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PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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Five PWP Credit-Bearing Programs in Summer 1982

1. Workshop in Holistic Assessment of Writing (June 23-24)
2. The Summer Institute (June 28-July 23)
3. The Open Program (June 28-July 15)
4. The Summer Workshops (June 30-July 2)
5. Curriculum Workshop (July 27-30)

Teachers and administrators at all levels can have their interest in writing instruction met by one or more of the five summer programs run by PWP in 1982.

Workshop in Holistic Assessment of Writing

Last year, in just 2 days of intensive discussion and activity, 16 teachers from grades 5 to college read and scored 2376 student papers (4752 readings). Actually, the 297 readings per teacher were accomplished from 11:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on both days, less an hour off for lunch. In fact, over 9.5 hours of scoring time, each teacher read about 31 papers per hour, or about one every two minutes.

Instant evaluation? Subjective? Hardly. As a result of the training sessions from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. every day, as well as periodic retraining during the scoring periods, the 16 teachers were in almost total agreement on the scores assigned to papers; on the first day their "interrater reliability" for such quick scoring was 95.4%, and on the second day it was 98.7%.

Here is what one participant wrote about this workshop course:

The training became a tool during this school term for quickly evaluating student's papers, which can become huge stacks on my desk. This tool gave me more time to evaluate other writing assignments using the more traditional methods.

My students can also evaluate papers holistically—a timesaver for me, but more importantly, a learning experience for them.

An unexpected benefit was the knowledge that several teachers could agree about a composition's merit. Research has shown

that a composition given to several different teachers will receive all possible grades if the traditional grading method is used, a fact which makes me believe student have not been treated fairly. Trained holistic scorers give the same rating to a paper with great consistency.

This experience in large-scale evaluation of writing is being repeated in a 1-credit graduate workshop held June 23-24 at West Chester State College. If you are interested in participating, register for the Pre-Session Workshop in English (ENG 599) at West Chester State College or contact the Project Office (436-2281).

The Summer Institute

At the heart of all National Writing Project sites is an intensive summer institute for 25 teachers who are designated Project Fellows and who receive a stipend of \$500 or more as institute participants. This year's Summer Institute, the third for PWP, will be held from June 28 to July 23 and will follow the successful model that links writing, responding, reading, and discussion activities. Joining co-directors Bob Weiss and Martha Menz will be Jim Trotman of the English Department at West Chester State, with experience in secondary English education and with professional background in Afro-American literature.

The roster of consultants to this year's Institute is impressive. In the first week, the consultants will be the workshop leaders for the 3-day conference from June 30 to July 2, and the Project Fellows will participate in the workshops led by the consultant most appropriate to their grade level (see this *Newsletter's* article on the workshops). The guest consultant in the second week will be June Birnbaum, an NCTE Promising Researcher on the relations between writing and reading and an experienced teacher at elementary, secondary, and college levels. For the third week, the Project will be visited by Harold Brent, of Rutgers University (Camden), chairman of the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English and co-author of two textbooks on the teaching of writing. The consultant for the last week will be Marion Mohr, assistant director of the Northern Virginia Writing Project and a high school teacher-researcher; Mohr has just written a book

titled: *Revision: the Rhythm of Meaning*.

Fellows from previous years who wish to participate in the Institute during the 3-day Workshops will have to register and pay the required conference or course fee. Fellows from previous years are invited without charge to the presentations of the other outside consultants.

The Open Program: Teaching Composition

Following the lead of the parent Bay Area Writing Project, PWP is making available a 3-credit summer course open to teachers who do not seek administrative endorsement but who wish to extend their knowledge of writing. Running from June 28 to July 16, the Open Program in Teaching Composition will parallel the Summer Institute and will encompass both the 3-day workshops of June 30 to July 2 and the consultant presentations of July 8 and July 12. Additionally, the course will include a variety of Project presentations on strategies for improving writing. Coordinators will be Robert Weiss, Project Director, and Lois Snyder of the Upper Darby School District.

