



# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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From the Director

## STUDENT WRITING IMPROVES IN PENNSYLVANIA

There is great good news. Pennsylvania students in grades 6 and 9 have shown marked improvement on the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment over the past 5 years (1991-95). Based on samples of students from across the state ranging from 35,315 in 1991 to a high of 144,125 in 1995, results indicate dramatic improvement in grade 6, with 50% of the 1995 sixth graders receiving scores in the "good" or "excellent" categories compared to only 24% in 1991. For grade 9, the gains were smaller but still substantial, with 44% of the 1995 group receiving scores of "good" and "excellent" compared to 35% in 1991.

I co-authored the research study that published these results, along with J. Robert Coldiron, former Chief of the Division of Evaluation and Reports for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, a man who is extremely knowledgeable about all matters of evaluation and measurement.

We looked first at the students' scores since the Writing Assessment began, then at the percentages of scores above the level of minimum competence for the grade levels involved, and presented conclusions that we believe to be iron-clad--and worthy of great praise for the teachers and administrators who have been teaching students to improve their performance. Further, we analyzed the

students' responses to the many questions they were asked about writing strategies they have been taught (for instance, pre-writing, conferring with their teacher, and seeing teachers write). These results suggested to us a strong link between the gains in student writing performance and the many staff development activities in writing instruction conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, intermediate units, local school districts, and Writing Project sites throughout the state.

The full study was published in *Pennsylvania Educational Leadership* in Fall 1995. Subsequent write-ups appeared in the *PSEA Voice*, the *PASA Newsletter*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the *Harrisburg Patriot-News*. Readers of this *Newsletter* may request a copy of the article from PAWP.

I was delighted about every aspect of this article--being able to report good news in an accurate and scholarly manner, to collaborate with a respected professional, and to be part of a program that could claim some responsibility for the fine results. Pennsylvania educators involved in the teaching and assessment of writing deserve a big round of applause! And the quiet revolution begun by the Writing Projects deserves the profound respect of everyone interested in young people and the future of our democracy.

**YOUTH PROGRAMS  
OUR BEST YEAR EVER!**  
*by Bruce Seidel*

The Eleventh Annual Youth Writing and Reading Programs were a major success. An unprecedented expansion of our program offerings and locations led to a student enrollment of 951 students; this was a 138% increase from the previous year. We have great plans for more expansion this summer with the hope of turning even more kids on to writing and reading.



Programs were offered at seven outside locations in Bucks, Chester, Montgomery, and Delaware Counties in addition to our traditional site at West Chester University. These outside students had a combined enrollment of 377 children which was 40% of our total student enrollment. These programs were extremely successful drawing such parent comments as, "Please make the program three or four weeks," and "We're glad that a site was so close to home." Students from thirty-five different school districts attended these outside locations.

Outside locations also offered a chance for many teachers who live far from West Chester to teach for our Youth Program. Thirty teachers taught at our satellite locations, with many of them teaching for the Writing Project for the first time. I know that many enjoyed their first experience, and are looking forward to returning to their original sites or teaching at new locations.

All but one of our locations will be returning for another year in the summer of 1996. In fact, we are adding a total of five new locations for this year including two new sites in Berks County, two new locations in Delaware County (replacing one previous site), and two new locations in Montgomery County. We are hoping that these new locations will provide an opportunity for teachers and students to get together and work on writing at even more convenient locations.

Teaching positions are available for PAWP fellows at all of our outside locations and at West Chester University. Positions offer flexible hours, locations, and work schedules as well as the chance to work with the best writers and readers in the Philadelphia area. We hope that you will join our team of dedicated teachers. For more information about how to apply, please call our new Youth Programs Coordinator Ginny O'Neil at (610) 436-3089. For more information about teaching positions, please leave a message for Bruce Seidel at the same telephone number.

*Bruce Seidel teaches chemistry in the Council Rock SD and is the Director of PAWP's Youth Program.*

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**NATIONAL WRITING  
PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Number of Sites:**

166 Sites (161 sites within the U.S.)

**Location of Sites:**

43 states plus Puerto Rico have at least one site; two sites in Canada; one site in Greece; and two sites overseas serving U.S. teachers in Department of Defense Dependent and Independent schools

**Numbers of Teachers Trained  
(1993-1994 programs):\***

Invitational Summer Institutes

Elementary	1,162
Junior High	669
Senior High	794
College	166
Other	85
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,876</b>

School Year Programs

Elementary	36,802
Secondary	38,314
College	1,759
Other	8,094
<b>Total:</b>	<b>84,969</b>

All Other NWP Programs:

<b>Total:</b>	<b>78,271</b>
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**Total Teachers and Others Trained**

**in 1993-1994 Programs: 166,116**

**Total Teachers, Administrators, and**

**Others Trained in NWP Programs to Date,  
1974 to the Present: 1,484,380**

*\*Yes, it takes this long to cumulate our data*

WHOLE LANGUAGE UMBRELLA  
CONFERENCE: CELEBRATING COMMUNITIES

by Nancy McElwee

Since immersion is one of the conditions of learning, the Whole Language Umbrella Conference is truly the place to learn Whole Language. From the opening keynote, through various workshops presented by teachers from across the country and around the world, we all found reminders, information and great ideas on how to make our classrooms true learning communities.

The theme of this year's conference was *Celebrating Communities* and there was never a doubt that this was a community of learners. Just as the writing project model is teachers teaching teachers, the Whole Language celebrates the classroom teacher as the important facilitator in creating a classroom community.

The diversity of the people in attendance enhanced the idea of each person being an important part of the community. While there were many published authors and known authorities on the subject of whole language, every member of the whole language community had equal prominence. The idea of an individual's contribution to the community was paramount at this conference.

After introductions and welcome from Dorothy Watson and Jerry Harste and the mayors of Detroit and Windsor, I and several hundred other educators settled back to enjoy the keynote address of children's author Robert Munsch. In addition to telling some of his stories, as only he can, Robert Munsch talked about the process he goes through with each of his stories. For several years he worked at a day care center and was known as the emergency storyteller. He would entertain and quiet the children with his stories. He said he knew a good story if the children chimed in. He has continued this practice with the stories he has published. They don't go to his editor until they have been "dragged through" the storytelling process at least 100 times. The stories change with each retelling until he feels he has the best version.

He shared the fact that he receives 10,000 letters from children each year and does send responses to each one. He especially enjoys the letters because they give him some of his ideas for stories. Two such stories are now in print -- *Where is Gah-Ning?* and *From Far Away*. He also shared that he has stayed with families who are unusual in exchange for visiting schools (you could see everyone trying to think of an unusual family in their school for him to visit!). Listening to Bob Munsch tell his stories put a whole new light on the stories themselves.

It was a particular thrill for me having the

opportunity to listen to Ken Goodman address the group on *Why We Can't STANDARDize Whole Language*. This was the first time that I had heard him speak and I thoroughly enjoyed his entire presentation, perhaps because it was so political. In his own inimitable way, he shared his concerns regarding the standards movement which he believes is trying to make the kids fit the schools. Ken began his address by asking everyone if they liked his suit. He explained that he shops for most of his clothes in other countries so that he can have them made for him. Clothes are proportioned to you when they're made for you. He quoted John Dewey--"We can make the kids fit the schools or schools fit the kids."

Ken Goodman is very concerned that the standards movement is heading us toward making the kids fit the schools. Those of us working with children know that all children are not the same but rather individuals who have their own unique set of strengths and talents. He is concerned that outcomes display a belief that in the end all children will come out the same. Goodman contrasted the whole language view of teaching, learning, curriculum, language and communities (the five pillars of whole language) to the standards view that we can decide an outcome and then shape everything around it. In discussing standards, he pointed out the following:

- A standard car is usually the minimum.
- Standards set up winners and losers.
- In education, standards are coming from groups on high.
- Standards in education tend to perpetuate the status quo.

His address gave those in attendance a great deal to consider. One point we could all agree on -- Whole Language is just good teaching. There is no standard Whole Language Teacher. The best teacher is not visible at all.

Besides the theme of creating community, the other recurring message which was heard frequently at many different sessions was the idea of change and growth. The idea was often reiterated that we are all in the process of learning and growing along with our children. The philosophy of whole language has been changed and refined and is in a constant state of revision, while the basic tenets of whole language have remained the same.

The Whole Language Umbrella remains a grass roots organization of individuals who are interested in children's natural learning. The community of learners in attendance at this conference left with renewed enthusiasm, eager to return to the classroom and implement the ideas which were shared at this conference.

