The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project

Newsletter



Volume 20, Number 5

Summer, 2000

REJUVENATE YOUR PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL LIFE DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY! - SUMMER INSTITUTES 2000

Give yourself or a friend the gift of time - the time to write, to read, to meet new colleagues, make new friends, and rejuvenate your professional perspectives. Attend one of the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project's (PAWLP) Summer Institutes for Teachers. PAWLP's Summer Institutes provide the time to discover yourself as a writer and reader - professionally and personally. Participants share best practices and favorite works of literature; indulge in writing and reading for pleasure and pedagogical purposes; meet local and nationally published authors; learn about publishing; and

publish their own work. For the past 20 years, the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project (PAWLP) has offered teachers from all disciplines and all grade levels the opportunity to rejuvenate their personal and professional lives via Summer Literature and Writing Institutes. Summer Institute participants earn 6 hours of graduate credit. In addition, PAWLP offers a \$500 stipend to offset the cost of the graduate hours. Don't miss this opportunity!

Once you have completed a summer Institute, you become a life-time member of PAWLP and the National Writing Project (NWP). The benefits are numerous. PAWLP Fellows may earn extra \$\$\$ when they take advantage of a variety of teaching opportunities during the summer and all year round. Summer Youth programs offer teachers the opportunity to implement Institute ideas and lessons developed throughout the year. PAWLP Fellows may also choose to teach one-credit and three-credit teacher education courses or develop in-services for their schools and districts. Join us this summer - at the Writing or Literature Institute!

See page 2 for details.

Mary Buckelew, Associate Director

PAWLP 20th ANNIVERSARY LITERACY CONFERENCE AND BANQUET

The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a Literacy Conference and banquet on June 22 and 23, 2000.

The keynote speaker on June 22 will be the renowned writing guru, Ralph Fletcher. Judie Thelen, past president of the International Reading Association, will be the luncheon speaker on June 23; and Peter Catalanotto, noted children's author and illustrator, will deliver the closing session. Greg Michaels, owner of Michaels Associates, will present a session each day on What's

New in Professional Literature, and Hannah Schwartz, owner of Children's Book World, will present sessions on What's New in Children's Literature. Professional and children's books will be on display and available for purchase.

PAWLP teacher-consultants will offer nineteen different workshops on a wide range of topics for all grade levels. In addition, author Joe Massucci will present a session on *Becoming a Published Writer*, and Dr. Robert Milrod, an administrator in the Upper Dublin School District, will

present a session entitled Assessment - Preparing Students for PSSA Tests. The Conference fee is \$95 (\$239 if taken for one graduate credit).

The banquet on June 22 will feature Lorene Cary, author of Black Ice, Pride, and The Price of a Child. A separate banquet fee of \$30 includes hor d'oevres, wine, dinner and the speaker.

Participants are welcome to attend both the banquet and the conference. Either event may be attended separately.

Call the PAWLP Office at 610-436-2202 to register.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy birthday to us! Or is it happy anniversary? PAWLP turns 20 this June, and while I'd like to use this column to wax eloquent - or at least nostalgic - about our remarkable history and potentially even more remarkable future, there isn't time right now. We'll do that at the celebratory banquet on June 22. Right now there's news about the new PSSA Writing Assessment and the even newer Act 48 to share.

First, I want to answer several of the PSSA Writing questions people have been asking lately. (1) PDE has set the number of prompts/modes to which each grade will respond. Eleventh graders will be tested in all three modes - narrative, informational, and persuasive. Sixth and ninth graders will be tested in two of the three modes but must be prepared for all three because there will be no notice of which two they will actually write. (2) Districts will receive six scores for each student: one in each of the five domains and the total of the five. And (3) if the budget permits, tests will be scored by two readers each as they have been in the past. If the budget does not permit that, however, each test will be scored by one reader, and 10% of the papers will have second readings as a statistically acceptable check on reader reliability.

