

<p>WKU Writing Project NewsLETTER <hr/> Volume 5, Number 3 August 2002</p>	<p>INSIDE THIS EDITION PARENTAL Barren County High tries innovative approaches to getting parents involved in students' education—On Pages 6 & 7</p>
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Notes from the Director

As I write this, many of your schools are about to open, and WKU begins its orientation meetings in two weeks. Like you, I'm wondering where the summer has gone. I have looked forward to it for months in advance, and then I blinked and it's the fall semester. Time to reflect!

The Project has been very active in the period since our last newsletter. In the spring, we sponsored six Focus Groups, for example. (These were led by Shanah Mills, Midge Krebs, Karen Alford, Chris Carter, Ann Nance, Kim Janes, and Sandy Kiper.)

We held a very successful poetry workshop on April 20 with Baron Wormser and David Cappella, authors of Teaching the Art of Poetry. And, we selected 22 participants from the 92 applications we received for Project 17, held a one-week mini-Writing Project in June for 20 of the teachers we were unable to accommodate in the four-week Institute, and co-sponsored another one-week June workshop led by David Lenoir on the three types of writing that our State Department promotes.

As if this weren't enough, we also co-sponsored a Celebration

of Poetry event with Western's English Department, KCTE/LA, and the KDE in May. Fifty-four students (K-12) who were nominated by teachers and cluster leaders sent us their poems to be anthologized and read aloud on May 4 in DUC auditorium. Both teachers and students received certificates, anthologies, and copies of KCTE/LA's Literary Map. Of course, at the same time Karen Alford and Karen Scott were coordinating workshops in the spring and planning two more workshops for this summer. How did we manage to promote such activity? Clearly, the expertise and hard-work of our two office workers deserve much credit: Allison Key and Bethany Deckard. (While Allison will continue with us in the fall, Bethany will be replaced by Cindy Britt as Bethany has accepted a position at Boyle County High School. Congratulations, Bethany!)

We were awarded funding again for 2002-2003 from the NWP and were pleased to read the opening of our award letter:

"What a pleasure to read about the WKU Writing Project's most recent year! While I imagine that it would be easy to become self-satisfied and complacent

with a long-standing record of laudable summer Institute, in-service, and continuity programming, your site's critical and energetic approach to self-reflection, self-examination and a self-analysis seem to scaffold new opportunities each year for continued growth and development."

We can't rest, however, as the NWP is really interested in having sites work with new teachers this year, and so your Board might be making new plans soon. The Board will also be making decisions on mini-grant awards, so look for an e-mail announcement in September.

The Board will meet in September and appreciates your suggestions and advice in planning this year and beyond. We want to hear from you—and e-mailing your comments to me will assure they get on to the Board.

I hope our paths will cross this coming year—you people are doing so many interesting, new things, and I want to keep up with everyone. Please share your accomplishments, questions, and advice with the rest of us via our web-site: www.wku.edu/wp. And best wishes to everyone for one of the best school years ever!

—John

Book REVIEWS

Review: How's It Going? by Carl Anderson

Reviewed By
STEPHANIE MARTIN

I have always struggled with the best way to conduct conferences with my elementary students. I wish I had read Carl Anderson's, How's It Going?, years ago. It is a very informative, teacher friendly resource filled with strategies to use when conferencing with students in a writing workshop. This author believes that conferencing with students is an ongoing and important part of the writing workshop.

He explains that the conferences are simply conversations between a teacher and student. However, Anderson feels that the different roles of conferencing must be taught and modeled for the students. He models very well within the context of the book, how to teach students to participate in these conference conversations effectively and what exactly their roles are in the process. The first responsibility of the teacher is to listen attentively and observe what area needs assistance. Then, just like in real daily conversations, it is the teacher's turn to talk while the student listens. It requires both parties to take an active part and to take turns.

Anderson reminds the reader throughout the book, that a teacher can't fix everything in the piece.

He stresses that teachers need to get to know their students very well in order to know how to help them. This can be accomplished through listening attentively and through thoughtful observation. Anderson offers many excellent samples of students' first drafts and of the same drafts after conferencing and revision. He also shares several actual conferencing conversations he has had with different elementary and middle aged students. These examples helped me understand the strategies he describes throughout the book.

