

INSIDE THIS EDITION

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**Unexpected
Holiday**

By Mollie Wade

Morning ritual interrupted
 by the Polar Report
 Chris Allen bearing good tidings,
 Warren's white
 Tickers at the bottom of
 the screen list all the lucky ones
 Good Morning America
 Hot coffee, endless warm-ups
 Pajamas 'till noon

Yawning children
 wandering downstairs
 Real breakfast
 Candyland, Sorry, Monopoly,
 Crazy Eights
 Ouija Board
 Phone calls from Daddy,
 jealous at work

Spaghettios or grilled cheese?
 Wrapping up like Eskimos
 Toboggans, scarves, boots
 Join the neighborhood gang
 Snow men, snow angels,
 snow forts, snow fun

Inside again, too soon
 Hot chocolate, buttered toast
 "You pick up the mess
 I'll make vegetable soup."
 Comfort for Daddy
 He's worked all day.

*Mollie Wade teaches English
 at Warren Central High
 School in Bowling Green.
 She is a WP2 fellow and serves
 as a co-director for
 the summer institute.*

Notes from the Director: Happy 2002

I hope you've had a pleasant, enjoyable vacation, and perhaps, time to read a good book! 2002 already looks to be a good year for us with KCTE/LA in February and an outstanding poetry workshop, tentatively scheduled in April.

However, this doesn't mean 2001 was a dud, especially for those Project teachers who received mini-grants for book groups, travel, and research. Specifically, Thad Elmore, Misti Logsdon, Ann Nance, Shannon Mills, and Lynn Claycomb received grants to create book groups in their schools; Sherry St. Claire and Ann Nance received grants for first-time attendance at NCTE, Baltimore while Stacy Kupchella and Sonya Bruce were supported for NCTE, Portland, and Tamara Francis, Kelly Tyree, Ana Pollard, and Jane Kirby received support for attendance at KCTE/LA; and Brenda Roberts and Jan Swisher received teacher-research grants. You'll read about several book groups and NCTE attendance in this newsletter issue, and more reports will follow in later issues.

KCTE/LA looks to be an excellent conference with Ralph Fletcher opening the two-day meeting on February 8, followed by the probable visits of Governor Patton and perhaps even First Lady Laura Bush. This is also the date of our state Writing Project luncheon: please RSVP me if you will be able to join us for this dutch treat lunch and program.

If our Writing Advisory Board approves, we'll have a workshop on teaching and writing poetry in April, led by the poet laureate of Maine and his well-published colleague, David Capella. Baron and David were highly rated by Project teachers at both Morehead State and Northern Kentucky Universities this past summer.

Finally, I ask your help in locating qualified teachers for our seventeenth Writing Project, beginning this June. You know the kind of teacher we're after because you are just such a person! Our website has applications for printing or completion on line: www.wku.edu/wp.

I hope you enjoy this second newsletter produced by editor Jason Dodson. Good reading and teaching . . . throughout 2002!

— John Hagaman

BookREVIEWS

Methods that Matter: Six Structures for a Best Practice Classroom, by M. Bizar and H. Daniels

Reviewed By
THAD ELMORE

Methods that Matter is a resource for teachers at all levels. In this book, Daniels and Bizar discuss six methods that can make any classroom effective and enjoyable. These methods are integrative units, small-group activities, representing to learn, classroom workshop, authentic experiences, and reflective assessment. These six practices will help teachers take their instruction to the next level.

In integrative units, the authors recommend a unit approach or theme. This inquiry-based unit would be planned with the students and would draw on knowledge from all areas of instruction. In the book, Daniels and Bizar take us through the elementary, middle, and high schools. They mention that this type of instruction can take many forms. Writing is a large component in this type of instruction.

Second, the authors discuss small-group activities. Through

this type of instruction the students work together, learn together, and with this the instruction is individualized. The students then place value on learning and writing, which helps the overall comprehension.

The third method is representing to learn. In this type of instruction, students write, use art to help them express investigations, remembering, and applying the information that they have learned. The book discusses the use of this technique in the math classroom while using drawings. Students were able to better understand and comprehend the subject matter.

The fourth type of instruction is the classroom workshop. This was very similar to the writing workshop. The teacher truly serves as a model and a coach for the students who take responsibility for their work. The student has freedom of choice but the responsibility to follow through with the completion of the task. Writing is involved in this as well.

