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PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1982

1982 Summer Institute for School District of Philadelphia

Under its second grant from the William Penn Foundation, The Pennsylvania Writing Project organized a 3-week Summer Institute exclusively for teachers in the School District of Philadelphia. With the cooperation of Dr. Beatrice Levin and Philomena O'Hanlon of the Office of English/Language Arts, a location was arranged and 24 applicants were selected to participate. (Their names are listed elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

Participants met at the Rhodes School, 29th and Clearfield Sts., all day from July 12 to July 30.

The first Philadelphia institute was coordinated by Robert Weiss, Project Director, and two Philadelphia teachers who had been Fellows of the 1981 Summer Institute at West Chester State: Cecelia Evans, a Language Skills Teacher at the Belmont Elementary School, and Chris Kane, a teacher-trainer with the Office of Affective Education. They were assisted and guided by Barbara Mitchell (W.B. Saul Technical High School), also a 1981 Fellow.

Two outside consultants were shared between the Philadelphia and West Chester institutes. On July 13 in Philadelphia, June Birnbaum of Rutgers University spoke to both groups about some interrelationships of reading and writing, and on July 19 in West Chester, Marion Mohr of the Fairfax, Virginia public schools addressed both groups about teachers' research into the writing processes of their students.

Two New Sites of the Pennsylvania/National Writing Project

As a result of preparation activities supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, two new Pennsylvania sites are now affiliated with the National Writing Project. One site is the Pennsylvania State University (Capitol Campus) in conjunction with the Lincoln Intermediate Unit No. 12; the site director is Donald Alexander. The other site, at California State College, is under the direction of John M. Hanchin. Both sites are independent affiliates of the Pennsylvania Writing Project at West Chester State College.

In July 1982, both new sites held institutes (the Penn State-Capitol site held two) for teachers K-12.

Representing the National Writing Project, the West Chester site sent Cathy Powell and Marcia Cole-Quigley as visiting teacher-consultants to the new sites.

How to Make Mulligan Stew: Process and Product Again

by Robert M. Gorrell

Ecrire, c'est deranger le dictionnaire.—Jean Cocteau
In composition I do not think second thoughts are best.

—Lord Byron

Composition is, for the most part, an effort of slow diligence and steady perseverance.—Samuel Johnson

Mulligan, according to one desk dictionary, is a stew "of vegetables, meat or fish, and other foodstuffs." An essay, in the same dictionary, is "an analytic or interpretative literary composition usually dealing with its subject from a limited or personal point of view" or "something resembling a composition." The definitions are about equally imprecise, suggesting that products in each genre are likely to vary considerably. If I want to learn how to produce either a mulligan stew or an essay, I have to look beyond a definition or a recipe.

If I want to learn about the process of composing a stew, I can conduct research. I can interview various stewmakers, for example. I can watch them in action and take notes on what they do. Or I can put a microphone in front of them, getting them to recite what they think goes on in their minds as they peel turnips or stir the broth or decide whether to add cumin or oregano. I can check on whether the chef's hat or apron seems to have much to do with the process. I can analyze protocols and generalize about procedures that seem to characterize many of the cooks. I can perhaps identify different parts of the process—selecting and preparing ingredients, putting them together and cooking, tasting the results and seasoning—preparing, cooking and revision—invention, arrangement, style. I can observe that these steps are not necessarily sequential; that for instance the cook may be selecting material even for the last stages, tasting and deciding to use more garlic. I can also, of course, make a stew myself and think about how I do it, a kind of research that seems to me important, and often neglected. I can also do a lot of stew tasting, analyzing what I eat and

relating the results to how they were achieved. This has the possibly misleading advantage of being the most pleasant kind of research, but it has the real advantage of allowing the investigator to examine the product as a way of finding out about the process, and to select only successful products.

I'm aware that this is mainly nonsense, but it leads me to some things I want to say about current enthusiasms in research, particularly about what we are calling the composing process. I think we have been learning something about the composing process—not only about the frequency with which a tenth-grader chews a pencil, but also about the psychological events attendant on getting something from the mind on to paper. I do not propose to criticize—or expand—current theories about the composing process. Rather I want to look at composing as a simple-minded stewmaker, to try to do some summarizing and ordering, and especially to urge that we should not of the composing process but of composing processes.

The search for *the* writing process seems to me to push the investigator toward conclusions too general to be useful or too trivial to be significant. (You should consider your purpose before starting the stew, or, some stewmakers like to sing as they stir.) The problem is that the writing process is so complex and so varied, as much current useful research is showing, that discussions of *the* process seem often to have the zeal, but also the only success of the medieval alchemist. On the other hand, I think that it is possible to isolate a number of processes or parts of the process, skills or techniques, if you will, that can usefully be taught and learned.