Now on to Act 48. PAWLP has recently learned that because all University programs are automatically recognized as designated service providers (meaning their work counts toward Act 48's required hours for teachers), the Project is a designated service provider because we are a WCU program. That means that not only do our credit-bearing courses count, but in-service programs/ hours we provide may count as well. This is wonderful news for everyone who takes advantage of what PAWLP has to offer. We look forward to working with school districts that want to attach graduate credit to their in-service programs or that want series of in-service hours to help their teachers meet the new state requirements.

And a note especially to PAWLP Fellows interested in meeting their Act 48 requirements: this fall, the Project will begin offering special credit-bearing courses for Fellows only to meet their special professional development needs. Among the possibilities are a Literature Circle for Fellows, looking at the newest in professional literature since your Institute; a Teachers as Researchers course, supporting continuing interest in writing and

literature pedagogy and theory in practice: a Fellows as Writers course, providing opportunity to continue developing your own writing skills; and a Presenter Development course, for updating presentations, developing new ones, and/or preparing to coordinate some of the new courses and programs PAWLP now offers. Of course, Fellows are welcome to do credit-bearing independent studies in any area of interest to them. So call the office or send e-mail) to let us know how your Project can con-

tinue to support you.

I can't end this column without adding my personal invitation to all the celebratory events we are hosting this spring. Ralph Fletcher, Peter Catalanotto, and Judie Thelen are only some of the reasons you should attend our Celebrate Literacy! conference on June 22 and 23. And Lorene Cary is only one of the attractions for our June 22 banquet. Come see why PAWLP was recently cited as one of the most successful, most vital sites in the National Writing Project in the 1998-99 school year. And how we intend to stay that way!

> Andrea Fishman. PAWLP Director

Literature and Writing Summer Institutes Rejuvenate Yourself! 6 hours of graduate credit 4 weeks, Monday-Thursday, June 26 - July 21

- \$500 stipend
- Excellent company
- Become a life-time Fellow of PAWLP
- \$\$ Teaching Opportunities \$\$ **GREAT IDEAS!**

CALL 610-436-2202 FOR AN APPLICATION

Editorial

The PSSA, Accountability and Fairness: An open letter to Governor Ridge and the PA State Department of Education

"I know you're a good teacher, but just look at those PSSA scores. Obviously, there are many teachers out there who aren't doing their jobs!"

How many teachers have had to endure comments such as this at neighborhood gatherings or holiday gettogethers with relatives? Not to mention the not-so-thinly veiled criticisms from our esteemed Governor, many state representatives and the current PA Secretary of Education, Dr. Hickock.

If it is really "obvious" that dismal test scores are the result of poor teaching, may I suggest Mr. Governor, Mr. State Representative and Dr. Hickock, that you all take the eleventh grade PSSA Math and Reading tests, write three essays in three hours responding to prompts you've neither seen before nor chosen, and then have *your* scores published in the newspapers?

Not crazy about that suggestion? Then, how about this one. If you want to see PSSA scores improve immediately, why not report the scores of only those students who attend school regularly, say at least 90% of the time? That would mean that students could miss up to 18 school days a year, arguably an excessive number, and still have their scores reported.

In my career as a public secondary school teacher, I've taught classes which showed 30 students on the rolls but in which only 20-22 showed up on any given day. Compounding the problem was the fact that not the same 20-22 youngsters were consistently present. I was accountable for getting myself to school by 7:15 daily, preparing appropriate lessons, and assessing students. It was not my responsibility to drive to

the homes of each of those 30 students, wake them up, feed them breakfast, and drive them to school. Yet when test scores were reported, I became accountable for the performances of all 30 students, a few of whom may have attended school less than half of the time.

I often read letters to the editor from parents who have nothing but positive things to say about the Philadelphia public schools, but we all *know* that the Philadelphia schools are doing a poor job. Just look at their test scores! Recent surveys have shown that the majority of parents are "very satisfied" with their children's schools. Yet the same surveys show that these same parents believe the performance of public schools generally is "poor."

Of course they do. The media reports any negative image of school performance that they can get their hands on. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* yearly devotes an entire section of the newspaper to reporting scores on the PSSA. And while Education Secretary Eugene Hickock states that the purpose of the scores is not to compare schools, the reality is that they are used exactly in that way.