Participants may register for either graduate or in-service credit. For persons interested in 3 graduate credits from West Chester State College, the course is scheduled as ENG 595: Teaching Composition. Persons interested in 3 in-service education credits should consult the summer brochures of their Intermediate Unit's In-Service Education Council, and should register for both the 1-credit Summer Workshops and the 2-credit course called Strategies in Teaching Writing. Please refer questions or problems to the Project office (436-2281).

The Summer Workshop

The 3 days of Summer Workshops scheduled for June 30-July 2 are PWP's noble attempt to do a little something for or with everyone interested in teaching writing. *Everyone* here means the Fellows of the Summer Institute, the participants in the Open Program in Teaching Composition, previous Fellows, and numerous other Pennsylvania teachers. Through the Intermediate Units of Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Delaware Valley Writing Council, West Chester State College is hosting a 3-day workshop conference for teachers of writing K-Collegé. Registration in the workshops will be open to up to 100 Pennsylvania teachers; participants in the PWP Summer Institute will be registered automatically.

The workshops will be led by Donald Graves (University of New Hampshire), Mary Ellen Giacobbe (Atkinson Elementary), Keith Caldwell (Bay Area Writing Project), Robert Weiss (West Chester State College), and teacher-consultants from the National Writing Project and the Delaware Valley. On each of the three workshop days, one or two of the workshop leaders will present a brief address to all participants; then 4 concurrent workshops will be held for teachers of grades K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-college. Over the three-day period, each workshop will have two different leaders. The daily schedule will be as follows:

8:30 - 9:00 Coffee

9:00 - 9:30 Keynote addresses

9:45 - 12:00 Concurrent workshops

LUNCH

1:15-3:15 Concurrent workshops (continued)

On Friday, July 2 the conference will end with a wine-and-cheese reception.

Enrollment is limited to 100 participants; preference will be given to Pennsylvania classroom teachers, grades K-college. Participants may earn 1 graduate or 1 in-service education credit. For information on registration, fees, housing, and the availability of credit, contact the PWP office (436-2281).

PWP Workshop Accepted for PDE Curriculum Conference

At its annual Curriculum Conference in Shippensburg Pa., the Pennsylvania Department of Education will offer a 15-hour PWP workshop in "Developing Effective School Writing Programs." For four days from July 27 to July 30, Bob Weiss and Nicholas Spennato, aided by Martha Menz and Doris Gabel, will offer effective strategies for teaching writing at all grade levels, help teachers and supervisors develop guidelines for a writing curriculum, and help teachers and administrators develop pupil interest in writing. The PDE Curriculum Conference is expected to attract teachers and administrators from all areas of the state. One in-service education credit will be earned by workshop participants.

News About Courses and Programs

Two activities—one an awareness session and the other an in-service course—are part of PWP's systematic follow-up in the School District of Philadelphia. Delayed as a result of the school strike last Fall, such activities apparently are meeting the needs of Philadelphia teacher participants.

On February 25, at the Ada Lewis Middle School, Lois Snyder and Bob Weiss made presentations to 30 language skills teachers from Philadelphia District 6. Bob introduced PWP and its philosophy, Lois gave an overview of the writing process and how she teaches it, and Bob concluded by asking the group to do some learning-centered writing about the presentations. Several participants expressed interest in the Summer Institute and in PWP courses.

On March 31, at Central High School, a 10-session PWP course began for 18 Philadelphia teachers. Coordinated by Chris Kane and funded by the William Penn Foundation, the course will provide two in-service credits.

The Radnor School District has been offering a writing class scheduled to end late in April. Lois Snyder and Jolene Borgese have shared the coordinating duties for the 12 sessions. The class of 25 includes 5 administrators—an encouraging note for continued interest in PWP.

