



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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NEW PAWPDAY FORMAT A SUCCESS

On September 19, 1992 PAWP inaugurated a free series of Saturday programs for area educators featuring presentations and roundtable discussions led by Writing Project teacher-consultants. The goals of this program are to enable teacher-consultants to improve their presentation skills while informing local teachers of important strategies in teaching writing. This format honors teachers' strengths as teachers of other teachers.

The six-session program began with over 55 teachers hearing a keynote presentation by Bob Weiss, PAWP Director, on the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment, followed by concurrent sessions led by Pam Hertz-Hilbert, Brenda Hurley, and Diane Dougherty. Thirty school districts or private schools were represented, with twice the number of elementary as secondary teachers.

The second session, on October 17, featured presenters from the 1992 summer institutes and was attended by 77 teachers. PAWP presenters were Steve Heffner, Joan Kilpatrick, Darlene Lupini, and Sandy McCullough. PENNLIT presenters were Theresa Bernecker, Audrey Krassowski, Mary Ann Ommert, and Vicki Steinberg. Again, elementary outnumbered secondary by a 5 to 3 ratio.

Although some teachers did not return evaluation forms, 91 rated the days useful to them. Typical comments: "I'm sold after two PAWPDAYS. I'll be back." "I loved the two presenters I saw today. Wonderful ideas."

While the results of November's PAWPDAY are still being compiled, there was again a large attendance. The bookseller received major attention from participants. In fact, one Berks County teacher reported that knowing the Heinemann books would be available was what finally made her decide to come. She added that she got great poetry-teaching ideas for her junior high students--between book-buying splurges.

Three more Saturday PAWPDAYS are scheduled for Winter-Spring 1993. See this *Newsletter* for a full page of information for the next two PAWPDAY events.



Pam Hertz-Hilbert, '86 Fellow, presenting on "kid-watching" as assessment.



Over 55 teachers filled the room to inaugurate the new PAWPDAY series.

EDITOR'S CORNER

THROWING OUT THE BABY

Several of the teachers in my school district and one from a nearby district are currently participating in the first Advanced Framework course. As I write this piece, we have enjoyed two sessions of good idea sharing and are looking forward to many more. However, something one of the teachers said started me thinking. Reflective thinking is what PAWP courses promote, after all.

We were talking about students wishing to write on their own topics or from their own perspective on a topic, not a teacher-assigned perspective. I mentioned that 20 years ago I used to ask students to describe their bedrooms, thinking I was allowing all sorts of choice because everyone had a different bedroom. With my introduction to NWP, PAWP, Graves, Atwell, Britton, etc., I realized I had been giving a very confining topic. Through brainstorming, mapping, peer conferencing, and other strategies, the students and I finally developed a very nice exercise in which they described a favorite room or place anywhere. The difference in assignments is obvious to a writing process-oriented person, I think.

Anyway, when I mentioned the exercise, I realized that the students and I haven't written about our favorite rooms in several years. Why is that, I wondered as I drove home. Detailed descriptive work is still an excellent tenth grade assignment. Did I get bored with the assignment because I write with students and I'd run out of rooms and places to write about? Have I been trying so many new ideas that I threw out the good ideas that I already had? Am I looking for the Olympic medal-winning assignment that works with every student in every class every year?

The end result of these ruminations is a desire to go back over all my files to search out exercises, poems, short stories, assignments and anything else that I've neglected recently. Surely I'll find folders which can be emptied directly into the recycling bin, but just as surely I suspect I'll find good ideas I almost threw out with the bath water.



Book sales at the October 17 PAWPDAY.

JIM MACCALL NEW PAWP ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

We congratulate Jim MacCall on his appointment as Assistant Director of the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Many readers of this *Newsletter* know Jim through the many presentations he has made for PAWP, or through the courses and summer institutes he has coordinated. A first-grade teacher at Penn Valley Elementary School in Lower Merion, Jim was a 1985 Project Fellow and has been involved with PAWP ever since. In a way, it's a return home for him, since he is a 1973 graduate of West Chester University.

Jim said he was thrilled by the appointment and hopes he can continue to help teachers see the importance of effective writing. Among the tasks he will undertake are establishing institute reunions and assistance with the PAWP Portfolio Project.

To Jim, helping other teachers is as important as helping his own students. "Every child has something to say," said MacCall. "Parents may see only a bunch of jumbled consonants because in first grade children haven't learned to spell yet. I want my students to learn that meaning and idea are most important. Writing is a way of communicating. Spelling, grammar and capitalization can come later."

NEWS FROM NORTH CENTRAL

Home-baked breads, fresh hot coffee, different kinds of teas, hearty lunches (soups, salads, hot entrees) and delicious home-made desserts were presented and served six Saturdays this Fall at Jersey Shore High School. Cooking class? No, just the first PAWP Strategies I course in North Central Pennsylvania. The festive spreads were prepared and served each Saturday by the Jersey Shore High School home economics department and were sponsored by the local intermediate unit.

Bruce Buckle and Mary Beth Smith, both 1992 Fellows of the North Central PAWP summer institute, coordinated 29 teachers K-12 with the help of many teacher-consultants from their institute: Holly Webster, Barb McAndrew, Judy Rishel, Kay Kuryloski, Maureen Albright, Chris Mackenzie, and Wendy Lockcuff. In addition, the course was visited by PAWP presenters Lois Snyder, Jim MacCall, and Jolene Borgese.

Participants included 18 teachers of elementary grades, 7 of middle school, and 4 high school. They travelled from Lock Haven, Williamsport, Montoursville, and Troy. They seemed enthusiastic and excited to be practicing and learning new teaching ideas.

The North Central PAWP site is planning a spring Strategies I course in the Lock Haven area, with Maureen Albright and Judy Rishel as coordinators.

To write simply is as difficult as to be good. W. Somerset Maugham

PAWP TEACHER-CONSULTANT PUBLISHES 2X

Pat Carney-Dalton, a 1988 Fellow of the Pennsylvania Writing Project, received two pieces of mail on the same day. Nothing exciting about that? Wrong. One envelope included a note accepting for publication an article she had written; the other brought a message that a poem of hers would also be published. Pat is a teacher for the Bucks County Intermediate Unit and has taught elementary gifted students for fifteen years. These are her first major publications.

The article, "In the Fall I'll Return a Poet," will be published in *The Quarterly*, the National Writing Project's journal. It describes Pat's philosophy and experiences in developing and teaching the course, "Teachers as Poets," for the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Pat developed the course in the belief that if teachers were involved in a reading/writing workshop on poetry, they would gain the confidence to continue their growth as writers. "Teachers as Poets" was based on a major philosophical component of the National Writing Project: "Writing teachers write." Participants were given the opportunity to work with published poets who guided them in writing poetry. In this way the "student poets" experienced the frustrations, challenges, and joys of writing, making them better teachers in the process. Many of the participants' poems are featured in the upcoming article.

During "Teachers as Poets" Pat wrote the poem "Joey," which is a tribute to a childhood friend who was killed during the Vietnam War. It will be published in the *New Voices Magazine's* annual anthology, *The Best New Voices in Poetry*.

In addition to the Summer Institute and other PAWP/West Chester University writing courses, Pat attended the New Hampshire Summer Writing Programs in 1990 and 1991.

PRACTICING SPELLING AND VOCABULARY

Wendy Lockuff

As I leave the North Central Institute of PAWP, I know that I have turned a corner in my professional life. Now, in terms of writing in my district, I feel like more of an authority. This is a strange sensation. In the eight years I've taught, I've always felt I had a great deal to learn and kept my mouth shut on policy issues in department meetings. I had not always agreed with directives about curriculum, but being the "new kid on the block," I simply felt that older, wiser teachers knew better what they were talking about. As a teacher of communication for 7th and 8th grades, I am expected to cover five language areas: reading, writing, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. The last two have been by far the easiest to teach because the school district did all the thinking and work for me. In spelling, 36 weeks of prescribed lists per year had been culled by somebody from some "expert" source and presented as the Words to Know. As far as vocabulary was concerned, a three-year program set up by a teacher committee within the school district decided what prefixes, roots, and suffixes should be taught to every 7th, 8th, and 9th grade student. Again, neatly typed lessons with sentences

which had nothing to do with the students were the backdrop for retention of these parts of language. Look it up, slap it down, satisfy the teacher.