Throughout the conference there were workshops and speakers from which each attendee could choose. The main problem with the offerings was the difficulty in choosing just one to attend. This was partially addressed by having some of the offerings audio taped and available for purchase.

One change I noted from a previous Whole Language Umbrella Conference I had attended was an increase in the number of workshops offered on multiage classrooms. The teachers presenting one of these workshops, stressed that they felt that multi-age was the logical next step in a Whole Language journey. The teachers involved were enthusiastic and gave practical as well as theoretical information on how and why they organized their day as well as their curriculum.

I attended the session on *We'll Tell You a Story: Integrating Math with Science and Literature to Help Children Build Concepts*. This session was facilitated by two teachers from a 5-8 multi-age classroom. They shared ideas for connecting math and literature. A few of the points made were important to the group.

They recommended that everyone have a copy of the National Association for the Education of Young Children publication of *Developmentally Appropriate Practices*. They commented on the growth of the children in their multi-age classroom with the older veterans helping the younger rookies. One child was overheard helping another to read--"Tell me the words you know."

*Multi-age Journey* was a session lead by two teachers from New York who have been involved in a K-2 multi-age classroom. They were quite enthusiastic and were able to explain the process they had gone through since they were involved from the beginning. They made you want to teach in a multi-age setting so that you could offer the most to your children.

The classes were grouped heterogeneously with an equal number from K, 1 and 2 grade levels. The unit stayed together, with the 2nd graders moving to 3rd at the end of the year. The younger children learned from the older children and the older children gained a deeper understanding of subjects as they taught others. The classes were formed from applicants and since there was such a large number of applicants, they had to hold a lottery.

The presenters shared their daily schedules and gave examples of activities which were part of the class program. They made the point that all day the children were learning to negotiate. Because of the class makeup, there were NO discipline problems, probably the best endorsement for the program.

I appreciate the support given to me by the conference. As well as being personally fulfilling, I found that I used many of the examples in coordinating the Whole Language course and in presenting material at a variety of conferences.

*Nancy McElwee, a 1990 Fellow, teaches in the Central Bucks School District. She co-chairs the Whole Language Umbrella and regularly coordinates courses for PAWP.*

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### WRITING PROJECT TEACHER RUNS FOR W. VA. GOVERNORSHIP

Charlotte Pritt, a former English teacher and director of the West Virginia Writing Project, is running hard for the Democratic nomination for the governor's office in West Virginia. The daughter of a West Virginia coal-miner, Charlotte left teaching and the Writing Project in the mid-80's to run on a reform platform for a seat in the state legislature. According to a recent article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, she is the leading contender for the nomination in a state that is heavily Democratic.

As a Writing Project director, Charlotte had traveled to schools throughout her state and learned its realities and needs. She recalls what impelled her into politics--a teacher in a poverty-riddled county who told her: "These are exciting writing theories, but what do you do when children are too hungry to think?" Charlotte never forget that question and consistently supported social issues when she was elected to the state House in 1984 and the state Senate in 1988.

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### PAWPER PUBLISHED IN NATIONAL JOURNAL

Mary Lou Kuhns' article "Metaphors for Thinking About Literature" appeared in the Fall 1995 issue of the *Missouri English Bulletin*.

Her article demonstrates the results of her students' increased perceptions about characters, settings, and themes after they created and discussed their metaphoric applications. The theme for the bulletin was "What Works in the Classroom."

Mary Lou teaches English at Conestoga High School, in the Tredyffrin-Easttown School District. She is a 1988 PAWP fellow, and has been involved with the Writing Project since 1989. She has most recently been involved as our summer institute co-director and editor of our publication *Strategies for Teaching Writing*.

## PAWP PRESENTS A WINNER

by Conne Broderick

Richard Cooper from the Center for Alternative Learning presented on the November PAWP Day. He added a twist to his presentation on "Writing Strategies for an Inclusion Classroom." He stressed *avoidance* as the main area of concern rather than the learning difference, learning problem, or learning disability. He emphasized that these are the three categories of students most likely to be included in a regular classroom which must be geared for their learning success. They may be students who appear to be unable to focus on tasks but are not "identified" as a result of specific tests, students who lack skill development, or who are disabled by a condition that is so severe they cannot function like others. A handicapping condition that requires a person to use a wheelchair is often easier to accept as a disability than one which is manifested in poor handwriting.

We must understand these students' thought processes, errors, and ways of handling situations in order to understand their problems. Many of their problems are caused by stress, anxiety, or fatigue. They often try initially to keep up with the other students for whom a lesson is geared. However, they have to work much harder and longer to accomplish the task than the "regular" student. They soon learn avoidance patterns which we often misinterpret as being lazy or obnoxious as their behavior may suggest.

Cooper discussed several areas which may interfere with writing performance. Visual organization and processing problems are manifested in poor letter and word spacing. He suggests using paper with raised lines for handwriting and making spaces between words by showing students to use a finger, pencil or eraser.

Difficulty with right/left discrimination is often referred to as reversal, suggesting children see things backwards. Cooper says this is a myth. They do not see backwards but experience confusion that lets them see both sides equally. When writing they can't remember which way a letter goes and have to guess. This either/or confusion permeates their thoughts in other areas of writing as well, e.g., capitals or not capitals, *-ence* or *-ance*, apostrophe or no apostrophe. The reversal of numbers is more easily corrected because there are only ten that need to be learned.

Auditory perception and processing problems are manifested in spelling and following directions. In some instances a student may confuse a word that sounds like something else. Concrete examples of words should be given whenever possible. In some cases students may have blurred hearing and only a few words may register in context. It is necessary to speak

slowly and enunciate clearly so they can more easily differentiate words such as *then/than, now/not*.

He referred to what is commonly known as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) as The Racing Mind. Focusing is often difficult as one thought triggers other ideas and the completion of an idea is not always concluded. This also interferes with thought processes for writing by skipping words as one writes because the hand just can't keep up. When proofreading the student's "racing mind" automatically inserts the missing word. Having a proofreading/editing partner is one accommodation that might be used. Another accommodation is to use an editing checklist that isolates one task at a time.

Sequencing problems may also cause writing avoidance behaviors. Students with this deficit do not see the connection between the tenses, antecedent and pronoun or sentence position. In anything that uses a step by step process, they will most likely mix up the steps.

Difficulty with spelling is one area of major concern. The lack of spelling automatically prohibits students in topic selection, expression of ideas, use of higher level vocabulary and syntax in a sentence. Many students ultimately dumb down a sentence so they can write it or just avoid the writing task altogether. Cooper cited another myth that we become better spellers as we write. This is not so for the identified child. They think regular students can spell all the words correctly and feel they need to do this to write as well. These children do not want to expose their weakness so they avoid the task.

Merely the understanding of learning styles doesn't help if students are avoiding the writing activity. It is necessary to help students realize that they are avoiding by identifying the kind of avoidance behaviors they are using. Causes of avoidance may include a fear of exposing a weakness or lack of a nurturing literate home environment to name only two.

Students tend to exhibit avoidance behaviors in several different styles. These include: emotional avoidance like crying or becoming angry; cheating by copying or saying it was done but now is lost; substitution by doing other things instead; easily distracted; distancing oneself by absentia; or shifting responsibility such as referring to writing as "stupid."

To break the avoidance behavior we must first help to make a student aware of the avoidance behavior. Next, it is important to determine the cause for the avoidance behavior. Finally, an accommodation must be provided to help the student begin and complete the writing task.

Once the avoidance behaviors are overcome, accommodations will be more accepted by students.

Cooper shared many more suggestions. For sequencing difficulties he suggests setting up sentence models to imitate during writing. Students with poor handwriting should be allowed to write on the computer or have their dictation written down for them. To help students expand their drafts using a formula for expanding sentences is especially helpful, e.g.,

*The dog barked.*

*The dog barked in the yard.*

*The dog barked in the yard all night long.*

Spelling inefficiency is a major cause for avoidance so that an individualized spelling program may be appropriate. In this program students write every day. The most frequently misspelled words are then pulled from their writing and practiced, repeating the same words weekly until they are used correctly in their writing. As word lists increase students note patterns of words and keep them in a special color coded book containing a Sounds page, Parts of Speech page, Vocabulary page, mnemonic page.

The important thing is that we must try different things to make the task easier. If the task is easier the student will spend more time on the task of learning--if not the student will "avoid" the task.

