



WANTED: MASTER TEACHERS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING SCHOOL LITERACY

Since 1980, nearly 800 teachers have attended an Institute sponsored by the PA Writing & Literature Project. Make this your year to attend a Writing or Literature Institute. Join our select network of teacher-consultants!

Laughing and Learning

Reflections by 2001 Literature Institute Participants

Remember the myth that teachers have much of the summer off? While some may have whiled away the summer at the beach, a dedicated group of 18 educators from all grade levels and 15 different school districts journeyed great distances—physically and pedagogically—to the Plymouth-Whitemarsh Senior High library for the experience of a lifetime. Through the Literature Institute, we expanded our horizons, collected souvenirs to

use in the classroom, participated in field trips, laughed, learned, and, in the end, loved the experience. Rather than giving up four weeks of the summer, we gained years of wisdom, professional connections, and new resources which will impact our teaching forever.

Kathryn McKenna and Dawn Nelson

Grouping We began as grade level groups to discuss, compare, and

present our independent pedagogy texts. This led naturally to response groups on a shared novel as a wonderful way to continue building community across grade levels. Reading the same book together gave us an immediate common bond which allowed us to connect ourselves to the text and revisit the text time and again, each time taking away something new. The group presentations, which grew from the reading, made "the in-

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Peter Catalanotto Inspires Teachers at the Bucks County I. U.

by Cynthia Hiryak and Teresa Moslak, 2001 Writing Institute Participants

"If your writing isn't affecting people, you are wasting your time." So says Peter Catalanotto, author and illustrator of Dylan's Day Out, Christmas Always, Mr. Mumble, Painter, Dad and Me, and Emily's Art and illustrator of numerous other books. Mr. Catalanotto gave a presentation to the PAWLP Writing Institute at the Bucks County I.U. on July 3, 2001.

Peter says that a writer is a receptacle, not a chaser. An idea gets

under an author's skin, irritates him and comes out a pearl. He also notes that multicultural books need to illustrate how people are alike as well as their differences. An example of this idea is the book he has illustrated, My House Has Stars, written by Megan McDonald, where children's houses all around the world, no matter how different, are still illuminated by the same stars at night.

Peter's process in story writing

starts with a character who has a problem or wants something. He brainstorms all his ideas, noting that "first ideas usually stink." He likes to use a list format rather than a web, where he feels ideas sometimes get stuck. He reminds us to keep only what is going to work, and get rid of what doesn't work, *even if you like it*.

The next step is to take the best ideas and create the storyboard, a

- continued on page 5, column 1

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is November 11, 2001, Veteran's Day, as I write this column. We are two months into the New Normal. I know it will be January, 2002, when you read this. I wish I could predict the return of the "old normal" by then, but current signs suggest we may have considerably longer than two months to wait for that.

Since September 11, the media report, many Americans now think about the unthinkable in a variety of new ways. People postponing marriage have married; couples postponing divorce have split apart. Long-time workaholics are taking vacations; travellers are cancelling exotic plans to stay closer to home and family. Some shoppers are guarding their credit cards; others are buying the big-ticket items they've always wanted but never thought they could afford. "Carpe diem" has acquired a poignant immediacy - even for those of us whose Dead Poets Society days were long ago.

What seems most relevant - and revealing - for readers of this *Newsletter* is the sudden resurgence of the idea that making a difference may be more important than making a fortune. The "helping professions" are back in style. Teachers were even on President Bush's recent list of heroes. As lawyers, business consultants, and others from more economically rewarding fields come to join us in the nation's classrooms, we know the disappointment many of them will experience. We know teaching isn't always the explicitly rewarding work Hollywood - and the President - might make it out to be. We may even think they're crazy. The truth is, though, we know how sane they actually are.

We know how meaningful, how essential, and how essentially optimistic our work is. Every day we look at, look toward, and even touch the future, as Christa McCauliffe said all those years ago. There was no better reason to get up early on September 10th. There is no better reason now either.

PAWLP exists to remind teachers of just how crucial their work is all the time, not just during national crises. And we're here all the time - supporting teachers, encouraging them, and providing professional development opportunities that meet their individual needs and goals. If you've considered becoming a PAWLP Fellow through either the Writing Institute or the Literature Institute but always had good reasons to put it off, 2002 is your summer. Carpe diem. Come join us.

* * * * *

An Illusion

This summer I was fortunate to spend ten days with children who wanted nothing more than the chance to read and write. Okay, so they did enjoy the art and music-related activities even as they were calling out, "Can we have more writing time?" Each day, they brought smiles to each other through their writing. While reading, these children looked as though they were engaging in a gourmet meal. So idealistic and refreshing to teach, this group has touched my life forever. Bliss is three hours in a reading and writing environment with people who want to be there. To top it off, there were no bells.