I am a different teacher than I was before this Institute, and I now feel differently about how I should teach. But there remains the question of walking into my room and ignoring the spelling and vocabulary curricula which occupy a prominent place beside my desk. I am still expected to deal with both of these areas in terms of my students. How? And how do I justify that stance to administrators, parents, and, most of all, to other teachers who will resent my not presenting the information in the same prescribed way?

In examining the issue of teaching spelling, I learned several startling facts: 1) teaching "spelling" is not mandated for the new learning outcomes of the state; 2) it is not found anywhere in the Chapter 5 regulations or quality goals of education for middle school; 3) it is not discussed in the PA framework PCR II. In fact, the only times it was even stressed in any of the numerous books on writing and language we've read this summer, was as a component of the writing process, somewhere between the editing stage and the final published piece. It is not reasoned in any current research that we've read that it should be taught as a separate entity in the curriculum, discrete from writing.

Instead, many prestigious researchers and writers treat spelling as a small secondary skill, taught only at the appropriate time - when the student needs to know it to perfect his or her writing. Nancie Atwell, a premier voice on reading and writing at the middle school level, teaches spelling in three different ways. The first is as a mini-lesson if it is a skill that a good many students demonstrate in their writing that they need to know. For instance, many 7th graders still mix up "their," "there," and "they're." Atwell would teach it in her 5-minute mini-lesson, then ask her students to do a quick check in their own piece of current writing. She would then record it as a "taught" skill. A student shown in future writings to be spelling those homonyms correctly would be evaluated accordingly. She then might bring out her second strategy for instruction to remediate that student - an individual editing conference. She would sit with the student, teach the spelling skill and have the student practice it, record it as being "re-taught," and look for it to be used correctly in that student's future works. She says of this method, "By teaching in content, one to one, I can go right to the heart of what an individual writer needs" (Atwell 107). Finally, Nancie Atwell gives the responsibility back to the student when she teaches kids how to "self-edit for spelling" (Atwell 148). She asks them to read through their last drafts with pens in their hand and to identify words which don't "look right" or any words they're not absolutely sure of. Then and only then, they find the correct spelling in a Spellex or dictionary.

Jane Hansen feels that every time a child is composing a piece of writing, he or she is practicing spelling. She also advocates self-editing as the most significant method of spelling, although she does include peer-editing as an additional strategy. She explains another technique I believe I could incorporate, and best of all, it is still student-centered.

After self-editing, the student goes finally to the teacher with last draft in hand for a double-check of his circled identified words. The teacher also checks the student's individual list of previously missed words. If the teacher finds a word which is misspelled, "she indicates them with a general remark, such as 'There's a word for you to check somewhere in these two lines.' She does this with maybe two words and corrects the rest herself. The child adds these two words to his individual spelling list," (Hansen 185). As Hansen says it best, "The students learn to think about skills as they read and write. They all remember to attend to mechanics only when these enhance a meaningful interesting text" (190).

In addition to modeling after these veteran writing process teachers, I will order the following texts from Michaels Associates: *Spel is a Four Letter Word*, *Spell By Writing*, and *Spelling in Whole Language Classrooms*. These texts, research which I hope supports them, and sources already cited should be enough impressive ammunition to forestall any questions about why I'm no longer "teaching the lists"!

Vocabulary will be quite another matter. Because our district program is spread over three grade levels (7-9), I feel that I must be somewhat consistent with "the program." Yet from our studies, I know that learning vocabulary comes best from reading. A colleague in my school district, Larry Bassett, has come up with a unique solution to our common problem. He calls it "a writing approach to vocabulary." Using the standard vocabulary book, he decided instead of studying, practicing in discrete sentences, and testing, that he would instead require a piece of writing based upon the "theme" of that particular lesson (lessons being done every two weeks). He explains the technique to the students at the beginning of the school year in the form of a handout and, through discussion, makes certain that the students understand. His criteria for the piece of writing are that it "is worthwhile, that it is meaningful to a reader, and that it is serious in intent (although that 'serious in intent' doesn't mean simply serious--a lot of humorous writings are serious in intent)." Although my lessons are loose-leaf pages of Greek and Latin prefixes and roots, I believe I can modify this plan to make it somewhat more meaningful for my students by relating it to their writing. They will simply have a much bigger choice of what words to include-- because they will choose the few with the prefix or root which have meaning for them.

Nancie Atwell has only one thing to say about vocabulary and she discusses Frank Smith's book, *Reading Without Nonsense*, to say it particularly well. "Smith cuts straight through the maze of skills and methods invented by textbook publishers--vocabulary and paragraph development, literal comprehension, phonics rules,...etc. Instead, he tells about the nature of reading, arguing that what teachers need is not more methodology but an understanding of reading itself and of what competent readers do" (Atwell 216).

Since vocabulary is seen by many teachers who teach reading as a "teachable" skill, I will at least try to use it as part of writing workshop; however, I never again want to impose it upon someone before or after reading in the form of a list to look up or memorize.

The purpose of an inquiry paper has become very clear to me as I wrote this. It was my choice and my concern; I had to re-read, re-think, discuss and make some decisions in going about writing it. I actually "learned" as a by-product of the process itself, and in the learning has come power to change. This year my spelling and vocabulary curriculum will stay on my shelves.

Wendy Lockcuff is a 1992 PAWP Fellow of the North Central PA Institute; she teaches in the Williamsport Area School District. Her name was inadvertently omitted from the last issue's listings.

NOVEL READING: TEACHER AS STUDENT

Linda J. Baer

"...[F]unny, inventive, interesting..." (*Newsday*)

"Lovely...a delight..." (*The Atlantic*)

"A cause for celebration..." (*Book-of-the-Month*)

These lines are excerpted from partial reviews emblazoned on the covers and first pages of Toni Morrison's award-winning novel *Song of Solomon*. Having just read Dante's *Inferno* and having re-read Shakespeare's *Othello*, I was ready for something to give me "...cause for celebration," something lighter, something...easier, something I would truly enjoy. So I began reading this novel with a positive attitude and great hope. I believed that as a voracious reader I could read this novel of promise quickly and effortlessly. I began reading, expecting to be pulled into the story and propelled with its characters to an enlightening, satisfying conclusion.

However, the first day I read only eight pages before I abandoned it, assuming I was too tired to do the book justice and that when rested I would better see the wonderful aspects which made critics across the country rave but which had so far eluded me. The next day I managed to read to page 14, and the next to page 32. By this time I had decided that I hated the book and I was going to read it only because I had to; it was an assignment. I was re-learning a lesson I knew too well: how students feel when we make them read something because it is "good for them" and "great literature."

During this time I ranted and raved to my husband, informing him hourly how far I had read and how much I hated the book. "I don't have any idea what this is about. I don't like these characters; I don't care about any of them. I will never finish this book. I'd rather iron than read this."

And so it went, for page after interminable page. My confusion began with Robert Smith's suicide on page 3 and only compounded as I read. Why are Ruth, First Corinthians, and Magdalene-called-Lena carrying velvet roses they made when they are out for a walk? Why do they make those roses? Where did these people get these strange names--Pilate and Guitar and Macon Dead? What does the suicide have to do with the Dead Family? Whom should I believe in this book? Ruth? Macon? Lena? Pilate? Milkman? The more I read, the more questions I had. What is going on here? What is the peacock's significance? How can Pilate not have

a novel? Why is that significant? Where is this book funny?

As I read, some of those questions were answered for me, but many more were not. The farther I read, the more intricate became the web of meaning to unravel. I still didn't understand these people, try as I might. Their backgrounds, their values, their views of the world, their lives were alien to me; and I was still wading painfully through the book.

One of the reasons I found the reading so difficult and unpleasant is the characters. I didn't like them; there was no one I could cheer for. They all seemed worthless. Ruth is a spineless woman obsessed with her father's memory and a sense of her own importance. Lena and First Corinthians remind me of dust: dry, insubstantial women without substance or redeeming qualities. Macon Dead is despicable, a man to whom appearance is everything and relationships nothing. Milkman is a spoiled, phallogocentric male concerned only with himself and his own pleasures. Yet all of them are who they are because of the way they have treated each other and have been treated. Their lives together reminded me of the bugs and worms and detritus that exist under rocks and are exposed only when one dislodges the rock, so repulsive were they to me.