Cooper has a number of inservice workshops and courses on learning differences. He speaks from his experience of working with learning disabled adults and from his own experience with a learning disability. A fifteen hour course entitled "Inclusion of Students with Learning Problems" is offered by Delaware County Intermediate Unit on Wednesday evenings starting in March from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. For more information contact him at P.O. Box 716, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.

PAWP itself offers a 15-hour course entitled "Writing in the Inclusion Classroom" for one inservice credit or one graduate credit from West Chester University. This course will run on Monday evenings starting on March 4, from 4:30 PM-7:30 PM in Upper Darby School District. This course is also offered this summer in Bucks, Delaware, and Berks counties. More information regarding these and other PWP summer opportunities can be found in our *Opportunities for Teachers: Summer 1996* publication.

To register for graduate credit call (610)436-2297. To register for inservice credit, make your check payable to the Pennsylvania Writing Project and send it along with the Intermediate Unit registration form to the Office of the Bursar, 114 Bull Center, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

*Please read more about Conne Broderick in the next column.*

## PAWPER PUBLISHED IN NATIONAL JOURNAL

Conne Brodericks' article "How Do You Spell Caught?" appeared in the Fall 1995 issue of *The Quarterly*, a joint publication of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy. This piece originally appeared in PAWP's first full-length publication, *Strategies for Teaching Writing*, a compilation of effective classroom writing practices used by 21 area teachers. The pieces were specially selected for inclusion in *Strategies* based on their unique and realistic perspectives on the writing process.

Her article focuses on students with special needs, and teaching them to use visualization as a way to discover proper spelling. Conne's model "Write, Think, Check" relies on our natural inclination to rewrite an unknown word until it looks right.

Conne is an learning support teacher in the Southeast Delco School District, and a 1984 PAWP fellow.



### WRITING

*by Mary Ellen Giess*

It's about pencils  
papers  
erasers

It's about the scritch-scratch of a pencil  
the quiet sound of a pen  
the click-clack of a computer

It's about the imagination at work  
the ink, just drying  
the masterpiece

It's about licking a sugar cube  
the happiness of a joyful author  
the tastes of a story

It's about a clammy hand gripping a pencil  
shivering fingers trying to type  
an excited author

It's about "Let's print it."

*This delightful poem was among those selected as a winner of a writing award for excellence in PAWP's 1995 summer youth programs. Mary Ellen Giess is currently a sixth grade student at Peirce Middle School in the West Chester Area School District, and a repeater in our Young Writers program.*

**"FAIRY TALES WITH A POINT OF VIEW"**

**PAWPDAY**

November 18, 1995

by Anne Murdock

Carol Starr Townsend's love for fairy tales translates beautifully in her teaching techniques of the genre. Leading professionals who deal with children also realize the importance of this literary form. Bruno Bettelheim believes it gives the students a true perspective on life and of good conquering over evil. Those present enumerated their reasons for including fairy tales in their curriculum. Such reasons are:

- to familiarize children with them,
- compare and contrast,
- point of view,
- work with math concepts,
- dramatization,
- literature appreciation,
- geography,
- and many interdisciplinary connections.

Carol demonstrates how imagination, which manifests itself differently in each child, is a nonjudgmental characteristic and is made apparent in "The Dance of the Chicken Feet" by Baily White. Imagination is personal and nonthreatening activities encourage its use.

There are many ways students can be exposed to fairy tales. Middle and high school students benefit from The Blue Fairy Book (and other color books in this series) when introduced to lesser known tales such as "The Yellow Dwarf."

Writing activities glut Carol's program and are an asset to the learning process. Writing is used to summarize a fairy tale, create poetry and rap, write letters to fairy tale characters, and to rewrite the story in a turn-about fashion with a new point of view from one of the characters. An opportunity for cooperative learning exists when two classes become pen pals writing to and responding as assumed fairy tale characters. They also share an understanding of turn-about tales using the Venn Diagram.

Carol is a fourth grade learning support teacher, a consultant for at-risk students, and teaches the homebound, physically challenged, and adults with literacy needs. She is a 1994 PAWP fellow and has succeeded in perpetuating the love of fairy tales through shared strategies.

*Anne Murdock is a first grade teacher at Devon Elementary School in the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District.*

**CERTIFICATE IN WRITING INSTRUCTION  
AWARDED TO 11 PARTICIPANTS**

PAWP continues to offer its special Certificate in Writing Instruction. The latest Fellow recipients are Carol Ann Edwards ('91), Neshaminy School District; Joan Duvall-Flynn ('80), West Chester School District; Kathleen Frick ('92), William Penn School District; Ruth Ann Higgins ('93), Delaware County IU; Brenda Krupp ('93), Souderton Area School District; Mary O'Gorman ('93), Upper Moreland School District; Carol Rohrbach ('94), Springfield Township School District; Freda Schopfer ('93), Upper Moreland School District; and Rose Anne Uhrig ('94), Reading School District. The latest non-Fellow recipients are Beth Howard, Abington School District; and June Barry Freeman, Hatboro/Horsham School District.

This certificate, earned through completion of 15 credits of course work with West Chester University through the Pennsylvania Writing Project, originated with the Upper Moreland School District, where a regular sequence of PAWP courses has been offered for teachers since 1990. Since then, 30 teachers have earned the certificate.

Teachers interested in the certificate should review their record of course work. Previous graduate credit earned through the Pennsylvania Writing Project may be applicable. *Please address all questions in writing to the office of the Pennsylvania Writing Project.*



*Style is the mind skating circles  
round itself as it moves forward.*

Robert Frost



# PAWPDAYS 1996

**March 23, 1996**

## *A Writing Community Project at Work*

Students of Joan Baldwin, Reading Specialist, Kutztown SD and co-director of the Lehigh Valley Writing Project, recently produced a book, *The Day the President Came to Visit*. Joan, along with her students and their parents will present how they developed a community effort around a visit from President Bill Clinton.

### Workshops:

#### Elementary

*Writing Across the Curriculum*

Susan Fitzgerald

Coatesville Area School District

#### Middle & High School

*Biographical Writing: Using Personal Artifacts*

Janet Kelly

Central Bucks School District

#### All Levels

*Writing in Response to Literature*

Troy Czukoski

West Chester Area School District

#### All Levels

*Found Poetry*

Tracy Valko

New Hope-Solebury School District

**April 27, 1996**

## *A Whole Language Reading/Writing Workshop*

Carol Meinhardt, a Springfield School District English Teacher and Co-Founder of the Lehigh Valley Writing Project presents a workshop featuring documentaries which she produced and directed showing her workshop in action. For additional information on this program, please see page 9.

### Workshops:

#### Lower Elementary

*Thinking Patterns, Writing Patterns*

Bonnie Brown

Hatboro-Horsham School District

#### Elementary and Middle School

*Teaching Through Thematic Units*

Erika Allen

Upper Moreland School District

#### All Levels

*Fostering the Writing Domains through Newspaper Publication*

Johanna Berman

Upper Dublin School District

#### All Levels

*Incorporating the Writing Domains into a Theme Based Approach to Learning*

Linda Mackiewicz

Willingboro School District

May 11 Snow Date will be held if needed and will be at the same time as the program missed. In case of inclement weather, listen to KYW or call (610) 436-2202 for cancellation information.

All programs will be held in Main Hall, West Chester University, from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM. Registration is in the lobby from 9:00 AM to 9:25 AM.

Donations of \$3.00 for coffee and refreshments will be collected at the door. Book sales at registration and break times are a regular feature.

## ATTENTION!

The Summer Institute nomination deadline has been extended!

Nominations from the postcard located in the 1996 Summer Opportunities for Teachers are now being accepted through Friday, March 29th.

If you have any questions, please call the PAWP office at (610) 436-2202.



## A WHOLE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM : PAWPDAY 6

We are extremely excited at the opportunity to present Carol Meinhardt as our keynote speaker for PAWPDAY 6, to be held April 27, 1996. Carol is a 1988 PAWP fellow and has coordinated the summer institutes of the Lehigh Valley Writing Project.

Carol has developed an innovative instructional model called the Reading and Writing Workshop, based on a concept that began with the National Writing Project in 1973 to improve students' writing skills prior to college attendance. In college, such skills will be continuously challenged, and any deficiencies obvious.