Identifying these involves the current concern to separate "process" and "product." There has been a justified reaction against the kind of rhetorical research that concentrates exclusively on the product, guessing about the ingredients of the stew, outlining the structure of the essay. The focus on the product encourages serious misconceptions about the process. This focus tempts us to assume that patterns that ultimately appear on paper parallel what goes on in the mind to produce those patterns. Of course they do not. To take a simple example, subject-verb-complement order is characteristic of the English sentence. It does not follow that the parts of a sentence occur to a writer in this order, that sentences are conceived because a writer picks a subject and then thinks of something to say about it. Usually it is an action or occurrence, what is ultimately expressed in a predicate, that stimulates the expression of a sentence. It seems unlikely that a sentence like "The dog is chewing the bone" would occur because a speaker thought of a dog and searched about for a verb and object to go with it. A writer more often than a speaker may think first of a subject, but in most instances the sequence in the product does not reflect what happens in the mind. That order is often indeterminate, with the thoughts that are to make up the sentence occurring almost simultaneously.

Similarly, a paragraph does not necessarily occur because a writer has thought of a thesis and wants to defend it, even though the paragraph may ultimately take the form of a generalization followed by various kinds of support. The writer may have been stimulated to write by an observation, by reading a striking sentence, by becoming annoyed, or what not. A thesis or generalization may have occurred to him only after much other mental activity. The paragraph may come out with some clearly discernible hierarchical pattern, but the writer's thoughts have not necessarily come to

him as a formal outline.

Recent studies have been much concerned with one misinterpretation of this sort—the assumption that prewriting, writing, and rewriting or invention, arrangement, and style—are a sequence in the writing process. Writers have been pointing out—more persuasively, it seems to me, than should be necessary—that composing is "recursive," that writers do not progress through three neatly defined sequential stages from prewriting to writing or revision.¹ Observing that these three kinds of activities do occur when writing occurs does not justify an assumption that they are sequential. All three of these parts of the process occur over and over before anything gets finished. But realizing that these do not necessarily occur in sequence does not alter the fact that they are composing processes, the results of which can be observed in a product.

Donald Murray says, "The process of making meaning with written language can not be understood by looking backward from a finished page. Process can not be inferred from product any more than a pig can be inferred from a sausage."² It is, of course, not easy to infer a pig from a sausage—but it is difficult to turn a pig into a sausage—or a cow into a stew—if you've never seen a sausage—or tasted mulligan. The pig is not the process, although it is essential to the process. The process is not an image of the product, and assuming that it is has led to some confusing teaching. But assuming that it is unrelated has led to limited notions of the writing process.

That is, so long as we distinguish process and product, the product can give us the most tangible information we can get about at least part of the process. Analysis of the product reveals the goal or end of the process, directs us to specific parts of the process that we can investigate. We know, for example, that thoughts, however they may occur, get transformed into words in subject-verb order to produce sentences.

The way in which this occurs is not obvious or simple, but this part of the process offers a focus for study. Or we know that thoughts may get translated into various sorts of hierarchical patterns in an essay. We can illuminate an important part of the composing process by trying to discover how thoughts can get put into order.

I am, in other words, issuing a mild warning that in many current studies of the writing process, we are neglecting important and tangible processes that are part of writing, that require us to consider the product, to taste the stew as well as watch the cook. By looking at what has been done we can see what has to be done and then work on ways of doing it. What we discover, I think, often provides the most useful and practical help in dealing with writing—by describing composing processes. I want to mention just a few examples.

One example, of the composing processes that I consider both important and practical, is the process of juggling and relating analysis and synthesis and specific and general. Two spheres of the human brain apparently govern two different operations. One, usually the left, deals with what may be called logical procedures such as analysis. The other is concerned more with emotions and larger ideas, the wholes or synthesis. Writing, as a function of the entire brain, requires the cooperation of both spheres, requires looking at both parts and wholes, for instance. That is, writing can be thought of as a kind of combination of analysis and synthesis, sometimes a kind of alteration between them. These two ways of looking at the world, at the forest or at the trees, characterize our thinking

and also our writing process. Whether we are trying to get writing started or to arrange or organize material or to construct paragraphs or sentences, we are likely to be combining synthesis and analysis.

Or, with different emphasis, we can describe the process as a combination of generalizing and specifying. Whenever we write, we are trying to refine thinking by taking it farther toward the specific. But at the same time, we are trying to help the reader understand how to make sense of a mass of details by making general comments about the specifics. This, among the many writing processes, has the advantage of being teachable. It is possible to learn more about handling synthesis and analysis, about dealing with the general and the specific.

Another composing process is the process of creating and revealing relationships. Writers do not create new things or new facts, usually do not even dig out much new information. Writers do relate things and facts as they individually see them and want to report them to readers. A cook doesn't create carrots or celery, but a cook may create an individual stew by selecting and arranging ingredients in a new way. The relationships we create and reveal in writing can be identified in two ways, as linear and as hierarchical.

The writing process is obviously linear. We have to put one thing after another—one letter, one word, one sentence, one paragraph after another. The observation is so obvious that we tend to overlook it, but by thinking of prose as a sequence we can get new insights into ways of generating ideas and keeping them in order.

