prove having learned and writing to learn. Writing to prove having learned takes the form of testing, compelled writing, writing in the public arena. It is either right or wrong. Writing to learn may be to yourself; it may be tentative, trial, experimental; it is concerned with content. If writing is for the purpose of learning then not every paper must be read and graded (evaluated) by the teacher. In fact Caldwell estimates that he only grades 30% of the papers his students write. He gives the students credit for writing the others — grading on quantity. I am not sure that I am completely comfortable with that concept, although I am fully aware of the magnitude of the task of evaluating in some way every paper for approximately one hundred students.

He stressed over and over again that to gain fluency one must write frequently and in quantity. Form and correctness are functions of purpose and audience. Those factors are secondary to getting one's thoughts on paper. Impelled writing, intentional writing, will be better than compelled or motivated writing. Students need a purpose for writing. A teacher should keep in mind when making assignments that students should have some element of participation and involvement. Writing requires personal investment if it is to be effective. These are Caldwell's guidelines for teachers.

Students need to know that there is more than one way to say something. Exercises may be incorporated after the first draft. For example: Take a telling sentence from the story and write a page about it. Find a place for a short sentence. Combine two sentences into one. Start a sentence with an *-ing* word. Put an adjective behind a noun, reverse the syntax, get rid of *who*, etc. See if a student can answer a few "So whats?" about his piece to perhaps get at some deeper generalities underlying his composition. These may be incorporated either implicitly or explicitly into the writing.

Another concept touched upon briefly was that of mapping and clustering as an alternative to outlining. I can certainly see this as being useful in my own situation, where it is difficult to convince my students that they have anything worth saying. It could also be used as a precursor to formal outlining.

We also spoke of revising and editing, of teacher comments on papers (those which are helpful and those which are not). We spoke of the need for initial comments on student writing to be content oriented, about that particular paper, and non-judgmental. Writing and the remedial

student, writing and the reluctant student were discussed. Pre-writing, post-writing, audience, purpose, point of view were all woven into the fabric of the two day session. It is impossible to do more than scratch the surface in a paper of this sort.

Prior to the guest workshop sessions on Thursday and following Friday's sessions we had an opportunity to hear briefly from each of the guest speakers. I must emphasize the word *briefly*. It seemed almost a travesty to have such knowledgeable people from so far away here and to only be able to have fifteen minutes to hear what they had to say. Oh, to be able to spend time learning, absorbing, receiving inspiration from each of them!

The single word which best describes my feelings about the three days is *inspirational*. I cannot wait for September to come so that I may start to use my newly gained knowledge, techniques, and expanded understanding of the writing process.

*Elaine B. King was a participant in the 1983 Teaching Composition course and is a reading specialist at the William Penn High School in Philadelphia.*

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### The Caldwell Workshop

by Barbara Georgio  
and Marlene Kelly

On Thursday, June 30, 1983, participants in West Chester University's Writing Project Institute were inspired, encouraged, and enlightened in a workshop led by Keith Caldwell of the Bay Area Writing Project. The two-day session began with questions so that Caldwell could focus his presentation.

The questions revealed a common desire to become adept in teaching the writing process. Caldwell pointed out that teachers have never really been taught or trained to teach writing, and that we have had to depend on each other, on research (which until recently was limited), and on experience. We had fallen into the trap of finding support through our own hard work — our "moral compunction" to read everything our students write. Correcting student papers has become a key part of our professional lives and the red pen has become our crutch; but we were reminded by Keith that "correcting" papers presupposes error. We respond to that error with our adult perceptions (i.e., "awk", "vague") even though we realize that such information has little personal meaning to our students. No wonder, then, that we are constantly faced with the reluctant writer: a student who is not incapable, but who is unwilling. He has no "stake" in his writing after red-pen fever has dissipated it.

Caldwell devoted a major portion of his presentation to the reluctant writer and to approaches which help him be more willing to invest himself in his writing. The reluctant writer's teacher must establish credibility to prove to the student that writing really is a powerful tool of communication. Merely telling such students that they will need writing skills in the "real world" is not enough. They need to see this fact. Thus, Caldwell surveyed his own community and found that only 3% of employees had to produce paragraph structured writing for their jobs; however, people in power, the employers and community leaders, did have to write frequently and fluently.

Reluctant writers should be shown that writing conveys their own power and then be encouraged to write on their own level. Guidelines for writing should be provided, and

the physical surroundings should be as conducive as possible since writing is, after all, a physical act. Teachers should consider the myriad problems that exist in any given writing assignment and help students sort out such problems. (Mapping and webbing were presented as means to help students organize.) Through discussion of Britton's "audience categories," Caldwell enabled us to see that "writing to learn," or writing which is tentative, experimental, concerned with content, and impelled will be far more motivating for the reluctant student than "writing to prove having learned" which is compelled, written for a public audience, and judged right or wrong by an examiner. His own students face the teacher as examiner only 20-30% of their writing time and even then will find their teacher's reaction divided between formative and evaluative response. In essence, he only marks those errors which can be a source of information for the student.