The appendix at the end of the book has a long list of what Anderson calls, "Mentor Texts." This list of titles is divided by grade level and genre so that it is a quick resource for finding a good example of an author that a teacher can use in modeling certain writing styles while conferencing. He believes it is important for developing writers to read and have available many different writing styles in order to craft their own writing. This author offers that his own writing mentor is Ralph Fletcher and gives examples of how Fletcher has influenced the way he writes. Students can easily learn by examples. Anderson proves in this portion of the text, that he is a believer of the reading/writing connection.

This book also provided me with the answers to some of my own questions I have had about classroom management during the writing workshop. He gives some effective ideas for dealing with students who say they have nothing to write about. Anderson also gives some sound advice about what teachers need to analyze about their students' behavior during the workshop. He believes that if students have an investment in their writing and if they believe that writing is important, then they will stay on task most of the time. This is something that all teachers, I believe, need to work on. Anderson offers a list of diagnostic questions that teachers can ask themselves when dealing with an ineffective workshop environment. He also offers many excellent suggestions on how to improve this environment.

This resource is one I have already started using. I plan to utilize it even more when I train the volunteers who are becoming "portfolio pals" with our fourth grade students. Many of the volunteers are parents or classified staff members who do not have experience in conferencing with students. The easy to use strategies and general philosophy behind Anderson's conference conversations will hopefully be helpful to these individuals.

STEPHANIE MARTIN teaches at Briarwood Elementary School in Bowling Green. Martin is a Writing Project 16 fellow. **MISTY LOGSDON** teaches at Bristow Elementary School in Bowling Green. Logsdon is a Writing Project 16 fellow. **SUMMER HENDERSON** teaches at Fordsville Elementary School in Fordsville. Henderson is a Writing Project 16 fellow.

Review: Never Too Early To Write by Bea Johnson

Reviewed By
MISTY LOGSDON

This book has proven to be one of the greatest resources I have ever encountered. Johnson discusses and advises on how to implement and manage a writing workshop in a Kindergarten/First grade setting. It is not often that an author focuses on that specific grade level. Being the only Kindergarten/First grade teacher at Bristow Elementary, I often find myself turning to this book for help.

Johnson has broken her book into three specific parts: Why write early, Writing Strategies, and Go Write. The information she provides within this book is true strategies and ideas that any teacher in this setting could use tomorrow. For me, so far, the most helpful part of her book has been Part I, Why write early. It is in this part, that she explains

how to set up writing workshop, the stages of writing development, rules, what to expect, and why it is beneficial.

Throughout the entire book, and especially in the first part, Johnson focuses on the idea that, "Early introduction of writing would enhance the development of reading skills." (p.5). Many times we think more so that reading will lead to writing, but in fact many specialists are standing behind the speculation that writing leads to reading. That has become my goal with my students. I expect them to all be reading in a book by Christmas. My means of getting them there focus greatly on writing.

According to Johnson, writing not only leads to reading, but to many other necessary skills in everyday life. A child who writes well is a child who communicates well, who thinks on a higher

level, who has a greater self esteem, and all of these are things teachers strive to instill in students.

Johnson's book not only describes the different stages of writing development in students, but she has included examples from real students from each of the developmental stages. She explains that writing workshop with these young primary students allows them to move on a continuum through these stages.

Never Too Early To Write is a small, simple book which holds inside inspiration for teaching writing to Kindergarten/First grade students. The entire book has proven priceless for me in developing a writing workshop for the first time. This book is the one I recommend to teachers who ask about my workshop. This book is the one I am basing a large part of my feature article on.

Review: If the Shoe Fits... How to Develop Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom by Carolyn Chapman

Reviewed By
SUMMER HENDERSON

Carolyn Chapman authored *If the Shoe Fits... How to Develop Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. First published in 1993 by IRI/Skylight Training

and Publishing, the text has recently been revised and contains information on all eight of the intelligences. In this source, each intelligence is assigned an appropriate shoe as a visual representation, and throughout the reading the reader

encounter the shoes.

