

The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project

Newsletter



Volume 23, Number 4 Spring, 2003

Celebrate Literacy IV Conference

Georgia Heard. Robin Moore. Judy Schachner. Reading and writing workshops. Children's books. Professional books. A gathering of colleagues interested in learning more about the reading and writing experiences in our classrooms. Where can you find all this and more? This summer, June 25th and 26th, on the West Chester Univer-

sity campus! Join the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project as it hosts the fourth annual Celebrate Literacy Conference.

Day one opens with a keynote address by Georgia Heard. An acclaimed poet and writer, Georgia Heard is the author of *Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way, For the Good of*

the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry, and *Creatures of Earth, Sea, and Sky*, a book of poetry for young children. She has also published numerous essays on poetry and writing, and her poems have appeared in a variety of literary journals. Following the keynote, Heard will be available for book signings. Day one continues with

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PAWLP Summer Courses Help Teachers Meet PA Standards

A perfect summer. Traveling. Catching up on household chores. Attending classes to gain powerful strategies to help your students with reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through interactive workshops. For finding myriad ways to meet PA standards and be more successful on PSSA tests, for practical classroom applications K - 12, for presentations, performances, and problem-solving strategies, think PAWLP summer 2003.

This year PAWLP will feature three summer Institutes. Diane Dougherty and Patty Koller will co-facilitate a new Literature Institute at our off-campus West Chester site. Mary Buckelew,

PAWLP's Associate Director, will join Brenda Krupp to head our WCU Writing Institute. And Hilde McGeehan and Shari Stem will continue our always-successful Bucks County IU Writing Institute.

Three new three-credit courses are special additions for 2003. *Guided Reading for Comprehension in Grades 3-8* is an exciting, highly practical course featuring active reading strategies that will improve and layer comprehension for all the students in your classroom. Ann Finore and Debbie Dinsmore team to present this course for the first time. *Reading/Writing in the Content Areas, Grades 2 - 8* provides practical tips

to help meet PA standards in reading and writing across the content areas. Diane Dougherty and Lynne Dorfman, a familiar team to many, offer this exciting course. *Managing a Writing/Reading Classroom, Grades 6 - 12* is specifically designed for middle school and high school teachers. Facilitated by Vicki Steinberg, this course includes choosing literature appropriate for different types of students, working with required texts, and using literature to spark and model good writing. Bring a large three-ring binder to organize all the material you will take home from these courses!

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

I've been thinking a lot about leadership lately. Maybe it's watching the results of recent elections and the decisions our elected leaders make. Decisions like changing tax laws to help the economy instead of more directly creating jobs; like requiring tests or offering vouchers to improve education instead of directly improving teaching and schools. What these decisions, and others like them, seem to have in common is a particular leadership model, one that suggests leading means imposing controls from without instead of increasing capacity from within.

I see it. But I don't believe it. Leadership from the outside doesn't feel like leadership; it feels like coercion. Humane, effective leadership works from the inside out – and has something to fall back on – whether we're talking about nations, school districts, classrooms, or individuals.

Let me put it another way: a leader who works by imposing controls works through structures and rules, tests and results, expecting such external demands to promote change in others, to pull growth from the outside. These leaders expect people to respond to demands on demand. To produce results that are visible, quantifiable, readily measured. Then they wonder why, even if some test scores go up, students still can't read, write, or learn in any but the most externally structured ways. It's no wonder, though. External demands may affect external behavior, but they affect no pro-

found, deeply rooted change. They produce changes to meet an external need, and they continue only as long as that kind of leadership, perhaps even that leader, continues. No capacity is built, no internal leadership developed.

What does leadership from the inside look like? How does it differ from leadership that is external? It seems to me that leadership from the inside starts from inside the leader. This doesn't mean warm fuzzies versus cold pricklies, nor subjectivity as opposed to objectivity. For a leader to want real – i.e., internal - professional growth for the people she leads, that leader must be willing to grow professionally herself. She must not only be powerful; she must allow others to be powerful as well. And as they become more powerful, she must stand for their voices and their goals as well as her own, learning to share control without losing control. She leads from within, developing leadership – and more leaders - as she goes.

