



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 2

WINTER 1992

Federal Funding To Reduce Summer Institute Costs

With federal funding anticipated for the first time, PAWP has reduced the costs for summer Institute participants and their sponsoring districts or school. The endorsement fee, previously billed to sponsoring districts or schools, has been eliminated. A reduced tuition fee will be billed to participants or their sponsors. As with any tuition bill, districts will follow their regular policy. In some instances, they will pay the tuition directly. In others, applicants will be responsible for direct payment and may then be eligible for reimbursement.

According to Martha J. Menz, a 1980 Fellow who is currently Staff Development Specialist for the Upper Darby School District, "these changes will make Institute participation more accessible to applicants and more attractive to sponsoring districts."

The elimination of the endorsement fee requirement, which would have risen to \$1,100 in 1992, will be especially beneficial in this year of tight school budgets. With the federal funding, the tuition bill reduces to \$700 per participant, an amount actually lower than straight tuition for the 6 credits awarded.

According to Bob Weiss, project director, "many educators from Southeastern Pennsylvania actively supported the federal legislation that led to this funding, so it is fitting that our region benefit from this initiative."

However, the fee reductions apply only to the summer Institute held at WCU's Exton campus. Similar fee reductions for satellite institutes have not yet been approved for the federal funding. "We are working on that next step to support institutes such as the ones we've run in Bucks County and Philadelphia," said Weiss.

Application forms for PAWP's Summer Institute are found in the centerfold of this issue of the PAWP Newsletter and are mailed in January to school buildings throughout southeastern Pennsylvania.

TALK IS CHEAP

Because I started life as a theater major, I have always designed exercises which incorporated drama, my reading aloud, the students' reading aloud, classroom Readers' Theater, and putting on productions in any other school building which would have us. I always felt guilty, but not so guilty that I didn't sneak interviewing first graders into a basic communications skills class, performing Readers' Theater into an advanced communications skills class, or reading Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" aloud to the students.

As my knowledge of the writing process has grown over the past ten years, I've added role playing to generate dialogue, students' reading their rough drafts aloud to each other, literacy circles where students talk about their self-selected reading, and oral sections to every project, whether it be a group or individual one. A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of participating in Virginia O'Keefe's presentation on critical thinking through talking, which reminded me to listen to the students as they worked.

Immediately, I heard comments validating my use of student talking to make meaning. Two seniors, not in the top ten, were working together on a visualization of the comparisons and contrasts among Hamlet, Laertes, and Fortinbras. As they worked they noticed that Hamlet and Laertes had both been to college. They called me over to ask what the characters' majors had been! Of course, I didn't know, so I asked what they thought. At first, they figured Hamlet's major had been something "wimpy" and indecisive to suit Hamlet's personality--like literature. Seeing the horrified look on my face, they changed to philosophy. Then they decided Laertes, because his father sends a spy to make sure he's not drinking, womanizing, or gambling too much, must have been studying something which didn't call for too much work--business. Again I must have looked aghast because they switched to "undecided." Finally, they asked if I thought Fortinbras also went to college. Again I wondered what they thought and they said he must have as, like Hamlet, he's a prince and would need to be trained, but they decided he studied military history and tactics since he was constantly in battle. When replaying this conversation in my mind after class, I was amazed at the depth of understanding this small discussion had shown about Hamlet and their own lives. I was also thrilled that the group talking had led to their making such connections to their own lives and understanding of college majors. Now I'm thinking 'what would their majors be?' is a terrific question for book talks on characterization.

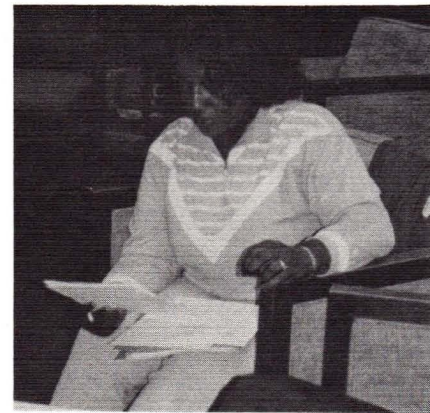
I couldn't have been as sure they understood the life of a prince and the basic personalities of the characters with a dozen questions. And no question would have shown me that the boys had made personal meaning of the play. I always start discussions by saying that the plays haven't lasted 400 years because English teachers like them but because the plays have something to say to students. My allowing and encouraging the boys to talk proved Hamlet

does have importance for seniors making major decisions about their futures.

The next step is to keep anecdotal records of this sort of episode for evaluation purposes.