Specific hints were provided to help workshop participants to successfully implement the writing process in our reluctant-writer classes. The foundation of such programs should be a commitment to daily, five-minute writings at the beginning of each class. Any form of writing will do (mini-plays, poems, dialogue, etc.) as long as the work is "writer-based" rather than "reader-based" and is conducted in an atmosphere of trust, where the teacher is an active observer and participant in the writing process. Quantity of writing is essential as fluency results from the students' commitment to writing and frequent successes. Reading is also an important component in the writing classroom and students should be encouraged to read on as high a level as possible while still maintaining interest.

Many of these hints are applicable to classes of any level where writing is the central focus. For all classes where daily free-writing is used, a distinction must be made among private, personal, and public writing so that students and teacher can avoid the embarrassment of shared private writing. Students should realize that "correctness" is a function of purpose and audience: a piece is correct if it appeals to its audience and achieves its purpose. In the same vein, standard language is that which is practical and effective.

The writing process, for all students, is one which does not have to be seen through to completion for each writing problem; in fact, Caldwell's reluctant writers will complete the process only 20% of the time, and his gifted writers, only 30%. Each stage of the process is valuable in itself as well as being part of the whole.

The *pre-writing* stage should concentrate on content, not form, and can involve any of numerous thought-provoking activities such as charades, role-playing, talking, mapping, fast-forced writing, lists, etc. The *writing* stage should begin with a fast-write to be shared, "fixed", shared and continued any number of times. The student's investment in the piece will determine the dedication to this stage and to successive stages. If he has an intentional purpose, one which is impelled, not compelled, then rewrites will be meaningful. The *post-writing* stage involves editing, or mere mechanical revision, and careful proofreading, leading to the *publishing* stage. Various avenues can be used to publish final drafts, and dissemination of the pieces to school board and community members could serve to educate them to the writing process.

Caldwell provided participants with a handout called "Review of Research on the Teaching of Writing" and discussed the major findings in the following areas:

- Grammar — taught as an entity in itself has no effect on writing

- Sentence combining — can be effective
- Quantity — important, but must be directed
- Reading — improves writing
- Prewriting — improves writing
- Modeling — improves writing

Suggestions for professional reading to aid teachers in the assigning of meaningful reading to enhance the writing process included reading:

- *Active Voice*, James Moffett
- *An Introduction to the Teaching of Writing*, Stephen and Susan Judy
- *If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You've Gotta Have This Book!* M. Frank

Caldwell often returned to his premise concerning the students' impelled purpose: "If they don't own it, they won't invest," and it was clear to those present at this workshop that he follows his own advice. His students are encouraged to think, risk, and own just as we were encouraged to become intimately involved in the writing process. His investment in our professional education was an inspiration to us all. Lost luggage, circles under his eyes, 4½ years on the road are just some of Caldwell's "fringe" benefits as an owner of the writing process, and we sincerely thank him for investing in us.

*Note: For the past four years Keith Caldwell has been editor of The National Writing Project Network Newsletter and the roving ambassador of the National Writing Project. This year he has returned to full-time teaching in the Bay Area of California.*

*Barbara Georgio teaches at Pennwood High School in the Wm. Penn School District. Marlene Kelly teaches at East Sr. High School in the West Chester School District. Both are 1983 Fellows.*

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### Keith Caldwell's Visit by Catherine Schutz

Keith Caldwell's presentation was filled with practical suggestions for classroom teachers. His earthy delivery provided participants with classroom management ideas, with ideas for varying assignments within the classroom, and with humorous anecdotes which kept those in attendance laughing and learning.

Caldwell's underlying message throughout the day was that if teachers want their students to write extensively and to write well, those students must identify with what they are writing. Students must have an audience for the writing being done. Caldwell shared some of his ideas for eliciting a change in the mode of discourse in which a student is writing. As this change in mode occurs, the student's audience may change, as might the student's degree of abstractness. For example, Caldwell suggested that using a series of "so what" questions as a response to concrete statements of fact in a student's writing may lead the student toward making some abstract observations of the world. This "so what" procedure may be used as part of the editing procedure.

In response to a statement that sometimes teenagers are reluctant to share verbally, Keith Caldwell jokingly told of such a time in his classroom. He related getting a volunteer

for sharing fourth, then third. Looking around the room, Caldwell asked, "Who wants to be second?" Upon finding a volunteer, Caldwell quipped, "Go ahead, we're not having firsts today!"

In a more serious vein, Caldwell observed that part of learning is listening because listening helps form future behavior. Because students need help in seeing the direction a paper is headed, Caldwell recommends the use of various sizes of response groups. He advocates that students be given a set task and time limit for these response groups, and that the question of who selects the groups' membership should vary according to the teacher's objectives for the project.

