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This issue of The Wisconsin English Journal is devoted to the discussion of the challenges and rewards of the teaching of English to diverse learners who are increasingly populating our United States classrooms. We are seeking the stories, research, questions, and puzzlings of the K-12 classroom teacher as well as college and university teachers. The emphasis of this issue is a discussion of the teaching of English of learners who are of low economic status, students of color, learners who have non-English language backgrounds, and/or are from culturally diverse backgrounds.

We particularly seek the work of teachers and researchers who share encouraging ways of linking research and practice in teaching English to diverse populations. Especially welcome are articles from those who have reconceptualized their teaching and research in relation to a diverse student population.

Questions authors may wish to address include: Who are diverse learners? How have we devised such categories and to what ends?/What is literacy? How do schools deny or foster literacy?/What new kinds of assessment might we devise that increase the likelihood of our understanding of diverse students' achievements?/What teaching and learning in English language arts is required for the twenty-first century if the predicted nearly forty-percent of public school learners of color are to succeed?

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Deadline: August 1, 1990
be good for high school students. Most students are introduced
to haiku at an early grade level, but then the genre is usually
dropped as being too elementary. After reading several books and
having subscribed to a half dozen haiku magazines, it was clear
to me that this idea was way off target. Haiku not only provides
a creative outlet for students, but it also encourages them to
look very closely at their surroundings and to appreciate simple
details. From a very pragmatic point of view, haiku provides an
excellent lesson in the use of concrete details and concise
language. Students also learn objectivity and the importance of
sensory images.

In introducing my students to haiku, I used the same books and
magazines that had gotten me hooked (see appendix). The basic
principle of haiku is simple: it is an attempt to capture a
specific moment of emotional or intellectual awareness. The
author tries to capture the exact objects/images that triggered
that brief flash of awareness. Haiku can be compared to a
snapshot. Using as few words as possible, the poets record the
details that their senses have just perceived. Haiku writers
should not preach, whine, or editorialize. The objects say all
that is needed. If the poem is successful, then the readers are
able to feel as though they are standing in the shoes of the
poet, experiencing the very same sensation. Students are
encouraged to be very free in their choice of words. Strict form
requirements are waived. (Actually, the 5-7-5 syllable pattern
generally associated with haiku is not common among modern haiku
writers. Most haiku range in length from twelve to seventeen
syllables, and even the three-line format is flexible.) With
this background students were ready to begin experimenting.

Positive results appeared immediately. Several students
quickly demonstrated a sharp eye for details. Even during the
first few days, excellent poems were turned in. Students were
asked to share their efforts, and soon student poems were mixed
in with poems written by published poets and used as models for
the rest of the class. Confidence grew rapidly. The format is
simple and nonthreatening, yet the results are very satisfying.

Once the classroom work was accomplished, the publishing task
began. Students were asked to submit their best work for
consideration and possible publication. Only those students who
met the submission deadline were considered. Students were
allowed to enter no more than five poems. There were no
guarantees that the work would be included in the book. Students
had to learn the hard lessons of submission, apprehension, and
possible rejection.

At this point half of the task was over. The students had
gained a pretty solid background in haiku, and they were now
writing their own poems. The next step was to meet with the
printer and discuss the exact details of the book. I met with
Jackie Hefty, a Madison area printer and papermaker. Together we
laid out the plans for the publication. We set our money limit
at four hundred dollars, the amount I had set aside in my budget.
There were many decisions to make: the type of paper to use, the
choice of bindings, use of illustrations, and the number of
copies. We agreed that the book should be authentic Japanese
haiku style, so we selected handmade Japanese paper for the pages
and homemade paper from the printer's own paper studio for the
cover. We also agreed that hand-sewn binding would be best.
Choosing to go with the expensive paper and binding limited the
number of copies that we could afford to print, but we felt that
quality had to come before quantity. The chosen format allowed
for just over twenty poems. Within a few weeks the selected
poems were in the hands of the printer. One of my ninth grade
students agreed to sketch a pair of leaping frogs for the cover
and this drawing was sent to an etching studio to be converted
into a metal plate for printing. By this time the work of the
students and myself was over.

The results of this project was a book called room for a few
more frogs. The title was a reference to Basho's classic poem of
the frog leaping into an old pond. The results were very
gratifying. The public response to the book was very positive.
Francine Porad, poet and editor of Brussels Sprout magazine
called the book "A superb publication!" Robert Spiess, the dean
of American haikuists and the editor of Modern Haiku, wrote the following: "room for a few more frogs is an aesthetic experience—even an aesthetic adventure—from front to back covers. All aspects harmonize, I congratulate you on a singular achievement." The book is currently in the running for book of the year award sponsored by the American Haiku Society.

The project has had some pleasant results. Three of the seniors in the project were among six students recognized nationally in a haiku writing contest. All three have had their poems published in Modern Haiku magazine. I am currently beginning to work on a second collection of student haiku which is tentatively titled a slanted beam of sunlight. The title is from a poem written by one of my current students. Also, I will be presenting a sectional on haiku at this year's WCCE convention.

The second publication to appear during the 1987-88 school year was called Along the Yahara (A Poetic History of the DeForest Area). The poetry in this book was written by ninth graders. The book was funded half through the grant from Dane County and half by the local school district. The grant also cosponsored the residency of poet David Steingass. Mr. Steingass spent almost two weeks tapping into the students' creative juices. He showed them many free-writing and prewriting techniques for overcoming fears and uncertainties. This residency greatly helped ignite the process.

Once the students were ready to write, they were assigned the task of finding information about the early years in DeForest history. They began by brainstorming a list of dozens of possible topics. Then they were divided into small groups to gather the details. Students visited the local historical society and the local library. They also made contact with local senior citizens. Through interviews they put together or collection of notes and details. All information was pooled and made available to everyone in class. Then students began writing. There was a great deal of experimentation. The entire process was spread out over several months. Once poems were written, much time was spent in class going through the "finished" pieces. Peer editing was encouraged. This was a group project, and students were very positive about working together to produce a publication of which they could be proud. The printed version of Along the Yahara was enthusiastically received around the area. Students seemed very pleased to see their poetry going out to the public. Nearly four hundred copies were distributed.

This project was primarily aimed at giving students practical experience in using the writing process. Much emphasis was placed on prewriting techniques and on various ways of revising and editing. The bonus results are that the community has a display at the local library, the historical society, many businesses, and in numerous homes.

The biggest lesson that I have learned from these projects is that for really a minimal amount of money a school district can produce some excellent quality publications. Students not only get the gratification of seeing their words on a printed page, but they also have a positive experience with writing. I have resolved to try to find the time and the funding to publish at least one or two books of student writing each year. At this point I am still on target: I have started work on the second haiku book, and I am also committed to producing a school-wide collection of creative writing.

APPENDIX
(A Beginner's Haiku Library)

BOOKS:
The Autumn Kind (Poems of Issa); (Kodansha International)
The Haiku Anthology by Cor van den Heuvel; (Simon and Schuster)
Haiku Handbook by William Higginson; (McGraw-Hill)
Introduction to Haiku by Harold Henderson; (Doubleday)
Matsuo Basho (The Master Haiku Poet); (Kodansha International)
A NEAR SONNET TO BETTER BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

The weight of gold is not a constant thing,
Nor distance always measure of the road.
Today becomes the past tomorrow;
In our present work, the future is foretold:

To see how deep the field of inner eye,
And feel the twisting dive of growing root;
To taste the wine of osprey, bog, and pine,
To feel the lichen log and draught of glacial breeze;
To feel the pass of talon overhead,
And share the backward tug of star upon its light;
To feel the density of chillness in the frozen air;
To know before the passing, the how if not the where.

Dennis Crowe
Luck, Wisconsin
Maybe not?

This essay represents not only a collegial sharing of ideas and techniques, it is my pilgrimage back into experience. It is that necessary reexamining, restating, and confirming of earlier lessons learned from the strictest of life’s teachers—a rite of passage for anyone serious about their career and its impact on others. To borrow Mr. Hawthorne’s own phrase, this, then, is a twice-told tale.

... One of my first real discoveries as a beginning teacher of composition was to realize how important it is to allocate extended time for selecting a topic worthy of considerable effort. Of course, the writing process today recognizes this, but often I still see writing being assigned after teachers allow for just a few minutes of obligatory brainstorming. This perfunctory approach by teachers to prewriting generally and inevitably produces perfunctory compositions from students.

Two specific techniques which I have found avoid such problems are: (1) to allow students to brainstorm a number of times in a number of ways. Lists, free writes, descriptions, narratives, and dialogues, free verse, etc., all are appropriate to use before students settle on one particular topic. And (2) when possible, to permit students to rewrite a composition an unlimited number of times within a nine week or semester grading period for the opportunity to improve the grade.

The advantage to a series of brainstorm before topic selection is not only in the increased number and variety of forms and the corresponding increase of ideas generated, but also in sheer repetition. Ask successful athletes for their secrets and one answer universally proffered is “reps”—the constant going over of a task or idea until its exact geography is completely internalized. Certainly the geography of the human heart and condition ought to be just as worthy a terrain for exploration and practice as is the scramble block in football.

Taken another way, more time to use free association generally helps produce a greater number of quality associations. Watch contestants battle the clock on a game show such as Win, Lose, or

Draw and this point becomes clear.

The advantage in allowing students to rewrite major compositions an unlimited number of times to improve their grade before a grading deadline is forced upon the entire school also is significant. Obviously, the novelty of the idea sends precisely the right kind of message to vary writers. The fact that most of their previous English teachers did not give students such an opportunity tends to set someone who does in a new and better light. Traditionally, teachers’ use of red ink corrections has been viewed by learners as simply a means to justify the grades assigned—a direct correlation existing in students’ minds between extensive use of corrections and low grades. And from the teachers’ point-of-view, the time and care which went into the written comments which accompany grades usually receive scant attention or is ignored and altogether a wasted effort.

But give writers the opportunity to try again and what happens? Don’t the corrections and comments now finally accomplish their intended purpose—that is, to have the students change their writing behavior? Isn’t it arguable that the painstaking business of writing comments now actually is worth the effort because students can make immediate and relevant revisions based upon teacher’s counsel?

To all of these questions, I have to answer yes! Remember, not every student will make use of this policy; some will be satisfied with their first grade, and others may not wish to always try. And teachers may choose to use this policy selectively—for major assignments but not for minor ones; for composition units early and mid term, but not for anything due just before grading periods end.

But the positive benefits here touch everyone in the classroom, and the bottom line is that evaluation can, at least at times, be turned into an effective educational tool. Teachers of writing who formerly were viewed only as judge, jury, and executioner have the chance to show learners they are on their side, helping writers find and use every opportunity to succeed,
not just waiting for them to fail. If as a body of teachers we profess to believe the art of writing really is rewriting, then shouldn't we create and use such novel means if we truly wish to make rewriting relevant and attractive to students?

Mention of papers to grade leads next to a discussion of the problems I encountered as a young teacher with the traditional method of grading compositions. Problems like how long it takes to read five classes of papers; how tough it is to take compositions home and try to grade them after working all day; how frustrated students are when they are given graded compositions they barely remember writing; how frustrated teachers feel when students just quickly glance at the grade and then throw the papers into the nearest wastebasket; how deducting points for errors on a paper means that some students can wind up with scores less than zero, and how after reading one hundred-thirty plus essays a teacher knows that some good papers have poor grades and some poor papers have good grades.

Do I hear someone out there saying "right on"?

So what did I do?

I guess my first step was to "go to the literature." The thinking about types of evaluation showed me that there are about five basic ways to grade writing. Those methods include self-evaluation of the primary traits of a particular writing form rather than just finding mechanical errors; the traditional teacher's red ink pen method, and alternative teacher methods such as grading only a limited number of writings or using a limited number of grading criteria, grading by use of checksheets listing basic criteria, or holistic scoring based upon a teacher's general impression of a piece of writing without notation of each and every error.

For purposes of this discussion, it isn't necessary to go into the pros and cons of each of the five ways papers can be graded. Instead let us assume I took a hard look and decided the best approach was to invent my own method, based, of course, upon the best of the available means at my disposal.

Here then is my own way of grading papers. It is not totally original by any means. Parts have been scrounged from most every source imaginable. But at the same time, no one that I have ever met has thought of using all of the steps I have in quite the way I use them. And I think the results mentioned before are significant.

A brief introduction is appropriate. Begin with the idea that the best way to evaluate papers is to try and use as many of all five methods a supposable. Use self, peer, traits, traditional, and nontraditional means, and the "better mousetrap" now exists. Start with students exchanging papers, the rotation of exchanges always being varied from one assignment to the next to insure objectivity and fairness.

Step one involves the teacher simply reading from a checklist which covers obvious primary traits such as heading, title, and manuscript form concerns like use of ink, indentions, margins, and legibility—the student evaluators circling the errors and commenting on what is wrong, thus allowing the teacher to later concentrate more on evaluating ideas and structure and less on time-eating tasks like reminding writers to use a heading.

Step two is for the teacher to have the students exchange the papers to new evaluators and for them to read, circling and commenting on any simple mechanical errors such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. When finished, students evaluators place a grade from A plus to F minus on the bottom of the paper and any brief comment relevant to how that grade was assigned.

Step three is another student exchange. And, again, students read for simple mistakes that may have been missed the first time. When pens are back down and heads are up as the task is finished, ask student evaluators to go back and examine more complex items. They comment on the originality of the title, topic sentence, topic itself, use of transitions, specific detail, transitions, and summary conclusion. Have students assign a grade and a comment, but this time remind them to use their own composition and the other two they've read as a point of comparison for determining a high, average, or low grade.
Step four is the last student exchange. Read for mistakes. Note any errors missed. But before any grade is assigned, teachers should intervene with any special concerns for the particular assignment. How exciting was the plot? Does the description appeal to all five senses? Is the writing voice conversational and interesting or dull, duller, dullest? Then assign a grade, average all grades from other evaluators, put the averaged grade in a box by the writer's name and return the paper.

Step five is self-evaluation. The teachers ask each writer to read the paper immediately. Think about the errors noted and how the writer's paper stacks up with the other papers each evaluator has read. If student writers agree with the averaged grade, they are instructed to write "I agree" next to their name. If they disagree, then they are to write "I disagree" and briefly explain why they should have a higher or lower grade. (That's right, some students will admit the paper is graded too high because they know the teacher will be reading it soon anyway.)

Finally, student writers are to jot down a comment to the teacher which in effect says: This is what I have learned about my writing from this assignment and here is what I believe I can improve upon in the next assignment.

Step six is to pass the papers to the teachers to grade holistically or traditionally based upon what they feel is most appropriate.

Disadvantages?
Yes, it does take about fifteen or twenty minutes to do all six steps, but that can be shortened because not every step has to be used each time.

Advantages?
Students gain immediate feedback on most of the errors and all major grading criteria the teacher will use regardless of who checks the papers first.

Students gain a good idea of what others did with the assignment, and thus they have a better idea of where their paper should rank.

Students are involved in the entire writing process; evaluation, therefore, becomes a means of reinforcing the learning instead of just punishing the lack of it.

Students have a chance to tell the teacher why they believe they have been successful or not; before the teacher evaluates anything. This heads off some of the confrontations which can occur when papers are returned.

Students don't have to rely on simply one other friend or foe in the classroom to determine how successful a composition has been.

And students have already begun the business of improving their writing and acknowledging specific areas of concern in preparation for the next writing assignment.

Teachers, on the other hand, don't have to start grading from scratch. Most of the obvious mistakes which take so long to constantly note have already been circled and/or have already received a comment. Papers have the kinds of marks that parents and administrators feel are so vital to always have. The time saved translates into a faster return of papers from teacher to students. And the time saved for teacher translates into better morale and more opportunity to assign more writing.

Maybe this works?
Perhaps it is worth a try?

There isn't much more to say. Give writers many different opportunities to brainstorm—in many different forms of brainstorming. Try, at least for some assignments, allowing an unlimited number of rewrites to improve grades, as long as the last rewrite comes in before report grades have to be assigned. And experiment with my method of round-robin grading or your adaptation of it and allow students to learn from the process of evaluation instead of simply living in dread of it.

It has been my intention in this essay, as Hawthorne suggested, "to convince myself of the wisdom I uttered long ago." Whatever small wisdom revisited and renewed here comes from two decades of teaching freshman composition. One hundred-thirty students times twenty years times five compositions for each of
four quarters. I'll leave the computation to the reader. But in case the number fifty-two thousand compositions is a fair representation of fact, then the labor of this pilgrimage is one made worthwhile.

Then again maybe it isn't.

The danger of public self-examination is considerable. Danger from critical peers on the outside. Danger from even keener criticism on the inside. In Wakefield, 1835, Hawthorne wrote, "Amid the deeming confusion of our mysterious world... by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever."

That said, perhaps I should write this essay again.

Frederick M. Poss is a teacher at South Junior High School in Eau Claire, WI

Late March

She sits inside the morning sleepy
coffee brewing
stroking the grey softness of his underside
sky speaks of rain
soft and grey
sleeting
like the markings of his underside
He opens one eye bleary
sortiy purring
watching in disbelief
as she hoists herself from the warmth of wool log cabin quilts
onto the harsh, frozen linoleum.
As he curls himself into the soft, grey warmth of his underside.

Laura L. Apfelbeck

FIRST CLASS AUTHORS
Kathleen Buss and Helen Busch

This is a lot of writing to do for a young student, especially a first grader. But, notice her message--I'm off to write another poem. This article will describe a process writing classroom in Central Wisconsin.

In this particular classroom, writing is as much a part of the daily setting as are desks and chalkboards. Donald Graves stated that children want to write and teachers should provide the materials and the opportunities for children to explore the written communication process. Lucy McCormick Calkins believes that writing is a natural part of childhood and that teachers should "tap children's natural desire to write."

The teacher's role in a process writing classroom is that of a model, a guide, a facilitator, and an observer of development. Students are invited to write and share finished or unfinished words. Writing becomes a collaborative process between teacher and student, student and student.

In this first grade classroom, writing is part of the total curriculum. Students are exposed to an abundance of writing materials and writing opportunities. Although there is an established time for students to write, writing is an integral part of the total day and is promoted through varied activities.
The writing begins when the children come into the classroom and sign in. Sometimes it's a contest to see who can be the first to autograph the dated notebook page.

The Writing Center is used daily by the students. Here they have access to paper, pencils, markers, staples, tape and magazines. They know that this is an area where they can find the materials needed for the books they like to make independently and collaboratively. Journals and writing folders also are kept in the center.

The children write daily entries in their journals. As a rule, they keep the journals with them during the day and return them to the writing center before they leave for the day. Entries are sometimes just a picture, sometimes an account of the day, such as--

Today is Friday, May 13. It is a sunny spring day. Ken moved away.
We saw patrols get awards. I made a new firend.
And occasionally it's a brief statement--
I don't have nothing to say!!!!

In addition to the Writing Center, there are other opportunities in the room for the students to use their writing skills. They can correspond with Beau-Ford, one of the resident bears. Beau-Ford has a preferred spot in the room. He introduces himself (by letter) to the children on the first day of school and invites them to correspond with him. He answers letters that they put into his mailbox. Messages are varied and personal.

Dear Beau-Ford,
I have a new toothbrush.
It's red.

Dear Beau-Ford
I hope I spell your name rite
now I'll never forget you because your so spechle to me.

Children also can snuggle up against Buddy, the "big as life" sized bear. With his big head resting on their heads they can put on the earphones and read along with a taped story. They then react to the story in writing.

A lot of children's writing finds a spot where most children prefer to put papers at home. The old refrigerator door adds a touch of "Home" to the classroom. Here students can write messages, notes, poems, or stories to others. The refrigerator door is a popular place in this classroom as one child wrote on her journal one day--

I made a poem to put on the refrigerator. But there was no room for it.