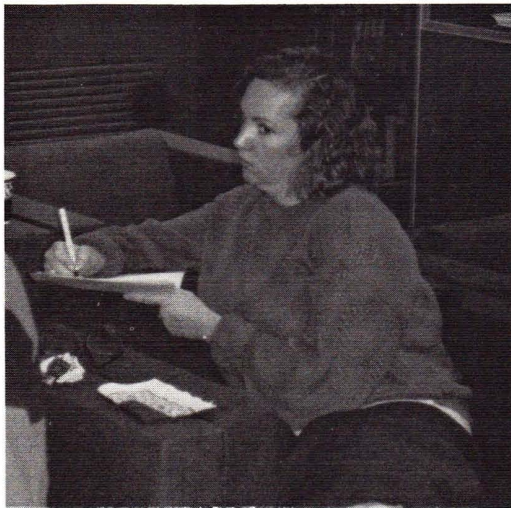
Before sharing in small groups, each participant in the talking as critical thinking workshop writes questions appropriate to the prompt Virginia O'Keefe assigned.



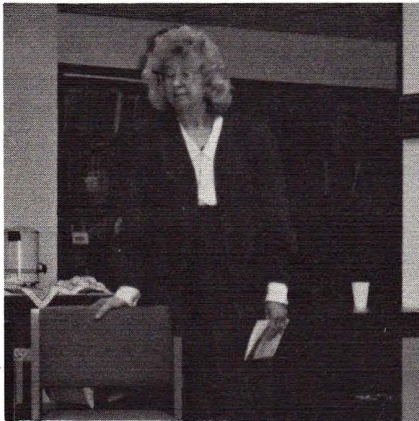
Barnia Young re-reads her letter as a character in a dialogue poem.



Taking part in a Readers' Theater selection from Shaw's Pygmalion shows teachers how to help students think through talking.



Martha Phillips adds her group's ideas to hers on a specific Pygmalion character.



Virginia O'Keefe thinks for a moment before suggesting a new prompt to encourage critical thinking about literature.

ALLOW THE TALK TIME

"Design class so the kids make the meaning," says Virginia O'Keefe, PAWP's guest speaker on Critical Thinking through Talking on Saturday, October 26. Having started her teaching career in a one room school in California, Virginia finally earned her doctorate by working two summers with James Britton in New York and two summers in England. Recently she has noticed a dramatic change in teachers' attitudes toward talking in the classroom as more formal and informal research is done on the rewards and self-esteem generated through these activities.

Virginia involved the approximately 20 PAWPs and guests as she lead them through exercises designed to encourage students to use "informal exploratory speech" to understand text. In an article she is developing, "Quest for Questioning," Virginia says, "When 58 fourth and fifth grade public school children were allowed to describe aloud their

interpretations and images of stories and to relate them to their own experiences, the students scored significantly higher on a comprehension test than students who were taught in a conventional manner."

Believing that higher order thinking comes from forming hypotheses and testing them, Virginia points out that teachers don't teach that way, perhaps fearing a loss of control. After all, Virginia adds in her upcoming article, "The environment which encourages putting the student in the position of initiating and responding to ideas is one which has the potential of threatening the traditional role of the teacher as leader."

The exercises Virginia presented in the West Chester University Special Collections Room on the sixth floor of the library are designed to help teachers help students develop the questioning skills necessary to making meaning and yet retain enough control. Nominal group technique, which most PAWPs will recognize as think-pair-share, encourages everyone to participate as everyone has had time to write her thoughts before sharing in small groups which eventually lead to large group sharing.

Each student does not have to reflect on the same question, Virginia points out. By dividing the class into groups first, the teacher can give each group its own question to think about, then share together, come to consensus, and share with the whole class. *What does the major character in the text wish for? What are some favorite lines or phrases? What questions would you ask the characters in the text? What questions does the students have concerning content or vocabulary? What questions would a newspaper/magazine writer ask?* are all viable starters.

Since students can have facts without thinking but no thinking without facts, these questions encourage the students to transact with the text closely to back their reasoning.

Another excellent exercise is an adaptation of the commonly used Readers' Theater. Usually the audience is passive during class performances of text, but assigning the audience things to look for during the reading assures the students' attention and thinking. The assignments can involve looking at language, writing devices, facts, characterizations, or whatever the teacher wishes.

Virginia reminds teachers that the subtext to having the students talk is that someone is listening, thus involving students more firmly in their class work than in traditional classrooms where teachers talk 70% of the time and stress "information acquisition and recall." If metacognition is important, students must have opportunities to connect ideas "in their own experience and language."

For information on The International Listening Association, contact Mary Wise, Executive Director, Center for Information and Communication Sciences, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0535, FAX: (317) 285-1516, or call (317) 285-1889.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

READING THE BUCKS BOX

Late in November Shari Stem delivered a curiously shaped box to the Project office. Made of flimsy cardboard and measuring about 18" by 12" by 3", it made me think at first that I was being given a robe or some other article of clothing from a fancy department store. Shari cleared up my misconception: "It's the final papers from the Fall follow-up of the Bucks Summer Institute." So I stopped my hand from opening for a designer bathrobe and set the package aside until I had leisure to look it over. Two weeks later, I readied myself to read the last official writings of the eleven new PAWP Fellows who had attended our open institute program at the Intermediate Unit building in Doylestown.