Another reason that reading it was difficult is the element of time. Morrison's story repeatedly jumps forward and backward in time with each character through flashbacks and reminiscences. Sometimes it is almost impossible to tell when and where the action is occurring.

Yet although I found the book almost painful to read, there can be no denying the grace of Morrison's language. I was repeatedly struck by the lyric quality of her descriptions and the aptness of her imagery: "Her voice make Milkman think of pebbles. Little round pebbles that bumped up against each other" (40). By her insight into the human condition: "The lengths to which lost love drove men and women never surprised them. They had seen women pull their dresses over their heads and howl like dogs for lost love. And men who sat in doorways with pennies in their mouths for lost love. 'Thank God,' they whispered to themselves, 'thank 'god I ain't never had one of them graveyard loves'" (12). And by the sheer power of her voice: "The calculated violence of a shark grew in her, and like every witch that ever rode a broom straight through the night to a ceremonial infanticide as thrilled by the black wind as by the rod between her legs; like every fed-up-to-the-teeth bride who worried about the consistency of the grits she threw at her husband as well as the potency of the lye she had stirred into them; and like every queen and every courtesan who was struck by the beauty of her emerald ring as she tipped its poison into the old red wine, Hagar was energized by the details of her mission" (128).

So something happened to me as I read this book. I was drawn into it and engaged with it. I'm not sure exactly when it became less abhorrent and more fascinating to me. But as I read further I realized that I had been affected by the text and no longer hated it. It had the power to enthrall me, and I realized that I wanted to read it.

At times, though, the book repulsed me. I felt my skin crawl when Morrison describes Milkman's journey into the cave in which the bones of his ancestor are supposed to lie

(254-55). And when Macon Dead has his encounter outside the cave with the old white man whom he stones and stabs (170). But at other times I was touched, especially by Hagar's pathetic attempts to make herself attractive enough to win Milkman's love and by her subsequent death. I could barely read the section in which she is caught in a rainstorm and her precious purchases are ruined (317-18) because it saddened me so and I could feel her pain.

There can be no denying the sheer energy and authority of Morrison's voice, the potency of her story, and the splendor of the tapestry she weaves. The language she uses, the allusions she makes, the symbols she employs provide thoughtful readers with subjects to ponder, discuss, dissect, and explicate. The text is rife with provocative situations, three-dimensional characters, and human themes; so many that every page invites inspection. And this is Morrison's gift to the reader. Her book is so lush, so full, that one could spend days discussing it and be reminded of it often. So much that "it is a banquet to me." *Song of Solomon* is truly a book worth reading.

It is this last conclusion that has had the greatest impact on me. I came to the text expecting something totally different from the experience I was about to have and was initially disappointed by its abstruseness and foreignness to me. But gradually I came to appreciate its vitality, its richness of images, and its vigor. Against my will I was drawn into it so that even now I find myself thinking at odd moments about its puzzles, trying to decode them; examining the events and intricacies in it in an attempt to come to a better understanding of it and what Morrison intended.

This book reminded me of the satisfaction there is in grappling with a worthy "opponent," of the joy in intellectual exercise, of the pleasure in learning and exchanging ideas. Because Toni Morrison is a black writer and because I generally do not read black writers, this has been a new experience for me, and one I want to share in some way with my students (like including multi-cultural texts in my curricula). Because I gained so much from my discussions with the other members of the class, I want to provide my students opportunity to share their responses with their classmates. Because now the mystery novel I am currently reading seems unsalted popcorn to Morrison's Edwardian feast, I want to help my students enrich their lives through meaningful engagement with great texts.

It is wonderful to encourage students to read and to succeed at it. But it is not enough. We must also provide them with texts which demand their full attention and intellectual response. I was reminded by *Song of Solomon* that we do not necessarily have to be immediately enamored of every text we read and that there is much to be learned even (and perhaps especially) from those texts which do not initially please us. I needed to be reminded of this, and *Song of Solomon* did a great job of doing just that. It is a book I will long remember.

Linda Baer, a 1984 PAWP Fellow who teaches in the Conrad Weiser SD, participated in the 1992 PENNLIT Institute.

About PAWP's Summer Programs

WRITING IN THE CONTENT AREAS WORKSHOP OFFERED IN UPPER DARBY

What's the difference between teaching writing and using writing in classrooms? If you don't know, or would like to deepen your knowledge of the use of writing to help youngsters learn, PAWP offers its programs on Writing in the Content Areas. Open to teachers from all school districts, a four-day writing-across-the-curriculum workshop will be held from July 12-15 in the Upper Darby School District.

The course, which emphasizes using writing to increase learning at all grade levels and in all content areas, invariably draws high praise, such as:

I can't wait to take the ideas back to my classroom.

...made me see writing in an entirely different light...helpful for my science class.

The instructor was superb...encouraging and helpful.

...inspirational....I enjoyed every moment of this class.

Last summer's program for 19 teachers in Upper Darby was evaluated with all 5's (excellent) in every category!

PAWP Assistant Director Martha Menz, Supervisor of Staff Development in Upper Darby, will again be the coordinator. Martha holds Social Studies and English certification, and she also directs her district's Center for the Enhancement of Teaching. Several PAWP teacher-consultants will be presenters in the workshop. Participants may earn two credits, either graduate or in-service.

PENNLIT CELEBRATES ITS FIRST BIRTHDAY WITH TWO SUMMER INSTITUTES IN TEACHING LITERATURE, K-12

To mark the completion of its successful first year, the Pennsylvania Literature Project (PENNLIT) offers two 1993 summer Institutes in Teaching Literature, one at the WCU Exton Center and one at the Berks County Intermediate Unit. Both 6-credit programs will run four days a week for four weeks, from June 28-July 22.

Modelled on the PAWP Institute for Teaching Writing, the Literature Institute focuses on participants' experiences as readers of literature as well as teachers of literature. Responding to literature, creating and managing a community of readers, selecting texts, the place of children's and adolescent literature in the curriculum, teaching skills through literature, writing about literature, portfolio, performance, and outcomes based assessment of reading and literature learning are among the topics Institute participants explore.

Visiting consultants include literature and education

experts, writers, and story-tellers from WCU, the University of Pennsylvania, and Holy Family College.

Some of the 25 charter PENNLIT fellows had this to say about their Institute experience:

I will never look at literature the same, in teaching or my personal reading.

The mix of ideas from teachers at all levels was invaluable.

My attitude about "literature" has been broadened. I'm reminded that we are not just teaching individual pieces of writing but helping to create a community of life-long readers.

I gained a high level of confidence through this course. I am excited about taking the information I learned and using it in my classroom.

I appreciated the camaraderie, the books we read, the insights gained into different perspectives.

I learned how to use literature to change a child's attitude to want to read.

This course forced me to look at the types of literature used in my classroom, the techniques I do and don't use, ways to respond to literature and an assessment overview. Wow!

What a wonderful experience! I feel really close to this group, and I have already made plans to get together with several other participants...the learning continues!

I appreciated the modeling of techniques and strategies implicit in the daily and weekly schedule of activities.

Literature Institute participants become teacher-consultants and can present in courses and programs PENNLIT offers during the school year. In fall 1992, five charter fellows made presentations in the Teaching Literature course given in West Chester, and four presented in the Saturday Seminar Series. Six PENNLIT fellows became involved in a multicultural literature experience sponsored jointly by the Literature Project and Philadelphia's Urban Sites Writing Network.

Co-directors of the Exton Institute will be Andy Fishman, PENNLIT's director, and Terry Bernecker, a second-grade teacher in the Quakertown School District and charter Project fellow. Co-directors in Berks County will be Vicki Steinberg, PENNLIT's co-director and English teacher at Exeter High School, and Patty Koller, a reading specialist in the Downingtown SD and charter Project fellow.

7TH ANNUAL WORKSHOP ON ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS

Supporting its emphasis on the classroom teacher, once again PAWP will offer a 3-day summer program for school administrators. Readers of this *Newsletter* know PAWP's commitment to the power of classroom-tested knowledge and to the primacy of experienced teachers as the major ingredients in educational change. In our annual program for administrators, we provide the experiences and knowledge that should guide those who are responsible for full programs in writing and language arts: principals, curriculum directors, supervisors, coordinators, specialists, and of course superintendents.