If this is the case, why do so many leaders - elected, appointed, and employed – lead from the outside? Perhaps because that kind of leadership seems immediately apparent (as all appearances are), its demands immediately clear, and its results immediately measurable. Leading from the inside by building capacity is not nearly so immediate, obvious, or neat. Nor is it so immediately "effective." Leadership from the inside is complicated, time-consuming, messy. Its first requirement is growth, which - as any gardener, teacher, or parent would acknowledge - requires all kinds of resources, nurturance, and time. Change-

through-growth is not immediately apparent. It doesn't test well right away. But once it begins, it is not forgettable; it just is.

That's why one recently appointed leader gives me hope. I don't know Vicki Phillips, our new state Secretary of Education, personally. Our only connection has been through the three-year grant PAWLP shared with Wharton Elementary School in the Lancaster City SD, where she was superintendent. I do know, though, what the Philadelphia *Inquirer* said about her on January 7 of this year. Contrasting Phillips with her predecessors (Eugene Hickok and Charles Zogby), the paper stated: "[S]he is likely to take a different approach to educational improvement...They favored more educational choice, such as charter schools and vouchers. Phillips...believes it is possible to change school districts through intensive professional development for teachers, clear goals, and accountability for results" (B8).

I'm not a Pollyanna, but I know that "intensive professional development for teachers," at least as PAWLP and the National Writing Project understand it, means leadership from the inside. It means building capacity so teachers and students grow in ways that make accountability inherent because they are given the power to accomplish shared goals.

So I welcome the change of leadership in Harrisburg. And for the first time since I've become aware of the politics of leadership, I hope our newly appointed Secretary of Education is a real "insider."



a variety of breakout sessions presented by PAWLP Fellows. Topics include: "Writing Workshop in the Middle and High School"; "The Road to Successful Peer Conferencing"; "Incorporating Art Into Literature"; "Revision: A Never-Ending Topic"; "Reading Comprehension Strategies in the Primary Classroom"; and "The Literature Response Journal: Opening Windows for Instruction". These are just some of the presentations that will provide practical strategies to implement in your classroom.

Storyteller and author Robin Moore begins day two of the conference with his keynote, "Awakening the Hidden Storyteller." Moore says, "Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller, waiting to be released. For some of us, this inner storyteller may be silent or sleeping or simply hidden from view. My aim is to guide listeners and tellers through the landscape of the imagination, allowing them to open the storehouse of memories, dreams and reflections and recover their own natural storytelling abilities." Through actual storytelling and discussion of his own research, Moore will illustrate the importance of oral tradition in the literacy process. He will offer an opportunity to pursue this connection further in a morning breakout session. Once again, participants will be able to choose from a diverse selection of breakout sessions throughout the day.

Children's author and illustrator, Judy Schachner will be speaking about her own writing process

during the luncheon on day two. Schachner has been illustrating and writing children's books since 1992. One of her most recent books, *The Grannyman*, won the 2002 (K-3) Golden Sower Award. Both Schachner and Moore will be available during the day for book signings.

Children's Book World and Michaels Associates will have many resources on hand during both days of the conference and will be happy to point out favorite

and newly published books.

The finale of the conference will include an opportunity for participants to meet in small groups and discuss action plans for implementing some of the many wonderful strategies presented throughout the two days.

Call the office at 610-436-2202 for more information. We look forward to seeing you in June!

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For Middle and High School English Teachers

READING IN THE LITERATURE CLASSROOM

Were you an English major who never thought s/he'd have to teach Reading?

Do you have students who need help reading the literature in your curriculum?

Then this course is for you.

- ** Learn reading strategies that promote comprehension and analysis of literature
- ** Connect oral, writing, and reading skills
- ** Find the links between reading theory and literary theory

Contact Andy Fishman at 610-436-2202 to bring this course to your district in September.