In response to the interest generated throughout the county by her workshop, Carol has produced and directed a documentary in which her Springfield HS sophomore English class was video taped over the course of a year participating in her Workshop. This film will be shown in conjunction with her PAWPDAY 6 program.

Please join us as Carol provides us with a novel and enlightening look into a whole language classroom. All PAWPDAYS run from 9:00 AM until 1:30 PM, with registration in the lobby of Main Hall from 9:00 AM until 9:25 AM.



### STAFFING CHANGES AT PAWP

There have been several staffing changes at the PAWP offices. Our former secretary and youth coordinator, Barb Caffro, has moved to Ohio. Taking her place as secretary is Ann Mascherino. A graduate of West Chester University with a degree in Elementary Education, Ann brings six years of teaching experience to the project. Prior to accepting the position with PAWP, Ann was a legal secretary with a local firm. As a mother of three, Ann will be sure to quickly acclimate to the harried environment surrounding the project as we move into the new year.

Due to the rapid growth of our youth program, a new position has been developed and filled by Ginny O'Neil. Ginny will function as the coordinator for both youth programs and publications (this newsletter is included in her responsibilities!). With a degree in English Literature from West Chester University, Ginny comes well prepared educationally, as well as historically; in her previous position, Ginny acted as a convention coordinator in the healthcare industry.

## PAWP COURSES SPRING 1996

*(All 1 credit unless specified)*

### BUCKS COUNTY IU (GRADUATE ONLY)

#### Writing and Children's Literature

PWP 599-71 - Sue Smith

W • March 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24 • 4:30-7:30 PM

#### Portfolio Assessment: An Introduction

PWP 599-72 - Brenda Hurley

T • April 9, 23, 30; May 7 & 14 • 4:30-7:30 PM

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY IU (GRADUATE/IN-SERVICE)

#### Skills and Spelling in a Whole Language Classroom

PWP 599-73 - Jim MacCall

T • April 9, 23, 30; May 7 & 14 • 4:30-7:30 PM

### UPPER DARBY (GRADUATE/IN-SERVICE)

*Center For Enhancement Of Teaching Curriculum Library Or  
Aronomink Elementary School Library*

#### Inclusion Through Writing Strategies

PWP 599-74 - Conne Broderick

M • March 11, 18, 25; April 8 & 15 • 4:30-7:30 PM

#### Writing Activities for Managing Double Periods

PWP 599-75 - Diane Dougherty

M • March 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 8 • 4:30-7:30 PM

#### Persuasive Writing

PWP 599 76 - Lynne Dorfman

W • April 10, 17, 24; May 1 & 8 • 4:30-7:30 PM

### COUNCIL ROCK (GRADUATE ONLY)

*Newtown Elementary School*

#### Designing Rubrics Across the Curriculum

PWP 599- 78 - Chuck Baker/Brenda Krupp

S • March 16 & 23 • 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

#### Emergent Writers and Readers K-2

PWP 599 79 - Sylvia Pennypacker

S • March 16 & 23 • 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

#### Managing a Writing/Reading Classroom

PWP 599 80 - Bev Hanrahan

S • April 13 & 20 • 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

### CHESTER COUNTY (GRADUATE/IN-SERVICE)

*West Chester University Campus*

#### Service Learning

PWP 599-81 - Jeff Singleton

S • April 13 & 20 • 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

# SHORT COURSES PROVIDE ESPECIALLY

One-credit workshops were very popular at WCU during the 1995 summer session. Course selections for 1996 include a wide variety of topics at the WCU campus and at four additional locations: the Berks County IU, the Bucks County IU, the Center for Enhancement of Teaching (Upper Darby SD), and the Montgomery County IU (EISC). PAWP and PennLit coordinators for each workshop are described more fully beginning on page 12.

Each 2-day session can be taken for one graduate credit or one in-service credit (except for those at the Bucks County IU, which provide graduate credit only). A maximum of 3 one-credit workshops may be used to create one final assignment. All short courses meet from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. One-credit programs can be applied to PAWP certificates in writing instruction. Enrollment is limited to 25 participants per course.

Dates and official course numbers appear in our Summer Opportunities booklet. Please join us this summer!

## THIRTEEN WORKSHOPS AT WCU CAMPUS

**Portfolio Assessment: An Introduction** examines advantages of portfolio assessment for teachers of all grades and subject areas and provides models for practical application. Types, purposes, content, format and audiences for student portfolios will be discussed and modeled. Participants also learn to create plans for portfolio systems for individual classrooms and ways to evaluate portfolios. *(Coordinator: Mary Lou Kuhns)*

Hands-on experience with various methods for bookbinding and other methods of publishing student work may be gained from **Classroom Publishing/Publishing Center**. Participant learn how to plan and organize a publishing center for their schools or improve an existing one. Many published samples will be presented and displayed, along with a slide presentation of notable area publishing centers. *(Coordinator: Sue Smith)*

**Developing Rubrics Across the Curriculum** introduces rubrics as a tool for assessment and instruction, K-12 and shows how to involve students actively and collaboratively in rubric design and implementation. Mini-lessons, read-around sessions, and peer response groups are modeled and discussed to integrate rubric-based assessment with daily instruction. *(Coordinator: Chuck Baker)*

Various techniques to respond effectively to student writing and to encourage student ownership are explored in **Writing Conference I: Management and Feedback**. The teaching strategies include student observations, personal and creative response, wait time, read around, helping circles, and response groups. *(Coordinator: Janet Kelly)*

**Writing Conference II: Beyond the Basics** follows through by addressing impediments to successful writing conferences. Intended for teachers who have a conference management system in place and use process approaches to writing in their classrooms, this workshop also offers strategies to prepare students to reflect and conduct self-conferences, make choices, and come to conference with questions or options modeled and discussed. *(Coordinator: Mary Lou Kuhns)*

**Writing and Children's Literature I (elementary)** helps teachers develop literature activities to blend and manage the writing/reading processes typical of a natural learning classroom. Graphic organizers for nonfiction pieces and fiction are created and shared, as are techniques for using journals in the classroom. The workshop also features children's books used to create activities to introduce genres and make reading-writing connections. *(Coordinator: Sue Smith)*

**Writing and Children's Literature II (elementary)** provides multiple models of literature-to-writing activities for various purposes, audiences, and genres. The workshop emphasizes the use of story elements and graphic organizers to strengthen reading comprehension and organize a piece of writing effectively, and shows how journals can enhance literacy circles and literature activities to integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening. *(Coordinator: Lorraine DeRosa)*

A special workshop on using picture books in secondary classrooms, offered as **Writing and Children's Literature I (secondary)**, provides many models and techniques, including introductions, teaching aids for sophisticated writing skills, thematic approaches, and illustrating the different modes of writing. Participants create writing lessons, literature activities, and annotated bibliographies. *(Coordinator: Jolene Borgese)*

**Flexible Grouping in the Writing/Reading Classroom** presents three separate and distinct flexible grouping models, with practical applications, management strategies, and authentic assessment tools. Emphasis is on choice, teaching style, time constraints,

# APPEALING MENU FOR SUMMER 1996

and individual district guidelines. The workshop features several approaches for getting feedback and for using logs and log entries to develop students' reflective skills. *(Coordinator: Sue Mowery)*

A hands-on approach in **Mini-Lessons: Connecting Writing/Reading** will help teachers to create practical, creative mini-lessons, to find sources for them, and to implement them effectively. Included will be mini-lessons related to authors/illustrators, poetry, and thematic approaches. *(Coordinator: Sue Mowery)*

The special topic of the **Writing/Reading Classroom for Students at Risk** presents ways to create support structures and organize process-oriented classroom writing and reading activities for at-risk students to be successful and to become responsible, self-directed decision-makers and problem-solvers. Strategies to be modeled and practiced include paired/buddy reading, retellings, Readers' Theater, graphic organizers, and journals/logs. Techniques will be shared for student negotiation, peer coaching, and flexible grouping patterns to enhance learning for all students. *(Coordinator: Sue Mowery)*

**Expository Writing: A Life Skill** emphasizes the essay, the research paper, and writing for assessment. The workshop provides techniques and strategies for using expository writing to communicate ideas and information, as well as new ways to introduce traditional assignments, drafting as discovery, developing voice, and exploring topics through journal writing. *(Coordinator: Carol Rohrbach)*

