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PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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A Superintendent's View of PAWP

The Pennsylvania Writing Project is an excellent vehicle for meeting the needs of several reference groups regarding the subject of writing. A school board member would view PAWP as an effective method for addressing the issue of improving basic writing skills in his/her district. A school administrator would see PAWP as an excellent way to improve student writing while at the same time providing an invaluable staff development experience for faculty members.

Classroom teachers would see PAWP as a way to resolve the frustrations that they have in attempting to help their students to become effective writers. It gives teachers a wealth of techniques and standards for measuring student improvement. Students benefit from PAWP because its use removes the old threats and fears which students usually associate with writing. Parents benefit from the program because their students learn to be effective writers through a relatively painless if not positive process.

PAWP is a very unique program in that virtually every segment of the educational community would agree that it represents a giant step forward in educational practice.

Richard P. McAdams is the Superintendent of the Octorara School District.

Summer, 1982

The summer of 1982 was a high-powered time for the PAWP. During June and July the Summer Institute ran for the third year at the West Chester site — but a whole lot more was going on, too. One of the other projects we undertook was the course "Teaching Composition" which was offered for graduate or in-service credit. As it turned out, twenty-three teachers of all levels took this new course for three graduate credits.

The interesting aspect of the format for "Teaching Composition" was the overlap we created with the Summer Institutes and the three-day Summer Workshop. Presentations by Donald Graves, Mary Ellen Giacobbe,

Keith Caldwell, June Birnbaum, Harry Brent, and several presentations by PAWP consultants were offered. Teachers taking this course also enjoyed full participation in the activities of the three-day workshop. In addition, these teachers experienced a version of many techniques used to train teachers of writing in our Summer Institute: writing, response groups, publication, theory-sharing, and learning strategies for the classroom.

Positive reaction from participants has us thinking already about course offerings for the summer of 1983.

★★★★★

In addition to the two Summer Institutes reported elsewhere in this issue, three writing programs were offered at West Chester State College this past summer under the sponsorship of PAWP.

Over 125 people attended a 3-day workshop on "The Process-Centered Writing Classroom," which was coordinated by Jolene Borgese. The workshop featured Donald Graves and Mary Ellen Giacobbe from the Writing Process Lab of the University of New Hampshire, and Keith Caldwell from the Bay Area Writing Project. Participants came from all over the state and went home full of enthusiasm from their experiences. Those who had never before heard the three speakers found unexpected levels of excitement, while the "repeaters" felt once more recharged with ideas and energy. Special thanks should be given to PAWP Fellows Stan Dull, Ed Bureau, Lois Snyder, and Jolene Borgese and Tom Tobin of the Radnor School District, whose students' writing was used during the workshop.

Late in June, Bob Weiss trained 27 teachers in the general-impression method of holistic evaluation in June. The two-day course was attended by teachers from schools and colleges in Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties.

End-of-the-summer in-service programs were given at Penn Delco and Rose Tree-Media School Districts. Stan Dull coordinated the former, and Jolene Borgese and Freema Nichols directed the latter. Two additional follow-up days are expected later in the school year in the Rose Tree-Media District.

Fall Programs

PAWP is returning to some familiar districts and venturing into some new territory this year.

The Reading School District, Berks County, is offering a 15-session in-service course, "Strategies of Writing," coordinated by Rosemary Buckendorff.

In Lackawanna County, the Abington Heights School District sponsored a one-day in-service program on Nov. 11. Mary Ann Maria (1982 Fellow), who teaches in that district, coordinated this program. Plans are also being made to offer a full in-service course in this district in Spring 1983.

On October 8 Bob Weiss and 8 PAWP Fellows travelled to introduce the Pennsylvania Writing Project to teachers in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Return engagements were scheduled for this fall in the following districts:

Radnor School District—a 10-week in-service course coordinated by Jolene Borgese

Philadelphia School District—a 10-week in-service course; Cecelia Evans, coordinator

Avon-Grove School District—2 in-service days this fall

Ridley School District—an in-service program for teachers of Special Education with presentations by Guy MacCloskey, Cindy Henry, Alexis Anderson, and Eileen Lynch; and a program for secondary social studies teachers, led by Nancy Letts

A 12-session in-service course sponsored by the Bucks County unit began on September 30, with Martha Menz and Bob Weiss coordinating.

An Advanced Institute

Plans are under way for a 2-week, 4-credit advanced summer institute for previous Fellows. The goal of the institute will be to increase participants' knowledge about key aspects of the writing process, thus improving their abilities as teachers, writers, researchers, or presenters. Fellows who wish to participate in the advanced institute may call the Project Office to help plan its shape and content.