This piece was written by Meryl Lightstone, a 1988 Fellow, about her experience teaching a class of Young Writers/Young Readers this summer. All participants who successfully complete a Summer Institute are eligible to teach in our summer Youth Programs. For more information contact Mary Buckelew, Associate Director, at 610-436-2998.

LITERACY AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

Where writing and reading meet right and wrong

- + What counts as character education in the English Language Arts classroom?
- + Who should teach it?
- + How do we balance the interests of students, teachers, parents, administrators, and school boards?

A special PAWLP Day presented by the participants in the first
Advanced Institute on Literacy and Character Education

April 20, 2002

Colonial Elementary School

Plymouth Meeting

8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

"The very least you can do in this life is to figure out what you hope for, and the most you can do is live inside that hope."

- Barbara Kingsolver
Animal Dreams

EDUCATION MATTERS

As occasionally happens, the guest author for this issue's column was unable to perform the assigned task in the time allotted. Since we're dealing with extremely busy and talented people, it's a wonder that this doesn't occur more often than it does. I suppose we'll all get over it, though, and look forward to the next issue when content you can perhaps use in your classroom (or teacher's lounge) will be presented. Since you're stuck with me again, I thought I'd take the opportunity to fill you in on what's happening at Michaels Associates. (Many of you will want to fast forward to the traditional "deal" at column's end.)

Since the company was founded in an extra room in 1986, Michaels Associates has evolved from a commis-

sioned rep firm into a distribution company. Around 1992 Jan Michaels politely requested that the company relocate to a commercial building, effectively reclaiming her driveway from the UPS truck. We are about to purchase larger quarters for the third time since then. The new building, if our offer is accepted, will provide us with a much more efficient layout to serve the needs of the education community. We have also invested heavily in sophisticated new software to process your orders, maintain our customer database, let you know the status of your order, and other features almost literally too numerous to mention.

Even though we spent a lot to upgrade the look and functionality of our website, it had become a nightmare. The e-commerce software package we chose went out of existence. The problems we – and you – experienced are now gone. The

site is better than ever and will continue to evolve now that we have the capability to add information like book cover images, new books, special offers, and even past "Education Matters" columns without calling in the web consultant. We invite you to look it over at www.michaelsassociates.com. If you decide to place an order, please type PAWLP in the "Company" field and we'll manually process your order with a 20% discount and free shipping until 30 days or so after publication of this issue of the *Newsletter*.

Thank you for your continued support. It is our sincere pleasure to serve you.

Cordially,

Greg Michaels

Laurie Halse Anderson, Peter Catalanotto, and Jack McGovern to speak at Celebrate Literacy III Conference

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Literature Institute, PAWLP will host the third annual Celebrate Literacy Conference on June 26 and 27, 2002, on the campus of West Chester University.

Keynote Speaker is Laurie Halse Anderson, a children's author who writes for all age levels; picture books for small children, middle-grade novels, and young adult novels for teenagers. Her novel, *Speak*, won the 2001 Heartland Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. *Fight for Life*, the first in Anderson's Wild at Heart series, was awarded the ASPCA Henry Bergh Children's Book Award. The award honors books that "promote the humane ethic of compassion and respect for all living things." Her Young Adult

book, *Fever*, won the 2001 Teacher's Choice Award from the International Reading Association. (Visit Ms. Anderson's website at www.writerlady.com.)

"Dream Bigger: Why Writing is so Significant in Children's Lives", is the topic of Friday's luncheon speaker, Dr. Jack McGovern, Deputy Director of Program Development for the Children's Literacy Initiative. Dr. McGovern will address the unique and powerful role writing can play in helping children "build their worlds." He will share ideas for connecting student writing with excellent children's literature, and suggest ways a school's culture can contribute to quality student work.

The closing speaker is Peter

Catalanotto, a popular local author, whose presentation will explore planning an author's visit to your school. Catalanotto's new book, *Matthew A.B.C.*, scheduled to be published in May, 2002, will be available for signing along with many other books he has written and illustrated.

Breakout sessions on literacy topics of current interest presented by Fellows of the Project round out the program.

The cost of the conference is \$110 for registrations postmarked by June 1, \$130 for later registrations and walk-ins (includes morning coffee and lunch).

Act 48 and one graduate credit options are available.

For information and a registration form please call 610-436-2202.

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visible, visible" as they brought each group's understanding to life while reflecting the group's personality. The presentation built a comfort level to move into our self-selected multicultural literature. Having read one book together, we could turn to our peers for guidance and constructive criticism to produce individual essays that were exceptional.