I opened the box and saw that it was filled with envelopes, writings of various sorts, and--indeed--what looked like a present. A small gift-wrapped box inside the larger package had a curly red ribbon and a gift card that got my attention, and I went to that first. The card was not made out to me. Instead, I read:

*To: Any Teacher Who Wants to Teach Writing.
From: S. J. Pennypacker*

Well, I could make a case out that I fit the description, so I opened the little package and found a tape cassette that was Sylvia's comical book review. Against a background of violins, I heard teachers whining about the difficulties they experienced when trying to get youngsters to write -- then a louder than necessary sales pitch for the book to cure all problems of writing pedagogy.

Sylvia sent several other things: one of her incomparable dialect monologues, this one by the uncouth spider that frightened away Miss Muffet; a collection of "Far Side" cartoons amended to comment wryly on writing and its teaching; a sequence of notes written to her first graders and their parents since Day One of the school year; and her daily diary-journal of classroom observations.

Elise Brand sent a double-entry review of Toby Fulwiler's Journal Book as well as a poem and her journal itself.

From Gail Horn I got two "Modern Composition Books," one filled with a review of Marjorie Frank's unusually titled book If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You've Gotta Have This Book, the other a with daily classroom journal (October 24 begins: "There was a fight today in my classroom..."). I also got her story of being stung by a bee and swelling up to near fatality.

From Ann Boger, a review of the same book, an extensive journal (including opening the school year while a family member was in hospital!), and a brief piece about how a first-grader named Tommy taught her something about "f-words" and about teaching.

Ted Feldstein's contributions: a personal humorous piece about vacationing, an alphabetized book review of Atwell's Coming to Know (with the comment that the appendices alone are "worth the price of the book"), and a multiform journal. I got into this and discovered lists:

Phrases that Raise My Blood Pressure: "assembly required," "DETOUR," and "Closed for the Season"...

Phillies I'd Love to See Traded: Von Hayes, Ricky Jordan...

Then an entry, referring to a phone call and (a writing) emergency. Turns out the article Ted co-authored with three other teachers was accepted for publication in Cooperative Learning and minor revisions were needed that night to be faxed to the editor. (A brief review of this article appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

What could follow that act? Diane Miernicki's submissions were a literate review of Build a Literate Classroom by Don Graves, a bittersweet parental reflection on a daughter's going away to college, and a copy of her handwritten journal relating how--even on her sabbatical--she is staying close to a first-grade classroom and teaching, helping, and thinking.

After Diane's work came a logbook from Barbara Gallen containing lines like the encouraging "I had no idea focusing on one sentence could be so effective," the frustrated "I'm already behind in conferencing and book-keeping," and the sobering "It also occurred to me as I wrote how difficult it is to keep everything going with 34 in a class." Parent-teacher conferences were the subject of Barb's poem, and Kirby and Liner's Inside Out was the focus of her review.

Janemarie Kelly filled her journal with reflections about returning with some trepidation to her school district. Yet in her own room and her own teaching life, she could experience a psychological turn-around and carry her enthusiasms through to her students. "Every day I am amazed to look out over the room and see them writing."

Larisse Goldstein reviewed Donald Murray's Learning by Teaching, took notes on a group of articles on writing, and created two poems "by a new mother" (Larisse being the first PAWPer to give birth during an institute and possibly the first in the entire National Writing Project).

Finally, with Carol Edwards' work, I was returned to the Modern Composition Book format for a journal about her teaching. And I had to piece together a 2-page jigsaw puzzle on which was handwritten and printed another review of the Marjorie Frank book. The job wasn't too hard, and the review was readable after putting together fragments like this:

deal of effort.
tion can seem like
lentiful notions
She not only addresses
opment a humans.

I read all the contents of the Bucks box. They make sense despite their often zany variety. The box reflects a summer institute in all its birthing of ideas and energies, as well as the aftermath of real classrooms and teachers' engagement in them. The box was indeed a present to me.

The following two poems by Bucks Fellows reflect the amazing experience of an NWP Summer Institute and--we hope--anticipate the institutes to come.

I'VE BEEN PAWPED

by *Tim Yanka*

Donald Murray, Nancy Martin
Pat D'Arcy and James Britton
They're introduced by Dr. Weiss
Why do we have to know these guys?
Doing freewrite and revision
'Til our writing blurs our vision
Though nine credits, it's no bargain
Takes much time to learn the jargon
End one paper start another
Of all classes, it's the mother
Learning the process, write to learn
While at both ends your candle burns
Slowly the fog begins to clear
Begin to see just why I'm here
Journals, Notebooks, Portfolios
Birthplaces of our poems and prose
Writing connects past with present
Helps to clarify what is meant
Makes us focus on what matters
So our thoughts are not as scattered
Writing, sharing ever linking
Students can reach higher thinking

REFLECTIONS:

by *Sylvia Pennypacker*

Frantic with the application;
impressed with the acceptance;
Nervous about the interview;
Concerned about the intensity;
Worried about the work;
Anxious about the time;
Frightened by the expectations;
Frustrated at the difficulty;
Dazed by the research;
Exasperated with the repetition;
Bombarded by the assignments;

Inspired by the innovators;
Excited by the learning;
Proud of the presentation;
Amazed at the changes;
Armed with new confidences;
Thrilled with the results;
Touched by the relationships;
Glad for the sharing;
Overwhelmed with the emotion;
Delighted with the friendships;
Hysterical from the laughter;

Saddened by the ending;
Eager for the beginning.

