



VOLUME 11      NUMBER 4

# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1991

TO:            Friends of the Pennsylvania Writing Project

FROM:        Bob Weiss  
              Project Director

DATE:        July 19, 1991

Our National Writing Project bill--in revised form--was signed by the President a week ago as P.L. 10262.

I thank all of you for the encouragement and very substantial assistance you provided on the project's behalf. Many people interested in our contribution to educational improvement through writing instruction were our supporters.

What the legislation will mean for Pennsylvania, and specifically for our service area, is not yet fully clear. I will let you know how the benefits will be felt locally when I learn more.

We will ask for no more phone calls, no more letters, no more whatever you did that made our two-year campaign a success. On the other hand, we will probably be calling on you next year when testimony is taken to increase our appropriation for 1993 (now approximately \$2 million to be split among 150 NWP sites, whereas the bill calls for \$10 million).

### EDITOR'S CORNER

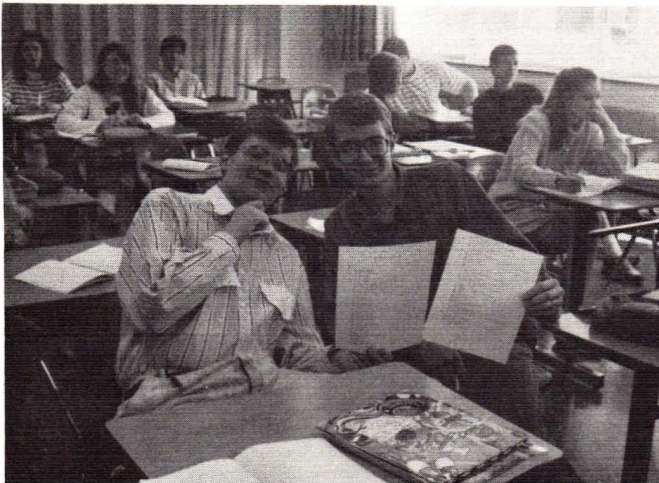
When I was in high school, every junior had to write a research paper, turn it into a speech and, as a senior, give that "senior oration" at the daily chapel meetings. I remember the topic of my paper was the American author John Dos Passos, and I was allowed to pick the hymn for the day (I attended a Methodist prep school). I picked "Holy, Holy, Holy" because the school's organ had a bell attachment and the song's accompaniment called for the bells to ring. A while ago I heard that seniors were no longer required to make senior orations. I couldn't--and still can't--decide how I feel about that loss. I certainly don't remember my speech or, indeed, much about Dos Passos, but I remember making the speech and the confidence having talked in front of 480 people gave me.

When I assign oral reports, I often tell this anecdote to my students. As I change my teaching to use more reports, projects, and portfolios and fewer tests, I hope my students will also gain confidence in their abilities to put everything together. As we were working on Gulliver's Travels projects, one student told me, "This project tells a lot more about what I know than a test does. All a test shows is what I know right this minute about Gulliver." For a minute there I thought she'd been reading the latest research on testing.

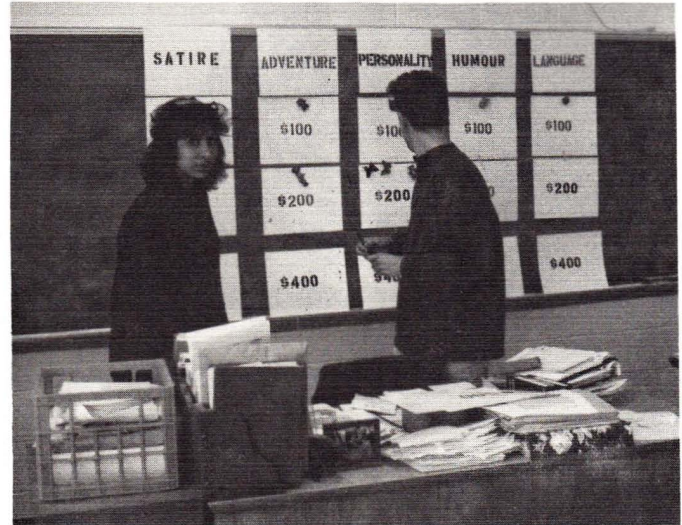
In an effort to show they'd understood one major aspect of the book, the class worked in self-chosen duos to search the text and their notes to design a project that showcased their knowledge and used their particular skills. Then they made oral presentations, first explaining exactly how they went about designing and making the project and telling who had done what part of the project. The final section of the presentation was the discussion of what the project taught. The pictures accompanying this article show the variety of ideas the class members had.