Moving from student response groups to teachers' responses to student writing, Caldwell shared some comments written on second and fourth graders' papers. He pointed out that teachers' responses often carry little direction for the students to follow. He continued by saying there is a gain in learning when teachers shift from grading through use of proofreading marks on papers (the "correcting" marks of *sp*, *awk*, and so on) to more personal rating comments appropriate to only the paper being read. This use of commenting on the content leads easily to non-judgmental remarks which encourage fluency. The traditional "corrections" made on papers do not belong on a final draft being returned to students, but on a draft being edited for final revisions. That editing process provides a forum for the teaching of form. After all, if the student is finished with the paper, what good are the corrections? Students tend to look for the grade, not the corrections.

A rather valuable tool Caldwell shared was a suggestion for using a shift in audience or situation to teach kids to write from a different point of view than "I". He suggested having students write about a time when they learned a lesson (outside of school). The students may then be asked to write about the same event from the point of view of another observer, of another participant in the event, or of a parent. In another version, the student could write letters about an event to his/her sister away at college, a cousin, a friend of the opposite sex, a teacher, or a business owner. Caldwell carefully reminded participants that writing about one's own experience can be as difficult as any expository writing assignment.

At the end of Friday's session, Caldwell distributed a handout on which he illustrated his model of the writing problem. He indicated the traditional five paragraph essay or the research paper places the subject of the student's writing far from the student, making it impossible for the student to identify with what is written. The quality of the writing decreases as students identify less with the written work. Also, as a student clearly sees the audience for his/her writing, the interest in the subject and the purpose of the writing becomes clearer, thus resulting in greater writing fluency.

Throughout the two day workshop, Caldwell provided practical inspiration to teachers of every age and type of student. Those in attendance certainly received an excellent overview of everyday use of the writing process.

*Catherine Schutz, a 1983 Fellow, teaches at Line Mountain High School in the Line Mountain School District.*

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## Mary Ellen Giacobbe's Workshop

by Susan Long, Jane Nieman and Joan Skiles

Instead of beginning with how children write, Giacobbe asked us what writing was like for us in our own school years. Very few of us had any recollection of learning to write in school. We also had little memory of any writing instruction in school at all. Most of us had learned to write from other sources.

Giacobbe's next question was: "When did you have a pleasant writing experience and what made it so?" From our response she developed the three elements of a positive and successful writing situation for us and for young children.

1. *Time* — We need to have time to write and time to share our writing with others. Similarly, children need time to write every day. When they do this they view themselves as authors.
2. *Ownership* — It is important to help children know that they have many options in writing. We must encourage them to experiment and take risks. Ownership means that:
  - a. Children choose their own topics.
  - b. Children choose their own writing materials and tools.
  - c. Children control revisions they make.
3. *Support Person* — A supportive teacher is essential to successful writing. Having someone to support us and care about our writing is very important.

Giacobbe then introduced the content conference. During it you are working on what a child's writing says. Once you know what the writer has written, the process of expanding and focusing begins. In short, the content conference involves focusing, expanding and discussing meaning. Giacobbe demonstrated the content conference with three children.

First I felt both fear and excitement. Before the workshop I had heard about the writing process and various terms associated with it. I found myself confused and frustrated by all of the talk. To be quite honest, I had no idea as to what it meant. Giacobbe both explained the writing process and convinced me to use it in my classroom. The excitement came when I began to think in terms of my own particular classroom and the numerous ways that I could implement the writing process. I was inspired! The fear began when my old friends, The Doubts and The Uncertainties, returned from vacation. How could I possibly pull this off? Where on earth would I begin in September? It took three words from Mary Ellen to send my friends on an extended vacation: "Let them write!"

The next day, Giacobbe restated the importance of beginning the year with content questions as a pre-writing activity.

Her next type of conference, the process conference, should serve to help children articulate how and why they are doing something and make them aware of their options in writing. This should help promote "ownership."

Only when the content of a piece is satisfactory to the child can the next type of conference take place. During this time the teacher will read through the piece and decide upon one skill that needs attention. This skill is then taught in the context of the child's writing. The important thing to remember at this point is keeping the skill to a manageable level for the teacher.

During the publishing conference, the child chooses his best piece to publish, with the teacher serving as final editor. In a writing classroom, publishing can be on-going, with everyone involved, including parents.

In the upper elementary grades, evaluation conferences are needed to grade the published piece. Teachers should keep the application of skills in mind and listen for meaning, authority and voice when evaluating. Giacobbe suggested that the final grades should be helpful to the learner. The child's self esteem is more important than the grade.

She then proceeded to break down actual classroom writing time. The first 7-8 minutes can often be spent as a whole group in a mini-lesson. At this time the teacher can give the children a brief lesson on a variety of topics. The actual writing time often takes on a workshop atmosphere, with the teacher circulating and holding spontaneous conferences. Sharing time is a nice way to end writing for the day.

Giacobbe then discussed the developmental level of the children as writers. Writing can begin as scribbles and labels on pictures. Early stories often take the form of "bed to bed" stories in which children write down every detail of their day. Another typical form is an "attribute book," merely a list of ideas about one thing. When children are at these stages, she helps them focus.