The fifth type is authentic experiences. This method really brings the students and the community together. In the book, the authors mention taking science into the outdoors. A block for science and English studies is blocked together and the classroom is outdoors. They also discuss the use of primary sources to help the students better understand what took place. This can be valuable to help the students understand that they too can make primary sources.

Finally, the book discusses reflective assessment. In this model, the students set goals, self assess, and work with the parents and teachers. The book offers several discussions about standardized tests. They suggest a good balance of assessment to help the student understand and help meet their needs.

This book will be valuable because it is not just about writing. For me, it is important to find something that is as useful as writing in the content area.

THAD ELMORE teaches at Elizabethtown High School in Elizabethtown. Elmore is a Writing Project 16 fellow. JANE KIRBY teaches at Moss Middle School in Bowling Green. Kirby is a Writing Project 16 fellow.

Assessing Writing Across the Curriculum by Charles R. Duke and Rebecca Sanchez

Reviewed By
JANE KIRBY

I spotted the book *Assessing Writing Across the Curriculum* on the last day of the Writing Project. I had just written my proposal for my feature article, which was going to deal with the question of assigning grades for writing, and this title just jumped out at me. I realized I had found what I was looking for.

However, as I began to read the book, the title took on a new meaning.

Was this book really about grading writing in all subject areas?

Flipping through the pages, I found many examples of rubrics for writing in all content areas, but I slowly began to understand that it was not just a collection of assignments and rubrics. I believe the authors intended for the title to stand not just for assessing the writing in all content areas, but also for assessing a school's writing-across-the-curriculum program.

The authors have divided the book into three sections. The first is titled, "Rethinking Our Methods." In the articles in this section, the authors emphasize writing to learn instead of writing to test. They make several valid points including that writing is

thinking, writing in the content areas does not always have to result in a finished product to be useful, and frequent, informal writing helps students handle more extended and difficult writing assignments. Rather than focus on the essay, which students will almost never write outside of school, teachers need to give students the opportunity through writing of making sense of what they are trying to learn and connecting new material with what they already know. Examples of specific, meaningful writing activities, which can be used in many content areas, along with easy ways of assessing the writing, make up the first section. The authors have also included "case studies" from various classrooms to demonstrate the use of writing to learn.

In the second section called "Crafting Assignments and Assessing the Products," several articles describe specific writing projects: in English-journals; in science-lab report and science fair writing; in math-story writing and mathematical essays; and in history, end-of-unit alternatives such as a collage or historical project. Because the assessments involving writing require higher-order thinking skills, teachers can determine to a greater degree of accuracy how much students know about a topic. Through self-assessment,

students are able to correct their own faulty thinking before a grade is assigned, assuring that they will actually learn more.

The final section, "Staff Development" looks at implementing writing-to-learn programs in various schools. By describing the situations in different school settings and examining their progress towards proficiency, the authors evaluate the strategies that work and draw conclusions about successful writing-to-learn programs. A few conclusions that the authors make, include the following: 1) writing needs to be a combination of product and process, with emphasis on communicating to a reader, 2) course content should be viewed as information that will be communicated, 3) students should be assessed on how effectively they communicated that information to a reader, and 4) two areas of emphasis should be prewriting/planning and organization.

As a result of reading this book, I have changed the focus of my feature article. I am motivated by the research and conclusions given by the various authors of the articles that make up *Assessing Writing Across the Curriculum* to try to implement a writing-to-learn program in our school. I believe this is one way to assist us in reaching proficiency by the year 2014.



Portfolio Pal Program Glasgow High School Sophomores and Happy Valley Elementary Fourth Graders

By ROGERLYNNE BRIDDON

Remember the old adage "Necessity is the mother of invention?" Well, never did this idea ring truer for me and my students than when we (my honors English class) were invited to conference with the 4th grade writers at Happy Valley Elementary about their portfolios last spring. When Denise Howard from the elementary school called me to ask if my students were willing to conference, I thought to myself this sounds like a nice Friday afternoon treat for my students. You know, the kind of activity that teenagers view as a "free day". One in which they won't have to think or work too hard.