The writing/reading connection is emphasized and writing is merged into all aspects of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to interact with and react to issues in social studies, science, and math. This is often done collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Examples of activities are:

1) Recording observations and conclusions after an outdoor lesson on animal camouflage.

2) Writing shopping lists for a "Food Group Fiesta."

3) Writing math story problems using their own experiences.
A favorite activity is to write story problems using foods.
An added plus is learning to spell words like pretzels and peanuts.

Writing is emphasized and incorporated into the daily reading lesson. The children rewrite basal and trade book stories, write their own Big Books and write letters to authors.

The students were reading a story in their basal entitled "Junk Day." The children were invited to write their own stories about their own JUNK DAY. Each student enthusiastically gave the theme a new twist.

Junk Day on Jupiter Street
There was once a Junk Day on Jupiter Street. Jupiter was where little machines lived. Jupiter was a planet.

Junk Day
One day we had a Junk Day. Every day we put out something new. We gave away a chair and a anker on the first day.

Junk Day
Well it started at Steve's house. To be eggsact Steve's father started it. He was reading the
newspaper there was an add that said "Do you have junk? If so then have a junk day". "Do we have junk?" He asked himself.

The children are familiar with, and react positively to the invitation "Come on up here for Writing Workshop."

The Writing Workshop is the structured group time in which children are invited to explore the writing process. The writing workshop format is modeled after the one proposed by Lucy McCormick Calkins. It begins with a Mini-Lesson which is a quick tip about the writing process on how writers write. After the Mini-Lesson, students write and conference with each other. Donald Murray's process of writing is modeled (rehearsing, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing). The workshop ends with group sharing time where authors share, voluntarily, what they have written and receive feedback from their audience. Each child has a writing folder. The writing folders house the completed and unfinished pieces that the children work on.

Periodically, children choose pieces from their folders to be published. These pieces, with the help of parents, are revised, typed, and made into "finished" pieces of writing. These published pieces are then proudly displayed and shared with others in the building, in the library, and at author parties.

Students' in this classroom are provided with many opportunities to write. The power of the written word is constantly being emphasized and writing is viewed as an integral part of the school day which is interwoven into every aspect of the curriculum, not as a subject to be taught at a specific period of time.

The writing is viewed as a developing process. All attempts, from pictures to scribbles, from invented to conventional spellings, are accepted and respected. Everyone has a story to tell and a message to share and everyone is considered a "First Class Author."

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WRITING IN THE REAL WORLD
Robert Root

There are two worlds of writing. One of these is the world of the practitioners. People for whom writing is a way to get things done, a purposeful means of engaging and expressing ideas and experience. In this world the success of a composition lies in the ways it satisfies both author and audience, either as artistic expression or as effective communication about a reality both are concerned about. It is the world of writing for publication, for expressive, literary, and transactional aims generated within the writer and received by readers interested in those aims.

The second world of writing is the world of pretenders. People for whom writing is a task to be accomplished, a set of often arbitrary exercises to be completed. In this world the success of a composition lies in its ability to imitate the appearances of real writing in format, language, and even manual dexterity. It satisfies its author by receiving the approval of a reader whose interest in the work lies not in its meaning but in its proficiency at disembodied skills, not for what it accomplishes as a act of communication but for how it conforms as an artifact. Even should the pretender hope to become a practitioner, the tasks imposed on him or her may be perceived—even conceived—as obstacles to be overcome rather than authentic acts fostering the growth of writing ability.

It should be clear from these remarks that I see the world of practitioners as the real world of writing and the world of pretenders as an artificial world. Both literally and symbolically, practitioners live in the marketplace, a place of both commerce and intellectual exchange. Pretenders have no place in that world because of the empty pointlessness and self-reflexiveness of the work they engage in and produce. Instead, they seem better suited to an environment stocked with make-work assignments and fragmented skills. A world of, say, quantitative testing, handbook activities, wordbook exercises and grammar drills, since that's where their training lies and since experience at nonwriting doesn't translate into real writing.

It may seem as though I'm trying to locate the world of pretenders in the classroom, but nothing in my description of the world of practitioners suggests to me that the real world of writing is necessarily excluded from the classroom, that the classroom is unavoidably an artificial world of writing. I think we can make the classroom part of the real world of writing, particularly the more we understand the way real writers write.

As a writer myself, as someone who has interviewed and analyzed the composing processes of essayists, critics, and business writers, I am always looking for clues about the real world of writing. Recently, reading Songs of the North, a collection of writings by Sigurd Olson, perhaps our most widely-read chronicler of the North Woods, I was struck by his description of how he became a writer. Olson came to writing fairly late, after growing up with a love for the outdoors, training as a biologist, working as a wilderness guide, and teaching at Ely Junior College. Having read widely in nature writing, eventually he felt the need to communicate something about the natural world and his understanding of it through his own writing. His description of his transition from teacher-outdoorsman to nature writer is a highly personal and candid piece of writing.

Sigurd Olson's account of his development as a writer is particularly striking for us because of the way it reveals some crucial elements of writing in the real world. For example, Olson's very motivation for becoming a writer arises out of his desire to communicate with others about specific subjects. His need to share his experience of the natural world generates his growth as a writer. Describing his years of development, Olson recalls "the gradual growth of facility through endless practice, day after day, the interminable disappointments, and the many false starts" (98). Real writers don't do it right the first time, and they don't achieve their peak levels of performance overnight. Without the possibility of trial and error, it is
arguable whether or not Olson would have ever developed into the writer he became.

The practice Olson mentions consisted not only of genuine attempts to write articles but also daily notes and observations. Olson used writing both to learn writing itself and also to learn nature. He stresses the importance of that writing for him:

taking notes in the field on what I saw and thought about, descriptions of animals, birds, and the countless things observed on each foray into the wilds; until now I had always relied on memory. This was a new activity, and while at first my scribblings were almost incoherent, in time they became more meaningful; but far more important than the actual wrestling with the mechanics of words and sentences was that the very act of recording made me see things more accurately. The longer I tried to recapture scenes and events, the more I saw. (98)

In the real world of writing, writing is a mode of learning as well as a mode of communicating, and this use of writing pushes Olson beyond superficial levels of knowing. Eventually, he tells us:

There were times...when words and ideas came without effort, and I was conscious of something going on in my mind I had not felt before. Golden moments, because they were rare, it was as though writing generated an energy that tapped new courses of knowledge and awareness. (98)

At such moments Olson is writing epistemically. That is, as Kenneth Dowst would say, his language is not a "representation of a preexisting and knowable reality" but, rather, a way of coming to know a reality. As Dowst observes, "Language in a sense comes between the writer's self and objective reality, modifying the former as it gives shape to the latter...we do not know the world immediately; rather we compose our knowledge by composing language" (68-70). Through his writing Olson discovers what his understanding of the natural world consists of. Significantly, as he observes,

What I did not realize was that the constant honing of my perceptions and writing ability, the continual practice in trying to express myself, was laying the background for eventual acceptance in a field I had not even begun to explore. (103)

Ultimately, as his dissatisfaction with earlier work led him to expand earlier ideas into the essays that became The Singing Wilderness, the book that established his place among nature writers, he discovered "what I had always wanted to say" (107).

The work in progress helped to generate further development both in writing and in understanding. The most deeply held beliefs often of necessity cannot lay easily accessible on the surface. To truly understand then and to discover the language to express them they must be mined and pursued laboriously beneath the surface. Writing not only expresses meaning—it uncovers it.

Furthermore, note that Olson discovers what he wants to say—not what someone else wants him to say. His great success as a writer ultimately comes from that moment, the moment at which he is satisfying himself, above all, whether he satisfies a broader audience or not.

Sigur Olson's description of his development as a writer echoes descriptions by other writers and in some ways encapsulates the elements of real world writing. To begin with, an essential element of composition for real writers is the personal commitment to their writing. Time and again working writers have said that they write to please themselves first. In an article of advice to young academics about scholarly writing, Donald Murray goes so far as to insist, "Write for yourself. Don't try to figure out what other people want, but try to figure out what you have to say and how it can best be said" (Murray, "One," 150).

The importance of this viewpoint is supported by research. Carl Bereiter has located such a commitment as an essential part of skills integrated into writing. When the author "begins to develop a personal style and a personal voice," he says, "writing becomes more authentic and satisfying...a productive craft and not merely an instrumental skill" (87). Moreover, such commitment is important across the board. Real writing in business and technology grows out of the same impulse to personal commitment that it does in criticism, journalism, and creative writing.
Olson's remarks illustrate a second element of real world writing: immersion in context. Olson had a subject matter in which he was deeply engaged. His growth did not occur devoid of context. In the same way Susan Nykamp, formerly an excellent writer as a college student, had problems at the sentence level as a beginning staff writer for the Photo Marketing Association until she learned the photo retailing business thoroughly. Her rise to managing editor of their major publication, Photo Marketing, followed the arc of her growth in understanding her field.

As researchers in composition and cognition, such as Bereiter, Flower, and Hayes, have been telling us, writers cannot consciously juggle all the constraints of writing simultaneously. They cannot attend to written language production, controlled association of ideas, rules of style and mechanics, social cognition, aesthetic or critical judgment and reflective thinking all at the same time. Some skills need to become automatic so that attention may be focused on fewer constraints at a time. Similarly some knowledge of subject matter, writing strategies, and sense of audience need to be stored in long term memory so that short term memory can deal with limited constraints. It is this immersion in context that stores knowledge of subject matter. Michael Ploanyi calls it the "dwelling in" a particular activity that leads to personal knowledge. As Olson and Nykamp show, in the real world, writing comes from a knowledge base that is neither arbitrary nor transient. In Thoreau's words, "How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live."

Donald Murray has tracked the way a written work evolves over a period from initial exposure to a topic—not even so grand a thing as an "idea" at the outset—to published work. He claims that "most of [his] articles have a five-year history": a year for his "reading and thinking and conversing and not-taking to work their way towards a topic"; a year to "play around with it" through talking or teaching it once he "recognizes the topic's potential significance"; a year to consider "reactions from colleagues and students and write a draft"; a year for further presentations, reactions, and revision; and a fifth year for publication. He says:

to those who do not work continuously it appears as if I had suddenly produced another piece of work, when it is really the product of a rather plodding habit of thinking through writing ("One", 151).

In the real world, where writing arises out of a personal commitment and immersion in context, writers are continually drawing upon their background, simultaneously completing one project and beginning another. Both their learning and their composing are part of the same continual cognitive process. Composition needs a long gestation period, one that begins even before the writer is conscious of being pregnant with intention.

Connected to immersion in context is a third element of real writing, constant involvement with an area of interest through writing. Tom Wicker has referred to this element as "assiduous string-saving," a tendency to take note of— and notes on—a range of subjects almost continually. Sigurd Olson models that for us in his copious fieldnotes; Jim Fitzgerald of The Detroit Free Press stores items and comments on them in a continually growing and ever changing folder. Donald Murray advises:

Keep a planning notebook with you to play in at the office, at home, in the car, on the airplane, at faculty meetings (especially at faculty meetings), while you're watching television, sitting in a parking lot or eating a lonely lunch. . . .make lists, notes, diagrams, collect quotes and citations, paste in key articles and references, sketch outlines, draft titles, leads, endings, key paragraphs ("One", 148).

The late Edwin Way Teale, another notetaker, not only regularly took field notes but at the end of each day typed them up and dated, titled, and numbered them. Henry David Thoreau, himself an assiduous stringsaver, kept so thorough a journal that many critics have pronounced it his greatest work. Certainly it was the source of his major works. Often the journal entries served as Thoreau's zero or rough draft; we can trace specific passages out of Walden, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, and The Maine Woods directly to
daily journal entries. His journal was the source of inspiration and expression, the place where he could generate, incubate, and explore essential ideas of those later works. Da Vinci, Darwin, Marx, Wittgenstein, Tolstoy, Freud, writers and thinkers in every field, have similarly used diaries, notebooks, journals, and logs, and given voice to their most profound insights in the pages of their workday writing before producing the influential and enduring works by which they are best known.

Such interaction with the materials of one’s writing is an important occasion for a fourth element of real world writing, the discovery of ideas through writing. The testimony that writing facilitates discovery has come to us from a multitude of sources, both literary and expository, in the real world of writing. James Michener claimed that "you write the first draft really to see how it's going to come out," and Alfred Kazin said that "in a very real sense the writer writes in order to teach himself, to understand himself, to satisfy himself." Robert Frost once said, "For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew." C. Day Lewis was more emphatic:

I do not sit down at my desk to put into verse something that is already clear in my mind. If it were clear in my mind, I should have no incentive or need to write about it...we do not write in order to be understood, we write in order to understand.

Donald Murray's daybook is a place to discover and rehearse before attempting to draft and revise his writing. Whether in preliminary workday writing or early drafts, real writers make a place for regular discovery through writing.

A fifth element of real world writing is a realistic understanding of the composing process. Real writers have customary work habits, practical expectations about the quality of early drafts, and confidence in their own ability to bring a "professional" text out of a formless mass of materials. Edwin Way Teale expressed this realistic understanding in a letter to Ann Zwinger:

I think the reason we dread the first draft of a book so much is not only that it is a time of endless decisions--what to put in, what to leave out, how to begin, how to end, etc., etc.--but it is the time when the book we dreamed of writing, the book that has been floating in the air, so to speak, has to be confined by words on paper. Immediately there are intimations that the book is beginning to be less than we hoped it would be. The reason revision is so much fun is that little by little, day after day, we feel we are lifting the book back nearer the original goal. (Zwinger, xviii)

The discouragement which comes with the first struggle with a draft is one familiar to all writers of books, articles, stories, poems, plays, academic papers, convention addresses. The assurance that revision will banish that discouragement is something only writers who understand the composing process and who have successfully gotten through it can feel.

Having that confidence doesn't necessarily make the writing easier. As Teale says of his revision process:

These are my "Earthworm Days" when I am plowing back and forth through the paragraphs, loosening up lumpy or soggy sentences and enriching the book by inserting new facts and ideas as the earthworm enriches the soil by pulling pieces of leaves underground. Or, to put it another way, I am occupied these days folding over my manuscript in the sense that Thoreau meant when he wrote to Ralph Waldo Emerson: "In writing conversation should be folded over many times thick." (xviii)

Real world writers know that writing is hard work but unlike the novice writer they know the rewards which lie beyond the labor.

For example, David Denby, film critic for New York Magazine, doesn't worry about careful crafting or choosing exactly the right sentences in the first draft. Instead, he says, because I know I'm going to do another draft, I try to get it down on paper in the right order and get it to say more or less what I want it to say and not be too fussy about specific wording... . . .

When he comes to revise he does the work more willingly. He says,

The second draft goes much more quickly and I find it very pleasurable. I find the first draft agony; the second draft I think is a lot of fun when you actually have something there to work with, to play with. It's at that point that your feelings of craftsmanship take over... . . .

Denby's experience is replicated by a host of other writers, each of whom have their own variations of the process. Each has
had to evolve a process that works specifically for them even if it would hamper the writing of another writer. More important, they have developed strategies for dealing with the roadblocks that often emerge in writing. Revising is an important part of those strategies, since the reliance on revising for content, style, and expression frees up their concentration for the development and discovery of ideas earlier in the process. As Dorothy Canfield Fisher, the historical writer, once observed:

"Very young writers often do not revise at all. Like a hen looking at a chalk line, they are hypnotized by what they have written. "How can it be altered?" they think. "That's the way it was written." Well, it has to be altered. Leo Tolstoy would agree. He said: "I can't understand how anyone can write without rewriting everything over and over again."

Real world writers also have routines that help them write. Richard Reeves, for example, will start writing at five or five-thirty in the morning and work productively before the outside world can interrupt him. He knows that his peak period of energy is early in the day and he uses that period for the work he values most. Donald Murray also writes in the morning, preferring to have his classes in the afternoon. In fact so many writers work on that kind of schedule that when Kurt Vonnegut attended an Eastern-bloc writers conference, almost the first question he was asked by a writer from Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia was: "Mr. Vonnegut, what do you do in the afternoons?"

These writers also know that the writing isn't likely to be completed at a single sitting. Richard Reeves can trace the decline of his energy through the pages of work he attempted to write nonstop: now he routinely breaks down longer tasks into manageable parts. John Saul, the American horror novelist, echoes other writers when he observes, "If I write fifteen pages every day, eventually I'll have five-hundred of them." Other writers settle for two or three pages a day, but even that produces a book length work in less than a year.

Many writers have testified to the same experience, and routinely break down the composing of longer works into short sections or chunks. In addition to recognizing that revision will pull these sections together, they also know that, in fact, the work benefits from this piecemeal approach by extending the time to incubate ideas and to work subconsciously on writing. As Hemingway did, they often leave the work at a point where they know they can begin again the next day, in order to have something to get them started. Such a policy is an antidote to writer's block.

Studies of experienced and novice writers have demonstrated that the strategies for writing that practitioners draw upon extend to the slightest, most reflexive actions. For example, when experienced writers pause in their drafting, they tend to reread what they've written and let the rereading help generate the next section of prose. Inexperienced writers are apt to use those pauses to look out the window or up at the ceiling, as if trying to find the next section floating in the air. The experienced writers know that text they produce can help them continue to produce text. Novices think the text merely records ideas generated or discovered in an outside world and can't use the text to help them write.

In the real world of writing, all the evidence supports the view that William Hazlitt once expressed: "The more a man writes, the more a man can write." In fact, I'm pretty sure that our best writers have always been self-taught about the real world of writing, teaching themselves through experience.

But if a real world of writing exists, there must also be an artificial world of writing, a looking-glass world which reflects a false image of writing. Here is how I would compare them:

* In the real world, writing arises out of personal commitment; in the artificial world, writing arises out of impersonal assignment—the writer is expected to act according to the goals of assessors and evaluators, nonwriters who impose tasks in order to judge the abilities of those who complete them.
* In the real world, writers live immersed in a context from which they draw inspiration, incentive, ideas and information, a knowledge of audience and writing plans. In the artificial world, writers begin in ignorance, with a lack of knowledge about
their subject, and often work in confusion and disinterest. A grade at the end of the project is their chief incentive for stumbling, chiefly on their own, through unknown, even hostile, territory.

* In the real world of writing, writers draw upon the assiduous stringsaving that makes their experience with the subject virtually an ongoing, continual act of prewriting essential not only for the individual product, but the act of dwelling in context itself. In the artificial world, the writer engages in jumpstart writing, a spark from an outside power source necessary to even get their engines to idle because writers themselves have no self-starting ignition.

* In the real world of writing, writers depend upon discovery through writing, whether in the workaday writing which constitutes their means of keeping abreast of their own thinking or in the drafting of communicative texts. In the artificial world, the writer continually confuses writer-based prose with reader-based prose, encouraged by their judges to aim for one-draft writing which they are often trained to perform at a single sitting.

* In the real world, writers understand their own writing process and draw upon a range of strategies to focus their attention on what is most important at each moment of that process. In the artificial world, writers assume that the process is the same for all writers and attempts to follow a prescribed set of activities focused on the final product; assuming that such elements as written language production, controlled association of ideas, rules of usage and mechanics, needs of the reader, critical and aesthetic judgment, and reflective thinking can all be given equal and simultaneous attention, thus virtually guaranteeing ineffectiveness at all of them.