Teachers should keep an ongoing account of a child's progress. Giacobbe shared some ideas for quick and thorough record-keeping that have been successful for her. She stressed that an elementary classroom should belong to the children. To support this she then shared slides of her own classroom. It appeared to be a well organized classroom encouraging children to be responsible and self-sufficient in their writing and publishing.

Further, she stated, "Essential ingredients for the writing process are not costly." The important ingredients are a caring teacher and regular and frequent writing and sharing. Availability of writing tools, time to write, accompanied by a place to display published pieces, will result in a writing classroom. Giacobbe concluded with a smile and a word of encouragement, "Keep your sense of humor and have fun with it."

*Susan Long, Jane Nieman, and Joan Skiles are 1983 Fellows. Both Susan and Joan teach in the Octorara Area School District; Jane teaches in the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District.*

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"A writer's problem does not change. He himself changes and the world he lives in changes but his problem remains the same. It is always how to write truly and, having found what is true, to project it in such a way that it becomes a part of the experience of the person who reads it.

—Ernest Hemingway  
*The Problems of a Writer in War Time*

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## Everyone Has a Story to Tell: Day One of Graves' Workshop

by Elberta Hopkins  
and Gloria Wetzel

Don Graves, author of the recently published *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*, addressed the 1983 Process-Centered Writing Class Workshop at West Chester University June 30 and July 1 with these words: Everyone has a story to tell. The question is will they tell it to you? Do you want to know?

Graves proceeded to give anecdotes set in England, Oregon, and Alaska which illustrated that when we really "listen" to oral or written stories, we can "hear" the story still begging to be told which is hidden within the lines. An interview of a London porter turned into a moving story of his trials resulting from a surgical mishap because Professor Harold Rosen "looked and listened" to the story within the interview he was conducting. Richie's three-line story about his fishing trip turned into a descriptive, exciting portrait of courage when Don asked him about his last line which told of Richie's diving into a fast-moving creek to rescue his father's tackle box. Graves pointed out the endless possibilities for stories from just asking Richie about the tackle box. A last anecdote of Paul from Alaska told of Paul's struggle between returning to the University of Washington to complete doctoral work or returning to nature as a shaman to fulfill his traditional Eskimo heritage as a hunter. All of these stories, events, and narratives share an incredible potential.

Graves challenged us to meet children at the brink of learning, at the teachable moment to uncover the potential within in order to enrich that which lies outside.

At the 10:00 a.m. workshop, Don continued to address the art of story-telling as a pre-writing activity. Using every opportunity to present himself as a teaching model, Graves told us his story of meeting Mary Ellen Giacobbe and Jane Kearns at the Philadelphia airport the night before. He then invited us to write four topics as did he. We shared one of our topics with a partner who repeated the story. Each of us then wrote on that topic as did Graves. After he read to us and we exchanged reading to our partners, Graves showed us how to "web" or map what we had written by putting the main idea in the center and surrounding it with prior and post events. This clarified our perspective of exploring the part in relation to the whole and to examine our role in the story. Then we were free to continue, double back to a different point of concentration, or to write about a new idea which "exploded" out of the mapping. Many of us were surprised to see how much of what we had written could be influenced by our partner. Others learned a developing sense of audience. Many were surprised to see how a web could be used to develop a story. Several questions were asked regarding class management, conferencing, record keeping, student interaction, the relationship of reading and writing, and modelling which Graves promised to address before the workshop ended.

In the afternoon, five children ranging in ages from 9-12 were invited to write and demonstrate the conferencing technique. We had all been requested to be in the classroom before the children arrived, not to react, to observe specific behaviors, and to look for the potentials within each child. Graves used the story-telling technique with this group as he had with us prior to the webbing. He then conferenced all five children after they had begun writing in less than 10 minutes. In each case he asked (at eye level), "What is

your story about?" Then he clarified by repeating what he had heard.

Then Graves would say, "Did I get that right?" If he didn't, the child supplied the additional information.

As he conferenced, he would say, "What is happening now?" The child responded.

Finally, Don said, "What will happen next?"

Watching the conferencing was a powerful observation, especially as the spontaneity was reinforced by Don's innovative asking the children whether he should write his story on bloodsuckers as fact or fiction. They chose fiction. Later Graves said he is hopeful that American fiction in general will improve by showing young writers the relationship of realism to fiction.

Other ideas which grew out of our observation were:

- eye level communication enhances writing through sharing
- body proximity enhances sharing
- story-telling techniques are pre-writing
- writing isn't done "to kids" but "with kids"
- the teacher doesn't read; he listens, clarifies, expects
- the more a child takes over a piece (shows more confidence), the more we can expect from him
- the more responsible a child is for himself, the less conferencing is involved
- praise of a piece isn't required when the teacher sincerely listens and comments on specifics; listening replaces the need for praise

The exceptional modelling demonstrated by Graves and the children left us all thoughtful, humble, but inspired as we pondered Don's statement, "When children teach, teachers learn; when teachers learn, children learn."