Throughout the winter Martha Menz and Lois Snyder have been supervising a series of writing workshops for Upper Darby School District secondary teachers.

Octorara Area School District, which offered a 12-session PWP course to its teachers in 1980-81, is

continuing to demonstrate its interest in the teaching of writing. Separate workshops for elementary and secondary teachers began in March with topics selected by polling the teachers' concerns. Both groups were strongly interested in learning more about the writing process and in developing writing in all subject areas. Sixteen teachers have enrolled in the elementary class and thirteen in the secondary.

The Delaware County Intermediate Unit in-service course, coordinated by Martha Menz was completed early in April.

Introductory presentations about the Writing Project have been given recently to the Council Rock School District (Bucks County) and the Downingtown School District (Chester County). An awareness session has been held for the faculty of the Westtown Friends School and other independent Chester County schools.

The March 6th Meeting: PWP at the Spring DVWC Conference

In the middle of a drizzly Saturday and in the midst of a finely conceived conference at La Salle College in Philadelphia, the PWP held its March meeting. The annual spring conference of the Delaware Valley Writing Council, on March 6, was selected as a likely day to bring together Project Fellows and colleagues, and the conference coordinator graciously scheduled a luncheon meeting for that purpose. Joining us for lunch was Bob Boynton, of Boynton/Cook Books, publishers of such authors as Nancy Martin, James Moffett, and Ann Bertoff. Bob Weiss, PWP Director, spoke briefly about the Project's in-service programs and plans for the Summer Institute and other summer activities.

After lunch, Jolene Borgese, Martha Menz, Lois Snyder, and Bob Weiss led a DVWC conference session based on questions put by the audience. After briefly introducing PWP and themselves as teachers, the panel responded to these questions (as written on 3 x 5 cards) and encouraged audience participation. This innovative session—no formal "papers" were read—was well received. Earlier in the day, Bob Weiss had made a 15-minute presentation on "Teaching the Conventions of your Discipline" to an audience of 40, most of whom were college teachers.

PWP a Prime Resource for In-service in Pennsylvania

On Friday, February 12, when schools in three Southeastern Pennsylvania counties were closed for Abraham Lincoln's birthday, 400 of their teachers at all grade levels were doing pre-writing, writing, and re-writing. On that day, Pennsylvania Writing Project Fellows offered 23 presentations averaging 2 hours each in six different school districts. Topics included motivating writers, organizational skills, re-writing techniques, peer evaluation, and holistic scoring. February 12 indeed showed the widespread impact of the Writing Project model. Now at the peak of its second year of operation, the Pennsylvania Writing

Project has emerged as possibly the most sought-after resource for in-service education in Pennsylvania.

The Project made its first in-service presentation in September 1980 in a 12-session in-service/graduate course taken by 15 Delaware County teachers. The course "worked." A dozen presentations by fledgling teacher-consultants or Project staff were received enthusiastically by participants, and evaluations were unanimously favorable. "The most useful course I have ever taken in the field," was the comment of one 9th grade teacher.

After this small beginning the Project office received several requests for in-service programs for individual school districts. By Winter 1980 the in-service/graduate course was offered again in Chester and Montgomery counties. The rate of requests for PWP presentations increased in 1981-82, by which time the second Summer Institute had prepared a new group of teacher-consultant presentations. In March 1982, PWP sponsored 36 presentations, an average of more than 8 each week.

In addition to many untallied presentations, especially those by Fellows within their own schools and school districts, PWP has thus far held over 60 different in-service programs for 41 schools and school districts, colleges, educational agencies, and professional organizations, totalling over 350 presentations in 335 sessions, and with over 3500 teachers attending. Here are specific figures on attendance in Project programs:

Teachers		
elementary	1829	(teaching approximately
secondary	1480	30 students/year)
secondary	1480	(teaching approximately
		100 students/year)
college	309	(teaching approximately
		100 students/year)
Administrators	272	
GRAND TOTAL	3890	

If 25% of the teachers attended more than one program (a liberal estimate), the number of students served by the teachers participating in PWP programs, 1980 to present, is still tremendously high:

41,000 elementary
11,000 secondary
23,000 college

ESTIMATED TOTAL

175,000

Videotapes of Elementary Writing Teachers at Work

By Margaret Kelly

We arrived at our January 30 meeting chilled from the frosty weather, but we quickly warmed to the friendly greetings and warm smiles of friends and colleagues.