I think the assignment hit all of the Pennsylvania Framework's four lenses and five critical experiences in the five days we read and worked on the first book of Gulliver's Travels, in the four days and one weekend the duos had to work together, and in the two days when the students made their oral presentations. By the way, I did give a test to verify my findings and the students did very well on the test, both the strictly memorized sections and the "thinking" essays.

From handing out the textbooks to collecting them, the whole unit took 12 days.



Two juniors prepare to hand out copies of their list of 100 ways to use a dead Lilliputian. Most of the uses reflected their understanding of the satire in the text.



Students set up their version of Jeopardy, using only questions which pertain to the elements the class studied in Swift's Gulliver's Travels.



A senior and a sophomore display their book which illustrated several satirical moments in Gulliver's visit to Lilliput. One side is the adventure; the other is the explanation.



A sophomore and a senior show two sides of their center graphically illustrating the difference in size between Gulliver and the Lilliputians. Ken represents Gulliver and all the drawings are to proper scale.

## JOIN US UNDER THE WHOLE LANGUAGE UMBRELLA

by Nancy McElwee

Networking. Teachers reaching out finding--and giving support. Wanting to be part of a group. Finding someone to share ideas with.

If this all sounds like it appeals to you, maybe you're ready to join us as part of the Whole Language Umbrella.

The Pennsylvania Writing Project has become a member of the Whole Language Umbrella which is a confederation of whole language support groups and individual professionals interested in developing and implementing the whole language approach in their schools. It serves as a support group for smaller groups or TAWLS (Teachers Applying Whole Language) across North America. The confederation serves to connect and enhance the local support groups which are its foundation and assists in the organization of these groups. As more and more of us embrace the whole language philosophy, which is a natural outgrowth of our association with the Writing Project, it may be helpful to come together in small groups to share what we are doing with others. Think of what response groups did for your writing!

We would like to help you in two ways. First, by including news which is published in the Whole Language Umbrella newsletter in our own announcements, books or just plain good ideas which you might find helpful. The WLU newsletter is published 3 times a year and will include networking ideas, information, and items of interest and concern for people in the whole language community.

The second way we'd like to help is by assisting you in forming your own support group or TAWL. If you're in an area where there are many teachers who are applying whole language ideas in their classroom you may have already formed your own group. However, if you're feeling all alone out there and would like assistance in forming a group, please let me hear from you. I'll be happy to serve as "matchmaker" for interested parties. You can contact me by phone at (215) 675-8391 or by writing to me at 90 Ember Lane, Horsham, PA 19044.

As part of a group which was an outgrowth of the 1990 Summer Institute I can tell you that the support you receive is invaluable. If you cross district lines you can easily multiply the resources you have at hand.

If you have an interest in whole language and have concerns or ideas for ways in which PAWP can assist, please let me hear from you. As part of a truly grass roots movement we have the power to shape the future--come join us under the umbrella.

Nancy McElwee is a 1990 Fellow who teaches primary grades in Central Bucks County at Linden Elementary.

## MODIFIED MAC

by Lois Palio

**Teaching Technique:** In my MAC class, I used the technique of double entry journals and cooperative learning by pairing the students to read and compile profiles on famous Black Americans.

**Lesson Description:** The students were paired up with buddies. Each pair sat at computers next to each other. They opened a double entry journal using Microsoft Works. Each pair was given a short book to read. After each student had read two pages, they typed remembered facts in their double entry journals. The buddies then switched computers and read what their buddy had typed. If the buddy had a comment, she typed it onto the left-hand portion of the page. The partner then read the comment and either followed the suggestion or commented on it. The pair then went on to the next two pages and followed the same procedure. After the double entry note taking was finished, the students printed out their double entry journals and used these notes as a basis for writing brief biographies of their famous people.