The meetings were set up so that we could pair the students together to share, then have lunch together, and then share again after lunch. On our first visit, after we got past the first few minutes of how cute 4th graders were, we got down to the business of listening, responding, and questioning. Now, I had done very little

to prepare my students for this other than reviewing the scoring guide. But when the sharing started by the very well prepared 4th graders, my students and I realized we had some challenging work before us. We got through the first meeting okay, but when we returned to my classroom to prepare for our next visit two weeks later, it became apparent to me and my students that we had to take back to the 4th graders some good writing tips and strategies. In short, we had to start thinking in terms of "What's the next best lesson for this writer." Several of my students were feeling responsible for their particular child, but not really ready to go back without being armed with some specific strategies. So we worked for a few days borrowing from Barry Lane and Carl Anderson and our own Sylvia Abell.

We went back armed with the concepts of snapshots, thoughtshots, exploding a moment, and shrinking a century. This time things went much better for my

students and for the 4th graders as well. As I walked through the room and listened to conversations, I felt that all the kids were really engaged in some meaningful conferences. Although we didn't see the final products, I felt that I and my students learned some valuable lessons. Many of these lessons I knew but had forgotten about.

1. One of the best ways to get students to internalize writing strategies is to teach them to someone else.

2. A good way to show students that writing is really high level thinking is to revise with someone else.

3. A great way to have fun on a Friday afternoon while engaging students in productive writing is to provide the setting and a little training so students may communicate and collaborate with someone else.

Our first conferences for this year are coming up on the first Friday in February. Fortunately for the students, this year I know a little better what to expect, how to prepare, and how to stand back, observe and learn.

ROGERLYNNE BRIDDON teaches at Glasgow High School in Glasgow. Briddon is a Writing Project 3 fellow. ANNE NANCE is a Writing Project 6 fellow.

Practicing What They Preach

By ANNE NANCE

"Have you read your chapter yet?"

"What will they ask us about the reading?"

"Like we don't have enough to do! One more assignment!"

Sounds like a typical group of students placed in reading circles, doesn't it? Yet this group of readers is very atypical. Practicing what they preach, Ohio County Schools' principals are participating in a book club during the Principals' Meetings each month! Superintendent Butch Canty, Assistant Superintendents, Ruth Fields, Soretta Ralph, and Buddy Shrewsbury, Special Education Director Jan Everly, Carol Alvey, Preschool Supervisor, Title I Coordinator Marie Bassett, and even Finance Officer Brian Decker take part in the book club with the principals of the ten schools in the county.

Principals read the assigned chapters in What Really Matters for Struggling Readers by Dr. Richard Allington, and discuss their reactions in small and large groups directed by Bassett. Activities such as Hoyt's V.I.P., Frayer's Constructing

Meaning," and dots on chart paper are utilized to summarize the groups' reflections.

Several principals are now sharing the book with their staffs. Scott Lewis, Principal of Wayland Alexander Elementary, immediately asked his staff to identify all students reading below grade level. He offered a challenge to his teachers. "We have the information; now what are we going to do with it?" In addition to reading interventions already in place, teachers are implementing reading emphasis groups to better serve their struggling readers.

The consensus is that the Principals Book Club has been a great success. Allington's elementary based book is applicable through middle school. It teaches four main research-based reading concepts:

1. In order to become readers, students must read a lot!
2. Students must read books that they can read.
3. Students need to develop fluency.
4. Students need to build thoughtful literacy, not just developing comprehension,

but connections. Connecting text to self, text to world, and text to text.

Allington gives his interpretations of current, effective reading research followed by a chapter on each of the four concepts above. He ends with how to begin improving classroom instruction through "fostering the development of teacher expertise."

This first book is completed in January, and the group looks forward to another selection! If you listen in on members' conversations now, you will hear a difference.

"Buy books! We need more books on all levels for our children!"

"Hey, look! I have more information highlighted than you!"

"How can I use this information to improve my students' reading abilities and joy for reading?"

Allington, Richard L. What Really Matters for Struggling Readers. New York: Longman. 2001.

Aunt Georgia's Garden by Midge Krebs

Aunt Georgia's garden was located between the backdoor to the kitchen and the two-seater outhouse. A white lattice work provided a privacy screen

for those who actually went to the outhouse to "do their business." One could have otherwise been strolling down the path to see the daisies or other flowers flourishing here.