Some of us viewed the videotapes sent to the Project by Fred Grossberg of George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. The set of three video cassettes was accompanied by two booklets of explanatory material.

The cassette called *Flight: Writing for a Classroom Project* showed Suzanne Brady with her fourth/fifth grade class in Monterey, Calif. Suzanne felt that the choice of writing topics should come from the children, not her. The school was so near to the airport they were interrupted all day long by the engines' roar, and the children were constantly being exposed to news about flight. One of the children had been born on an airplane. Brady brainstormed with the whole group about the multiplicity of topics connected with flight. Then she broke the children into groups, in which they picked specific topics and made up questions that they would like to have answered. The tape shows the children in discussion groups and then visiting the library where they used the card catalog. Some of the children interviewed people like the owner of a hang glider shop. One little girl interviewed a pilot, who took her for a ride (which was filmed). The children did their own proofreading and rewriting in their groups. Finally, they shared a reading of their final drafts. I thought it was remarkable that the overhead noise of the airplanes had been turned into a positive force. As viewers, we thought the tape would be helpful for a presentation, but that the section on revision needed more clarification, and we agreed that just reading the reports for a culminating activity was a letdown. I read the booklet accompanying the tape and found that a bulletin board of all the work had been put together.

We also looked at Margaret Grant's tapes of third graders from Missoula, Montana. In *Castle Creep: Telling, Drawing, and Writings*. Grant uses a scary Halloween story about a castle to put the children in a mood to think about scary happenings. Before they write, there is much discussion. This is followed by a drawing period, during which the children each draw a room of the castle and discuss with each other what their drawing represents and what it means to them. Finally they write their stories. One of the things the booklet reveals is that all of the drawings were put together on a bulletin board to make a castle. This would have been worth showing on the tape. I felt that the project was well thought out and that the drawing and talking periods gave the children plenty of time to mull over and develop ideas for writing. This tape would make an effective presentation at the beginning of the year when teachers could look forward to using its ideas for Halloween.

The tape, *Bill and Jase: Independent Writing in Paris*, is one based on an idea that germinated from an accidental discovery by the teacher. She happened across a 3' by 6' blackboard that had been discarded and decided to make it a writing center. She invited her students in pairs to write on the board, side by side, answering each other line by line. The children stimulated each other's thinking and they loved writing in this manner. The tape shows two children in the process of talking and writing.

While some Fellows may feel that they have seen similar work done in their classes or those of colleagues, the point is that these tapes are now readily available to share with teachers who learn through example. Although they are canned material, the way they are presented will make quite a difference. Because the gifted teachers they show make optimum use of

material and stimuli in their own environments, viewers at the workshop could be encouraged to probe their own minds for materials and ideas they have that would be spinoffs rather than carbon copies of the tapes.

We did not have time to see all of the tapes, but understand that they are available through the Project office for review or use in presentations.

Margaret Kelly (1981 Fellow) teaches 4th grade in the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District.

**Zebulon Pike: Pike's Peak:
Student: Writing Teacher:: Apprentice:
Master Woodworker**

By Ed Bureau

Ostensibly making peace with local Indian tribes, Zebulon M. Pike paddled and pushed his way to the head waters of the Arkansas River back in 1806. Surreptitiously he sought a path over the Rockies into the alluring lands surrounding Sante Fe. Within sight of the Rockies and spurred by Indian tales of a path to those lands beyond the great range, Pike struggled toward the key to passage—the Great Peak. Reaching it, he clamored up, struggling for the illusive path through what others would call Pike's Peak. Heavy snows and faltering supplies halted him short of surmounting the top and reaching the territory beyond. We teachers of writing share an analogous, harrowing need to scale a peak—share it and its similar frustrations with Zeb Pike.