That is, we can observe in the product that there are certain linear patterns in prose and that these are limited and identifiable. Each unit of expression—a single word or a paragraph—limits and influences what follows. I have in other places talked about writing as a series of commitments and responses; every statement both responds in some way to what has preceded and directs what is to follow. And I have argued that the kinds of possible responses are limited and identifiable—as further generalization, diversion, repetition, specification, or parallelism. Ross Winterowd has suggested the same sort of thing in defining the possible relationships between ideas as coordinate, observational, causative, conclusive, alternative, inclusive, and sequential. He points out that certain conjunctions typically express these relationships.³

The composing process can be viewed as the struggle to arrange words and sentences in the sequence that achieves the desired relationships. I am not suggesting that the patterns that can be observed in the product are the process. But the process is the attempt to achieve the product, and to that extent is defined by the product. The writer's thoughts, trial-and-error creations, thinking, writing, and revising, are all directed toward these patterns of linear relationships, which give prose continuity.

But writing is also a process of creating hierarchical relationships, making some ideas depend on others. Patterns of hierarchical relationships are traditionally part of what textbooks label organization, and they get described most commonly in discussions of outlining or in formulas for creating paragraphs. Outlines are most frequently produced as orderly descriptions of a product, although they are also often prescribed, usually unrealistically, as part of the writing process. Paragraph patterns also, in the hierarchical arrangements of sentences, are illustrated by examples of existing paragraphs. The debates about what is a paragraph, if it is anything, whether it must have a topic sentence or a conclusion, are argued primarily by

collecting examples of one view or another. Indeed, there has been a good deal of time devoted to providing data on the percentage of paragraphs in modern magazines having a topic sentence or extending for more or less than a hundred words. It is hard to know how to apply this kind of information to the writing process. If, for example, we learn from research that only 57% of modern paragraphs begin with topic sentences, do we try to hit the same average in what we write, or do we forget the whole thing? Analysis of the relationships in the written essay does not tell us how to write, but the creation of those relationships is a writing process. As we write we are constantly making decisions, consciously or unconsciously, about words or broad ideas will be subordinated, which coordinated. We classify, arrange, rearrange. We consider relevance.

The writing process can be thought of as a process of ordering and relating ideas, attempting to achieve hierarchical patterns like some of those that can be described by analysis of the product.

There are other writing processes, or ways of looking at the process, but I think I made my point. I am pleased by the current emphasis on writing rather than a product, partly, I suppose, because I thought we had always been teaching the writing process. But I don't want our view of the composing process to become so narrow that we neglect difficult but useful parts of the process or fail to take advantage of analysis of the product for its value in illuminating the process. The problem is to find out all we can about how you get from an empty refrigerator to an edible stew, from a blank sheet of paper and a relatively unfocused mind—to a readable essay. You can't learn to make a stew just by examining or even eating one, but neither can you learn to make one if you don't know what you're trying to make—any more than you can come back from where you've never been.

Notes

¹ See, for example, Sondra Perl, "Understanding Composing" *College Composition and Communication*, 21 (December 1980), p. 364 ff.; and Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experiences Adult Writers," *College Communication*, 31 (December 1980), pp. 378-391.

² "Writing as a Process: How Writing Finds Its Own Meaning," *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition*, ed. Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland, (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1980), p. 3.

³ "The Grammar of Coherence," *College English*, 31 (May, 1970), pp. 828-835.

Robert M. Gorrell, of the University of Nevada, is a past president of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. This paper is based on a talk given at that organization's 1982 meeting.

I do not sit at my desk to put into verse something that is already clear in my mind. If it were clear in my mind, I should have no incentive or need to write about it, for I am an explorer...We do not write in order to be understood, we write in order to understand.

—C. Day Lewis

Pennsylvania Writing Project Prominent in School Administrators' Publication

As part of its Critical Issues Series, the American Association of School Administrators recently published a report of the teaching of writing in schools throughout the United States. Called *Teaching Writing*, the report was written by Shirley Boes Neill based on months of interviews with teachers and administrators.

The report features the National Writing Project sites and is heavily oriented toward teaching writing as a process. There are interviews with Donald Graves and Donald Murray, a discussion with Robert Weiss of the NCTE's standards for effective basic skills programs, and sections of in-service training, the principal's role, and evaluation.

All school administrators, from board members to principals, would profit from reading the report's descriptions of how successful writing programs operate in every possible school situation. Teachers should make sure that their administrators have a copy. *Teaching Writing* costs \$11.95 and may be ordered from AASA, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia. Quantity discounts are available.

Fellows of the 1982 Summer Institute at West Chester State College

Barbara Ann Cyperski, Coatesville Area School District; Alice Ebert, Owen J. Roberts School District; Robert Elias, Wallingford—Swarthmore School District; Margaret E. Gallo, William Penn School District; and Joan M. Gould, West Chester Area School District.