Many secrets were told between cousins as we sat in the outhouse

together, giggling at the smell still seeping up from the pits below despite meticulous maintenance by Uncle Bud (who would end his worklife as head of the city waterworks). Wasps plagued us there occasionally and we'd race out to the security of the screened porch of the house. Not many greater fears did we have then than a sting on a bare butt.

I can still see Aunt Georgia with her white hair drawn up behind her head in a bun, smiling with calm satisfaction at the little buffer of beauty she'd created between the clean order of her kitchen and the base necessity of the outhouse. Maybe that's one of the most important purposes of beauty — to create a bridge between the illusion of control and the raw reality of life.

Market Aisle By Midge Krebs

I seek out brown eggs in the grocery store's sterile shelves
and see Grandma in her day dress beneath an azure sky
guiding us to the Rhode Island Red's nests
hidden under dark shadows of the hen house rafters
to scoop up smooth brown eggs still warm in the musty straw.
I look longingly at the crusty yellow-brown Bosque pears
Piled in a pyramid in the super market's bins
Remembering a scattered scattered sea of fragrantly decomposing
pears

Buzzing with wasps

Under the three sentinel trees at the orchard's edge

Awash with light from the fields beyond.

Abundance and love,

Unchilled by the years.

Midge Krebs is a Writing Project 13 fellow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Denise Reetzke, Writing Project V, has been informed that one of her students at Franklin-Simpson Middle School, Lacey Steele, was recognized in the "2001 Promising Young Writers Program for Eighth-Grade Students," sponsored by the NCTE. She received a Certificate of Recognition and was one of only six students selected from Kentucky.

■ Melinda Miller Campbell, Writing Project IX and teacher at Barren County High School, was honored twice for Outstanding Educator Awards from the Governor's Scholars Program this summer.

■ Teaching the Art of Poetry Workshop, a renewal workshop with David Cappella and Baron Wormser for WKU Writing Project Fellows at all grade levels, will be held Saturday, April 20, at Western's South campus on Nashville Road from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Preregistration is required. You may register on-line from the WKU Writing Project home page and send your check to the WKU Writing Project, English Department, Western Kentucky University, One Big Red Way, Bowling Green, KY 42101. Fax number: 745-6938. The fee is \$45, which includes a copy of Cappella and Wormser's widely praised book, a hot buffet lunch and morning and afternoon snacks.

Book Review: *Never Too Early to Write* by Bea Johnson

Reviewed By
MISTI 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 for 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.

Misti is a WP 16 fellow.

WP Fellow serves on Teacher Exchange Planning Team

Ever since Donna Vincent participated in the NWP teacher exchange by attending the Southwest Georgia Writing Project in 1998, she has been a member of the NWP Teacher Exchange (TEX) Planning Team. The responsibilities of the team include soliciting interest in participation and analyzing and revising the exchange process.

This year, the team was to meet in Berkeley again, but the meeting

was rescheduled due to the Sept. 11 bombings. The meeting took place in Atlanta on Oct. 20. Members of the team include the following:

Pat Fox of the Coastal Writing Project of Savannah, GA

Anne Watson of the NWP of Vermont

Jacquelyne Wesson of the Mobile Bay WP of Alabama

Alisa Daniel of Southwest Georgia

Writing Project

Donna Vincent of Western Ky University Writing Project

The team revised the application packet and assigned sites to solicit interest for the coming summer institute exchange.

The next meeting is scheduled for Baltimore. There will be a table in the exhibits hall to promote the NWP TEX.

Donna is a WP 5 fellow.

Tribute to Beverly Brown

By JAN SWISHER

At the end of July, just before school started again, I had one of those rare moments when I was actually in the car by myself without the usual distractions of noisy children or a blaring radio. The sun was shining and had I lowered my window, I am sure I would have heard birds singing. What I did observe were two butterflies merrily chasing each other with their sunshine yellow wings almost translucent in the brightness of the day being lifted here and there by the soft wind and by their own volition. Later I wondered had they been able to speak, what would have been their recollections of the moment. Would they have reminisced about the beauty of the day and how the enemy had approached unnoticed as they were caught up in the joys of everyday living? Because, regardless, my encounter with them was very short; almost as quickly as I was struck by their beauty, they were struck by my windshield. Their broken bodies flew lifelessly over the roof of my car and all that remained to mark their beauty was my memory of the brief moment of recognition.