### Evaluation of the Trial Application

**Observations:** The students were actively engaged in the project. They enjoyed reading together, typing what was important to them, and then comparing their partner's information. The comments I heard from the students were: "Working with partners is fun," or as one recalcitrant learner said, "It's more fun to be able to read what somebody else has said and see if I want to add to it. Somebody is picking up my slack."

**Products:** At the end, each student wrote up a brief biography on his/her Black American. The finished copies were published in a class pamphlet entitled "Black American Heroes."

**Conclusion:** This proved to be a very effective technique in getting slow ninth grade students engaged in the writing-thinking-reading process. They enjoyed the interaction and felt that they had some support. In addition, if there were any disagreements, a discussion and a rereading ensued; the buddies then arrived at a joint decision about the disputed journal, which seemed to increase their understanding of what they had read and seemed to enhance their memory.

**Next Steps:** I will use this technique more frequently in my class. My class definitely enjoyed this project and seemed to profit from it more than if they had to do the project alone. Our next project will deal with Renaissance heroes, and they will handle that in a similar fashion.

Lois Palio teaches 9th grade at Dobbins Vo-tech in Philadelphia. This piece comes from a PA Framework course.

### ANOTHER PUBLISHED PAWPER

"Becoming Writers," an article by Beth Cox (PAWP, '88), recently appeared in the winter issue of *The Writing Notebook*, a quarterly journal for "creative word processing in the classroom." The article recounts, often through lively classroom dialogue, the collaborative writing of a short story by Beth's Chichester High School seniors.

After sharing both the process (which, of course, included use of the computer lab) and her assessment of the experience, Beth concludes, "There were problems with the collaboration. There were problems with the story itself. But the end result was obvious--during this project 13 students became writers."

### NEWSLETTER FORMAT CHANGES

Readers will note a new look for this issue. We are using new office equipment, a Hewlett Packard Laserjet IIP Printer, along with Word Perfect 5.1, to create the text you are reading. As we learn more about desktop publishing, we will try to create new formats that are readable as well as graphically interesting. We welcome your comments on the fonts used for this issue (Line Printer 8.5 point, 16.67 characters per inch for titles) and on the ragged right margins. Desktop work has been accomplished by Kathleen O'Brien, PAWP secretary.

**REFLECTION  
ON AN EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING AND ON  
WRITING ABOUT IT**

by Sister Jeannine Mary Norton

Skills which involve physical coordination and dexterity always present themselves to me as unattainable. Bike-riding, swimming, skating, even dancing and, later in life, tennis, all proved to be challenges I did not seem equipped to handle. In reflection on the attempts now, I think it was not so much a missing connection in the joints or in the sense of balance, but a fear of physical hurt that was caught (like a germ) from my mother. As I perceive it now, this fear of hurt translated eventually into fear of failure and finally has solidified into adult inability based more on thwarted potential than on an inborn predestination to be a klutz.

Third grade was my roller skating attempt and seems to draw a line of demarcation between the physical risk-taker me and the fearful me. Even though I had already had a frightening experience in water and had given up on swimming, I remember the excitement and determination I felt deciding that I was going to learn to skate. I practiced all day in the backyard, holding onto the fence and skating up and down the cement walk that was probably no longer than ten yards. I slowly learned to take my hands off and there I was skating--fenceless! By mid-afternoon I knew I was ready!

I confidently went out the front door, sat on the bottom step, donned my skates, and proudly hung my skate key around my neck just like everyone else. I exuberantly skated all the way down the city block to meet my father at the bus stop, but he had gotten a ride home and called to me from the distance. I couldn't wait to show him! I skated half-way and then fell and broke my wrist.

My mother, who was fifty when I was this eight-year-old roller-derby hopeful, put the skates away. Hers was a protective love, which unfortunately for me, created too tight a net for much risk-taking, at least of the physical variety.