Also, Sally Hale, Upper Darby School District; Christine Hauslein, William Penn School District; Cynthia Henry, Ridley School District; Donald Houck, Upper Darby School District; and Adelaide Katz, Marple Newtown School District.

Also, Nancy Kirchgasser, Coatesville Area School District; Nancy Letts, Wallingford—Swarthmore School District; Guy MacCloskey, Ridley School District; Mary McCann, Octorara School District; and Paul Maloch, Upper Darby School District.

Also, Maryann Maria, Abington Heights School District; George Martin, West Chester Area School District; Veronica Muzic, The Williamsport Area Community College; John P. Ollinger, Marple Newtown School District; and Marion Podaras, Marple Newtown School District.

Also, Blanca Scanlan, Upper Perkiomen School District; Renee Tepper, Upper Darby School District; and Julianne Yunginger, East Lancaster County School District.

Fellows of the 1982 Summer Institute for the Philadelphia School District

Audrey L. Badger, Elwood School; Loretta Badger, Benjamin Franklin H.S.; Phyllis Barksdale, High School for Girls; Christine Connors, Stetson J.H.S.; Anemone D'Angiolini, Northeast H.S.; and Shirley A. Farmer, Kensington H.S.

Also, Judy C. Fisher, Morton School; Jane E. Head, Germantown H.S., and Carolyn B. Hill, Cassidy School.

Also, Cynthia Jenkins, Nuey School; Rose S. Joseph, Clemente School; Doris A. Kahley, Thomas J.H.S.; Barbara J. Marshall, Forrest School; and Zahida Mohammed, Shawmont School.

Also, James B. Morley, Lehigh School; Leslie C. Moses, Bustleton School; Gloria C. Outlaw, G.W. Childs

School; Irene M. Reiter, Northeast H.S.; and Mary Ann Robinson, Jenks School.

Also, Mary Janet Robus, Fitler School; Linda Rosenfeld, Jenks School; Glayds A. Schultz, Lincoln H.S.; Jacqueline Swartz, M. Washington School; David Ward, Overbrook H.S.; and Maureen R. Whitaker, Saul H.S.

Radnor School District In-Service Course

"I'm not afraid to write anymore." "Not only did I learn new techniques of teaching writing, but I've learned to enjoy writing." These were typical comments of 24 teachers and administrators of the Radnor School District who participated in a 3-credit, 45-hour Pennsylvania Writing Project In-service course in Spring 1982. This course was coordinated by Martha Menz, Lois Snyder, and Jolene Borgese.

Teachers of grades 1 through 12, principals, and other administrators pre-wrote, wrote, and re-wrote for 12 weeks in the library of the Ithan Elementary School in Wayne, Pa. Participants were open and responsive to the process of writing, and teachers were eager to "try it out" on their students.

At the end of the course, each participant published a position paper and a personal piece of writing. The teachers showed not only talent in writing but also skill in entertaining: each week they presented the most delicious spread of goodies ever known to an in-service course!

Julia Gibbs

by Edith Lefferts

(character in *Our Town*, by Thornton Wilder, with apologies to Edgar Lee Masters)

The farthest I ever travelled was to Canton, Ohio.
Can you imagine? Canton, of all places!
That day I waited for the 5:45 with my black suitcase at my feet;

brass buckles gleamed its newness.
That day I'd be on the train; it would not pass me by.
Beneath my dark wool coat wrapped close to keep out the winter chill
beat my fluttering heart.

Above, my hat tugged to free itself from the ruthless hatpin,
a fake pearl hatpin jammed into my greying topknot.
Wheezing with excitement,
trembling with fear,

I strained to hear the familiar hoot.
Finally grey steam clouds towered toward me
towing the locomotive down smudged tracks.

I check my worn handbag again, my ticket fuzzed with so much
rubbing ready to hand to Shorty.

Here it was—my only trip to anywhere.
Oh and it was wond'rous on that train!
Not that I really saw the fields and towns and telegraph poles
that flickered past, mind you
that flickered past, mind you.

No, for me it became—the Orient Express.
Elegant ladies with cigarette holders swaying in haughty single
file through closed cars to dine on Spode china
while

Slouch-hatted, pencil-moustached gents offering tiny flames from

silver lighters—
 Swirls of pardonnez-mois and buon giornos marbling
 genteel
 British accented air.
 The Eiffel Tower, Venetian gondolas—
 Crumbling crenelated castles flying wind-slashed
 silken colors
 of ancient kings—
 That's what I saw
 Till that sooty old train dragged its load into my
 daughter
 Rebecca's new home town.
 Oh, I relived my dream ride many times
 as pneumonia fed on my rusty lungs.
 When they put an oxygen tent over my sterile bed in
 Canton, Ohio,
 they never knew that the smile on my dying face was
 for—
 The Orient Express and mysterious beauties speaking
 in
 unutterable tongues—
 And cognac sipped slowly at sidewalk cafes.

Edith Lefferts, who teaches high school English in the Wallingford/Swathmore School District, was a 1980 Fellow.