The advanced institute will be led by Bob Weiss and will run from July 18 to July 29, 1983 (9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.). The course fee will be \$328.00. Registration information will be available at a later date.

A Workshop on Giving Workshops

On Wed., Sept. 15, PAWP was well represented at a PDE-sponsored workshop in Harrisburg on the subject of conducting workshops. The "How To Do A Workshop Workshop" was conducted by John Collins, of The Network, an Andover, Massachusetts training-consultant firm.

A lively and likeable group leader — except for the

moment he swatted Bob Weiss with a handout for reading ahead of the group — Collins put the group through a well-paced series of sessions on all aspects of in-service consulting. Providing a model for designing a series of workshops, he advised his audience to avoid "one-shot" workshops since the time limitation would inhibit the presenter's ability to be effective. In his view the presenter's enthusiasm and the clarity of the presentation are the two elements most essential to the success of a workshop. "If in doubt, don't," seemed to be his motto — doubt either as to your enthusiasm or as to your knowledge of your subject. "You have no obligation to bore people," he said, and without enthusiasm the presenter will do just that. His own enthusiasm seemed undiminished at the end of the day, and his audience certainly had no opportunity to be bored.

Closing the afternoon, Robert Carroll from the PDE informed the group on the techniques and technicalities of getting PDE approval for in-service credits for workshops.

Attending the session from PAWP were Bob Weiss, Joan Flynn, Marcia Cole-Quigley and daughter Alicia, and Doris Gabel.

The Use of Writing in Elementary Social Studies: Report of a Personal Search

by Robert Gilstrap

It was during the summer of 1978 that I began my personal search to learn more about how writing was being used in current elementary school social studies programs. As a teacher whose primary interests are in elementary social studies and language arts, I was invited to serve on the staff of a summer institute sponsored by the Northern Virginia Writing Project, a spin-off of the Bay Area Writing Project. One of my summer responsibilities was to develop a workshop presentation introducing the teachers to ways in which writing could be effectively used in elementary school social studies.

Although I have always believed that the social studies curriculum provides many excellent opportunities to use and improve the knowledge and skills taught in the elementary language arts program, I had never actually focussed on this topic. Since it was my first summer on the Project staff, I decided that I should make an attempt to develop the workshop rather than selecting another topic. Even if I never made the presentation again, I was sure I'd be able to use my handouts and other materials with my undergraduate social studies methods classes when I helped them develop units. Besides, I was curious to find out what I would include in such a workshop.

As an initial step in preparing the workshop, I developed a list of opportunities for writing in elementary social studies. To do this, I first reviewed the course guides, lesson plans, and textbooks that I had recently

used with my students and listed the types of writing I was encouraging them to include in their social studies units. I then reviewed other recent undergraduate social studies methods textbooks in my professional library to discover what additional writing activities could be added. Finally I interviewed several elementary teachers to get their reactions to the list of activities I was developing and their suggestions.

As I reviewed my list of writing activities, I discovered that all of them could be classified under one of the general phases of a unit of instruction which are: (1) planning and initiating, (2) gathering information, (3) using and sharing information, and (4) culminating and evaluating. As a handout for my presentation, I developed the following list of the most commonly recommended activities under each of these phases:

Recommended Social Studies Writing Activities

I. Planning and Initiating

- ★ completing preassessment exercises and tests
- ★ preparing contracts
- ★ developing questions to be answered during the unit
- ★ doing initial data gathering for the purpose of determining purpose of determining what to study
- ★ preparing questions for a resource person who will help

III. Using and Sharing

- ★ writing reports
- ★ writing plays and stories
- ★ developing scripts for slide presentations
- ★ developing learning centers
- ★ preparing bulletin boards
- ★ writing dialogue for cartoons
- ★ making maps
- ★ preparing time lines
- ★ making charts
- ★ writing book reviews
- ★ developing historical newspapers, diaries, and letters
- ★ writing lyrics to songs
- ★ writing itineraries for imaginary trips

II. Gathering Information

- ★ taking notes
- ★ summarizing
- ★ outlining
- ★ observing and describing
- ★ recording answers to interview questions
- ★ keeping diaries and logs of reactions and insights
- ★ writing letters for information

IV. Culminating and Evaluating

- ★ developing personal summaries of progress to accompany children's work (i.e., "Things I've Learned booklets)
- ★ drawing conclusions from the unit
- ★ responding to problem situations related to the content of the unit
- ★ selecting questions for future units based upon knowledge gained from this one
- ★ listening, defining, and responding to questions

This list documents the many opportunities that exist to involve children in meaningful writing activities in elementary school social studies. Although writing was not viewed by many of the writers of texts for teachers or for children as of primary importance in a good social studies program, most authors did include some writing activities. As one might expect, the emphasis on reading was much greater than writing, however.