What we are often about in our attempts to teach writing is peace-making, not with hostile tribes, but with a conscience that continually thrusts before us the disparity between theory and practice. So we beat on up the pedagogical river, heaving ourselves against new research and paddling against the latest trend, while covertly longing for the rich land of "the philosophy of composition teaching"—a land of congruence between practice and theory. Before we can begin to understand and apply theories about composition teaching we must understand the intended relationship between ourselves and our students. Implicit in this peak, this path into understanding philosophy in composition teaching, is a fundamental assumption: writing teachers must write. Proof of that assumption unravels as the relationship is explored.

We must find our way through the intended relationship—student: writing teacher:: apprentice: master woodworker—before we can fully understand why we must write. Like Pike groping up his peak, as we explore the relationship we may have some false starts; we won't find short cuts; and we won't immediately find all the implications and understandings. We will be dealing with the fundamental issue, the peak, that looms before us as writing teachers.

Pike started at the base of his peak and climbed as far as he could. Since the relationship explored is intended, let's start with the known relationship (apprentice:master woodworker) and extrapolate into the intended relationship (student:writing teacher). To comprehend his relationship to his apprentice, the master begins by identifying what he knows, for that, in turn, affects his understanding of the apprentice and the apprentice's process of learning.

A master woodworker can conceptualize his subject matter and choose the appropriate materials, tools, and processes to represent it. He knows that the colorful wildflowers are suitably carved in light grained and mellow toned woods with a specific progression of sketching, laying out, chiseling, sanding, polishing—and an unspecific progression of refining steps. His work is guided by an eye for beauty, symmetry, and flow. Stepping back, he views his wildflower motif from the perspective of total effect as well as for specific critical points. In his work he has moved from conceptualization through selective decisions, through process to product, and finally to refining.

All of those "skills" and derived understandings the master has learned concurrently as he has learned his craft of woodworking. He understands that his apprentice, too, must learn them concurrently—not in a vacuum or in isolated steps—the apprentice is becoming a woodworker. From the master he needs constructive criticism that addresses weakness and praise that reinforces accomplishments. The master, remembering that he knew a little before he began as an apprentice, begins his apprentice at whatever point he is capable of and teaches by having him practice over and over and over.

The relationship, then, between master and apprentice is one of guidance and nurturing—an impossibility unless the master understands why he knows what he knows and the significance of what he knows. As teachers of writing, we cannot understand why we know what we know or its significance if we don't practice our own craft. Lacking such practice, we won't truly possess "skills" or understanding of what we ask our students to do. If we attempt without knowledge of ourselves as writers to apply theory in a classroom, we risk what an inexperienced, but titled, master would produce in his apprentices—not woodworkers but wooden workers.

Translating the apprentice:master woodworker analogy specifically into composition teaching is easier than actually exemplifying it. Pike must have felt the same difficulty when from afar he saw the peak and commanded, "Boys, we must surmount it." Shouldn't we writing teachers be able to conceptualize, then choose the appropriate mode, form, words, style, and grammatical structures to represent that conceptualization effectively to an intended audience? Shouldn't considerations of balance and coherence guide our decisions as we move from conceptualization through process to product and finally to refining? Shouldn't we view our own and our students' work from a total perspective as well as for specific critical points?

With those "skills" and understandings internalized, the teacher realizes that the student becomes a better writer but never reaches a static plateau of attainment and frequently, like Pike, backslides. Progress for the student results from constructive criticism and from praise. "Success breeds success." Beginning at

whatever level of proficiency the student has attained, the teacher realizes that the student must frequently practice his writing. Those are but a few of the possible implications drawn by writing teachers who write.