PAWP'S SUMMER PROGRAMS

AT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Writing Assessment	June 23-July 9
Holistic Assessment	June 23-25
Portfolio Assessment	June 29-July 3
Conferring and Feedback	July 7-9
The Summer Institute	June 29-July 30
Strategies for Teaching Writing I	June 22-July 10
Administering Writing Programs	July 14-16
Publishing	July 14-16
Teaching Poetry	July 20-31
Teaching Literature Conference	June 24-26
Teaching Literature	June 29-July 17
Teaching Literature Institute	June 24-July 17
Whole Language Conference	August 12-13
Week of Whole Language	August 10-14

AT UPPER DARBY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Writing in the Content Areas July 13-16

AT BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

Teachers as Poets June 29-July 10
Summer Institute (open program) June 22-July 23

SATELLITE SUMMER INSTITUTES PLANNED FOR BUCKS CO. AND CENTRAL PA

Two satellite summer institutes are scheduled in 1992 for teachers in the BLAST and Central Susquehanna IU's and in Bucks County. Each institute will parallel the one held at West Chester University's Exton Center in terms of the selection process, preliminary meeting, writing requirements, visiting consultants, responsibilities, and follow-through. The only difference will be that PAWP is not yet able to provide stipends for satellite institute participants. The central PA institute will be geared toward the staffing of local in-service series to be held in the fall and spring of 1992-93.

YWP ADDS SPECIAL AUGUST SESSION

Each summer the Youth Writing Project grows larger and offers students more opportunities in writing. Next Summer the YWP staff will offer additional specialized courses, seeking to touch a few more youngsters and to kindle in them what so many young people have experienced in the YWP's past seven years. More about this session will appear in the Spring Newsletter.

**AN INVITATION TO APPLY TO 1992 SUMMER INSTITUTE
JUNE 29-JULY 30, 8:30 AM-4:00 PM
AT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY**

The summer institute is an intensive five-week program approved by the National Writing Project for demonstrating specific teaching strategies, examining research and key texts in the field of written composition, writing in several different modes, and meeting regularly in groups to share and examine manuscripts with one another. Up to 25 Fellowships are awarded to selected teachers who represent all grade levels and areas of the region. The Fellows may subsequently serve as teacher-consultants in in-service workshops and programs.

Structure of the Summer Institute

Participants meet four days each week for five weeks. Usually mornings are spent sharing knowledge and classroom strategies through participants' presentations. Presentations by noted teachers, consultants and writers are also part of the program. Afternoons are devoted to writing and editing sessions.

Content of the Institute

- phases of the writing process
- varying forms, purposes, and audiences for writing assignments
- writing to learn/writing across the curriculum
- evaluating writing
- dealing with writing apprehension
- relations of writing to reading and thinking

Who should apply?

Any experienced, talented teacher is eligible to be selected for a Project Fellowship. Applicants may teach on the elementary, secondary, or college level in language arts, communications, English, or any content area. Teachers may be nominated by their schools or school district. The Project staff interviews applicants. Teachers interested in writing across the curriculum or writing to learn are encouraged to apply, as well as teachers who are interested in improving the writing skills of their students.

Responsibilities of the Writing Fellows

1. Attend the Institute and present one classroom method or approach that has proven successful.
2. Write periodically in several different modes during the Institute.
3. Make in-service presentations and contribute to other activities during the following year as requested and as mutually agreed between teacher and school or district officials.
4. Adopt methods gained from the Institute and participate in evaluation activities as needed.
5. Serve on one Writing Project committee for one year.

Cost to schools or districts and participants

After the \$400 stipend is applied to the tuition bill, participants or their employers are responsible for paying the remainder (\$700). Some schools and districts will accept third-party billing for this amount.

What will be gained by participating teachers and school districts?

For Teachers

1. Recognition as a Fellow of the Pennsylvania Writing Project
2. Six hours of West Chester University graduate credit.
3. A stipend of \$400 applied against the institute costs.
4. Improved skills in the teaching of writing.
5. Training as an in-service "teacher/consultant."
6. Relationships with other writing teachers who seek to improve their teaching and writing.
7. A one-year sponsorship of the National Writing Project which includes the Quarterly of the National Writing Project.
8. A library of textbooks and articles.
9. Additional course/program options for follow-up in Fall & Spring.