So, let's be fair. Let's report the scores of only those students who come to school. After all, if we want to know how schools are doing, we need to use accurate data. Teachers can't teach absent pupils. Or is this not about what's fair or even what's accurate but rather what is best for politics?

Diane Dougherty, PAWLP Co-Director

Top Ten Reasons to Take PAWLP Summer Courses

- Courses provide a myriad of practical tips for management and instruction.
- They target current thinking and cutting-edge practices with intensity.
- The facilitators are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and userfriendly since they are classroom teachers themselves!
- It sparks enthusiasm and excitement for reading, writing, and learning for teachers and their students.
- Children's Book World or Booktenders will bring children's literature on location several times during the summer.
- Participants receive many handouts and useful packets.
- Common threads in our courses create a solid framework for teaching.
- Coursework applies across grade-level curricula, linking reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- There are plenty of parking spots and restaurants, delis, markets – and the snacks in each course are substantial!
- It's a chance to network with colleagues from many school districts - often across grade levels spanning from kindergarten to college!

Young Adult Literature Survey

- > Are you teaching any YA literature this year?
- > Are your colleagues?
- ➤ Please call 610-436-2202, or e-mail the office (afishman@wcupa.edu) and tell us what titles are currently being taught in your school. (Be sure to include your school and district in your message!) Results will be published in the next Newsletter, so please respond as soon as possible!

We've Come a Long Way, Baby

I couldn't believe the crowd at the annual fall meeting of the National Writing Project on November 19 at the Hyatt Regency Denver. Just a few short years agowell, maybe it was more like 15 years ago-the teachers attending an NWP meeting wouldn't fill one corner of the Imperial Ballroom at the Hyatt. Now the teachers filled the large room-and. believe me, the chairs were tightly placed. In 1999 alone, NWP added 11 new sites, bringing the total to 168 sites. There are more NWP staff members now than there were sites when I became a

Fellow way back in 1983.

The first time I attended an NWP fall meeting there weren't enough workshops to fill a thimble; in fact, there were no workshops, just directors' meetings. This November there were four 75 minutes rounds, each with 14 completely different sessions in four areas: cultural diversity, alternative methods of professional development, teacher research and leadership, and composing connections between classrooms and communities.

I attended workshops called "Get Real: The Quest for Authentic Professional Development," concerning teacher portfolios; "Responding to Standards-What's In It for Writing Projects?". concerning the challenges involved in matching what teachers know with what states think the public wants; and "High School Teachers Teach Reading," concerning the parallels between the reading process and the writing process. These may sound pretty heavy but since the presenters were Writing Project people, everything was hands-on but theoretically based.

The standards challenges weren't a surprise: problems with getting non-performing students to perform, concerns about the time out of class to test and/or to teach to the test, good standards/bad test instruments, and standards not related to real classes or real students. On the other hand, there are opportunities for Writing Projects in offering courses to help teachers with the challenges and opportunities for teachers to get the materials they need since school boards will pay for materials which seem to be connected to the standards or the tests.

The reading challenges weren't a surprise either: how to make engaged, fluent, competent readers of the variety of texts found at the secondary level-and in 'real' life. Our students are better writers, by and large, than they are readers, probably because through NWP sites teachers have learned how to make the writing process explicit. The next step is to make the reading process explicit through such things as literature circles and whole class discussions which make visible the strategies good readers use.

> Vicki Steinberg, PAWLP Co-Director

Peter Catalanotto!

A chance to acquire mini-lessons, activities, bibliographies

What a Writer Needs and Michaels Associates book sales

Luncheon on Thursday with Judith Thelen

Peter Catalanotto!

Children's literature – what's new

Oh, my! Books on sale from Children's Book World

No way! Only \$95 for a two-day affair?

Fletcher's coming! Fletcher's coming!