## Graves Tells All: Day Two

A second floor classroom was the workshop site. For the second day participants leaned forward in their seats as they hung onto every word spoken by Donald Graves. Why? Because on July 1, 1983 the professor of education at the University of New Hampshire conducted three sessions exploring, explaining, and sharing techniques related to the development of the writing process, "Graves-Style."

Sure enough by the end of day two, Graves had told his story. In his case the story was entitled: "Writing Every Child's Story." Don Graves, like many other successful craftsmen, offered a child-proof approach to the teaching/learning of the writing process.

The highlights of this approach are:

1. Graves pointed out the powerful effects of the teacher who is knowledgeable about the individual interest expressed by the student. This knowledge is gained through the prewriting aspects of the writing process.
2. He tells his listeners that the first draft can be, initially, closely related to free writing when viewed as a product. Conferencing follows immediately at an audible level — designed to provide information, guidance, and a working model for the entire class.
3. Teachers' and pupils' comments are to be about the ideas in the piece of writing rather than looking at the mechanics of the piece.
4. Teachers of the writing process were warned and reminded of their role as facilitator. They were told to view children's compositions as unfinished pieces during the first four steps of the process.
5. Teachers must read the child's work/composition and respond to the content.

6. Graves stated that editing is the phase of writing that comes near the end of the process.
7. Structure learning environment. Be predictable as a teacher.  
The implications of the workshop were:
  - Explain the grading system in the early stages of the process.
  - Remember that correcting is not teaching.
  - Teach students how to bypass problem areas related to writing, i.e., spelling.
  - Keep a complete folder.
  - Keep the teaching and modeling simple.
  - Limit the amount of praise given during the writing process.
  - Never lower your expectations.

**TEACHERS:** Be consistent, be a writing teacher, be an attentive listener, be a predictable teacher, and be an initiator — meaning you are to be the one to set up a time for the parents and administrators to share their views.

*Elberta Hopkins and Gloria Wetzel are 1983 Fellows. Elberta teaches at Caln Elementary School in Coatesville; Gloria teaches at the Bryn Athyn Church School.*

### PAWP on TV and Radio

Since the spring TV shows done by Irene Reiter and Pat Wachholz and the radio show done by Bob Weiss, Bob has been invited to develop a series of half-hour talk shows for KISS-100 (FM). Each show runs twice on one Sunday a month, first at 7:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 a.m.

The first show, on June 26, featured Cecelia Evans (Philadelphia School District) and Lois Snyder (Upper Darby School District) on the subject of teaching writing to children in elementary schools. The second show, on August 7, was a discussion of the role of a school principal; the participants, all school principals, were Eva Andrew (Coatesville School District) and Mary Kay Sweet (Upper Darby School District). The third show is scheduled for September 18. Tune in.

### Indeed, Johnny and Sally Can Write

*by Hubert Seemann*

We in the Upper Perkiomen School District pride ourselves that Johnny and Sally can write. To show this, the Red Hill-Green Lane principal and the various Parents-Teachers for Students (PTFS) organizations publish monthly or bi-monthly selections of the elementary school children's writings.

Letter writing is stressed by all Upper Perkiomen second graders prior to their Pen Pal Trip to Montgomery County Park, a program initiated by Mrs. Whetstone, Reading Supervisor. Fifth grade pupils prepare the fourth grade students for the big step into middle school by writing to designated fourth graders about the daily routines and expectations of middle school.

Why do our children write? One answer may be found in the fact that many of the elementary and middle school

teachers learned various writing techniques while attending an Individualized Language Arts workshop (ILA). More recently, 25 Upper Perkiomen School District staff members and I, a building principal, participated in a 30-hour course given by the Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP), an affiliate of the National/Bay Area Writing Project.

The Writing Project course conveyed the message that when writing, "content comes before form, but the search for the right form illuminates content." Not only was the PAWP course stimulating, but it impressed upon the participants that a successful writing process incorporates the following five components: pre-writing, writing, re-writing, editing and publishing.

As you may see from the elementary children's sample writings, children can and will write when given the opportunity by a staff interested and versed in the writing process.

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#### MY BROTHER

His name is Robbie. He is pretty big. He is 11 years old. He has brown hair. He has blue eyes. He likes to play Dungeons and Dragons. He does handstands. Then I push him over. When we play indoor basketball, he goes up for the shot. I get in his way. Then he pushes me out of his way and I hit the door. He is funny. I kinda like my brother.

Johnny — Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

Mom  
Hard working  
Cleaning, talking, phoning  
Cool, hot, nice, good  
Lady

K.Y. — Grade 4

\*\*\*\*\*

#### A FRIEND

A friend is someone who makes you happy. A friend is someone who plays ball with me. A friend is a good person who helps you with your homework. A friend is someone who goes jogging with you. A friend is someone who watches T.V. with you. A friend is someone who invites you over to his house for lunch. A friend is someone who talks to you.