Working from a communication model that connects essential elements, **Oral Communications: Talking to Learn** emphasizes strategies for using and maintaining small "talk" groups for multiple purposes such as problem-solving, project design, and response to literature or writing. Participants also gain methods to improve students' active listening skills. For "accountable talk," the workshop emphasizes topic selection, audience awareness, audience goals and responsibilities, and evaluation tools including checklists of criteria, report cards, rubrics, and scoring guides. *(Coordinator: Kevin Dean)*

## FOUR WORKSHOPS AT EASTERN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT CENTER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY

For teachers from pre-kindergarten through grade two, **Emergent Writers & Readers** offers strategies and activities to enhance literacy

development, with practical tips for creating writing/reading workshops and using dramatic play, authentic assessment, and parent involvement in process-oriented classrooms. Grade level teams design writing/reading attitude surveys, observation checklists, and rubrics to evaluate writing and reading. *(Coordinator: Bonnie Brown)*

**Writing Strategies for Double Periods** is intended for teachers who want to create dynamic 80- or 90-minute periods in any content area with a workshop atmosphere where everyone is on task as a learner through reading, writing, and responding. Strategies are offered for sustaining writing experiences and for helping students recognize the powers and values of writing as a tool for their own learning and for instructing others. *(Coordinators: Joan Kilpatrick and Becky Miller)*

**Introduction to Whole Language** introduces methods for organizing and managing whole language classrooms or literature-based classrooms. Included are literature extension activities and response to literature through response logs and discussion groups, mini-lessons to demonstrate reading/writing skills taught in context, and ideas for independent and collaborative writing and reading activities. *(Coordinator: Lorraine DeRosa)*

For teachers who have had less than 15 hours in writing process, **Writing Process Revisited** is a practical overview of the current favored practices in teaching writing, with emphasis on writing process. Procedures and strategies for publishing and sharing students' work help teachers to create prewriting and revision activities appropriate for their grade level as well as mini-lessons to aid in revision, editing, skills teaching, and classroom management. *(Coordinator: Brenda Hurley)*

## FOUR WORKSHOPS AT THE CENTER FOR ENHANCEMENT FOR TEACHING, UPPER DARBY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Persuasive Writing** presents practical strategies and techniques to develop and improve student this mode of writing across subject areas and grade levels. Activities, procedures, purposes, forms, topics, and audiences appropriate for different grade levels will be designed, along with evaluation tools such as rubrics, holistic scoring guides, checklists and self- or peer-review. *(Coordinator: Judy Jester)*

Writing activities to practice organizing, inferring, interpreting, communicating, explaining, and

reflecting are offered in **Writing in Math and Science**. Emphasis is on writing processes and ways to engage students in an active, constructive view of learning at all grade levels, using writing-to-learn experiences and learning logs. Practical applications for evaluation are provided. (Coordinator: Kathryn Falso)

**Inclusion Through Writing Strategies**, to meet the needs of all students, provides lesson design and assessment options and explore the multifaceted roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers. Emphasized are cooperative strategies to organize and manage the inclusive classroom, structures for writing workshop time, and activities to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence. (Coordinator: Conne Broderick)

**Multicultural Issues in Today's Classrooms** clarifies what the term "multicultural" means and helps teachers apply that understanding to their own classrooms and students. Teachers will be helped to design teaching and assessment strategies that accommodate culturally diverse responses across the curriculum and to develop writing activities to help students explore and understand their own and others' cultures. (Coordinators: Patti Koller and Carol Rohrbach)

#### FOUR WORKSHOPS AT BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

**Writing Process Revisited** (See Montgomery County information above). (Coordinator: Sylvia Pennypacker)

**Inclusion Through Writing Strategies** (See Upper Darby information above). (Coordinators: Ted Feldstein and Gretchen Maysek)

**Managing a Writing/Reading Classroom** features tested procedures and methods to aid in a smoothly running workshop classroom. Teachers gain ways to use mini-lessons, student journals, a writing center, peer and self-evaluation, and vocabulary, skill, and strategy reinforcement. Management strategies for student conferences, self-selected reading activities, and flexible groups will also be presented. (Coordinator: Gretchen Maysek)

**Writing to Learn** has the goal of helping students learn better in all content areas and at all grade levels. The workshop provides many tested strategies for sustaining writing-to-learn experiences, various uses for journals and process logs, graphic organizers, and performance-based assessment to evaluate writing-to-learn activities. Participants model and practice creative response, learner's notebook, dialogue, analysis, comparison/contrast, inquiry, test review, and problem-solving. (Coordinator: Carol Rohrbach)

#### FIVE WORKSHOPS AT BERKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

**Writing Strategies for Double Periods** (See Montgomery County IU information above). (Coordinator: Vicki Steinberg)

**Inclusion Through Writing Strategies** (See Upper Darby information above). (Coordinator: Sue Mowery)

**Manage a Writing/Reading Classroom** (See Bucks County IU information above). (Coordinator: Ruby Pannoni)

The **Multiple Intelligences** workshop offers classroom activities exercising the seven kinds of intelligences discussed in Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind*. Teaching strategies for each intelligence will be modeled and discussed, and elements of classroom environment and management revisited in terms of MI theory. The MI portfolio and other multimodal approaches to assessment are demonstrated and created by participants. (Coordinator: Vicki Steinberg)

**Multicultural Literature** helps participants to redesign literature programs to include a multicultural facet. The workshop provides guidelines for selecting multicultural texts and creating reading/writing activities to enhance students' personal connections to the new themes and topics, including peoples of African descent; immigrants and immigration; Hispanic/Latino characters; Asian Americans; and Native Americans. Also discussed will be rubrics and portfolios as they relate to the use of this literature. (Coordinators: Linda Baer and Patti Koller)

#### PAWP AND PENNLIT SUMMER COORDINATORS

**Linda Baer**, a 1984 PAWP fellow and a 1992 PennLit teacher-consultant, has coordinated Teachers as Writers and Strategies for Teaching Writing (K-12).

**Chuck Baker**, a 1992 PAWP Fellow, teaches English and creative writing in Abington. Chuck has coordinated multi-media workshops and computer assisted writing. He has also presented ways to design rubrics for revision and evaluation.

**Jolene Borgese**, the co-director of the PA Writing Project, is a 1980 "PAWPer". She teaches English and creative writing at East High School in West Chester, and is presently a doctoral student at Widener University in Educational Leadership. Jolene also coordinates PAWP days.

**Conne Broderick**, a 1984 PAWP fellow, is a Learning Support Teacher in an inclusive class at Delcroft Elementary School in Montgomery County. She has presented for and coordinated Strategies for

Teaching Writing. Conne also coordinated the development of written retellings as an evaluative tool for her school.

**Bonnie Brown** teaches at the Simmons Elementary School in the Hatboro Horsham SD. She is a reading specialist and a member of the 1984 PAWP summer institute. Bonnie coordinates the writing program for her school and has designed writing workshops for parents.

**Kevin Dean** is a professor at West Chester University. He coordinates the honors program in addition to facilitating our Oral Communications course.

**Lorraine DeRosa**, a reading specialist in the Philadelphia SD, teaches fifth grade at the Hancock Demonstration School. She is a 1990 "PAWPer" and coordinates a childrens' literature course. Presently Lorraine is the facilitator for a multicultural literature study group in Philadelphia's CHAIN cluster.

**Kathy Falso** teaches fourth grade at Cheltenham Elementary School. She is a 1994 PAWP fellow and has coordinated the Writing To Learn course in the Souderton area. She has also made numerous presentations for Strategies for Teaching Writing K-12.

**Ted Feldstein** is Supervisor of Special Education for the Bucks County IU. He is a 1992 PAWP fellow and coordinated Inclusion Through Writing Strategies in Summer 1995.

**Judy Fisher** is the editor of the PAWP newsletter and a member of the 1982 PAWP summer institute. She is a reading specialist at the Fell Elementary School in Philadelphia and has coordinated numerous PAWP courses including Strategies for Teaching Writing K-12.

**Brenda Hurley**, a 1984 PAWP fellow teaches gifted support students in grades 6, 7, and 8 at Log College Middle School in Warminster. She is the language arts resource leader for the school and has coordinated Strategies for Teaching Writing K-12 (1&2), and Computers and Writing.

**Judy Jester** is a 1993 PAWP fellow and a 1994 Penn Lit teacher-consultant. She has made numerous presentations at PAWP days and presently coordinates our youth program in the Kennett Consolidated SD.

**Janet Kelly** teaches 10th and 11th grades in Central Bucks County. She is a 1988 PAWP fellow and a 1995 PennLit teacher-consultant. Janet has presented for many of the Strategies for Teaching Writing K-12 courses.