Ellen Hastings and Craig Norris

Reading During the Institute, we read everything in sight, including adult novels, young adult novels, picture books, pedagogy articles and books, poems, and nonfiction. We were exposed to different perspectives, both as readers and teachers, that made for higher level thinking and stimulated our questions, responses, and discussions which sparked many connections from text to text, text to world, and text to self. The background knowledge of the participants and facilitators and the information were priceless.

Dorris Alfonso and Carole Budilov

Presenting The whole world is a stage! At least it seemed that way as we looked at pieces of literature through new eyes to work our way through various forms of performance assessments. Attempting to make our learning visible, we enjoyed two-voice poems, visual metaphors, character analysis, improvisations, presentations, and portfolios.

Maureen Jackson and Joe Morretta

Writing From the morning focused freewrites—just to get our brains charged and ready for the day's concepts—to more intense writing to develop scripts, poetry, and personal essays, the institute participants discovered that writing is inextricably linked to the reading process. Our response groups talked and wrote, our grade level groups shared and wrote, and the whole class interacted and wrote—all while we concentrated on theory and implementation of the best reading instruction.

Mary Reindorp and Elsa Taylor

Presenters One highlight of the Literature Institute was the presenters, all former Literature Fellows themselves, who enriched our studies and discussions. As teachers presenting to teachers, they were very aware of our struggles and triumphs as educators. Amazingly, every presenter provided thoughtful theory and useful strategies and activities that we all could implement into our own diverse settings.

**Michelle Ambrosini and
Lisa Guglielmelli**

Scripting One of the most challenging, yet rewarding, aspects of the institute is the development and partial presentation of the leadership script. The process involves exploring professional materials, collaborating with colleagues, and designing a highly useful in-service presentation that can be used to instruct other educators in the sound strategies and approaches to literature. In addition, from each other, we gained practical and satisfying activities that can easily be implemented in our classrooms. The frequent community building exercises provided a sense of assurance as we each received constructive feedback.

**Jennifer Oakes and
Jennifer A. Saskiewicz**

Community Our institute established a very strong learning community quickly. Working together throughout the four weeks created lasting relationships, both on professional and personal levels. Having a collaborative learning environment allowed for the building of a community of learners who trusted and valued each other's opinions and ideas. On the last day, much laughter and many tears were shed as friends shared what they had learned.

**Mary Ann Berman and
Debby Herm**

Art, Language Arts, and the PA Standards

a unique PAWLP Day for teachers,
children and parents

March 9, 2002

8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Sykes Student Union Building
West Chester University



A \$5.00 donation
will be requested
for materials

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graphic representation of the plot on one page from beginning to end. He commends choosing the best beginning first, then jumping to the end, and fill in the middle last. Noting that one problem can lead to another, the writer can flesh out the story's plot with new ideas. The storyboard is only the outline to follow while writing; it is best to keep the details out. They can be added during the actual writing of the story.

After his presentation, Peter delighted the Institute participants by graciously signing books and chatting. He ended his day by thanking the participants for spending their summers becoming better teachers and writers.

Through PAWLP, some things are lost, and others are found....

Lost: Sandy Connelly, who dreamed of writing

- Guilty of a sketchy writing past
- Timid about putting herself on the written line
- Unsure she could wire-tap her inner voice
- Needed encouragement and confidence

☞ Last seen entering the Writing Institute

Found: Sandy Connelly, writer

PRAISEWORTHY PAWLERS

Troy Czukoski, a 1994 Fellow, received National Board Certification in January, 2001. The rigorous performance-based assessment process, sponsored by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, requires intense self-reflection and analysis of one's teaching practice. Many applicants find the process helps them become more focused, reflective and confident in their teaching and emerge with a lasting commitment to professional growth.

Dr. Cecelia Gartrell Evans, a 1981 Fellow, self-published, *Appointed to Tell: A Chronicle of Springfield Baptist Church, Washington-Wilkes County Georgia, Organized in 1968*. Evans was honored on February 24, 2001, by the Washington, Georgia community with a reception and book signings. Evans is active in her Pennsylvania community and is the sponsor and founder of an active family literacy program. This past year, Evans and her group received a grant from the Ethel Sargeant Clark Smith Foundation to continue the family literacy program, With Parents and Children -- With Pens in Hand.

Teresa M. Moretta, a 1996 Fellow, and **Michelle Ambrosini**, a 2001 Fellow, had their book, *Practical Approaches for Teaching Reading and Writing in Middle Schools*, published by the International Reading Association. Morretta is a sixth grade language arts teacher at Jenkintown Elementary School, Jenkintown. Ambrosini is a seventh grade reading and writing teacher at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary School, Philadelphia.