As I said at the outset this description of the real and artificial worlds of writing, the worlds of practitioners and pretenders, may seem at first glance to describe the writing worlds of the marketplace and the classroom. Perhaps in some cases this is a fair assessment, particularly where just such artificiality dominates classroom practices. But the marketplace and the real world of writing are not coterminous. Real world writing happens in the marketplace because here no writing would happen if the strictures of the artificial world were applied. No one would willingly subject themselves to such strictures, and since real world writing is self-motivated, pretenders wouldn't even attempt it.

However, neither are the classroom and the artificial world coterminous; at least, not necessarily. Students needn't be pretenders in the classroom. They might be apprentice practitioners, particularly if teachers do things to avoid setting up an artificial world. For example:

* We could make our assignments grow out of the context of the course, with flexibility in student selection of topic and genre.

* We could help our students acquire background in subject matter through immersion in that context, seeing the whole course as a continuous matter, not just a series of closed units.

* We could engage our students in assiduous stringsaving, the constant consideration in writing of their own ideas and accumulation of ideas and information from outside themselves, inculcating the habits of a lifetime upon which real writers build.

* We could provide them opportunity to discover and rehearse through the writing of zero drafts, learning logs, journals, and the whole range of workaday writing that facilitates deeper understanding of subject matter and self.

* We could work with our students through the process of their own writing, letting them discover and develop their ideas in early drafts, teaching them strategies for their earthworm days as they need them, dealing with their individual problems individually, teaching them about writing while they write rather than only before or after they produce products to evaluate. To do these things might take time to develop, organization to coalesce, motivation from teacher and student alike, but eventually it would create an environment conducive to committed
apprenticeship. If we could encourage our students to become practitioners, not just pretenders, writing in the classroom would be a vital part of writing in the real world.

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PUNCTUATION SIMPLIFIED

OR,

SNAKE OIL THAT WORKS--MOST OF THE TIME

Ralph Schneider

To suggest that the punctuation of the English sentence can be simplified is probably presumptuous--placing this author in the class of rogues and scalawags who sell quack medical cures (like snake oil) and used cars. But I believe it can be done, and done effectively--as long as readers realize that what follows is composed of useful simplifications and that there are exceptions to most punctuation "rules."

THE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE IS THE KEY!

The independent clause (sometimes referred to as a main clause) is the basic unit of written English. It has a subject, a verb, and sometimes an object. The independent clause is, in fact, the same thing as a simple sentence:

\[ S \quad V \quad O \]

Gertrude ate a lizard.

This is a simple sentence--one with each of the three parts just mentioned. But if we selected a different kind of verb, the sentence could be even shorter:

\[ S \quad V \quad O \]

Gertrude died.

But sentences can be much longer than these examples; we can add more words, phrases, and even other clauses to create more complex sentence structures. However, when we do so, we must often use punctuation marks to help the reader understand where the basic structural unit (the independent clause) is.

Whether a sentence is long or short, there is no doubt that RECOGNIZING THE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE IS THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE PUNCTUATION! Once it is located, a few easy rules provide quick answers to the questions about where the punctuation goes:

1) Find where the independent clause begins. Any preceding material of more than a few words should be set off by a comma:

\[ S \quad V \quad O \]

Tired of bats and thistles, Gertrude ate a lizard.
2) Never use a single comma between subject and verb or between
verb and object. The following use is incorrect:

\[ S, \quad V \quad O \]
Gertrude ate a lizard.

3) However, it is correct to use two commas in such places:

\[ S, \quad V, \quad O \]
Gertrude, stuffstuffstuff, ate a lizard.

or

\[ S, \quad V, \quad O \]
Gertrude ate, stuffstuffstuff, a lizard.

It is helpful to think of these "stuffstuffstuff" sections as
parenthetical remarks or insertions, and, in fact, a writer could
use parentheses or dashes instead of commas in such places.

So much for punctuating in and around the main clause or
simple sentence. Now for the another kind of sentence--the
compound sentence: THE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE IS STILL THE KEY!

The compound sentence is composed of two or more independent
clauses, and some form of punctuation must be used between them--
so recognizing the independent clause(s) is again essential. The
following sentence has two independent clauses; the boundary
between them is indicated by a break.

\[ S \quad V \quad O \quad S \quad V \]
Gertrude ate a lizard she died.

4) The writer must place punctuation at that point to indicate
the boundary. The following punctuation/word combinations are
acceptable:

; so
; therefore
; (comma plus a coordinating conjunction)
; (semicolon--all by itself)
; (semicolon plus a conjunctive adverb plus a
comma)
; (a period--but this creates two simple
sentences)

Coordinating conjunctions-- so, and, but, for, or, nor, yet.
Conjunctive adverbs --> words like therefore, however, moreover,
etc.

There's one more sentence type: the complex--which isn't
called that because it's more complicated, but because it has two
different types of clauses in it: independent and dependent.

Writers often create dependent clauses out of independent
clauses by adding something called a subordinating connective
(SC):

\[ SC + IC = DC \]
because + Gertrude ate a lizard = Because Gertrude ate a lizard

Although the resulting clause (DC) has a subject and verb, it
cannot stand by itself (it is incomplete), so it is called
dependent. There are other kinds of dependent clauses, but it
isn't necessary to deal with each type--since they are all
punctuated like the introductory material described above. THE
INDEPENDENT CLAUSE IS STILL THE KEY! Identify it, and deciding
on the proper punctuation is easy:

5) If the dependent clause precedes the independent clause, just
set it off with a comma. This rule is simply a slight variation
of rule #1 above.

\[ DC \quad IC \]
Because Gertrude ate a lizard, she died.

6) If the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, no
punctuation is required:

\[ IC \quad DC \]
Gertrude died because she ate a lizard.

That's about it--except that any of the clauses in compound or
complex sentences may be preceded or interrupted by introductory
or parenthetical sentences as indicated in the first section
above. In such a case, of course, the writer would have to use
commas to set that material off as indicated in rules 1-3.

Two more situations, quickly described, will round out this
review.

7) Commas are also used to separate elements of a series--
including the last elements, where there is usually a conjunction
as well:

Gertrude ate a toadstool, a hippo, and a lizard.
8) Do not use a colon after a verb or preposition—only after a completed clause:
Incorrect--> Gertrude ate: a toadstool and a lizard.
Incorrect--> Gertrude was made sick by: a toadstool and a lizard.
Correct--> Gertrude ate three tidbits: a toadstool, a hippo, and a lizard.

There is in a nutshell—a few simple rules that cover the vast majority of the problems that writers have with punctuation. Always remember that THE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE IS THE KEY: once it is identified, punctuation becomes simple.

Throughout this explanation, I've written about "rules" and about "correct" and "acceptable" and "proper" punctuation—and I've done that because this is the way many of us have been trained to think about such issues. In fact, however, punctuation is not decided by authoritarian dictates, but by how writers actually communicate; the so-called "rules" of punctuation are actually just practical observations about what works best.

That's the end of the snake-oil sermon. Now, I've got this Edsel I'd like sell you....

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**Flakes**

Cold noses, warm tongues
turn toward the sky to begin
tasting icy, lacy
crystals dancing gently down
dripping droplets once again

Genny Freier

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**THEY'RE SENDING US THE BEST KIDS THEY HAVE**

Mary Louise Gomez

Recently, I have been puzzling about the need for a balance of attention in teacher education programs to prospective teachers' subject matter knowledge and to their understandings of the skills and needs of the diverse learners who will populate their classrooms in the 1990's and beyond. I have firsthand experiences with these challenges as a teacher educator, as a member of a professional development school faculty, and as a researcher. Predicted demographic changes in the U.S. in the next decades fuel my contemplation. More learners of color than ever before will be enrolled in U.S. classrooms by the year 2000. Within two decades, thirty-four percent of all students enrolled in public schools are estimated to be persons of color (Center for Education Statistics, 1987a, 1987b; Georgiades, 1988; Haberman, 1989). Numbers of non-English language background learners are also expected to increase; for example the population of Hispanic Americans in the U.S. is expected to grow from 14.6 million in 1988 to 47 million in the year 2000 (Romero, Mercado, and Vazquez-Paria, 1987). Yet, numbers of teachers of color are expected to decrease from eleven-twelve percent in the 1980's to five percent within twenty years (ASCD, 1989; Grant and Gillette, 1987) as fewer persons of color enter the profession and higher numbers of black than white teachers leave the profession (Haberman, 1989). Those students who have historically been poorly served by American schools are dramatically increasing in number. Yet, teaching in the U.S. remains a predominantly white, middle class, and female-dominated profession whose members prefer to teach those most like themselves living in suburbs and small cities.

As I puzzle over these dilemmas, the voices of teacher candidates studying in a graduate program of teacher preparation at the University of Florida in 1987-88 return to me. These prospective teachers participated in an NCTE-sponsored study of their program of secondary English teacher education. A cohort
group of twenty-eight prospective teachers was administered a questionnaire in the fall and spring of 1987-88 and a randomly selected group of eight case study teachers were also interviewed at these times. These beginning teachers had high hopes in October of 1987; lifelong readers and writers, they had each completed a bachelor's degree in English and were eager to share their passion for their subject matter with secondary school students.

However, over a seven-month period spanning October 1987, when they participated in the first of two three-week practica to May 1988, when they exited ten weeks of student teaching, their optimism to teaching their subject matter to the diverse learners they encountered in their classes waned. While they began their graduate year of teacher preparation concerned with the sufficiency of their subject matter knowledge, they ended the year lamenting their inadequate knowledge and skills of classroom management. While they began their graduate year of teacher preparation with beliefs that all learners can learn to write via a process approach emphasizing drafting, peer editing and publishing, they ended the year questioning these beliefs. Rather, they wondered if low-tracked learners would benefit more from instruction emphasizing the acquisition of the basic skills of mechanics, spelling and grammar while their more able peers learned to write by research-supported activities of drafting, peer editing and publishing. While they began their teacher education program with the belief that they could instill what Escalante (Weeks, 1989) calls "ganás," the desire to learn, in all students, they ended the year uncertain this was possible. In one teacher's words, "...not all kids are going to like you, like school, or like what you do, and it's not your fault. ..." (Sena, 1, 1).

During the academic year and two summers of their program, the teachers, enrolled in thirty-six hours of coursework, two three-week practica, and ten weeks of student teaching. They enrolled with colleagues preparing to teach other subject matter areas in a general teaching methods course called "Effective Teaching in the Secondary School" in the fall of 1987. This course lasted half the semester and focused on the domains of the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) and the teacher effectiveness research on which the FPMS is based (e.g., the effective use of praise to encourage the conduct of elementary-aged students and to correct misconduct in the higher grades). Students listened to lectures, read and discussed expectations for teacher behaviors and learner outcomes, watched videos of teachers conducting FPMS-based lessons in various subject matters and were tested concerning their knowledge of the domains. In the second half of the semester, each group of prospective teachers studied "how to" teach their subject matter in a special methods course. In the spring semester, the English teacher candidates also enrolled in a course which explored the theoretical base for writing instruction.

During the two fall practica and the springtime ten-week student teaching, the prospective teachers were supervised by two of the three faculty working in the English component of the program. All three program faculty endorsed a process approach to teaching writing, held beliefs about learners that acknowledged their differences in relation to their variety of styles and procedures of writing and supported the FPMS. While participating in their student teaching, the teacher candidates were supervised with the domains of the FPMS in mind.

Florida is a particularly interesting place in which to study prospective teachers of writing as there are a number of state policies related to teaching and learning that subject matter. These include legislation known as the Gordon Rule, which created a Writing Enhancement Program for Florida students in grades 10, 11, and 12 (the chief provisions of this program are requirements for lowered class size for writing classes and requirements for students to produce the equivalent of one paper per week in these classes) and state Uniform Performance Standards for three different tracks of learners in English coursework—skills, average, and honors. The tracking of learners and use of the standards, which define different learning outcomes for learners
in different tracks is not mandated, yet is pervasive in use. The expectations for learners in the skills tracks, as described in the performance standards, focus more on learning correct spelling, mechanics, and grammar than the outcomes expected of students in average and honors tracks, whose work focuses more on activities of drafting work in different modes of discourse and for different purposes.

As the teacher candidates tried out the ideas for teaching writing advocated by their program, they frequently encountered low-motivated, low-skilled groups of difficult to manage "skills" track learners. They became frustrated and puzzled by their inability to accomplish the goals they had been encouraged to set for themselves as teachers. As they tried to untangle the reasons for their students' low motivation to learn and poor skills of written communication, they reasoned that the students' prior life experiences were deficient. The teachers surmised that their skills students' poverty had rendered their parents insufficient time to provide the literacy experiences and other requisite cultural activities which lead to school success. As a consequence, the students reached secondary school without the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions for successful performance in English classes.

Second, the teachers predicted the future occupational lives of the low-tracked learners. Since these students' economic futures looked bleak, tied to low status, semiskilled labor or skilled labor type employment, the teachers tailored their English curriculum to "practical", life skills activities of writing. For example, one student explained that most of the young black males in her skills classes would be entering the military following graduation, and needed to know both how to take the examination for entry and the sorts of knowledge required for a passing score. She elaborated, explaining that such students did not need to write about abstract themes, write five-paragraph essays, or write research papers. In making and justifying curriculum decisions based on these learners' socioeconomic status and likely future employment, the prospective teachers were able to accomplish four ends: (1) they were able to justify the tracking in the schools; (2) they relinquished their own feelings of inadequacy with regard to classroom management, failure to motivate learners, and inability to increase learners' skills; (3) they reduced the dissonance between their program's advocacy of one way to teach writing and the schools' differentiated writing curricula; and (4) they were able to maintain the illusion that they were helping students whom they cared about by preparing them for their future occupations.

These prospective teachers' changing beliefs appear related to a complex set of program practices and policies and state-mandated and state-endorsed policies and practices which sent conflicting messages to the teacher candidates. The policies of a single stakeholder, such as the teacher education program or the state, were not always compatible. For example, the teacher education program concurrently advocated an approach to teaching writing—a process approach—with a diffused classroom orientation, and a design for teacher behaviors—the FFMS—which stressed a focal, predominant role for the teachers. The policies of the state, too, do not appear to have compatible outcomes. There appear to be tensions between a Writing Enhancement Program designed to encourage greater numbers of writing assignments with concomitant feedback regarding student work and the outcomes for low-tracked learners listed on state curriculum standards. Further, tensions existed between the process writing orientation of the teacher education program and the Writing Enhancement Program in the schools. While the Writing Enhancement Program nominally supported processes of writing, the goal of producing one piece of work per week from each student precluded attention to multiple drafts and peer response which process writing advocates support.

I have written an in-depth description and analysis about the program and the prospective teachers' changing beliefs and dispositions elsewhere. My point here is to remind teacher educators that as we discuss the role of subject matter knowledge
in preparing teachers, that we should remember that it is but one piece of that to which we must attend. I suggest that one means of avoiding the outcomes experienced by these beginning teachers and their students is to both explicitly teach strategies which have been found effective in teaching diverse learners and to help new teachers negotiate the often conflicting tensions which exist within teacher education programs and between programs and the school, community, and state contexts in which programs operate.

Teacher education which acknowledges and makes problematic the racial, cultural, socioeconomic and political factors influencing diverse learners' motivations to learn and skills of learning can help both teachers and students meet the challenges which lie ahead in the coming decades. Without such attention, prospective teachers are left alone to make sense of complex cultural and institutional webs. While some beginning teachers will surely teach in ways that honor their students' knowledge, beliefs, and dispositions, many others equally well-intentioned and well-grounded in their subject matter, will endorse existing school practices and state policies which do not emancipate learners, but proscribe their skills and rehackle them to timeworn roles and expectations. Parents of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic status groups are indeed sending to school all the best kids they have; they are not keeping the "good" ones at home. All parents and children deserve the best from teacher educators and teachers as well.

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LISTENING TO YOURSELF WRITE: A STUDENT LOOKS AT HER WRITING PROCESS
Julie Sauter

The longer I've been in school, the more I've come to look at writing as a necessary evil. Necessary, because one can just not get around it; some kind of talent in reading and writing is necessary just to survive. An evil, because as a communications major and writing minor, I've had numerous journals and papers, countless English classes, and have finally realized that I hate to write.

But I'm not surprised that I hate to write. Merely sitting down to put pen to paper makes me struggle, sweat, and pull my hair out. My desire to write is there, my teachers tell me my ability is there, but in the connection I get short-circuited. Somewhere in my life I got the idea that I'm not a good writer; whether someone once told me that or I just told myself, I don't know. I've always been a good student, so as far as mechanics go, I can hold my own, but I just don't have the confidence to believe that I am a good, or even adequate writer, which leaves me with a wrong attitude and an ineffective writing process.

These thoughts ran through my head as I sat in yet another writing class fearing what the professor would assign. But instead of a dreaded research paper or creative essay, she suggested I analyze my writing process.

The whole idea of a writing process was foreign to me, so I began by doing what is known as a "protocol analysis:" I wrote an essay, all the while talking into a tape recorder. Later I was able to listen to myself write, hearing not just the words I put down on the emerging text, but the mental directions and asides I made to myself as I wrote. Thus I was able to hear what I experienced, and I began to see writing as a process for the first time.

If my problems were not obvious before, they became clear after my protocol analysis. Listening to myself compose, I visualized a frustrated writer banging her head against a wall and realized that I had some major problems in my composing process. I categorized them into three areas: before, during, and after writing.

My first problem began immediately upon receiving an assignment: fear and anxiety besieged me. Can I do this? Can I get an "A" on this? My mind racing, I composed the entire paper in my head so I wouldn't go blank when I sat down to write. Peter Elbow comments on how serious and widespread this problem is: "Fear of badness is probably what holds people back most from developing power in writing." When I finally sat down to write, problem number two entered. In an attempt to copy down my mental text, I inevitably became frustrated. Linda Flower calls that problem the "Perfect Draft Approach." With the intent of beginning at the beginning and ending at the end, I struggled through each sentence to get it just right before moving on. This left me with about three sentences after an hour's work. I juggled word combinations, and focused my attention on producing sentences rather than expressing ideas. Again, Peter Elbow has some insights: "Most people's writing lacks voice because they stop so often in mid-sentence and ponder, worry, or change their minds about which word to use or which direction to go in."

Somewhat, I got the text written and problem three emerged. After reading over my text, I experience an acute disorder Peter Elbow calls "nausea," and I call "What is this junk I have just written?" If fear or perfectionism didn't run my paper into the ground, over-criticism certainly did.

In the next step in analyzing my writing process, I reached into my past experiences to find out why I had some of these problems and where they came from. One was perfectionism, a fault many other students share. Every day I see students setting impossible standards and crashing when they cannot reach them. Expecting a flawless paper inevitably causes another problem--fear of failure. In school I was always a very conscientious, organized student with neat papers. But I now see that those neat papers didn't give me the chance to revise or edit; I was caught in the trap of writing perfectly the first
time, or at least trying to. Looking back on my writing teachers, I see that I was taught the only important thing about writing is the final product. Not until my senior year in college did I even learn what process was and begin to understand its importance. The entire process involved in writing is carried through in all papers, and by improving that, one can improve the final products.

After defining my problems and their origins, I needed to work on correcting them. Some books by Linda Flower and Peter Elbow set me on the right track toward finding effective writing strategies to take the place of my old, ineffective methods. Both authors had some excellent ideas and powerful strategies for easing the burden and quieting the fear of writing.

Peter Elbow calls the perfect draft approach the dangerous method. From experience I know that my end product was rarely worth the time and trouble that went into it. He created some alternate writing processes:

DIRECT WRITING PROCESS

Most useful when one has little time and plenty of ideas for a text, this process gives the writer an opportunity to get ideas out and put them in correct form. The first step is to cut the available time in half; half for raw writing and half for revising. During raw writing, everything pertaining to the topic is written down. Grammar or style is not important at this point--only the thoughts, ideas, and facts that make up the meat of the text. When half the time is over, the writer needs to change from composer to editor and refine, correct, and clarify. Both parts of the Direct Writing Process are important, so equal treatment should be given to them.