Having leaped the peak by becoming accomplished writers and by gaining understandings of what student writers do, writing teachers of course can easily make conceptual leaps into that mystic land of "the philosophy of composition teaching." Pike would be jealous of the seeming ease of that move, but it's not really all that easy. Understanding the intended relationship does depend on that implicit assumption that we writing teachers do write—and that appears to be the last, often most foreboding, outcropping that keeps us from the summit. How do we compel ourselves to write and how do we see ourselves as writers?

Pick up any writer's magazine, any writer's biography, or any research on writer's block. The reasons and causes for not writing are, no doubt, as numerous as slippery boulders on Pike's Peak. The fundamental problem, the hugest, most awesome boulder presented by blocks is an inability or unwillingness to sit down with blank paper and write. Without that fundamental act, no understandings of the self as writer, the student, or the theories of composition teaching are truly, intuitively possible.

Suppose the boulder is overcome? We write. How do we go about determining how we see ourselves as writers? What is the realm of images affecting our views of and relationships to our students? As writers do we see ourselves as ogres? taskmasters? rabbis? salesmen? Are we ever truly "masters" who guide and nurture our apprentices? No, not if we allow ourselves the feeling that we have "arrived" at mastery; not if we hold a static image of ourselves. A master woodworker is never finished learning; he continually seeks greater precision, sophistication, simplification. He is becoming.

As teachers of writing few of us will have the luxuries of time and place, nor the wherewithal to become reknowned writers, but we should be in the process of becoming. We should be becoming better writers, no matter how boxed in we already are by other obligations. We must write! Understanding of ourselves as writers, of our students as becoming writers, of the complexity of writing, and of theory will follow. We strive for the intended relationship—student: writing teacher:: apprentice: master woodworker—by writing. It is only an intended relationship, rarely attained in the purest or most ideal sense.

The relationship does serve as a guide in our own efforts as writers and in our efforts with students. It is a reference point from which we chart our trappings about in the territory of composition teaching. Without it we are lost in our explorations. Pike saw his peak from a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. As he meandered up and down the Arkansas, about in the Rockies, over the Great Plains, and through Indian tribes, he kept it in view—all the while charting, annotating, and hypothesizing. And he never got lost!

Ed Bureau (1980 Fellow), teaches at East Senior High School in the West Chester Area School District

From the class of Margaret Kelly (1981 Fellow)

Part I

Time: October 22, 1781
Place: Joseph Pratt's farm (Colonial Plantation)

"Father, why are we going down into the new root cellar?" asked little Sara Pratt, who was only seven years old and very sick. "Yes, why?" said 11-year-old John Pratt, "I still have to feed the chickens." "Well," said their father, "I heard that the British sailed up the Delaware and landed in Philadelphia yesterday. A man on horseback said he saw them near here, marching down Providence Road!! So that is why we are coming down here to hide." "Oh," said Sara, sounding very frightened and cold. "Well," said Mrs. Pratt, "there is no need to worry...." Mrs. Pratt's statement was cut short by the sound of banging and shouting. "Let us in!! Let us in or we'll knock the door down!!" The voice had a British accent, so they all knew that the men outside were the redcoats. Mrs. Pratt looked as if she were about to scream, but Mr. Pratt held her hand tightly and said, "Just be quiet and everything will be all right." Just then, upstairs, the bolted door flew open with a violent crash. In the midst of all the excitement, Sara started coughing. Even though she tried not to, she coughing. Then suddenly she saw *them*. The soldiers wearing bright red jackets and pointing bayonets (guns) at them. Mrs. Pratt fainted and little Sara let out a frightened cry. After that Mr. Pratt had to give the British soldiers all their food, except for two wheels of cheese, five jars of preserved vegetables, two hams, one calf and cow, and one horse. But, in spite of all this, little Sara Pratt died three months later.

