The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project

Newsletter



Summer, 1999

Volume 19, Number 4

PSSA WRITING RUBRIC AND SCORING TO CHANGE IN 2000

Domain scoring will replace holistic scoring and individual student score reports will replace anonymous score reports on the PSSA Writing Assessment beginning in the 1999-2000 school year. This change is in response to the new Chapter 4 regulations.

The new domain scoring rubric retains the important features of the original holistic scoring guide. Focus, content, organization, style, and conventions - the aspects of good writing identified in the original - are now "domains", each of which will receive an individual score instead of being the basis for a single holistic score. This means every paper will receive 5 scores that will be added to determine the total student score. Because the new rubric has four points instead of the original six, the highest score a paper can get from one reader is a 20.

The same domain scoring rubric will be used for 6th, 9th and 11th grade papers. Each grade level set

will be scored separately, however, with its own anchor papers to illustrate the increasing expectations across grades.

In the 2001-2 school year, performance levels on the 11th grade Writing Assessment, combined with those of Reading and Math, will be associated with diploma seals for graduating seniors.

(For ways PAWLP can help your district prepare for these changes, see FROM THE DIRECTOR on page 2 of this *Newsletter*.)

Understanding Domain Scoring: A PSSA Writing Assessment Workshop for Administrators

For curriculum directors, Language Arts supervisors, and other administrators who want to understand the new PSSA Writing Assessment rubric, scoring process, and their implications

Presenter: Andy Fishman, PAWLP Director, co-author of the domain scoring rubric, and Chief Reader for the Assessment

In West Chester: Thursday, September 23, from 3-5:30PM at the PAWLP office In Bucks County: Wednesday, September 29, from 3-5:30PM at the Bucks IU

Cost: \$50/person (handouts and refreshments included)

Space is limited. To register, call the PAWLP office at 610-436-2202.

D'ARCY, CATALANOTTO, & BLUMENREICH TO GUEST IN 1999 INSTITUTES

Pat D'Arcy, researcher and author of <u>Making Sense, Making Meaning</u>, will work with summer Writing and Literature Institute participants in July. She will present a day-long workshop on "Thinking in Words and Thinking in Pictures."

Peter Catalanotto, children's author and illustrator (<u>Dylan's Day Out, The Painter,</u> <u>Christmas Always, Mr. Mumble</u>) and Julia Blumenreich, teacher and poet, will conduct half-day workshops on creating stories and writing poetry.

There are still some spaces and stipends available for all Institutes - APPLY NOW!

Call (610) 436-2202 for application

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's "deja vu all over again."

Or should I say "the only constant is change," but "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

It was one year ago that PAWLP announced its new course, Preparing for the PSSA Writing Assessment. In this *Newsletter*, we are announcing the same new course once more. Preparing for the PSSA Writing Assessment is the same but it's different. The course has been revised to reflect the switch to domain scoring made by the PSSA folks in Harrisburg. We now are prepared to help teachers and districts understand the Writing Assessment in its new guise.

There are several ways we can do this. We can bring the course, Preparing for the PSSA Writing Assessment, to your district, so teachers can earn graduate or inservice credit as they learn how the test works and how they can better prepare their students. Or we can offer in-service programs on the new rubric, the new scoring process, and their application to the classroom.

What should you know about domain scoring in the meantime? First, the positives:

(1) In some ways, domain scoring is easier than holistic scoring. A reader no longer must arrive at a single "general impression" when multiple impressions exist. If a paper is notably strong in one area, the reader can give it a high score in that area. Conversely, if the same paper is notably weak in one area, a low score can be assigned to reflect that, too.

(2) Domain scoring is, therefore, more meaningful than holistic scoring. Teachers, students, and parents had to guess what a holistic "5" meant, for example, in terms of a student's particular strengths or weaknesses. Each domain score tells them that in categorically precise terms.