On the last week of the summer institute, I finally had

the opportunity to give my presentation. Nervously I shared my findings from the early part of my search with the teachers and gave them the opportunity to share with me some of the specific activities that they had found successful. I asked them to complete a 5 x 8 card on which they described their most effective writing activity in the area of social studies. We shared these during the workshop, and most of the activities mentioned fell under the third category on my chart. I asked them if I could have their cards so I could use them during future workshops. Most of the teachers were pleased to share their ideas with me.

Because of the interaction among teachers that I had planned as part of the workshop, the presentation was well received, and I was asked to conduct the workshop several times during the next year. Each time I asked the teachers to complete a 5 x 8 card, and each time category three appeared to be the one most mentioned as I read through the cards.

By the fall of 1979, I was asked to present my workshop on writing in the elementary school social studies at a state social studies weekend conference, and again the cards were distributed and effective uses of writing were recorded.

On Monday morning when I returned to my university office, I pulled out the stack of index cards written at the state meeting and placed it on my red work table. As I read through the new set of cards, I sorted them into four stacks, one for each of the categories on my chart. Again one stack was noticeably thicker—the one for phase three, using and sharing information. My informal study of elementary teachers in Virginia was clearly revealing that when asked to identify the most effective writing activity involving social studies, approximately 75 percent described an activity that took place near the end of a unit of instruction. Based upon the research that I had done in preparing the list of writing opportunities for my workshop handout, this seemed to be a very narrow use of writing. I was curious to know if this limited use of writing was typical of teachers in other parts of the nation. On that fall day in 1979, I decided to expand my local search by doing a national survey of teachers to help me answer that question.

I selected as my sample for the survey those elementary teachers who had participated in summer institutes of the National Writing Project. Although I realized that this was an above-average group of teachers, I thought this would be a good place to begin asking my question because of their interest in writing as represented by their participation in the summer institutes.

My first step was to write to the directors of all of the National Writing Project sites. At that time there were over 70. I gave each director a description of my study and asked for a list of all the elementary teachers who had participated in their summer institutes since their projects had begun. As a result of these requests, I received over 300 names.

I then wrote to these teachers asking them to complete a questionnaire which included the following major requests:

1. In an average week, how much time is spent on writing activities in your social studies program?
2. In general, what kinds of writing activities do you use in or plan for your class in the area of social studies (research reports, book reports, interviews, etc.)?
3. Describe in detail, the social studies writing activity that you have found to be most effective with your

children (This should be a description of one of the types of activities listed under question 2. If available, attach a sample assignment or worksheet.)

The enthusiasm for writing expressed by many who responded was amazing. Sixty-four teachers completed the questionnaire and enclosed notes related to their interest in the results of the study as well as samples of children's writings and arework. By the spring of 1981, my office was filled with evidence that a great deal of writing was going on in elementary social studies—at least in the classrooms of teachers who had been involved in the National Writing Project. During the summer, I completed my analysis of all the responses to the three major questions. Let me share with you what I learned.

In reviewing the responses to question one which asked about the amount of time spent on social studies writing activities during an average week, I learned that the average among the 64 teachers who responded is 30 minutes per week. The responses ranged from "one-quarter" hour (two responses) to "five to seven hours a week in social studies as broadly defined" (one response). Quite a range! Although eight of the teachers were unable to determine how much time they actually spent on social studies writing activities because of the integrated nature of their curriculum, the most frequently mentioned response (10) was "one hour a week." The second most frequently mentioned response (6) was "one-half hour." Out of the 64 teachers who responded to the survey only five indicated that their students did either no or very little writing in the social studies.

The responses to question two, which asked the teachers to identify the general kinds of social studies writing activities they used, revealed a varied set of writing opportunities that could be classified under all four categories that I identified above. By the time that I analyzed all of the survey forms, I had a list of 102 distinctive social studies activities that involved writing. The most frequently mentioned (33 responses) was some form of research paper or report. The next highest (14 responses) was book reports. Receiving five or more responses were letters, poems, paragraphs, short plays, stories, interviews, class notes, diaries, outlines, summaries of material read, essays, and essay questions.