You're Never Too Old To Learn

by Doris Kirk

My initial reaction to an invitation to attend the Pennsylvania Writing Project's 1981 Summer Institute was, "I don't think I should do this. I don't want to do this." For most summers I had been either working, attending classes, or doing curriculum work in my school district. The summer of 1981 had long been anticipated as a free one. I would catch up on many postponed business, personal, and recreational matters.

Yet, I had enjoyed the Spring in-service course given by the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Offered through the Chester County Intermediate Unit in conjunction with West Chester State College, the course enabled taught associated with the Pennsylvania Writing Project to share with other teachers what they had gained in the first Summer institute. Their own classroom experiences and acquired expertise were tangible proof of what writing done by and with students can accomplish.

After some thought and discussion, I decided to accept the invitation. Now, seven months later, and my reintroduction to teaching fourth grade well under way, I am both happy and thankful I said yes.

What did I learn about writing? Maybe I should start with what I had to unlearn. In my classrooms, writing had meant winding up with sets of totally correct papers. These would only be correct because I had red-pencilled every spelling and grammar error and helped to revise certain items. My students would just have copied all of these corrections onto their good papers, often enough copying incorrectly. Writing as an activity was often afforded the least time. If it was a follow-up activity to a reading assignment, it often was not taken far enough to give the students a sense of authorship and voice. The assignment was appreciated as just that, needing corrections both in content and technique. My attitude towards writing was that it was deadly. Neither the students nor I were too happy. I remember having what I considered only one or two

good writers in a class. All the others, I thought, were still at the very early stages of good writing—still aiming for correct spelling, grammar, good penmanship, neatness. I never held out hope for solid content or interesting insights from them.

How the tables have turned! Small, and not so small, triumphs are experienced all the time by the 23 fourth-grade students in my language arts block. Their comments to me during and after writing reveal what is happening as they experience the writing process as I now teach it.

Valarie: Writing is poetry. I like to write about stories and make-believe and monsters.

Ron (as he is using an apostrophe in his writing): I know what that comma (apostrophe) is. It shows ownership.

Mark (on making revisions): I didn't like this word, so I changed it. I used an arrow to move this part.

Ronald: I like the way Mark writes. He writes like a writer.

Shannon: Now I am feeling good to do it (writing) because when you are about ninety years old and you keep all the things from when you were little and come across your folder, you want to write, and the more you want to write you just got to do it.

My own triumphs are to be able to share in those of my fourth-graders. I started off in September with 18 of them in a totally self-contained classroom—an ideal situation surely too good to last. Soon two new fourth graders arrived. At the end of November, four learning-disabled fifth graders joined our ranks.

Armed with all the information from the Writing Project, the frequent writing opportunities, and the shared experience of the other 37 fellows, I renewed my commitment to writing in my classroom. Again, I had to ask, what is writing? Writing is a process. It involves several steps: pre-writing, writing, and rewriting. It involves fluency, form, and correctness. Now I understood better what Donald Graves had written of in his paper, *Back to Basics: Let Them Write*:

1. Writing is most important as a contribution to the development of a person, no matter what that person's background and talents.

2. Writing contributes to intelligence. The work of psycholinguists and cognitive psychologists shows that writing is a highly complex art that demands the analysis and synthesis of many levels of thinking.

3. Writing develops initiative. The writer must supply everything: the right relationship between sounds and letters, the order of the letters and their form on the page, the topic of writing, information, questions, answers, and order.

4. Writing can contribute to reading. Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic systems are all at work when the child writes, and all contribute to greater skill in reading.

I found I also was in agreement with the five key points listed in R.D. Walshe's article, *What's Basic to Writing?*

1. The teacher values writing.
2. The teacher values the learner-writer.
3. The teacher encourages pleasure in reading.
4. The teacher makes use of insights into how reading happens.
5. The teacher fosters self-editing.

These help to sharpen my focus when looking at the children as they become involved with writing as a process.

With this focus, I decided to help my class develop fluency—the first stage in the writing process. By letting them write without fear of discouraging red marks, I hoped to create a writing atmosphere, one in

which their abilities could be nourished and sustained. I began with journal writing for five minutes a day. Pictures were taken of each child, and plans were made for more pictures to be taken again in spring. These were to be included in a special journal folder of finished pieces of their choice to go home to their parents.

For two and a half months we all wrote faithfully right after lunch, missing very few days. Each day two or three volunteers would share what they had written. Privacy was respected. Each day it hit home in one way or another that these children had something to say. They revealed the stuff their days were made of. I learned about these children. Their journals told about their lives in very simple terms. There was very little of the extremely personal and more reflective writing of the older student, although this would occasionally appear. Their desire to share demonstrated a pride in their own writing and also revealed a pleasure they experienced in reading what they had written to classmates. I would write comments every now and then or ask questions. If I didn't get a chance to look their journals over in several days time, someone would let me know: "You haven't read our journals. Are you going to today?"