Applied personally, as I reflect on the experience and write about it, I see more clearly the "why" that forms my present feelings of fear, timidity, and embarrassment whenever I am called into a position of acting with any demonstrable degree of physical coordination and sense of rhythm. I can clearly recall the feelings of excitement and pride, but I don't recall being afraid to try again. I just wasn't given the opportunity, which became a situation I learned to accept and, I guess, welcomed later as "safe." From the vantage of middle age, I can understand my mother's fears and I am more grateful for her love than disappointed in her fears. I can and do wish it had been different, but I can (most of the time) just enjoy my strengths and forget my deficits.

Applied to my work as teacher, I am made more aware of the emotional factors that influence learning. As a teacher, I see the incomparable value of encouraging all students in that initial surge of excitement and determination during the time of beginnings. It is for me to provide room for trial, with "fences" for support and guidance, and then to provide a structure to direct the progress so that the first solo attempt is a forum for pride or, at least, an accepted step in perfecting the skill. It is so important that I do not say in any gesture that "we might as well put away the 'skates' because you will probably fall again." How important that I stress how far they have come, how remarkable the progress so far, and note that with such a promising beginning, the distance that could be traveled the next time is incalculable.

In my own mid-age as teacher, I need to allow my students to "skate" so that they can never look back and say it was in fifth grade that they realized they could not do Math, or Reading, or use a map or.... I want my students to feel that it was in Grade 5 that they realized that with patience, enthusiasm, and help, they could progress in any skill.

Sister Jeannine Norton is a fifth grade teacher at a parochial school in Philadelphia. She wrote this reflection for a Fall '90 Framework Course in the Upper Darby S.D.

**ONE WHO INSPIRES**

by Pat Ripley

Dynamic, electric, a magnetic personality, those are the first three words that I think of to describe author and illustrator Olivier Dunrea. I knew Olivier was someone special when I heard him speak at a Pennsylvania Writing Project Workshop. His presentation on his original approach to teaching writing was excellent. His lecture on literature and whole language was equally inspiring.

Now, how do I get such a multi-talented man to Oakview School? I pleaded; I begged. And when it comes to helping others, Olivier is a soft touch! He couldn't say no when I told how much my school needed him.

What I didn't know is that when Olivier Dunrea works with--or for--the benefit of children, he gives more than 100%. He showed slides of his background and craft that grabbed the children's imaginations and took them to Chickahomie, Virginia, the Orkey Islands, Scotland, and the Wissahickon in Philadelphia. Literature, writing, science, geography and history were all discussed through his slides.

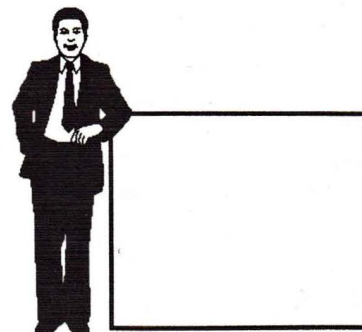
The writing workshops with the children revealed Olivier's talent as a writing teacher. His particular approach uses student choices to build and revise the structure of a story. He constantly interacted with the children in a personal, engaging way. He particularly connected with these so-called "hard to reach" kids. These "at risk" learners were mesmerized by Olivier. Who wouldn't be? He makes everyone feel important! "Active literacy" is definitely what the man is about!

Olivier also did a very special after-school presentation on literature and whole language. He opened his presentation with a reading from To Kill A Mockingbird, an excerpt describing Scout's first grade experiences. Olivier's powerful delivery moved many a listener! Olivier speaks from his heart to listeners' hearts when he discusses his love of good literature.

Our "Dunrea Day" was a huge success for the children and teachers of Oakview School. My principal says, "Olivier Dunrea completely immersed himself in our school and created an atmosphere of excitement we had never before experienced." Even the next day, the school was still on an emotional high from Mr. Dunrea's visit.