I next classified each distinctive activity under the four categories that I mentioned earlier using my original list as a guide for placement. My tally sheet looked like this:

I. Planning and Initiating	1 response
II. Gathering Information	19 responses
III. Using and Sharing Information	70 responses
IV. Culminating and Evaluating	12 responses

These results surprised me because I had carefully worded the question so that those responding would have the opportunity to develop a list of activities that would reveal the range of writing in their classrooms. As you noticed, the "using and sharing" category dominated the responses. These results, however, did support the informal study that I had done during my workshops in Virginia which revealed that writing activities that fall under this classification are the ones most associated by elementary teachers with social studies. I should point out, however, that the list of 102 activities that emerged from the answers to this

question included 54 activities that were not on the chart that I developed. I have listed some of these here:

- ★ "We do a complete genealogy work-up on each child. They conclude by writing a letter to their oldest known relative—bringing them up-to-date on the family." (4th grade)
- ★ "Writing questions and answers as a review of material studied. This is used in a game called 'Stump the Panel' in preparation to a test." (5th grade)
- ★ "News reports and commentaries that are aired on our school's closed circuit TV station." (3rd-4th grade)
- ★ "I plant questions in bottles and jars all around the room before our day starts. Questions are about our current social studies unit. As children discover them, they open them, read the question, and write a response for me." (1st grade)
- ★ "Writing activities for a simulation are popular in my room. One example would be writing a script for a TV interview show with famous characters in U.S. history." (5th grade)
- ★ "Writing brief reviews of movies, books, speakers, field trips." (4th grade)
- ★ "Making and designing posters." (1st grade)
- ★ "Writing 'What Do You Think?' position papers." (5th grade)
- ★ "I assign some first person reports, asking students to write from the viewpoint of a character from our social studies text." (4th grade)
- ★ "Recipe writing." (3rd grade)
- ★ "Interviews of famous or not-so-famous people." (4th grade)
- ★ "We've done stories on how it feels to be handicapped based on a simulated experience during which my students were fixed up with a handicap for a day." (6th grade)
- ★ "We've written 'We're not so happy with you' letters to the secretary of the interior who wants to lift the ban on importing whale products as well as other local, state, and national leaders." (Kindergarten)
- ★ "Writing advertisements for inventions (cotton gin, telephone, radio)." (5th grade)
- ★ "Writing jokes, riddles, and puns about social studies content." (5th grade)

I next turned to the section of the survey which asked the teachers to describe in detail the social studies writing activity that they believed to be most effective and to include any sample assignments or work sheets. I first tried to list each activity as a separate item such as research reports, etc., but soon realized that many of the teachers had described their most effective writing activity in such detail that one description often included experiences with writing that could fall under more than one of the four major categories that I had identified. I then decided to analyze each description very carefully and to categorize each of the activities under one of the four headings. I soon realized that I also needed to add another category for non-unit related activities. For example, one third grade teacher wrote: "In third grade, the students do a very good job of writing about their feelings. They are not as inhibited as older children. I ask them to write how they feel when they are happy or surprised."

Reading through the descriptions of social studies writing activities with accompanying materials and

pictures was a real pleasure. It was obvious that some very exciting and effective learning experiences involving writing were being provided for children in these classes. Several people commented that it was impossible to describe the "most" effective activity, but that they could describe "an activity that worked" and they did that very well. In the responses to this question, I was able to see the value given to writing activities that went beyond the using and sharing category.

After reading each description, my tally sheet looked like this:

I. Planning and Initiating	8 activities
II. Gathering Information	39 activities
III. Using and Sharing Information	43 activities
IV. Culminating and Evaluating	9 activities
V. Non-unit Related	4 activities

Although the number of activities that fall under "using and sharing information" again dominates the results, the responses for "gathering information" is very close behind with 39. "Initiating and planning" activities and "culminating and evaluating" activities almost balance out; eight for the first and nine for the second. Four people mentioned activities that from their descriptions could only be classified as non-unit related.

By the fall of 1981, I had analyzed all my questionnaires and as I looked over my summary sheets, I asked myself: "What have I really learned from my study and how can I use what I've learned to help other teachers, especially my undergraduate teachers-in-training?"

First of all, the information that I have gathered clearly shows that writing is used by a significant number of the elementary social studies teachers who were surveyed. Of the 64 teachers who responded to my questionnaire, only 5 indicated that they do no or little writing as part of their social studies program.