OPEN-ENDED PROCESS

This process is ideal for the situation where one has to produce a text on something, but doesn't know what. In the Open-Ended process, the writer is given the privilege of complete freedom to ramble on paper. After awhile, a focus point or main idea of the text is found and used to begin another burst of freewriting. This process of writing and focusing is repeated until the buried idea emerges. The Open-Ended Process lets the writer sift through chaos to find the topic.

LOOP WRITING PROCESS

This process takes the best of the Direct and Open-Ended and puts them together to allow both control and creativity. In the Voyage Out, the writer is given the freedom to soar with "almost-freewriting." The writer should keep the general topic in mind, but expand, invent, and experience the topic by writing on first thoughts, portraits, scenes, stories, prejudices and dialog connected with the topic. The Voyage Out allows the writer's real voice to surface and imagination and creativity to abound. During the Voyage Home, the writer returns to the topic and audience and shapes a coherent draft from the raw writing. The paper comes together by using ideas and insights from raw writing kept under control by the topic.

BRAINSTORMING

While brainstorming, the writer concentrates on ideas over sentences. Instead of trying to cram words into already produced sentences, one should jot down thoughts and let the imagination go as one brainstorms about the topic. This is a more casual way of letting ideas and thoughts flow instead of forcing them, which ultimately stifles them.

WIRMI

"What I Really Mean Is" is an obvious idea, but one that writers rarely use. It helps to get the writer's real thoughts down instead of some forced, false-sounding words. As the writer inevitably gets stuck or lost in some area of the text, it helps to stop and get a grasp of the ideas instead of the words. Even if a piece of writing is unfinished or weird sounding, the important thoughts are down and can always be revised later.

NOTATION TECHNIQUES

Notation Techniques are an excellent way to work out jumbled thoughts and ideas. Being anything from a tree diagram to a flow chart, notation can display relationships, grouping of ideas, steps in a process, or simply ideas on a topic. This lets the writer put some order in the material, while at the same time helps to produce new ideas.
SATISFICING
A necessary method for every perfectionist, satisficing makes
the writer settle for an adequate, but imperfect, expression or
idea in order to get on with more important writing. The writer
is free to move on and not be caught by problems such as word
combinations or grammar errors that can be dealt with later.
Though these methods may not always be appropriate and are
certainly not foolproof, they have worked for me in a number of
cases. These processes can help any writer learn that writing
does not have to be a stressful chore, but instead can be
enjoyable—even fun.
Using and practicing these techniques and processes has opened
the world of writing to me. Now, I not only write for those
English and communications classes, but also write every day for
my internship in public relations. I still get scared sometimes
and worry about what I write, but I don’t let it stop me. I’ve
learned through my protocol analysis that writing is a process—
an ever changing, evolving creature. I used to believe that one
day I would have “it”—the ability to write confidently about
anything in any circumstance. I understand now that time will
never come. One is constantly learning and improving and
changing through writing. If one does reach the point of
“knowing it all,” he or she stops learning.

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A NEW LENS ON LIFE: SEE FIRST, WRITE LATER
Constance A. Pedoto

It is my contention that English teachers must leave their
grammar books, sterile syllabuses of “assigned writings” and
required topics, and rhetoric manuals behind and bring to class
instead a camera, telescope, or kaleidoscope. It is imperative
that the writing instructor introduce any means by which to alter
students’ conventional way of viewing life and to stimulate a
more meaningful, dynamic, and multifaceted composing process—
even if they must literally introduce a “new eye.”

This actual visual introduction of a rejuvenated way of seeing
one’s reality is what Jack Kligerman tried successfully in his
own English classes with a camera. As he states so well in his
article, “Photography, Perception, and Composition”:
The teacher must help his students learn what there is to be
seen, how to see “it,” and hopefully why “it” is important to
be seen. This process of learning to see and of writing about
what one sees is, like learning the desert, a difficult task
(174).

What this teacher-rhetorician suggests is that the composing
process must be preceded by yet another process: learning how
“to see” unorthodoxically. Bringing diverse types of lenses to a
literary classroom is valuable for the entire composing
experience. If students perceive their world from a narrow
viewpoint, they will transfer these preconceived attitudes,
feelings, beliefs into a stereotyped linguistic style
characterized by clichés and unoriginal, imagery. If, however,
students see a diversity of ways to look at their environment and
themselves, they will transfer these experiences, inquiries, and
concepts into a more dynamic, innovative writing style and into
the entirety of the composing process.

Some contemporary literary critics theorists and fantasists
contribute to the spirit of revitalizing seeing and offer, a
wealth of good advice for composition students of all grade
levels. Fantasy-like games are an unconventional way of seeing
and relating to one’s inner self. For example, Peter Hutchinson,
in his book *Games Authors Play* illustrates how diverse "parallelings" of the text (like literary allusions and wordplay, pictorial references, or social-sporting games, for instance) entice the audience to participate in the fiction by creating novel perspectives on the action.

Likewise, Rosemary Jackson, a leading fantasy theorist, conceives fantasy as not a separate antithetic realm to reality (in other words, not a world exclusively composed of nightmares and weird surrealistic or magical happenings), but another perspective on it. Her fantasy—like Hutchinson's play—is just another, perhaps, more creative or unique way of seeing reality or of looking at feelings and experiences through a different lens. In her famous work, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, she summarizes this novel visual approach: "It has to do with inverting elements of this world, recombining the constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently 'new' absolutely 'other' and 'different'" (8).

Seeing well, then, is also vital for writing well. Literally and figuratively, the changing of angles creates vast opportunities for improved writing skills—more colorful imagery, more original composing styles, and even a better use of grammar and syntax. An important interjection should be made at this time: that seeing differently is still part of our social context or traditional-historical approach to living. It is not a superficial state for a limited group of learners to experience but a way to become in touch with oneself through questioning the reasons why a certain topic has been selected or why a certain audience has been chosen over others. In fact, Jackson concludes in her critical text that:

Even though they [literary fantasies] appear to be free from many of the conventional restraints of more realistic texts—regarding strict distinctions between the conscious and unconscious self and life and death—fantasies are still part of their social contexts. (Jackson 2)

In other words, fantasy in literature does not occur outside of time. Authors create fictional texts which reflect nonfictional relationships to the historical-social-political realms of their characters.

Within an actual educational setting, simultaneously, students must see a multiplicity of ways of viewing life and must begin to use new, unorthodox ways of writing about it. As Kligerman literally uses a point of view with his camera and with his unconventional approach to teaching writing through photography, he suggests that teachers of composition must originate new points of view for their students: they must determine why students select a certain angle, how they feel and think about their subject, and for what purpose have they chosen their topics and specific audiences (174). Students do have the capability of being playful, innovative with language—as exemplified by their out-of-the-classroom jargon—but the teacher must, through writings on the self for instance, stimulate students to be playful in writing by using new metaphors, styles, and means of expressing environment.

Interesting to note, is a present-day writer, like the surrealist Italian author Italo Calvino, who constructs his fictions through novel ways of playing, fantasizing... or just seeing reality. He uses, as illustration, in his famous fiction, *Cosmicomics*, a multiplicity of pictorial-psychological images which suggest sight and provoke nontraditional ways of seeing, as well as establish new relationships between the text and its reader through this fantastical interplay of visualizing differently. Specifically, at the conclusion of *Cosmicomics*, Calvino's magical, brainless and sightless male mollusk becomes a literal metaphor for the investigation of how characters view themselves and how they procreate new visual systems. The sea creature is affixed to a rock bombarded only by non-visual sensations. It miraculously manages to fertilize a female mollusk's egg, becomes jealous through the sensory channels of smell-sound-touch about his lover's unfaithfulness, and resorts to the secretion of a calcareous matter which encases him in a beautifully colored and striped shell. In producing the shell, the sea creature also starts to fashion visual images of other
shells which are the end products of a highly complex, esoteric system of retina-encephalon circuitry and of optic ganglia nerves. While the mollusks are hard at work creating sight, other forms of life surreallyistically are adapting their embryonic receptive organs to receive these images. An anticlimactic discovery occurs when the great revolution of evolving eyes proves only to be the "sight that the others had of us [the mollusks]" (Calvino 132). Suddenly a great bombardment of sight imagery bursts forth from Calvino's self-conscious novel as the cornets, irises, pupils of crayfish and lobsters, of the sea seals and gulls, of captains' spyglasses and students' eyeglasses, and of rapturous lovers' gazes materialize.

This post-modern writer's weavings of sight by his fictional personages reinforce various strategies of rhetoricians who, likewise, make self-conscious sight and encourage seeing the external world through various other beings' lenses. For instance, in "Teaching English Composition as a Creative Art," Jean Pumphrey approaches the need for stimulation in writing from the opposite end of the spectrum. He talks about turning students off to writing through instructors' insistence on a specific length of a paper, on perfect grammar and proper tone, and on supporting examples. His exasperation with the traditional object centered English teaching curriculum is revealed in the following statement:

The fact is that No One, in the decade of the seventies, is convinced by being told. Yet students and teachers go on telling with greater and greater embellishments as if extravagant rhetoric could obviate simple illustration. And we are all turned off, students and teachers alike. (42)

HIs solutions for a more process-oriented teaching approach are returning to self-oriented writing assignments, doing a great deal of in and out of class writing which include free and speed writings, writing multiple drafts, using peer reading and criticism groups, and evaluating students through comments, not mechanics. He appears, like Calvino, to support the need for students to see for themselves and for a multiplicity of other eyes what is worth commenting upon in life and why.

In summarizing some of the pertinent ideas made by rhetoricians, such as Kligerman and Pumphrey, and critics, such as Hutchinson and Jackson, about the importance of seeing in the creative composing process, a common goal is to allow students to be in tune with their own feelings, beliefs, and values. Students have an abundance of exciting ideas and energy locked within themselves, but this natural flow of expression through language is disrupted by outdated product-oriented teaching methods: insistence on themes of certain lengths, fitting specific writing forms, with an X amount of supportive and grammatically perfect examples. Writing, like talking, is a natural way of learning. By allowing students the linguistic and perceptual flexibility to talk about themselves and to see alternative perspectives on life, teachers encourage students to self-analyze, interpret, and structure their personal experiences for a multitude of audiences and purposes without the reliance upon textbooks and instructor gimmicks. I have used this concept of "see first, write later" in English classes by using a host of prewriting-writing-rewriting activities. In my Freshman composition classes I have placed the element of writing with personality/self as top priority, regardless of the mode of writing, or type of audience and purpose. I use fantasy as a means to show students how artists, like writers, see themselves and their worlds; and, then, how they transfer these perspectives into a symbolic system of communication, whether linguistic or artistic. As illustration, I show a group of provocative surrealistic slides by such leaders as Dale, Tanguy, and DeChirico. The students were surprised to discover from their own self-analysis and from peer interaction that these paintings reflected similar, private subconscious turmoilis. This pre-seeing stage, before the prewriting is an invaluable tool for motivating students' philosophical-conceptual points of view.

Other than the implied new freedom of expression and more creative imagery in student writings, there are also practical results of "seeing first, writing later." I noticed in my composition classes that students' works incorporated more
playful language, as well as a surprising improvement of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. This revelation ties in well with the fantasists' belief that unreality, or seeing differently, is another perspective on reality. In other words, seeing from a post-modern viewpoint does not abandon traditional constructs, but incorporates new skills and means of self-expression into present conventional structures. To test the effects of seeing first before writing, I designed a case study last summer involving all gifted students (grades four through six) who were attending a special creative writing enrichment program. I specifically wanted to test the correlations between the reading of a highly complex, multi-perspective text and the writing of qualitative papers. The children were given a traditional piece of fiction to read—a story by Edgar Allan Poe characterized by an limited plot-theme-tone interpretation, textual closure, and orthodox usage of words—and a post-modern story to read—a work by Italo Calvino characterized by a kaleidoscopic presentation of personages, textual plurality, and game-playing with language. The children's written commentaries were evaluated for quality writing which I determined arbitrarily to include the usage of complex sentences, internal punctuation, difficult words, spelling and sentence correctness, paragraph organization, textual plurality, and creativity of style.

The results of this study correlate well with the various critics'/teachers' viewpoints presented in this paper. The ability to see more creatively, less conventionally, definitely increases the knack for writing more meaningfully, less stereotypically, and correctly. The results, supported by the final tabulated writing scores of the young composers, demonstrate a positive link between these two learning processes, reading and writing, and, concomitantly, between these two systems of self-realization, seeing and writing. In other words, the reading of a sophisticated fiction which encourages an endless array of viewing oneself and one's environment (like "The Enchanted Garden"), as opposed to a more linear restricted perceptual-ideological writing (such as "The Telltale Heart"),

definitely enriches the process of writing. For these students' works by far contain more inventive metaphors and language, illustrate a better usage of grammar and mechanics, and, obviously, reflect a deeper awareness of subject, purpose, and audience in the final written product.

Whether we bring to our English classrooms fantasy slides and our own visual-artistic endeavors, or a camera as Kligeran suggests, and a sea-mollusk as Calvino offers, teachers must have students re-review the world from their own mental cameras first. There are many diverse and helpful prewriting activities to engage in as Pumphrey advocates, and still other unique approaches to composing to further investigate—such as using invented language-computer codes in writing or exploring new forms themselves for writing (hymns, letters, and diaries in lieu of traditional five-paragraph compositions). As writing teachers, we must alert our students to the perils of viewing the world, writing, and feeling from one perspective, or, as Kligeran concludes, "To the dangers of taking the world created by concepts as one's primary environment" (178).

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SHIFTING AUTHORITY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:
THEORY AND PRACTICE
Margaret L. Lansing

To see themselves as writers who make meaning and as readers who interpret meaning, to see their teacher as one source of information, not the source of all answers—these are among my goals as I teach writing to my college-bound seniors. To reach these goals is to engage in the process of learning as defined by John Trimbur: "To learn is to change: learning implies a shift in social standing—a transition from one status and identity to another and a reorientation of social allegiances" (90).

What kind of classroom encourages such increased independence? How does this reorientation—this shift of allegiance from teacher to self—occur? What roles do student preparation and structure play in planning and implementing lessons to achieve this shift in authority?

In the traditional classroom, the teacher is the center of authority, the person who has the "right" answers (Spear 119). When the subject is literature, the teacher interprets texts and imparts knowledge while students take notes in order to take tests—objective or essay. When the subject is writing, the traditional approach assumes that the teacher is the only one who responds to students' papers—the texts (Knoblauch and Brannon 120). If students are not encouraged to question what they are told, if they are not given opportunities to discuss alternative interpretations, the teacher remains the sole authority.

In the collaborative classroom, the emphasis is on student-centered activities which "offer a style of leadership that actively involves the participants in their own learning" (Trimbur 87). To be actively involved participants, students need to engage in dialogue that focuses on inquiry, that requires them to make assertions and to offer potential interpretations or solutions. During student-centered learning, the teacher establishes the objectives, the structure, and the environment within which students learn.

Considering these attitudes toward how we know and who assumes authority in the classroom the collaborative classroom seems more conducive to developing independence in inexperienced writers than the traditional classroom. Theorists agree that the teacher's role in preparing students and planning activities for collaborative learning is significant in facilitating this shift in authority, but they differ in actual practice.

According to Kenneth Bruffee, the teacher in the collaborative classroom gives assignments, designs tasks for students to solve, organizes students into groups, helps students resolve conflicts, and evaluates the quality of the students' development both as a writer and as a group participant (9). However, while the group is working together, the teacher remains outside the activity of the group (13) so students can openly converse with their peers. In creating opportunities for peer conversation about writing, the teacher designs tasks that lead to some common response or solution, a "collective judgment. . . of the group as a whole" (9-10). This consensus involves agreeing or agreeing to disagree (14). As students work in groups, they develop an "effective interdependence" (13) so that authority gradually shifts from teacher, to self. Finally, the teacher helps each group and the whole class to synthesize the activities that take place.

Harvey Wiener, relying heavily on Bruffee's ideas, also describes the teacher as one who arranges or organizes. The teacher establishes tasks that can lead to consensus, reviews the principles for solving tasks, and organizes students in groups (54-56). Wiener believes that teachers should remain on the fringes of the class because they can readily undercut the independence of any group they visit (57). Like Bruffee, he describes the teacher as a "synthesizer" whose task in two-fold—to help students synthesize what happens in their groups and to summarize what happen in the whole class (58-59).

For Charles Schuster, the issue of authority is also significant: If students are "to possess their own writing," they must "internalize what it means to be a writer" (4). In his collaborative writing classes, the teacher does not give writing
assignments, nor does the teacher develop tasks to be solved through conversation leading to consensus. Instead, students write, choosing their own topics and form, and read that writing to response groups. The listeners write comments and share those comments orally with the authors. By combining self-directed writing assignments with critical responses given regularly by peers in groups, students learn "to assume full responsibility for what it means to be a writer" (4).

As an organizer, the teacher sets the guidelines for the class and establishes groups. As "respondent and role model" (10), the teacher participates weekly in each group in order to demonstrate how listeners should comment on other students' essays. Gradually, students perceive the teacher as a member of the audience, not as the source of authority. Unlike Bruffee and Wiener, Schuster believes that the teacher needs to participate in the groups in order to create a sense of support and commitment to the whole process (11).

Karen Spear says that peer response groups help students "shift from passive reliance on teachers to greater autonomy and self-reliance" (97), but that teachers need to instruct students in group techniques (8). Spear emphasizes teaching students reading strategies, especially prediction -- "where an idea is heading, how it will affect an audience, and how an audience will affect it" (105). Learning to do reading free writes--written responses to both professional and student readings (107-108) -- and to be active listeners (122-123) helps students offer alternative points of view on essays. Spear also advocates consensus activities in which students work toward "a single best course of action" (159-160) because such activities help students resolve writing problems (160). Unlike Schuster, Spear thinks that teachers should not contribute to the group's commentary on an individual's writing so that students stop relying on the teacher (158).

Although these collaborative theories were not part of my knowledge when I revised the writing program for my seniors last fall, I provided students with ample time for writing and revising, instruction in revising and editing, and group work for responding to writing. These activities set the stage for the collaborative writing groups the students were to experience during the second semester.

After six weeks of drafting essays on various topics, we began our study of revision with a discussion of terms. I asked my students to write out their own definitions for revising, editing, rewriting, and proofreading and then to revise one of their rough drafts and to record the changes they had made and the reasons for those changes. These activities provided the foundation for our discussion of terms.

Some students argued for revision as rewording; some argued for revision as changing ideas. A few claimed that revising and editing mean the same thing--making major changes and correcting errors. However, most students agreed that revision means making changes in the meaning of the essay, not just correcting errors. We agreed on that definition and the value of operating from a common language--at least in our classroom.

Using the students' records of their revisions mentioned above, we discussed the types of changes and reasons for those changes. Gradually we named and grouped changes according to types and extent--additions, deletions, alterations at the paragraph, multi-sentence, or sentence levels. Students also discussed whether it was better to begin revision by considering the overall content of the essay or by perfecting individual sentences. Although they admitted that they often feel the need to get the words "just right," they concluded that that can be a waste of time if they ultimately throw out that sentence.

This discussion initiated students into peer conversation about writing. While sharing their definitions and revision strategies, students spoke from immediate experience and demonstrated their involvement in what they had done and what they could do. They also revealed themselves as makers of meaning, a meaning they controlled through their choices.