**Joan Kilpatrick** is a 1992 PAWP fellow and teaches English at the Upper Moreland High School. She has made many presentations on the design and implementation of the ninety minute period.

**Patti Koller** is 1992 PennLit teacher-consultant. She is the assistant director of the literature project for

the Downingtown Area SD, and facilitates four literature circles a year.

**Mary Lou Kuhns** is a 1988 PAWP fellow and teaches English 10th to 12th grades at Conestoga High School. She has served the writing project as coordinator for programs and summer institutes. She is co-editor of the Pa. Department of Education publication, Strategies for Teaching Writing.

**Gretchen Maysek** is a 1990 PAWP fellow and a 1991 University of New Hampshire fellow. She was a special education teacher of a full inclusion class in Quakertown. Gretchen has coordinated Strategies for Teaching Writing K-12 and presented at PAWP days.

**Becky Miller**, a 1992 PAWP fellow, teaches English at Upper Moreland High School. She has also taught in the 90 minute period model for two years. Becky coordinates the reading/writing lab at her school and is piloting a creative writing course.

**Sue Mowery**, a 1989 PAWP fellow and Instructional Support Teacher, teaches in Manheim Township. She has presented for numerous Houghton Mifflin Literature conferences and is the Region IV coordinator for the Keystone State Reading Association.

**Ruby Pannoni**, a 1990 fellow at the PAWP institute, is the Language Arts Supervisor for the Boyertown Area SD. She has led writing workshops in Boyertown in 1994 and 1995. Presently Ruby is coordinating the writing of curriculum linked to the PA Learning Outcomes for Communication.

**Sylvia Pennypacker**, a 1991 PAWP fellow, teaches first grade at the Oliver Heckman Elementary School in the Neshaminy SD. She coordinated the Young Writers, Young Readers Summer Program in Neshaminy and was a PAWP day presenter.

**Carol Rohrbach** is a 1994 fellow of the Writing Institute and a 1995 PennLit teacher-consultant. She teaches at Springfield Township High School in Montgomery County. She has presented for PAWP days and several courses. Carol also facilitates a workshop on "Teaching Grammar in Writing Contexts".

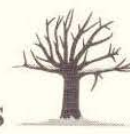
**Sue Smith**, a 1984 PAWP fellow, taught at the Roundtree School in the Rose Tree Media SD. She is presently coordinating our PAWP days and has taught in the Youth Writing Project.

**Vicki Steinberg** is a 1983 PAWP fellow and has been a coordinator for eleven years. She is also 1992 PennLit teacher consultant. She teaches English at Exeter Township High School, and is a past editor of the PAWP newsletter.

*This article was co-authored by Cynthia Muse, an 1982 PAWP fellow who teaches in the Philadelphia SD, and Lynne Dorfman, who teaches in the Upper Moreland SD and is a 1989 PAWP fellow.*



## NEWSWORTHY DOINGS



**Brenda Krupp** ('93) is currently working with another 3rd grade teacher in a "peer-coaching" situation, as they help each other establish student-run literature circles.

**Rose Ann Uhrig** ('94) recently received her writing certificate. She has started literature based instruction in reading.

**Diane Barrie** ('95) is in a new district, on a new team, and in a new section of the building this year. In addition to figuring out how to find the library and when reports are due, she is attempting to integrate much of what she learned as a 1995 PAWP fellow into her curriculum. She will be involved in the district's writing process training, and will coordinate the Young Readers/Young Writers program at Methacton School District this summer.

**Erika Allen** ('94) is a member of the "Pioneers", a group who are working with a consultant to revamp the current curriculum, and are in charge of making it more performance based. They met over the summer to develop one subject, and are in the process of piloting it. Group members are currently presenting these developments to the entire staff, and are helping them to develop other subject areas.

**Betsy Zaffarano** ('92, PennLit'94) is coordinating a literature circle with Patty Koller for the Chester County Intermediate Unit. She is also participating in a pilot project to establish a portfolio program for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Schools. This project is sponsored through the CCIU.

**Ruby Pannoni** ('90) is the supervisor of language arts (K-12) for Boyertown Area School District. She is currently buried under mountains of data from their first-ever 1-12 district writing assessment, involving approximately 6,000 students. This is the first time many of the teachers have used a holistic scale in the scoring. Their general opinion was, "This is great! Now what are we going to do with it?"

**Kathy Frick** ('92) is in her 10th year as a 4th grade at Evans Computer Magnet School in the William Penn School District. She recently received her Certificate of Writing Instruction from PAWP. Her first in-district workshop on "the writing process" took place recently. She has resumed the role of co-coordinator of the school computer program and is a new member of building IST. She is also an on-going member of building the professional development committee, and is a member of the district language arts committee.

**Joan Kilpatrick** ('92) is, in addition to her other classes, teaching a new course to the 10th and 11th grade students at Upper Moreland High School called "Comprehensive Reading Strategies in the Content Area/SAT". As with any new course, a lot of time is taken by planning and implementing, especially because the syllabus for this course is very comprehensive. As part of her class instruction, the students use the writing process, daily freewrites, holistic assessment, authentic assessment, portfolios, and cooperative learning.

**Becky Miller** ('92) is currently teaching a computer resource program at Upper Moreland High School. In December, she will complete her Master's degree in Computer and Technology Education "basically because the perception is that women simply aren't good at this." As a result, her thesis is entitled, "Gender Bias in Computer and Technology Education." She says "revenge is the best motivation!"

**Diane Dougherty** ('89) is the winner of the 1995 School District Educational Improvement Grant for her project involving writing and community service. Her 12th grade at-risk students are currently working on books for use by 3rd graders in the Carl Benner Elementary School. She just began intensified scheduling at the high school. She says "I'm about to have a nervous breakdown, otherwise I'm fine."

**Jolene Borgese** ('80) provided 2 presentations on NCTE at the annual conference in San Diego earlier this November. She is also coordinating a strategies course at the Montgomery County IU on Mondays.

**Barnia B. Young** ('82) completed requirements for her Masters in Elementary Education at West Chester University in August. She started a student council at Reeceville Elementary in October. She is a buddy teacher with a 4th grade teacher and her class this school year in order to complete Good Citizenship Projects, including language arts activities. A pen pal program was initiated with a first grade class in Michigan, where one of her students recently moved.

**Janine C. Warnas** ('95) is currently a 6th grade substitute teacher in Souderton Area School District. She is still looking for a teaching opportunity, and says that there is a classroom out there waiting for her. She is planning a trip to Great Britain, Switzerland, and Germany this summer. She has been involved for the past two summers (1994-95) in a Young Enrichment Program within her School District which teaches creative theater arts and creative writing.

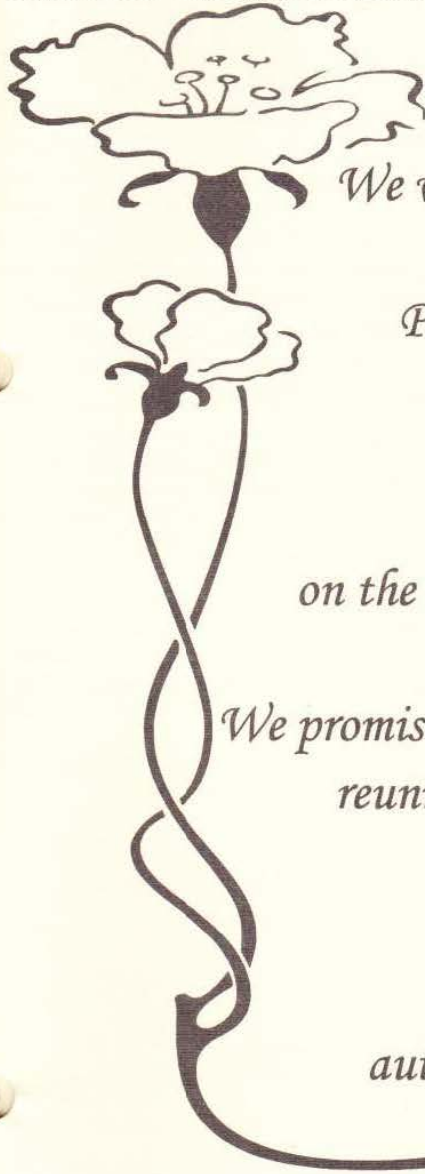
**Phyllis Smith** ('95) is presently teaching 2nd grade at New Hope-Solebury Elementary School. Her students enjoy free writes, only they call them "fun writes", where there are a lot of ideas and sharing. She says she has a very noisy class, and that it's a good thing her room is at the end of the building!