March 8 & 22 PAWLP Days feature Linda Oatman High *Writing to the Beat of a Different Drummer*

Linda Oatman High, poet, author, and songwriter, will keynote two PAWLP Days in March. Ms. High's presentation, entitled "Writing to the Beat of a Different Drummer", includes a slide show demonstrating how a writer gets ideas from everyday life.

She will address teachers, parents and students on March 8 in the Sykes Student Union Building at West Chester University and on March 22 at Jamison Elementary School in the Central Bucks School District.

An author of books for children and teens, Oatman High's middle-grade novels include *Maize*, *Hound Heaven*, *The*

Summer of the Great Divide, and *A Stone's Throw From Paradise*. Her picture books include *A Christmas Star*, *Beekeepers*, *Barn Savers* (NCTE 2000 Notable Books and short-list for Keystone State Reading Award 2001-02), *Under New York* (Best Book of the Year, Nick Jr. Magazine), *The Last Chimney of Christmas Eve*, *A Humble Life: Plain Poems*, and *The President's Puppy*.

For more information visit her website at linda oatmanhigh.com.

Interactive workshops for teachers and parents/students round out the programs. Topics for teachers include "Thinking Outside the Box: Using Art to Inspire Writing", "Stories Never End: Books that Help Children

Write", "Style and the Writing Piece: How to Know it, When to Use it, and Where to Add it", "Writing in the Discipline of Social Studies", "Responding to Literature Visually", and "Pass the Popcorn: It's Time for the Show". Workshops for students and parents include "The Eclectic Classroom: Using Music and Visuals to Foster Reading, Writing, and Creativity", "Splash into Artful Poetry", and "Poetry and Paint".

Both programs run 8:30 a.m. - noon. A \$3.00 donation is requested at the door for materials and refreshments.

Please call 610-436-3089 to register.

Summer Courses

-continued from page 1, column 3

This summer *Writing and Children's Literature*, one of PAWLP's longest running courses, will again offer the chance for teachers to explore over 1,000 children's books to create ideas for minilessons that meet PA Reading and Writing standards. Rose Cappelli and Lynne Dorfman will highlight reading-writing connections, the writing process, domains of writing, elements of story, and author's craft.

Rose Cappelli's popular *Strategic Guided Reading and Writing for Grades K-3* will be available again this summer. Learn how to level books through a simple process, interpret miscues, and improve struggling readers' abilities.

Don't miss the opportunity to help your students by becoming a better writer yourself. This summer attend *Teachers as Writers*. Wendy Towle, PAWLP Fellow and author of professional and children's books, will help you set goals for yourself and become more comfortable with your writing abilities. She will coax you into a writerly life, offer suggestions for publication opportunities, and help you become a model for your students. (Remember, key to helping students become writers is to model, model, model!)

Again you will find *PA Literacy Framework* with Dr. Marion Dugan at our WCU site. This course offers a look at the revised PCR II document and includes PAWLP's Literacy Conference featuring Georgia

Heard, Robin Moore, and Judith Schachner. *Strategies for Teaching Writing in the PSSA Domains* will return this year at BCIU and WCU sites. *Visualizing Words and Worlds* is hosted by Michener and Brandywine River Museums. Don't miss the opportunity to take this unique course!

As always, PAWLP offers a variety of one-credit courses at both its summer locations. *Developing Minilessons for Reading/Writing Processes for Grades 3-12* returns with a new look and a focus on meeting PA standards through minilessons that anchor workshop approaches to reading and writing with direct instruction that is directly applied by your students during workshop time.

A perfect PAWLP Summer, 2003.

PAWLP YOUTH PROGRAMS ADD TWO NEW SITES AND FOUR NEW COURSES

Centennial and Pennsbury School Districts join West Chester University and sixteen other districts in the Delaware Valley area hosting PAWLP's 2003 Summer Young Writers/Young Readers program.