Part II

Time: October 22, 1981
Place: Colonial Plantation (Joseph Pratt's farm)

In what Sara thought was hours (but was really over two centuries) she woke up again. She knew something was wrong, because she was in the cellar. Sara got up and brushed herself off and found that she was pale white all over. Sara started upstairs and was shocked when she found that she could float up the stairs.

At first Sara thought she was dreaming, but then she realized that the house was bigger. She went into the kitchen and saw a plump woman bustling about, humming to herself. "Maggie," said the woman, "come and help me move this pot. The children will be here soon." Maggie looked so much like Mrs. Pratt (Sara's mom) she could not help feeling a lump of sadness in her throat. Sara watched the ladies for a while and then went outside.

Sara ran down a path she had never seen before and was frightened by a loud roar as she saw a large, rectangular yellow thing on wheels *zoom* away. As the dust settled, Sara saw children wearing bright-colored clothes and girls wearing pants. She saw them looking in little boxes. The colonial girl wondered what they

saw in them.

As the day sped on, Sara saw the kids doing the chores she used to do: candle-making, thread-making, weaving, chopping wood, making Worm Kraut (a mixture of sourkraut, apples, potatoes, onions, pork, and spices mixed together in a big black pot over a fire) and feeding the pigs. After that, the kids ran around and played on the swings for about fifteen minutes and then got on the big yellow thing and went home.

Suddenly Sara felt tired. She floated back up the path, into the kitchen, down into the cellar, where she went back to sleep.

By Michael Haggerty
Grade 4
Wallingford-Swarthmore
School District

**THE PENSIVE WRITING PERIOD:
Notes from my morning free-writing at
the 1981 Summer Institute**

"TREPIDATIONS"....

Having never had any courses on how to teach writing, I am entirely self-taught. As a result, I have two concerns about the writing process: am I teaching it correctly and am I grading it fairly? At the end of the school year, I have felt a great inadequacy because of these problems. I leave the school with two questions in my mind: will my academic students express themselves well enough to pass a freshman comp course in college and will my vocational students express themselves well enough in the job world? I want them to always feel secure about their basic writing skills, not frustrated. I am hoping that PWP will be my mentor.

"HODGEPODGE"....

I have mixed feelings about yesterday's theory sharing, response groups, and speaker; enthusiasm and a "having been there before" feeling...enthusiasm is a quality which I sensed during and after the theory sharing, realizing that I had tried most of the suggested techniques but had not Followed Through with additional relearning.

The initial sharing of my autobiographical sketch, with the response group, was a traumatic experience till I realized that I was not alone in this feeling. The relaxed atmosphere of the group, the empathy, and the understanding attitudes relieved my feelings of anxiety. In the process, I realized that we are all very caring teachers about our students and our profession.

After Susan Sowers' superb presentation, the 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. session at the conclusion of the second day was a muddled time for me. Mentally exhausted, inundated with papers, and worrying about doing my theory-sharing did not lend itself to appreciating the reason for this session. Still being nervous and excited with the first day's experiences, I was exhausted before ever entering our "write, write, write" atmosphere of the second day.

"DORM LIFE"....

A little personal type of writing?...I'll give it a try!

With much trepidation, I was awaiting my first experience with dormitory living after almost forty years. I did not relish the thought of sharing an area with exuberant teenagers...I was looking forward to a time of meditation, of gathering my thoughts, of finding myself again. As I entered the lobby of Goshen Hall, I was appalled by the noise, smell, milling figures. A soccer lab and a swimming camp were being held at the college and Goshen Hall was their dorm. I felt absolutely devastated.

With the key to the room in my sweaty, nervous hand, I rode the elevator to the seventh floor. Stepping out of the elevator, I entered a dark, gloomy, humid circular foyer; and crossing the threshold of room 702, I was dumbfounded by my memories. I felt as if I were a freshman again. Is this austere room to be my home for the next four weeks? Forty years ago, I had brought matching drapes and bedspreads, stuffed animals, and lots and lots of clothes. Forty years later, I had brought the bare essentials and lots and lots of books.