Over the three days, participants learn the latest theory and research about writing and language, examine successful programs, and plan for implementing new programs or improving existing ones. Many who have attended seek to clarify their understanding of "hot topics" such as: writing as a process, whole language, writing across the curriculum, critical thinking, the PA Framework (PRCP2), the PA Assessment System and its writing sample, performance and portfolio assessment, outcome-based education, and strategic learning. Several central issues are always addressed: how to adopt a rationale for your program, how to develop curriculum, how to provide staff development, and how to evaluate what you have begun. Administrators from districts throughout Pennsylvania attend this workshop each summer, and evaluations have been very favorable, including comments such as:

This is the most valuable workshop that I have attended as Language Arts Coordinator for our School District. Many thanks!

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

Thank you for the openness, generous sharing, and positive experience. We learned so much. I now consciously understand how to make it work; before, it was hit or miss!

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

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

Thanks so much for a great experience! This workshop has dovetailed beautifully into experiences I've just had in Writing Assessment.

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

Thank you for all the material and handouts! My summer reading list is complete!

I commend you for providing such a rich variety of materials (and for sharing them so generously)!

Instructing the 1993 administrators' workshop are Bob Weiss, PAWP Director, and Marion Dugan, the Director of Curriculum and Staff Development for the Souderton Area School District.

The workshop is offered July 13-15, 1993 from 8:30 to 2:30 and includes "working lunches" where ideas are hatched and shared. One graduate credit may be earned by participants.

WRITING ASSESSMENT "MODULES"

With the aid of Lynne Dorfman and several teacher-consultants, PAWP has "modularized" its Writing Assessment courses so that participating teachers may select options worth from 1 to 6 credits. The program now has the following components which may be taken separately or together:

- I. Writing Outcomes/Summative Evaluation
- II. Conferring and Feedback/Formative Evaluation
- III. Assessing Speaking & Listening
- IV. Portfolios in Assessment
- V. Assessment Seminar

Except for the portfolio workshop, which is offered for 2 credits, the other modules are for 1 credit each. The modules are offered separately for those teachers who want individual topics only. The complete set of modules will give participants a broad and deep knowledge of writing assessment and assessment in general. In all of the sessions, emphasis will be on the appropriateness of assessment to instruction and will include such topics as grading, response to writing, portfolio management, setting standards, and writing assessment research.

In Writing Outcomes/Summative Assessment (June 29-July 1), participants will be introduced to the problems of defining and assessing outcomes in writing. Additionally, the workshop will explore the theory and practice of rapid and reliable assessment of large numbers of writing samples as currently used in schools and colleges. Several systems of holistic scoring will be examined in relation to the functions of diagnosis, placement, ranking, exit proficiency, and program evaluation. Participants will gain experience with analytic, primary trait, and developmental rating, as well as familiarity with the 6-point scale used in the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment. PAWP teacher-consultants will share some of their experiences with district assessment, the Pennsylvania Assessment, and the Educational Testing Service.

The Conferring and Feedback module (July 6-8) analyzes and demonstrates different models for formative classroom assessment of writing, emphasizing teacher and peer conferences, checklists, and commenting about student work in progress. This module provides insight into assessment within the process of writing.

Less familiar to teachers, the assessment of speaking and listening skills will be the subject of Module III (July 13-15). Kevin Dean, of West Chester University's Department of Speech Communication, will be the chief presenter on these topics and will relate them to the Pennsylvania Framework.

Portfolios in Assessment (July 19-23) will address such topics as purposes for portfolios, contents, student involvement and choices, and daily and long-term management. In 1991, PAWP began the portfolio assessment course for elementary teachers in Bristol Township, made a videotape of portfolio plans, and gathered many resource materials on portfolio systems. Since then, the use of portfolios has expanded tremendously, and many options are available for teachers and districts. This 2-credit module enables participants to learn about current portfolio designs and to develop their own systems for managing portfolios.

Finally, teachers who want to pull together their ideas about assessment and become expert in the field will have the opportunity to do so in the Assessment Seminar (July 27-29). This 1-credit seminar is limited to 10 participants who have completed all the other assessment modules in 1993 or earlier.

NEXT NEWSLETTER FEATURES OTHER SUMMER PROGRAMS

- **SUMMER LITERACY
CONFERENCE, AUGUST 11-12**
- **WEEK OF WHOLE LANGUAGE,
AUGUST 9-13**
- **TEACHERS AS WRITERS,
JULY 19-29 (EXTON)
JUNE 23-JULY 2 (BUCKS)**
- **ADVANCED INSTITUTE:
WRITING-READING
CONNECTIONS, JUNE 28-
JULY 9**

BOOK LINKS: A REVIEW

Patty Koller regularly reviews BOOK LINKS for PENNLIT; she is a reading specialist in the Downingtown School District.

Whether your focus is on the Solar System or back here on Earth, chances are the November issue of *Book Links* has something for you!

Ellen Mandel and Barbara Elleman's article entitled "Holiday Messages of Friendship and Peace" begins with a review of the recently published book *Elijah's Angel, A Story for Chanukah and Christmas* by Michael J. Rosen. The bibliography that follows includes books for the Hanukkah season, Christmas books and books celebrating Kwanzaa. Also in this section Anna Quindlen, author of *The Tree That Came To Stay*, shares a glimpse of herself and the family traditions that are a part of her life.

A list of materials available concerning HIV and AIDS is presented in "Classroom Connections" This updated list includes books for elementary and middle grade children, books for teenagers, videos, adult resources, hotlines and national organizations.

Amy Tan's *The Moon Lady* is featured in "The Inside Story." Both Amy Tan and her longtime friend, Gretchen Schields, tell about the book they collaborated to produce. A bibliography of Chinese Folktales follows this informative interview.

"Your Friendly Neighborhood Solar System" is the first of two bibliographies on space that will be presented in *Book Links*. This one includes books such as Peter and Connie Roop's *The Solar System: Opposing Viewpoints*, which presents various sides of space-related questions and contains quotes by astronomers. Current books about the sun, the moon, planets, astronomers, asteroids, comets and meteors are also included in addition to an entire section on science fiction books such as Jane Yolen's *Commander Toad in Space* and Gillian Rubinstein's *Skymaze*.

The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales is a book that has particular significance to those of us who were involved in PENNLIT last summer. It is listed along with many others in the section on "American Folk Heroes."

The "Early Books" section by Maeve Visser Knoth is entitled "Homes for Everyone" and includes an extensive bibliography of books about animal homes and homes for humans. Bernard Lodge's *There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Glove* and Colleen Stanley Bare's book, *This Is a House* are just two of the newly published books on this list.

Also of interest to primary teachers is the section entitled "Big Books" which contains a summary of ten different titles along with suggested activities.

Was I correct in assuming you would find something of interest to you in this issue? I know I always do!

Back issues can be ordered by sending a check for \$3.50 per issue to: *Book Links* Order Department, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. A yearly subscription (6 issues) can be obtained by sending \$14.95 to *Book Links*, P.O. Box 1347, Elmhurst, IL 60126 or call 708-279-0936.