K.M. — Special Education Class

\*\*\*\*\*

#### APPLICATION FOR WHITE BELT

Dear Doctor Seemann:

I would like to be a White Belt. I will make sure no one runs in the hall. I will do my best to be a good White Belt.

Sincerely,  
L.W. — Grade 2

*Dr. Hubert Seemann is the principal of the Green Lane-Red Hill Elementary Schools of the Upper Perkiomen School District.*

## Doing History: Experience and Write

by Ellen Just Braffman

A tall slim eleven year old girl led a tour of adults through the streets of historic Philadelphia. She paused at a particular street and house and said: "This is the house of Samuel Powel. His wife, Elizabeth, is my historical identity. My husband and I lived here while he served as mayor of colonial Philadelphia. I was the grandest hostess of the city. I gave a lot of parties in this house and some were in the garden. The little street across the way is Willings Alley. It is named after my first husband Alfred Willings. I was such an important lady that I was buried in Christ Church Cemetery. Only wealthy and famous people were buried there."

This historical narrative was part of a tour written, planned, organized and conducted by middle school children during Philadelphia's Tricentennial summer in 1982. During a project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities entitled "Phil-A-Kid Program: People and Places of Colonial Philadelphia," educators, museum interpreters, and historians came together and helped middle school-age youngsters investigate life in colonial Philadelphia. Each youngster stepped back in time by assuming a historical identity. The children pieced together the fabric of colonial life by visiting their identities' homes and neighborhood which included churches, graveyards, a tavern, a hospital, a print shop and meeting places such as Carpenters' Hall. Each child received a packet or primary data about his or her historical identity such as wills, deeds, surveys and letters. (Available sources varied for each identity.)

After observing, reading and experiencing primary resources the children transformed historical information into personal meaning and understanding through writing. Since children assumed an individual's identity who lived over two hundred years ago, they were asked to write as if they were that person. Using their packet of information each child wrote a biographical profile. Figures I and II were writing guide sheets given to the children. Figure I broke down the writing process and Figure II was an example of a profile which children examined so they could see the product of the process. The following is an example of a student's profile.

Hello, my name is Susannah Drinker. My husband is a bricklayer. Before we were married he bought this house for a yearly rent of 20 pounds from Jacob Lewis. Our fine neighbor welcomed me warmly to our new house. We live so wonderfully close to other people that I can talk to Widow Griffiths from the window. My best friend is the widow Susannah Wildrege who lives down the street. I pray that I shall never be left in a plight such as hers. If John were to fall from one of the chimneys that he works on I would be in a sore plight. The possibility for a widow is to run a boarding house.

Did you know that we are moving soon? We have lived here for 27 years, and I will be sad to leave. I do hope that the people will be as kind and friendly as they are here.

This student was able to synthesize her field experiences (observations about the proximity of the houses), information found in the deeds, colonial maps and street addresses and comment on the social behavior of neighbors in the colonial city.

There is a paucity of research exploring relationships between experiencing, thinking, composing and learning. However, Barry Beyer points out that writing provides an opportunity for the child to establish relationships, make inferences and assertions, and ask questions. In another writing activity the children cut quill pens and wrote wills for their identities based on primary sources. The will encouraged children to make connections among data, ideas, and concepts. In addition, the children inferred the kinds of possessions that were described in a will based on their identities' lifestyles. The following is an example.

In the name of God. Amen. I, Elizabeth Powel being of sound and perfect mind and memory do make and publish this my last Will and Testament in manner following.

To that brave and courageous Negro coachman who attended so faithfully my husband Samuel at death I leave my sewing table and silk curtains.

I leave the Alms House the sum of one thousand dollars to use in the assistance of the poor.

To the Pennsylvania Hospital I leave what remains of my entire personal estate to sell or do what is pleased. One thousand of the forementioned estate is to be used for the building of a new wing of the forementioned hospital.

Elizabeth Powel

When children process primary data, whether reading deeds or making observations at a historical site, they are compelled to use critical thinking such as problem solving in order to comprehend history. Writing about these experiences gives children a tool to synthesize and analyze historical data. The children in the Phil-A-Kid Program were able to recreate social history through the writing of narratives and wills and thus, as Janet Emig asserts, "writing as a mode of learning becomes a new and powerful instrument of thought." The relationship between experiencing and composing provides the student with the opportunity to make connections, obtain feedback and engage the student in a personal manner. Barry Beyer has suggested that the experiences of assuming a historical identity and having students write from that point of view develops "historical mindedness, the ability to step out of one's environment and to travel into the past."

Consider the following writing by one of the children, Jennifer Mack.

My name is Eleanor Roberts. My husband Thomas Roberts bought our house (131 Elferts Alley, formerly called Gilberts Alley) in 1723 from Maethais Birchfield, a Philadelphia cordweiner and his wife Alice for 27 pounds. Mr. Birchfield explained to us he had purchased the house from Jeremiah Elfeth, a Philadelphia blacksmith in 1721 for 22 pounds and also he added as far as he knew nobody else had owned the house before Mr. Elfeth. My husband and I believed it wasn't old and we could restore it easily. The interior of the house was 20 X 68½.