**Bernadette Cant** ('95) is currently teaching a multiage classroom of 8 and 9 year olds. She is now on the Assessment Task Force, a group of teachers and administration who are involved with educating the faculty, and bringing more authentic/holistic assessment into the district. She has also developed and is piloting a new report card for the multiage classes that she hopes will be used throughout the whole district next year.

**Janet Kelly** ('88) wrote and implemented Central Bucks' first course in academic writing. It is a

nine week course, with no more than 15 students. For the course, she has taken on the personae of Donald Murray, Nancy Atwell, Tony Romano, and Lucy Calkins. The video will be out soon, followed by a tell-all-book.

**Conne Broderick** ('84) says that since money is tight, the district has cut her position as IST, so she is currently a learning support teacher in the fifth grade. She is very excited to be co-authoring an article with Morton Botel, and his graduate assistant Cathy Luna, citing the research done in her school on the Botel Written Retelling Teaching Assessment. In the spring she will be teaching the five week course, Inclusion and Writing, and she will also be teaching a graduate course at St. Joseph's University on the Psychology of Reading.



*We would appreciate your attendance  
at our celebration of the  
Pennsylvania Writing Project's  
15th Year  
May 22, 1996  
5:00 PM until 8:00 PM  
on the campus of West Chester University*

*We promise an evening full of excitement, awards,  
reunions, recognitions, and door prizes*

*Keynote Speaker:  
Jerry Spinelli,  
author of the Maniac Magee books*

## THE QUILTING CIRCLE

by Cheryl L. Martin

Recent reflections on how we learn and master the art of writing, left the image of quilt-making on my mind. It became apparent that learning what writing is and how to do it, closely resembles a quilt, in that quilts hold deep meaning for the person who stitches it--whether the quilt is a traditional pattern or one that tells a history. It entails far more than choosing fabrics, stitches or patterns--and true quilters would dare not rush the process with a sewing machine.

The art itself must be acquired--learned by doing, snipping, pricking fingers, pulling out stitches, and yes, starting anew. The finished product, however, is forever cherished for the reason that it uniquely belongs to the person that worked it.

Writing, as does quilting, holds meaning for the person who has diligently worked on it. The ownership, energy, and experiences that influence the written word all contribute to the end product.

The teaching of writing, can become synthetic and process-oriented to the extent that children have little, if any opportunity to develop as writers within their contexts. The emphasis by educators to produce "picture perfect" representations worthy of display sacrifices creativity and diversity to satisfy preset standards.

In meeting these standards, the primary purposes of writing: communication and self-discovery have been replaced with a dissected, often unrelated presentation of skills and styles that supposedly will "mold" writers. This act of "chopping up" the writing process further inhibits children in that connections and meanings are limited, if not severed altogether. If the personal aspect of writing is removed, the process has no relevance, and therefore no meaning in the life of the child.

In order for authenticity to exist, children must be free to write according to their needs and interests. The five assumptive steps that oversee the writing process presume that: a) all writers begin at the same place; b) each piece requires the same treatment; and c) every written expression must be pigeon-holed by style or category. Often these stages could be expanded or omitted depending upon goals and needs. Factors such as language acquisition and experience require consideration. Looking out of a window and spotting a butterfly or hearing an airplane overhead can jostle a child's memory or imagination far better than "brainstorming" on a topic that is unfamiliar or unappealing to that child. Using a favorite toy or experience to elicit details is far more meaningful than inserting words from a teacher-made list onto lines on a paper. The

opportunity to interact with and reflect upon the world as they have seen and experienced it is crucial to the development of a child's writing.

Currently, writing programs frequently reflect school or curricular interests, rather than goals that are child-oriented. Lessons are planned without input from students and without regard for the intimate nature of writing. As a writer, I am aware that ideas or thoughts often emerge when least expected. It is difficult to "produce on demand." The best pieces that I create are those that come freely, without intrusion or advice.

Ideally, my preference would be to have writing develop naturally, via an open-ended approach. Students will learn that writing is a spontaneous act, another way to speak--done without fear or forethought. As their language emerges, so then will their art of writing. As techniques and styles mesh, each child will, in effect, become an author with a distinct personality.

As an educator, I feel that my call is to "coach" students as they discover the joy of writing and its place in their lives. Certainly skills and mechanics must be introduced and taught, as must various types of functional writing. I am stressing, however, that these not be the primary components of a writing program.

As administrators and school boards seek to redesign and improve on current programs, I do hope that they will remember that writing was never intended to be a duplicative process, but one that takes on a life of its own through the eyes of the child.

*Cheryl L. Martin, a PhilWP Teacher Consultant and a member of the Penn Literacy Network of the University of Pennsylvania, teaches third grade at the Thomas G. Morton Elementary School for the School District of Philadelphia.*

### PAWP & PENNLIT FELLOWS:

A reminder regarding the upcoming leadership meeting, to be held Thursday, March 9, 1996.

Kevin Dean of West Chester University will provide a workshop in "Oral Communication Skills for Contemporary Classrooms."

In the event that we need to reschedule the meeting due to inclement weather, an announcement will be made on KYW news radio. You can also call the office at 436-2202 to hear a recorded message.



**WHY DO I TEACH?**  
by Carol Lane Rohrbach

The following piece is dedicated to my mother, Helen Cospers Hood (1922-1989), who taught English for many years at Hatboro Horsham High School. She left a legacy to her peers, her students, and to me, that a good teacher is one who gives more than her time and her skill, a good teacher gives her heart.

✓“There are three good reasons why I teach --- June, July, and August.” Ba duh dum. No, that tired joke does not offer compelling reasons on the days that I wonder why I do what I do for a living. Instead, in my office at school I have a bulletin board filled with mementos of my students over the years: thank you notes, pictures, newspaper articles, letters, keepsakes, and gifts. I keep this board to remind me on bad days why I stay in teaching. It is the antidote to the continual general bad press that bashes teachers and teaching. It is the antidote to the frustration of rarely knowing if I've had any meaningful and acknowledgeable direct result of what I do. It reminds me why I teach:

✓*I teach in spite of* Sean's response to one of my lovingly prepared classroom activities, “This is stupid.”

✓*I teach because* in his learning log, later I read, “At first I thought what we were doing was stupid, but now I understand; you were trying to get us to take a risk...”

✓*I teach in spite of* Josh who constantly complained that I expect too much and give too much work.

✓*I teach because* the following year he wrote in a college admission essay: “When I think back to the momentous events in my life, I usually remember something that happened to me for the first time: my first job, first car, first kiss. But there's one ‘first’ that I'll remember more than the rest: my first Mrs. Rohrbach. Picture this. Rumors are quickly circulating that this English teacher that we're about to meet is one of the toughest in the school. To our dismay the rumors turned out to be true. Yes, she assigned a large amount of work, but she did because she cared about challenging us and helping us see things from different perspectives. She wanted to hear what I had to say, she believed that my thoughts were worthy of another ear.

✓*I teach in spite of* the college recommendation letters I write every year on my own time, and my struggle to individualize them while meeting various deadlines.

✓*I teach because* Missy wrote a thank you note which said: “Today, all of my college applications were finally signed, sealed, and sent away! I just wanted to let you know how grateful I am to you for helping me with my essay, especially my revisions and editing. Because of you, I am now confident in my work.”

✓*I teach in spite of* the years that have passed with wondering if any of what I did matters in the long run.

✓*I teach because* of the letter that I received a year ago from a student in my second teaching year (She is now forty-one years old--how is that possible?) thanking me for providing her with the empathy and guidance that a sixteen year old, insecure girl so badly needed (I was all of 22--how is that possible?) She reminded me that I had required journal writing in 1970. She had found her journal, reread my comments, and felt compelled to write to me after all of these years.

✓*I teach in spite of* students like John who don't seem to improve.

✓*I teach because* of the final expository paper from John who tells me in two error-filled pages entitled “A Recommendation” how much he has learned in my class. “I would go home and tell my father about my wicked English teacher. He would just grin with a smile and say, ‘Your English teacher will be your favorite in high school.’ Needless to say, I never believed him. Through all of the debates the two of us had I know that my defence (sic) was incorrect half of the time, and I think Mrs. Rohrbach was well aware of my misconceptions. Knowing that I would learn better if I continued to debate, she continued to be patient.”