PAWP SUMMER PROGRAMS 1993

Exton Center

Regular Session

WRITING OUTCOMES/SUMMATIVE EVALUATION HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT

(PWP 504-75) 1 Graduate Credit
-Develop and assess outcomes in writing
-Learn to assess writing using 3 scoring methods
-Theory and practice of rapid, reliable assessment of large numbers of writing samples
-Prepare for the writing sample of the Pennsylvania Assessment
June 29-July 1, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

WORKSHOP IN WRITING ASSESSMENT: CONFERRING AND FEEDBACK

(PWP 517-75) 1 Graduate Credit
-Models for formative classroom assessment
-Teacher and peer conferences
-Checklists
-Commenting on work in progress
July 6-8, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

ASSESSING OTHER LITERACY SKILLS: SPEAKING AND LISTENING

(PWP 517-76) 1 Graduate Credit
-Develop outcomes in speaking and listening skills
-Activities to demonstrate literacy
-Interrelationships of literacy skills
July 13-15, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

WORKSHOP IN WRITING ASSESSMENT: PORTFOLIOS

(PWP 517-77 & 78) 2 Graduate Credits
-Portfolio purposes and content
-Student involvement and choices
-Daily and long-term management
July 19-23, 1993 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

WORKSHOP IN ASSESSMENT: SEMINAR

(PWP 517-79) 1 Graduate Credit
-Relate assessment strategies from all modules
-Implications of the Pennsylvania Assessment System
-Assessment systems in relation to effective instruction
-Develop presentations on assessment
July 27-29, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WRITING I

(PWP 502-75) 3 Credits (Graduate or In-service)
-The Pennsylvania Writing Project "first course"
-Explore practical and imaginative approaches to the teaching and learning of writing
-For teachers in all subjects and at all grade levels
-Offered successfully over 100 times: designed to fit the PA Framework (PCRP2)
June 28-July 16, 1993 8:30 AM - 11:45 AM

TEACHING LITERATURE INSTITUTE

(PWP 599-31) 6 Graduate Credits
-Theory and practice of teaching drama, poetry, and fiction K-12
-Analyzes the experience of reading, classroom approaches to texts, curriculum development
-develop literature units and lesson plans
-guest speakers address topics of current interest
-requires previous PWP course or equivalent
June 28-July 22 (Mon-Thur) 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS

(PWP 515-75) 1 Graduate Credit or non-credit
-Identify critical components of a successful program
-Program management, organization, evaluation
-Practical plans and ideas to improve programs
-Needed administrative skills and resources
-How to link writing process, critical thinking, writing across the curriculum, whole language, and PCRP2
July 13-15, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

PCRP2 SEMINAR: ADVANCED INSTITUTE IN WRITING-READING CONNECTIONS

(PWP 513-75) 3 Graduate Credits
-In-depth study of linkages and applications
-Develop presentations for Writing Project and Literature Project programs
-Open only to Writing Project Fellows
June 28 - July 9, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT: TEACHERS AS WRITERS

(PWP 599-78) 3 Graduate Credits
-Presentations by practicing writers
-Writing and teaching poetry, fiction, and plays
July 19-July 29, 1993 8:30 PM - 2:30 PM

PAWP SUMMER PROGRAMS 1993

Exton Center

August (Post-) Session

WHOLE LANGUAGE/LITERACY/WRITING PROCESS: CONFERENCE FOR K-8 TEACHERS

A program developed with Houghton Mifflin Co.
Graduate credit option (PWP 501-41)

- Lectures by well-known educators followed by hands-on sessions for teachers and supervisors
- Topics include: fitting whole language into your curriculum, practical suggestions for the whole language classroom, ways to present literature, writing, and skills in a whole language framework
- Includes continental breakfast daily at 8 AM, luncheons, author's reception
- Must register by July 24, 1993

August 11-12, 1993 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT: A WEEK OF WHOLE LANGUAGE

(PWP 599-41)

3 Graduate Credits

- A Week of Whole Language addresses issues of teaching writing and reading
- Practicing teachers review ways to implement whole language instruction
- Includes Literacy Conference August 11-12

August 9-13, 1992 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

PAWP SUMMER PROGRAMS 1993

Bucks County

Regular Session

SUMMER INSTITUTE PROGRAM IN TEACHING WRITING

(PWP 597-75) 6 Graduate Credits
(Required Fall component) 3 Graduate Credits

- Parallels the WCU-Exton Institute
- Located at Bucks Co. Intermediate Unit

June 28-July 29 (Mon-Thurs) 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

(PWP 599-73)

3 Graduate Credits

- Parallels the WCU-Exton version
- Located at Tohickon Valley Elementary School, Quakertown Area School District

June 23-July 2, 1993 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

PAWP SUMMER PROGRAMS 1993

Other Locations

Regular Session

TEACHING LITERATURE INSTITUTE - BERKS COUNTY

(PWP 599-77) 6 Graduate Credits

- Parallels the WCU-Exton Literature Institute
- Located at Berks Co. Intermediate Unit

June 28-July 22 (Mon-Thurs) 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

SUMMER INSTITUTE IN TEACHING WRITING - NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

(PWP 597-76)

6 Graduate Credits

- Parallels the WCU-Exton Institute
- For Central Susquehanna IU 16 and BLAST IU 17

June 28-July 29 (Mon-Thurs) 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

WRITING IN THE CONTENT AREAS - UPPER DARBY

(PWP 505-75 and 76) 2 Graduate or In-service Credits

- Using writing to teach content
- Writing to learn and to improve writing
- Effective practices K-12

-Located at Center for Advancement of Teaching

July 13-16, 1993

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT REGISTRATION FORM

Return to: WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE BURSAR
E.O. BULL CENTER, RM 114
WEST CHESTER, PA 19383

PROGRAM/COURSE NAME _____ Course number: PWP _____ - _____ Credit type _____
PROGRAM/COURSE NAME _____ Course number: PWP _____ - _____ Credit type _____
PROGRAM/COURSE NAME _____ Course number: PWP _____ - _____ Credit type _____

Credit types: G graduate credit I in-service credit N non-credit

PERSONAL INFORMATION: (Shaded data required of graduate registrants only)

Name: _____ Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____

Address: _____ Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Your School District: _____ Building: _____

Grade(s) levels presently taught: _____ Job Title: _____

Present Certification Status: L1 level 1 ___ L2 temporary ___ TE temporary ___ PE permanent ___

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Birthdate: _____ Social Security # _____ Sex: Male ___ Female ___
Have you taken a WCU graduate course in the last 2 years? _____
Residence county: _____ Citizenship country: _____
Check one: Black/non hispanic ___ Hispanic ___
Asian/Pacific Islander ___ White/non-hispanic ___
Bachelor's Degree from: _____ Year Awarded: _____

PAYMENT: TOTAL AMOUNT YOU ARE REMITTING (see fee schedule on reverse): \$ _____

PAYMENT TYPES

A. VISA ___ Mastercard ___ card # _____ Expiration date: ___/___

Cardholder name: _____ Cardholder Signature: _____

B. Check or money order #: _____ Check Amount: _____
(Make sure that your phone number and social security number are on the check or money order.)

C. Third party. Note: Payment must be made in full unless your registration is sponsored by a third party.
_____(3rd party name) _____(contract or P.O.#)
_____(address) _____(phone of 3rd party)
_____(amount of third party billing)

FEE SCHEDULE (subject to change without notice)

REGULAR SESSION

Strategies for Teaching Writing I	PWP502-75	Exton	Jun 28-Jul 16	471 3 cred	240 3 inserv cred	_____
Administering Wrtg Programs	PWP515-75	Exton	Jul 13-15	212 1 cred	155 non-cred	_____
Wkshp: Teachers as Writers	PWP599-78	Exton	Jul 19-29	471 3 cred	n/a	_____
Outcomes/Holistic Assessment	PWP504-75	Exton	Jun 29-Jul 1	157 1 cred	n/a	_____
Wkshp/Assess: Confer & Feedback	PWP517-75	Exton	Jul 6-8	157 1 cred	n/a	_____
Wkshp/Assess: Speaking & Listening	PWP517-76	Exton	Jul 13-15	157 1 cred	n/a	_____
Wkshp/Assess: Portfolios	PWP517-77&78	Exton	Jul 19-23	314 2 cred	n/a	_____
Wkshp/Assess: Seminar	PWP517-79	Exton	Jul 27-29	157 1 cred	n/a	_____
PCRP2 Seminar: Adv. Institute	PWP513-75	Exton	Jun 28-Jul 9	471 3 cred	n/a	_____
Teaching Literature Institute	PWP599-76	Exton	Jun 28-Jul 22	992 6 cred	n/a	_____
Teaching Literature Institute	PWP599-77	Berks IU	Jun 28-Jul 22	992 6 cred	n/a	_____
Writing in Content Areas	PWP505-75&76	Up. Dby	Jul 12-15	314 2 cred	160 2 inserv cred	_____
Teaching Writing Institute	PWP597-76	Bucks IU	Jun 28-Jul 29	992 6 cred	n/a	_____
Wkshp: Teachers as Writers	PWP599-73	Quakrtn	Jun 23-Jul 2	471 3 cred	n/a	_____
Teaching Writing Institute	PWP597-76	N Central	Jun 28-Jul 29	992 6 cred	n/a	_____

Regular Session University Fee 10

POST SESSION PROGRAMS

Writing Process/Literacy Conf	PWP501-75	WCU	Aug 11-12	212 1 cred	85 Conf only	_____
Wkshp: Week of Whole Language	PWP599-79	WCU	Aug 9-13	526 3 cred	n/a	_____

Post Session University Fee 10

ADDITIONAL FEES for Graduate
Credit participants only

WCU application/re-application fee* _____
Out-of-State resident, add \$76 per credit _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY _____

* \$25 FEE applies if not a WCU graduate student within past two years.

