



INK

LSU WRITING PROJECT

INTERNAL NETWORK OF COMMUNICATIONS VOL.V NO. 7

APRIL 1990

SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The National Writing Project identifies nine basic assumptions that define its mission and purpose. This issue of *INK* focuses on two:

- Teachers are the best teachers of other teachers; successful practicing teachers have a credibility no outside consultant can match.
- Summer Institutes (and other activities) must involve teachers from across the disciplines; writing is as fundamental to learning in science, in mathematics, and in history as it is in English and the language arts.

LSUWP workshops have provided training, inspiration, and writing experiences for teachers throughout the state this year. Conversations in halls, on buses, in grocery store aisles, at meetings, and elsewhere have also contributed to the Writing Project's influence on what goes on in classrooms.

CALENDAR

April 21 All Project Meeting
Gonzales Middle School 9-11.
Come at 8:30 for coffee and
conversation.

April 22 Earth Day 20

April 28 Anthology Deadline

May 2 EBRCTE

May 6-11 IRA, Atlanta

May 10-11 Urban Sites, Chicago

June 4-15, 18-29 YWI/EBR Parish

June 5-8 The Grand Hotel

June 5-7 EBR/SU Writing Workshops

June 9 or 10 Keynote Address

June 11-15, 18-22 Teacher Writing
Institutes in EBR-

June 11-July 14 LSUWP Summer
Institutes

June St. Charles Parish Writing
Seminar for teachers

July St. Charles Parish Young
Writers Workshop

BOOK NOOK

Sandy Asher, creative writing instructor, playwright, and author of children's and young adult novels has said that she feels she has a lot to say to adolescents, and she can do it through her novels. She has recently written two books that could be used as guides and source material, especially for those teachers who aren't "at home" or comfortable teaching the writing process. In these two small books are packed enough easily understood information to cover a semester's worth of writing, reading, and responding activities. If she wasn't aware of the national writing project, she certainly came up with parallel ideas.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR IDEAS. Walker, 1987

Ideas are everywhere. We miss most of them unless we develop and nurture a special way of watching, seeing and noticing. Her chapters are interspersed with "Stories behind the stories" wherein various well-known children's and young adult authors tell us where they get their ideas. She talks about poetry, stories, ideas to play with (what would happen if), writing to find out why (if such and such happened, why?), keeping a journal, and the three things needed to tell a story: (character, problems, solutions). Chapters could be read to students, stopping at various points to do the suggested activities. There are many places to stop, many branching activities, and many things to think about. Depending on how many students you work with, there will be that many different correct answers. The teacher should participate and share with the students. Good exercise!

WILD WORDS; HOW TO TRAIN THEM TO TELL STORIES. Walker, 1989.

A good companion book. The two can very beneficially and easily be used together. Again, there are so many suggestions for activities that one really needs to stop and participate as the book is read.

The ideas are so elemental that they will be useful to teachers of lower and middle grades as well as early high school. Examples and stories written by child authors abound. Even beginning adult writers would benefit from the ideas and practices she suggests.

I have wished so many times that I had been exposed to true creative writing during my school years. I had English teachers, of course, and some tried to introduce us to writing, but not this way. Young minds are so much more imaginative and while old folks have the memories (if they haven't been covered with clutter) most have lost the creative edge of imagination. Perhaps practice would sharpen it.

These books could be used separately or in tandem. Some of the suggestions overlap, but who's to say how many new ideas will be sparked by saying the same thing in another way. Each pair of ears hears something different; each brain sees its own picture. With a classroom of students, the harvest should be as productive as it is varied. Happy planting!

--- Florence Steben ---

Wanted: Book Reviews to fill this space. Send to Florence and she can type them up in this format for submission to Mignon. This page is for sharing.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR US

TO LEARN

The Gulf Coast Conference on the Teaching of Writing

June 5-8, Point Clear, Alabama. If staying at The Grand Hotel (conference rate \$103 per night for up to four persons) isn't inspiration enough, consider sessions with Lil Brannon, Kenneth S. Goodman, and Shirley Brice Heath. Golf, tennis, jogging, nature trails, Gulf Coast seafood meals, and dancing under the stars are also mentioned in their flyer. Application attached.