Following this discussion, I introduced the students to a reader-response sheet designed to draw their attention to an
essay's strengths and weaknesses. After students completed response sheets for a sample essay, we discussed what they had written and exchanged ideas about weak and strong comments. We also discussed how writers might use these responses to revise their essays.

For the rest of the semester, students completed reader-response sheets to other students' essays as part of their preparation for revision. Working in groups of two, three, or four, they exchanged papers, read them, wrote responses, and then discussed their responses with the author of the essay.

During second semester, these students wrote a research paper based on a topic related to the field they planned to enter in college. Before the students narrowed their topic and made a working bibliography, they spent a class hour writing and sharing that writing.

First students spent about fifteen minutes writing what they already knew about their subject and what they tentatively wanted to accomplish through their reading and interviewing. Next, students write for ten or fifteen minutes on what they didn't know, what they wanted to know, or what they thought they needed to know about their subject (Macrorie 62-64). Having explored their own familiarity with the topic, they then generated questions that they thought other people would want or need to have answered about the subject. Finally, in groups of three or four, students circulated their papers so the others could read and respond by stating questions or listing additional questions that they as readers might want to have answered.

Students, then, had at least two sets of questions to compare to their own. Most of the students liked this activity because they found that other people's questions provided insight into what an audience might want to know or need to know in order to grasp an unfamiliar subject. In addition, they seemed to feel responsible for narrowing and shaping their own topic.

As students read their sources and conducted interviews, they wrote the typical notecards. After completing notes for two or three sources, students brought their notecards to class on a given day and spent at least half the period writing about what they had learned from these sources. I encouraged them to write in their own words and to document as needed. Students repeated this process three times so they had several pages of predraft writing by the time they finished taking notes.

After completing their research and sketching a writing plan, students write a first draft which then went through a revision workshop. During first semester, students had used reader-response sheets to comment on essays and to offer suggestions for revision. During second semester, however, I tried a more open approach to revision through collaborative writing groups based upon Charles Schuster's model in "The Un-Assignment: Writing Groups for Advanced Expository Writers." My students' groups did not meet regularly as do college or adult writing groups; instead, their concern was offering responses for a single paper over several days—first for revision and then for editing.

In order to accommodate our high school class period of forty-nine minutes, I arranged students in groups of three and asked them to read and respond to three pages of writing for each person each day. Since the papers averaged eight or nine pages, students were able to respond to each person's entire essay over three days.

The students followed these procedures:

1. Read your pages through once while the other group members listen.

2. Read again while the listeners write comments about what is good and what is not clear or does not work. Listeners must use a separate page for each reader.

3. When one reader is finished, go to the next reader and repeat the process.

4. When everyone has finished reading, give the written responses to each reader; read the responses you receive, and spend the remaining time discussing reactions to each paper.

5. Sit in the same arrangement each day and on each succeeding day, begin with a new reader.
During the first workshop, I joined each group and write a response for one reader. After the first workshop, I did not continue to join groups unless I was asked. Following the three days of workshops, students revised their drafts and then brought one revised section of their paper back to the group for another reading.

After revising their paper, students met in the same groups to edit their work. Using Richard Haswell's concept of minimal marking, each student read one paper at a time and placed a check mark after each line that contained an error. Then he/she passed the paper to the next reader to repeat the process so that each paper was read twice. As soon as the authors had their own papers, they began checking for and correcting errors. Students consulted with each other or with me when they needed assistance.

Because oral reading in groups was a new experience for my students, I asked them to comment on this method and to compare it to using reader-response sheets. Of the twenty-one students who responded, the majority said they liked the oral method and explained why. Cindy said, "I realized while reading [aloud] that things were monotonous or out of place." Michelle wrote, "This method helped me see that not everyone understood how my paper sounded."

Several who compared this process with the use of reader-response sheets, wrote in favor of the oral reading. Julie said, "I prefer the method we are currently using...to the style we used last semester [because] I would rather listen to the paper being read and jot down my thoughts about it than read it and answer questions." Michael wrote, "This method worked much better for me than the last method...It's easier to see necessary revisions when I hear other people read their papers and when I read my own and compare how each sounds."

Not all students were so positive. A few preferred the security of reader-response sheets because they then knew "what to look for." Others found listening difficult: Tami said, "It like being able to see the paper myself because not only can I go back to reread, but I can follow at my own pace." A few students discussed the limitations and advantages of each method and noted that for a paper of seven to nine pages oral method seemed more efficient than reader-response sheets.

One student--Nick--wrote about the autonomy of his group. "I like this format much better than the one we used [last semester because] this format was less formal and allowed us...to revise in our own manner... After everyone had read their sections and the others had written their initial comments, we exchanged papers and looked at them more carefully. When everyone was done writing [additional] comments, we gave the papers back and discussed the suggestions we had made for revision."

With careful preparation and planning, collaborative learning can encourage student development in ways that teacher-centered classes cannot. Students learn to challenge each other's ideas, to scrutinize evidence and information, to question their own thoughts. They learn "that knowledge is something they can help create rather than something to be received whole from someone else" (Gere 69).

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STUDENTS USE WRITING TO LEARN

A Persuasive Article Designed for the
Skeptical, the Enchanted, and the Dubious
Eleanor Carducci and Norean Muir

For those who might still be skeptical about the writing-across-the-curriculum rhetoric you keep hearing from peers at educational conferences, we hope to convince you that students do use writing to learn subject matter and to define, clarify, and reflect on experiences. We hope to persuade you that students learn better when they write frequently and that we, as instructors, gain knowledge of the process of their learning in a way beneficial to both student and instructor. We come to you after completing an ethnographic research project that has reaffirmed in practice our theoretical support of writing as a learning and critical thinking tool.

OUR BEGINNINGS

Our introduction into classroom inquiry began when we participated as institute fellows for the Center for the Study of Writing in New Jersey. The institute, which was held at Rutgers University, brought together college faculty from throughout the state to study and prepare ethnographic research projects on the subject of writing in the classroom. Inspired by ethnographer Dixie Goswami, we formulated our study question, "How Do Students Use Writing to Learn?" and began our study which encompassed the academic year 1987-88. We then presented our findings at Stockton State College at the Center for the Study of Writing at New Jersey's statewide conference.

OUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As previously stated, the methodology for the study was an ethnographic one. Described by James Britton as a "quiet form of research," ethnographic studies transform teachers into researchers in their own classrooms. Ethnographic studies focus on the learning and teaching process in the context of individual classrooms which are treated as distinctive subcultures of an educational community. Comparable to cultural anthropologists,
teachers function not only as observers but daily participants in
the culture they are studying. Data comes from logs, journals,
questionnaires, and interviews.

OUR STUDY

Guided by our central research question, "How Do Students Use
Writing to Learn?", we studied students in two very different
classroom situations. One class was a junior-level practicum
seminar and the other a sophomore-level English literature
survey. One class was primarily discussion and experience-
oriented and the other academic and text-centered. We collected
data from student journals, prepared and distributed
questionnaires, and discussed with students individually. We
collected, read, and analyzed the students' journals together and
separately. Our focus was upon the ways students were writing in
the journal and how they used it as a learning tool. The
questionnaire, was given at the end of the study and analyzed
qualitatively in the spirit of ethnographic studies.

OUR CONCLUSION

Although some of the findings had different areas of emphasis
because of the nature of the courses studied, poignant common
characteristics of the writers/learners were evident to the
researchers. The following is a collaborative list of how
students used writing to learn in both English and Literature and
the seminar courses:

1. Students agreed without exception that writing helped
   them focus more on the subject at hand. Writing
   requires more self-discipline and as a result of doing
   it, students were more directive in their learning,
   causing them to consider text and situations more
   carefully.

2. Writing gave more permanence to thought. Students
   remembered situations and text more vividly after
   writing about them. They were also able to reflect on
   their own thoughts and reactions.

3. Writing served as a catalyst to thinking. Students
   approached text and experience in a thoughtful manner.

4. Writing helped students tie elements of a text or
   situation together.

5. Thinking on paper was evident as students hypothesized
   tentatively and then rehypothesized more definitely.

6. As instructors, we gained knowledge from the student
   writing that we could not have gained otherwise. We
   were able to ascertain the point at which confusion or
   misinterpretation occurred.

7. Students applied their own cognitive and affective
   constructs to text and situations but then reformulated
   as they compared and contrasted their own thoughts and
   feelings with the readings and situations.

8. Writing brought together formal connections of ideas and
   feelings.

9. Students often worked inductively to the solutions of
   dilemmas.

10. Students used writing to define themselves in relation
    to text and situation.

11. Writing was used to clarify meaning.

12. Students summarized, linked ideas, and made sense of
    text and situations through writing.

We hope our study will cause others to pursue the topic, "How
Do Students Use Writing to Learn?" We know the subject deserves
further attention and future ethnographic studies as well as
traditional methodologies. Some may still need convincing of the
value of using writing to learn but we, after careful study, no
longer do!

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HIGHER-LEVEL COMMENTS OR STRUCTURED: WHICH ARE MORE EFFECTIVE?
John T. Scenters-Zapico

While it is generally acknowledged that the effect of particular types of teacher comments on student writings is an important aspect of composition research (Sommers, 1982; Lamberg, 1980; Beach, 1976), this assumption has not been empirically validated. Although composition teachers spend enormous amounts of time on written comments, "we do not know in any definitive way what constitutes thoughtful commentary or what effect, if any, our comments have on helping our students become more effective writers" (Sommers, 1982, 148). There are, however, several studies which tell us where teachers tend to focus their comments. Rosen (1983), Searle and Dillon (1980), McDonald (1978), Harris (1977), Jerabek and Dieterich (1975), and Cohen (1973), all maintain that teachers' written responses are directly related to the mechanical or technical correctness of students' writing. Searle and Dillon note that "there were little or no comments referring to audience or moving outside of categories." Other related studies are connected with extensive versus brief comments (Hillocks, 1982), intrinsic versus extrinsic comments (Hirsch, 1977), positive versus negative comments (Hausner, 1975; Stephens, 1973; Gee, 1972), and the effect of marginal, terminal, and mixed-marginal comments (Bata, 1972; Stiff, 1967). Yet none of these studies questions and examines the underlying assumptions behind such comments. This study analyzes the "whys" and the "hows" of responding to student writing, and can guide teachers in helping their students develop their higher-level thoughts.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study was to discover if those students who received higher-level (rhetorical) comments on their writings during one semester of freshman composition would receive higher holistic scoring than those students who received structured (grammatical) comments. As seen in table one those students in the higher-level class consistently received higher mean scores on the pre- and post-tests than the structured class. The overall average decrease does not demonstrate that the students had become worse writers; it merely indicates that each writing topic had distinct demands on the writers and the holistic readers. If the students had received the same writing topic, then it could be hypothesized that their holistic scores would have increased on each holistic reading.

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*Mean of combined raters' scores.

It was believed that by working with students' higher-level thoughts, using the rhetorical triangle, students would improve their writings as a whole. Unlike a traditional composition class, these students were urged to reshape their ideas and ultimately, in a peer-group workshop, correct any structured errors in their writings. With this in mind, students were shown "that it is not spelling or punctuation or most grammatical usage that we first worry about when preparing a first or maybe even a second draft" (McDonald, 1973). Therefore the higher-level class was shown what needed to be done and what could be done in their writings.

Searle and Dillon point out that teachers of writing feel writing begins with a mastery of mechanics and large structures;
but as they found in their research, "there was little evidence of teachers to develop thinking through writing" (1980:239). In addition, Harris perceptively observes in her study that although teachers' response revealed a slight preference for giving more weight to content and organization when they rated samples, they were strongly influenced by errors in mechanics and usage" (1977:185); other similar studies by McCracken (1985); Les (1979), and Freedman (1979) found that often what teachers say is not necessarily what they do.

I hypothesized that if students are able to develop higher-level ideas and then edit the structured weaknesses, they would have well-developed ideas that are edited correctly. On the other hand, if students receive only structured comments, the most they would have with the final drafts of writings are underdeveloped ideas that are punctuated correctly.

THE EXPERIMENT

Students received two distinct writing topics. This was done to allow students the freedom "to address diverse audiences in order to accomplish diverse purposes. We cannot make claims about writing ability until we have examined students' performance on a variety of writing tasks" (Odell and Cooper, 1980, 40). The students also received exactly the same amount of out-of-class and in-class time for each writing task. McDonald feels that most departments still rely heavily on the impromptu essay, which means students can only submit one version of their writing for a grade. However, he notes that if we are to show students what the entire composing process is like--this includes revisions--"then...we are obliged to allow them to submit several drafts" (1978:167).

The experimentally controlled writings went as follows: 1) students received the topic on a Monday, 1) on the Friday of the same week they brought to class their drafts and worked in small group workshops; in this first workshop both classes concentrated on only higher-level aspects of their writings. At this early stage in the writing, as Odell points out, "it seems best to ignore mechanical errors and phrases...and examine some of the useful things" (1973:398), 3) at the end of the class period they turned in their drafts, 4) on the following Wednesday and Friday they had oral conferences with me; to those students in the structured class only structured weaknesses were marked by using the Prentice-Hall Handbook for Writers numbering system; to the students in the higher-level class only higher-level weaknesses were marked according to a rhetorician's guide. It was at this stage that I felt the students in the higher-level class were guided more in achieving their own purposes in writing, and the students in the structured class were given the "impression of the importance of (structured) errors that is all out of proportion to how they should view these errors at this point in the process" (Sommers, 1982, 150). After the following Monday they brought in their finished writings and worked in small-group workshops; in these workshops they concentrated only on structured weaknesses in their writings; at the end of the class they turned in their finished writings, 6) these writings were photocopied without the student's names or class and holistically ranked by outside readers, 7) students' graded writings were returned with structured or higher-level comments on them, and 8) students had to turn in a revision sheet with only the corrected errors, not a complete revision.

ANALYSIS

After the experimentally controlled pre- and post-writing assignments, all of the students' writings that were turned in on the due date for the holistic rankings were used; however, only those twenty-four students who turned in their writings on all three due dates of the holistic readings were included in the results. The writings were photocopied, coded, and all identifying information about the student was blacked out.

The students' writings ranked holistically because it asks the reader "to rank papers on the basis of the total impression created by the writing" (Gere, 1980, 47; Cooper and Odell, 1977); moreover, according to Hillocks (1982), "good writing, ultimately, is writing that is perceived to be good." A four point holistic scale with four being the highest and one being
the lowest was used by two outside readers to rank the students' writing. To avoid any bias in the holistic rankings, I chose one professor who is a rhetorician and the other a professor of literature. As Raymond suggests, "because variability in reader response is both inevitable and desirable, it makes sense to have more than one reader evaluate" (1982: 401).

Prior to holistically scoring each of the twenty-four writings, the readers participated in a training session to determine rater reliability. Six student writings were selected and rated holistically before each holistic reading; at least one 1, one 2, one 3, and one 4 were chosen so that the full gamut of holistic scores were covered. Each rater was given a copy of the writing assignment to read and was asked to holistically rank each of the six writings based on their general impressions (Raymond, 1982, 403). Afterward the two scores were compared to see if the readers were reading the same as each other. Any writing which received two very different scores was discussed by the readers until the disagreement was resolved. Then all the writings were randomly mixed and scored.

Realizing that writers' and readers' performance varies from day to day, I gave the writing assignments and held the holistic scoring sessions over a sixteen week semester. As the holistic scores breakdown indicates, the class receiving rhetorical comments earned an overall higher mean on the pre-test (2.63) and the post-test (2.50) as compared to the class receiving grammatical comments (2.45 and 2.33).

IMPLICATIONS

Student writers have been receiving grammatical comments as the only means to improve their writing. Teachers of writing have been trained to mark these errors, and thus they feel writing begins with a mastery of mechanics. This pilot study does not condemn one form of marking and teaching and hall any other as being superior: it indicates the need for students to be helped with the development of their higher-level thoughts at early stages in the writing process, and it indicates for teachers, if they want better developed writings, that it is essential for them to guide their students' higher-level thoughts and, ultimately, mark their structured weaknesses.

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ACCESS MINDS TO ACCESS TEXTS
Jeffrey Wilhelm

Before the act of reading ever begins, be it a science text, a short story or a Shakespearean play, the teacher has her most powerful opportunity to elicit student background and interest, and therefore to ensure that comprehension, involvement and application of personal meaning can and will occur.

THEORY AND RESEARCH:
Frank Smith, in his psycho-linguistic approach to reading, asserts that the value of pre-reading activities can be found in the very description of the reading process (1972). Reading is viewed as an active process that begins with what the reader knows from his prior experience, which includes prior language knowledge, skills and strategies. Smith refers to this experience as non-visual information because it is part of the reading act that is separate from the text being read. This non-visual information interacts and is integrated with what appears on the printed page, which is what Smith refers to as visual information. In short, the more the student knows about the content of a selection, and the stronger and clearer his own attitudes towards the content, the simpler the reading task will be. A host of other researchers have also clearly shown that if prior knowledge cannot be applied and connected to the reading task, comprehension cannot be achieved (Hart, 1983).

According to the strategic reading movement, global comprehension is demonstrated not through the answering of questions, but through the reader's ability to summarize, re-state, interpret and apply the information gained through reading (Pehrsson, 1982). However, studies by Taba (1955), Hoetker (1968), Squire and Applebee (1968), Applebee (1981) and Purves (1981) demonstrate that students do not need to summarize, apply, interpret, analyze or even talk or write about what they have read to be highly successful in the
typical school setting. As a result, students are not
guided to "globally comprehend" what they read, nor are they
guided "to develop more comprehensive thinking and analytic
skills." (NAEP, 1981, 2) In fact, the NAEP asserted in
Reading, Thinking and Writing that the schools "have failed
to teach more than 5 to 10 percent to move beyond their
initial reading of a text." (1981, 2) This, in effect,
means that up to 95 percent of our school population cannot
learn or think through the act of reading, nor can they
connect reading experiences to their own life.

Finally, consider the work of Herber (1970) who stresses
the importance of success to learning. Herber asserts that
all students, but especially remedial ones, need to be
"successful in the vast majority of the tasks they attempt"
if they are to become enthusiastic, successful, and lifelong
learners. In the same vein, Smith (1988) asserts that the
learning situation should be structured so that errors are
few and relatively specific. In this way reading is
forescored and mistakes are easily remediated.

Using structured pre-reading instruction is the teacher's
best strategy for creating this focus and providing an
opportunity for a successful and enjoyable reading
experience, with clearly targeted topics for interaction and
discussion. The ultimate result is the development of
independence in learning and reading, which is, of course,
the goal of education.

The task set before every teacher is to enable each
student to actualize their fullest potential on each
assignment by making that text accessible to her. And the
research provides at least one clear answer of how to move
in that direction: structured pre-reading activities have
been shown to be very effective at all grade and ability
levels; and in fact, that similar preparation for reading is
consciously or unconsciously used by all successful readers.

PRE-READING TECHNIQUES

Types of pre-reading activities have been generally
divided into the motivational, preview, vocabulary and pre-
questioning (Graves, Palmer, Furniss, 1976), but I would
argue that the best pre-reading activities, i.e. those that
provide a workable "schema" for understanding the assigned
text, include all of these techniques.

A schema is the "script" — that is the set of elements,
patterns, relationships, processes and vocabulary — that we
have for understanding a situation or concept. Researchers
like Bransford and Johnson (1972) have shown that the most
efficient use of time in studying new material is in
providing a schema, using students' prior knowledge, for
understanding the new material (1972). A good schema should
motivate the students to complete the reading by arousing
interest and helping students to generate their own
questions. It should provide a preview by eliciting
important and personal background information in reference
to the general topic of the text. It should provide for use
of important and difficult vocabulary so that students can
understand the gist of the passage without paying "conscious
attention to individual words." (Smith, 1971, 88) (Samuels,
1974). Finally, student attention should be focussed on
important questions and themes (Norman, 1969).