TO REGISTER for Inservice or Graduate Credit, complete both sides of this page and mail with your payment to Office of the Bursar-PAWP, Bull Center, Room 114, West Chester, PA 19383.

DEADLINE: Register by June 7, 1993 to avoid late fee of \$25. Register by July 23 for the Literacy Conference or Week of Whole Language.

CONFIRMATION: Timely registration will be confirmed by mail. Confirmation cannot be sent to people who register after the deadlines.

RESIDENCE RATES in West Chester University dormitories are approximately \$15/day for single occupancy and \$11/day for double occupancy. Apply directly to University College, Bull Center, WCU, West Chester, PA 19383 before May 14, 1993. Identify yourself as a participant in a PAWP program.

LOCATIONS and PARKING: All courses are at the WCU Exton Center unless otherwise specified. Exton Center programs are located at the University's facility at the West Whiteland Corporate Center in Exton, 10 minutes from main campus. The Literacy Conference and the Week of Whole Language are located on main campus. Ample parking is available at all locations. We will send a map when we confirm your registration.

HOLIDAY: Class hours are adjusted for the July 5 holiday.

TRANSCRIPTS: Grade reports are mailed to participants in mid-August for Regular Session and in early September for Post Session. You may request an official transcript by writing to the Office of the Registrar, Bull Center, WCU, West Chester, PA 19383; include your Social Security number and \$3 check payable to WCU.

QUESTIONS: Call the PAWP Office at (215) 436-2297.

THE PATH TO LITERACY

Dory Fitzgerald

As I approach the school, I turn around and head back home. I'll just say I got sick on the way to school. My mom will let me stay home; I'll pretend I am real weak, at least for awhile. At home I always feel so much better, I know what to do and I feel confident at whatever I try.

School is such a fog. I never know what they want from me. This reading thing really gets in the way. Everyone around me is catching on and I don't have a clue. I can see all the words, but they mean nothing to me and make no sense. "Don't you see?" they ask. "It's right there in front of you!"

When I moved on to the third grade, reading was still very difficult. I panicked as my turn neared to read aloud. I counted the lines and paragraphs; I tried to practice my words. I remember thinking, "She will catch me; my mind will go blank when it's my turn. Someone has wet their pants--that won't happen to me! I am scared but I won't let them know."

I remember vividly the reading tests--three words in a box, underline the one the teacher is saying. The three words looked so much alike. I HAVE NO CLUE WHICH ONE IS CORRECT. SHE'S MOVING SO FAST, I CAN'T KEEP UP. HOW CAN I FIGURE THIS OUT IF SHE IS GOING SO FAST? I'M TIRED. I'LL BE GOOD. SHE WON'T NOTICE ME! What a struggle it always seemed, wanting to be special and be noticed but having to hide and protect the secret. As time passed, I could read, slowly, deciphering each new word, back-tracking as I discovered I'd done something wrong--it no longer made sense. It took me so long; any pressure and the darkness would take over. Anxiety made it all disappear. Listen to what they say, I would remind myself. Memorize the study sheets, it is very rote, there is a system. Silently I could read enough to get by, but orally I was still a disaster. I couldn't even read Dr. Seuss to my younger brother who had been ill. "Can't you read better than that? It's no fun this way," he would complain.

My friends were the top students. School seemed to come easily to them. They always knew the right answers and read for pleasure. I learned early to surround myself with the smart ones, used as a mask to hide my secret. I watched and listened, figured out what looked and sounded good. I became very shy and introverted, letting my personality be colored by those around me. Never trusting my own thoughts or feelings, I was afraid to make a decision without advice from my alter-egos. My decisions were made by assessing what would look good to others. How could I trust the thoughts of someone who couldn't read, who was so stupid? I had spent so much energy creating this calm, controlled exterior to surround and protect the fear and confusion inside. No one ever suspected what lay just below the surface. NEVER LET ANYONE KNOW WHAT YOU ARE REALLY THINKING OR FEELING. PRETEND YOU UNDERSTAND. READ THE CROWD. FIGURE OUT WHAT IS EXPECTED. PERFORM!

High school was a blur of fun and excitement. I had learned how to play the game, so my academic worries were

suppressed and I did what I needed to get by. English was the most difficult course. I had to be so careful there. Every summer we were given an extensive reading list and were tested in the fall. Somehow I managed to bluff my way through using class discussion and what little I had gleaned from the few chapters I stumbled through. Writing was the most frightening and insurmountable challenge. I couldn't spell, had few opinions of my own (or at least that I was willing to share), and I had such a superficial understanding of the language.

In college, I continued the charade, though by this time I was working very hard to try to reverse the damage done over the years. I was lucky to have a wonderful roommate who would read difficult texts to me and help where she could. I don't think she had any idea how frustrating it was for me. She was a 4.0 student on scholarship and was probably used to being smarter than those around her.

It wasn't until I was a freshman in college that I actually read a book with pleasure. *Dibs*, the story of a teacher who discovers that a child long thought to be retarded was actually autistic, was that book. It was required reading that had turned into a pleasurable experience. Next, I read *The Godfather* (can you imagine 800 pages for pleasure?), slow and plodding but with an intensity I had never felt before. I had finally unlocked the door to reading for pleasure. It was, though, still a struggle and always frustrating, wanting to move more quickly through the action but knowing if I went too fast I would lose the sense.

Today, I read with a vengeance to make up for all those years. I've even started going back to some of the classics I did not read as a student. They are more challenging, as I must still adjust for the different pace and sound of the language. It is usually worth it - to know that I have now conquered something so unattainable years ago.

Today, as I work with children with reading problems, I understand what it is like to look at a page of print and to panic, to not know the difference between similar words and to watch it all slip away as the panic and anxiety sets in. Often, I'll walk into a classroom full of children at work or watch them coming down the hall and it is as if I can almost smell them, the ones with the reading problems. Sometimes, I think, the most important gift I can give them is to let them know that this weakness is only a small part of their lives and that they should identify themselves with their strengths, not their weaknesses.

Dory Fitzgerald, a 1992 Fellow of the Bucks County Institute, is a Chapter I Reading Specialist in the Neshaminy School District.

Only presidents, editors, and people with tapeworm have the right to use the editorial "we." Mark Twain

HAS GRAMMAR LOST ITS GLAMOUR?

Betsy Zaffarano

My dilemma has grown out of my relationship to the Writing Project. I feel it's only fair that PAWP help solve the problem I didn't know I had. Until two years ago I had been, somewhat blissfully, teaching grammar lessons the way I learned them when I attended Catholic grade school thirty-something years ago. My teaching seemed to be successful--that is, I had received no complaints. Then, during the summer of 1990 I attended a PAWP course on Strategies for Teaching Writing. During those few weeks it became apparent through presentations and readings that the study of grammar, at least the way I was conducting it, was not compatible with a writing workshop approach. Over the years, I think I had been convinced, perhaps indoctrinated is a better word, that a demonstrable knowledge of grammar (that is, being able to list the indefinite pronouns, perform a conjugation, parse nouns and verbs, and list the seven uses of the comma) would assist me and my students in written and oral communication; yet the nagging feeling persisted that I was wasting precious time in the classroom with diagramming, sentence analysis, maintenance sheets, and drills.

Ever since that course, I have been modifying my classroom practices in the teaching of grammar. Teaching grammar so exhaustively left little time for the writing workshop approach which I was trying to establish. I do recall when I was hired eight years ago that the principal told me my background in writing (as a theme reader) was what the school was looking for. I was supposed to teach all the grammar requirements and then in left-over time teach "creative writing." And that's what I tried to do for six years.

In six years, my grammar skills improved immensely. The rusty ones were polished bright by years of rubbing against sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who just couldn't get the idea of a predicate nominative clear in their heads or on the test paper. They would complain (at that age they are beginning to test their reality) "Why are we doing this? What will this do for us in the real world?"