For Schools and/or Districts

1. Trained specialists in writing to assist in staff development.
2. In-service programs to improve the teaching of writing.
3. Participation in the National Writing Project network for exchange of information about school writing programs in Pennsylvania and the nation.
4. A one year sponsorship of the National Writing Project which includes the Quarterly of the National Writing Project.

HOW TO BECOME A PAWP FELLOW

Today: Tell your administrators of your interest, so they can arrange for possible financial support. Get an application from the building secretary.

February: Complete the application form. Follow all directions carefully and be sure to get the necessary endorsement.

March: Submit your application materials.

April: You will be contacted for a personal interview.

May: If you are invited into the Institute, you will be expected to attend the preliminary dinner meeting on May 13, 1992.

APPLICATION FOR PAWP SUMMER INSTITUTE

Important Information: This application form must be endorsed either by a PAWP teacher-consultant or by a district or institution official. Return the completed form to the Project by March 30, 1992 with: (A) a brief description of your background and experience teaching writing, including current and planned assignments, and (B) a one-page statement presenting one aspect of your classroom teaching of writing that you would be willing to develop at the Institute and present to the Fellows. Interviews will be held and notification of Writing Fellows selected will be accomplished by April 20, 1992.

Return Application to: Pennsylvania Writing Project, c/o Robert Weiss, West Chester University,
West Chester, PA 19383.

Teacher Application:

Name: _____
Home Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: Home _____ School _____
Grade(s) currently teaching _____ Subject area (if applicable): _____

I have enclosed required supporting materials and agree to accept the responsibilities of a Writing Project Fellow.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Endorsement by School Official or PAWP Teacher-Consultant:

I endorse the above application for a position as a Summer Fellow in the PAWP Summer Institute. I believe that the applicant will be an effective in-service presenter for the Writing Project.

Check here if the sponsoring school/district will accept 3rd party billing for the remainder of the institute fee (\$700). If so, an administrator's signature is required.

EndorserSignature: _____ Date: _____

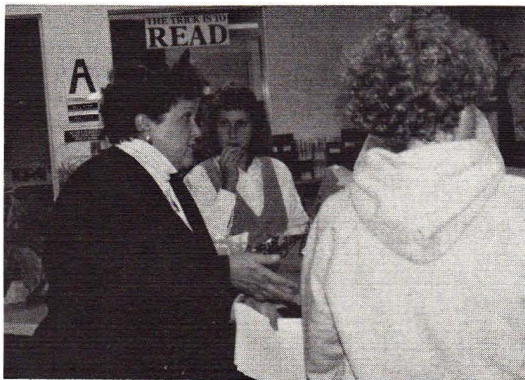
EndorserName: _____ Phone: _____

EndorserPosition: _____ SchoolDistrict: _____

Endorser Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Please enclose a brief supporting statement for applicant. _____



New presenter Sue Tiernan, a 1991 Fellow and an English teacher from the West Chester School District, discusses reading strategies at the break with Pottsgrove first grade teacher Chris Reisner and ninth grade English teacher Beth Mays.

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FEATURES PAWPERS

Sally Gibson ('91) and Linda Baer ('88) of the Conrad Weiser Area School District were both featured by their districts bi-monthly newsletter. Linda had won a \$600 grant for a book discussion project, and Sally was noted for her participation in the PAWP Summer Institute.

MAGIC HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE PUBLISHED

An article jointly authored by Theodore Feldstein, Gretchen Maysek, Carole Carlson, and Ronald Freed, was recently published in the October 1991 issue of Cooperative Learning. Called "Magic Happens: Integrating Regular and Special Education Students," the article focussed on a successful 5th grade project at the Richland Elementary School (Quakertown School District), showing how the regular 5th-grade teacher and her emotional support teacher (Gretchen) helped to mainstream several seriously emotionally disturbed students. Gretchen had been a fellow of the 1990 institute, and Ted (the IU program and training specialist) was part of the 1991 open institute program in Doylestown.



Pottsgrove participants in a PA Framework course note an overhead projection on volcanos.

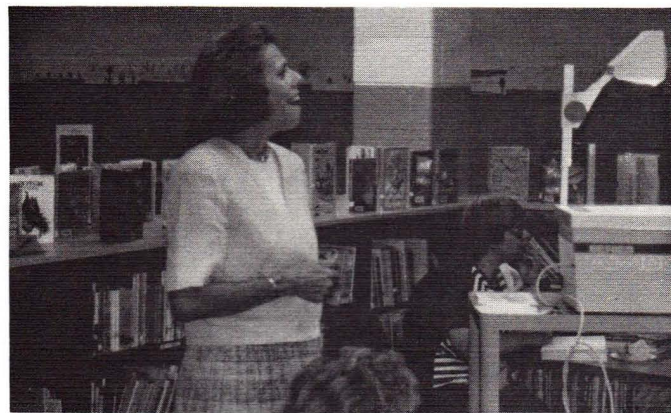
MUSIC IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Beth Cox, a 1988 Fellow who teaches at Chichester High School, was among 75 English Journal subscribers who responded to its request for short pieces on "How do you incorporate music in your English classroom?" Beth's response, "Comma, Comma" was highlighted in the December 1991 issue under the Round Table section, "Words and Music in the English Classroom."