Second, the survey reveals the variety of social studies writing activities that the teachers use in their social studies programs: 102 distinctive activities were tallied, as you recall. Although I was disturbed to see that so many of these activities were limited to "using and sharing" information, when the teachers were asked to describe their most effective activity, writing activities that were used during earlier stages of a social studies unit were often identified.

Finally, the survey reveals that even teachers as interested in writing and as knowledgeable of current information related to that process as those included in my sample do not use writing to its fullest potential as a tool for communicating and thinking in elementary school social studies.

Since I began my search in an effort to become more knowledgeable about the use of writing in the elementary social studies and to be able to use that knowledge with the teachers with whom I work, especially my undergraduate teachers-in-training, I believe the results of my national survey have important implications.

Based upon my findings, I believe I have the responsibility to help future teachers better understand the significant role that writing can play as a tool for communicating and thinking as part of an effective social studies program. I will need to acquaint them with our current knowledge about how writing contributes to personal learning, a concept that is summarized in a recent publication from the National Council of Teachers of English entitled *Perspectives on Writing in Grades 1-8* as follows:

Personal learning values of writing stem from discovery. Through seeing personal ideas and experiences appear on paper, redefining what is written to make it more accurate or complete, and receiving reader feedback on what has been written, a writer expands what is learned from the original experience. Being involved in, and yet in a sense detached from, experiences that have been recorded on paper encourages insight and discovery. (5, p. 5)

I also need to help my students better understand the many opportunities to use writing within a classroom, both unit and non-unit related. Susan Florio and Christopher M. Clark, co-directors of the Written Literacy Project at Michigan State University, recently studied the writing that is undertaken in a 2-3 grade combination classroom and the teacher planning that relates to that writing. As a result of the study, they have identified the following general functions of writing in the classroom:

1. Writing to Know Oneself and Others
2. Writing to Occupy Free Time
3. Writing to Participate in the Community
4. Writing to Demonstrate Academic Competence

Florio and Clark have found out through their research that a great deal of writing does occur in the classroom and much of it is enabled by teacher thought and action. They point out in their preliminary report that "lacking the props and constraints of other of the 'basic skill' areas, writing is often 'invisible' as teachers report their instructional lives or as researchers seek evidence of 'writing instruction'—or even as children or parents talk about the writing done in school. Writing in everyday school life may be 'invisible' in the sense that talk is invisible in everyday life—it is such a part of day-to-day transaction (tests, worksheets, essays, notes, letters, etc.) that it is taken for granted." (p. 3) Her findings appear to support what I have learned through my study about the use of writing in the elementary school social studies curriculum.

Using my list of unit-related activities and the functions described by Florio and Clark, I think I can give my students a clearer idea of the many ways in which writing can be used within an elementary classroom in which social studies is taught.

I also need to give my students more opportunities to write in my class in ways that they will be asking their pupils to do in their social studies classes. Some authorities believe that the most effective teachers of writing are those who are writers themselves and are continually using writing in the way that their students are. I agree with this point of view, but need to do more with my teachers-in-training to help them develop confidence with the use of writing for many purposes.

Finally, I need to share with my students some creative methods that the teachers in my study were so willing to pass on to me, beginning with the ones described in response to my questionnaire. Knowing that many other teachers are including effective writing activities within their social studies programs should give future elementary social studies teachers the support they need to give a higher priority to writing in the social studies than they do otherwise.

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In developing this article, I have attempted to use the process and format of an "I-Search Paper" as described by Ken Macrorie in his book, *Searching Writing* (Fiochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1980). In an I-Search paper, the writer tells the story of what he or she did in the search and includes the following information: (1) what you knew or didn't know about the topic when starting out, (2) why you are writing the paper, (3) the story of the search, and (4) what you learned or didn't learn from the search.

Robert Gilstrap, Professor of Elementary Education at George Mason University, is Associate Director of the Northern Virginia Writing Project.

Sentence Sense and Nonsense

"The following sentences were taken from the Exemption Examination essays. They represent some of the more common writing difficulties." Assumption College, Sept. 1982.

The four most important values in my life are Family, Friendship, Success and work, respectively.

From supporting one another, we grow to learn what is right and establish a natural sense of what is best and we get the perseverance and we procure the open-mindedness to be just and "fight" for what is right for all mankind.

In today's world you can't do it alone. A spouse is a friend. A dog is a friend. Any kind of companion that has emotions is a friend.

One must work because it is not natural to be a nothing in our society.

Stil others have Gods ranging in religions from smoking pot to running around stark naked.

Today parents are more submissive and that is a

problem which you must all work out.

There are two extremes; a freak, and also someone put together just right.

Justice is especially used in crimes and punishment.