The first of eleven, the introductory chapter explains the basic Multiple Intelligence theory, as outlined by Howard Gardner in *Frames of mind*. According to the theory, each person is born with

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Book REVIEWS

all eight intelligences. This introductory chapter describes how they may be modified. There are four possible stages of intelligence development, the development depending on environmental factors. These stages, as well as teacher modification and the elements of a brain-compatible classroom are found in chapter one.

The eight middle chapters are devoted to the intelligences individually. Each chapter addresses career choices for those who are well developed in the particular intelligences and outlines example lessons. Also addressed are eleven often-asked questions, such as "What is the developmental path for this intelligence?" . How is this intelligence developed

in other cultures?", and "How can this intelligence be used for problem solving?".

The final chapters discuss integration of the Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom and the grading dilemma. The section by section, based on need. Teachers K-12 will find applicable information in a clear manner.

Review: Reinventing English: Teaching in the Contact Zone by John Gaughan

Reviewed By
KELLY TYREE

The author, John Gaughan, teaches English at a high school outside Cincinnati, Ohio. He consults and presents through the Ohio Writing Project, the National Writing Project, and at the NCTE annual convention. Gaughan's teaching experience, not unlike most teachers, began with strict adherence to a controlled curriculum that kept students comfortable and structured. Gaughan sought to offer his students more. Working from the premise that schools must address societal problems and prepare students for life, as well as college, Gaughan instigated methods that have worked in his classroom. Focusing on appreciation and empathy, Gaughan relates how he facilitates his

students' explorations of differences by beginning with challenging assumptions and moving from identifying prejudice to misinformation of cultural representations, gives specific teaching strategies/activities for explorations, and places all of these issues into context for the teacher/reader.

Identity is very important to young people. A sense of belonging and security may be established as they attempt to fit in. However, when certain assumptions cause dissonance and/or exacerbate the insecurity, questions must be answered and concepts analyzed. The book begins with a series of questions that show how certain concepts or issues may be assumed by individuals about other people simply because the majority of people the individuals know

or the individual themselves hold certain beliefs. To facilitate the students to think outside of their own comfort zone, Gaughan discussed a book that he reads to his students and then an assignment that imitates this writing. The objective is to explore and share their own worlds and environments while at the same time discussing differences. This activity seems to give students the idea and opportunity to learn that other circumstances exist outside of their own environments and convictions. After this initial introduction, Gaughan provides a chapter each for commonly held prejudices and stereotypes. The author approaches the topics of racial, sexual, and cultural prejudice. He discusses pervasive beliefs he sees in his classes and gives specific activities

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KELLY TYREE teaches at Hart County High School in Munfordville. Tyree is a Writing Project 16 fellow.

designed to help students visualize, contextualize, and share thoughts and feelings. He uses case studies and specific examples of how students' thoughts and beliefs have been affected by the exploration of uncomfortable issues. Gaughan seems to count success not only as changing a student's mind about controversial issues, but also as opening a student's mind to controversial issues.

Gaughan offers usable strategies and activities that he deems effective in stimulating debate, analysis/interpretation of feelings, and forums for sharing. The four corners debate allows students to choose a position (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) concerning a particular issue. Once the students decide, they jot down notes that best reflect their opinions then they align themselves in the four corners of the room with like minded peers. With guidelines and etiquette, the students discuss their opinions focusing on why they believe as they do. Some students may choose, after the discussions, to move from one group to another; however, they must prepare to explain why they moved. In the end the students reflect in writing again. This activity includes discussion,

debate, analysis, interpretation, and sharing. Gaughan also uses writing to allow students to organize their thoughts in pre-writing and the students write multi-genre papers, character sketches, poems, and essays to continue analyzing and interpreting. All of these strategies seem useful and practical for learning and assessing learning, as well as including writing.

Gaughan's concluding chapter serves to discuss specific student success stories and the pitfalls of attempting to reach students in the ways he outlined in the preceding chapters. Teachers may hesitate to implement the concepts and strategies in efforts to not offend and avoid conflict with administrators, parents, and/or students. However, the overriding question, for Gaughan's perspective, is won't students be spared the conflict in the long run? He further clarifies that most objections are not raised by students, but by parents, administrators, and board members. Therefore, he urges teachers who venture on this path less traveled to prepare a ready argument that includes the consideration of long term sustained thinking and thematic context rather than simply teaching strategies.

Poet?