EXAMPLES:

Opinionnaires and Questionnaires: Before reading any
text that involves American attitudes towards success or
more particular attitudes towards sports, opinions of the
student and significant others can be elicited with a survey
form with statements such as these:

1. The stress place on winning is robbing us of sport's
   true and higher purpose.
2. Participation is sports builds character.
3. A winner never quits and a quitter never wins.
4. Athletes have a richer human experience than non-
   athletes.
5. Football encourages insensitivity to violence.
6. Sports are little more than big business.

Likert and polarized scales can be put to similar use with great success.

Survey results can be tabulated; results can be discussed and explained; viewpoints can be debated in small or large groups; prepared or ad-libbed position speeches can be offered in defense or attack of particular statements. Predictions can be made: in this situation, the main character/myself/my best friend would probably....

I have found that since most students have strong feelings about sports, such an activity offers an excellent point of entry and thematic focus for difficult texts such as Death of a Salesman, The Right Stuff or texts more obviously related to sports such as Brian's Song.

Any theme that concerns teenagers is a useful focus for such a survey. An excellent questionnaire concerning the theme of love and marriage is offered in Writing About Literature, and others concerning maturity, friendship, parents and individual liberty appear in Explorations, both TRIP booklets published by ERIC/NCTE.

You can easily make up your own for any other theme or issue by referring to Bartlett's Quotations or watching a lively talk show.

Scenarios/Case Studies: A list of scenarios concerning a conflict or issue that have some bearing to those in a text can be ranked from most to least acceptable, and the rankings then discussed or debated.

For example, rank the following scenarios from the least to most acceptable:

1. John is the star quarterback. He is ineligible for the big game because he has not completed any of his homework in math. After talking to John's father and the coach, the math teacher agrees to change John's grade if he will promise to start doing his homework.

2. Louise has been running cross-country for four years. Although she is not a top runner, she has been a conscientious and positive team member. Finally, in her senior year, she has earned enough points to earn her first varsity letter. The week before the last meet Louise is kicked off the team for attending a party where there was smoking and drinking. Two girls who are better runners than Louise were not kicked off although they were at the party too. They claimed to have left when they saw the drinking and smoking.

3. Jerry has been to every golf practice all season. The coach recruits another student to play in Jerry's spot during the tournament, although this player refused to practice with the team. Jerry's coach explains that it is "for the team."

Students can discuss justifications for their rankings, predict their own responses and those of others, including literary characters, in similar situations.

Profiles: Nancy Lester has published a profile of character values that can be completed by the student about herself, and then about characters in a studied text. Values such as "Aesthetics," "Wealth," "Love" and others are ranked in order of importance, then discussed and debated using real evidence. A profile can concern other issues such as Morality, or Attitudes towards Science. A profile about a particular character can be completed before, during and after reading to facilitate an understanding and ability to write about character change.

What If Questions...: The NCTE PLUS regularly publishes "what if" questions, which can be adapted for students' personal use as a pre-reading technique and for use with characters as a post-reading activity.

1. If I (Brutus) were at a game, I would (a) be the coach (b) be the star player (c) be the referee (d) harass the players (e) be a ball hog (f) not pay attention (g) hang out at the hotdog stand. Why?
Piaget's and Kohlberg's moral dilemma scenarios work well in this context when used by students, or when applied to literary characters.

2. If I (Romeo) had to immediately get a rare and expensive drug to save my best friend's (Juliet's) life, and the pharmacist would not sell it to me, I would (a) consult my priest first (b) enlist the help of my friends (c) try to talk to the shopkeeper again and promise to reward him later (d) run in and steal it immediately, hitting anyone in his way (e) simply give up and do nothing (f) wait until the night and break into the shop (g) try to get help from the courts or the media. Which strategy would be most effective and why? Which is most "right" and why?

All of these ideas can be used not only to elicit student opinions and background information, and to provoke discussion and debate, but they can also be used as a touchstone for focussing discussion while reading, and for analyzing and writing after reading. Students are enabled to make specific textual responses that require justification. Instead of generally asking: "What is the author saying here about love?", teachers and students can ask "Which of these opinions/values/scenarios would the author/protagonist/antagonist agree with and how do I know?"

Role Playing/Simulations: Before reading a text about people in a different time, environmental or political situation, role-playing or simulation activities can make the text experientially accessible (Kern, 1983). For example, before reading The Crucible several role plays concerning the clash of authority and individual liberty can be completed and responded to. With The Crucible, A Handmaid's Tale or The Scarlet Letter, which all require an understanding of Puritanism and their attitudes toward morality and community, a more formal simulation of Puritan life could be undertaken in the classroom. A set of stringent rules could be set up for dress and behavior. For example, drinking soda and chocolate milk could be determined as "morally unsound." For the good of the community all breaches of conduct should be reported to the class, and judgment should be passed by a few "untouchable" elders. Elders could hold classroom meetings in town or prayer meeting formats where they are in total command. After a few days of such activities students will have some idea what it is like to live in a society where all one's activities are prescribed, watched and judged, and would gain insight into the thoughts and actions of a Hester, Abigail or John Proctor.

The INTERACT company (Box 997g, Lakeside, CA 92040) publishes many excellent simulations, including one about Puritanism called "Virtue." Teachers can easily devise their own role-playing scenarios, and once becoming familiar with the format, their own simulations.

These are just a few ideas which will help motivate, preview, focus, and guide readers to become more independent and successful. Readers, in light of what they already know, use the successful strategies of bringing knowledge, generating questions, predicting, and clarifying. And finally, summarizing and applying what has been learned in the text.

Pre-reading techniques provide for the detection of patterns that can be connected to the patterns of knowledge that a student already possesses, and that he must articulate during the pre-reading. This is how learning occurs, and this is how teachers can help ensure that reading does lead to learning. It is clear that to promote global comprehension, pre-reading strategies should be carefully structured, modeled in their use, and referred to during and after reading. Then students will be able to successfully make a difficult text their own, and will be able to analyze, interpret and synthesize what they have read - all vital skills to master for life in a complex and quickly changing world.
TEACHING WRITING

Sara Larsen

What makes good writing teachers? Must they be good writers or just good teachers? Do they emphasize strategies or skills? Do they motivate, facilitate or dictate?

Some "experts" argue that successful writing teachers must be good writers, but why? We can usually recognize someone singing off-key or playing out of tune, even if we aren't concert musicians ourselves. We all know winning coaches who were never better than second-string themselves. Isn't it possible then to recognize good or poor writing without being exceptional writers ourselves? Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen believe so. In Beat Not the Poor Desk, they state, "We who teach writing are qualified to do so by our training in literature" (47). C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon agree, stating, "The teacher is an authority only in the sense of being a more fully matured writer and reader" (102).

In the course of our study to become English teachers, we read extensively. We peruse. We discuss. We become familiar with what works and what doesn't work. We develop our individual tastes (I prefer Hemingway to Faulkner, James to Howells), but we still recognize the elements of style that propel these writers into "stardom." As practicing writers ourselves, we know the difficulty of achieving this.

Donald Murray, in A Writer Teaches Writing, argues that writing teachers do not have to be great writers, but they must have "frequent and recent experience in writing" (74). He notes, "The toughest critics on every faculty are usually those whose vision of what they would write remains unblemished by the drafts they might produce. They demand unrealistic high standards of others because they are not trying to measure up to those standards themselves" (41).

Peter Elbow describes good writing teachers as "people who simply succeed in helping most of their students write better and more satisfyingly" (ix). Sounds good, but how do we do that?
One way is to avoid the misconceptions Knoblauch and Brannon point out in Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing. These include lecturing about the composing process instead of encouraging students to write, having students write more than one draft to achieve technical merit rather than improved style and content, and assigning topics that encourage students to think but then implying their ideas are incorrect (99). Sending mixed messages to students causes confusion, which, far from satisfying them, leaves them frustrated and rebellious.

Ponsot and Deen's solution for making better writers is to "make writing prevail" (8). By continually practicing the essential writing skills, just as piano players continually rehearse their scales, students become more adept users and manipulators of language. Ponsot and Deen's essentials include writing prolifically, using literature to understand whole structures, making observations and separating them from inferences, writing abstractly and concretely, and rewriting.

While not everyone may agree that these are the skills students need to work on, "practice makes perfect" is as true in writing as in any other field. Through "free writing" and journal writing, students explore ideas, find meanings and develop style. From reading, they discover the intricacies of writing: organization or carefully manipulated disorganization, rhythms, voice, language. Revising allows them to apply these discoveries to their own writing.

Since teaching is my livelihood, it is difficult for me to admit that Elbow may be right when he contends that a teacher is most useful when not necessary. Murray, too, advocates that we must learn "how to get out of the way of our students" (5). Before eliminating thousands of jobs, however, let's stress the word useful rather than not necessary. We can prove useful by helping students discover what they want to say and how they can say it. We are not necessary because writing exists without teachers.

When we become facilitators, we are most useful. As trained readers, we know if writers have succeeded. When they haven't,

we need to ask questions (Are you saying helmet laws should be abolished or that all states' laws should be consistent? Do you wish to imply that this is better or just different?), make suggestions (I'm not sure what you mean here; perhaps if you eliminated some of the wordiness it would be clearer. The arguments are difficult to follow; why don't we take a look at the organization.), and give students the incentive to improve by emphasizing the worth of their writing.

Teaching writing doesn't mean prescribing a formula for how to write. We aren't surgeons; we are diagnosticians. We don't fix what's wrong; we make suggestions for possible cures. It's up to the patients to find the remedy. "The teacher is a guide, a coach, a stimulator, a listener, an informed responder," say Knoblauch and Brannon, "who knows too much about the complexities of writing and the talents of writers to assume a more ambitious--and less informed--role of Arbiter or Judge" (102).

Granted, at the end of the course, the teacher must become arbiter and judge and assign the grade. But as students write, the teacher must be more the mediator than the arbitrator, negotiating between reader and writer. "Negotiation assumes that the reader knows better than the writer the actual effects of authorial choices" (Knoblauch and Brannon 128). We may be good writers, but we don't have to be. It is our training in reading and writing and our skills in negotiating and facilitating that make us good writing teachers.

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THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR: DOES IT REALLY COMPUTE WITH JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS?
Karen Tutkowski

I don't know which was more severe--my computer-phobia or my seventh graders' grammar phobia. Combined, the two seemed like a certain deadly-duo, but they actually ended up being a life-giving force.

In the past, I've tried all sorts of methods to improve writing skills. Grammar books are a definite crowd-killer in junior high. The Racine Daily Oral Usage Program is a good aid; also, drawing examples from students' own writings definitely brings the lessons closer to home. Many students can self-analyze and edit their own work--to a point. They seem to know when something doesn't sound right and can often play around with it until it's better. The real stumbling block comes when they just can't see the problem--be it less skilled writers who simply can't find the fragments, or more sophisticated writers who can't understand the verb-subject agreement problem or the pronoun confusion that exists in their otherwise well-structured complex sentences. Students seem to lack the necessary vocabulary--the "grammar jargon"--that would allow more proficient writers to help them analyze and improve their own paragraphs.

Every subject requires a knowledge and understanding of a basic vocabulary before meaningful communal dialogue can take place. Most students should be able to discuss their writing in clearer terms than "this doesn't sound right but I'm not sure why." They need to know--and feel comfortable using--basic terms like nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, understanding their basic functions and what they can do for a sentence. The more impressive terms like "gerund" and "infinitive" can be left to future English teachers. The majority of students simply need to possess a sound working vocabulary in the basics. The study of grammar, then, becomes a necessary evil.

Grammar is not quite so deadly when it is slipped into a seventh grader's life via a computer, and then painlessly extended to writing to which the student has already made an initial effort. Since I practice what I preach, this forced me to learn the basic lingo of the computer so I could adequately communicate with students who were infinitely better versed in "computerese" than I. Computers, are not quite so deadly, either.

I used Mastering the Parts of Speech (SVE, 1345 Diversey Parkway, Chicago IL 60614-1299), a six-disk program with tutorials and hands-on experiences. Each disk contains two levels of difficulty to assure a continuing challenge for students. Adventure themes provide motivation, graphics and sounds maintain interest, and supplementary print materials offer additional review and reinforcement. Few real-life teachers can compete with this package.

Initially, I decided to concentrate on verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. For some of my students, portions of the programs would merely be review and they could concentrate on the more advanced concepts. For others, much of this would seem relatively new and they would take it as far as they could. Individualizing, then, was no problem. General class size, however, was a major dilemma. Our school owns twenty-five computers but only two disks for each part of speech. That computed to eight disks to be shared among classes of twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and thirty-one students. This unit definitely encouraged a cooperative learning venture.

Since it was already second quarter, I used my own knowledge, along with a diagnostic grammar test that I had devised to suit my own criteria, to analyze each student's strengths and weaknesses in the four areas. I then assigned each to a group--focusing on either nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs--that each would study and become an "expert" in. For some, the choice was made because it was the easiest; for others, because it would provide a needed challenge. Once students became "experts," they would be responsible for teaching their specialties to students from other groups.
This seventeen-day unit was divided into four segments because of the heavy sign-up of the computer lab by other teachers. This actually proved healthy in the end, because it relieved the monotony and made the students look forward to their next opportunities to do English at the computers. Only nine of the seventeen days required lab time.

Day one, I organized the groups and explained the unit. We reviewed the proper handling of computers and did a sample "prepositions" disk together on the large screen. They were ready.

The "expert" groups assembled at their assigned computers on day two. In a class of thirty-one, using two disks per part of speech, created nearly eight potential experts in each area of study, with four to a computer. One student in each group was appointed the leader. Leaders were to start the programs, give each group member a chance to operate the computer, and ensure active group participation by calling on members to answer questions as the lessons progressed. The others, naturally, made sure the leaders also answered.

Day three took place back in the classroom. The four students who had shared a computer the day before now pulled their desks into a circle to work jointly on the worksheet that reinforced skills learned on the disk. Nobody was to write down an answer until all four in the group agreed; they were to discuss and analyze any disagreements. Those who understood the concept were to coach and aid the group members who didn't. My job was to organize and facilitate.

On day four, the same groups met together in the computer lab to correct their own worksheets. I gave leaders the answer keys, which they read aloud to their groups. I was available for group or personal consultation. In the time left, groups and/or individuals had the options of redoing the disks or working on additional worksheets to reinforce these skills.

On day five, students were evaluated for mastery in their specialty areas via quizzes that correlated with the computer programs. Instead of using letter grades, I determined what percentage would fairly represent mastery on each of the four different quizzes. To avoid handing back graded quizzes that the other three-fourths of the class would eventually be taking, I created a tear-off section at the bottom of each paper that outlined what concepts had been covered. On these outlines, I circled what problems the students had on the quizzes, so that each one would know what to study for the retest. Those students who attained mastery on their first tries were issued teaching certificates and were now regarded as "experts" in one of the four parts of speech.

After the quizzes, came the chance for the students to integrate their newly-acquired grammar skills with some personal writing they'd done the previous quarter. From September on, we had slowly been working on an eight-part Identity Book. Each section covered a different topic, such as "Physical Me," "Questioning Me," etc., and was added to a folder that was kept in the classroom. A progressive evaluation/improvement chart was stapled inside each folder. Different book sections emphasized different writing skills, but often these skills built on each other. To date, I had merely checked-off on the charts in what manner each skill had been handled: Wonderful, Very Good, Satisfactory, Poor, or Not Done. No grades had been given because I intended to correlate this writing project with my computer grammar unit.

Naturally, the students who had already done both a rough and revised copy of each section were surprised to discover that the papers in their folders were not, in reality, their final copies after all! On day five, I asked the classes to take a fresh look at Part I of their Identity Books, and to circle—in color—all examples of the part of speech each had just studied. Students were to examine their own papers for any misuses—to make notes and to revise. They were also to ask one or two other students from different groups to look over Part I and to make additional comments and suggestions from their own areas of expertise. Hopefully, a noun expert might now recognize a sentence without a proper subject; a pronoun person might discover an antecedent
problem. In addition, each proofreader might also detect other technical problems previously overlooked, such as spelling or punctuation. Authors then had a chance to rewrite their Part I and submit their papers for final evaluation.

Segment Two of this progressive unit began after a two-week intermission. The first day of this new segment required some organization. Some of the students would now play "teacher," some would be learners, and some would be seated at desks doing review. There were only four computers in operation, with as many as eight users around each. Before we sat down at the computers, everybody wrote down job descriptions for the three different roles they might assume either now or later. Teachers were to operate the computers, call on learners to answer questions, explain difficult concepts, and pass out homework worksheets at the end of the disks. Learners were to cooperate with the teachers, answer questions, ask for help when not understanding something, and have their worksheets completed by the next day. Reviewers were those students who were supposed to be teachers on this day but had not achieved mastery on the first quiz. Together we did additional practice exercises, with hopes of achieving mastery on the rest day. It was possible to have as many as four teachers and four learners at each computer, but this seldom happened because some of the group members did not have teaching licenses and, so, were doing review work with me. Even when there really was a four-and-four ratio, it caused no problems and actually allowed for one-on-one tutoring. We followed the same routine as before. And, again, I was available to help, intervene and further explain.

It was individual quiz time again on Day Nine, focusing on the part of speech each student had studied. Once again, the quizzes were evaluated for mastery and the bottom sections, rather than the whole tests, were handed back to indicate problem areas. No teachers' certificates were issued for this second segment or any segment thereafter; to keep things simpler, students could only become teachers in their original specialty areas. But those who had not achieved mastery during segment one could retest on this day. Mastery on this second try would allow those students to play teacher during the third and fourth segments of the unit; failure would mean further review and a chance for another try in the future.

For our writing connection, we once again delved into Part II of the Identity Books, searching for previously-undetected problems related to what had just been learned on the new disks. Two or three others from different groups also critically reviewed each, with the aim of perfecting the new final copies that would be written and handed in.

After another two-week break, segment three of the unit was performed; a few weeks later we completed segment four. Basically, Days Ten to Thirteen and Days Fourteen to Seventeen in these last two segments were repeats of Days Six through Nine, except different groups worked together teaching and learning the two parts of speech each had not yet covered. We revised Parts III and IV of the Identity Books.

By the end of the unit, each class member had specialized in one part of speech, and taught it to others (or reviewed it) three more times. Each student had also dealt with three other parts of speech--with the aid of the computer, other students, and a teacher--and had either mastered these or had been given ample opportunities for further review and retesting. Teachers liked the new sense of responsibility they had been given. Learners did not mind being taught by peers when there was a computer in the deal. Reviewers were lured into working hard because of the prospect of eventually getting teachers' licenses. A failure to attain mastery did not mean an instant "F" and an end to the whole thing; it just meant try harder and success was still possible. Class members who were absent on a learner day lost the opportunity to work at the computer that day, but had the backup of a group of peer learners and teachers to work with them on written exercises when they came back.

Poetry was used to tie all four of the segments together. The students were given a free form parts-of-speech poetry assignment. They followed a line-by-line formula, which largely
TEACHING WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM
Michael Segedy

Until relatively recent history, the teaching of composition has focused exclusively on the surface features of single draft compositions. During the last decade and a half, composition theory has undergone, as described by Richard Young (1978) and Patricia Bizzell (1979), a "paradigm shift." Theoretical attention is given now to the act of composing with research focused on heuristics, creativity, imagination, and the overall role of the student in the thinking-writing process. Writing as product continues to be viewed, in theory, with glowing skepticism since it divorces composing from the thinking-forming activity. Supportive research has been amassed to uproot the notion that composition can be taught by teaching grammar/mechanics to the exclusion of teaching students to use written language as a creative act vital to the formation and discovery of ideas. Notable studies by James Britton (1975), James Moffett (1968), Richard Graves (1976), Janet Emig (1971), Donald Murray (1968), and Ann Berthoff (1978), to name only a few, testify to the abundance of research that has come forth to war against years of dogged tradition.