Chester University. Carrie Hagen's new Young Shakespeare class for students in grades 6 - 8, will be offered at the North Penn site.

Last summer, almost 1,300 children in grades K - 11 attended PAWLP Youth Programs, and we anticipate a fabulous turnout again this summer. Three two-week sessions run from June 30 to August 8.



Additionally, three Fellows have designed new courses for this Summer's Youth Programs. Kathy Garrison will pilot an On-line Literature Circles class for students in grades 6 - 8. Lesley Roessing will offer two new courses: Writing College Application Essays for high school students, and News Writing for students in grades 6 - 8. All of these courses are offered at West



Young Readers will be offered at the Interboro site this summer for students who have completed kindergarten, and will continue at West Chester University for students who have completed kindergarten through grade 2.



All Fellows who have successfully completed a summer Institute in the Teaching of Writing or the Teaching of Literature are eligible to teach in the summer Youth Programs. Interested teacher-consultants should call 610-436-3089 for an application form. Anyone interested in information on becoming a Fellow of the Project should call 610-436-2202. We encourage master teachers to join our creative, energetic staff.



**TEACH YOUNG WRITERS/YOUNG READERS!
A GREAT WAY
TO SPEND TWO WEEKS OF YOUR SUMMER
CALL 610-436-3089**

EDUCATION MATTERS

A COLUMN FROM MICHAELS ASSOCIATES

I've told many of my friends in education that one of the things that makes my job fun, interesting, and exciting is that only the best teachers come anywhere near a Michaels Associates display of professional books. Only true professionals who like what they're doing take the time and effort (and spend the money) to buy professional resources. As a result, I spend all my time with positive people who keep me fresh and excited about the small role we play in promoting the teaching profession.

One of the other major benefits of my job is that I get to meet and sometimes become friends with the authors who write professional books for teachers. One of them, Richard L. (Dick) Allington, has given me permission to excerpt part of his newest - and first Heinemann- book, Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum: How Ideology Trumped Evidence. Dick is an outspoken and well credentialed advocate for teachers.

No one I've met knows more about research or how it's been distorted by those with agendas.

He's upset by the trend towards taking away the important day-to-day decisions good teachers make about education, replacing them with scripted, "teacher proof" curriculum materials being cranked out again by large publishing companies. (This book, \$23.50, is available to PAWLP Newsletter subscribers for \$19.00 plus shipping and handling by identifying yourself and asking for the discount at our toll free number or by mentioning PAWLP in the body of your purchase order. Offer expires March 15, 2003.)

*Cordially,
Greg Michaels*



Excerpt from

Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum: How Ideology Trumped Evidence

with permission of the author, Richard L. Allington, for PAWLP Newsletter readers

One of the mixed blessings of being one of the "graybeards" band of scholars is that you remember what education was like thirty-five or more years ago. You recall how the federal government was going to eradicate illiteracy through the application of scientific research—primarily applied research done at federally funded regional educational laboratories. You remember that the best minds in the nation were working to develop code-emphasis (phonics) reading curricula that were scientific and effective. You remember the Wisconsin Design of Reading, the skills-tracking package from the University of Wisconsin; the Sullivan Programmed Readers from Behavioral Research Labs; the Miami and Palo Alto linguistic readers with their "Nan can fan

Dan" sentences; the International Teaching Alphabet; Words in Color; Direct Instructional System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading (DISTAR); plaid phonics; multisensory phonics; and so on. All of them were developed with federal funds. You also remember that we gave up on those research-based programs when they didn't pan out with improved reading achievement.

I feel like Bill Murray's character in the movie *Groundhog Day*; I'm seeing the same things happen over and over again. I awake every day now and have to remind myself that it isn't 1972. It's just that the same old ideas that were so popular in 1972 have returned as the next "new, new thing" for reforming American education. Phonics is back. The

vendors have dusted off all those 1970's materials, stuck new covers on them, gussied up the artwork a bit, and put them up for sale. That the two most heavily promoted reading curricula have barely changed since 1970 seems to bother almost no one.