Within the austere gray-lined walls
of this columned room
I postulate
Will I the master writer become?
Nestled among a scholarly throng
with common goals
to write
to teach
to inspire!

An Atypical Morning By Katy Cecil

In the morning I pace back and forth
between the aisles of sleepy-eyed
children
What possible good can my self-
recrimination do either of us
now that they are taking the CATS
test?
On the wall above the door, the only
escape hatch from this torture
the clock hands, like their maniacal
sadists,
creep excruciatingly towards
"TIME!"

Trapeze By Ann Nance

Traipsing back and forth,
I dodge the clutter strewn about
the years.
Am I halfway home?
Mother's weary sigh wafts
heavily,
Deciding the outcome of this
balancing act.

PARENTAL Involvement

Barren County High getting parents involved at school

Parents Offering Portfolio Support

By
LAURA HOUCHENS

People love free stuff: pens wherever you can pick them up, chicken on toothpicks at the mall, government cheese, and the list goes on. To continue this great tradition of free goods and to encourage parent involvement, Barren County High School offered door prizes and an all-you-can-eat cookie bar at their first ever POPS, Parents Offering Portfolio Support, on Thursday, April 11, 2002.

As with most great ideas, the premise was stolen from someone else—a great thinker from Writing Project XV shared her knowledge of POPS with the rest of us in a group discussion. I have wanted to institute it since then, and it just had not worked.

The stars were finally aligned correctly this year for POPS to work at BCHS. Although I don't think my principal would have said no in any instance, my request came at a particularly opportune time. She had just received the results of our voluntary audit and one of the areas of need was parent involvement. This, of course, was a perfect occasion to involve parents and hopefully raise our portfolio scores as well (students would have added interest knowing their parents would be reading their work). What better way to involve parents than with writing portfolios

and free stuff? When I went to the principal with the idea, she immediately agreed and even volunteered funds for the project (i.e. free stuff).

The principal was just the first step. Next on the list were my students. Their immediate reaction was, "My parents read my portfolio? Now they'll know what I'm thinking!" Slowly I made them understand that surely they would want to share one of the major projects of their senior English class with the people who gave them life. Finally, there were a few nods. I pulled the rest of them in when I mentioned, you got it, the free stuff—not only for their parents, but for them too. At the mention of money and free cookies, their eyes glazed and they agreed to get their parents to attend, all except the Keebler kid, but he agreed to come anyway.

Knowing my high school seniors hadn't successfully delivered a paper from school to their parents since their elementary days, I sent a letter to each parent, personally inviting them to come, read, and offer suggestions and support to their child concerning their writing and to register for the ever-popular door prizes. I requested that the parents RSVP by a particular date, but that did not work very well. Most called on the day of the event or just showed up that night.



Barren County High English teacher Laura Houchens consults with a student and parent at POPS.

After the principal and my students were convinced (it goes without saying that my fellow teachers always approved), the hardest part was getting the free stuff. After having promised the goods, I now set about making good on my promise. I must admit, however, that the businesses in Glasgow were all very generous—gift certificates, savings bonds, flower arrangements, candles, picture frames, handpainted glass, screwdrivers; we finally managed to have about twelve parent gifts and two student gifts. More could have probably been acquired, but time and my energy ran out. Before I visited the businesses, I prepared an outline of POPS's goals and activities on school letterhead for their information. Although few took the time to read the whole paper at the time, they did keep it for their records.

On the night of April 11, there were three senior

teachers who participated in POPS—Kelley Ross, Honors English IV teacher, Rhonda Simpson, resource and collaboration English IV teacher, and I, regular English IV teacher. Our portfolios were basically complete and ready for scoring. They could still be changed, of course, after considering the suggestions of their parents. I made available to parents the Holistic Scoring Guide as well as several of the high-end portfolios for them to compare their child's portfolio. I explained to each parent the contents of the portfolio and the work that we had engaged in to get it to the point of completion.

Each of the three teachers had students and parents to attend. Some parents laughed; some cried, but all of them were proud. They had no idea their child could compile such a body of work. It was thrilling and rewarding as a teacher to see students who rarely get any attention

News, Notes & Accolades

by school officials to be doted on by such proud parents.