Pain struck my heart when my husband died on May 1753. The moon reflects on my tears as I weep in bed each night, it kind of reminds me of a bag of diamonds spilled on a piece of peach silk. At night I sat by the window wondering what it would be like when I'm gone. I wish Thomas was alive lying beside me.



Jennifer Mack "stepped out" of her environment and wrote about the historical identity she had chosen. Jennifer's writing showed she had selected some static information. Nevertheless, the facts she found in deeds and surveys were incorporated into Eleanor Roberts' sentiments. When introducing the Phil-A-Kid Program to the children, John Alviti, the Director of the Atwater Kent Museum, explained that the 18th century family was a very practical unit. "The bonds of the family were considered to be economic rather than love. However, historians are always surprised to learn that great emotional ties existed in colonial families." Although colonial society was reticent, romantic proclivities have been proven to exist. Historians have used the letters between Abigail and John Adams as proof of this.

In her writing, Jennifer synthesized interpretations of colonial society with documented facts. She was then able to describe Eleanor's loss of her husband in first person with heartfelt emotion. Jennifer's writing demonstrated that the "writer's learning as well as the quality of one's writing depends not on some static value of information but on the way the writer relates the information fragments to one another." (A. D. Nostrand)

To encourage active study of history, social studies teachers should examine the importance and usefulness of primary resources for middle school education. After all, history is not "what happened in the past" as historians Davidson and Lytle explain. It is the "act of selecting, analyzing and writing about the past." Middle school children can "do history" by experiencing (reading primary resource data as well as reading the world of historical locations) and then writing about their experiences in narrative form.

John Dewey once described classroom pedagogy of lecture and textbook as "the child forever tasting and never eating; always having his palate tickled upon the emotional side but never getting the organic satisfaction that comes only with the digestion of food and transformation of it into working power." In the Phil-A-Kid Program the children ate, digested and transformed historical information (primary resources) into personal meaning and understanding with writing as a formative tool.

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 A. D. Van Nostrand, "Writing and the Generation of Knowledge," *Social Education*, March 1979, pp. 178-180.

#### Figure I DEVELOPING A BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

<u>Focus</u> (your historical character)	<u>Exploration</u>
*Get acquainted with your historical figure.	*Given information collected, select the bits and pieces you want to incorporate into your profile.
*Read the article and information in the file.	
*Write notes about the person. Include people in his or her background (previous owners, relatives, slaves, etc.) and things they owned.	
<u>Write</u>	<u>Sharing</u>
*Organize the information.	*In partners, read your profiles to each other.
*Write the profile as though you were the historical character telling your story.	*Ask your partner if the profile was understandable.
*Don't be afraid to make up a story you think might have happened, using the facts you know about the person.	

#### Figure II A BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

My name is Mary Moyes and I live at 320 Union Street (Delancy Street). My husband purchased the house in 1780 from Joseph Crukshank who was a printer. It cost 250 pounds. Mr. Crukshank explained it was only ten years ago that the house was part of the Old Almshouse Lot, a house for poor people. When the Almshouse (poorhouse) became overcrowded they divided the land and this part was sold to John Rich. Mr. Rich was a plaisterer (builder) and built the house in 1771. He only lived here for three years and then sold the house to Mr. Richard Truman, a cabinet maker. Four years later, Mr. Truman sold the house to Mr. Crukshank. I'm hoping we will live in the house much longer than the previous owners. My husband and I have been here for ten years.

We love this house. My husband, being a sailmaker, must live near the docks for easy access to the sea captains, sailors and boats. My husband often sails at sea with the sailors for long periods of time. He enjoys being apart of the seaman's life. He likes to take money along to lend the sailors. Our house has always been a meeting place for sailors to rest their floating bones. They are comfortable here and enjoy docking near 320 Union Street. This also is helpful to my husband's business. When my husband leaves and the sailors have sailed, I often sit at my bedroom window and watch the water. I wonder what it might be like to sail on the open sea.

*Ellen Just Braffman, Instructor and Supervisor in the Teacher Education Program at the University of Pennsylvania, is running a Phil-A-Kid Program, "Victorian Philadelphia: People At Home, Work and Play," this summer.*

## The Cabbage Patch

by Judy Yunginger

Authorities in the field of teaching writing are recommending loud and strong that students write for broader audiences, not just for the teacher. They need to recognize purposes for writing and must learn to tailor their writing to particular readers. Classroom teachers in the Eastern Lancaster County School District are responding to this concern in a variety of ways, one being pen pal projects. Students are writing to their peers in other schools in the district, the county and beyond. For example, one third grade teacher aims to have his youngsters corresponding with others in every state of the United States, making it a social studies as well as a writing project, as pen pals are identified by pins on a large map and questions about environment and life styles are posed and responded to.