After I physically cringed with the unexpected harsh end of something so beautiful, my mind quickly went to my brief encounter of a fellow teacher, Beverly Brown, with whom I had shared the month of June involved with a writing project. In my memory, I had stored several fleeting glimpses

of Beverly. The first time I ever saw her; in my mind's eye, she wore a loose flowing sort of garment, giving her that "artistic" look, that added to her natural grace and enhanced her cultural heritage. Her dark hair was pulled straight back and clasped at the back exposing a prominent aristocratic forehead that glistened in its smooth caramel coloring. Her eyes twinkled with interest as she sat quietly listening to the others talk around her until she was joined by a smaller version of herself. I found out later the perfectly groomed little girl was Beverly's granddaughter whose everyday care rested on her grandmother's shoulders.

Another vivid glimpse of Beverly is of her uncertainty as a writer as she sat in the classroom — a social studies teacher in the middle of all of us English teachers. Then came the day during a fellow's presentation when Beverly wrote the first piece that she was truly proud of. It spoke of tradition calling out to her in the form of a carefully written heartfelt poem. Pride made Beverly's serene face move to a contented smile. She knew victory at that moment.

Her generosity is permanently etched in my mind with the scene of the entire writing project family on the floor with paper, scissors, markers, feathers, colorful tissue paper, glue, ribbon and who knows what else strewn here and there. There sat Beverly working with her partner next to the huge box of art supplies that she had gone

to her own classroom the night before and collected for us to use. She so freely and hospitably encouraged each of us to take what we wanted from her treasure.

One of the last pictures in my mind's eye is of our high school group presenting a skit—a take off of *Snow White*. Beverly's character, although a writing draft, was a takeoff on grumpy and I can still see the frame where "Snow White" stopped in front of her; Beverly jumped out so full of life and said "Wha ju talking about?" in her best rendition of Gary Coleman on "Different Stokes." She gave us all a good laugh. This time her contented smile moved to barely concealed laughter.

My encounter with Beverly was oh so brief, because less than two months later as I pull into the funeral home parking lot, again a rare moment of being alone in the car, I wish for a friend to walk with into the chilly rooms ahead where only my memory, and others like me, can mark the beauty of our encounter of such a sweet soul, our friend and writing family member, Beverly Brown.

Beverly Brown, a Writing Project 16 fellow, died August 20, 2001. Jan Swisher is a Writing Project 16 fellow.

Moss Middle working with elementary students

By KIM JANES

Moss Middle School seventh graders are working with 3 of our feeder schools (Lost River, Warren Elementary, and Rockfield) to assist 6th graders in the areas of writing, open response, and preparing them for middle school.

Once a month I take 30 7th grade students (10 per elementary school) to the elementary schools to work on portfolio pieces or open response questions. So far, the feedback has been wonderful. The 6th grade teachers have been impressed with the quality

of the revisions on portfolio pieces.

This month the elementary students came to Moss to work on open response strategies. Students were pleased with tips they learned and seemed eager to share with their classmates when they returned to school. Our hopes for this program are to help students improve writing and open response skills as well as help them feel more comfortable upon entering the 7th grade the next year. A typical session usually goes as follows:

I will take my 7th grade mentors by bus to Lost River from 9-

10. The next group of mentors will go to Rockfield from 11-12. The last group will go to Warren Elementary from 1-2. As you can see, it is a full day for me, but it has been well worth it.

All students involved are keeping a journal of their experiences for each session. I hope to use this feedback to improve and keep this project going for next year as well.

Kim Janes is a Writing Project 12 fellow.

IS THERE A DISTINGUISHED POET IN YOUR SCHOOL WHO DESERVES RECOGNITION?

On May 4th at 10 a.m., Western Kentucky University's English Department in conjunction with the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts and the Kentucky Department of Education will sponsor a reading and award ceremony at Western for distinguished poets, grades kindergarten through 12th. The poems selected will be published in an anthology, presented free of charge to students and their participating teachers. Students, parents, and teachers are invited to attend this celebration.