In all, we had about 15 sets of parents to attend POPS. This is not a huge number, but we were pleased for the first year. Despite this small number, we were consistently busy from 5 to 7 pm talking to each parent and student, welcoming, explaining, and sharing. We received several notes afterwards from parents thanking us for the opportunity to read their child's portfolio.

We gave away all the door prizes including some pens, pads, and bumper stickers that were donated by the principal. Everyone who came ended up with some free stuff. We didn't have any government cheese or chicken on a toothpick, but our cookies and pens worked just fine. The parents came expecting just to read through their child's work, eat some cookies, and leave, but what they received was one final fulfilling chance to participate in their senior's high school education.

Laura Houchens teaches junior and senior English at Barren County High. Houchens is a Writing Project 15 fellow.

Jon Frederick retires after 34 years of teaching

Jon Frederick retired after 34 years of teaching. Frederick will become an adjunct faculty member at Lindsey Wilson College and at Somerset Community College in the fall. He will also become a consultant for SREB (Southern Region Education Board) and will be doing some consulting for them. He will also be available to do consulting should anyone desire to contact him at his home email: jefred@kih.net.

Moss Middle School conducts summer project for students

Moss Middle School conducted its first ever Summer Writing Project for recommended incoming 7th grade students. The program ran from 8:00-11:30 each day from July 15th through the 18th. During that time each day, students learned various tips and strategies to help improve their writing, worked on a new type or style of writing, and they even discovered more about themselves as writers.

Students participating in this program will not only have a head start on writing for their 7th grade year, but they will also become familiar with Moss Middle School before the school year begins.

Michelle Pedigo joins MetLife Resources, Inc.

Michelle Pedigo, Project 7, left her post as Director of Secondary Instruction with Barren County Schools to begin work with MetLife Resources, Inc., as Manager of Affinity Relations, on August 1, 2002. She is working out of her home, traveling across the state, and since this is a national position, across the states as well.

"The decision to move into the corporate world was not an easy one, but I see

this as an opportunity to bring resources from MetLife into school districts and as a chance to educate the corporate world about education," Pedigo said. "The company assured me I would not be selling products but I would be increasing MetLife's visibility with educators, which can produce several partnerships that will be lucrative for us all, I hope. Because this position has an 'educational slant,' I was able to venture out, and we'll see what happens in a couple of years.

"Thanks to all those who over the years have been great colleagues in education. I look forward to continuing to work with you."

Tammy Stephens recognized at EKU awards banquet

Although it probably won't seem so special to my WKU colleagues (sorry guys!) I was recently honored by the Eastern Kentucky University Department of English at an awards banquet. My fiction piece, "Over the Bridge" was chosen as winner in Graduate Fiction division in their annual writing contest. The guest speaker was Crystal Wilkinson, author of *Blackberries, Blackberries*.

— Tammy Stephens

Laura Houchens named BCHS Teacher of the Year

Laura Houchens was recently given the 2001-2002 Barren County High School Teacher of the Year Award.

Submit your news, notes, and accolades today

If you have news, notes, and accolades that you would like to share with other Writing Project fellows, please e-mail the information to Newsletter Editor Jason Dodson at jdodson@cland.k12.ky.us.

Writing Project 17 Fellows, Summer 2002

Sara Appleby, Daviess County Middle
Vivian Baker, T.C. Cherry Elementary
Patti Bucklew, Butler County Middle
Rebecca Burnett, Elizabethtown High
Byron Darnall, Bowling Green High
Franklin Foster, Allen County Scottsville
Kelly Fulkerson, T.K. Stone Middle
Alison Hackley, Garyson County High
Clarissa Hurt, Warren East Middle
Kim Jones, Western Elementary
Lori Jones, Bristow Elementary
Marsha Kerr, Moss Middle
Katherine Ledford, New Highland
Elementary
Anita Lowe, Richardsville Elementary
Vanessa McGehee, Longest Elementary
Donna McPherson, J.E. Bazzell Middle
Travis Meserve, Bowling Green High
Eve Meyer, Russellville High
Laura Miller, Meade County High
Mary Lois Roberts, Breckinridge High



Cynthia Starr, Adairville Elementary
Carol Stayton, Taylor County High
Susan Walters, Union Chapel Elementary