For the very first time, teachers in the lunch room were discussing literature and what books they personally wanted to read. We will never forget Olivier Dunrea. We were touched by his magic. We will now continue to touch others and perform our own magic in our classroom. Olivier, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Pat Ripley, a 1990 Fellow, teaches first grade in the West Deptford, NJ, School District.



## INVENTED SPELLING

by Eleanor E. Ziegler

The water was too cold, the wind was too high, and the surface was too rough. After listening to them, I was glad I had abandoned my fishing rod for the loon, which was about to regain my attention.

As one of the reviving sportsmen related the odyssey of Lake Underwood, his partner gazed out across the waves. As he did, he discovered the bird. "What is that?" I heard him say.

"Huh?" grunted the interrupted sage. He scanned the water, soon fixing on the bird. "I dunno. Probably a duck or a goose."

I considered not responding, not wanting to admit to eavesdropping. But then I figured, what the hell, I may as well be friendly.

"It's a loon," I said in a voice I thought was loud enough for them to hear.

They paused, continuing to stare out at the bird on the water in silence.

Finally: "Naw," said one. "It's too big for a duck and too small for a goose."

"Yeah, I guess," said the other.

I pondered their ignorance of me. Maybe they hadn't heard me. Maybe my voice had been muffled by the wind, the words blowing off like the smoke from Grant's cigarette. Maybe I'll try again.

"It's a loon!" I offered with a good bit more volume.

Again there was a pause. They both stood motionless and stared dumbly out at the black spot on the lake. Suddenly, the one closest to me swung his gaze down the lake past me as though attracted to something a hundred yards beyond. He flicked his ashes into the wind, then swung his head back again to stare out at the bird.

"Sometimes those small Canada geese come in here, but that don't look like one."

"Maybe something got loose from somebody's farm. A big 'Scovy duck or something."

"That's probably what it is. Yeah. I dunno."

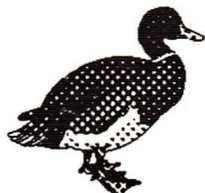
One more time, I figured. "I think it's a loon," I said again, beginning to doubt my own confirmation.

Again they countered with silence. They seemed interested enough; they continued to stare. But they just couldn't bring themselves to take this K-Mart fisherman with no guns too seriously. Or perhaps they weren't about to let on what was so obviously wrong with my bird identification faux pas. It was probably something so simple that its mere mention would mean embarrassment all around. Either that or it was something so complex that my would-be-outdoorsman brain would never be able to comprehend it. I should have thanked them for not laughing. The obvious was obviously alluding me.

They stared out at the bird, contemplating the obvious for another moment before turning toward each other in unison and stepping back off the edge. Unaware of me, they strode back up the path, their mumbles, chuckles and coughs fading quickly through the dense cover. I stood by the water dumbfounded.

"Damn! I know it's a loon," pulling the binoculars up to my eyes again. Out on the cold waves the bird screeched and splashed, raising itself into the cold air once more.

Christopher M. Haring, a teacher of Senior English in the Kutztown Area S.D., wrote this story in a recent Strategies for Teaching Writing Course, held in Fleetwood Area S.D.



When first asked to write about a personal learning experience for my PCR2 (now PA Framework) course, I thought of things I had learned to do as a child, such as riding a two-wheeler. Those learning experiences were so long ago, however, that they no longer can be remembered vividly. I am very involved presently with learning how to teach my kindergartners how to write with invented spelling, so I would like to reflect on this learning experience instead.

My prior knowledge in the area of kindergartners and written composition was weak. My own four children had written very little in kindergarten--mostly copying something written by the teacher or in a workbook. This approach was used by my mentor teacher across the hall as well. She would take dictation from the children or have them copy something she wrote, but I did not see her asking them to do any invented spelling or composing on their own. I thought the children needed to be introduced to all their letter sounds before they could start putting the letters into words on their own.

Very early in the PCR2 course, I discovered several ideas that were to revolutionize my thinking and my classroom. Through reading the class textbooks and many journal articles and library books that I sought myself, I discovered that not only can kindergartners compose, but that it is critical for them to have the opportunity to do so. Having made this discovery for myself, and confirmed it through multiple readings, I was compelled to do something with this new understanding. How could I start my kindergartners on the happy road to becoming writers?