Those who know Beth can picture her doing exactly as she says, signing and dancing to Boy George's "Karma" changed to "Comma, comma, comma, comma, separated the phrase!" She also admits to singing INXS' "Devil Inside" to explain Lord of the Flies and Aretha Franklin's "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" whenever the literary character deserves it. On a final note, Beth says, "The worse I sing the more I captivate my audience." When the students call her crazy, it's just another opportunity to adapt Patsy Cline's "Crazy": "I'm crazy, crazy because I'm a teacher."

PAWP FELLOW: PA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Rudolph Sharpe, a 1985 Fellow from Lower Dauphin School District, was recently named Pennsylvania Secondary Teacher of the Year for 1992. Chosen from a field of 169 candidates, Sharpe teaches senior English at Lower Dauphin Senior High School as well as English composition at Harrisburg Community College. He says quality teaching is made up of "lots of knowledge, dedication, patience, and plenty of time to grade papers."



During her presentation on learning to learn, Charlotte Roede, a 81 Fellow and Language Arts Coordinator at Ridley School District, involves the PA Framework participants in a prior knowledge exercise.

If any man wishes to write in a clear style, let him first be clear in his thoughts. -Goethe

Clear prose indicates the absence of thought. -Marshall McLuhan

HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING- WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND HOW IS IT DONE?

by Carol Edwards

Coming from a "top track" in my high school career, I was always a firm believer in a homogeneous grouping system. I was reaping all of the benefits of education, so I thought. In college, I was faced with many different types of people from all tracks of life. It was difficult at first for me to learn from the diversity to which I had never been exposed but I learned much from them. Education classes stressed the advantages of heterogeneous grouping. It all seemed very nice in theory but I was still not sold on the concept. Then, I went to the other side of the fence and became a teacher. Receiving a dose of both heterogeneously and homogeneously grouped students enlightened me about education in the classroom as well as in day to day life. I began to see some benefits in the outlook and achievement of those students grouped in classes with different abilities over those who were "tracked." Still, the controversy between the two was so great that I needed support for my beliefs.

As I researched this conflict between heterogeneous and homogeneous classrooms, I began to see that the former is not simply a current fad. Rather the positive outcomes are far reaching in educating students. This heterogeneous grouping involves not only high school and middle school but also affects elementary school groups.

The first point of support for non-ability grouping is that it results in less hardening within the categories. This is especially true among lower achievers. When I read this statement in Getting It Together, I thought of one of my ability grouped students from a lower achieving section. He inadvertently gave me the following scenario in reference to the way in which their classes were constructed: "If you have a pack of bad wolves and a pack of good wolves and you take one of the good wolves and put him with the bad wolves, he will most likely become a bad wolf." The insight of this 14 year old boy was proof that students in lower tracked classes have a negative self image that is difficult to abandon. They see school as something to "go through" rather than something to "enjoy."

A second key about grouping is that whether we realize it or not, teacher attitude and inconsistencies are apparent, particularly to students who are homogeneously grouped. Teacher expectations for achievement and behavior vary greatly from class to class. As I reflect on this point, I recall my two groups of classes. The classes of mixed ability students knew that my expectations were standard for all four classes. The distribution of grades in these classes was much more even than in the homogeneous sections. The less motivated sections had a stigma. As hard as I tried to be consistent among them, the students read their differences in my manner. They reacted accordingly as in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Finally, students in homogeneous classes do not see their peers in other classes as resources. Rather they see

one another as being mutually exclusive of each other. Proper grouping of students for cooperative activities can give students the support and interaction needed for achievement. This achievement even stems to situations in life outside of school. Research shows that people joining the work force do not function well in group situations. Perhaps future heterogeneous grouping will remedy current statistics.

Providing that a heterogeneous classroom situation is established, how should teachers group students in each class for cooperative activities? Students should be resources for each other. In a pure non-ability grouped classroom, there will be students at various ends of the achievement spectrum. Both Elizabeth Cohen, author of Designing Groupwork, and Nancie Atwell, author of In the Middle, say that teachers should define students' strengths and weaknesses and design groups so that such exclusion does not occur. The following are some suggestions from Cohen and others for designing groups.