In the first four months of school we did varied writing tasks in class. The students wrote lists of words on certain topics, brainstormed for descriptive words, used kernel sentences and expanded them. Along with journal writing, we wrote stories, non-fiction, and content-area paragraphs. The attempts were modest but the class and I were experimenting. I became more aware of how clear my directions should be. I had to re-evaluate my expectations in light of the students' written products. "Adapt! Adapt!" became my watchword. I had to face the question raised by so many other elementary school teachers: how do I organize and reorganize my time to achieve my objectives?

Here are the concerns that I (and other elementary teachers) had to address:

1. Time organization.
2. Classroom space organization.
3. Materials to be readily available.
4. Time limits set by curriculum demands.
5. Administration involvement and support.
6. Reading program/writing program.
7. The reading groups and seat work.
8. Conferences.
9. Parent involvement and contact.
10. Evaluation/grades.

Overwhelming? Indeed!

With the support of the reading/language arts supervisor and the administration of my school district, I felt comfortable enough to forge ahead. By this time, I had become fully committed to the writing done in the language arts program in my class. I enjoyed it, wanted to be involved in it. More importantly, the written products of these students showed progress and permitted me to see how they were thinking, why they wrote what they wrote.

When January arrived, I felt the need for more structure. I decided to do some pre-writing activities with the students on either Monday or Tuesday, followed by the writing of a first draft. They always chose topics, but support and direction were always available (along with a selection of story starters). As often as possible, the following day's work would include having conferences with partners or in groups and/or individually with me. Revising took place and a second draft was written. All final revising and editing were to take place

by Friday. Friday was final draft day. Was every child seen each time? No. Were all corrections made? No. However, my goals remained: to get more fluency, to get more writing, and to hold conferences more systematically and effectively.

January and February's weather created havoc with my plans. Nevertheless, by mid-February, each child had several finished but not perfect selection of his own. Robert's folder included pieces on Charlie Brown, our well-stocked classroom library, the Kansas City Chiefs, Tony Dorsett of the Dallas Cowboys, the Super Bowl, the weather of 1982, championship wrestling at the Spectrum, fishing, and going to the dentist. Michael's story on the hag in concert who played hot music had the whole class chuckling, and another Michael wrote often about his Dad. I felt a great deal of pride in these children, and it was mixed with equal parts of relief, surprise, and awe. The majority took to writing very well, and the others could come along comfortably at their own pace. Their willingness to share still increased. One day they exchanged with one another their folders of completed stories. Among the bits and pieces of conversation I overheard were "Oh, this is good, Crystal!" and "Wow, you write good." I observed and duly noted their attitudes toward writing and towards what they had produced. For the first time ever a student said to me, "I want to be a writer."

Using several first drafts of one student, it is easier to see more specifically what was happening for one child through the writing program. Mary's writing demonstrates progress and growth both in confidence and writing skills. Mary is a girl of ten. As a first grader she needed eye surgery to correct a vision problem. Her development in the early years of school was slow. Results on a group IQ test administered in grade three were: Verbal 79; Non-verbal 75; Total 76. Also diagnosed as learning disabled, Mary experienced many frustrations in her early school years. At present, Mary is big for her age, shy, and often hesitant in beginning new tasks. I feel that the writing has been a pleasant experience for her, and has revealed to me the wide range of her abilities. Without the writing product, I feel it would have taken me longer to see her linguistic capabilities.

Early September

I wish I was at
Fantasy Island Mister warc
is magic They have a big
swimmingpool and Tattoo
is at there They have a
water fall and there are
Aps and birds and some
ducks. Ther is big bell
Tattoo has a horse
Ond he has a wife
he loves her

I wish I was at Fantasy Island. Mister Rourke is magic. They have a big swimming pool and Tattoo is (at) there. They have a waterfall. And there are apes and birds and some ducks. There is a big bell. Tattoo has a horse and he has a wife. He loves her.

Observations: Many complete thoughts; story progresses to some extent; little capitalization and punctuation; manuscript (printing) is used.

October

I went to Hersheypark
And we went on
all kinds of rides. And
my mom almost got sick
on a boat ride. And,
do you know what my
favorite ride was the
water ride and when we
was on it we went
down a big hill and
got all wet. and we

I went to Hershey park and we went on all kinds of rides. And my Mom almost got sick on a boat ride. And do you know what my favorite ride was? the Water ride, and when we was on it we went down a big hill and got all wet and we (unfinished)

Observations: Many complete thoughts; story progresses; sense of humor; use of interrogative sentence; cursive is used; beginning several sentences with and.

January

Smurfs

There are blue things in the forest
they are called smurfs. And a mean
old wizard, his name is Gargamel. He
is a wizard he tries to catch them
but he can't it makes him mad
and his cat tries to eat them ^{they} are
too fast for him. He falls off the cliff
in to the water his face gets red
there is one girl she is the only
girl smurf her name is smurfette

Smurfs

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Observations: Many complete thoughts; story progresses; good beginning sentence; better capitalization

and punctuation; use of details; use of contraction; use of arrow to interject word; cursive is used.