Sharon Sweeney, a 1996 Fellow, recently won production of her plays in the Delaware Short Play Festival. In 2000, Sweeney's play, *Drift*, was nominated for a "Best of the Festival" retrospective by the City Theater of Wilmington, and her play, *Smokin'*, won production in the 2001 Festival. Sweeney works extensively with the Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival and is a member of the Philadelphia Dramatists Center.

Wendy Towle, a 1998 Fellow, and Diane M. Cohle co-authored a book, *Connecting Reading and Writing in the Intermediate Grades*, published by the International Reading Association. Towle is a classroom teacher in the Tredyffrin-Easttown School District.

K - W - L - PLUS FOR THE WRITING INSTITUTE

by Betsy Brecht

| WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW ABOUT WRITING | WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT WRITING | WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT WRITING | PLUS |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Only certain gifted people can write well ◆ There's a secret I need to know in order to teach my students to write ◆ The only good examples of writing to use in the classroom come from published authors ◆ Poetry is boring ◆ I can't write | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What is the best way to present writing to my students? ◆ What is the type of writing my students will prefer? ◆ Can I teach my students to write if I don't write? ◆ How do I get my students to proof read and revise their own writing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is no secret, just a process ◆ Everyone can write something well ◆ I can and should use examples of my own writing and student's writing in the classroom ◆ There are many ways to pique student interest in writing ◆ Poetry is not boring ◆ I can write! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I got to meet so many talented, brilliant, inspirational and helpful mentors that I hope will continue to be there for me as I grow in my endeavor to be as wonderful a teacher to my students as they all have been to me |

The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project Summer Institutes

Writing Institute

What is the Writing Institute about?

- * Writing processes: theory and practice
- * Revision strategies that work
- * Peer and teacher conferencing
- * Response groups in the classroom
- * Writing-to-learn across the curriculum
- * Writing-reading connections
- * Writing Workshop management
- * Teaching skills in context
- * The PSSA Writing Assessment

What happens in a Writing Institute?

- * Writing of all kinds, some assigned, some self-selected, in a model writing workshop environment, with mini-lessons, response groups, peer and teacher conferences
- * Reading current professional literature on the teaching of writing, with opportunity to pursue topics of individual interest
- * Experiencing a range of writing and teaching strategies, including individual, small, and whole group activities appropriate K-12 and across the curriculum
- * Preparing one presentation to share an effective strategy with other teachers
- * Working with visiting scholars and teacher-consultants who present workshops on theory and practice in teaching writing

What teachers have said about their Institute experiences

"This course is by far the best I have ever taken. It has changed my entire view of writing."

Sixth grade teacher

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

Fourth grade teacher

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

Kindergarten teacher

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

High School English teacher

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

Reading Specialist

I entered the Institute a reluctant teacher of writing. I am leaving with effective writing strategies I can use in the Physical Education setting.

Physical Education teacher

"Overall I loved it!"

Eighth grade English teacher



Literature Institute

What is the Literature Institute about?

- * Reading and teaching literature
- * Literature Circles and reader response
- * Multicultural literature for all readers
- * Young adult and children's literature
- * Fiction & non-fiction for the content areas
- * Art and visual media as literature
- * Reading/Writing Workshop management
- * Portfolio and performance assessment
- * The PSSA Reading Assessment
- * Teaching skills in context





What happens in a Literature Institute?

- * Reading different kinds of literature as a community of readers, some assigned, some self-selected, experienced in literature circles, grade-level groups, and whole class formats
- * Reading current professional literature on the teaching of reading, literature, and literacy, with opportunities to pursue topics of individual interest
- * Experiencing a range of reading and teaching strategies, appropriate K-12 and across the curriculum
- * Preparing one presentation that shares an effective strategy with other teachers
- * Working with visiting scholars and teacher-consultants on issues of theory and practice in the field of literature and literacy



**Enrollment
is limited. Applicants
are considered on a
rolling admission basis.**



-  Earn six graduate credits in four weeks from West Chester University
-  Receive a National Writing Project stipend
-  Become a teacher-consultant (Fellow) of the Writing and Literature Project, which offers professional opportunities beyond the summer
-  Be eligible to coordinate courses, present in-service programs, and teach in our summer Youth Programs

**July 1 - July 26
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Nomination form for the Summer Institutes of the PA Writing & Literature Project

- I nominate myself or the teacher named below for the Summer Institute in the Teaching of Writing
Location (check one):
 ___ West Chester ___ Bucks IU
- I nominate myself or the teacher named below for the Summer Institute in the Teaching of Literature
Location: Colonial SD, Plymouth Meeting

Nominee Information:

Name _____
 Home Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____
 School _____
 School District/
 Town if private school _____
 Grade level/
 Job title _____
 Nominator _____

**Please return this form to the
PA Writing & Literature Project
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383**

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- Contact person changed
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