Though so much has been written to change the course of writing instruction in our school systems to a process-oriented, student-centered curriculum, there still remains obstacles to theory implementation in secondary school classrooms. To gain footing, the teacher who wishes to implement a practical program for writing as a process must know the specifics of the program. Tenants of process writing sound great in theory, especially for the college classroom or summer workshop. Their justifications are irrefutable. But "how" specifically does one implement, within the public school framework, specific process writing strategies like peer-evaluation, holistic grading, and student-teacher writing conferences and still maintain order? In short, how can discipline be maintained within a system that advocates and encourages individual effort, growth, and development when a
classroom has one teacher and thirty or more students? How specifically is process writing possible given the large class sizes and management dynamics that exist within the traditional public education structure? These are questions for which specific answers must be provided before an English teacher, not entirely sold on the methods of antiquity, begins dancing to a different drummer.

By focusing on three important elements of a process-oriented, student centered approach: peer evaluation, conferences, and holistic grading, I believe I have developed a program that truly works. I implemented the following program over the last four years and watched modern writing theory bear fruit. Over that period of time, I have also given a number of in-services and have been pleased to see the ideas take root and succeed in destroying many of the icons of product-oriented writing. It's fun being an iconoclast when the images you're destroying merit the blasting.

Peer-evaluation in the secondary school classroom, and I prefer the word evaluation here in place of editing because of the emphasis the latter can place on mechanics, has a number of advantages for the student. Peer evaluation teaches students the value of critical reading skills. They are taught to look for areas of developmental weakness, not by being given a list of abstract terms found in the back of an English handbook, but rather by learning to ask questions about a student's paper (and ultimately about their own) that cover the fundamental concerns of composing. The questions they learn to ask apply to any written work, fiction or nonfiction.

Secondly, the student writers have their immediate audience expanded. For any writer there is a difference between the theoretical audience, those for whom the paper is intended, and the real audience, those who will actually read the paper. With the traditional approach, the students have one audience--the teacher, although they are writing for a theoretical audience that they know will never see eyes on the work. The writer's awareness of this can affect the paper's clarity, for often the student assumes the teacher knows what the paper "means," so no serious attempt at clarification is undertaken. Also, criticism from the teacher on the student's inability to communicate ideas effectively can, after a time, be taken for granted with ensuing attitudinal consequences. The student writers doubt they can ever meet the teacher's expectations and learn to accept, lethargically, comments about their writing. The student writers are also reassured that their shortcomings, which they now accept, are a personal matter between them and their teacher.

On the other hand, when their peers constitute the larger part of their actual audience, their personal reason for writing shifts some and with this shift they accrue concomitant responsibilities. Other student writers can assume, really don't know exactly what they "mean," unlike the omniscient teacher. Nor do they relish the idea of a classmate reading a paper that could have been thought out a bit more and is perceived by a classmate as "immature" writing. Although their classmates don't have the lofty expectations of the teacher, yet, somehow, peer pressure and accountability seem to weigh heavier.

Another advantage is the sharing of different viewpoints on a particular subject, not just parroting the teacher's. Peer evaluation encourages this kind of sharing and also provides the opportunity for the student to test ideas and hypotheses on classmates before adopting them in a subsequent draft. Not only can the writers test their ideas, but they can obtain feedback from peers on the paper's clarity and development as well as feedback on the paper's overall unity, coherence, and relevancy to the writer's expressed purpose.

Finally, when a peer comments on the writer's creativity, they are rewarded and encouraged to eschew plagiarism. This also reinforces the idea of responsibility and scholarship.

For the teacher, there are also a number of apparent advantages. Evaluating a paper that has been rewritten two or three times reduces frustration by minimizing the number of disunified, incoherent, inadequately supported, and grammatically unintelligible papers that accumulate on their desks to be taken
home and agonized over. Students actually assist the teacher by providing the student-writer with immediate critical feedback, so the writing process can continue without a week's delay. And students can provide valuable feedback without an astounding amount of instruction if the approach they are taught is not mystified with terminology and esoteric rubrics that detract the evaluator's focus from unique concerns of the papers they have in front of them. Students' critical thinking skills need to be exercised. Lastly, the teacher is freed during class time to assist students, on a one to one basis, who need help with the development or mechanics of a paper. Often the questions they ask about their classmate's paper, and the answers the teacher provides, have direct relevance to the questions they will later ask themselves about their own papers. They learn, through peer evaluation, that the problems that writers share though different in degree are not in kind.

Two questions immediately surface. Though it all sounds theoretically sound, how does it work? How can students be taught to evaluate papers effectively if they don't possess the skills? First let me say this: all human beings possess critical thinking skills. When I was asked to present a workshop, a few years ago, on peer-evaluation to a group of teachers, I knew that if I were to convince them that peer evaluation does work, I would have to prove my premise, since it obviously was not an a priori one. The way came to me three days before the in-service was scheduled. I had one of my eighth grade English classes peer evaluate a set of geography papers I borrowed from a ninth grade geography teacher. Three days later, during the presentation, I asked the teachers if they would apply the five categories outlined on the peer evaluation that follows to a geography paper I happened to bring along. Following the evaluations of the paper, I asked individuals to read their comments aloud. Their comments, for the most part, were excellent. Everyone appeared to be in general agreement as to the weaknesses and strengths of the paper and the paper's alleged focus. I then took out the evaluations of the same paper by my eighth grade class and began to read their observations. My audience was shocked to discover that they had duplicated the comments of my eighth graders. Obviously students could think critically and be helpful to the teacher in the evaluation process.

There is nothing complicated about the peer evaluation format I use. In fact, its effectiveness resides in its simplicity. When I set out to create the format, I wanted to avoid the rubric approach and develop a method of evaluation that could be applied to any written work. I had also observed a tendency with students using rubric evaluations to only focus on the guidelines of the rubric and ignore other vitaly important considerations. The format I developed looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor's Name</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I. Summary of writers' alleged purpose and whether their paper attempts to achieve it

II. Questions concerning development (specific questions about ideas, word choice, sentence clarity, awkward phrases, relatedness, tone, and support) use letters in left margin

III. Specific strengths concerning paper's development

IV. Comments to improve overall development of paper

V. Mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation) use letters in left margin.

The method of introducing (and reviewing) the format is crucial since it is the backbone of teaching critical thinking and writing skills that will later apply to all modes of discourse. Students learn best by example, so an effective way to teach the method is to choose a paper to display on an overhead projector and walk the students through the process, beginning with category one and ending with five. While working through the categories with the students, I discuss their observations with the class. I explain to them the need to read the paper through a couple of times before they begin, and the importance, at the outset, deciding if the alleged purpose is understood. This is an important first step, for if the paper lacks unity and focus, there is little purpose in continuing an
evaluation on the entire paper. The editor need only comment on the parts of the paper that appear to develop the author's implied purpose.

Category two targets specific areas of the paper that need clarification and development. I emphasize not telling the author ways to improve the paper, but instead asking questions that will require the writer to find the means of solving problems. All questions on the evaluation sheet begin with letters of the alphabet that corresponds to the letter placed in the left margin of the paper locating the area of concern. Letters vary in size, depending on the actual space to which they refer. Common questions raised under category two are:

1. How does this idea relate to your purpose? (unity)
2. Does this idea belong here? (coherence)
3. Don't you need an example? (support)
4. Does this sentence make sense to you? (awkward structure)
5. Is this the right word? (diction)
6. Doesn't this sentence have two different meanings? (misplaced or dangling modifier)
7. Couldn't you begin with a clearer statement of your purpose? (weak introduction)
8. Doesn't your paper end rather abruptly? (weak conclusion)
9. Aren't you inconsistent here? (logic)
10. Don't you shift into this part of your paper rather unexpectedly? (transition)
11. Is this paper supposed to be funny? (tone)

The words in parentheses following the questions are common tools of the trade, but, as we all know, a person doesn't need to know the name of a tool before they can use it. The tools that students use when critically evaluating a paper are not foreign to them. In fact, discussing the definition of the English terms (above in the parentheses) presupposes the existence of the facility requisite for grasping the abstraction under discussion. Students, if they are taught to look closely, can see developmental weaknesses in a paper. And if they don't have the ability to see them in someone else's paper, can we really expect them to see similar weaknesses in their own?

Category three asks the editor to locate areas of the student's paper that merit praising, or if not praising, at least appreciation and encouragement. Students rarely have difficulty finding positive things to say about their peers' papers. The teacher's job here is to just keep them honest in their assessments of their classmates' creativity.

Category four involves some real concentration on the part of the editors. The areas of the paper that disturb them most and interfere with the paper's success, they must now decide on, knowing that their comments must be about the paper's overall developmental improvement.

Success with category five is obviously dependent on the amount of editing expertise the student possesses. Some students are very helpful here, and others helpless. However, when students have questions about mechanics or grammar, I usually have the time to advise them. Letters are used with this category also. Students just continue with the next letter of the alphabet with which they ended. Students who pride themselves in their editing skills must be dissuaded to correct errors. Their role is only to locate them; the writers must correct them. If this doesn't work, the conference, held before the next draft is written, will provide the occasion for asking questions about grammar or mechanics. Sometimes the redevlopment of the paper during the second draft precludes the need for addressing such peripheral questions.

This, brings us to the next point: the conference. Much has been written about the value of individual conferences, yet in the secondary school program there appears to be an implementation lag. Again the major obstacle is numbers. How, or more importantly when, can one teacher have conferences with an average of one hundred and thirty students? Then there is the belief, on the part of a number of teachers, that each paper submitted by the student should receive some sort of written evaluation from the teacher.

Following the peer evaluation, I provide two or three conference days during a workshop session where students are busy reading evaluations of their papers and working on reformulating parts of their papers or, in some cases, their entire papers. I call each student and try to answer any questions about the peer
evaluations or the paper in general. These days are very exhausting for me, but also very productive. In that space of time I have responded to each student's paper in a manner that is not quite possible with the conventional one-way communication system. I make more comments and have greater effect during this time. For one thing, it is much easier to discuss complex problems than to write about them to a mute audience. In addition, it is imperative for the teacher to understand the students' opinions about what their intentions were without trying to second-guess them. The students bring with them so much more information about the subject they have chosen to write about than the teacher has access to when evaluating the paper in a posthumous fashion. The teacher has live subjects at hand, with strong feelings about what they wish the paper to say. These feelings need some discussion if the writers are to benefit, and the conference presents the opportunity for dialogue.

Once the conferences are over, I set a deadline for turning in the papers; not the paper, but the papers. Students place the peer evaluations on top of the drafts once they have arranged the drafts in the order in which they were written with the rough draft on the top and the last draft on the bottom. The whole effort is then stapled together and placed in the student's writing folder. A grade is never assigned to an individual draft. At first this is a rather strange notion for the students to grasp, but in time they learn to accept the idea that the composition grade will be based on something other than the averaging of isolated grades. This is just another step in the direction of process writing called holistic grading.

The advantages of holistic grading are numerous. Students learn to identify their composition grade with the amount of effort and progress they exhibit over the grading period. They are never in the position to slough off because they have a high average on previous writing assignments. The writing folder also allows the teacher to evaluate the student's writing skills and diagnose recurring problems in development or mechanics and grammar. For high school students, I assign pages to read in the English handbook when persistent problems surface in a number of their papers. This allows me to focus on individual problems that require remediation.

Though the writing folder is bulging with papers towards the end of the grading period, hundreds of hours of pouring over the numerous drafts, with pen in hand, has been unnecessary, thanks to the peer evaluations, conferences and workshops. Now I can focus primarily on the last drafts of each assignment, after reading through the peer evaluations and reskimming the earlier drafts. Since the idea is to provide an environment in which the students can generate a large amount of writing, it is necessary to devise a method of evaluation that meets the needs of the student writers, and also recognizes the fact that teachers are not machines nor were meant to be. The obvious reason for the paucity of writing assignments in many English classes is the fear and trembling when confronted with the masochistic task of grading each assignment. Teachers can lay the self-flagellation aside by selecting only some of the papers within the folder for evaluation. I select papers of particular interest to me but also allow students to choose the paper they feel best represents their finest endeavors. The others remain as testimony to the commitment that writing will only improve through writing.

I conclude each phase of the folder evaluation with a letter about the status of their writing in general, specific suggestions for improving any developmental weaknesses or mechanical/grammatical problems, and some positive comments about papers, or parts of papers, I enjoyed. I then place a phase grade in their folders with the understanding that with the next phase evaluation I expect to see an improvement in areas of concern I have pointed out.

And I will see improvement because the students will be engaged in a process of writing for meaning and discovery through a multiple draft approach that affords them the time and occasion for working out problems that in the traditional one-paper, one-grade, one-draft approach are sometimes pointed out but rarely solved.
TEACHING ANALYTICAL WRITING

John O. Stark

One can enrich writing theory by using some of the process school's insights to reconceive formalism. Specifically, one can teach forms not as containers that a writer can mindlessly fill but as conventions that can assist writers to think more effectively. Using forms may help many current students because more and more of them take writing courses to prepare for business and professional careers. If a teacher can sharpen students' analytical skills by teaching them to use certain forms in a certain way, they will gain a vocational advantage. At the same time, because teaching someone to think better is the most liberal--the most freeing--of educations, English teachers can serve students' needs without selling their own humanistic birthright for a mess of vocational pottage.

One can begin such a course by asking the students to write four lines of blank verse, which would force them to write within stringent formal conventions. If the students have written poetry, it almost certainly was free verse, so this exercise will indicate immediately that this course is unusual. The students' attempts can lead to discussion of the differences between highly formal and only moderately formal writing and the effects of minimally modifying forms. Also, issues will be raised on whether or not one can more easily and effectively write certain things and more easily reach certain audiences by using a conventional structure and whether or not adhering to a form stimulates and improves thought. At the very least, by doing this assignment students should realize that a game played by strict rules differs substantially from a game played with minimal rules. Perhaps they will recognize the advantages of writing within forms.

A suitable second assignment is another four lines of blank verse to follow the first four, especially if the teacher explains that a pivot, where the poem turns, occurs in, and helps to organize, most short poems. For example, from a question to
an answer, a description to an analysis, or a position to a counter-position. Students will quickly realize that they cannot create a suitable pivot if their first four lines lack a point. Perhaps they will also realize that they probably cannot proceed effectively in writing of any type if the work from which they set forth lacks a point. Thinking about pivots can also teach students that some forms do not derive from rules and cannot be discerned simply by counting elements of composition, such as iambic. Some forms are difficult to detect; many are unconsciously produced and valuable not because a reader recognizes them but because they work: they encourage writers to think in certain productive ways. To write well by using forms one needs to discover the forms that pertain to the kind of writing one wishes to do and to learn to use them consciously. Finally, the student should learn from this assignment that if he or she aspires to analytical prose worthy of being called art, it, like most art, must reconcile opposites. Specifically, it must acknowledge opposite viewpoints: the silent voice that ought continually to say, "This, too, is true."

In the next assignment the student, rather than writing, could study a masterpiece of English prose, Samuel Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield. This assignment affords a chance to study prose style and its relation to occasion and audience. Students could begin by considering whether or not a personal letter has a form. Reflecting on their own letters should convince them it has. After students have identified that form's rudiments, a teacher can help them to see the ways that Johnson pushes that form to its limits and thus to see that they should not slavishly follow a form but use it for its benefits. Johnson's tone—the stance he takes in regard to his noble correspondent—his style (especially the devices he uses to express his dignity while expressing his anger) and his figure of speech about the drowning man are the main instruments he uses to extend the possibilities of the personal letter's form. This letter demonstrates that devices writers commonly employ in "literary" writing also strengthen analytical and argumentative writing.

The object of the course's next prose analysis, the first paragraph of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, demonstrates the intimate relation between thought and style. Gibbon's Latinate diction implicitly demonstrates his subject's importance. Specifically, the words derived from Latin indirectly establish the continued relevance of the empire Gibbon is beginning to discuss. He gradually moves into his characteristic irony, beginning with pairs of words, such as "disciplined valor" and "gently but powerful," that do not seem quite comfortable together and proceeding to the startling effect caused by "enjoyed and abused." Irony, because it exhibits a double perspective, forcefully acknowledges and opposite viewpoint.

The teacher can then begin systematically to teach analytical writing. It makes sense to discuss the units of writing in the same order that a student writing an essay can most effectively think about them: in order of decreasing size. For example, determining a paragraph's main topic before one begins to write it will probably result in a sharply focused paragraph, which in turn will make it easier to compose the sentences in the paragraph. A teacher could begin the heart of the course by considering the first problem that a student beginning an essay should attack: clearly and distinctly formulating the essay's main idea. Students would profit from learning to begin to write an essay not by writing its first sentence but by expressing the essay's point in a sentence that will probably not appear in the essay. Compression induces clarity. I would even argue that that exercise is a effective first step to take in writing a book. A student will more easily express an essay in a sentence if he or she conceives of that essay as an argument. Even if an essay is not an argument in the literal sense, writers can think of it as an attempt to convince readers that the writer correctly describes its topic.

After explaining the essay-in-a-nutshell, the teacher could address the topic, boring as it may appear, of outlining. Of the three alternatives, two, classifying with minor points
subordinated to main points and sketching the main headings, do not work well partly because they do not nurture the knack of thinking in paragraphs, which separates the adequate analytical writer from the first-rate analytical writer. The third alternative the paragraph outline, is more likely to have the desired effect and, moreover, will control the essay's length. A writer restricted to a certain number of words or pages can translate that goal into paragraphs by assuming that the introductory and concluding paragraphs will each be about one hundred words long and that the middle paragraphs will average about one hundred fifty words. Thus, a writer, before putting the first word on a page, can ensure that he or she will achieve the proper length. The essay having been planned paragraph by paragraph, the writer confronts not the daunting prospect of writing an entire essay, or even a book, beginning with a stark, blank piece of paper, but the possible task of writing one paragraph, the topic of which the writer already knows.

Introductory and concluding paragraphs present unique problems, and the best advice I can give on them is to follow the suggestions that Sheridan Baker makes in The Practical Stylist. To write main paragraphs well the writer has to solve three problems: to unify them, to develop them sufficiently and to arrange their sentences logically. Stating these problems makes a case that one who thinks in paragraphs is more likely to write excellently, because to solve them one needs to use three—perhaps the most important three-characteristics of effective thought: focusing scrupulously on a topic, focusing long enough on a topic and thinking about a topic in a logical sequence. The teacher would do well to concentrate, and to get the student to concentrate, on rhetorical, rather than conceptual, problems. Implored a student to think better will not work; in fact, trying to get oneself to think better probably will not work. However, one can fairly easily determine whether or not a paragraph hangs together, one can roughly measure a paragraph's development merely by counting words and remembering that one hundred fifty is a reasonable goal, and one can more easily determine whether or not paragraph progresses logically than one can learn and try to apply many rules of logical thought.

A student who has composed a good paragraph outline has moved a long way toward writing unified paragraphs by identifying the topic on which each paragraph will focus. The student then needs only to cling firmly to that topic throughout the paragraph, resisting the irrelevant. A teacher can help by encouraging students to make sure that all the sentences in each paragraph develop the main topic. By focusing one concentrates, and concentration forms a large part of intelligence. Students will have more difficulty learning ways logically to connect a topic's center, the paragraph's main point, to matters related to it but peripheral: the paragraph's minor points or, to put it in rhetorical terms, the ways in which one develops the paragraph. Success in several intellectual disciplines, most notably the law, in large part depends on ability to relate center to periphery.