I want to attain this warm feeling of oneself's accomplishments.

Knowledge is important because its effect may allow a person any number of results.

Swivel

From the desk of the editor.

I swivel in my swiveling chair—
swing to the window;
captain of my desk I
issue commands to the files,
hear complaints from
the paper clips
about the pencils—again,
give the desk five minutes,
no more,
fondle the desk pen set
privately, discreetly,
wander sentimentally
through the middle drawer—
the pencils, the stamps, the neat
hole reinforcers.
Firing staples into thin
air as from a gun
I swivel, suddenly
stop, decisively,
a Baryshnikov of swivel.
I lean back—all the way—
dangerously,
with e'lan
controlled quickness—
Bart Starr in the pocket.
The turning machine
surrounds me,
is an extension
of my powerful body,
a weapon of mobility
as I Buck Roger
through the archipelago
of civil service.
The dust that falls
invisibly
from the files and kills
quietly
flies from me
as I circle, swing,
lean back and roll
precisely,
from desk to waste basket,
dart chairborne to the bookcase.
My armored swivel chair
careens from desk to wall
smashing, ricocheting
and back again to my desk
where I watch the sun
set—alone.

Keith Caldwell

Trying Out for the Governor's School

by Steff Wardrop

—Steff Wardrop, a senior at Exeter Township High School, was accepted as a participant for the 1982 Governor's School of the Arts as a writer. In this writing, Steff tells what the second round of try-outs was like.

What is it like to be auditioned for the Governor's School? What is it like to stand a solitary soldier with your dreams and ego on the front line, armed only with the faith of friends — and two #2 pencils with broken points?

My penchant for exaggeration aside, it was one of those nerve-jarring, blood-draining, stomach-collapsing moments of supreme paranoia and worry that your parents tell you will prime you for the outside world of job interviews, college applications, and IRS audits. We were led to a classroom at East Pennsboro High in the beautiful metropolis of Enola, Pennsylvania, that looked like every other classroom in America. Here we surreptitiously sized each other up — he looks like a writer, his fingers have ink on them, she doesn't, more like a majorette at Beverly Hills High.

It is odd how gut terror draws people together; I struck up a rapport with a couple people in record time. Remember how everybody quizzed each other and told horror stories about Sergeant Viola when you took your driver's test? I imagine earthquake sites are very friendly places.

After an introductory speech by a man whose jokes were about as enthralling as your grandfather's war stories the third time around, we, the prospective Hemingways and Shelleys, went to the classroom and were told to write an impromptu character sketch of someone. I immediately forgot everyone I'd ever known. During this exercise, we were called out one by one to talk to two women (one taught poetry at the University of Pennsylvania) about writing. One had samples of our work and wanted to discuss them; I would sooner have given blood, but I fumbled through it. The other asked questions about what we like to read, what authors we admired, and how old we thought Dick Clark really is (only kidding).

With that gauntlet run, we were released to try to collect our addled thoughts and find our ways home. In retrospect, I suppose it was a beneficial experience — being thrown off balance is good for a person, I think. Forcing yourself into unpleasant and embarrassing situations must build character. At least that's how I'm rationalizing it.

Submitted by Rosemary Buckendorff (1981 Fellow), who teaches in the Exeter Township School District.

For The Sake of Writing and The Teaching of Writing

by Cecelia G. Evans

Twenty-three Philadelphia teachers gave up three weeks of their vacation to participate in the first Pennsylvania Writing Project — Philadelphia Summer Institute. The Institute was made possible through a grant from the William Penn Foundation/West Chester State College and through the cooperation of Beatrice Levin and Philomena O'Hanlon of the Office of English-Reading/Language Arts of the Philadelphia School District.

While many of their friends, family members, and co-workers were perhaps relaxing on the beach of taking a leisurely swim or engaged in some other fun-filled activities, these teachers were spending six hours a day (9-4) learning about the process approach to writing, discussing the theories that support this approach for the teaching of writing, listening to consultants and writing themselves.

A typical day for the Fellows included: (1) writing on many topics; (2) discussions of their writings and theories of experts in the area of writing; (3) listening to presentations and observing consultants who made them; (4) making presentations themselves showing how they might implement this approach in their own classrooms; (5) participating in response groups. Overwhelming? Of course, but three weeks is just too short a time for an institute of such intensity, so every minute had to be used to its fullest — plus some.

Fourteen of the sessions were held at the Rhodes Middle School at 29th and Clearfield Streets in Philadelphia in a partially air-conditioned room. One session was held at West Chester State College which required that Fellows rise early in order to arrive at West Chester, find a parking place that would not result in receiving a ticket, and find the Learning Research Center by 9:30 a.m.