Before beginning the formation of groups, there should be some limitation on group size. The ideal number for an efficient group is three to four students. This is a moderate number that prevents groups from being either too large or too small to produce. Cohen's process for student selection is first to assess possible resource students. These are students who have particular strengths for the task at hand. Next, the teacher evaluates students who have needs and matches the needs of these students with the strengths of the first set. Other students who fall in the middle should be dispersed to groups who may be in need of their particular strengths. (These may include socialization skills.) The goal is that students will learn from one another. Groups may be changed as often as needed for the activity. Some students who were in need of assistance for one activity may become resource people in a different one. The ultimate goal of this type of grouping is to increase the number of resource students in all classes. Everyone may be a resource for something. With this, no labels are permanent.

The more that I read about heterogeneous grouping, the more convinced I was that it is not simply a fad. One point that Nancie Atwell makes is that there were students in her school who were in special education classes. The only class in which they were mainstreamed was her English class because her room was designed in the heterogeneously grouped fashion. That in itself is a powerful statement for non-ability grouping. I have come a long way in my thinking since high school. I hope more school systems will see the benefits for students in a diverse environment.

Carol Edwards, a '91 Fellow, who teaches 7th and 8th grade Language Arts in the Neshaminy School District, she investigated grouping for in the Bucks County Summer Institute.

CERTIFICATE IN WRITING INSTRUCTION

A special Certificate in Writing Instruction is now being issued by the Pennsylvania Writing Project. The certificate is earned through completion of 15 credits of course work with West Chester University through the Pennsylvania Writing Project.

Courses may be offered in sponsoring school districts or intermediate units as well as at the University. The idea for the special certificate came about through discussions with Becky Bride, Upper Moreland School District. As a result, a regular sequence of PAWP courses is offered at Upper Moreland for teachers seeking to gain the special certificate.

Previous graduate credit earned through the Pennsylvania Writing Project may be applicable. Address all questions in writing to the office of the Pennsylvania Writing Project.

JOHN MEEHAN AWARDED "FRIEND OF PAWP" CERTIFICATE

John Meehan, Language Education Advisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, has been designated a Friend of the PA Writing Project. He was awarded a certificate in recognition of the support he has shown the Pennsylvania sites of the National Writing Project--and our West Chester site in particular--since 1980.

In 1981 John began to interest educators in the creation of additional writing projects. Those efforts continued and resulted in the 8-site network that now dots the commonwealth. Through his continued involvement and support, each site receives funds for activities that implement the Pennsylvania Framework for Reading, Writing, and Talking Across the Curriculum.

John announced his retirement from state service as of December 31, 1991. His work has touched ours and enabled it. We thank him for his wisdom, cheer, and faith, and we wish him an active and joyous retirement.

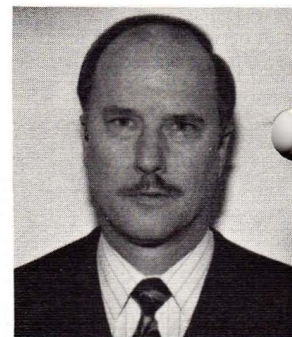
ESSAY CONTEST PRIZE: A HOUSE

Reuters News Agency reports a Maine couple who decided to give their house and \$10,000 to the person who wrote the best essay on the theme: "Why would I like to own a single family home with in-ground pool and attached garage and a Mom & Pop variety store in Lewiston, Maine?"

The couple conceived of an essay contest as a means of unloading their house, which had been on the market too long. For a \$250 entry fee (refundable if the couple does not get 800 submissions) writers will have their work judged by a local English teachers for "originality, style, content, and wit" as well as freedom from errors in spelling and mechanics.

DAN KIRBY FEATURED AT MARCH PAWPDAY

On March 25, PAWP will sponsor an open PAWPDAY event for teachers and administrators featuring Dan Kirby, author of the new Mind Matters: Teaching for Thinking and co-author of Inside Out and Thinking Through Language.



Dan regularly speaks at school districts, NCTE affiliates, and writing project sites. The event will be held at East Senior High School in the West Chester Area School District.

His subject for the morning will be revision. Later that day, he will be the speaker at a dinner for secondary English teachers sponsored jointly with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit.

Dan began his teaching career as a high school English teacher near Boulder, Colorado, later serving as a middle school guidance counselor and a middle school assistant principal. After completing his doctorate in English Education at the University of Colorado in 1972, he joined the Language Education faculty at the University of Georgia. Dan recently completed a stint as visiting professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, teaching in the writing program. He is currently professor and chair of the Department of Instructional Programs at the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

J.C. TODD (formerly known to PAWP as Jane Todd Cooper) PUBLISHES 15 POEMS

In the past year, eight poems by Jane Todd Cooper have appeared in journals. Forthcoming this year or early next year are seven more, as well as three brief biographies which will appear in the new Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry. Her most recent chapbook manuscript, Nightshade, placed as a semi-finalist in the Flume Press contest. Last summer when she wasn't working at the Bucks County institute, Jane was a Resident Fellow of the Hambidge Center for the Arts.

In 1992 she will be teaching a series of workshops for the Gershman Y Poetry Center in Philadelphia. She is an advisor to a proposed poetry series for public radio and has been appointed to the post-graduate studies committee of the Friends of Writers, a support organization.