February

The Clay Man

One day there lived an old man.
He made clay pots. He had to go to
a contest. He made a big clay pot
and when he went to the contest he
dropped the biggest one. When he
was going there it started
to rain. There were five little
mice out in the rain. They were
trying to find a home. When
they saw it they said there
is a home for us.
And when the old man was coming
home.
He saw it and he picked it up. He looked
in it he saw them. "What are you
doing in ~~it~~ ^{there}. We don't have a
home to live in. Would you
like to live with me?" said
the old man. "Yes," said the mice.
And they lived happily ever after.

The Clay Man

One day there lived an old man. He made clay pots. He had to go to a contest. He made a big clay pot. And when he went to the contest he dropped the biggest one. When he was going there it started to rain. There were five little mice out in the rain. They were trying to find a home. When they saw it they said there is a home for us.

He saw it and picked it up. He looked in it. He saw them. "What are you doing in there?" "We don't have a home to live in." "Would you like to live with me?" said the old man. "Yes," said the mice. And they lived happily ever after.

Note: The Clay Man had its origins in a third grade reader. Mary's story, although derived from it, has its own original aspects and was written in the classroom.

Observations: Use of complete thoughts; story has a beginning, middle, and end; consistent capitalization and punctuation; use of details; beginning use of dialogue and quotation marks; use of arrow to interject word; use of interrogative sentences; cursive is used; observable increase in length.

Mary's papers speak to me. I look at them with a different eye. There are no red marks on her first drafts,

or for that matter, her second drafts. Her errors are pointed out, either directly to her or within a group of children. However, I identify only a few at a time. Mary learns as she needs and as she is ready. Her progress has been excellent.

Despite this progress, for her and other children there were days when things didn't work. At one point, our student was having a bad case of the cranks; another got sick; another returned after a two-day absence; another had to be tested by guidance; and another had to go to Speech. We persevered. I looked to the long-range goals. Already I know I will do some things differently next fall. I have not been able to do all that I wanted or answer all my own questions. But we go on!

The Pennsylvania Writing Project has affected my teaching for the rest of my career. My students are writers. I am a writer. We all draw satisfaction and pleasure from the reading and sharing our written products. There is a sense of voice growing within Mary and my other fourth graders. I see my task as pulling together all the components of a strong language program, with the writing process taking its rightful place as an integral and prominent part.

Doris Kirk teaches fourth grade in the Coatesville Area School District and was a Fellow of the 1981 Summer Institute. This paper was written in the course, Directed Studies in Composition.

Arizona English Bulletin Call for Papers

Following are the themes for the 1982-83 issues of the *Arizona English Bulletin*, together with some suggested topics. Please circulate this to colleagues who may be interested. Deadlines for submission are in parenthesis.

October: *Writing Projects: Growth and Outgrowth*
(August 1, 1982)

Research on Teacher Effectiveness, Validation Studies, Changing Attitudes toward Writing, Evaluation of Writing, Classroom Research by Teachers, In-Service Programs, Self-Sponsored Writing, Writing Groups, Improved Classroom Practices, K-12 Writing Programs, Teachers Write for Publication, Students Write for Publication, Writing Across the Curriculum, Legislation Affecting Writing, Degree Programs in Writing, Writing in the Content Areas, Literature Programs Modeled on the NWP, and New University Writing Programs.

February: *Reading, Writing, and Adolescence*
(December 1, 1982)

Adolescent Literature Revisited, Writing and Adolescent Development, Language Arts in the Junior High, Integrated Reading and Writing, Writing Ideas for Early Adolescence, Writing to Learn, The Novel of Adolescence in World Literature, Writing as a Way of Becoming, Non-fiction for Adolescents, Bridging Adolescence and Adulthood, Adolescents Evaluate Literature, and Teacher-Student Evaluation of Adolescent Literature.

April: *Teaching Language Creatively*
(February 1, 1983)

Ceremonial Language in High School, Grammar and Sports, Vocabulary Without Drill, Names and their History, Regional Dialects, Language Games, Grammar and Poetry, Style in Advertising, Students Research on Usage Items, Semantics in Use, Slang Lexicons, History in Exotic Words, A "Model A" Style Machine, Figurative Language on Bumpers, More Uses for Sentence Combining, Varied Styles in Mass Media, The Rhetoric of

Graffiti, The Grammar of Film, Comparative Translations, The Rhetoric of Naming, Stylistic Analyses of Literature, Language Acquisition, Naming and Perception, and The Language of _____.