East Baton Rouge Parish Teacher Writing Institutes

June 11-15 THE WRITING PROCESS. This workshop is designed for people who have not as yet survived an LSUWP Summer Institute. Tell your friends who cannot commit to a four-week institute about this opportunity. A stipend of \$250 is offered to 25 EBR teachers. People from any grade level or discipline are welcome to apply. Call Evelyn Alford's office.

June 18-22 WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE. Anne Campbell and Cindy Elliott will direct this institute, which is open to LSUWP members who teach in EBR and others who have taught in EBR Youth Writing Institutes. The stipend offered is \$250. Call Evelyn's office for details.

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH-SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY WRITING WORKSHOPS

April 19 (4-7 PM) and June 5, 6, and 7 (all day). Dan Kirby, who wrote Inside

Out, will work with teachers during the June sessions. A \$50 stipend is offered for the April 19 session and \$200 for the three days in June. Call Evelyn's office for details.

St. Charles Parish Teacher Writing Seminar

Rickie Bruce and Jim Dukes will be facilitators for a one-week seminar for middle school language arts teachers in June.

TO TEACH

EBR YWI

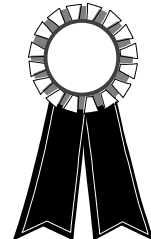
Only four locations are scheduled for Youth Writing Institutes this summer, but--who knows? Parents have often shown us that they are willing to pay for a program that is good for their children. If you are interested in this opportunity, call Evelyn's office before April 20.

St. Charles Young Writers Workshops

Last year's workshops were terrific. This year's are expected to be better.

TO COMPETE

David wrote about the State Times-Morning Advocate Teachers Writing Contest in last month's INK. The deadline is June 22 for nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.



NEWS ABOUT US

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Anthology Committee will meet in May to select and process submissions to the 1990 anthology.

Wed. May 16, 5:30 PM at Shoney's on College Drive in Baton Rouge

Thurs. May 24, 5 PM at Ann Biggers' house. Sandwiches provided.

Fri June 1, TBA at Kinko's downtown

The committee has asked that people attach the form on the last page of this newsletter to their entry (or entries) to the anthology.

The **Awards Committee** would like to have your nominations for Principal of the Year by May 1, 1990. Guidelines are in March INK. You may bring your nomination to Rose Carter at the April 21 meeting or mail them to her at Zachary High School.

The **Newsletter Committee** is still here. We would like to know what you are doing to advance the cause of the LSUWP. Please send information for the May INK to Mignon by April 28: by pony to Red Oaks Elementary (but remember that mail is collected only on Mondays) or by mail to 9544 Windward, BR, 70810.

The **Telephone Committee** would like to know if you are not receiving calls about meetings and special events. Let Rhea know if you are being missed.

Sara Sims will bring Publicity packets to the April 21 meeting. She is considering charging \$5 for the packet--refundable when you have an article

published anywhere about the LSUWP. Seems reasonable.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

April 14 Susan Hays

April 18 Joanna Newman

April 29 Linda Daniels

May 2 Lorna Boies

May 21 Mary Hitt, Betty Coleman

May 23 Alice Sumler

PERSONALS

We welcome to our family Catherine Dunlap who is the new Language Arts supervisor in St. Charles Parish.

Angie Wall also had a winner in the Young Authors Contest.

Pam Freshney and Rickie Bruce have again proved that they can lead students to excellence. The NCTE ranked the Scotlandville Magnet High School's Rhapsody and the Destrehan High School's Visions as Literary Magazines of Excellence.

ALL-PROJECT MEETING

The agenda for the April 21 meeting is as follows. If you cannot attend the meeting, please fill out the ballot on the last page of this newsletter and mail it so that Betty receives it by April 20.

8:30-9 coffee & greetings

9-9:45 business and voting

10-11 program Felicia Rapp will tell us about Whole Language.