✓*I teach in spite of* feeling exhausted at day's end from facilitating student groups, conferencing, and addressing specific needs for five classes amid lots of interruptions.

✓*I teach because* Megan writes, “I tried to hide from you in class, but it didn't work. I am glad that you pushed me to do this paper. Even though I am not getting a good grade on it at least I can say I did it.”

✓*I teach in spite of* the time outside the teaching day when I feel impelled to juggle family and student needs.

✓*I teach because* there are the prom pictures. In one, I am dancing the latest dance with Chris and Rob. There are the individual shots of Tekeisha, Connie, Brian, and Melody “to remember me” by.

✓*I teach in spite of* Monday mornings with eyes red from grading, planning, reading, Wednesday afternoons after faculty meetings filled with minutiae, Report card days when I agonize over “fairness” and “objectivity.”

✓*I teach because* Dave wrote to me, “On my behalf and everyone else's, I feel better having you know you're an incredible person and teacher. I know I shouldn't thank you because you are just doing your job, but thank you for caring so much, and for doing your job so well.”

My bulletin board reminds me that what I do means many things to my students. It reminds me that what I do means something, many things, to my students. It reminds me that in the end, I teach because...I want my legacy to be, “She gave her heart.” Thank you Mom.

*Carol Rohrbach, (PAWP '94 and PennLit '95) teaches in the Springfield Township School District.*

## KIDDIE-LIT GOES TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

by JoAnne M. Morris

"You can't be serious," an eighth grader commented when she saw the book I had chosen to read that day. "Oh no! She is serious," she whispered to the girl next to her when I opened the book and began to read. With a sullen look on her face, she slumped in her chair, rolled her eyes, and let out an exasperated sigh. Her body language spoke volumes to me, but by the end of the book, a whole new set of non-verbal signals had taken over. A tough, street-wise kid, she wiped a tear from her face and asked to see the book. The date was December 7, Pearl Harbor Day; the book was *Faithful Elephants*. This was the first of many picture books I would share with my students as I came to the awareness that it was time for Kiddie-Lit to grow up and go to Middle School.

The power of picture books has long been underrated beyond the primary grades. Somehow it is difficult to imagine reading *Stellaluna* to High School Seniors. Research indicates that children who are read to in their early years become life-long readers. Yet, many of the nation's high school and college students have had little or no exposure to reading or being read to in the home. As educators, we expect them to understand complex literary elements, the language of the classics, and to function in a print-saturated environment, but we fail to consider their shallow foundation in literature. Recognizing that children's literature is literature, perhaps it could provide the springboard which would give depth to reading and enhance writing and speaking skills, as well.

Listening to the discussion which followed the reading of *Faithful Elephants*, I was convinced that Kiddie-Lit had found a home in my classroom. One picture book had provided these students with the opportunity to discuss the impact of war, to examine point of view, flashback, theme, and tone. Writing that day centered on poetry and persuasive essays about war, and students began looking for books with war themes. They discovered *Diary of Anne Frank*, *Hiroshima*, *Maus I and II*, *Zlata's Diary*, and *A Thousand Cranes*, all books which previously had been gathering dust on my library shelves.

What began purely as a read-aloud, because I love to read children's literature, had mushroomed, so I began the research which would support my conviction that picture books belong in every classroom from pre-school through grade twelve. Articles and books were being published on the value of children's literature for older readers. "Shouldn't fifteen-year-olds have outgrown a picture book like *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Judith

Viorst)? Not by my standards ... a good story is a good story. A picture book should be on the reading list of every class in every grade through twelve years of school" (Trelease 59-60). I discovered that children's literature can be used to teach complex literary elements, can help students learn to think critically and analytically, can bridge the gap between what students know and what they want to know, and most importantly, develop in them a love of literature.

I began to look for picture books which would supplement the literature program by teaching literary skills, genre, life issues, and provide the transition necessary to read, write, and speak literately. (A bibliography of some books and their uses follows.)

The students' responses were more than I had hoped for. Mark wrote a parody of *The Three Little Pigs* after reading Roald Dahl's *Revoltin' Rhymes*. Laura wrote a poem about homelessness after reading *Fly Away Home*, by Eve Bunting. Carlos wrote and performed a rap of *The Three Musketeers*, and Ruby painted a watercolor titled, "When I Was Young in Puerto Rico," based on Cynthia Rylant's, *When I Was Young in the Mountains*. Students brought picture books from home, received picture books as birthday and Christmas gifts, which they excitedly brought to school to show and share, and they used reading/writing workshop time to read picture books to each other. Oral expression was no problem when they had a picture book in their hands. I listened as they laughed about *Cinder-Elly*, cried over *Love You Forever*, and discussed their experiences with older people after reading *Mrs. Katz and the Tush*. They talked about the pictures, the language, and the issues. Picture books had provided the catalyst they needed to begin to understand the literature and literary devices they were expected to know for high school.

I am glad that I was serious about reading *Faithful Elephants* on that cold, December morning, several years ago, because recently I received a letter from a fifteen-year-old former student, who is now in high school. She wrote, "One of my most favorite things to do in your class was listen to you when you read the story books. I think more teachers should read these books to their students. It made me feel like I was young again and didn't have to worry about everything. I smiled as I read those words and thought to myself, "Yeah, Laura, we're all entitled to several childhoods in this lifetime."

### Using Children's Literature in the Classroom LITERARY DEVICES AND ELEMENTS:

#### Characterization

Cole, Babette - *Princess Smartypants*

Cooney, Barbara - *Miss Rumphius*

Emberley, Michael - *Ruby*  
Front, Sheila - *Never Say MacBeth*  
Martin Jr., Bill a John Archembault - *Knots on a Counting Rope*

### Setting

Baylor, Byrd - *The Desert is Theirs*  
Compton, Joanne - *Ashpet: An Appalachian Tale*  
French, Fiona - *Snow White in New York*  
Kalman, Maira - *Max in Hollywood, Baby*  
Ringgold, Faith - *Tar Beach*  
Rylant, Cynthia - *When I Was Young in the Mountains*

### Point of View

Bunting, Eve - *Fly Away Home*  
Fleischman, Paul - *Joyful Noise*  
Martin Jr. & Archembault - *Knots on a Counting Rope*  
Sceiszka, Jon - *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*

### Theme

Browne, Anthony - *Piggybook*  
Flournoy, Valerie - *Patchwork Quilt*  
Fox, Mem - *Koala Lou*  
- *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*  
Polacco, Patricia - *Mrs. Katz and Tush*  
Tsuchiya, Yukio - *Faithful Elephants*

### Imagery & Figurative Language

Polacco, Patricia - *Thundercake*  
Rylant - *When I Was Young in the Mountains*  
Stolz, Mary - *Storm in the Night*  
Yolen, Jane - *Owl Moon*

### Rhythm & Rhyme

Mahy, Margaret - *Seventeen Kings and Forty-two Elephants*  
McPhail, David - *Pigs Aplenty, Pigs Galore*  
Minters, Frances - *Cinder-Elly*  
Prelutsky, Jack - *The Dragons Are Singing Tonight*  
- *Tyrannosaurus Was a Beast*  
Silverstein, Shel - *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

### **TEACHING ISSUES:**

#### Generational

Flournoy - *Patchwork Quilt*  
Martin, Jr. & Archembault - *Knots on a Counting Rope*  
Miles, Mishka - *Annie and the Old One*  
Polacco - *Mrs. Katz and Tush, Thundercake*

#### Gender

Browne - *Piggybook*  
Cole, Babette - *Prince Cinders*  
- *Princess Smartypants*  
French - *Snow White in New York*  
Steig, William - *Brave Irene*

### Multicultural

Flournoy - *Patchwork Quilt*  
Hoffman - *Amazing Grace*  
Martin, Jr. & Archembault - *Knots on a Counting Rope*  
Polacco - *Mrs. Katz and Tush*  
Ringgold - *Tar Beach*  
Tsuchiya - *Faithful Elephants*

### Friendship

Cannon, Janell - *Stellaluna*  
Fox - *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*  
Goble, Paul - *Love Flute*  
Lionni, Leo - *Swimmy*  
Polacco - *Mrs. Katz and Tush*

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*A writer's problem does not change. It is always how to write truly and having found out what is true, to project it in such a way that it becomes part of the experience of the person who reads it.*

Ernest Hemingway



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