Two visiting consultants addressed the institute. They were Joan Birnbaum from the New Jersey Writing Project and Marian Mohr from the Northern Virginia Writing Project. Presentations were made also by the director and co-directors as well as by Barbara Mitchell, an English teacher at the Saul School in Philadelphia and a 1981 Pennsylvania Writing Project Fellow.

Coordinating the Philadelphia Institute were: Robert Weiss, Director of the Pennsylvania Writing Project and an English instructor at West Chester State College; Chris Kane from the Affective Education Office for the Philadelphia School District; and Cecelia G. Evans, a language skills teacher at the Belmont School in Philadelphia.

On the last day of the Philadelphia Institute, Fellows made presentations to the guests who had been invited to gain information about the Project. These presentations promoted the advantages of the process approach to writing with great enthusiasm and I would say that the Philadelphia Summer Institute 1982 should be long remembered. Among the guests were Philomena O'Hanlon, Curriculum Specialist-

Reading/Language Arts Division of the Philadelphia School District; Helen Oakes, Philadelphia School Board Member; Howard Amos, Philadelphia District #8 Superintendent; Yolanda Middleton, President-elect of the Philadelphia Home and School Council; Inez Hill and Allie Mulvihill of the Affective Education Office and 1981 Fellows of the Pennsylvania Writing Project.

Other visitors to the Institute were: Beatrice Levin, Director of the Office of Reading/Language Arts; Willadine Bain, Curriculum Specialist in the Office of Reading/Language Arts; Mary Ellen Costello, Supervisor Reading/Language Arts-District #1; Ruth White, Supervisor Reading/Language Arts-District #4; Evelyn Joelle, Supervisor Reading/Language Arts-District #2; Bessie Ross Title I Coordinator-District #6; and Ray Gregory, Principal of the Cassidy School District #4.

Cecelia G. Evans, a Language Skills teacher at the Belmont School in Philadelphia, was a 1981 Fellow. With Chris Kane, she co-directed the 1982 Philadelphia Summer Institute.

From a Teacher in the 1982 Open Program

by Carol Goodwin

I hate to write. Because I hate to write, I hate to make students write. Because I hate to make students write, I took this course (ENG 595: Teaching Composition one of the PAWP Open Programs). However, discovered in this course that writing is thinking and love thinking. If writing is thinking, maybe I *can* write. This course has asked me the right questions so that can organize my thoughts and develop a story, argument, or position depending on the questions asked. For example, when Joan Flynn gave the definition of a fable and asked me to think of a life question, I could then write a fable by putting the two parts together. I also discovered that I hated to write because I felt that I could not do it. I felt I was the The research that shows that most people have trouble starting to write, that most people get tired of their work, and that most people need to discuss their work, has allowed me to feel safe enough to risk writing. I discovered that I was afraid to let anyone read my writing and so I always handed in papers meekly and then ran so that I would not have to see the negative response. To my surprise, the discussion in the response groups, instead of making me feel foolish, made me feel good about the writing I had done and made me eager to do more. I also discovered that I started writing and got tired of it and so threw in several undeveloped ideas at the end of a paper. I hate to proofread but reading to someone else took the pressure off me and gave me enough support to continue to further correct my writing. Since process writing worked so well for me personally, I know now I can ask students to write without feeling I am torturing them.

At the moment I am full of dreams for the future. I dream of organizing a Process Writing Workshop for our middle school teachers on Learning-Centered Writing and Writing in the Content Areas. I dream of organizing a workshop for the parents to help them understand the process theory. I dream of introducing the process theory to other private schools. And I dream of doing research on the relationship of reading and writing or on the development of writing in the young child, after reading *Research on Composing Points of Departure* by Cooper and Odell and after hearing the lecture by June Birnbaum. This sounds overwhelming, but I will try to start slowly so that I will not become overwhelmed and disillusioned. I am not really worried for I have found the "missing link" for my own writing and for my teaching of writing.

Writing About the Writing Process: A Teacher's Response

by Adelaide Katz

I am now hooked on Donald Graves and plan to incorporate the results of his research into my language arts program for the coming year. Graves cast his spell upon me early in July when he spent two days with the participants in the third summer institute of the Pennsylvania Writing Project at West Chester State College. "How Writers Develop" was the subject of Graves' workshop. His presentation was based on daily observations of children enrolled in New Hampshire's Atkinson Academy, a public school. Graves and his colleagues studied the processes that children follow as they develop their ability to write.