Co-Directors: Gaye Foster, Mollie Wade,
and Judy Whitson

Writing Project Mini-Workshop Fellows



Charlotte Asaad, Memorial Elementary
Sandy Ashley, Central City Elementary
Sandra Bridges, T.C. Cherry
Carrie Bunch, Barren County High
Rexanna Chapman, Glasgow High

Julie S. Coffey, Bristow Elementary
Winifred Cohron, Drakes Creek Middle
Cara Cox, Cub Run Elementary
Carolyn Cunningham, White Plains
Elementary
Ginger Crain, Clarkson Elementary
Jennifer Gonzalez, Moss Middle
Eleanor Grant, McLean County Middle
Larissa Haynes, Warren East High
Allen Hunley, Muhlenberg South High
Jenny Porter, Greenwood High
Rhonda Smith, Richardsville Elementary
Cheri Sneed, Allen County Primary
Renee Spry, Drakes Creek Middle
Crystal Thompson, Larue County High
Lori Williams, Barren County Middle

Co-Directors: Sylvia Abell, Jane Labadie,
and Kaye Spear

Confirmation, Affirmation, Determination!

By
JANE KIRBY

On February 8th and 9th, in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, I participated in the KCTE/LA Conference—a whirlwind tour that began and ended with a flourish. It wasn't just the dynamic presenters, new ideas and products, or the vast expanse of the Drawbridge Inn that made the conference a success. What I took away from the experience was a feeling that my profession matters, that what I do is important, and that others recognize that importance. I left with determination to try harder to contribute to the education of public school students in Kentucky.

Ralph Fletcher was inspiring! Some teachers prefer to be taught by other classroom teachers, reasoning that they can relate, but I hold the opposite view. Give me someone who is famous and fabulous! His first presentation, in which he discussed nonfiction writing, confirmed many ideas that I had found in my research on the subject. I agreed with his statements that “informational writing has value,” and that “kids should sound like kids.” The examples of letters from kids and his sharing of his books affirmed his conclusions. I liked his ideas for focusing within a topic, and for “playing” with information before writing about it.

Fletcher's instructions and suggestions for the “writer's notebook” made me determined to incorporate this tool for writing in my classroom

beginning with the next school year. His statement to “have the innocence or arrogance to write about something you've never written before” quieted my fears about never having anything original to say. His suggestion to “sell” the notebook to boys as a collection was insightful. He was entertaining, informative, and very easy to listen to.

The other keynote speakers, Dianne Aprile and Melissa Fourney, were just as inspiring as Fletcher. Ms. Aprile, quiet and subdued, used personal examples to illustrate her key points. Her references to her Catholic school upbringing, her love of reading, and the influences on her writing served to illuminate her statement that “we all see things through our own lens.”

How could Melissa Fourney not uplift me? Her humor and cheerfulness would be sufficient to make anyone glad to be a teacher, but in addition to the playfulness, she gave us excellent tips for encouraging writing and learning in our classrooms. She described writing as three big C's: content; the most important part, what you say; creativity, how you say something; and conventions, grammar rules, which are not as important as the other two. She brought along props, which included pipes for listening, and paper plates cut in half, which became individual thesauri. I came away from her session wanting to learn more about “razzle, dazzle reading and writing.”

Although “regular” classroom

teachers taught the other sessions I attended, I learned from all of them. Highlighting models is a strategy used to help students write transactive pieces. The artistic response process, adapted from a storyteller and dancer, as a means of responding to others' writing, teaches students to think of themselves and each other as artists. I learned a strategy to teach students to use dialogue effectively for idea development in another session. I participated in the process with other teachers and could readily see how it would be effective in teaching students to use dialogue. Finally, in one other session, I was amazed by a math teacher's presentation on using writing in math class. It affirmed my belief that writing really does belong in all classrooms.

From the book sellers to the information sharers, this conference was truly about confirming the teacher as an integral unit of society, affirming our belief in ourselves and what we do, and determining that students in Kentucky will be the recipients of the best education in the country. As for me, I came away from the conference determined to be as Ralph Fletcher says, “the teacher who lights the spark.”

*Jane Kirby is a
Writing Project 16 fellow
and teaches at
Henry Moss Middle
School in Bowling Green.*