After unpacking, strewing books, and other articles around the room, I was beginning to feel better. Yet the quiet was deafening. I turned on the radio for the sound of another voice. Later, I discovered that Sister Cristella from Marymount College and Eileen LePage from Albright College were on either side of me. We were the only ones on the seventh floor. Why, we could turn into dust, be taken by Martians—no one would ever know. But the awesome quiet has lent itself to a scholarly atmosphere; we are able to write in sacrosanct silence.

"MUSING"....

a side trip....

Getting lost on North Campus the size of West Chester State College is almost an impossibility. yet, the impossible did happen. Walking across campus to the Learning Center in the rain, I kept my head down, too preoccupied with thoughts of driving home in heavy traffic this Friday, of household duties awaiting me, but most of all, thoughts concerning my presentation. With these problems darting hither and yon in my mind, I just followed the sidewalk pattern. Suddenly, I was stopped by a door. Bewilderingly, I entered, finally found someone to tell me where I was. Greatly chagrined, I found my way to the Center, immediately had a cup of coffee, collected my thoughts, and relaxed, inwardly embarrassed that my mental maze had led me into a physical maze.

"GOING INTO THE WOODS OF THE MIND"....

Free writing—what to write about? There is only one choice—Elizabeth Gray Vining's sharing of herself yesterday. Only at PWP could I have heard her. Her quiet, gently, Quaker charm was relaxing; her laconic sense of humor was delightful; her interesting life enviable. The one aspect of her speech, which struck my heart, was the "enlisting of the deep inner-self, going into the woods of the mind and the heart" in

order to write successfully, even if it is just for my eyes.

I have always felt that good writing comes from the heart and have found myself acting on this feeling in the free writing sessions, but not realizing what has been occurring. When rereading my free writing, I have not been discouraged by the written words; I have felt the stirrings of confidence, the possibilities for some interesting articles, and the rousing latent dreams of pink slips.

At this point, pink slips seem a form of reward. At least I will have tried it; I won't be spending the rest of my life living with that big "if." I would have gone "into the woods of the mind" and satisfied a frustration, a yearning, a dream.

"WREATHING"....

The last Monday of the fourth week....impressions? Has the project fulfilled my expectations? I wag my head exuberantly! I have so many ideas to use in the classroom and am frustrated that I can't do everything, and more assurance about my writing. All sorts of ideas are wreathing inside that grey matter....thoughts of finishing my life as a writer of sorts appeal to me. Even if no one likes my writing, perhaps it will serve as vignettes for my grandchildren. The PWP has given me the courage to at least give it a try.

Doing all this writing and sharing this writing with my colleagues has been rewarding, for they are all professional teachers, some more authoritative than others in the writing process...my expectations are being fulfilled.

"BASTILLE DAY"

July 14, Bastille Day—the French Revolution, the revolt of the French rebels against the traditional French hierarchy. At PWP, we have had our own revolution, rebelling against the traditional method of teaching writing; we are learning a democratic writing process. Instead of arms, our pens have been our weapons. We have written, written, written our thoughts, presented our ideas, shared ideas, agreed, disagreed. We are up in arms with our pens!

It is still difficult for some of us traditionalists to accept the new, but we have come to realize that writing can be an enjoyable process. We have learned to respect our own skills, the skills of others, and to apply these revolutionary skills to our own situations. By doing the writing process in our classrooms, we will be spreading these revolutionary techniques; we will be startling our colleagues by our revolutionary ideas. Sallying forth, we shall spread the PWP Revolution from the campus at West Chester to the campuses and classrooms of our schools.

Alice H. Frye teaches senior high students in the Loyalsock School District.

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THIRD CLASS