The answer presented itself in many of the readings I did, and in the classroom of the PCR2 course, through sharing thoughts and ideas with other teachers--the journal. The journal then became a serious personal goal for me to establish in my kindergarten classroom. I found that I needed and wanted confirmation from my peers to get started. I talked it over with other teachers I knew were already using journals in their classrooms to get ideas on getting started and to answer some questions for myself:

Why journals? These would provide daily writing opportunities, and the element of choice of length and topic was important to ownership of the writing to my students.

What kind of journals? I didn't have composition books available to me and wanted everyone's journal to be of the same kind, so I didn't want them sent from home. Also, I had read that kindergartners were intimidated by lines, so I decided on ten blank ditto papers stapled between construction paper covers.

When would we write in them? I decided to use time first thing in the morning as that was when my students were the freshest and were still full of ideas from their home life.

What would be my role as teacher in the journal writing process? I decided to be an encourager and a motivator, but not a provider. What this meant was that I would not tell them what to write, but I would help them brainstorm possible topics, and I would not tell them how to write or spell, but would encourage them to do it their way.

Once these questions were answered, I was ready to begin. I was hoping for miracles, I think. I secretly dreamed every child would automatically be writing in readable invented spelling from day one, even though, as the students did mostly use invented spelling, not all of them started in sentences. I found myself longing for encouragement. I needed to know I was doing it right and that I was achieving something, so I shared what I was

\*\* CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE \*\*

doing with those I felt would give me the confirmation I was seeking--other teachers who were using journals. I did get what I needed from them. I also began to feel a certain smugness about doing it right, a degree of pride in my accomplishment, like a kid who just rode her two-wheeler around the block and knows she can ride anywhere now. With this confidence, I was ready to share what I was doing with the teacher across the hall, knowing Fullwell she would not really approve. I was right. She wanted to know if they were all writing, and how I was fitting it in time-wise, and if I was finding time to respond to them all. These were all sore points for my project, as no, they were not all writing--some were just drawing pictures, and no, I was not finding it easy to fit in and some days I didn't remind the students to write, and no, I was not finding it easy at all to respond to them. She left with a look of smug satisfaction on her face, and I was left to ponder who was right. Was my project worth it?

Yes, it was. I thought about the benefits I had already seen--improved sound test scores, enthusiasm for writing in their journals, increased self-confidence. These outcomes were worth the effort. It was an effort, too. Implementing journal writing was not as easy as it had sounded from my reading about it and talking to other teachers who were doing it. But I was happy with the results I was getting, still anticipating miraculous results by June, and determined to go on with the project.

My head was full of questions I wanted answered. I was almost obsessed with my search for "the right way to do journals." I found many good journal articles at the library, which led me to some books by Lucy Calkins and Don Graves. The more I read, the more I realized I didn't know. I discovered what seemed to me to be endless stretches of ignorance within my knowledge. I was feeling swamped by all the information I was taking in and also feeling a sincere need to share it, as if the act of speaking it would clarify the issues on my mind. I found this to be true, which led me to allow the students more time to share what they were learning and writing about in school, to give them the opportunity to clarify and crystalize the information they were discovering.

Spring break was a life-saver. I was able to catch up on all the reading that was swamping me and get my head above water once again. I had brought my children's journals home and was able to analyze them. Having learned so much about developmental stages in writing, I was really able to make sense of what I was seeing in the journals. I was able to see the developmental stage of each child at this point in time. Twelve students were using some degree of invented spelling. Some of these were only labeling their pictures. Others were writing sentences. Some were using a bit of conventional spelling as well. Four students were only using conventionally spelled words they were sure of--words like "I love Mommy"--and color words available to them from the environment. These four were not yet ready to take any risks with their writing. Three children were using letterstrings, which at least showed they knew words were made of letters printed from left to right and that they were willing to take a risk. Two were only using drawing to communicate their ideas. This analysis gave me time to reflect on my goals for individual students and the project itself. My ideal goal was to have all my students writing in sentences using invented spelling by June. I would continue to strive for this, even when it didn't look possible. The school district I work for has a motto: "High expectations pay off."

