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FOCUS: TEACHING WRITING.

LAJM

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

As teachers of the English Language Arts we have always been interested in the teaching of writing and "Getting It Write." For years we have attempted to share our excitement about the power of writing with our colleagues. Now the anticipation of the first Writing MEAP and High School Writing Proficiency Test has raised the level of concern over the teaching of writing across the state. We hope this issue will be of help to those new to writing instruction, as well as to all of us who look to our colleagues to inform us of alternative ways of teaching and thinking about writing.

The articles demonstrate many aspects of writing practice as well as the issues that surround it. More than twenty teachers from pre-kindergarten through college describe a wide variety of practices including letter writing, writing to learn, reading/writing connections, I-Search papers, peer conferencing, portfolios, celebrations of writing, and what happens in a writing center. But far more than mere descriptions of what works, these articles show what happens as teachers wrestle with converting theory into practice, letting us in on what's involved in both the struggles and successes of the teaching of writing.

We lead off with an interview of the nationally known author Sue Harrison who talks about writing and herself as a writer. We hope teachers will be able to share ideas from this interview with their students.

Following the interview, the articles are arranged by levels beginning with the elementary grades and proceeding through middle school, high school, and college. Then Ellen Brinkley takes a close look at the MEAP and Writing Proficiency Test, while Chrenka, Kuzma, and Vasicek question the testing process. We conclude this issue with our columns by Susan Sturock, Jennifer Ochoa, Mark Shaheen, and Peter Butts.

Fred Barton

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