Unfortunately, development, the second goal in writing paragraphs, conflicts with the first. A writer will have more difficulty unifying a well developed paragraph than a poorly developed paragraph, and more difficulty adding to a paragraph without destroying its unity than accumulating random thoughts. The average paragraph in sophisticated analytical prose being about 150 words long, one ought to try to achieve that length without being slavishly dedicated to it. That length also seems to accommodate intellectually respectable treatment of well chosen paragraph topics in analytical prose. A student revising an essay can readily evaluate a paragraph's unity and development but will not so readily evaluate his or her attainment of the third goal in writing paragraphs: arranging the sentences in a logical sequence. However, that accomplishment facilitates linking one sentence to the next, and the sentences that comprise a paragraph will be more likely to seem to be in a logical sequence if the writer has linked them well. This synergistic effect—work on one problem simplifying work on another—makes this goal more easily achieved. A writer can also
profit from conceiving of himself or her self, at the beginning of each paragraph, as aiming at the paragraph's final sentence and beyond it at the next paragraph's beginning. To do that one composes a first sentence of a paragraph that will both connect to the previous paragraph, specifically to its final sentence, and aim at the last sentence of the paragraph it begins. One also can try to compose last sentences that are the paragraph's strongest: either the most rhetorically effective and interesting or the most substantively impressive, a worthy target for the paragraph. Achieving a logical sequence creates the reward of a paragraph the logic of which can bear careful scrutiny. To achieve a logical sequence one has to make viable connections.

A writer who has followed these principles of organizing an essay and writing paragraphs will be well prepared to solve the problems of writing sentences. That is, having already ensured that each sentence has a sound purpose, while revising one can examine sentence structure. One can start improving sentences by recognizing that the most effective English sentences rest on the scaffolding of a clear, easily conceptualized noun or a pronoun, a precise verb--preferably one other than a form of "to be"--and an object. A writer can check the strength of his or her sentences' scaffolds by extracting from some sentences the subject, main verb and the object and then determining whether those three units form a coherent whole. For example, the previous sentence's scaffold, "writer...check...strength," coheres. A writer of analytical prose must perform this test occasionally because of two tendencies. Persons who survive in their work largely by obfuscating the responsibility of decisions and actions usually use abstract nouns, passive verbs and incoherent subject-verb-object combinations. Writers on abstract topics tend to advert to forms of "to be." These verbs are much more ambiguous than they appear, as one can see by listing their meanings. Also, their over-use soon engenders tedium, and they pop too quickly into one's mind and into one's manuscript, forestalling thought.

After one has constructed a strong scaffold, one can improve sentences by replacing the dead weight it supports with live weight, for example by eliminating some prepositional phrases. Like forms of "to be," they invade the mind unbidden and become a nasty habit. Eliminating many of them makes writing a little harder and thereby intensifies thought. By resisting the temptation to link ready-made phrases one takes the subject and the language more seriously. A writer who rations prepositional phrases most likely will probably build sentences by composing dependent clauses. Dependent clauses serve the noble purpose of forcing a writer to think very precisely about the ways in which ideas and topics relate to one another. That is, trying to produce them makes one think more subtly. Edward Gibbon used them brilliantly to knot up skeins of historical relationships so that he could produce his masterpiece's immense yet coherent tapestry.

Writers are probably better off to defer intense thought about words until they revise. While composing the first draft, one is usually better off if one puts down words, even if they fall short of perfection, and gets on with it, rather than groping or halting. To select words well one needs constantly to remember audience. Jargon is another thought-inhibitor, a plague of analytical writing. Rather, one must remember that the reader needs to be convinced and diction that overstates or creates an even mildly offensive tone will ensure that the reader will not be convinced. To state this point in a way that by now should be familiar, one needs to recognize the opposite, in this case by realizing that a reader may disagree with one's positions. In short, one needs to take the reader and one's native tongue seriously and oneself not so seriously. Beyond these few principles, diction depends in large part on innate ability nurtured by intellectually respectable reading. In fact, the smaller the unit of writing the larger role ability plays and the smaller role training plays. Luckily, however, if one teaches the larger units well the students who have only modest ability will write competently and the gifted students will more effectively use their gifts.
Revision has both an intuitive and a calculating element. Most students depend on the former. To help them do so remind them that their intuition will help them find weaknesses by making them uncomfortable in their presence and that it works better when they read their work aloud and are self-reflective and self-secure enough to recognize that discomfort. Students can be convinced to use calculation to remove the weaknesses they find and to turn adequate passages into good passages. They can begin by noticing the work's appearance on the page: that is, how long are the paragraphs? Many students need to calculate, for example, sentence lengths and the ratio of "to be" verbs to the other main verbs of their sentences. They also need to examine problems that have been troubling them. For example, students who have been writing incoherent sentences should evaluate the subject-verb-object component of several sentences. A beginning student would profit from making one trip through the essay only to inspect the main verbs and another only to inspect prepositional phrases; and advanced student can perhaps inspect both things simultaneously. In any case, once through the essay will certainly not suffice.

These principles of organizing, writing and revising will not turn every student into another gibbon, but using them will ensure that a writing course will be intellectually substantial and that students will later do the world's work better, which is a useful social result. That does not mean that a course based on these principles will be crassly vocational. These principles of writing, being principles of thinking, will help students develop intellectually. If that can be accomplished, basic writing courses will certainly deserve an honored place in the curriculum.

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MY VIEWS IN REVIEWS

Alethea K. Helbig

Robert Frost once remarked that understanding the process of metaphor is vital for determining whether or not somebody is trying to put something over on us. It would be pretentious, of course, and perhaps arrogant, to suggest that appreciating the metaphorical process of language, or even methods of style in written or spoken discourse, would protect us from unscrupulous word-manipulators. But surely some realization of why speakers and writers employ the manner of writing they do, how and why they arrange words in certain patterns or their choice of words, or why they adopt a particular tone is vital for determining what they are trying to say in a specific instance, or perhaps what they are trying to avoid saying, as witness the annual NCSE awards for doublespeak.

For younger children, Mother Goose rhymes serve as an excellent introduction to what can be done with words, because they make use of all the important devices of style from simple alliteration through powerful visual imagery to delicate or obvious irony. "The Wind in the Willows, Winnie-the-Pooh, the Narnia books, The Hobbit, Where the Wild Things Are, and The Borrowers expose children to some of the finest literary stylists of the twentieth century."

Even quite young children can appreciate Lewis' "tongue-in-cheekness" and Norton's use of specific details. My seven-year-old granddaughter, for example, much engrossed in the story of Arrietty, asked whether there could be such creatures as Borrowers, described at length what the Clocks' home looks like and Pod's rules for borrowing, and then announced, "That proves it." Norton's meticulously specific style does more than adorn; it becomes integral to the meaning of the story.

Recently published books for middle graders and young people offer fine prospects for discerning why authors have selected the words and arrangements they have. In A Begonia for Miss Applebaum (Harper, 1989), Paul Zindel's characteristically overstated, witty, sometimes sardonic style succeeds in keeping the account of the impending death of a 62-year-old, much-liked, unconventional biology teacher at Andrew Jackson High from becoming sentimental or morbid. The vibrant language he chooses to describe her last days with two admiring and enterprising students projects a festival atmosphere and makes the book a celebration of the life of an exceptional teacher and, indeed, of the possibilities life holds for everyone references will date the book, but the strong bond between the narrators (a boy and girl switch off in telling the story) and their subject, and the unusual outings the three share in her last days are intrinsically interesting in themselves and have an enduring entertainment quality.
stories. The title character of Balyet (McElderry, 1999) is an Australian aboriginal girl of legend, who is thought to have lived for eons in the mountains, ostracized by her people for breaking tribal rules, searching for someone to join her and relieve her loneliness. Into these hills come a group of adolescents, a rebellious young girl, a fourteen-year-old Jo identifies with Balyet, refuses to believe Granny when she insists that Balyet intends harm, and is almost lured to her death by the spirit girl. This is a remarkable blend of fantasy and realism, with both touches of humor that relieve the tension between indigenous and contemporary forces.

Bobbie Branscum and Bill Brittain both employ homespun speech and local color effectively in Cameo Rose (Harper, 1989) and Dr. Dredd's Wagon of Wonders (Harper, 1987) respectively. Arkansas hill girl, Cameo Rose, 14, is determined to help her Grandpa, the sheriff, find out who shot and killed a neighbor. Her impulsive, often misguided efforts produce much humor and some suspense when someone takes a pot-shot at her, too. The hill speech which establishes place and character expressions the experience. The book recalls Branscum's earlier The Murder of Hound Dog Bates (Viking, 1982), in which Sassafraz sleuths to discover which of his three maiden aunts poisoned his best friend, his hound, and learns to keep his mouth shut and not jump to conclusions.

Dr. Dredd's Wagon of Wonders is the latest in Brittain's series about the village of Coven Tree, which began with The Whirligig (1980). In laconic, folkloric, old-timey tone, the story reworks the old theme of making a pact with the devil. Coven Tree, now drought-ridden, engages Dr. Dredd, who has come to town with his traveling show, to bring rain, and increase the price of the bargain. The story has a fast pace and all the ingredients to engage the emotions, a truly villainous villain, virtuous, yet opportunistic townsman, an abused youth and his determined sweetheart, and several ages-old evil spirits including a fire-breathing dragon. The story has just the right mix of formality and whimsey to produce credibility.

Exemplary for their careful attention to detail of emotion and intellect as well as of incident and setting are Midnight Hour Encores (Harper, 1986) by Bruce Brooks and In Lane Three, Alex Archer (Houghton, 1989) by Tessa Duder, both stories of girl prodigies, the former a cellist, the latter a championship swimmer. In both war, is more inner than outer directed and told in first person. Shibilane Spooner, 16, in the Brooks book, is a protagonist of considerable dimension, a musician internationally

Also flamboyant in approach is IRA award-winning The Ruby in the Smoke (Knopf, 1987). Philip Pullman's novel is a highly constructed, patently sensationalistic, Victorian melodrama. A beautiful young girl of sixteen, suspicious about her father's death at sea, seeks to find out what really happened and get's in motion an intrigue involving opium trade, a valuable ruby, a handsome young photographer who becomes her suitor and in the end, a mysterious and evil old woman gang leader, and a young man who is sent to read dramatic scenes in a book. The book's first lines set the tone: "On a cold, frosty afternoon in early October, 1872, a hansom cab drew up outside the offices of Lockhart and Selby...", out steps a girl, "alone, and uncommonly pretty," whose "name is Sally Lockhart...and [who] within fifteen minutes...was going to kill a man." An old-fashioned thriller, this grips and holds to the very last word. Its sequel is Shadow in the North (Knopf, 1988).

Understatement can be equally as effective as hyperbole. The last book of renowned historical novelist Scott O'Dell, who died in October of 1989 after a long and distinguished career, is My Name Is Not Angelica (Houghton, 1989). The African narrator, whose birth name is Rajah, is kidnapped into slavery by a rival tribe, transported to the West Indies via slave ship, and sold to a Danish planter on the island of St. John, where she participates in the actual slave rebellion there of 1733. As is typical of O'Dell's writing, the narrative explores the emotional, too laconic for easy identification with the protagonist. His verbal economy sometimes produces unusual dramatic effects, however, as when the unfortunate black youth forced to plug leaks in the slave ship is lowered over the side, "dangling with the rope around his waist, [and] the next moment only half of him was there. Sharks had got the rest."

Another writer who typically employs understatement is Australian award-winner Ivan Southall. His stories often start at fever-pitch, with short, staccato sentences or fragments of sentences punchy with dialogu and sibilants. "Madden domined the valley. It was the key to the defense of the Australian Alps. The key to all things visible and all things out of sight...Yet not a weapon in sight to defend it. Not a defensive obstacle to delay an enemy assault." The tense, taut tone introduces Blackbird (Farrar, 1988), set during World War II. Believing a Japanese invasion iminent, the Dad, and army officer, moves his family to a safer part of the continent. Young Will remains determined to protect the home, and loses control over everything. His foolish yet sympathetic act of bravado and an unusual facet of World War II combine with a high-strung style to produce an exciting tale of a different kind of boy's growing-up story, and a tense and exciting thriller.

Patricia Wrightson uses imagery to create an eerie, nature-directed atmosphere appropriate to her folklore-based
renowned, proud but uncontrived. Abandoned by her mother at birth in the flower-child era, Sib has been raised by her father. Her often funny narrative is told with many "ing" verbs and connectors that move things along rapidly and give the tone an appropriate musical quality. The details she gains about the hippie era through her father's somewhat awkward attempts to help her understand what motivated her mother contrast well with Sibilance's own period. Duder's Alex Archer is keenly observant about herself and others. Her story is more serious and has little of the humor that sets off Sibilance's growing awareness of self and family. In Alex's book the details revolve around the inner struggles and yearnings of a top-flight athlete, a swimmer of Olympic caliber. Alex tells the story as she lives it and sees it both in actuality and in her mind's eye. The big race, only minutes in duration, provides the frame for her flashback narrative. Alex concentrates on her fifteenth year, 1959, the year she comes to understand the problems and ability of her chief competitor, and must adapt to the accidental death of her boyfriend, who has been her dearest friend, and staunchest supporter. She tells how she learns to ease up on herself, surmount the pain of competition, training, and failure, and focus on the best that life has to offer. The careful use of detail in this book and in Midnight Hour Encore effectively conveys the universality of the feelings and needs of the protagonists and at the same time illustrates that style is intrinsic to the meaning of a story.

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BOOK REVIEWS


Billy Connelly's death in an auto accident the previous summer haunts his family, particularly his younger brother, Bobby. Billy was an ace baseball player, headed after high school, it seemed, for the big clubs. Bobby idealized Billy. Now, Bobby can't seem to function--in school, with his peers, with his family. Additionally he can't face the fact that Billy was driving too fast the car that caused the death of two people, Annie Dunham's parents.

Almost by happenstance a relationship begins with Annie. Initially, their hurt and anger keep them apart; catharsis brings them together. The heavy mantle of grief begins to slip from Bobby's shoulders as he learns to accept his loss. All of this collapses when Bobby learns the truth; his brother wasn't driving; he's been framed to protect the son of the town's leading merchant. Then he discovers that his parents know, indeed have know, the truth.

This is an extraordinary novel, linking as it does the coming to terms with life's reality and response to injustice. The characters seem true, fraught with human foibles and doubts, trying--but not always succeeding--in being true to themselves. The plot is tight and believable, lightened somewhat by the preliminary stages of romance and some baseball play. I highly recommend this novel.


Crutches, set in post World War II Austria and Germany, is an unusual historical fiction book for this age group because it focuses more on character than it does on plot. Thomas Schramm is virtually orphaned, having been separated from his mother in the crush of a crowded train station. (His father was killed in battle.) He does not arrive at their agreed-on destination, his aunt's house in Vienna which is just a heap of rubble. Alone, anxious of being picked up by the police or soldiers and about how he's going to live, he attaches himself to a one-legged former German soldier, Crutches. The book essentially depicts their life together over the period of a year until Thomas and his mother are reunited.

The core of the book is the relationship of these two wayfarers. From a tentative, grudging acceptance of the "requirements" of their situation, a bond of mutual caring,
protection, and giving develop. This is reflected also in personality and behavioral changes that belle the ravages of the post-war devastation. These changes speak to the positive effect of friendship and affection; they suggest that humanity is possible even in the context of inhumane conditions.

Nicholas J. Karolides
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Embracing the excitement, danger, and pride of Gentle Ben's frontier life, Walt Morey treats Year of the Black Pony with comparable adventure. The story takes place in Oregon and involves the family life of an adolescent boy named Christopher. The book opens with Christopher waiting for Sam Fletcher's horses to gallop past Christmas Ridge on their way back from pasture. Christopher admires the black pony who races in front, with "his head up, his ears forward, black mane and tail flying in the wind." This pony "set him dreaming. Thinking of him running so free, so eager, so full of the love of life." This is Christopher's secret passion, to watch and admire the black pony, and to forget about the "bickering and quarreling that went on at home." Christopher then narrates of his father's terrible temper and drinking, and how this has led to several fights ending in a fatal one leaving Christopher, his mother, and sister on their own. For survival, Christopher's headstrong mother has an ingenious plan, and devises and executes a "marriage of convenience." Much of the book involves the adjustments each family member must make in the new setup. As a contrast with Christopher's real father, his new stepfather, although gruff, turns out to be gentle, understanding, and strong. Christopher develops a healthy relationship with him that leads to the fulfillment of Christopher's dreams and self-confidence.

Year of the black pony embodies many important themes that provide connections between twentieth-century living and frontier life. Walt Morey writes with much detail about the hard work and responsibility needed to farm the land. Students can learn from Christopher's systematic approaches to solving tasks.

Christopher's family life involves similar problems students today may see or experience. The image and role of women is encouraging since Christopher's mother is strong, smart, and practical. Although she appears cold and distant at times, in the end, we see her compassion. The spirited pony encompasses the boyhood dreams of Christopher and his stepfather. He stands for the freedom and unbroken spirit of a land unwilling to succumb to pioneer settlement. And yet this spirit is the very same the pioneers relied on to survive in the hard and untamed land they called home.

Year of the Black Pony is an interesting and fast moving book that will entertain and educate children and adults alike about important elements of dreams, freedom, responsibility, and love.

Kim Sorenson, Eau Claire, WI

REVIEW


This kit consists of fifty 9½" x 11" cards to aid in teaching elements of the short story, a packet of worksheets with permission to duplicate them, and a teacher's guide. An advertisement specifies use for grades four through eight, or gifted three through seven, but some of the ideas and activities could easily be adapted to high school or even college classrooms as well. The Kit could be used either as part of a classroom unit on short story writing or as a supervised independent activity.

The approach to the short story is academically sound, with the cards organized into sections according to traditional elements: characters, dialogue, setting, point of view, plot, and structure, with a final section called "all together." Each card contains some basic information about one of the story elements, gives one or more examples of it, and suggests several activities to help children stockpile ideas for a story of their own to be written at the end. The "all together" section gives help in organizing, revising, and even "publishing" a book or classroom magazine.

Be a Story Writer effectively teaches the elements of a short story and would, I think, not only help students write an original story, but make them more astute readers of fiction. It also builds vocabulary by defining such terms as "anachronism" and "character composite."

Ideally, this kit should be used with a teacher's close supervision. Card 2 suggests that students use dictionaries, diaries, and a thesaurus "to help you choose lively words." I have two reactions to this: 1) students need to be taught how to use a thesaurus, and 2) unless students already know the word they are looking for, a thesaurus can be a dangerous tool. A good teacher could interpret Card 2 so that the young writer will not use the thesaurus as a means to become "flowery." My own
preference would be to have students stick with the dictionaries and diaries.

I would like to have seen more in this program about how to handle time in writing short stories, but this, too, can be covered by a competent teacher.

The strengths of this kit are many, from the appealing and sometimes humorous illustrations (I especially like the convoluted snake on Card 3) to the clear and imaginative writing on the cards ("The middle [of a story] is as important as the peanut butter in a peanut butter sandwich!—Card 40). The suggested activities are superb and varied: group sharing, interviewing someone to research details after preparing a list of questions ahead of time, role playing, rewriting a story to change the sex of the hero or heroine, observing and writing about people. And there are many others, most of which made me want to take out my pen and try them.

Even the title of the kit is appealing; the challenge is not just to scribble off a short story but to be a short story writer, which implies growth and learning, becoming a different person than one was before. This kit could be helpful nudge in that direction.

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