If I expected each of my students to succeed, they had a better chance of doing just that than if I did not hope for their success. Goals for individual students would take them one step forward with their writing process. For some it was using the beginning sounds of words they were trying to write. For others it was expanding their writing to include more than just one sentence about a topic. The goals depended on where the child was and took him/her forward from there. Having goals established, I was able to get back on the path, a little like getting back on a bike after a fall.

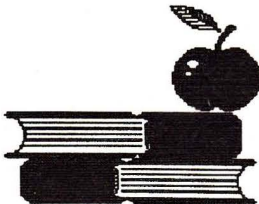
Another learning experience I was having at this same time was how to write for children's magazines. I had enrolled in a course titled "Writing For Magazines," offered by The Institute of Children's Literature in Connecticut the previous December, and had started my efforts at writing at the same time as I started the PCR2 course. What I was learning in my writing course made me more aware of authors' techniques and styles in the reading I was doing. Also, my own struggle to become a writer at this level made it very easy for me to have empathy for the struggle my students were having at their level. I was struggling to master the art of showing, not telling, in my writing, and the art of writing vivid descriptions, just as my students were struggling to master invented spelling. This was something I could share with them. My own needs for encouragement to something I could share with them. My own needs for encouragement to experiment and support for taking risks could be transferred to providing what my students needed in the way of encouragement and support. I was able to celebrate their attempts at writing, as I hoped my attempts would be celebrated. I was ready to share my passion for words with them, to give them the motivation to keep up the struggle.

What I was learning as a student was revolutionizing my teaching. I almost felt ashamed of the number of dittos my children had done in the past. I felt a new importance for the printed word in my classroom. We would be doing much more reading and writing now than we had in the first half of the year. I would never again be in the more traditional way I had been teaching. I knew I had begun a journey into a new awareness of literacy, one which I hoped would never end.

#### Resources:

- Gentry, Dr. J. Richard. "Getting Kids to Write in Kindergarten and First Grade," Early Years/K-8, Dec., 1985, pp.34-35.
- Hansen, Jane, Thomas Newkirk and Donald Graves, eds. Breaking Ground: Teachers Relate Reading and Writing in the Elementary School. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1985.
- Hipple, Marjorie. "Journal Writing in Kindergarten," Language Arts, Vol. 62, No. 3 (March, 1985), pp.255-260.
- Kintisch, Lenore. "Journal Writing: Stages of Development," The Reading Teacher, Nov., 1986, pp. 168-172.
- Mavrogenes, Nancy. "What Every Reading Teacher Should Know About Emergent Literacy," The Reading Teacher, Nov., 1986, pp. 174-178.
- Strickland, Dorothy S. and Lesley Morrow. "Emerging Readers and Writers," The Reading Teacher, February, 1989, pp. 426-427.
- Strickland, Dorothy S. "Emergent Literacy: How Young Children Learn to Read and Write," Educational Leadership, March, 1990, pp. 19-23.
- Sulzby, Elizabeth. Emergent Literacy: Kindergartners Write and Read, Agency for Instructional Technology, 1990 (video from I.U.).

Eleanor Ziegler is a kindergarten teacher at the Westtown-Thornbury School in the West Chester Area School District.



**AN OVERVIEW OF SEVERAL  
IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS  
READING, WRITING, TALKING  
ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

Although most participants in the PA Framework (formerly PCR2) course have been primary, reading, or language arts/English teachers, there have been enough teachers of other age groups and other curricula for PAWP to have developed quite a file of implementation plans and projects. Looking through these projects shows clearly exactly what the state's blue document says: reading, writing, and talking across the curriculum showcase the four lenses and five critical experiences no matter what age level, the curriculum, the learning ability.

This issue of the PAWP newsletter tries to capture some of those ideas in personal learning experiences and implementation projects, but there are many others that could be mentioned.