But it isn't just the recycled reading programs that make this feel like the early 1970s. It was the 1970s that brought us "performance contracting" - bidding out schools to for-profit vendors. Teachers were paid for student performance on tests. That didn't pan out. It was the 1970s that brought us large-scale minimum competence testing and the first accountability packages. It was, as Rowan (1990) notes, an era when "control" strategies were the education management fad of the day.

We had pacing schedules to keep teachers on track to cover the materials. We had skills testing of every child, with scores turned into the central office for plotting. We even had a Right to Read movement that asserted that literacy was a civil right and promised literacy for all. But all those schemes didn't accomplish the Olympian goal of universal literacy.

There are days when I could swear that some sort of social amnesia is running rampant. How is it that so many folks cannot see that the new, new educational reform plans are but recycled bad ideas? Ideas we have tried before. Ideas that had their chance. Ideas that fell flat on their faces thirty years ago.

I did not plan to create this book. I planned to largely ignore the various policy promoters and entrepreneurs who are offering up these tired ideas as new solutions. I was just going to slide into retirement over the next few years.

When the Preventing Reading Difficulties report (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) appeared, I read it and yawned. As Catherine Snow (2001) herself has argued, "Nothing said in the report about reading instruction, for example, could not have been formulated by an experienced, thoughtful, reflective first-grade teacher with a few weeks' free time" (p.236)

When the National Reading Panel (NRP) was formed I yawned again, if only because virtually all of the panel members were old (even older than me), and none were among the group of active reading researchers that most people in the profession would recognize. My dean joked that it

was a cutting-edge panel, circa 1978. I testified to the panel that I thought their choice to focus only on experimental research was too narrow. And when the panel's 500-plus page report appeared, I read it and yawned.

But when I read Elaine Garan's Phi Delta Kappan article, something set me off. Maybe I was just tinder for her sparks. Garan exposed the ideological distortions of what the research said and how these had affected the educational reforms being dumped on teachers. Maybe I wasn't ready to retire. I don't know why, but suddenly the need for this book loomed large in my mind. I had never considered myself a whole language kind of guy. In fact, I viewed the first edition of *Classrooms That Work* (Cunningham & Allington, 1994) as a cautionary tale about the exaggerations of research by whole language advocates. It wasn't until that book was branded a whole language manual (a nice oxymoronish twist) by California state representative Steven Baldwin and I was called a whole language conspirator by a member of the California state board of education that such thoughts even entered my head. Dick Allington a whole language guru?

Of course I'm not really a whole language person. I disagree with Ken Goodman on at least as many things as I disagree with Marilyn Adams. But I do admire the spunk the whole language folks have demonstrated. When it comes to school reform, I know they are closer to the mark than the direct-instruction folks. The whole language folks understand the critical importance of teachers

— expert, autonomous teachers — in the development of children's literacy. Dumbing down the curriculum and curricular materials through narrowly conceived accountability schemes and scripted materials didn't work in the 1970s and it won't work now.

This book is my attempt to demonstrate that it isn't just whole language advocates who are having problems with the NRP report and the new education laws. I've framed the articles written by others with my own chapters, both extending their arguments and developing an additional evidence-based argument for reconsidering the direction of educational reform. As a researcher by vocation, I decided I could not simply sit on the sidelines and allow the ideologically based distortions of what the research says go unchallenged. I hope this book will move you, too, to get off the sidelines and into the game.

Are you a PAWLIP Fellow?
Have you thought about
presenting at a local or
regional conference?

LET PAWLIP HELP YOU
GET THERE

\$100 stipends are available
for any PAWLIP Fellows who
have presentations accepted by
KSRA, CCRA,
PCTE, DVASCD, PAASCD,
PDK, or other regional
conferences.

Contact Andy or Mary at the
office for further information

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