Send manuscripts to:
Margaret Fleming, Editor
Arizona English Bulletin
c/o Department of English
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721

Little Boy

by Joseph Smith

little boy—too shy,
little boy—always cried,
little boy—never uttered no words,
little boy—never tried.

little boy—standin' way from the crowd
little boy—standin' away from the crowd,
little boy—with his face to the ground,
little boy—so lonely,
little boy—cannot be found.

he's right there in front of 'em
nobody notices
they search frantically
nobody notices him
little boy—cry out for help
little boy—cry out for help

little boy—thinkin' to himself,
little boy—don't you see,
little boy—concentrating,
little boy—come with me.

little boy—looks like you need help,
little boy—looks at the light,
little boy—wake up,
little boy—now you're all right.

he's right in front of 'em,
now everyone sees,
they all laugh and sing,
now everyone sees.

little boy jump for joy,
little boy jump for joy.
BIG BOY!

Joseph Smith is an 11th grade student of Barbara Mitchell, at the W.B. Saul H.S. (Philadelphia).

The Purpose of English

The grade school student is told by his teacher that he must learn English because the high school teacher will expect mastery of it. The high school student is told by his teacher that he must learn it because the college professor will expect mastery of it. The college undergraduate is told by his professor that he must learn it so he can go to graduate school and write his Ph.D. thesis in it.

Almost no one reads Ph.D. theses.

from **Uptaught** by Ken Macrorie

A Writing Course for Teacher of Writing

This Fall, the Pennsylvania Writing Project at West Chester State College will again offer a "directed studies" course to enable people to develop and complete an individualized project in writing or teaching of writing. Called Directed Studies in Composition, this course will be adapted to the needs of the participants and will provide guidance and consultation for their proposed projects.

Participation will be limited. Participants will meet as a full group monthly or as needed in Fall 1982 to present and respond to proposals, work in progress, and completed projects. Acceptable projects include but are not limited to:

- development of a position paper or writing process journal into an article suitable for publication in a national journal.
- classroom-based case-study descriptions or experimental research.
- development of articles related to the teaching of writing or to courses and programs in writing.
- development of "guides," monographs, or curriculum-related materials such as published by the Bay Area Writing Project and the National Writing Project.
- development of other publishable materials (see the newsnote below).

An individual's project may focus on writing as it is taught or learned at any grade level, on the writing teacher, on evaluation, or attitudes to writing, on writing programs curricula, on evaluation, or on any subsidiary concern.

Directed Studies in Composition is offered for three (3) graduate credits from West Chester State College. The course will hold its organizational meeting on Thursday, September 9, 1982, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the basement conference room of the Philips Memorial Building. Tuition is \$246.00. Registration forms are available through the Office of Graduate Studies, West Chester State College, West Chester PA 19380 (Tel. 436-2943). Last day for registration in person is August 20, 1982.

If you wish further information about the course, please call Bob Weiss at the Project Office.

Fellow in Print

An article by Bob McCanny (1981 Fellow) has been accepted for publication in *Folklore and Mythology Studies*, Volume 6. McCann, who teaches English at East Senior High School in the West Chester Area School District, wrote the piece last Fall during a Directed Studies in Composition, at West Chester State College.

Delaware Valley Writing Council Fall Conference

This fall, the Delaware Writing Council's conference will be hosted by the University of Pennsylvania. The conference theme is "Writing, Reading, and Speaking:

A Fresh Look at an Old Connection." In addition to nationally known presenters, the Pennsylvania Writing Project will be represented by Cecilia Evans of the School District of Philadelphia (a 1981 Fellow) and by a panel organized by Bob Weiss, Project Director. The panel will consist of three brief presentations on the conference theme examined in elementary, secondary, and college classrooms.

The Conference will be held Saturday, October 20, 1982. Cost is \$20.00. Register by contacting Allan Glatthorn, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (tel. 215-243-5693).

My task...is, by power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see.—Joseph Conrad

Dear PWP Fellow

Remember all that writing that you promised to do as you were finishing the last week of your Summer Institute? Would you like to begin or renew your publishing career now? The *PWP Newsletter* is offering you the opportunity to have your thoughts in print. We would like to print your current writing: humorous sketches from daily living, reflections on recent events, personal experiences, or poetry.

We would also like your contributions in professional areas. Have you any teaching experience that you would like to share with other teachers? Have you attended any meaningful in-service sessions or read any noteworthy articles or publications that you would like to tell us about? Will you contribute a short review of a recent book or article on writing? Do you have drafts of your students' writing that show progress in learning?

If your desire to be a teacher of writing who is also a writer is urging you to grab pencil and paper, please respond by mailing your publishable piece to:

Sister Regina Dunn
Villa Maria Academy
Malvern, Pa. 19355

**Your editors,
Doris Gabel
Chris Sundro
Sister Regina**

Goodbye PWP, Hello—PAWP?

As a result of a complaint by the legal representatives of Parents Without Partners, the Office of Regional Council of the Pennsylvania Department of Education has advised us to cease using the initials PWP and has recommended that we adopt the acronym PAWP. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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Director: Robert H. Weiss
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Sponsors:

West Chester State College Chester County Intermediate Unit Delaware County Intermediate Unit
Montgomery County intermediate Unit Pennsylvania Department of Education

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

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

**Pennsylvania
Writing Project**

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West Chester, PA 19380



THIRD CLASS