Mimi Shurr Geddis, a senior high art teacher in the Exeter Township SD, designed a project which required the students to interview each other so they'd know enough about each other's personalities to design appropriate calligraphy styles for writing their names. Interestingly, several of the students designed similar lettering for the same interview subject.

In the same district, Christine Forlini, a junior high home economics teacher, used the Before-During-After technique on a video-tape concerning date rape. She discovered the students knew more than the video-tape did and were able to carry on an enlightening discussion based on their Before brainstorming.

Also at Exeter, senior high math teacher Debbie Kubovchik who teaches many students with math deficiencies, used a math journal where students wrote out--in English--the new problems as they encountered them. Student interest in the math increased as did test scores.

At Interboro SD, Sharon McCallum, a middle school home economics teacher, divided her class into groups of three and had them brainstorm a list of what they already knew about microwave cooking. Using these lists she was able to show them (and herself) what they needed to know by developing a semantic map on the board. When the students read the textbook and watched the filmstrip, they were much more attentive and added to their previous notes without fuss. Sharon also added a cooking diary where the students reflected on the procedure used that day, what might have gone wrong or worked well, and/or whether they liked or disliked what they made.

Margaret Salvucci, a middle school science teacher at Interboro, used small cooperative learning groups to help the students learn 20 science vocabulary words. She reports the results were so good she plans "to look into some activities within the science curriculum that are less rote-memory based and more of a higher thinking activity."

Jean M. Livingston, also of Interboro, wished to help her 11th and 12th grade Advanced Math students learn their essential vocabulary. She asked the students to "write what you feel is substantial to make the meaning and use clear to anyone who reads this." Jean's project title, "Yes, Math and English Do Mix," tells of her experiment's success.

In the Rose Tree Media SD, Regina Jewell, Latin and French teacher at Penncrest High School, found a way to encourage fluency in writing in a foreign language when she used some of the ideas from a pre-writing presentation "to inspire confidence in speaking." Her French II project requires the students to start with "the most basic writing exercises...perhaps brainstorming and the listing of vocabulary pertinent to a theme" to develop that confidence in speaking.

These projects and others like them encourage the student (and the teacher) to be a risk taker and to learn to learn at all ages in all subject matter.

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**CONSULT WITH OTHER TEACHERS**

**USE 15 WEEKS THIS FALL TO DEVELOP A PROJECT OF REAL USE TO YOU**

Pennsylvania Writing Project Director Bob Weiss will again offer a course to enable teachers to develop and complete an individualized project in writing or the teaching of writing. Called "Directed Studies in Composition and Rhetoric" (ENG 594), this course is adapted to the needs of the participants and provides guidance and consultation for their proposed projects.

Participation will be limited. Participants will meet as a full group eight Mondays during the Fall semester to present and respond to proposals, work in progress, and completed projects. Applications from writing groups or teams are encouraged. Possible projects include but are not limited to: classroom-based research, reflective descriptions of courses or programs in teaching writing, and "guides", monographs, or curriculum-related materials such as published by the National Writing Project.

A project may focus on writing as taught or learned at any grade level, on the writing teacher, on evaluation, on attitudes to writing, on writing programs or curricula, or on any related concern. Personal writing is also an option.

Last year's projects included:

- "Writing Process Burnout," Dick Halsey (Phoenixville Area S.D.)
- "Writing Instruction in the Cooperative Learning Classroom," M. Joan Kilpatrick (Upper Moreland S.D.)
- "The Metamorphosis of a Writing Curriculum," Karen Nina Klingerman (Bensalem S.D.)
- "What Classroom Teachers Need to Know About Writing Centers," Suzanne Powers (Delaware County Community College)

Directed Studies (ENG 594) is offered for three graduate credits from West Chester University. The course will hold its organizational meeting on Monday, September 9, 1991, from 4:15 to 7:00 p.m. in Schmucker Hall, Room 312. Tuition is \$381.00 plus fees. (Tuition costs are subject to change by Fall.)

Registration forms are available through the Writing Project Office, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383 (telephone 215-436-2297). Telephone registration is possible with Visa or Mastercard. Deadline is August 17 by mail, September 4 in person.

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

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

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