The fourth grade students of Richard Stackhouse at the Brecknock Elementary School are involved in a unique pen pal program called "The Cabbage Patch". Their correspondents are inmates of the Somers Correctional Institution in Connecticut. "The Patch", which was initiated in the summer of 1978 by five long-term prisoners, has grown from a modest venture to one that now serves many school children in the United States and Canada. The present staff of eight not only write to boys and girls, they are now publishing a biannual newspaper, *The Cabbage Leaf*, and a series of cassette recordings for classrooms and libraries, on which they read stories and poems and sing songs created by youngsters, professionals and staff members.

Each Brecknock fourth grader has a personal pen pal in "the Patch". Each has received two responses as of this writing. The men talk of hobbies, families, sports, pets and schooling. Tony compliments April on her handwriting and challenges her to reckon his age, knowing that, "I started to take guitar lessons when I was 12 and have been playing and singing since then, 18 years now." (It may be Tony who does the fine music on the tapes.) Jose encourages one young partner to hang on through the problems he has shared in a previous letter and to "work hard and you will see how things will turn out for you." He counsels another lad who has expressed an interest in science to work hard and learn all he can because "We need . . . all kinds of good scientists." Carson shares with Jason his boyhood memories of trips to Pennsylvania, berry picking, swimming, enjoying the flowers and vegetables in our beautiful state.

The adults encourage their student pen pals to submit material for *The Leaf* along with their letters. Those in Mr. Stackhouse's room who sent stories were recently thrilled to receive word that they had been read on radio in Somers. They look forward to the possibility of being published in the fall newspaper. While getting them to revise and proofread is still not always easy, those stages of the writing process have taken on real meaning.

The project offers still more to the classroom writing program. Mr. Stackhouse's class received a copy of the spring 1983 *Leaf*, fifty pages featuring the works of young authors from New York, Minnesota, Texas, Louisiana,

Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida and Michigan schools. Not only can this newspaper be read for enjoyment, the material is perfect for instructional activities. Consider, for instance, the possibilities of using Colleen's "The Good Swan" for sentence combining:

"There was a little girl. Her name was Patty. She got lost in the forest. She came across the edge of a lake. There was a swan. . . ."

and for slotting or sentence expansion with these excerpts from Norm's "Halloween Night":

"It was a scary night."  
"A wolf was howling at the moon."

"The Cabbage Patch" has doubtless given new meaning to the lives of those inmates who now refer to themselves as "the Cabbage Heads". We know it has given new meaning to "writing time" in many a classroom.

Judy Yunginger, 1982 Fellow of the West Chester PAWP Institute, is Language Arts Supervisor for the Eastern Lancaster School District.

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## PAWP NOTES

EILEEN M. LEPAGE, a 1981 Fellow, is a Lecturer in English at Albright College where she teaches writing courses. In the spring she was a candidate for School Board Director of the Wyomissing Area.

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LEONA DRIZIN, a teacher in the Norristown Area School District and a 1981 Fellow, has received notification from Susquehanna University that her submission "On the Teaching of Writing" has been accepted for publication in the first issue of "The Apprentice Writer" magazine set for distribution in September. It was one of 60 out of 2,000 received.

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A SPECIAL NOTE ON A NEW COMPOSITION: Ian Robert McCann was born May 31, 1983 to Robert and Mary Kay McCann. Bob, a 1981 Fellow from the West Chester Area School District, and Mary Kay, a 1981 Fellow from the Octorara School District, say that "Ian was well worth waiting for. He seems to be one of the good ones."

### SCHEDULE OF PROJECT MEETINGS, 1983-1984

<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>
Saturday, September 24 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Alumni House West Chester University	John Meehan, Pennsylvania Department of Education, has led a video-taping project involving Don Graves, Mary Ellen Giacobbe, and a number of Pennsylvania teachers, including some PAWP Fellows. We will see the introductory videotape.
Friday, October 14 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Towne Hall Restaurant West Chester, Pa.	Cocktail party, reunion meeting, with funds to support Project Institutes. Guest speaker to be announced.
Saturday, November 12 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	West Chester University	Presentations made by participants in the Advanced Institute on Revision.
Saturday, December 9	TBA	Dinner meeting. All funds will support Project Institutes. Guest speaker to be announced.
Saturday, January 14 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Snow Date: Jan. 21)	West Chester University	Computers in the Writing Process
Saturday, February 11 (Snow Date: Feb. 18)	Northwest Library Philadelphia, Pa.	TBA
Saturday, March 10	TBA	TBA
Saturday, April 7	TBA	TBA
Saturday, May 19	Lawrence Center West Chester University	Luncheon for Fellows
Monday, June 25	West Chester University	Institute begins
Friday, July 20	West Chester University	Institute ends

## PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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Chester County Intermediate Unit

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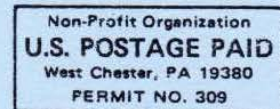
Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

Pennsylvania Department of Education

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.

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

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THIRD CLASS