PA FRAMEWORK SUGGESTED AT ARTS CONFERENCE

Clyde McGeary, chief of the Division of the Arts for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, recommended teachers of the arts look into the PA Framework and take a course to help them implement the strategies in their classrooms. McGeary was a general session speaker on the theme of "Recreating Education in Pennsylvania: Reform, Unity, and Diversity Through the Arts" at the 1991 Arts Education Conference run by the Pennsylvania Alliance for Art Education and the Pennsylvania Coalition for Arts in Education.

STATE LEGISLATURE AGAIN CONSIDERING SUPPORT FOR WRITING PROJECTS

Representative Elinor Z. Taylor (R-Chester Co.) has again introduced legislation to support the statewide network of National Writing Project sites. House Bill 1059, currently in the House Education Committee, would provide for \$30,000 for each of Pennsylvania's eight NWP sites. In previous years, a parallel bill has passed the state Senate but failed at the last minute to clear the House or the budget conference committee. This year, with matching federal dollars available from NWP, the legislation has a new life.

For those who don't know or have forgotten, the other seven NWP sites in Pennsylvania are:

<u>site name</u>	<u>site host</u>	<u>director</u>
Capital Area WP	Penn State-Harrisburg	Karen Bowser
Lehigh Valley WP	Penn State-Allentown	Margaret Cote
Northeastern PA WP	Wilkes College	Rosemary Williams
Northwestern PA WP	Gannon University	Sally LeVan
Penn Rivers WP	Clarion University	Charles Duke
Phila. WP	Univ. of Pennsylvania	Susan Lytle
Western PA WP	Univ. of Pittsburgh	Nick Coles

MOFFETT AND MEYERS PROGNOSTICATE

At the annual convention of the NCTE, Executive Director Miles Meyers and educator-author James Moffett held a crowd spellbound as they predicted the next 20-40 years in education. Their session, titled "Curriculum for the 21st Century: Free to Dream," was sponsored by the NCTE Commission on Curriculum. Moffett, who spoke at a PAWP conference in 1987, listed many of the current educational buzzwords: *decentralization, empowerment, choice, small groups, collaboration, localization, apprenticing, mentoring, building community, community service, integration, and assessment that is personal and practical.* From these and other concerns and issues, Moffett teased out three broader movements that he believed would mark education in the near future:

- using schools to get at social problems
- self teaching and home schooling
- networking through technology, pooling, centralized information as in libraries

Meyers, the former administrative director of the National Writing Project and a past president of the California Federation of Teachers, spoke about reconceiving the mission of education. In the future, we will teach "how to go to school" as a discipline. Students will have their own offices, to which teachers will travel. Students will be taught how to talk to themselves about learning, how to regulate their behavior, how to teach themselves and others. An orals board will conduct periodic evaluation: "Tell us, what have you been doing since kindergarten? Show us your portfolios. Tell us what problems you've had with your work. Tell us what you'll be working on the next three years." Finally, teaching and learning will take into account the idea that novice and expert knowledge are not found along a scale but may indeed contradict one another.

(SPECIAL NOTE: Miles Meyers will be one of the featured speakers at this summer's Conference on Teaching Literature, K-12.)

FELLOWS COOPERATE?

In the December, 1991 edition of English Education Mary Ann Tighe addresses the question of why student teachers do "all the things they . . . vowed not to do once they were in charge of a class" (206). And she comes to both an interesting conclusion and an interesting, if partial, solution to the problem this paradox represents.

Tighe concludes that the cooperating teachers who work with these students strongly influence what they are willing to try.

[Student teachers] believe they should follow the practices of their cooperating teachers, and they are hesitant to ask to try anything different. There are, of course, cooperating teachers who are good role models. . . but too often the intern is probably correct--it is better not to suggest any changes [and] either the teacher or the curriculum may not be open to change.

Tighe's suggested solutions include increased university and school district support for cooperating teachers, but she also cites Hepzibah Roskelly's suggestion: use only Writing Project fellows as classroom cooperating teachers.

Certainly an interesting idea!

JULIA BLUMENREICH WINS POETRY AWARD

Poet and teacher Julia Blumenreich has just won a \$5,000 poetry grant from the Pennsylvania Arts Council. With the grant, Julia will be able to reserve some time from her teaching and parenting to work, as she puts it, "on poetry and laughter." Last summer, Julia was the visiting writer for the Exton-based PAWP Institute, as well as one of the Youth Writing Project visiting authors; she also taught a one-credit poetry workshop for teachers.

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Editor: Vicki Steinberg
Director: Robert H. Weiss
Co-Director: Jolene Borgese Associate Director: Andrea Fishman
Assistant Director: Martha J. Menz Program Coordinator: Mariann Shirk
Secretary and typesetter: Kathleen O'Brien

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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.

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Pennsylvania Writing Project
201 Carter Drive, Room 105
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383

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