We would like to recognize an outstanding student poet in each of the 200 schools in our Region Two Service Area. Writing Cluster Leaders and/or Writing Consultants from each building are asked to nominate one student per school and fax the attached information sheet to Sylvia Abell, Region

Two Service Center Writing Consultant, at 270-746-7071. Deadline: March 26th.

Each student and teacher will be recognized at the award ceremony, and after a small group session of readings, students will receive a certificate of accomplishment from Western Kentucky University.

Don't put off the selection process! Identify your student ASAP and send us a copy of the poem along with the attached information sheet. Many students are doing a truly outstanding job of writing and—along with their teachers—deserve to be recognized.

1. Name of School:
2. Cluster Leader/Writing Consultant Who Nominated Student:
3. Sponsoring Teacher and Grade Level:
4. Student and Grade Level:
5. Name of Parents and/or

Guardian:

6. Number of Guests Likely to Attend the Reading:

Note: Please fax a copy of the poem to be read (3-5 minute maximum—excerpts may be needed) and the Permission Slip for reading and publication.

Celebration of Poetry: K-12:
PERMISSION SLIP

I agree to read (or have someone I designate) read the poem "_____ " on May 4th at Western and have it published in an anthology.

Student's Name (as it will appear in the program):

Student's Signature:

Parent/Guardian Name (as it will appear in the program):

Parent's Signature: :

Date:

Please fax this information to 270-746-7071

NCTE Fall 2001
By Anne Naace

I boarded the plane anxiously, unable to remove the fears growing from the events of September 11. Passengers boarded, smiling, wearing bits of red, white and blue with pride. Flight attendants joked and encouraged as the plane lifted. After a brief flight, we landed onto a cloudless, sun filled runway. What a beautiful day to arrive in Old Baltimore! What an adventure! I looked forward to seeing the city for the first time.

Streets bustling with energy
Strolling pigeons capitalizing
on tourists
People waiting at crosswalks
Masts of ships resting in
harbor
Sidewalks, cafes, enticing
aromas
Taxis, shops, vendors,
As far as you could see
Then I looked up . . .
Gothic architecture laced the
sky
Time stood still- moved
backwards
History waiting above Charles
Street
High above the heads of
progress

Lessons from Time waiting to
be learned
This was the real Baltimore

Inspiration was all around me, I wanted to sit down and write. I loved the smells, sights and tastes of this lovely old city. I wandered down the streets toward the Convention Center in a dream like state, worried that the rush of the conference would stifle my ideas for writing.

Lucille Clifton spoke at the opening banquet of NCTE/LA Fall 2001, and I was enthralled! Her lulling voice and stirring words made me hungry to read more of her writings. "I have learned to be available to poems, and when they come to me, I accept them." She encouraged teachers to share poetry with students, "Poetry speaks for those who have not yet found their voice to speak." I bought two of her anthologies and spent the rest of the evening reading and enjoying the night view from my room.

Crab balls, crab cakes, crab imperial, blue crab, creamy crab soup. . . Do I sound like Bubba from "Forrest Gump?" The food in Baltimore was scrumptious, tasty! I feasted on these wonderful crustaceans every meal, soaking in the charming harbor atmosphere.

The sessions were excellent and

applicable! From Steven Layne's "Books That Kids Can't Put Down" to Beverly Gallagher's "Gathering and Growing: Writer's Notebooks," I found new ideas, strategies and motivation. Instead of stifling my desire to write, each session gave new ideas and lines of poetry! IDEAS Plus and a tee shirt were the bounty from the breakfast for newcomers. Could it get any better?

Squeezing into a seat at the Saturday evening session, I looked around in awe at writing heroes. Harvey Daniels, Sandra Cisneros, Joan Bauer, and Caroline Cooney shared ideas for building on students' conversations as a stimulus for writing and reflection. I know students will relate to Cisneros's advice. "Write as you talk to someone in your pajamas. Revise as if your enemy will read it!"

In this open setting, the tragedy of September 11 was remembered personally. Cisneros encouraged teachers to integrate art for students with her message: we need art now more than ever to heal.

I am still writing, thinking, digesting all the sights, sounds, tastes, and experiences of N.C.T.E. Fall 2001 in Baltimore, Maryland. The impact on students' and my writing will be evidenced through many pages yet to be written.

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