(3) Domain scoring informs writing instruction more directly. With its clear information about strengths and weaknesses, teachers - and students - know where to put their efforts.

The negative side:

(1) Domain scoring takes longer than holistic scoring. Districts that conduct their own assessments will have to allot more hours for scoring. Teachers who use it in their classrooms must do the same. (I should note that readers accustomed to domain scoring need only one reading to score all five domains. Readers new to the process, however, may need to read the same paper several times to assign the five requisite scores. In either case, domain scoring still takes longer.)

(2) Pennsylvania's new four-point scale does not allow for the kinds of distinctions the original sixpoint scale did. Given the range of development we see in our classrooms, this can produce forced choices and less-thanaccurate results.

The PSSA Writing Assessment has been around since 1989. First it was voluntary, then mandatory. First it was grades 6 and 9; now it is 6,9, and 11. First it holistically assessed writing programs; now it provides domain assessments of students' writing. But the PSSA Writing Assessment is still with us and will be for the forseeable future. The more things change, the more they stay the same.



TIRED OF HEARING ABOUT PSSA TESTS AND NEW ACADEMIC STANDARDS? TRYING TO REMEMBER WHY YOU BECAME A TEACHER IN THE FIRST PLACE? LET PAWLP REMIND - AND REFRESH - YOU IN OUR SUMMER WRITING OR LITERATURE INSTITUTE

- Experience the most effective writing, reading and teaching strategies you can take back to your students
- Read the most current professional literature, with opportunities to pursue the topics of your greatest interest
- >Work with Pat D'Arcy, Peter Catalanatto, Julia Blumenreich, and PAWLP teacher-consultants

June 28-July 23, 1999 Writing Institutes at WCU and in Doylestown Literature Institute at WCU \$400 stipends available



"Internet publishing opens doors to the world of professional writing."

Deep down inside, I used to feel like a hypocrite. While I regularly advocated the Internet as an accessible tool for publishing student work, I secretly wondered, "Does anyone ever find and actually read the student writings I post in cyberspace?".

Recently I received an answer to that question when I opened a letter from an editor at Holt, Rinehart, and Winston and read these words: We have visited your website and would like to use

my Hofmann's "The Call of the Beetle" in our new grammar and composition series if she is willing to do a little work on an already excellent piece.

Enclosed with the letter was a copy of an I-search paper that Amy, one of my former ninth graders, had written and which I had posted to our classroom web site two years ago. Only now, Amy's original reflection on her search to find a Volkswagon Beetle was engulfed in a sea of proofreader marks and editor comments. Evidently, the meaning of the word "little" in "a little more work" is relative one's level of literary uccupation. Yet, the high number of carefully made

marks show that Amy's original piece was good enough for the editor to take the time to make them.

"Getting the piece published is even more important than getting paid for it," said Amy, when I showed her the letter. "The paycheck will be an added bonus, but the real reward for me will be knowing that my ideas are in print and other people will be reading my paper and using it as a model for their own I-search." In exchange for her I-search paper, HR&W has offered to pay Amy, to give credit in the textbook to her, her school, and her teacher, as well as to provide her with a free copy of the text when it goes to press late next year.

Now a junior, Amy went on to reflect, "I thought it was really cool knowing that the class's I-search papers were originally published on the Internet. I secretly hoped that they might be useful to someone else someday, but to be honest, I never really thought that anyone outside this school and your students would ever read them."

I had to agree with Amy, and yet the editor at HR&W had found the papers, read them, and actually sought to buy one.

Up until now, Internet publishing had been a motivational incentive for my students, but now it has proved itself to be a practical means of sharing work with a distant, faceless audience—the kind professional writers write to every day.