Teachers were urged to write whenever they ask students to write and to share their preliminary efforts with the class. Instead of evaluating only "finished" pieces, Graves recommends that teachers touch base with their students early in their first draft by conducting brief roving conferences. The focus should be on a "hot" topic, something the child knows about. Scheduled conferences are also held involving six pupils at a time. These require preparation on the part of the student. He must be able to tell what his draft is about (one sentence); how far he's advanced; and what he's working on or needs help with. To demonstrate these techniques, Graves worked with five fifth and sixth graders from a local school. Later this year, Graves' methods and observations will be published in a book entitled *Writing: Teachers and Children At Work* (Heinemann).

During the three day workshop, Mary Ellen Giacobbe, a first grade teacher at the Atkinson Academy, met with primary teachers to share her experiences and demonstrate with a small group of children. Keith Caldwell met with secondary teachers to share his expertise.

The Institute Fellows had to actually experience the writing process before becoming committed to this method. Each day began with free writing; many days ended with groups of four meeting as response groups to critique and encourage each other's efforts.

Presentations and reviews of books authored by those foremost in the field of teaching writing skills made up the greater part of each day. The presentations were the "meat and potatoes" of the project. They made each participant cognizant of theories and techniques which will add a new dimension to our teaching. The affective value of these presentations cannot be overlooked. Highly desirable teacher behaviors were modeled, with each of us experiencing new strategies just as our students would.

Learning-centered writing, a phrase coined by Weiss, is a useful tool for every teacher and student. When asked to write, the student must reflect and clearly communicate his new knowledge. A teacher can quickly learn, through this technique, when reteaching is needed.

For the twenty-four participants, the summer of '82 will long be remembered. Hopefully, by sharing our enthusiasm and new skills, there will be a renaissance of student writing in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Adelaide Katz is a fourth grade school teacher in the Marple-Newtown School District and a 1982 Fellow.

Shippensburg 1982

In the last week of July, PAWP traveled to central Pennsylvania. Having been given a slot in the annual PDE Curriculum and Instruction Conference held at Shippensburg State College, Bob Weiss offered a workshop entitled "Developing Effective School Writing Programs: Strategies from the Pennsylvania Writing Project." He took with him Martha Menz and Doris Gable from the Project and James Lee, Language Arts Supervisor of the West Chester Area School District.

In spite of the sauna weather the group was at work within two hours of its arrival. For the next four days the approximately 30 class members were given a concentrated dosage of the writing process and its implementation in the programs of the districts of the participants. The class represented all parts of the state and every level of instruction from primary through college. Both public and private schools were

there, as well as both teachers and administrators.

The four team members took turns in directing the four daily sessions which began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 4:30 p.m. Presentations were made on the elements of the writing process with the class working through the steps, on the teaching of grammar in relation to writing, on learning-centered writing, on evaluating writing with a special look at holistic evaluation, and on the place of writing in the curriculum.

The comments from the final questionnaire completed by the class members were consistently positive. "A most rewarding conference!" "I was pleased that this workshop recognized the basic, *real* problems of teaching." "I needed this 9 years ago. Information needs to be included in a college curriculum — any chance?" Repeatedly the request came, "Can you do a workshop in our district?"

By Friday the weather had cooled, the stacks of paper had been distributed, and the presenters had emptied their heads. PAWP had attended its first PDE Curriculum Conference and left convinced that it had reached some new classrooms in Pennsylvania.

Footnote: Don't ever let Bob make any room reservations for you. He booked Martha Menz, Doris Gabel, and James Lee all into *one* room!

Correction

The June issue of the Newsletter omitted the name of one of the 1982 Fellows. Barnia Young, Coatesville Area School District, was a member of the West Chester Summer Institute.

Writing is an unsettling and disconcerting task for most people. It forces them to think — something they have little confidence about doing — and this makes them self-conscious.... When we write we have no eye contact, no body language, no sound, nothing. Faced with silence, the expectant paper, and our own thoughts, we are suddenly forced to listen to ourselves and to be good critical judges of what we say. In other words, writing is thought speech, and since most of us feel at some level that our faculties of thought — let alone our writing skills — are not what they should be, we become self-conscious when we pick up a pen and must listen to ourselves think.

Daniel Shanahan, from "Why Johnnie Can't Think," Change, vol. 9, no. 9, 1977

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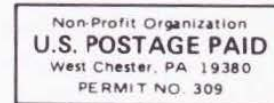
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THIRD CLASS