Excellent presentations on reading, writing, and assessment

Really practical ideas and great handouts

Easy parking and fun-filled days

Numbers of sessions – lucky seven in all

Come with your friends and colleagues

Even a banquet Thursday night with author Lorene Cary

Lynne Dorfman, PAWLP Co-Director

To register for the Celebrate Literacy! Conference and/or make a reservation for the PAWLP 20th Anniversary Banquet please call 610-436-2202

Education Matters

a column from Michaels Associates

Do you want to Increase Your Students' Reading Acheivement? Maximize Reading by Timothy Rasinski

The latest information from the National Assessment of EducationProgress (Donahue, Voelki, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999) seems to suggest teachers provide insufficient time and support for real reading by students. According to the 1998 NAEP, 21% of fourth grade teachers, about one in five, reguire little reading of their students—only five pages or less per day. And, by grade twelve, the percentage of students reading five pages or less per day in school or at home increases to 33%, or one in three.

Similarly, that very same study found a relationship between opportunities given by teachers of fourth grade students to read for their own purposes in school and reading achievement. Yet, many fourth graders get daily opportunities to read in school; less than half (45%) of all fourth graders reported that they were given opportunities to read in school only twice a week or less.

Thus it is clear that a strong relationship exists between reading achievement and amount of time spent in actual reading by students, whether that reading is done at home or in school. And yet, despite the growing evidence of this relationship there are many classrooms in this country in which little actual reading is assigned or even encouraged. Perhaps each of us needs to examine how we promote and encourage reading in our own classrooms. How might you answer the following questions?

- Do I make authentic reading a priority in my classroom? How?
- How many times per week do I give students opportunities to read in my class?
- How often do I give my students a reading assignment to be read in school or at home?
- Do I encourage other teachers in my school, especially the special teachers—art, music, and physical education—to include reading in their curricula?
- Do I encourage reading at home for students' personal enjoyment and satisfaction?
- Am I enthusiastic when I talk with students about reading?

- Do I recommend books and other reading materials to my students?
- Am I a model of a literate person for my students?
- Do I communicate to parents the importance of children reading at home?

Answers to these questions may help determine the extent to which you are a teacher who not only knows the research but puts it into practice by encouraging and supporting students authentic reading experiences. Moreover, your answers to these questions may also help you focus on particular strategies for making reading a greater priority in your classroom.

Dr. Rasinski is Professor of Literacy Education at Kent State University and co-editor of *The Reading Teacher*, a professional journal published by the International Reading Association.

Readers of this Newsletter may purchase his book, Effective Reading Strategies: Teaching Children Who Find Reading Difficult 2E, regularly priced at \$31, for \$25 plus shipping from Michaels Associates. You must request the discount when ordering.

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WHERE: Main Hall, West Chester University

WHEN: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Floyd Cochran, Former Aryan Nation Propaganda Director

Seven breakout sessions to choose from

This special PAWLP Day program is for teachers and parents

Cost: \$10/person - \$15/pair (teacher and parent)

Please call the PAWLP Office to register: 610-436-2202

SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS

Summer Institutes

Six graduate credits

Institutes in the Teaching of Writing

West Chester University

Dates/Times

Institute in the Teaching of Literature
Colonial SD, Plymouth Meeting

Bucks County IU, Doylestown

June 26 - July 21

Monday - Thursday

Haddonfield SD, Haddonfield, NJ

8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Total participant cost is \$850

Fellows of all Institutes may become paid teacher-consultants eligible to coordinate courses, present in-service programs, and teach in our summer Youth programs

2000 Summer Courses

Chester County

Courses held at West Chester University In-Service credit from Chester County IU

3 credit courses

8:30 am - 3 pm

Writing in the Content Area.....June 26-July 7
Managing Reading/Writing Classrooms.....July10-19
8 am - 4:30 pm