Thanks to Internet publishing, at least one of my students is getting a taste of the world of professional writing. "It's going to be difficult to cut my paper as the editor wants and still make it sound like my writing," Amy admitted to me. "I've always hated cutting because I was afraid I'd lose some of me in the piece. Then again," Amy guipped after reevaluating her position, "I guess the piece is no longer mine if a publisher is going to buy it from me." Perhaps Amy is beginning to learn one of the most basic concepts of professional writing: A writer's primary audience is the editor who authorizes the paychecks that buy the Volkswagon Beetles of the world.

STEVE HEFFNER (WRITING '92) IS THE PAWLP ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHES IN THE CONRAD WEISER AREA SD. CHECK OUT STEVE'S CLASSPOOM PAGE AT:

http://sheffner.home.pipeline.com

Internet publishing is free and much easier than you might think. To learn more about it and how to start your own classroom web page, register for the new PAWLP course, **Using the Internet/Web Pages in Your Teaching**, coordinated by Steve Heffner. The course is offered for beginners on June 22-23, and for advanced students on June 24-25 at West Chester University.

EDUCATION = MATTERS a column from Michaels Associates The Shadow Curriculum

by Harvey "Smokey" Daniels

Last Fall, my daughter Marny started high school after twelve years in a progressive, whole-language Pre-K through 8th grade "demonstration" school. It was quite a shock. Gone are writing workshop and literature circles, interdisciplinary curriculum units, exciting trips and projects, teachers who have watched you grow for years, and a small cohort of classmates who developed -- not without struggle -- a powerful and wholesome community amid their shared childhoods. Instead Marny's huge and celebrated public high school handed her a stack of textbooks, a map of the building, and a full schedule of multiplechoice tests.

Teachers often wonder what happens when kids who have been nurtured on holistic approaches must transfer to a new grade, a new teacher, or a new school where the culture is completely different, where the old ways rule, where there is no voice. and no choice for students, where people scoff at "whole language" - or never heard of it. Do the kids come unglued? Fail? Drop out? Progressive educators tacitly assume that nothing provides a better foundation for adaptation and flexibility than a rich, student-centered education. But is it true? Will whole language kids do O.K. in traditional schools? Or should we compromise our beliefs and work on "getting them ready?"

One quick and glib answer comes in the form of a story: Imagine that you are the second grade teacher in a school. You know that the third grade teacher spanks the kids every day. Does this mean that you should start spanking them in second grade to "get them ready" for third? Well, of course not. You should give kids the very best year you possibly can, according to your knowledge and talents, and hope you give them the resources to survive the third-grade spanker. Marny has found her own way to sidestep the spanking. To begin with, she is responsible and dutiful about high school – showing up, participating in class when she's interested, doing her homework, studying for tests. This ability to meet the everyday demands of "regular school" probably owes both to her positive personality and to the sense of responsibility and pride developed at her K-8 school.

But Marny's passion is directed elsewhere. Because she is hungry to conduct her own investigations, to design her own artworks, and to create a community rather than be conscripted into one, she has turned to the Internet. Over the first six months of high school (during which many of her classmates undoubtedly devoted 100% of their efforts to schoolwork), Marny has created a complex and sophisticated website honoring her favorite rock band, Queen.

What does Marny do as she works on her website for two or three hours a day? She reads, researches, organizes, designs, categorizes, writes. She creates detailed bibliographies. She conducts extensive written conversations with friends all around the world - many of whom are working adults of diverse and varied backgrounds. She composes critical reviews. She writes historical essays on the origins of individual songs. She maintains a gallery of 300 photographic images collected from books, magazines, and other websites. She orders out-of-print books from around the world, pays for them from her summer earnings, reads and digests them, and includes their insights in future pages of her site. She conducts on-line opinion surveys, calculates the results and presents the statistics. She negotiates agreements with other websites for cooperative mutual promotions. She arranges official links with vendors like Amazon and Music Boulevard to connect her visitors with their sites. In the first three months of operation, Marny's site has enjoyed nearly 3,000 "hits."