I truly couldn't think of a practical reason and I still can't. So I said, "Well, it will really come in very handy when you study a foreign language. See these conjugations? Well, let's learn a little here so that when you get to high school you'll have a framework with which to approach those more difficult conjugations in French."

Now I understand that even that rationale isn't workable (Weaver 4). That truth came home to me last year when our school instituted a Spanish class for seventh and eighth graders. That program gave my dogma about needing grammar to help learn a second language a shot to the head. The students were learning Spanish through an immersion process, speaking conversational Spanish without ever having to learn how to parse. They used the language! They had some exposure to the idea of inflections but nothing as systematized as the declension charts they'd worked with in Language Arts.

As I worked more and more with the writing workshop

idea and the whole language approach, I received all kinds of helpful hints but never anything on how to teach the three special forms of the indicative mood to junior high school students. These special forms are required by the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guide, the Language Arts Scope and Sequence, and are tested on Archdiocesan midterms and finals. I wanted to know how to teach these sorts of requirements so I did some research with the experts--published authors I've never met, published authors who have been instructors, and fellow institute participants.

The first thing I discovered is that no one, absolutely no one, believes that grammar should be taught as an entity separate from the writing that students do (McCaig 49-51; Murray 171). "Grammar competence... should be developed primarily in relation to students' own writing and through 'doing' grammar activities rather than from rules and exercises" (Lytle and Botel 105). Mina Shaughnessy (128) and Muriel Harris (120) agree that grammar be taught not as a composing skill but an editing skill in a conference. But no student is ever going to ask in a conference, "Have I used potential form of indicative form here?" That student will, however, have to identify that verb form during mid-terms and finals. So my search question remained not "Do I teach grammar?" I have no choice -- it is a mandate from higher up -- but became instead "How can I teach grammar in a way that will be the most useful to my students and at the same time allow them to perform credibly on Archdiocesan tests?"

Andrea Fishman and Lela DeToye both suggested, in response to the example I offered above, that the students be instructed in the special forms during mini-lessons given shortly before examination time. They both agreed that my showing the students, from examples in their own work, that they had been using potential form all along but had never labeled it, was a reasonable exercise but neither felt just demonstrating would result in any long-term retention. I guess I could employ inductive reasoning here and ask, "Why do you suppose the words *could*, *would*, *should*, *might*, *may* are considered signals of potential form?" I've used potential verb form as my example for this short paper, but my students also have to recognize past perfect tense in passive voice, noun clauses used as the object of the preposition and in apposition, along with gerunds and participles.

Julia Blumenreich, during her visit to discuss poetry with us, made a half-statement. She never finished it, and unfortunately I never asked her to. But I recall her mentioning the "power of the gerund," that combination of verb and noun, in the poem "I Could Live Like That." I think I could employ a grammar lesson while teaching the poem form to the class. The gerunds in Julia's poem were all subjects of the sentences. My students have to be able to recognize gerunds in several syntax locations.

According to Irene Thomas, the special requirements of the written forms and conventions, which don't seem to be changing in language development, require practice, even--dare I say it--if they do not help my students write correct sentences. She went on to say that they need to be involved in a process of copying, imitating, and manipulating good

models and she offered 12 practical sentence-exercises which begin with the student's own texts (167). Her other contribution to my new understanding focused on the idea of having older students proofread and correct copy and practice with sentence combining (168). I think I could replace/adapt my daily maintenance sheets with combining and expansion exercises.

I also came across the distinction between usage and mechanics. Standard usage may vary. Transcription conventions such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are language mechanics, are standardized and do not vary as much as usage (Lytle and Botel 104). It would appear that drill in these conventions is warranted. I think I'd interpret drill here to mean repetitions and then practice with proofreading.

Mina Shaughnessy, in *Errors and Expectations*, does allow for some drill in the area of verb tenses (135), but my students are not ESL students as many of hers seemed to be. I really appreciated two points she made regarding grammar: first, grammar should be a matter of thinking through problems as they arise and, second, there is no need for students to load their memories with information that can be found in handbooks and guides including Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, the Modern Language Association Handbook, dictionaries and copies of grammar books. That shelf is labeled "Writers' Resource Center." I have always maintained that knowing where to find the answer is almost as good as knowing it outright.

Another great item of good news that developed out of my various researches was that errors in grammar represent approximations and should be regarded as partial successes. These partial successes can provide, because of their dual natures, insights into where the error came from, and may be the first steps in considering other alternatives (Lytle and Botel 93). What a refreshing thought that an error is not a death sentence but actually may be a new lease on life. Now rather than looking at the weekly maintenance sheets as a collection of errors, I can view them as partial successes at least. I do think, however, that I'm going to have to build a plan, based on my search, indicating which items I can and can't teach through the workshop process. With a plan in black and white, I'll be able to set goals and know my limitations in the area of grammar instruction. From all the research I've done, I've noticed no one recommending diagramming as a way to learn/proof sentence structure. Is it because analysis breaks a whole into smaller parts, and the point of language is to build, synthesize, communication?

I noted that in PCRP II, it was suggested that the students participate in extended language inquiries and language events in the classroom. I'm wondering if I can adapt my list of "language people and events" to develop language projects this coming year?

My final wonder is, how will I convince the rest of the teachers and the administration to take a careful look at what may be an out-dated approach to the teaching of grammar? I know that the Catholic school system of English grammar is founded on the ideals of a classical language--Latin; but our

students don't learn Latin anymore as part of their regular elementary schooling. Latin is no longer the language of ritual within the church. It would appear to me that the system has outlived its usefulness and should be re-evaluated in the light of research put into practice.

NOTE: The word "glamour" descends from the word "grammar" and originally meant "magic," "a spell or charm," qualities that were associated with those few who knew Latin grammar (Ziegler 77).

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- Thomas, Irene. 1987. "Some Basics That Really Do Lead to Correctness." *Practical Ideas for Teaching Writing As A Process*. Ed. Carol Booth Olson. California State Department of Education.
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Betsy Zaffarano, a 1992 Fellow, teaches at Villa Maria Academy Lower School.

PAWP TEACHER-CONSULTANT HONORED

When Pennsylvania's 1993 Teachers of the Year were recognized, a 1991 PAWP fellow was among them. Ruby Pannoni, communication arts specialist in the Souderton Area School District, was one of the elementary school finalists lauded "for improving public education."

At a dinner in Harrisburg, each finalist was introduced by a student from his or her school and received a certificate and a crystal apple. "These teachers represent thousands and thousands of kids," said Lt. Gov. Mark Singel, "and understand [education] really is a gateway to the future." Ruby will coordinate a Strategies I course for PAWP in her district this Spring.

Writing is making sense of life. Nadine Gordimer

THE PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT HOLISTIC SCORING AND SCORE REPORTING

The Pennsylvania Writing Assessment is now a fact of life for all districts in the state. A voluntary test in 1991 and 1992, it became a required part of the assessment system for grades six and nine when new Chapter III regulations were approved in March, 1992. Districts will participate on a rotating basis, according to their "wave" designation. Wave One schools will administer the writing assessment in March, 1993.

What does this mean for Pennsylvania teachers? According to PDE, "such an assessment can encourage more and different types of writing in Pennsylvania classrooms, provide information to help districts and teachers strengthen their writing programs, and provide one measure of the quality of writing within a school district."

Perhaps the assessment can do all this first because it is a direct, rather than indirect, test. It requires that students write actual extended prose rather than correct usage or grammar

errors in test-provided sentences. Second, it may "encourage more and different types of writing" because it tests more than one type. Narrative/imaginative, informational, and persuasive writing are all tested, no one knowing in advance which kind will be required of which student. Third, writing programs may be strengthened by including writing process instruction to prepare students for a test in which they are expected to brainstorm and draft in the first 40-minute sitting, then to revise and edit in a second 40 minutes.

But perhaps the most important implication of the new assessment for teachers results from its holistic scoring and the features of good writing to which scorers are trained to respond. Given a six-point scale, scorers are trained to distinguish each score point on the basis of an essay's FOCUS, CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, STYLE, and CONVENTIONS without considering whether the writer is a sixth or ninth grader.