Ask another TC to come with you.

PRESENTATIONS ALREADY DONE

The St. Charles Parish series of workshops, for elementary and secondary teachers featured several TCs from the LSUWP. Because these teachers shared stories of how writing activities have worked successfully in their classrooms, participants felt confident in trying them in their own.

Allison Braud presented "Using Writing as a Response to Literature" to K-6 teachers. Participants shared children's books by Judith Viorst and Chris Van Allsburg, then responded to the literature in various modes of writing. Teachers showed creativity and enthusiasm in their writing. They benefitted personally and professionally.

Joan Besselman showed content area teachers how to "Chart Your Course: retrieving Information for Writing in the Science Classroom." This experience allowed teachers to practice thinking and process skills that are used throughout the curriculum. Writing for the session took the form of factual fiction stories and writing in the round. The teachers found that writing can be fun while concepts are being reinforced.

Barbara MacDonald showed teachers that "Throwing a Tantrum on Paper" is an ingenious way to incorporate writing into the social studies classroom. After studying current, local, state, and federal issues, the participants engaged in a letter-writing activity to voice concerns and opinions.

Bridget Simoneaux followed with "Mathology," which incorporates writing into the math class: Participants were

exposed to myths of various origins and then tried their hand at, writing one of their own. (Math. Myth. What's the difference? Why, the result of subtracting one number - or is it numeral - from another.)

These are only a few of the excellent workshops presented in the St. Charles Parish series. See last month's *INK* for a list of all the presentations.

Mary Ann Doyle, Jerelyn Girod, and Charlie Moffatt presented three workshops for Napoleonville teachers. Mary Ann focused on prewriting strategies, beginning with a silent walk to ease away the day's stresses. Jerelyn followed up by encouraging teachers to use both left and right brain strategies to write, read, and respond to each others pieces. Charlie completed the circle with ideas for incorporating writing in the content areas.

A spring workshop will give these teachers more experience with the writing process.

West Feliciana Parish teachers participated in three workshops. Lorna Boles, Mignon Morgan, and Michelle Lachney found that these teachers didn't want to go home. They stayed late, and would have been willing to stay later, to learn one more thing that would help them be better teachers.

PRESENTATIONS STILL TO COME

Sharon Kerlec and Gwen Kershaw will be presenting at the International Reading Association Conference in Atlanta in May.

The California Raisins, aka Anna Catherine Ferguson, Jackie Parson, and Paula Fletcher, will present at the same conference and then they will go to Stockholm--the one in Sweden--for a presentation on July 5.

The LSUWP will be represented in Point Clear, Alabama, at the Gulf Coast Conference on the Teaching of Writing (also known as the chance to stay at the Grand Hotel) this June 5-8 by Sarah Burkhalter, Mary Holm, and several other TCs who were involved with the work done this spring throughout the state. The title of the presentation is "Writing- Teachers Teaching Teachers Writing." A palindrome if I ever saw one. (Recursive? Not that anyone would notice.)

Both St. Charles Parish and East Baton Rouge Parish are offering writing institutes for students this summer. The directors of these workshops will need people to present whole-group sessions. Think about it. What do you have to offer?

Workshops are being presented by LSUWP TCs in Livingston, Assumption, Terrebone, and Ascension Parishes. Details will be published when we have them.

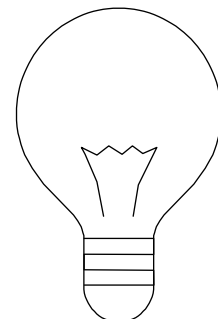
Felicia Rapp will deliver a presentation about whole language at the All-Project meeting on April 21. Some of our best sessions have been when we have learned from one of our own TCs.

LSUWP TCs have a wealth of talent to share with other teachers. How can we let someone know that we are ready and able to present workshops of interest and value?

Charlie Moffatt is compiling a catalog of presentations. He is using abstracts sent to Mignon or Art in years past as well as those that he has recently received. If you have developed a presentation (or have a good idea for one) that he does not know about, give Charlie a call or drop him a note.