Marny is never satisfied with her site,

and she is constantly scanning others for features she can adapt. She subscribes to services that critically review websites and provide written ratings on a variety of features. She revises something every day. She adds new columns and retires old ones. She has changed the basic look of her home page perhaps a dozen times, seeking the elusive and perfect representation of the spirit of Queen. When technical glitches occur, she can dig behind the surface and fix things in HTML code, which she had taught herself to write. She's taken on a couple of small, paying jobs designing websites for others. And now, more and more often, Marny is patiently advising other would-be website designers, beginners who are seeking her experience and expertise.

In other words, Marny has created her own curriculum, and it is a surprisingly broad and challenging one. It incorporates reading, writing, mathematics, technology, humanities, music, art, business, and even a couple of languages - HTML and Front Page. There is plenty of craftsmanship, reflection, and critical self-assessment, but no textbooks, no "ability groups," and no "Scantron" tests. And the biggest difference between Marny's home-made curriculum and the official one, of course, is choice. After nine years in a progressive school. Marry has both the tools and the need to direct her own inquiries. As long as her parents don't start placing her class rank or GPA above her learning, she can continue to strike her own balance between interests and obligations.

So, yes, Marny is a whole-language kid in a profoundly traditional school. And she's doing just fine, thanks.

Sponsor's Note: This article provided for exclusive use in this *Newsletter*-all rights reserved by the author. The article will be part of a forth-coming, as yet untitled, book which will be available through Michaels Associates at our new distribution and conference facility (see ad on back page for new address). Thanks for contributing to our continued growth!

Best Practice: immediate ideas for teachers

Reading from Perspectives: A Reading/Writing Connection

My students become accustomed to writing at the proverbial drop of a hat. By the end of the semester their readers/writers notebooks look bedraggled, "used" to the last page. We write to discover, we write to respond, we write to learn. (and I do mean "we" because I write too!) The casual instruction, "Let's take a few minutes and jot down our thoughts about how Hamlet must feel right about now," may be followed by a productive class discussion of character motivation, tragic flaw and/or plot devices.

Writing to learn may also be a

more formal exercise. One of my favorite activities follows. I've used it during study of novels and plays, but it can easily be adapted to content areas as well. I picked up the original idea at a Whole Language workshop several years ago and made it a part of my writing-tolearn repertoire.

Called "Reading from Perspectives" it asks students to put themselves in the place of one of the characters in the literary work being studied (or in the case of social studies, one of the participants in an historical event, for example). In this role, the student then lists his/ her needs and concerns at this point in the story. The next step takes the student to the text where s/he finds pivotal statements made by any character to which the chosen character might react. S/he then writes reactions to these statements, again in the voice of the character. Finally, the student writes a summary of the situation from her character's point of view.

Here is Renee's reading perspective on "the mousetrap" scene in Hamlet from Gertrude's point of view.

A Perspective on "The Mousetrap" Role: Gertrude

Needs

Text Statements

Ham: No, good Mother, here's metal more attractive.

Ham: No, no, they do but poison in jest--no offense

Ger: Come hither my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

To find a way to help Hamlet gain his sanity

To show good "face" for my subjects

Ham: Madam, how like you this play?

Clau: Have you heard the argument?

Ham: What, frighted with false fire!

Clau: Give me some light. Away!

To please Claudius

Is there no offense in it?

Oph: The King rises.

Pol: Give over the play.

I' the world.

How much does Hamlet know about my affair with Claudius?

Concerns

How can I persuade Hamlet to be nicer to Claudius and to forgive me?

Do any of our subjects resent my hasty remarriage?

Read and React

Gertrude's reaction

Hamlet seems still attracted to Ophelia. Could he be in love with her?

Hamlet must realize that this play is insulting to me. That boy is fresh! Why has Hamlet chosen this play of all plays? What does he know?

Uh-oh. Claudius is upset. His anger with Hamlet will get worse now. I'll never get him to change his mind about sending Hamlet to England.

Summary

My son has really done it this time! He had a chance to shake off the misery of the past few months and join in merry-making with the actors and the courtiers. Instead, he selects a play that insults me and disturbs his father. He has made Claudius so angry that I will have to use all my charms to smooth things over. When Hamlet comes to see me later I am going to have to be very firm with him. He will shape up or the king will surely ship him to England.

In completing this activity students can demonstrate their understanding of the plot as well as sharpen their interpretive skills. As their teacher, I can spot errors in comprehension and help to develop their thinking skills. We all learn together. "'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished." DIANE DOUGHERTY (WRITING '89, LIT '94) TEACHES HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH IN THE COATESVILLE AREA SD AND IS LEAD DIRECTOR OF THE PAWLP WRITING INSTITUTES

Summer Programs for Teachers

Summer Institutes

Institutes in Teaching Writing Dates/Times Institute in Teaching Literature

West Chester University Bucks County IU, Doylestown

June 28-July 23 Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. West Chester University

\$400 stipends available for all Institutes from the National Writing Project. Total participant cost is \$850. Six graduate credits. Fellows of all Institutes may become paid teacher-consultants eligible to coordinate courses,

present in-service programs, and teach in our summer Youth programs.

1999 Summer Courses

Chester County

Courses held at West Chester University In-Service credit from the Chester County IU 3 credits 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Teacher as WriterJune 28-July2, July 6-8
Strategies for Teaching WritingJuly 12-16, 19-21
8:00 a.m 4:00 p.m.
Writing & Children's LiteratureJuly 26-30
1 credit
8:00 a.m 4:00 p.m.
Using the Internet (Beginner)June 22-23
Preparing for PSSA Writing AssessmentJune 22-23
Using the Internet (Advanced) June 24-25
Preparing for PSSA Reading Assessment .June 24-25

Poetry WorkshopJune28-29
Developing Mini-LessonsJune 30-July 1
Guided Reading (K-3)July 6-7
Phonics & Spelling (K-6)July 8-9
Using Non-Fiction in the K-8 ClassroomJuly 12-13
PA Standards & Classroom AssessmentJuly 14-15
Flexible Grouping (K-8)July 19-20
Manage a Writing/Reading Classroom (2-8)July 21-22
Writing to LearnJuly 26-27
Multiple IntelligencesJuly 28-29
Persuasive Writing Aug. 2-3
Developing Literature Circles IAug. 2-3
Reader's Workshop (K-8)Aug. 4-5
Developing Literature Circles IIAug. 4-5

3 graduate credits: \$621*, in-service: \$250 1 graduate credit : \$207*, in-service: \$100 *includes University fees

Bucks County

Courses held at Bucks County IU, Doylestown No in-service credit available

1 credit	8:00 a.m 4:00 p.m.
Preparing	g for PSSA Writing Assessment June 28-9
Persuasiv	ve WritingJune 30-July 1
Manage a	a Writing/Reading Classroom (2-8)July 67
Manage V	Wrtg/Rdg Classroom, At Risk (K-8) July 8-9
Reader's	WorkshopJuly 12-13
Flexible (Grouping (K-8)July 14-15
Guided F	Reading, (K-3)July 19-20
Poetry W	/orkshopJuly 21-22
Developin	ng Mini-LessonsJuly 26-27
Developin	ng Literature Circles IJuly 28-29
Preparing	g for PSSA Reading AssessmentAug. 2-3
PA Stand	lards & Classroom AssessmentAug. 4-5

1 graduate credit: \$207, no credit: \$100

---See registration form on page 7 for course offerings in the Council Rock School Dis-

Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature and Art

Discover and explore the connections between visual arts, writing and literature.

Held at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, Bucks County August 16-20 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. 3 graduate credits from West Chester University Cost: \$621 (stipends may be available) Enrollment is limited to 25

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING and LITERATURE PROJECT REGISTRATION FORM - Summer 1999

Return completed form by mail or in person to: Register early: Enrollment is limited PA Writing & Literature Project West Chester University West Chester, PA 19383

Check the course(s) in which you wish to enroll and circle the type of credit. Graduate=gr In-s/nc=in-service or non credit (whichever is applicable) Cost includes ALL fees.

Ch	ester County Location: West Chest	er University	1	Bucks County Location	s: Bucks County IU, D	ovlestow	n
	PWP599-01 Teacher as Writer	3 gr-\$621	in-s/nc-\$250	PWP517-75 PSSA		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP502-31 Strategies Tchng Wrtg	3 gr-\$621	in-s/nc-\$250	PWP501-75 Persuas		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP599-02 Wrtg/Child Lit	3 gr-\$621	in-s/nc-\$250	PWP599-73 Mng. Wrtg/Rdg Class		r-\$207	nc-\$100
_ Q	PWP506-31 Using the Internet	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP599-72 Mng.W		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP517-31 PSSA Wrtg.Assess.	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP599-74 Reader		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP506-32 Advanced Internet	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	DWP599-75 Flexibl		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP517-32 PSSA Rdg. Assess.	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	DWP599-76 Guided	Reading 1 g	r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP501-31 Poetry Workshop	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP501-77 Poetry		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP599-31 Devel. Mini-Lessons	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP599-70 Devel.		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP599-32 Guided Reading	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP599-71 Devel.		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP599-33 Phonics & Spelling	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP517-76 PSSA H		r-\$207	nc-\$100
	PWP599-30 Using Non-Fiction	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP 517-77 PA Star			
	PWP517-33 PA Standards &			Classrm Assess.	1 g	r-\$207	nc-\$100
	Classrm Assess.	1gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100				
	PWP599-34 Flexible Grouping	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP513-75 Visualiz	ing Words & Worlds:		
	PWP599-35 Mng Wrtg/Rdg Class	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	Writing, Literature &		3 gr-\$	621
	PWP501-32 Writing to Learn	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	*Held at Michner Mi	useum, Doylestown	0	
	PWP599-36 Multpl Intelligences	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100				
	PWP501-33 Persuasive Writing	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	Council Rock School Di	strict Location:		
	PWP599-37 Devel. Lit. Circles I	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP522-75 Literatu	ire Circles for Tchrs.		3gr-\$621
	PWP599-39 Reader's Workshop	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP599-77 Using N	Non-Fiction in K-8 Clsrr	n.	1 gr-\$207
	PWP599-38 Devel. Lit Circles II	1 gr-\$207	in-s/nc-\$100	PWP501-78 Writing			1 gr-\$207

PERSONAL INFORMATION (Please print all information)

Name:	Phone: ((H)	_(W)	
Address:	Town:	Stat	e: Zip:	
Have you ever taken a PAWLP co	urse before? (check one) yes_	no Social Security #		
Birthdate: Reside	nce county:	Citizenship country:	Sex: Male 🔲	Female
Check one: Black/non-hispanic) Hispanic 🗋 Asian/Pacif	ic Islander 🗋 White/non-hi	ispanic 🖵	
Bachelor's Degree from:			Year awarded:	
Present Certification: L1 (Instr. 1)_	L2 (Instr. 2)	L0 (Bachelor's degree: 1	teaching certific:	ate)
chool District and Building or rivate/Parochial School (name & locat				
PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY REG Write phone number an PAYMENT TOTAL: \$	d Social Security # on the check o			
Credit card: VISA 🗋 Mastercard 🗋	Card #		Expiration:	
Cardholder name:		Cardholder signature:		_
. Check or money order #:	te mittion for PA residents is \$102			

For more information, call 610-436-2202 (Fax: 610-436-3212). Mailing address: PAWLP, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

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The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project Newsletter is published four times a year by and for those affiliated with the Project. Submissions are always welcome and can be mailed to the Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA, 19383.



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