Writing & Children's Literature.....July 24-28

8:30 am - 3:00 pmTeacher as WriterJuly 31-Aug 9

Emergent Writers/Readers.....June 26-27

1 credit courses

8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Guided Reading and Writing June 28-29
Developing Mini-LessonsJuly 5-6
Phonics and SpellingJuly 10-11
Portfolio/Performance Assessment July 12-13
Poetry Writing in the Classroom July 17-18
Using Non-fiction in K-8 July 17-18
Writing to LearnJuly 19-20
Preparing for PSSA WritingJuly 24-25
Developing Literature Circles I July 24-25
Preparing for PSSA Reading July 26-27
Developing Literature Circles II July 26-27
Author Studies, Gr. 6-12July 31-Aug.1
Author Studies, Gr. K-5July 31-Aug. 1
Multiple Intelligences July 31-Aug.1
PSSA Math thru Writing Aug. 2-3
Readers' Workshop Aug. 2-3
Storytelling & Readers' Theater Aug. 2-3 Costs:

3 graduate credits: \$630 + fees, in-service: \$330 1 graduate credit: \$210 + fees, in-service: \$110

Bucks County

Courses held at Bucks Co. IU, Doylestown 1 credit - No in-service credit available 8:30 am - 4:30 p.m.

Developing Mini-Lessons June 26-27
Readers Workshop June 28-29
Flexible Grouping July 5-6
Guided Reading and Writing July 10-11
PSSA Math thru Writing July 12-13
Writing to Learn July 17-18
Author Studies, Gr. K-5 July 19-20
Poetry Writing in the Classroom July 24-25
Preparing for PSSA Writing July 26-27
Preparing for PSSA Reading July 31-Aug.1
Phonics and Spelling Aug. 2-3
Costs:

1 graduate credit = \$210 + fees, no credit = \$110

Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature and Art

Discover and explore the connections between the visual arts, writing and literature. July 31- August 11 9:00 am - 2:30 pm Held at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, Bucks County

CELEBRATE LITERACY!

A Conference honoring PAWLP's 20th Anniversary

Keynote Speaker: RALPH FLETCHER

June 22 & 23, 2000

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING & LITERATURE PROJECT **REGISTRATION FORM - Summer 2000**

Return completed form by mail or in person to: PA Writing & Literature Project

Register early: Enrollment is limited

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 Cost is \$210/credit + Fees (\$23/credit at WCU, \$15/credit off-campus) In-s/nc=in-service or non credit (whichever is applicable) Cost is \$110/credit

Chester County Location: West Chester University			Bucks County Locations: Bucks County IU, Doylestown		
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PWP599-02 Wrtg/Child Lit. PWP599-01 Teacher as Writer	3 gr	in-s/nc		1 gr	
	3 gr	in-s/nc	PWP599-78 Guided Rdng&Wrtng	1 gr	
PWP599-30 Emergent Writers/Readers		in-s/nc	PWP517-77 PSSA Math thru Wrtng	1 gr	
PWP599-31 Guided Reading&Writing	1 gr	in-s/nc	PWP501-75 Writing To Learn	1 gr	
_PWP599-32 Devel. Mini-Lessons	1 gr	in-s/nc	PWP599-79 Author Studies, K-5	1 gr	
PWP599-33 Phonics & Spelling	1 gr	in-s/nc	PWP501-76 Poetry Writing	1 gr	
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PWP501-31 Poetry Writing	1 gr	in-s/nc	PWP517-76 PSSA Reading	1 gr	
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PWP517-31 PSSA Wrtg.Assess.	1 gr	in-s/nc			
_PWP599-34 Devel. Lit. Circles I	1 gr	in-s/nc			
PWP517-32 PSSA Rdg. Assess.	1 gr	in-s/nc	PWP513-75 Visualizing Words and V		
PWP599-35 Devel. Lit Circles II	1 gr	in-s/nc	Writing, Literature & Art		
PWP599-36 Creating Author Studies, 6-12		in-s/nc	3 graduate credits		
PWP599-37 Creating Author Studies,K-5		in-s/nc	This course is held at the Michene	r Art	
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1999-00 Fee Schedule: Graduate tuition for PA residents is \$210 per credit (non-residents higher)

Plus fees of \$23/credit at WCU, \$15/credit off-campus. Fees subject to change without notice 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 five 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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- ☐ Incorrect address
- ☐ Received more than one☐ Remove from mailing list
- □ Contact person changed
- ☐ Other (Specify)