How can we develop new presentations? Listen to people on buses, in faculty lounges, in the hall between classes. What concerns are they expressing? What have you done in your classroom to address these concerns? Don't keep your ideas to yourself. Prepare a presentation.

Instructors at area universities are usually willing for you to present to students in education courses for practice. Or get a few like-minded TCs together and try out presentations on each other.





Sarah's Spot

April 1990

When I get together with other Writing Project Site Directors, as I did this March in Colorado Springs at NCTE, one of the topics that always comes up is continuity. The other directors never cease to be amazed by my stories of what you, the LSUWP TCs are doing. Very few projects in the country have such an active membership, one with so many members who write and continue to meet in Reading and Responding Groups and who attend All Project Meetings.

This year, admittedly a time of transition, many of you have taken the opportunity to expand your personal and professional potential as TCs. Twenty of you have joined in a statewide effort to share writing project ideas through the Louisiana Writing Project. Others have made their impact through the LSUWP's effort to deliver staff development in an eight parish area and in courses for preservice teachers.

Just as importantly, many of you have devoted your time to serving as Advisory Board members and committee chairs for the LSUWP. As this project has grown, so have the duties of these positions. Last Wednesday night, representatives from both groups met to discuss goals and strategies that can make our coming year an even greater tribute to the NWP philosophy.

A TC said to me last week, "The Writing Project and my work with it this year have made me feel more like a professional than anything else I have done in my twenty years of teaching." Of course we recognize the truth in her statement. We have all experienced these same emotions but we must continue to work to keep this spirit alive.

Our last All Project Meeting is April 21st. Please join all of us in Gonzales for a program which will help plot the LSUWP's course for the coming year. Spring is a time of rebirth and the various committees need your input and planning suggestions. We will also elect one new Advisory Board member from each institute year. Please attend so that your voice can be considered as we lay the ground work for an even more successful year to come!

ODDS AND ENDS

EDITOR NEEDED

For the past two years, Florence Steben has done a wonderful job of soliciting submissions, writing, and editing our "Book Nook" column. She plans to retire at the end of this school term and move to Illinois during the summer. If you would be willing to take on this responsibility next year, please talk to Florence or Mignon.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

At the April 4 Advisory Board meeting, representatives and committee chairmen discussed the responsibilities of each committee. If you have similar descriptions from previous years, please send them to Mignon so that she can use them in preparing drafts the next newsletter.

SUMMER INSTITUTES

Applications for Summer Institutes are due NOW. Please call someone who will be an active participant in the LSUWP and ask that they apply.

NEW ADVISORY BOARD

One new Advisory Board member from each Summer Institute will be elected on April 21. If you want to be on the Advisory Board, let someone (everyone) in your group know. If you cannot attend the meeting, mail your ballot so that Betty Kraft receives it no later than April 20.

Only LSUWP TCs are eligible to serve on the Board or to vote for members.

HAVE YOU READ?

Educational Leadership, March issue is about reading and writing. One article features a profile of two Writing Project teachers. (Note from Publicity Chair -SS- They did it nationally. When are you going to do it locally or nationally?)

Kappan, March issue, "Getting to Know a Good Middle School" Counseling is at the center of this school's curriculum. Perhaps you won't buy into everything told about this school, but it's something to think about.

Lears, March issue, "Writers and Booze" Something else to think about.

New Orleans Magazine, "A Place to Write" The New Orleans literary scene. Good people article.

TO DO LIST

_____ Send Charlie abstracts of presentations.

_____ Check to see if _____ has turned in an application for LSUWP Summer Institute.

_____ Decide who should be on the Advisory Board from our Summer Institute.

_____ Ask someone to go with me to the All-Project meeting April 21.

_____ Send a newsletter article to Mignon for the May *INK*.

_____ Send Anthology submission to Susan Ourso.

_____ Send Principal's Award name to Rose Carter.

_____ Send something to STAMA Teacher Writing Contest