What do these terms, identified as characteristics of effective writing, mean? Scorers are given these definitions:

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

FOCUS	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	STYLE	CONVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates an awareness of audience and task • establishes and maintains a clear purpose • sustains a single point of view • exhibits clarity of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and details are specific to topic • Information and details are relevant to focus • Ideas are fully developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • logical order or sequence is maintained • paragraphs deal with one subject • logical transitions are made within sentences and between paragraphs • Introduction and conclusion are evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • precise language • effective word choice • voice, tone, originality of language • variety of sentence structures, types, and lengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mechanics: spelling, capitalization, punctuation • usage (e.g. pronoun references, subject-verb agreement) • sentence completeness

No single category may outweigh all the others; in other words, a paper may be weak in mechanics and usage (CONVENTIONS), but unless those weaknesses "interfere significantly with the writer's purpose," the paper may earn a 4 or even a 5 because of its clear focus, specific content, logical organization, and effective style. Similarly, a paper with few conventional errors may receive a 3 or even a 2 if it is unfocused, lacking in substance, disorganized, and lacking in sentence and diction variety.

To enhance the reliability of holistic scoring, each paper gets two readings and must receive identical or adjacent scores from those readers to be considered accurate. That means each paper finally receives a score between 2 and 12, reflecting the added scores of both readers (or the arbitrated score if the two original readers were not identical or adjacent).

In this issue of the *Newsletter*, we are publishing the Writing Assessment scoring guide, definitions of terms, and scoring categories for interpretation of test results. In the next issue, we will explore the application of these guides to classroom instruction and responding to student writing. (If your school is interested in workshops on these topics, especially if yours is a Wave One or Wave Two district, have them contact Bob Weiss or Andy Fishman at the PAWP office.)

(SEE NEXT PAGE)

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE

6	5	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharp, distinct focus • substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content; sophisticated ideas that are particularly well developed • obviously controlled and/or subtle organization • writer's voice apparent in tone, sentence structure, and word choice • few mechanical and usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear focus • specific and illustrative content • logical and appropriate organization • precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice • some mechanical and usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate focus • sufficient content • appropriate organization • some precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice • mechanical and usage errors not severe enough to interfere significantly with the writer's purpose

3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vague focus • content limited to a listing, repetition, or mere sequence of ideas • inconsistent organization • limited sentence variety and word choice • repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confused focus • superficial content • confused organization • lack of sentence and word choice variety • mechanical and usage errors that seriously interfere with the writer's purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • absence of focus • absence of relevant content • absence of organization • no apparent control over sentence structure and word choice • mechanical and usage errors so severe that writer's ideas are difficult if not impossible to understand

Notice that each of the score points has five bulleted elements beneath it. Each of those elements represents one of the five "Characteristics of Effective Writing," always in the same order (FOCUS, CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, STYLE, CONVENTIONS).

SCORE CATEGORIES

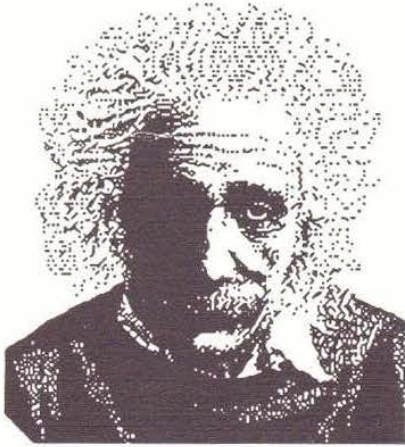
Because a range of writing abilities exists at all grade levels, sixth and ninth grade papers are scored together without regard for the writer's grade level. Because growth is expected between sixth and ninth grade, two slightly different 12-point scales are used for reporting.

12-POINT SCALES FOR REPORTING RESULTS, PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Weak</u>	<u>Poor</u>	
Grade 6	12 11 10	9 8	7 6	5 4	3 2	(7 = minimal competence)
Grade 9	12 11	10 9	8 7	6 5	4 3 2	

America's Smartest Home Videos

The Event



Mr. Bob Saget (*Not!*)

The purpose is to encourage and reward the use of video technology in the teaching of writing.

Videos should teach, demonstrate, or celebrate the use of writing—in any subject area. They should prompt or document student work.

Ideas and imagination are more important than technical "slickness."

The recommended (but not required) length for an entry is five minutes.



"Show Not Tell"

The Rules

This flyer (or a photocopy) should be submitted with each entry.

- Submit each entry on a separate 1/2-inch VHS tape. Tapes cannot be returned. Keep a copy for yourself.
- Label each tape with your name, address, and phone. Title your tape.
- Entries must be postmarked by March 11, 1993.

Use the (blank) back of this form to:

- Describe what the tape presents, its purpose or instructional objective.
- Credit any copyrighted text, music, still images, and video segments.
- Provide your name, address, and phone.
- Identify the National Writing Project affiliate serving your area.



Topic Ideas:

A Traditional Category (Narrative, Expository, Persuasive, etc.). Creative, Poetic, Technical, or Vocational Writing. Multiculturalism. Handwriting. The Rewards of Writing.

Combine images with sounds and voices.

The Goodies

Selected entries will receive teacher stipends for supporting technology-related teaching of writing. All entries receive certificates suitable for proud display in your classroom.

The Alliance

The CWP/CTP Alliance was formed to encourage and support the integration of technology into Writing Project activities and inservice.



The California Technology Project is funded by the California State Department of Education.

Do This.

Send this form with your tape to:
Stephen Marcus
Coordinator, CWP/CTP Alliance
SCWriP, Graduate School of
Education, University of California,
Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

We understand that the CWP/CTP Alliance may tape and use all submitted materials.

Teacher's Signature _____

Principal's Signature _____

Pennsylvania Writing Project PAWPDAY Seminar Series 1993 Saturday Seminar Programs

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.

JANUARY 9th PROGRAM

9:00 - 9:25 Registration. Coffee by PAWP. Book sales.
Lobby

9:30 - 11:00 "Writing and Reading Non-Fiction" (Alan Trussel-Cullen, New Zealand educator & children's author)
Auditorium

11:00 - 11:25 Lobby. Coffee break. Book sales continue.

11:30 - 1:00 Choose one

Main 300 "Working with Reluctant Writers" (Patty Morgioni, Northern Virginia Writing Project)

Main 301 "Using Themes in the Elementary Classroom" (Jim MacCall, Penn Valley Elementary School, Lower Merion School District)

Main 302 "BDA: Before, During, and After Social Studies" (Joe Myers, Vaux Middle School, Philadelphia School District)

1:00 - 1:30 Book Sales continue

FEBRUARY 27th PROGRAM

9:00 - 9:25 Registration. Coffee by PAWP. Book sales.
Lobby

9:30 - 11:00 "Networking with Parents" (Panel discussion led by and for elementary and secondary teachers)
Auditorium

Ways to instruct, train, and incorporate parents and the community into process approaches to writing

11:00 - 11:25 Coffee break. Book sales continue.

11:30 - 1:00 Choose one

Main 300 "Enriching Reading Before, During, and After" (Patty Koller, East Ward Elementary School, Downingtown School District)

Main 301 "Writing in the Persuasive Mode, Grades 1-8" (Lynne Dorfman, Roundmeadow Elementary School, Upper Moreland School District)

Main 302 "Publishing: The Payoff" (Karen Klingerman, Snyder Middle School, Bensalem School District)

1:00 - 1:30 Book Sales continue.

Alan Trussel-Cullen is a leading New Zealand educator in the fields of reading, writing, and whole language education, including children's drama and media studies. He is currently coordinator of courses for visiting educators for Auckland College, where he was formerly Coordinator of the Department of English and Language Education. He has written numerous fiction and non-fiction books, zany poetry, TV scripts for children, TV comedy and drama, and more. His children's books are available from Rigby and Scholastic.

NEXT PAWPDAY: APRIL 24, 1993 -- SAVE THIS DATE!

Snow Day Policy: Listen to KYW and /or WCOJ radio stations. If a PAWPDAY is cancelled, it will be held the following Saturday.

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 Spring 1993 programs are held in Main Hall, located on High St. north of Rosedale Ave. On-street parking is free on Saturdays and all campus lots are unrestricted.

Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter
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The purpose of the Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter is to link together all teachers of writing in our 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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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED