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Submission Guidelines

- Send **two** copies of each manuscript, typed and double-spaced throughout (including quotations, endnotes, and references), with one-inch margins (see address on page 55).

**OR**

Submit your manuscript electronically to the editors, Ruth Wood (Ruthann.P.Wood@uwrf.edu) and Anne D’Antonio Stinson (stinsona@uw.edu), as a Word or WordPerfect attachment.

- Provide a statement guaranteeing that the manuscript has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

- Ensure that the manuscript conforms to the Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language in NCTE Publications.

- Follow MLA format throughout.

The name, address, school affiliation, telephone number, and e-mail of the author should appear on the title page only, not on the manuscript. If the manuscript is accepted, the author will need to provide a disk copy of the manuscript in Word or WordPerfect.

**Upcoming issues:**

**Teaching To Kill A Mockingbird** (Fall 2003)
Deadline: September 15, 2003

**Special Feature: An Exemplary School** (Spring 2004)
Deadline: February 15, 2004

**Bilingual Education in Wisconsin** (Fall 2004)
Deadline: September 15, 2004

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**Editors’ Note**

Dear Wisconsin English,

You have in your possession a wonderful piece written by a teacher entitled "How He and His Standardized Test Students Did Well on the Test," which represents either the opposite of good teaching or the student's ability to learn how to read.

*A discussion* of Carmen Mann's article "Teaching to Literacy" may provide useful insights into the teaching of standardized test students. The following piece is an attempt to provide some concrete examples.

*In Wisconsin, a Metacognitive Reading teacher is able to help students learn to read into how well they learn.*

**Showcase of Best Practices:**

"Labors Lost" by Mike Oliver (current HS teacher and former student Matt from High School).

We close the issue with a report on the current research on bilingual education in Wisconsin, and a reprint of "Why Adults Are Left Behind" legislation.

We hope you find both interesting and informative.
Editors’ Note

Dear Wisconsin English Journal Readers:

You have in your hands an issue devoted to celebrating the connection between good teaching practices and good student work. Each title in this issue represents either the combination of the description of a contributing teacher’s specific writing assignment or writing program and sample results of that teaching or the student product itself. Specifically, in this issue you’ll see:

• A piece by Illinois high-school teacher, Thomas McCann, describing how he and his colleagues get their students to do better writing in standardized testing situations and including a sample from one of his students.

• A discussion from two Eau Claire English professors (Jill Kotta and Carmen Manning) about using reader-response journals in an Introduction to Literary Studies course that critiques successful and not-so-successful journal responses, with an eye to using the contrasts to learn how to make better journal assignments.

• In Wisconsin Classrooms offers insight into two classrooms: Metacognitive strategies used by Lee Ann Troutman, a high-school teacher in Wales, WI, in her creative writing classes for getting students to be aware of their own accomplishments as well as giving her insights into how well various pieces of her classroom instruction work for students. Also, and dialogue, poems, and commentary from Menominee Indian HS teacher Marti Matyska’s students participating in a Holocaust project.

• Showcase of Scholarly Student Writing offers two intriguing pieces: “Labors Lost” by then Wauwatosa East high-school student Kyle Oliver (currently a freshman at the University of Wisconsin) and “Lowering the Drawbridge” by then UW-Whitewater teacher education student Matt Turner (now a high school English teacher at Milton High School).

We close the issue with a description of a student-responsive reading improvement strategy developed by Laura C. Ritten, reading resource teacher in Barron, Wisconsin, and a reprint of the NCTE 2002 Resolution concerning the No Child Left Behind legislation.

We hope you’ll find this array of teacher-student interconnectedness both interesting and inspiring.
CALL FOR PAPERS

We are especially proud and pleased to be able to publish works by our colleagues in our home organization and national affiliates. We'd like to encourage all of you to look over our plans for upcoming issues and consider preparing yourself or your school to get in on the good thing that being published in *Wisconsin English Journal* is.

Our topic for the next issue (Fall 2003) will be Teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Harper Lee's novel has an amazing track record for maintaining an honored place in public school curriculums at many levels, and it's often featured in university Adolescent Literature and English Techniques classes. Because so many of you know this novel, love it, and teach it, we'd like you to send us discussions of how you teach it, why you teach it, and what results from the teaching of this book and the film based on it.

For the Spring issue of 2004, we're going to do something we think will be exciting and unique: We'll feature the Language Arts/English program of a selected Wisconsin school or school district. What we want to do is display and applaud “best practice” teaching in the language arts. Articles will be written by and about teachers in the program, special courses and special assignments taught, and reactions parents and students have to these educational practices. If you'd like your department, school or district to be considered for this issue (or a similar issue to be published later), please send a note or letter to Anne D’AntonioStinson or Ruth Wood, telling us what's special about the program you're promoting (see addresses on page 55). We'd love to hear from you. If we get more offers than we can manage, we'll do our best to at least feature your letters in forthcoming issues.

For the Fall issue of 2004, the topic will be Bilingual Education, and the guest editor will be Wallace Sherlock. We're not looking for you to defend or discredit bilingual education, for we're taking for granted that we need to sharpen our abilities to deliver it. So what we'd like to have from you are ideas about how best to provide bilingual education in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college classrooms.

Articles on these and related topics may be submitted to Ruth Wood at UW-River Falls, KFA.239, River Falls, WI 54022; fax (715) 425-0657. If your article is accepted for publication, you will be asked to submit a disk in Word or WordPerfect along with a final edited hard copy. Thanks for your continued interest in and support of *Wisconsin English Journal*.

Ruth Wood and Anne D’Antonio Stinson, Editors

Writing Across the Curriculum

Tom Roosa

For years, we've been writing samples involving pre-test/post-test, randomly assigned research, and were influenced by the Board of Education. First, we provided some policy questions in the case of the narratives—one each separated by word count. The results of our analysis show the narrative writing in the curriculum is a sense “worked” the time, the writing is the practices of pre-test/ post-test efforts on each bad writing stems from students. We have found that we can get students to write under conditions where conditions are not present. We found that the students perform better on tasks involving a development of compositions including a development of the latter portion that might add.

For the writing samples we displayed for the students of Abdul Gaffar, we have an evocative and illustrative.
Writing Assessment as Instructional Experience

Thomas M. McMann, Community High School, West Chicago, IL

For years at Community High School, we had asked students to produce writing samples at the beginning and end of the school year, following a common pre-test/post-test protocol for collecting and rating the compositions. We randomly assigned students either a narrative or a persuasive topic. In part, we were influenced by the writing assessment model sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education. We departed from the state model in two significant ways. First, we provided each writer with a data set to support efforts to think about a policy question in the case of the persuasive topic, or to invent a story in the case of the narrative topic. Second, we asked students to write two compositions—one each on two comparable prompts—with the two writing sessions separated by what we judged to be reasonable instruction in writing over the course of eight months.

The model worked for us in that we could compile data, complete the data analysis to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses for persuasive and narrative writing, and track any significant growth in particular components of writing and in the writing overall. Although the writing assessment model in a sense “worked” for us as far as revealing change in the quality of writing over time, the writing-on-demand episodes were contrary to our usual classroom practices of providing a series of experiences, including interaction with other students. We had emphasized writing as a thinking process that the discussion with other thinkers would support. In short, while we could see growth in writing from pre-test to post-test, we sensed that we were not seeing students’ best efforts on each writing occasion. It was as if we could measure change from one bad writing situation to another, without seeing change that might occur when students wrote under much more favorable writing conditions.

When we revised the assessment protocol for prompting students to write under circumstances more consistent with our usual instructional approach, we found that the students produced better papers on both the pre-test and the post-test, and we were still able to track growth over the course of the school year. We kept the basic prompts in place, but we revised the process by which the students produced their writing. A sample narrative prompt appears below, including a description of the process that students followed to complete their compositions, and a sample of one ninth grade student’s composition. In the latter portion of this article, I discuss the features of the prompt and the process that might account for the students’ improved performance.

For the narrative sample, the teachers distributed the basic prompt and displayed for the students an illustration from Chris Van Allsburg’s The Garden of Abduł Gasazi, a children’s picture book. Van Allsburg’s illustrations are evocative and rich in detail, convincingly representing an imaginary world. The illustrations are essential to his books because they suggest much of
the action of the narrative. The work of other illustrators or photographers would serve the same function of suggesting a series of events, their consequences, and the emotions they evoke. Without the exposure to the entire story from the picture book, the students are not likely to repeat someone else’s story. Instead, the picture seems to activate memory, allowing students to draw parallels to other stories and to their own experience. Here is the basic prompt:

**Narrative Writing Task:** After you have examined the attached picture closely, complete the following:

- Tell your reader the story that the picture suggests.
- Convey in appropriate detail the substance of the picture so that a person who cannot see the picture will be able to imagine it. The person who reads and scores your paper will not be able to see the original picture. You need to help the reader to imagine the setting, characters, and actions.
- The picture should suggest a story to you. Tell the reader the story—one which is logically supported by the details of the picture. Your composition, in the end, should weave description with the narration of events and feelings.
- Tell the story in a logical order so that the reader can see the connection among the events. Any resolution should follow logically from the events that preceded it.

As part of the preparation process, the students independently examined the illustration and wrote brief responses to a series of questions:

**Questions for Reflection:** Before you begin writing, examine the attached picture closely and answer the following questions:

- Where does the action take place? What is the place? What is the time?
- Who are the characters involved in the action?
- Who has just occurred? How has this action followed from previous events? What has brought the characters to this situation?
- As the situation develops, what will happen to the characters?
- One would expect that the two characters would talk to each other. What was the purpose of that conversation? What did they have to say to each other?
- The meeting of the two characters may have resulted from a problem or conflict. What is the conflict? How will the conflict be resolved?

After the students reflected on what the picture suggested to them individually, they joined a partner to share impressions. During the work with a partner, the students followed the partner’s prompts to provide clarification and elaboration. The partners offered informal assessment of each other’s ideas, provided encouragement for any promise an idea might hold, and suggested refinement to plot, character, and setting.
refinement to plot, character, or dialogue. This portion of the process took approximately 35 minutes. After spending time with a partner, each student worked individually to note a plan for the development of the narrative. The teacher then collected the plan and the prompt to make the material available the next day.

During the next class meeting, the teacher returned the prompt and the plans to the students, and they used the entire class period to produce the writing sample. The narrative below is one of the better pre-test responses from the ninth graders. Although not all the students wrote stories this developed or inventive, the story suggests the quality of work that is possible when students are given some time for planning and are allowed to follow a process that is consistent with the processes that their teachers typically encourage.

SAMPLE NARRATIVE

The mansion loomed ominously above him as Tom traversed the narrow driveway to the top of the hill on which it was situated. Tom, also known as Tom Baker, was in a sorry state, wearing tattered knickers and a rather worn and faded shirt. At one point the shirt had probably been red, but the dust and grit from long road travel had obscured the color to the point that it was unrecognizable. His hair was matted down and chocked with wild knots, and his bare feet bore the scars of a life of hard journeying. For the most part, Tom appeared to have been drug in by the cat, so to speak.

Tom’s thoughts drifted back to the previous events in his life. The death of his parents from the influenza epidemic pushed forward. In his hometown of Liverpool, England, a plague of influenza had swept through, leaving hundreds dead in its wake. Miraculously, Tom was spared, though with nobody to support him and at the age of only nine, he was not in any less of a predicament. “Well, life is hard in the 19th century,” Tom concluded quietly to himself; “I’ll just have to plug on.”

Tom had traveled all the way from Liverpool to Birmingham, a sum of several hundred miles to his reckoning, in search of his Uncle Clarence, the only true relative known to Tom. Tom had been traveling for some three weeks by this time, but now that he was actually here, at his uncle’s estate, he was filled with doubt. Tom could not seem to convince himself that his uncle would, in all actuality, take him in and shelter him when the two had only met once in Tom’s remembrance. For all Tom knew, Uncle Clarence would not even recall Tom’s existence.

Tom has always been a stubborn boy, though, and pushing his uncertainties out of his mind, he began to climb the steep slope of the hillside to his uncle’s residence. As he went, he tried to review each bit of information that he knew about Uncle Clarence. His uncle was fairly wealthy, Tom knew, for he had often heard his parents’ discussions. Also, Clarence was a widower with no children, his wife having died in childbirth. He was a stern man, who always bore a serious expression,
though he never became angry. Basically, he was a clam taciturn man who seems to keep mostly to himself.

By this time, Tom had reached the entrance way to the estate. Treading cautiously up the white limestone steps, he reached the oaken portal, flanked upon both sides by rows of bushes. Reaching tentatively up, Tom grasped the lions’ head doorknocker; and before he was quite sure of himself, found that he had already started to tap it against the door. Tom imagined a grand butler issuing forth to shoo him away from the mansion and so Steele himself for that fate. However, when the oak barrier finally swung in, no servant came to kick him off. Instead, there in the entrance stood, looking just as he had before, Tom’s Uncle Clarence. He was an imposing man standing at a full six feet in height with an ample belly and a rich, satin robe draped across his shoulders. A gold pocket watch chain dangled from one pocket and a thin pair of wire frame glasses sat upon his nose. If he had existed at the time, Tom would have sworn he looked to be a mirror image of Theodore Roosevelt, though since it was only the mid-1800’s and Tom had never heard of Teddy Roosevelt, the thought never crossed his mind.

Clarence stood and stared at the slightly trembling boy for a few moments, letting the boy wonder what was to happen to him. Then, in a deep, measured voice, he asked, “What is it that you want?”

“Well?” Clarence pushed.

Tom finally found his voice, “Excuse me sir, but I … um … I am your nephew … Tom … Tom Baker. My … my parents were k-killed by the influenza. I, … I was wondering if … perhaps, um, I could, um, uh…”

“—Stay with me,” his uncle provided.

“Well, uh, yes, sir.”

For an extended moment, Clarence directed his gaze full on the boy. As the silenced lengthened, Tom became sure his uncle would turn him away, but he was too scared to move a muscle. Finally, his uncle lifted away his eyes, and stared off towards the far horizon.

“Why not?” Clarence murmured to himself, “This has gone on for too long…”

Turning back to the young boy in front of him, Clarence looked him up and down. He seemed a sturdy, intelligent lad. For the first time in uncounted years, Clarence smiled.

‘Come in,” he said quietly to Tom. “I’ll fix us some tea.”

Perhaps the student who wrote this composition has an innate gift for language, for narrative structure, and for invention and would have produced the same work under any circumstances. But there are some features of the prompt and the process that could help to account for the quality of the work. First of all, many writing prompts that are used in state assessments of writing require students to draw from a knowledge base that they may or may not have. Hilllocks (in press) notes that the prompts used for state writing assessments in such
states as New Jersey or Illinois "present no information about the issues, no data, and no other help." To ask students to write on demand on a topic about which they may not be informed is to revert to the typical classroom practices that Applebee described in 1981: "Only three minutes elapsed from the time the teacher began explaining a writing topic until the time the students were expected to write. Discussion of the topic was rare; it usually took the form of questions prompting brief student response. Rare too was any gathering and sorting of relevant information, whether through procedures such as brainstorming or through systematic reference work. Indeed, most writing assignments began with the expectation that the students already knew what to say and could rapidly begin to write" (102). One would expect that after two decades of reform, schools would have moved beyond the pattern of assigning and assessing writing, but Hillocks documents that state assessments of writing return students to school practices that reformers have been trying for years to change.

The typical state assessment prompts have the distinction of inviting students to write under conditions that would be contrary to the practices that most teachers would follow to encourage the students' best work. Hillocks notes that the prompts and practices used in statewide assessments in Illinois, New Jersey, and Texas are likely to encourage students to follow a formula to produce their compositions, and the assessment format belies the notion that writing is a thinking process that requires the writer to have something of substance to say.

Bereiter and Scardamalia report that when the young writers whom they studied were asked to write narratives, they produced compositions that were equivalent in length to the amount that a speaker would say in one conversational turn. Bereiter and Scardamalia found that the young writers were able to produce more when they were provided with contentless prompting (e.g., "Do you want to say anything else?"). The researchers conclude that the relatively inexperienced writers were operating from a schema for conversation rather than for composition. In other words, without the presence of an actual conversational partner, the students had little to guide them in the production of the detail that would have helped them to elaborate in their compositions.

A prompt that provides students with a data set (i.e., a detailed picture in the case of narrative; a statistical table and a set of testimonies in the case of persuasion) does not assume that the students already have a command of the relevant body of information that the writing topic requires. The process allows students an opportunity to examine the data, note their initial observations, discuss the topic with a partner in order to try out ideas on an authentic audience, and plan a composition before attempting it. The process does not have to confound the assessment, as long as the students follow the same protocol in responding to comparable prompts for the pre-test and post-test. If the students can follow a process that is similar to the composing strategies that their teachers encourage, then the assessment can serve as an instructional experience that leads to meaningful writing rather than vacuous formulaic responses to topics with which they may or may not be familiar.
References

Censorship Problem?
NCTE offers advice, helpful documents, and other support at no cost to K-12 teachers, schools, and districts that are faced with challenges to literary works, films and videos, or teaching methods. Leave a message for Charles Suhor, NCTE/SLATE Field Representative, at (334) 280-4758.

Reader Response: A Literature Course

Jill Kotter

We love journalling because we understand the theoretical and practical uses of journalling in our literature. Jim Burhman believes that journalling can help provide students with a way to connect with what they read. "To this end, we aim to have students between this and equally meaningful understandings at the many uses of journalling.

Despite the theoretical and practical virtues of journalling, it is important to note that journalling entries in Literature courses often boil down to Literature courses themselves, "How are these texts?"

Armed with our own personal journalling, we begin the assignment for our Literature courses. We consider the effectiveness of journalling as a way to explore the impact of journalling on students' understanding of literature. In this section, we explore the advantages of journalling and reflect on how to integrate our class activities into our Literature courses.

The theoretical and practical uses of journalling offer non-English language learners a new practice ways of understanding, enjoying, and reflecting on literature. The journalling activities help to develop literature skills and provide a way for teachers to respond to and reflect on their students' work within the context of a Literature course and to encourage deeper understanding and appreciation of the literature they study.
Reader Response Journals in an Introduction to Literature Class

Jill Kotta & Carmen Manning, UW-Eau Claire

We love journals. As a current and a future English teacher, we understand the theoretical value of having students write in journals while studying literature. Jim Burke tells teachers in his text Reading Reminders: “Journals provide students with a place to do their thinking as they read and discuss what they read.” “To think; to elaborate on their thinking; to make connections between this and other texts or ideas; and to synthesize their different ideas and understandings at a critical juncture in the reading process or the text” are among the many uses of journals for students Burke lists (210).

Despite these admirable purposes for journals, our previous attempts at journal assignments have been problematical. Reading and evaluating journal entries was difficult and tiring. Journal after journal said the same thing. Many of the entries were only plot summaries, despite repeated instruction to avoid plot summary. The entries were boring and difficult to assess. As we thought about designing journal activities to support instruction in a college-level Introduction to Literature course, we questioned what value they would truly serve. We asked ourselves, “How can journal responses help students become better readers of texts?”

Armed with these questions about the purposes and effectiveness of journal responses to literature, we set out to design a reader response journal assignment for our course. Additionally, because of our questions about the effectiveness of journal writing, we designed a teacher-research project to study the impact of journal writing on our students’ engagement with and understanding of literature. In this article we aim to discuss the nature of the reader response journal assignment, present some preliminary results from our study which explore the advantages and disadvantages of our approach, and more generally reflect on how teacher research has helped us better understand the impact of our class activities.

The Reader Response Journal Assignment

The theoretical focus of the course was reader response; our aim was to give non-English majors in this Introduction to Literature class opportunities to practice ways of interpreting literature in order to develop an ability to understand, enjoy, and participate in life-long reading of literature. We designed the journaling activity to give students a chance both to practice interpretation of literature skills and to prepare for class discussion. The purpose of the reader-response journal was for students to explore connections among the texts of the course and to explore connections between those texts and their own personal
experience. As Karolides noted in his discussion of Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory of Literature, “Cognizance of and developing the readers’ transactions with the text is at the center of classroom instruction. Class dialogue starts where the student readers are (not where the teacher is), focusing on their initial reactions and understandings” (Karolides 20). In order to start where the students were, however, students needed to do some work before they came to class.

Rather than having students only react personally to a text, we wanted the journal exercise to build students’ capacity to make claims about texts and use specific support to back up those claims, the focus of quality interpretation of literature. Therefore, the assignment called for students to make a claim, state a position, or raise a question about one or more of the texts that were read in class and then to support that claim or position with specifics from the texts and from personal experience.

In addition to their initial weekly journal response, students were expected to complete a weekly follow-up journal, which briefly discussed the claim, position, or question from their original entry in light of class discussion of those texts. The intention of these follow-up journals was to allow students the opportunity to revisit previous ideas about the texts and reflect upon and evaluate their thoughts on those claims in light of new understanding gained through class discussion. The original journal entry was expected to be about one page; the follow-up was to be a paragraph. Only the original journal entry was scored.

Student journal entries were scored for their adherence to the aforementioned criteria on a 0 to 3 point scale. Level 0 entries failed to make a claim, state a position, raise a question, or relate personal experience connected with course texts. Journal entries that only summarized texts received a zero. Level 1 entries were those that made a claim, stated a position, raised a question, or related personal experience connected with course texts, but did not provide development or support, while level 2 entries did so and provided moderate development or support. Level 3 entries were well-supported discussions of a claim, position, question, or personal experience connected with course texts. These scores for the journal entries provided the data for our teacher research study.

Preliminary Trends

Preliminary data reveal several interesting trends. Amazingly, simply looking at the scores for six weeks of weekly journal entries and looking for general trends provided more insight and raised more questions than we anticipated. We discovered two interesting categories. One group of students had steadily increased their journal scores. Another group of students remained relatively constant with low scores because they focused solely on personal response, often ignoring the text altogether. As teacher-researchers we asked ourselves, what do these trends tell us about student performance generally and the efficacy of the journal assignment specifically? Susan and Rose represent two types of student response. Analyzing their specific cases helped us answer our questions about the effectiveness of the journal responses as a tool.

In addition to a form of a count of the number of times students participated in discussion. Additionally, there was an emphasis on students' personal experience and actively participating in the process.

Susan represented a student in their journal entries, explicitly discussing her personal experience and effectively discussing the text.

Susan began to actively participate in the first week of classes. After this, she frequently shared her opinions with the class. Her participation became more interesting as she included personal twists to the text. For example, she included "like" and "you know" in her language development.

Because Susan was the student who actively participated in the discussion, Susan still did not understand the formalization of the guidelines and grading criteria for the journal. Her first journal entry was a typical first response. It was clear that she was not used to the journal as a writing tool. She initially expressed her thoughts about the text in a personal manner, to the writing staff. However, in the second week, the journal required personal reactions and the journal became a means for Susan to reflect on her reading and her personal experience in the form of a journal entry.

Susan had an idea for her next journal. She decided to begin an introduction and discussion of her idea. She concluded her first entry with a personal reflection on her reading experience by expressing that she was more than just an ordinary girl. (Susan, January 30, 2003). This is the kind of support Susan actively participated in, helping to reflect on her personal experiences and those of her classmates.
In addition to the journal data, we have formal participation data in the form of a count of the number of times a student participated in whole-class discussion. Additionally, we have informal observation data of student behavior and participation in whole-class as well as small-group discussion.

Profile 1: Susan

Susan represents the group of students who made steady improvement in their journal entries; this improvement was mirrored in their development in effectively discussing texts in both small-group and whole-class discussions.

Susan began the semester with irregular attendance, missing the first week of classes. After that week, her attendance became more regular. Susan actively participated in both large- and small-group discussions, often blurring out her opinions to the rest of the class. However, as the semester progressed, Susan’s participation became more sophisticated; her comments often added interesting twists to the discussion. Her language became less peppered with “like” and “you know” and also became more formal and organized. This language development was also reflected in her journals.

Because Susan missed the first week of class, she also missed most of the formal instruction concerning our reader-response journal. Although the guidelines and grading procedure for the journal were outlined in the syllabus, Susan still did not understand how to formulate a claim and develop it using supporting evidence from the text and personal experience.

Her first journal entry was general and vague. She wrote about the entire range of her reactions concerning the text. Each paragraph had a nice focus, but the journal as a whole lacked coherence. Susan’s focus varied from her initial thoughts about the text as a whole, to the main character’s attitude and demeanor, to the writing style of the text, to the moral lesson for the story. Her personal reactions and thoughts about the story were abundant, but the goal for our journals was for students to elaborate on one of those reactions or thoughts in the form of a claim.

Susan had an engaging and energetic writing style. All her journals began with an introduction that caught the reader’s attention and interest. For example she concluded her first introduction with the line, “However, Sylvia isn’t just an ordinary girl, and ‘The Lesson’ is no ordinary story” (Susan, Journal 1, January 30, 2003). The attention-grabbing sentences in her introduction showed us Susan was probably more advanced in her writing development than some of the other students in the class. She was also comfortable in a classroom environment that valued students’ opinions, questions, and random thoughts about the text. But her journals still lacked the clean, crisp focus we wanted to get from students.

Susan’s next few journals improved slightly, but the clear claim with well-developed supporting evidence was still not apparent. She continued to actively participate in class; however, her ideas were scattered and numerous, as reflected in her journals. Throughout this time, we encouraged students to
support the claims they made during class discussions with textual evidence and to expand and develop their ideas thoroughly. We also provided feedback on the journals that explained the reasoning behind the score and encouraged deeper critical thinking about the texts.

Susan’s fifth weekly journal showed significant improvement. She wrote about Langston Hughes’ poem “Harlem.” She began her journal with her typical attention-grabbing introduction, closing with “However, upon deeper reflection I discovered a whole new possibility as meaning” (Susan, Journal 5, February 24, 2003). This sentence showed that Susan was not simply recording her initial responses to a text; rather, now she was pausing, taking the time to think about the text, and then writing her thoughtful response as her journal. First she discussed Hughes’ metaphors for deferred dreams and supported her initial claim that dreams, according to Hughes, are negative reminders of failures. But then she moved to her deeper claim and discussed what Hughes meant by his last line in the poem, “Or do they explode?” (11). She explained her reasoning clearly and concisely while using the imagery from the poem to support and strengthen her claim. Finally, she contextualized the poem by speculating on Hughes’ intention and message using the viewpoint she developed earlier in the journal. Susan effectively stated a claim, supported it with textual evidence, and developed it with her own opinions. This journal was a huge improvement from her first journal.

Profile 2: Rose

Rose represents a group of students whose consistently low responses focused only on connections between the text and their lives rather than using those connections to personal experience to better understand meaning in the text. We wanted students to use their personal experiences to help support their claims; however, this group of students focused on connections to personal experience and excluded claims about the text.

Rose was a quiet and reserved student who strove to keep the attention away from her. Rose participated in small group discussions by mostly listening to the discussion and answering questions posed to her by her group mates. Rose was one of two students (out of 34) who never spoke in large-group discussions. In her follow-up journal she indicated that student-centered discussions were a new concept and experience for her. She was used to and comfortable with teachers who gave their own interpretations of the text and limited students’ contributions. Her journals, according to our criteria, were below average. However, one of the goals of this introductory literature course was to help non-English majors understand and enjoy literature. We wanted them to pull ideas from literature and find meaning in those ideas throughout their daily lives. We wanted the journals to help students develop their ideas about the texts more thoroughly and more formally.

In her journals, Rose would pull an idea from the literature, develop a broad claim about life, and use personal experience to support her claim. She usually highlighted one line from the text that evoked some meaning in her. In

her first journal, she used a line from Ormsby’s poem “Address to My Son.” Instead, she wrote about her grandfather Disease progressed, ideas were spurred by ideas concretely to the grandmother were restated to enrich her understandings.

Rose’s sixth journal was similar to the text, but not acceptable. She wrote in Oedipus the King, Rose to Oedipus, where Teiresias was a servant. Instead of describing events in the play, or seeing, Rose expanded it and Jesus more in the more religious was a. However, the purvue of an idea the text evoked, students develop meaning, further. we read. However, her response was better, instead of under the response journal was to understand complex texts, the idea evoked by the text, Rose envisioned the purpose responses to the text for purposes and criteria.

Susan represented the focused journal text. She used those students (53%) were response journals her conversations about.

Rose represented students move beyond personal connection to begin their literary and personal understandings of the personal connection weak or incomplete.
her first journal, she pulled the idea of living each day with no regrets from Eric Ormsby’s poem “Adages of a Grandmother” and Peter Meinke’s poem “Advice to My Son.” Instead of discussing the claim in context of the two poems, she wrote about her grandmother, how her grandmother changed as Alzheimer’s Disease progressed, and how she feels now that her grandmother has died. Her ideas were spurred by Ormsby’s and Meinke’s poems, but she never related her ideas concretely to the poems themselves. While her reflections about her grandmother were related to the poems, Rose was unable to use those reflections to enrich her understanding of the poems.

Rose’s sixth journal was the best example of her reacting brilliantly to the text, but not according to our journal criteria. Reacting to Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, Rose highlighted the conversation between Teiresias and Oedipus, where Teiresias said that he was not Oedipus’ servant, but Apollo’s servant. Instead of explaining how this conversation impacts the rest of the events in the play, or Oedipus’ opinion of himself, or the irony in the blind man seeing, Rose expanded on the fact that people today need to think about God and Jesus more in their everyday lives. This claim about the need to become more religious was a valid claim, and she supported and developed it well. However, the purpose of the journal was to make a claim about the text, not about an idea the text evoked. On the other hand, the purpose of the class was to help students develop meaning from a text, and Rose did find meaning in all the texts we read. However, the meaning Rose found helped her understand her own life better, instead of understanding the text better. The purpose of the reader-response journal was for students to use personal experience to better understand complex texts, rather than solely analyze personal experiences related to an idea evoked by the text. While personal experiences are important, we had envisioned the purpose of the journals as helping students develop meaningful responses to texts. Responses such as Rose’s have led us to reevaluate our purposes and criteria for the journal assignment.

**Discussion**

Susan represents our ideal student. She found her literary voice. She used the focused journals to refine, hone, and shape her own responses to the text. She used those responses to gain a deeper understanding and create meaning from the texts. Our preliminary data show that just over half of our students (53%) were similar to Susan; the structure and practice of the reader-response journals helped these students gain skill and confidence in entering conversations about complex literary texts.

Rose represents those students (21%) who have not yet found ways to move beyond personal connections to their readings of the texts. While personal connections are a good place for introductory literature students to begin their literary analysis, the aim of the course was to help them develop understandings of the texts which required critical analysis in addition to personal connections. While the issue with these students may well be their weak or incomplete readings of the texts, such reading impeded the intention of
the required journal entries to motivate close reading and interaction with the
texts. The journal requirements were intended to help develop students’ ability to
carefully read and respond to course texts. For students such as Susan, the
journals fostered this development; for students such as Rose, the journal
assignment was insufficient.

Analysis of these two trend groups leaves us with several questions
about our journal assignment. While the journal seemed to have the intended
effect for over half our students, and another third of the students’ responses
occupy that middle ground of “okay,” the journal assignment clearly did not
have the intended effect for Rose and students similar to her. Additionally, those
students like Rose are the ones most difficult to reach in a literature course. So as
teacher-researchers we are left to ask, how do we respond to what we now know
about our journal assignment?

One option would be to adjust the journal criteria to value personal
response because we agree that making personal connections to texts is a good
starting point for literary analysis. However, we feel this option would undermine
our original intentions for the reader-response journal. Additionally, our experi-
ence has shown that most students can make initial personal connections. It is
the more difficult step of literary analysis with which they have trouble. While we
are not attempting to develop literary scholars in an Introduction to Literature
course (similar to high school English classes), we do believe that these students
need opportunities for and instruction in literary analysis which goes beyond
personal response.

The second option for revision of the journal assignment would be to
change it to provide more scaffolding for students such as Rose. Instead of the
current ambiguous assignment which asks students to make a claim and support
it, we could provide open-ended questions which prompt students to make a
specific claim about the text. Our concern is that this approach would lead
students to a particular interpretation of the text. Our goal for the course is for
students to develop the ability to interpret texts on their own; yet perhaps the
journal needs to provide an intermediary step to this goal for some of our
students.

As is always the case with a large class of students, we struggle with
how to modify and differentiate instruction for students at different developmen-
tal levels. Since many of our students are handling the current journal assign-
ment well, we hesitate to change the approach for them. We also wonder if it is
appropriate for some students to receive more scaffolding than others.

Conclusions

Based on this research on the efficacy of our journal assignment, we
have decided to revise the journal assignment for future classes. For the first four
weeks, we will provide several open-ended questions for the journal. Students
will be required to choose one and respond, focusing on making a claim about
the text and supporting that claim. Then we will return to the current assignment.
We will continue our research as to the effectiveness of the modified approach;

References
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while the populations will be different, we should be able to draw conclusions as to how our modifications affected the outcomes for students such as Rose.

We see two important outcomes from this teacher research study. First, we have determined that our journal assignment was not effective for a portion of our students and have made plans for modifications. Second, we have learned that our small-scale teacher research project, that required no additional data gathering, has given us needed insight into our students’ journaling. By looking at the trends in response, and then at specific student examples from two of those trends, we now know how our focused reader response journal is working for different types of students.

References
In Wisconsin Classrooms

The Exit Paper as a Vehicle of Expression
LeeAnn Troutman, Kettle Moraine High School

"Where would everyone be without writing? Just think of all the things we wouldn't have if writing did not exist...there would be nothing to read." Thus began one Creative Writing I student responding in her end of semester Exit Paper to my question: What lessons this semester have been the most helpful to your development as a writer?

Exit papers serve two useful purposes. One, exit papers provide the student with an opportunity to examine his/her personal development. Teachers, too, benefit from exit papers as the students' responses allow teachers to see into the minds of the students and hear how the lessons, so carefully constructed and planned, have actually been processed. The goal of the exit paper is to have students:

- self-assess personal growth during the semester
- examine the second attempt at the short story once material from semester has been explored
- recognize the mistakes in the first short story and realize improvements they can make as a result of the semester
- comment on personal significance found in a variety of instruction methods and specific exercises

To review the end of semester exit papers is to review the semester. We begin nearly every class with a journal entry to which the students respond in their notebooks. I encourage them to write for at least ten minutes and to attempt to "go there" using all five senses in expressing their thoughts. The time spent journaling allows me an opportunity to view the students in the process of writing and glean fairly quickly how comfortable the student is with writing as a means of expression. My series of entries begins with "childhood" questions and moves on to sibling, friendship, and family issues. One student responded in her exit paper, "Journal writing gave me a chance to get in touch with some of the meaningful things in my life." Another commented, "I enjoyed doing the journal entries every day at the beginning of class. It was good to get a little writing in at the beginning of each class as a warm up. I found the journaling interesting because we were given something different to write about each day..."

Another project which we weave throughout the semester is the sharing by each student two separate times during the semester of a written piece the student has chosen for its personal meaning and its quality of writing. I dictate the selection must be from a published piece unless I give prior approval, and also that it must be from an established author. One student responded to this sharing:

We begin the year with Rona Maynard and with focus on fiction, stressing the type of conflict this produces. Students converse in pairs, and the type of conflict this produces. For each problem, then, they would translate into the metaphor "poetic license" to alter the thoughts.

This process was my family an last February, our decision to weather, decide work, rest and hope with the white snow me. She rarely

"Throughout the year, I taught me the most was that students knew very little about
It enabled every person to open up to each other and show their feelings and lives through words. Not only were they informative to listen to, but I found myself remembering little things about every story that was told. Metaphors would stick in my head from some, and similes, personifications, alliterations, and onomatopoeia in others. Then I would take what I liked about them and attempt to use it in my writings. Steve read a poem he wrote about a deceased co-worker of his, and by listening to his feelings, I could relate to the situation, and that is the kind of writing that touches and stays with me. That night at home, I made a list of all the memories, thoughts, and feelings I felt when a friend of mine passed away. I am still attempting to make it into a perfect poem, and someday it will be. I noticed while making my list how many things I wrote down that I never would have been able to write, without the experience of this class. One example, I described the tingling feeling we had felt in our legs after trying to kick a basketball into a hoop for hours on end...I picked out the five senses in the readings of others, as well as the figures of speech, giving me practice in recognizing them. Also, I got a chance to feel the inner feelings of others through their choices and show my inner feelings through mine.

We begin the semester with the short story. We read The Fan Club by Rona Maynard and with this story as the example, I introduce the elements of fiction, stressing the types of conflict, and the elements of the plot. To prepare for writing individual stories the students discuss three problems in a journal entry. For each problem, the student must list the setting, characters, and what type of conflict this problem would be. After the three are established the students converse in pairs to share their three ideas and decide which problem would translate into the most interesting and viable story over which they have "poetic license" to alter to fit the story framework we are establishing.

This process forces the student to examine the context of a conflict.
As an example, the response "My mom got sick is my conflict," ultimately is processed by the student to become, "My conflict is with myself over how I am going to handle my mom's illness." For this first short story the word choice is often weak, but the plot elements have proved interesting. The following exposition is an example:

My family and I were getting ready to go to church one dreary morning last February. The frigid air and the fresh fallen snow made us rethink our decision about going. My mom, who had been feeling under the weather, decided it would be best if we didn't go. That way she could rest and hopefully recover from the bug that hit her. Seeing how frail and white she looked and hearing her say we should stay home worried me. She rarely gets sick and she is usually hurrying us out to church.

"Throughout CW1 we cover many writing lessons, but the one that taught me the most was the short story period...Before the short story lesson I knew very little about working with dialogue and quotations." This comment
from another student reflects some of the variety of lessons on and instruction incorporated in the unit. Personally I find this significant because as what one person finds valuable another discards, so too with lessons. What one student finds of value another despises.

The poetry unit follows the short story. First, I read the students a variety of poems including Robert Frost’s *The Road Not Taken*, Emily Dickinson’s *A Fuzzy Fellow*, *My friend must be a Bird*, *Fame is a Fickle Food*, E.E. Cumming’s *Spring is like perhaps a hand*, and Gwendolyn Brooks’ *We Real Cool*. After reading the poems we analyze them together for rhyme, meter, meaning, and figures of speech. For the assignment, the student must choose three poems. The poems must be from a published author and contain the elements for analysis. The student analyzes in a short essay each poem for rhyme, meter, meaning, and figures of speech. During this time we view the video *Fooling with Words-A Celebration of Poets and Their Craft* by Bill Moyers. For most of the students it is the first time they have heard a poet read his/her poems. One student’s reflections during his exit paper:

*Action speaks louder than words, but experience screams. For this reason I say that the video “Fooling with Words” helped me the most this semester. It is not often these days that young people are exposed to professional poetry scene. Personally I never heard a professional poet present his/her own material. The way they used spoken rhythm and facial expressions caught me off guard. Also, the poets were interviewed. It showed their personality, and because you know more about them you could better appreciate their work...It really inspired me to become more serious about my writing. So in this case experience was screaming loud and clear."

Following the poem analysis, the student completes a poetry portfolio by writing a total of eight poems from a variety of patterns I provide including Life Metaphors, Series Poems, Letter Poems, and Color Poems. For each poem the student must submit a peer-edit sheet, which asks for the peer’s comments on a variety of issues such as, Is the language beautiful? Is the language cut to the bone? Does the poem show feeling with figures of speech? One student’s comment on that process: “Peer editing is what helped me the most of all. When my classmates corrected my papers, they always offered great ideas to make my writing sound and flow better.”

During this lesson we stress the figures of speech and really bring home the idea of “showing” the reader, not “telling.” We have fun with sensory week during which time the students bring in a different sensory item each day. On day one, each student passes a paper bag containing an item. The grimaces are entertaining to watch as each student feels for the sensation of the item. The second day of sensory week each students has chosen a “sound” to demonstrate for the class. The third day each student provides a photograph or magazine picture of a place. The week’s highlight is taste and smell day. During the week each student is attempting to describe in their journals the sensory experiences of each item.
The poems produced during this unit are for the most part thoughtful
and done with sincere effort.

In the Rain

Here I am like a statue in the
Rain quietly and patiently
Waiting for your problems to stop
Drenching me.

by Stephanie

Gone

A tree in the fall,
My leaves drop like tears
In the mourning
Of the mislaid summer.

by Lisa

The Color of Me

More often than not,
I'm daffodil yellow.
Radiant and joyful,
Gleaming and glistening.

But every so often, I'm gray
And dreary.
These are the days the sun
Needs to remind me
What yellow really is.

by Kelly

During this lesson we stress the figures of speech and really bring home the idea
of "showing" the reader, not "telling." A student reflects on this unit:
The poetry lessons exposed me to a completely different style of writing
and helped bring out creativity. We learned that figures of speech make
poetry, not rhymes. It helped me write better metaphors.

School and Home

In school I'm...
Droned by work, which embodies no
Flexibility.
Perplexed by the kids who strive for
Notoriety.
Challenged by overwhelming emotional
Salvos, which transforms my skin
Into leather.
Mystified by the shared sensation a number feels when it hides itself
In a calculator.
Vexed.

At home I’m…
Rescued by the untamed freedom that ignites my
Creativity.
Assured by the tranquil family members that
Inhabit the house.
Relieved by the ability that I can just be me, which
Makes my skin transparent.
Gratified by being treated like I in a million.
At ease.

by Kristi

The Road of Life

Life is like a long road.
There are many bridges to cross.
Some bridges will lead you to greener lands,
Others my lead you to new bridges,
Yet, some will crumble beneath your feet,
Leaving you to plunge
Into the icy water below.

by Jay

Another student shared this experience:

I have learned that the figures of speech are very important and without
them a poem can be boring and lack feeling…by using your five senses
you allow your reader to see, smell, hear, touch, and taste what you
want them to so that the writer and reader really connect through the
piece of writing…since the poetry unit I see myself using the things I
have learned about the figures of speech and five senses in other
writing I do and it truly makes a difference in the response and feedback
I receive from my readers…The next time I talk to someone who thinks
that poetry must be structured and rhyme I’ll make sure to tell them that
it is so much more than that.

The fairy tale unit has evolved into a fun, entertaining, and educational
experience for my students and myself. My experience has been that many of
the students are not familiar with fairy tales and as a result are lacking knowledge of
one of our most basic and often used cultural references. First, I read the
students two fairy tales, The Emperor's New Clothes by Hans Christian Anderson
and The Seven Crow Princes by the Brothers Grimm. I present the character-
istics of the classic fairy tales
references permeate or is her lack of knowledge

The unit requires
Grimm or Anderson, not a classic tale, and write a
the character
does not meet the character

Media Alert:
Contact the local
whereabouts.
daughter after
Thumbelina's
some far off
engages the reader
classic fairy tale.

After her essay on the
neither historical nor music
causality restraints, the

“Media Alert”
received number
Thumbelina's
rescued by story

Now the student
readily identify the
and The Paperbag Prince
are humorous fractures
classic format.

We have had
wonderful exercise in
critique and now recreate them.
chooses three classic examples.
One example entitled “

There once was a
wife was prone
were just like
passed, but the
sweet, gentle,
would crack for
the kingdom.

After the fracture
ative of a character or of
Cinderella by Laura W.
samples of this type of
itics of the classic fairy tale. We discuss these characteristics and how fairy tale references permeate our culture in one form or another. One student, expressing her lack of knowledge about the fairy tale, remarked, "I feel cheated."

The unit requires that the student select a classic tale, preferably from Grimm or Anderson, read the chosen tale, examine it for the characteristics of a classic tale, and write a standard five-paragraph essay explaining why it does or does not meet the characteristics. One student wrote:

Media Alert: Two-inch tall girl snatched from loving mother's home. Contact the local police immediately if you have any clues as to her whereabouts. Thumbalina's mother is frantically searching for her daughter after her disappearance. Little does she know that Thumbalina's dreams have become realities as she lives in royalty in some far-off country. The tale of Thumbalina's adventures effectively engages the reader by incorporating many of the characteristics of a classic fairy tale.

After her essay on the classic elements of polarities of good and evil, a hero of neither historical nor mythological significance, and the lack of time, place or causality restraints, the author of this essay concludes:

"Media Alert: Good news just came from the police department. They received numerous calls after Thumbalina was published, and Thumbalina's mother is relieved. The latest headline reads tiny girl rescued by sparrow and lives happily ever after in royalty."

Now the students are ready for "fracturing the tale." The students readily identify the fractured elements in Princess Smartypants by Babette Cole and The Paperbag Princess by Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko. Both are humorous fractures of the prince saves princess and princess weds prince classic format.

We have had great successes with the fracture venture. I believe it is a wonderful exercise in creative writing because we have learned classic elements and now recreate them to fit our cultural modes. For the fracture, the student chooses three classic elements of their original tale and rewrites the fairy tale. One example entitled "Cinder-Ugly" begins:

There once was a man whose wife died and so he took another. The new wife was proud and haughty and had two gorgeous daughters who were just like her in every way. Men would fall at their feet as they passed, but the man also had a daughter named Cinderella. She was sweet, gentle, and good as gold, but when she looked in a mirror, it would crack to pieces. The man's daughter was the most hideous girl in the kingdom.

After the fracture the last exercise is to write a poem from the perspective of a character or object within the tale. If the Shoe Fits – Voices from Cinderella by Laura Whipple and Laura Beisinger contain entertaining samples of this type of poetry.
This, too, has brought dramatic results:

Working Tunes

Wondrous tweeting tunes,
Come from seven short lads,
One looks to be happy,
Another seeming mad.
Silly sounds seem dopey,
As they awaken the sleep head.
While the doc comes to the rescue,
The sneezy one inbed.
One becomes bashful by the sight of me,
As they continue to work,
Whistling merrily.

by Stacey

One student reflects on unit:
Once upon a time there was a prince who was as brave as a lion and as strong as an ox. This past semester in creative writing we learned many things, including lessons on how to put together the first sentence in this paragraph. The poetry and fairy tale lessons were the best this semester. The poetry lessons exposed me to a completely different style of writing and helped bring out creativity. We learned that figures of speech make poetry, not rhymes. The fairy tale lessons were my favorite. It was good to know fairy tales were not invented by Disney and that many of them are actually quite gruesome and unpleasant. It was fun to build off and twist around an existing story in the fracture.

“Tie back to grab!” That was the phrase used most commonly by Mrs. Troutman. That is only one of several things that helped me in creative writing.”

So as instructed by my student, I now “tie back to grab” and reflect on Where would we be without writing? Where would we be without exit papers? As instructors we would be wondering if our lessons were of value to the student. Or worse yet, we would be assuming that they were of value. If our essential questions are in fact essential, then as instructors we need to know if our students value the devices before we can expect that they will attempt to employ them. We need to know students value the multiple genres before they will use them as a catalyst for writing. Then finally, we can see in the exit papers how the student uses the language as a vehicle for individual expression and creativity. And isn’t that why we are here?

References


Helping Students Understand the Holocaust: Lessons Adapted from the Arthur and Rochelle Biefer Exemplary Lessons Initiative
Marti Matyska, Menominee Indian High School

As they study the Holocaust, my students keep a scrapnol (scrapbook/journal) where they write ideas, feelings, thoughts, quotes, newspaper articles, pictures from the web...whatever.

At the end of the course of study, they are asked to choose, hopefully from their scrapnol or their class textbook, a short piece of literature that they are willing to present to an invited audience. The students are expected to find three visuals that enhance this presentation, and the pictures are projected behind the speaker using Powerpoint software. I write a script to tie all the pieces together and one student acts as narrator.

Usually some students will volunteer to set the tone of the event with instrumental music or a hymn and we finish our program with our Menominee Indian Singers and Drummers performing an Honor Song. We practice about four times and have had presented in various sized rooms: a classroom, a lunchroom, and a theater. I invite freshman and sophomore classes, and the presentation has always been well received.

What’s effective about this lesson is that it summarizes what was learned and more importantly, it makes students think about implications of the Holocaust: dehumanization of a people; the need for personal responsibility, personal courage, and tolerance of persecution; the value of human life. Students who present must communicate what it is that they want other students to know about what they have learned.
Lesson Plan 4

Objectives: To describe European Jewish culture before and during the Holocaust.
To characterize Nazism.
To describe the sequence of events that culminated in the destruction of European Jews
To describe examples of courageous action.

Strategies: At the end of the semester, students choose a piece from their readings to present to other classes who are not studying the Holocaust. They must also choose a picture or graphic to project on a screen as they speak.

Resources: Readings from selected novels, their class text, and the Internet.

Assessment: This is assessed as a speaking assignment using the supplied rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your points</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posture: Are you standing tall?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance: Are you dressed for success?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice: Do you project? Good volume?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact: Don't read. Look up</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuality: Do you make your cues?</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
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2002 Holocaust Script

Hello, my name is Goof and I am from Rosholt High School. Ryan and I will be acting as M.C.’s for this production. Today, my fellow classmates and I from Holocaust Literature would like to present some readings we have gathered from the last 15 weeks of our course.

The Holocaust refers to the murder of some six million European Jews from 1933 to 1945. The Holocaust is our legacy—all of us. It is essential that we understand the tragic events that took place during the Holocaust.

It was one of the darkest periods of the history of the world. Thankfully, it is over, but the nature of society that carried it out exists here and now.

As the 16th Century poet John Donne says:
No man is an island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main….
Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind;
Therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

At the United States war headquarters in Chicago, 50-year-old Schulstein, a Yiddish poet, wrote:

We are the Jews;
We are the Jews;
We are the Jews;
From Prague, we escaped,
And because we are Jews,
And not of any other race,

Pastor Knee Moller to a prison he wrote:

In Germany and the world,
Then they came for the Jews and the Jews,
Then they came for the socialists and the socialists,
Then they came for the communists and the communists,
Then they came for me and me.

Germany lost World War II, but America lost World War II by not getting rid of the Jews.

Hitler was an educated man, who dominated Germany during his lifetime. His promises were based on the promises of the Nazis, who had no plans for new leadership.

Hitler continued to hide himself, but it could not be concealed for the death of nearly six million Jews.

How did the Jews fit into the Great Depression?

Becky who is playing Hitler.

Q. Can you in your own words explain what happened to the Jews?
A. My family and I, we were Jews, we were against the Germans. We were against the Germans. We were against the Germans.

Q. Can you explain what happened to the Jews in a German war?
A. We were in a German war, we were against the Germans. We were against the Germans. We were against the Germans.

Q. Can you explain what happened to the Jews in a German war?
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Q. Can you explain what happened to the Jews in a German war?
A. We were in a German war, we were against the Germans. We were against the Germans. We were against the Germans.
At the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, there is a room with dress up shoes, boots, work shoes, and baby shoes. There is an eerie smell to this room from the 50-year-old leather. On the wall reads this poem by Moses Schulstein, a Yiddish poet:

We are the shoes
We are the shoes that saved a nation.
We are the shoes that saved the world.
And because we are only made of fabric and leather
And not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire.

Pastor Knee Moller lived in Germany during the Holocaust and when he was in prison he wrote:

In Germany, the Nazis first came for the Communists,
and I did not speak up because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews
and I did not speak up because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I did not speak up because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics
and I was a Protestant so I did not speak up.
Then they came for me.....
by that time there was no one to speak up for anyone.

Germany lost World War I; their economy collapsed; the people were looking for new leadership. Adolph Hitler emerged:

Hitler was a powerful, clever, and ruthless politician. He totally dominated Germany during WWII. Hitler promised German people glory and prosperity. His promises were offered in empty slogans that masked lies or irrational arguments. Yet, because of his magnetic style, many people accepted those slogans without thinking. Hitler could not have caused the Holocaust by himself, but it could not have occurred without him. By 1945, he was responsible for the death of nearly 6 million Jews.

Hitler committed suicide in May 1945, as the Soviet Army approached his hiding place.

How did the Jews fit in German society before Hitler? Amanda will interview Becky who is playing the part of a German Jew living in 1924:

Q. Can you describe your family?
A. My family has lived in Berlin since 1795. My grandfather fought against the French in 1871, and my father fought them in World War 1; he was decorated with the Iron Cross. My family has been loyal to the Reich for 125 years.
Q. With all the laws passed since 1933, how has life changed for you and your family?
A. Life under Hitler is more difficult for Jews. My children cannot attend public school any more; my husband’s newspaper has been shut down; my non-Jewish friends don’t see us much any more; we cannot fly the German flag; I have had to release our non-Jewish maid. My husband is now earning money sweeping the floors.

Hitler’s Second Solution was to expel the Jews from Germany. It is now 1938:
Q. You have now been sent to Poland and are living in this Ghetto. Do you mind?
A. We have had to adapt and adjust to a new life. My family of four plus another family of four are living in two rooms. This has not been easy. We share a small bathroom and sleep on the floors. But we manage.
Q. What else has changed?
A. We have lost most of our savings because the government has seized the banks. Food is rationed to us. We are forbidden to be in public parks and the buses are closed to us.

The third or what is called the Final Solution was the annihilation of Jews through gas vans, mass shootings, and death camps. Once again Amanda will interview Becky.
Q. The war is over. You have lived through Auschwitz. Are you alone?
A. No one is alive. In January of 1942, Jews had to give up all warm clothing. My husband contracted pneumonia and died within a week. My son was taken away a few months later. He died in a slave labor camp in Poland. My brother was sent from Dachau to Auschwitz around the same time. He was sent immediately to the gas chamber when he arrived at Auschwitz. My uncle died in the boxcar en route. My daughter died of malnutrition in ’43 just before I was deported to Auschwitz. Now I don’t know why I survived—

What was it like in a concentration camp? Deidre, Rhonda, Sabrina, Shannon, Dan, Bill Josh, and David will give you an idea.

Imagine yourself a panicky 16-year-old girl kneeling on the floor in front of a huge furnace that you know is being used to cremate human beings. Some were even your relatives. You have a stern SS guard standing behind you barking orders to clean ashes out with your bare hands. The ashes are still warm and you realize he is going to burn you. You blink back your tears as he screams “Mach Schnell, Juden Schwein—faster you Jewish pig.” He is standing so close that you can feel his large, steely gray eyes watching you. You are trembling. You have just experienced what one Dutch Jew went through during one of the worst acts of Anti-Semitism this world has ever experienced.
Hitler believed that Germany's main problem was the presence of the Jews; his first solution was to remove Jews from the economy and to isolate them within Germany. Once again Amanda and Becky:

Jews were taken to Auschwitz to carry out the plans for the Final Solution. Auschwitz, the most familiar death camp is where you are now being taken:

The train arrives—cattle cars. You hold your father's hand as you are forced into a car with 80 to 100 other people. The door slams shut and you hear the lock.

After two hours, people grow thirsty; there is no room to sit down; one small opening in a corner of the car is the sole source of air. You gasp for breath. There is no toilet, only a bucket somewhere in the middle of the car. The heat grows unbearable.

After 8 hours, about 25 people have passed out or died. After 20 more hours, the train stops. A machine gun sprays the car and 4 people fall with blood flowing from their bodies. Your sister is one of them. Silence

The door opens; air rushes in. "Raus! Raus! Out! Out!" There are dogs, men with guns. Prisoners in striped uniforms take suitcases, old people, and the dead out of the car. You watch as they throw your sister's body on to a wagon.

"Line up by fives. No talking." The air is filled with a foul smelling smoke. A chimney is visible; flames and smoke billow from it. Some one whispers: "Lie about your age; tell them you are 16." An SS man with a whip points to the left to you and your father. You follow his directions. You see your mother, old people, and children go to the right. All those under 16 and over 40 were sent to die.

You are made to strip and stand naked. You are sprayed with delousing solution; it burns. Still naked you are marched to a long room where all body hair is shaved; your arm is tattooed with a number. You are given a uniform and sent to barracks. What has happened to your mother and brothers? You ask another prisoner. He drags you to a window and points: "Do you see that chimney? Do

4 am Roll Call. Fall out in the biting zero-degree cold. Stand. One hour passes while a guard calls out numbers. All must wait because one person is not present. Five minutes later the body is dragged to its place. Even the dead must report.

Coffee—dark water—and one slice of bread are given to you. You stand in line three hours to use the latrine. People have urinated on themselves. When your line finally gets there, you have three minutes to use the toilets. You are beaten with a whip if you take too much time. Some have committed suicide by drowning in excrement. The smell is overpowering, and you feel the urge to vomit.

11:00 Roll Call. You are given a work detail. Your job is to sort out clothing collected from the victims, most of whom were gassed on arrival. You are lucky. You can steal from here.
At noon you are given coffee and another slice of bread with margarine. Ten minutes to eat. Back to work. You suddenly find a familiar sweater, your mother's, and a pair of shoes, your brother's. They are dead; you know that now.

Another roll call. 19 people have died from your group. Another meal which consists of one slice of bread and a small piece of hard salami. You return to the barracks. You watch a girl getting beaten. You lay your head on your board thinking about your mother, your brother, and your kitchen at home until you fall asleep.

Chelsea and Jenny found a poem on the Internet called “Survivor’s Prayer”

I have lived
dear God
in a world gone mad
and I have seen evil
unleashed beyond reason
or understanding.

I was with them.
We drank from the same
bitter cup.

I hid with them,
Feared with them,
Struggled with them.
And when the killing was finally done
I had survived
while millions had died.
I do not know why

I have asked many questions
for which there are no answers
And I have even cursed
my life
thinking I could not endure the pain

But a flame
inside
refused to die
I could not throw away
what had been ripped away
from so many.

In the end
I had to choose life
I had to struggle to cross

the bridge
of the dead age
I had to relearn
what had been
I had to develop
another view

Some people to this
what the Americans

In April an
 fosterage Camps. The
 people. The stench
iders among America
they would find in the little idea that such a
nered. One of the An
Landsberg recalls that simply boggles the im
was a kind of a shoe for this...there was a
given up hope.”

The British
Belsen, they found e
where. Rats had been
starving people had
were opened survivors of their inability to if
then locked the store to feed them. Many
ological disorders af

One of the most not
diary of a schoolgirl
in the summer of 19
and wrote:

“Gorgeous

Then she proceeded

“I hope I sh
been able to do in an comfort to me”

Yours, Ann
Some people to this day deny that the Holocaust existed but Justin will tell you what the American and British soldiers found when they freed the camps.

In April and May 1945, American troops marched into German Concentration Camps. The Americans were greeted by blank stares from skeleton-like people. The stench and sight was enough to cause physical and mental disorders among American troops. None of the American soldiers had been told what they would find in the camps. Most heard about concentration camps but had little idea that such horrors existed. They were shocked by what they discovered. One of the American soldiers who liberated the concentration camp at Landsberg recalls that “even at its least terrible, it was incredibly terrible...it simply boggles the mind...you have to not just see it; you have to smell it...there was a kind of a shock. I think we were in a state of shock. We were unprepared for this...there was no cheering. They were just ...they had given up...almost given up hope.”

The British had a similar experience. When they arrived at Bergen-Belsen, they found dead bodies rotting in the mud. Corpses were piled everywhere. Rats had begun to gnaw on the living, and some of the desperately starving people had begun to eat the flesh of the dead. When the storehouses were opened survivors raced for cans of food and many dropped dead because of their inability to ingest food after many years of malnutrition. The British then locked the storehouses, began disinfecting prisoners, and carefully started to feed them. Many British soldiers had to be admitted to hospitals for psychological disorders after observing the horrible conditions.

One of the most notable and quoted books in the century is a red and white plaid diary of a schoolgirl—Anne Frank. It was a birthday gift for a 13-year-old girl in the summer of 1942. She pasted a class picture of herself on the inside cover and wrote:

“Gorgeous photograph, isn’t it?”

Then she proceeded to write in this book that she called Kitty.

“I hope I shall be able to confide in you completely. As I have never been able to do in anyone before, and I hope you will be a great support and comfort to me”

Yours, Anne
Anne’s family moved to Holland to avoid the Nazis, but Germany overwhelmed the small country in just 5 days. Otto Frank tried to safeguard his family. For over a year, he had been clearing a space in his business, hinging a bookcase over an opening that covered a staircase leading to 4 small forgotten rooms.

One night Otto took his wife and two daughters, Margot and Anne, to the hidden rooms which Anne called her secret annex. Each member wore four sets of clothing and carried school bags:

“The first thing put in my school bag was this diary; then hair curlers, school books, old letters, and a comb. I put the craziest things! But I’m not sorry because memories mean more than clothing.”

Yours, Anne

Anne is a witty person. Once she described her hiding place like an ad in a newspaper:

“Board and lodgings — free
Special fat free diet
Running water in the bathroom; unfortunately no bath
Use of language: speak softly at all times, by order.
All civilized language permitted — therefore no German.”

But her life was strained — no talking and only 1-hour a day could they use the toilet:

“We are as quiet as baby mice. Who could believe three months ago that quicksilver Anne would have to sit for hours … and once more COULD.”

Once when one of their helpers came, cold and red in the face from the winter she wrote:

I want to feel that again. When will I be granted the privilege of smelling the fresh air? I can’t talk about this with anyone because I should cry.”

Anne dreamed about her school friend Hannah Lee who had been taken:

Dear God, I have everything I could wish for while her fate has her in its deathly clutches. What’s the difference between us? Why are we so far apart?”

The irony is that Hannah Lee survived her friend. In 1944, someone betrayed the people in the Secret Annex. Two German SS Officers and three Dutch accomplices burst into the ground floor of 263 Platzgarten. They were shouting and shaking their revolvers:

“How long have you been here?”
“Twenty-five months,” Edith Frank replied.

But the soldiers them their scratches off the family alone, but SS Sergeant Major Hubert van den Bergh, the gas chambers, but not Auschwitz of starvation. When Anne was told no diary left us these words:

It’s really a war that seems so absurd despite of everything. I see the world approaching the end of millions and I hope I come right, then I will return aged.

Yours, Anne

Anne’s story ended tragically during the 40’s, but her influence lives on.

Everyone’s hero, Anne Frank, vanished in 1945 in Nazicontrolled Czechoslovakia. Another man, a Polish diplomat who saved the Jews, had disappeared in 1945. His name was Jan Karski. In Denmark the whole family was not sent...
But the soldiers didn’t believe him and laughed until Mr. Frank showed them their scratches on the wall. Otto Frank offered them money to leave the family alone, but SS Sergeant Silverbaur replied, “It’s too late for that.”

The family was taken away; the diary remains. Otto Frank was listed for the gas chambers, but the war ended before his turn came; Mrs. Frank died in Auschwitz of starvation; Margot died in Bergen Belsen from a concussion.

When Anne was told mistakenly that her father died, she gave up hope... but her diary left us these words:

It’s really a wonder that I haven’t dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out, yet I keep them because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again.

Yours, Anne

Anne’s story ended tragically as did most lives of Jewish people living in Europe during the 40’s, but there are a few recorded acts of courage.

Everyone’s heard of Oskar Schindler who saved factory workers in Czechoslovakia. Another hero is Raoul Wallenberg, a wealthy privileged Swiss diplomat who saved thousands of Jews in Hungary before he mysteriously disappeared in 1945. In Greece, a priest told the Nazi SS that he could not tell the difference between Jews and Christians and was able to save 20,000 Greek Jews. In Denmark the whole nation organized a night to save their Jews by using every available boat to send them to Sweden where they were given sanctuary.

All of these heroes along with those who perished deserve our recognition and remembrance. Please stand for an Honor song. That concludes our program. Thank you for coming.

Selected Poems from the Holocaust Poetry Project (2001)

Shoes
Fairly new, clean
Walked in, worn, comfortable
Six million pairs—one big pile
Removing, hurting, scaring
Torn, dirty
Junk

by Rachel
Heart
Oppression
Lives lost
Obstacles
Crying
Angst
Uprising
Suffering
Tattered and torn
Solitude
Hardship
Open wounds
End of life
Starving

by Casey

My Shoes and Theirs

My shoes are brown and leather,
Their are the same but slightly worn.
Mine are new—they're tattered and torn.
They take me places in which I choose.
The Jews don't go; they have nothing to lose.
Taking their shoes because of their religion.
Feeling so sick and taken away,
But their clothes and shoes must stay.
Them in a chamber, their shoes in a room,
Smoke pours out, we hear a loud boom.
Their lives are gone, but mine will stay,
Souls are lost and people forgotten.
Their shoes are here for us to see,
Lying around disgracefully.

by Mandie

Shoes

My Sketcher shoes are new and white
They walk me around day and night.

The victim's shoes have come unglued
Their spirits shot, not enough food.

My shoes last quite a long time
Everything I have will always be mine.
Others less fortunate were forced to walk miles
And throw their shoes in heaping piles.
Forced to work as slaves and be brutally beat
Standing in line for the smokehouse in bare feet.

by Kelly

Shoes: Past and Present

Shoes: aged and tough

Many miles these shoes have walked
Trudged through war, disease, ghettos, and
Concentration camps.
They have survived through the Holocaust,
Leaving a legacy that I cannot.
These shoes made of leather,
Aged and tough,
Much stronger than I
As I await my death at
This prison called Auschwitz.

Shoes: fresh and new

Round and round the school halls my shoes have walked
Scurrying through recess, phy. ed, and
To class for fear of being tardy.
They have survived through Marion High School,
Leaving after graduation
These shoes, made soft and squishy,
Fresh and new,
Much more durable than I
As I strive each day at
This school called Marion High.

by Jennie

Note: Some material quoted from: Life Unworthy of Life by Dr. Sidney M. Bolkosky, Betty Rotberg Ellias, and Dr. David Harris. Published by the Center for the Study of the Child, 1987.
Labors Lost: Examining the Causes of the Continual Acceptance of the Stratford Theory of Shakespeare Authorship

Kyle Oliver, University of Wisconsin

Introduction

"the Prologue is address'd"
- A Midsummer Night's Dream Vi.106

William Shakespeare is held, almost undisputedly, to be the greatest writer of all time; the exhaustive study of his work has been the task of seemingly innumerable scholars for the better part of four centuries, he is celebrated among and above the likes of Virgil and Voltaire, and his drama and poetry have become the standard against which all work in these genres has been and will continue to be evaluated. He is literature's greatest champion. His identity, however, is one of history's profoundest enigmas.

More troublesome than this, however, is that much of the public is ignorant to this fact. Limitless credit and praise for these outstanding works may well have been misplaced, and yet Shakespeare authorities tend to unequivocally dismiss the Shakespeare authorship question, hiding it from the public eye.

Louis Wright does so in an introduction that accompanies Folger Library publications of Shakespeare's plays:

The anti-Shakespeareans base their arguments upon a few simple premises, all of them false. These false premises are that Shakespeare was an unlettered yokel without any schooling, that nothing is known about Shakespeare, and that only a noble lord or the equivalent in background could have written the plays...Most anti-Shakespeareans are naive and betray an obvious snobbery. (Louis Wright in Alias Shakespeare 7-8)

His incorrect conclusion is drawn from an oversimplified and biased examination of the arguments at hand.

These arguments have changed over the years as new evidence has been discovered; what began as a ragtag group of pseudo-scholars seemingly theorizing at random has evolved into a brotherhood of legitimate researchers. Numerous outside observers agree that these men and women have carefully presented considerable evidence (Bethel 1; Satchell 72; Chua-Eoan et al. 74); it warrants review. However, Heller reports that these researchers continue to have considerable difficulty in getting their work to be taken seriously, especially among other scholars (Heller 1). This is rather ironic, given that Shakespeare scholars would be expected to be very interested in so important a debate.

In fact, it is Shakespeare that it is supposed to challenge their position. Consider William Shakspeer's plays, attributed to William Shakespeare Studies and the continuing mainstream of literary credibility associated with them. Because they are widely accepted not because Shakespeare has proved it, but because we have said so. It is the task of the anti-Shakespeareans to question. Furthermore, it is our responsibility, not least, not ignored. We must be committed to...
In fact, it is partially because this question is so central to the study of Shakespeare that it is so often ignored. If the orthodox scholars were to reconsider their position (known as the Stratford theory) that a businessman named William Shakspeare from Stratford-upon-Avon had written the plays and poems attributed to William Shakespeare, it would undermine the very foundation of Shakespeare studies. This paper argues that the most significant reasons for the continuing mainstream acceptance of the Stratford theory are the lack of credibility associated with early anti-Stratfordian supporters, a hesitancy to deviate from a widely accepted norm, and a hesitancy to undermine the democratic ideals that Shakespeare has come to represent; furthermore, each of these reasons is flawed.

The Question
"a tomb / Which hides your life and shows not half your parts"
-Sonnet XVII, lines 3-4

Time has shrouded Mr. Shakspere's life in mystery and provided a very formidable question, indeed. Clark and W. Wright cite that the main reason is that "there was no Shakespeare biography written until nearly 100 years after his death. During that time, Fact became mingled with legend — and what we do know has been pieced together from secondary sources or implied from his work" (Clark and W. Wright back cover). It was not unnatural, then, that individuals began to question whether history had gotten it right, saying that a merchant of Stratford had written these eloquent works. In fact, it seems very necessary and proper that they did.

After a shaky start, these men and women began to come up with a serious and credible theory: Edward de Vere, the seventeenth earl of Oxford, and not Mr. Shakspere, wrote the plays that have been attributed to William Shakespeare. Evidence supporting this Oxford theory fills entire volumes, compendious tomes that supply ample historical and literary evidence. For instance, why, Sobran asks, is Mr. Shakspere's life full of unexpected silences? He accepts no public praise, he fails to complain when others steal or mislabel his work, he writes no introductions to his plays or poems, and he is entirely absent from London at the height of his works' popularity. In short, "outside his published works, he says nothing," and furthermore, "this taciturnity is strongly at odds with the impression the works themselves leave, of a ready wit and irresistibly generous eloquence" ("Bard thou never wert" 44). Conversely, these facts entirely correspond to the Oxford theory; Sobran explains that Oxford would have had to conceal his identity as the author of the Shakespeare works, because for such to have been written by an important member of the nobility would have been scandalous ("Bard thou never wert" 45). This is just one of the innumerable pieces of evidence that, while perhaps proving little, should at least cast serious doubt upon Mr. Shakspere's authorship.

This, after all, is what needs to be acknowledged, because there is a question. Furthermore, it is a question that needs to be answered or, at the very least, not ignored. Whalen contends that a dedicated, interdisciplinary study must be committed to the Shakespeare authorship question. For universities
worldwide, this is not only an opportunity but a responsibility, "even if it challenges conventional wisdom, perhaps precisely because it does challenge conventional wisdom" (Whalen 130). However, there are, Matus claims, a growing number of people who support quite the opposite; they do not care who wrote the plays (14). Edwards and Babor report that there is even some support for "the outright abolition of the authorship concept" in general (2). This seems more than a little foolish, given the nearly undisputed literary significance of any work's author. Werth maintains that "If we can tie [Shakespeare's works] to a biography, they will become richer for us, and for the generations to come. Yet there is another, perhaps deeper reason which pushes us to discover Shakespeare's biography: the simple, visceral need to know the source of that which amazes, engages and fascinates us" (Werth 5). Given the intellectual benefits of investigating the authorship question, there must be some reasons why it does not receive further study and acceptance.

Credibility

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't."
-Hamlet, II.i.108-109

Perhaps the most obvious reason for the general unwillingness to accept any anti-Stratfordian theory of Shakespeare authorship is the admittedly dubious credibility of some of those who pioneered the cause. Bethel maintains that, living in "the Age of the Amateur," many who initially doubted Mr. Shakespeare's authorship were creative but wholly unconvincing (Bethel 2). Sobran concurs, but adds that even when these people did happen upon something valuable, their faulty methods cast doubt on their work as a whole: "The great comedy of the authorship question is that so many important discoveries have been made by dubious scholars, intellectual misfits, and outright cranks; mainstream scholars, meanwhile, ignoring their challengers, have insisted that there is no real authorship question at all...often a priceless gem may be found in a pile of intellectual rubbish. (Alias Shakespeare 5)

Modern anti-Stratfordians, then, are forced to labor under an undeserved stigma; orthodox scholars simply assume they are just as nonsensical as their foolish forerunners.

One of these forerunners is Delia Bacon. According to Looney, she contributed to the theory that Lord Francis Bacon, who is no relation to her, wrote Shakespeare's plays. She claims to have received confirmation of this theory in a series of hallucinations she had while spending a night at the place of Shakespeare's burial (Looney xvi). This clearly ridiculous evidence casts serious doubt upon the theory as a whole. Such is also the case with Ignatius Donnelly, proponent of a cryptogram theory. Looney and Bethel report that he believed that hidden within the texts of Shakespeare's plays were coded clues pointing not only to Bacon as the author (Looney xvi) but also to the secret locations of his hidden manuscripts (Bethel 2). Bethel maintains that this severely hurt the anti-Stratfordian cause (Bethel 2). Because of the vigor with which these
Baconians celebrated their incredible claims, their theories were widely disregarded, not only because of the lack of evidence to support them but also because the public regarded them as unscholarly and, probably, crazy as well. Although their theories are no longer generally accepted, the Baconians’ influence is far from dead; theirs is a legacy of missing substantiation and irrational thinking. What is worse, it has tainted the credibility of anti-Stratfordian Shakespeare studies as a whole.

However, whatever damage lingers from the Baconians is exacerbated by similar harm done by a great Oxfordian. Percy Allen, Sobran reports, was a spokesperson for the cause until 1943, when he “went flaky on them in his old age and nearly demolished the cause for all time: he published a book transcribing his conversations with Oxford, Shakespeare, and Bacon at a series of seances” (Bard thou never wert 44). In this outrageous claim, a man who was once held in high regard, relatively speaking, went beyond the irresponsible claims of Donnelly and Delia Bacon. While Donnelly’s claim that the answer to the authorship question was coded in the plays was implausible, at least he could point to these passages and make his case. Even Delia Bacon did not go so far as to claim she had actually spoken with the three long-dead men involved. That a comparatively rational man would, in his old age, give up his scholarly methods and attempt to substantiate the Oxford theory through tales of preternatural communication is dubious at best. Stratfordians, not unreasonably, could interpret this incident as further proof of the Oxfordians’ folly.

This is unfortunate, because much of the evidence Oxfordians have gathered is very credible, indeed. Two new papers place their authors among the likes of Looney, Ogburn, Whalen, and Sobran as outstanding Oxfordian scholars, and their methods are indicative of the seriousness with which this group of men do their work. One of these papers, Holden reports, was placed on the Los Alamos Nation Lab site by physics and medicine student Eric Altschuler. Altschuler has done an extensive study into the astronomical references in Shakespeare’s plays, finding none about significant events after 1604, the year of Oxford’s death. This lends credence to the already existing theory that Shakespeare’s later plays were assigned erroneous publication dates (Holden 1255). While, like any other study, this can be easily enough dismissed as inconclusive, it brings with it a string of intriguing coincidences. Holden specifically cites Altschuler’s inference that a reference found in Hamlet to “a bright star on a November night…could refer to a “new” star (now called supernova SN1572A that appeared in November 1572. The star was described by Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, in whose portrait a coat of arms bears the names ‘Rosenkrans’ and ‘Guldenstern’,” two characters in the play (Holden 1255). Taken by themselves, such coincidences bear little weight; however, the wealth of such coincidences in the Shakespeare debate is suspect, especially when combined with supported objective evidence such as is presented by Altschuler.

Another recent scholarly study is even more impressive. Heller reports that Roger A. Strutmatter, preparing for his doctoral dissertation, spent eight years carefully researching the “so-called Geneva Bible, a volume purchased by de Vere in 1570.” The significance of this book is that “More than a quarter of its
1,066 annotations and marked passages appear in some form in the Shakespeare canon. They range from thematic parallels...to specific wording (Heller 3). Stritmatter, whose work earned him his Ph.D., also exemplifies the patient diligence that characterizes a credible scholar. Like Altschuler, he has made a comprehensive examination of the breadth of Shakespeare’s work and reached a supportable conclusion based on the information gathered from the literature and from outside sources.

Altschuler, Stritmatter, and most of the other men and women currently contesting Mr. Shakespeare’s authorship labor under the established guidelines for credible research, having learned from the mistakes of several of their predecessors. However, the damage has been done; much of the public will probably continue to regard the anti-Stratfordians as heretics, conspirators, and quacks. That society regards them with such disproportionate skepticism must, therefore, be viewed as a significant cause of the continuing mainstream acceptance of the Stratford theory.

The Norm
“I am constant as the northern star”
-Julius Caesar, III.i.60

Another such cause is the continuing nature of that acceptance itself, i.e., people believe that Mr. Shakespeare wrote the Shakespearean works largely because that’s what has always been believed. This constancy is not altogether unreasonable, for it is surely difficult to doubt a theory that has been widely accepted for so long. Indeed, numerous thinkers throughout history have encountered problems presenting deviant ideas. The significant hesitancy to doubt an orthodox theory, then, is another major challenge that Oxfordians will have to overcome.

Few who contribute to Shakespeare debates are unaware of the challenges ahead. Pitcher acknowledges the difficulty in questioning any accepted information regarding Shakespeare. He predicts that many will view his work, which attempts to prove Shakespeare’s authorship of a little-known play called The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, with skepticism, because there is so much at stake. Therefore, he expects many “will prefer to remain comfortable amidst uncertainties” (Pitcher 3). Herein lies an interesting point: some authorities prefer to put faith in an accepted notion, however questionable, rather than pursuing further investigation and reasoned discourse. This is surely indicative of the considerable stock many place in the Stratford theory simply because it has been accepted for so long. Such reliance on tradition as an epistemological way of knowing questionable, certainly outweighed in credibility by science and rationalism.

Whalen writes that this is probably the most difficult challenge facing Oxfordians. Time, he says, is something of an enemy to Oxfordians:

For many, the greatest hurdle to considering Oxford as the author is the difficulty of accepting the possibility that for centuries the wrong man has been taken to be the author of the works of Shakespeare. Will

Thus, Stratfordians set out their case. Furthermore, on their side, Stratfordians claim, “The only problem is that the plays and sonnets, not Shakespeare’s life, are the double standard; Stratfordians have it and yet they do not require the advantage of popularity.”

Another reason Shakespeare’s authorship deftly summarizes this...

To question the form, akin to morning coat...

It is obligated...sanctity...It is not criticism...

Although his statements may seem unreasonable to apply Shakespeare and his coincidence that here...

As modern discipline...crime of deviation from tradition and scale. And while this analogy goes a long way to receive in the legitimacy...

Besides time is slow to question the...and...respectability”...

unwilling to question this tenacity certainly...

theory. Like the reason...

the norm is not altogether...

is not easy. Scholars...

is a challenging field...

researcher to an isolate...

to accept a theory since each convert to their...

possible that the Stratford...
Shakspere continues to enjoy the support of the establishment authorities in academia and publishing. They have inherited a powerful tradition. (Whalen 129)

Thus, Stratfordians seem to have the upper hand in yet another facet of the debate. Furthermore, they do not hesitate to make use of this fact. With time on their side, Stratfordians shirk any responsibility to prove their case. Paster claims, “The only proof necessary is that Shakespeare could have written the plays and sonnets, not that he did” (in Satchell 71). Clearly this sets quite a double standard; Stratfordians demand incontrovertible proof from Oxfordians, and yet they do not require this of themselves because their theory has the advantage of popular acceptance over a long period of time.

Another reason for reluctance in deviating from confidence in Mr. Shakspere’s authorship is that he is held in universally high regard. Looney deftly summarizes this phenomenon:

To question the Bard’s work, or to cast doubt on his credentials is bad form, akin to eating peas with a knife or wearing brown shoes with a morning coat. It isn’t done. It is not necessary to read “Shakespeare.” It is obligatory to revere him. And Stratford-on-Avon has the same sanctity... It is a national shrine. The correct attitude toward a shrine is not criticism but faith. (Looney xv)

Although his statements relate specifically to the British people, it is not unreasonable to apply them universally. The general reverence toward William Shakespeare and his writing is an undisputed cultural phenomenon. It is no coincidence that heretics, as anti-Stratfordians are frequently labeled, are treated by some in a manner analogous to the religious dissenters of the late Middle Ages. As modern disbelievers, they share with their skeptical ancestors the crime of deviation from time-honored and deeply held beliefs of the utmost scope and scale. And while there is no inquisition to lock up or execute Oxfordians, this analogy goes a long way towards explaining the lack of attention they receive in the legitimate scholarly arena.

Besides time and quasi-religious devotion, other factors make scholars slow to question the orthodox. Sobran contends that “tenure, promotion, grants, and... respectability” are additional factors that keep them devoted to the norm, unwilling to question (Alias Shakespeare 15). Whatever the causes, though, this tenacity certainly plays a role in the continual acceptance of the Stratford theory. Like the reason of initially inadequate scholarship, hesitancy to question the norm is not altogether surprising. Marching to Thoreau’s different drummer is not easy. Scholarship, dominated by peer review and dissertation committees, is a challenging field in which to stand alone. However, if the truth leads a researcher to an isolated position, he or she must remain steadfast. It is foolish to accept a theory simply because it is normal practice to do so. Thankfully, with each convert to their cause, Oxfordians gain a little ground; eventually, it is possible that the Stratford theory will no longer be the faithfully accepted norm but rather simply another option to be considered.
Democratic Ideals
“Some are born great, some achieve greatness”
-Twelfth Night, III.i.45-47

A third reason for refusing to doubt the Stratford theory is that Mr. Shakspeare has come to represent certain democratic ideals. Denying that a virtual peasant with a grammar school education could have written the plays would undermine those ideals, many claim. Sobran contends that “democratic ideology has become entwined with the cultural icon known as ‘William Shakespeare.’…For twentieth-century readers, Shakespeare without his plebeian identity wouldn’t quite be Shakespeare” (Alias Shakespeare 8). Schoenbaum serves as a perfect example of this mentality. He states that “children of a democracy” have no reason to question the ability of any citizen to write splendidly, regardless of socio-economic background (Schoenbaum in Alias Shakespeare 8). Lamb attributes Mr. Shakspeare’s ability to nothing more than simple hard work, comparing Mr. Shakspeare to Edison, who believed and demonstrated that genius is ninety-nine percent perspiration (Lamb 13). Oxfordians doubt the plausibility of this explanation, and there is much debate as to whether they are elitists or simply realists.

Heston claims that they are the former, saying that Oxfordians faultily find Mr. Shakspeare to be “simply unfit,” based on his educational status (Heston and Sobran 34). Equally frustrated with the Oxfordians’ purported concern with Mr. Shakspeare’s status, Matus claims that the Oxford theory is the unsurprising result of a search for a more impressive Shakespeare, because “Sooner or later, someone was bound to decide that the Immortal Bard could not possibly have been so blandly mortal” (Matus 14). Stratfordian claims of Oxfordian elitism are not altogether unfounded; as Fairfax-Lucy observes of Mr. Shakspeare, “In the shadowy throng of the Great he cuts an uninspiring figure” (14). Oxfordians really do believe that a man of Mr. Shakspeare’s socio-economic background could not have written his plays and poems. However, common sense plays a larger part in this claim than snobbery, and so the term “elitist” is at least a little inaccurate.

On the contrary, “realist” would be a more accurate descriptor; Oxfordians doubt Mr. Shakspeare’s authorship not because they are anti-democratic, but because they see it as foolish to do otherwise. Allen contends that it is highly questionable that a man of Mr. Shakspeare’s education could have written plays that “show much acquaintance with foreign languages, and with law, medicine, history, natural history, and philosophy” (Allen 2). Likewise, Looney contends that “a vast disparity in incompatibility between the man and the work must always justify a measure of doubt…and make us cast about for a more likely agent” (Looney 74). Daniel Wright agrees and also points to the significant time Mr. Shakspeare dedicated to his other profession: “Whoever Shakspeare was...he did not simply pick up pen and paper and begin to write as he did and of what he did, in cultural and critical isolation, without benefit of an extensive and varied education, leaving off at inconvenient times to pursue his apparent ‘real’ passion: small-town business affairs” (Daniel Wright 4). Allen, Looney and Daniel Wright was not a duke or earl, the wealth of knowledge completely reasonable, viewed as elitist or in any way.

Finally, there is Daniel Wright summary of Shakespeare achieved by student writers “have not been the other discipline of the age, an offense against the writer in Heller 2). While the tables on Stratfordian perspective as criticizing each other’s democratic ideals Shakespeare question at hand: refusing little concern for finding method of justifying fn...
Looney and Daniel Wright are not concerned with the fact that Mr. Shakspere was not a duke or earl, but, rather, that he probably had no means of acquiring the wealth of knowledge that Shakespeare must have had. This conclusion is completely reasonable given the information available, and it should not be viewed as elitist or in any other way biased.

Finally, there are even claims that it is the Stratfordians who are elitist. Daniel Wright summarizes that the Stratford theory teaches students that Shakespeare achieved what he did only through genius, without which these student writers “have no hope for the future.” He further asserts that “in any other discipline of the academy” this contention would be strongly criticized “as an offense against the very raison d’etre of the education enterprise” (Daniel Wright in Heller 2). While some would view this statement as simply an attempt to turn the tables on Stratfordians, they should instead recognize that there is a legitimate point here as well. In either case, it seems that both sides are too busy criticizing each other’s motivation. This brings to light the fact that any democratic ideals Shakespeare has come to represent have nothing to do with the question at hand; refusing to question the Stratford theory for this reason shows little concern for finding the truth in this debate. Instead, it demonstrates only a method of justifying further acceptance of a questionable school of thought.

Conclusion

“All is well ended, if this suit be won”
-All’s Well That Ends Well, V.iii.336

In addition to Shakespeare scholars who have dedicated countless hours to the subject, numerous noteworthy thinkers have, in the last two centuries, come to doubt that Mr. Shakspere wrote the works generally attributed to him. Satchell reports that among these famous heretics are Walt Whitman, Henry James, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mart Twain, Sigmund Freud, and Orson Welles (Satchell 71). Despite considerable efforts from the unsung scholars and the added attention from these relative celebrities, the Stratford theory still reigns supreme among the Shakespeare authorities. Furthermore, the most important reasons for this continuation are that several early anti-Stratfordians were found to be quacks, individuals are reluctant to question long-held orthodox beliefs, and questioning Mr. Shakspere’s authorship would betray doubt in the democratic ideals he has come to represent.

The most notable similarity between these reasons is that none of them actually has any factual bearing on the debate itself; after all, lunatics can ally themselves with either side, believing an argument based on tradition is foolish, and considering only the cultural ramifications rather than the facts at hand is equally so. In short, the most significant reasons why people refuse to question the Stratford theory are superficial and inconsequential. To a neutral observer this should indicate that the Oxford theory deserves considerable attention. However, for this to come about, these factors will have to be overcome. With an increasingly credible argument, this might be only a matter of time. Overcoming the third factor, though, may prove to be the most difficult. The first two are
much more general; they can apply to many uncertainties. Conversely, Shakespeare's perceived value as a symbol of democracy is specific to this debate. Time and further hard work may be adequate to recover from damages caused by early anti-Stratfordians, and each convert to "Oxfordianism" slightly decreases the power of the Stratford theory as "the norm." However, no amount of evidence or time will quell the desire to believe that Shakespeare was an ordinary citizen and that all such citizens are, therefore, capable of greatness. This is an entirely natural human belief, and as Hamlet says, "there's the rub" (Shakespeare III.i.35). Even human nature itself seems allied against the Oxford theory. The authorship question, then, is like the story of Hamlet, full of "accidental judgements" (V.ii.393). All Oxfordians can do is see that it "High on a stage be placed" (V.ii.389) and "call the noblest to the audience" (V.ii.398).

References

Lowering the Drawbridge
Matt Turner

The traditional image of medieval kingdoms, castles with iron gates, putrid moats, and queens rule as if they are the universe. Hence, rifts have become their seeming students is that they dehumanized pieces of information, and their reality is that the proletariat masses in the actual process of learning a student's pursuits of gain.

But now a noble product-oriented, segregated system often perceived as irrelevant, mythic enigma off reference factor that students in the process models in learning, students are invited to weigh ideas, to evaluate voices, styles, positions communicating... (Zemelman 3)

The journey students take, the assumptions of the process, and affective nature, serve with the interests and the
Lowering the Drawbridge

Matt Turner, Milton High School

The traditional curricular setup of most schools can be equated to that of medieval kingdoms. Castles containing one of the four major content areas (math, science, history, and English) have long been separated by steep walls, iron gates, putrid moats, and guards clad in chain mail. Within each castle, kings and queens rule as if their respective discipline is the center of the curricular universe. Hence, rifts have developed between the content areas leading to what has become their seemingly ego-driven departmentalization. The resulting effect on students is that they are continually "confronted by disconnected, fragmented pieces of information or skills" (Tchudi 25). This type of isolationist mentality, no doubt devised by the monarchs of the time in an attempt to keep the proletariat masses in check, has led students to become disengaged from the actual process of learning. Indeed, many argue that this has "contributed to student's pursuits of grades rather than pursuits of learning" (Berenson 182).

But now a noble knight has stepped forward to challenge this archaic, product-oriented, segregated curriculum that has long kept the minds of students locked away in the proverbial dungeon. This knight, wielding the sword of written expression, looks to champion the paradigm shift from product-oriented (focus on grades) to process-oriented (focus on learning), which is presently occurring in the realm of education. The plan of attack is simple: use writing to unite the separate kingdoms that house the various content areas in order to create a more authentic and cohesive curriculum. In brandishing this pedagogical weapon, the knight will also unlock the minds of students by fostering the development of their critical thinking skills while providing teachers with a more valid and insightful way to assess students.

The trick for educators has become finding ways to relate what students often perceive as irrelevant academic content to their supposed real lives—that mythic enigma oft referred to as the "real world." Relevance is the motivational factor that students in the crux of identity formation frequently demand, and according to Eric Erickson's theories, are justified in doing so. Thus by using process models in learning to write, students are invited—compelled, really—to make sense of the world, to weigh ideas, to explore values, to find their own connections, to invent voices, styles, personas on a page—and then to test everything out by communicating with others, sharing writing and exchanging responses. (Zemelman 3)

The journey students take through writing coincides with the philosophical assumptions of the process-oriented curriculum. Writing, because of its personal and affective nature, serves to connect the academic agenda of the curriculum with the interests and the experiences of the student; thus students can combine
factual knowledge with personal relevance. This is what makes the learning authentic.

Educators have realized the importance of making the aforementioned connection, and, in recognizing writing as the key to incorporating this philosophy, they are lowering the respective drawbridges of the various content kingdoms and allowing writing to infiltrate the various disciplines. Writing has clearly become a major unifying force in the newly formed academic philosophy of a more “open-door” policy between the disciplines. Much of the success writing has had in integrating itself into the various disciplines has to do with its incredible effectiveness as a learning tool. Sarah Berenson, an advocate for writing as a form of assessment, borrows from Lev Vygotsky the argument that “writing is one of the most effective ways to learn, because it not only helps cement knowledge already acquired but also enables students to synthesize new concepts as they use old information in new ways” (74). This assertion ushers in a host of educational presumptions that surround this new philosophy in education.

One assumption is that the authentic nature of a curriculum that incorporates writing throughout the disciplines will increase student motivation. Part of this motivation stems form students being able to reflect on and acknowledge their own learning. In doing so, they are not only being empowered to take control of learning that now seems tangible to them; they are also exposed to the interrelated contexts that tie each academic discipline together. Through this learning/process centered approach, students are also affirmed as being intelligent. Such affirmation will lead to an increase in effort as students take ownership not only in their work, but also in their own cognitive processes. The learning that is accomplished becomes more meaningful, culminating in the creation of active and eager learners who are using higher order thinking skills. Using these skills will assist students in their efforts to retain and apply the material they are learning.

Perhaps it is easier to examine these presumptions in their applications within a specific content area. Take history for instance: History teachers, who have long struggled with finding ways to engage the students more effectively than in the traditional lecture, have noticed that:

Writing challenges students to clarify, organize, and express what they have learned. When students are asked to verbalize their understanding of a historical issue, they often respond with vague, unorganized ideas. Requiring students to put their thoughts in writing challenges them to have explicit, tangible, and detailed ideas. (Bower 109)

One possible way to incorporate the value of writing into a history classroom would be to have students write a dialogue between Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. This requires students to clarify and organize their knowledge into coherent and expressive thoughts. It will also help students develop empathy for the two men, thus demystifying them, increasing the relevance of the learning activity, and ultimately increasing the effort and quality produced by the students.

Writing also that are very high on a benefit. High-level thinking must be presented, while carrying another. For example, then be asked to write the Gulf War. Student references and subject understood through what Writing, especially especially carried the students. Having the first person will personal investment writing across the current activities designed to teaching and learning.

Although they related to the use of writing potential as an assessment and content-area-integrated provide not only a motivational piece of the learning process the test for example: what read and interpret the given wording on the test dependent on the understanding of the subject characteristics of a traditional teaching students. This is what the teacher to see into this way:

A student write square. A triangle, a trapezoid. "The teacher to the lesson plans such as multiple choice, not have revealed, identify such corrections and

This example clearly illumi-
ment, regardless of components process, or the lack thereof.
Using writing teaching and learning is a function to the teaching and learning (71). In order to re-imag
Writing also involves analyzing and synthesizing. These are two skills that are very high on Bloom’s Taxonomy and thus of substantial educational benefit. High-level thinking allows students to come to conclusions, and most importantly, in terms of authenticity, make connections between the past and the present, while carrying the knowledge they have acquired in one classroom to another. For example, students could analyze outcomes of the Vietnam War and then be asked to write a paper comparing and contrasting it to the outcomes of the Gulf War. Students will also begin to see how literature is filled with historical references and subject matter, how mathematical thought can be more clearly understood through writing, and how interrelated all the disciplines really are.

Writing, especially creative writing, leads to increased feelings of ownership from the students. Having students write a letter from Sequoyah to Andrew Jackson in the first person will help students empathize with the historical figure. This personal investment will increase their effort throughout the learning process. In writing across the curriculum, teachers are able to fashion engaging learning activities designed to help bolster the effects of the process-centered method of teaching and learning.

Although the examples and activities I have outlined above have been related to the use of writing as a learning tool, one must not overlook its powerful potential as an assessment strategy. Following along with the process-centered and content-area-integrated format, writing for assessment enables teachers to provide not only a more valid and authentic form of assessment, but to continue the learning process through the assessment. Take a standard multiple-choice test for example: what is being tested here? Maybe it’s the students’ abilities to read and interpret the question, or maybe it’s their skill in guessing. What if the wording on the test doesn’t match the students’ own schematic base of understanding of the subject matter? No teacher would prefer to assess the characteristics of a traditional test rather than the internalized knowledge base of their students. This is what makes writing for assessment so powerful. It allows the teacher to see into the various thought processes of the students. One teacher explains it this way:

A student writes: “The relationship is that a parallelogram is a type of square. A trapezoid is a type of parallelogram. Thus a square is a type of trapezoid.” This student’s confusion about these relationships tells me that the lesson has not been meaningful to her. Traditional assessments, such as multiple-choice tests or having students write definitions, might not have revealed the depth of this student’s misconceptions. Once I identify such misconceptions through students’ writing, I can make corrections and alter future lesson plans accordingly. (Liebers 166)

This example clearly illustrates the point that using writing as a form of assessment, regardless of content area, gives teachers greater insight into the learning process, or the lack thereof, taking place within the minds of their students.

Using writing for assessment also serves to reconnect assessment to teaching and learning interaction. “If teachers could see assessment as integral to the teaching and learning act, they could re-imagine its purpose” (Townsend 71). In order to re-imagine teaching, drawbridges must be lowered, gates opened,
and guards removed. Authentic assessment helps students grow in their abilities to express themselves, increase their cognitive thought process, and actually see their thought process on paper, increasing student confidence and providing affirmation that they are capable of learning.

Although many drawbridges have been lowered, and the curriculum in many school systems has become more cohesive and more authentic, the battle is far from over; there is still jousting going on between traditional isolationists and upstart integrationists. The new standards system has reasserted the old guard’s product-oriented philosophy, and those teachers, students, and parents who are thriving in this kingdom of lower-order thinking skills are understandably apprehensive about defending the more radical paradigm of process writing and writing across the curriculum. I see it as my job as a duel-licensed educator, to lead the charge (by continuing to research new educational philosophy and its applications to curriculum and the classroom) in trying to lower every drawbridge, harnessing the authentic power of writing all the way along.

References

The Reading Tool Box

Laura C. Ritten

As a Title I Reading Teacher, I understand that they use tools to help struggling readers use online. Some of those teachers who would be teaching a variety of reading strategies are quite successful. Instead of managing the tools, I constructed enlarged tool kits that included my reading tools and pliers. I placed these tool kits in a large plastic storage box from my children. I can’t explain that when we build a tool kit, we use many tools. And I guess you make sense, 3) match the sound to the word, 4) read the word, 5) chunking, 6) say “book” and I place a “post” card on the book and I place a “post” card on the book. I have used the book to teach the strategy of making a guess at the meaning of a word. “fine” in the sentence that I encourage the child to go on to find the word. So, for example, I praise the child for a good guess or give the child a good word so all that is important. I encourage to brainstorm the word, so the children have a clear path.

The next step is to think of the word they did to guess this word. I provide guidance, but the student uses the tool kit to shape the way they write down the word. We use the wording of the ends of the words and ask, “What did we do with the tool? Which tool, “Match the letters on the tool?” We have also used two tools on a poster box. “Reading Tool Box” for...
The Reading Tool Box

Laura C. Ritten, Woodland Elementary School, Barron Wisconsin

As a Title I Reading Resource Teacher, I think it’s important for readers to understand that they use many strategies. I have observed, however, that struggling readers use only a limited number of strategies while reading. For those teachers who would like an idea of an engaging and hands-on method of teaching a variety of reading strategies, here is a method that I have found to be quite successful. Instead of using the word “strategies” I use the word “tools.” I constructed enlarged tool shapes—a hammer, drill, screwdriver, saw, wrench, and pliers. I placed these tools in my “Reading Tool Box” (a leftover toy tool box from my children). I then model how we use multiple tools while we read. I explain that when we build a house or fix our bikes, we don’t just use a hammer, we use many tools. And when we read, we don’t use one tool, but we use many.

The main tools I model are: 1) use the pictures, 2) make a guess that makes sense, 3) match the letters of your guess to the letters of the words you are trying to read, 4) read the WHOLE word, from beginning to end, 5) practice chunking, 6) say “blank” and read on, and 7) read the sentence over. I use a big book and I place a “post-it” over a word that matches the strategy I am emphasizing. I have used the book, Grandpa’s Slippers by Joy Watson. To model the strategy of making a guess that makes sense, I place a post-it note over the word “fine” in the sentence that reads, “Nonsense,” said Grandpa. “My slippers are ______.” I encourage the students to make guesses that make sense.

I then go on to the strategy of matching your guess with the letters of the word. So, for example, if a child guessed “good” for “My slippers are good.” I praise the child for a guess that makes sense but then I uncover the first letter of the word so all that is shown of the word “fine” is the letter “f.” I ask the children, “Does our guess “good” match the first letter “f”?” The children are encouraged to brainstorm guesses that start with “f.” I uncover one letter at a time, so the children have an opportunity to refine or confirm their guesses of the word.

The next step is a critical one. I encourage the children to tell me what they did to guess this word. What “tools” did we use? This will require some guidance, but the students do get the idea. I get one of my laminated tool shapes and write down “make a guess that makes sense.” I try to use the wording of the children as closely as possible. Then I get a different tool shape and ask, “What did we do after we made our guess?” I write down on a different tool, “Match the letters of our guess with the word on the page,” again, using the children’s wording as closely as possible. To end the lesson, I display these two tools on a poster board labeled “Reading Tools.” You can also put them in a “Reading Tool Box” for each child to have at their desks.
To model the “chunking” tool I uncovered the word “nevertheless.” I explain that chunking is looking for parts of the word within a word. Three rules for chunking are that:

- each chunk needs to have a vowel (make sure children understand what vowels are, including “y”)
- each chunk has to be pronounceable
- children have to hear themselves say each chunk.

I demonstrate by chunking the word “practise.” My first attempt at chunking looked like this: pra–ctise. The children determine that this attempt does follow the rule of having a vowel in each chunk. (Have the students name the vowels for you.) Then I ask the children to pronounce the first chunk and the second chunk. Since they can’t pronounce “ctise” I ask the children “What should we do?” Chunk it a different way. Pra–tice. Now say the chunks. Prac–tice. It is very important to have the children say their chunks, because even if they say the chunks incorrectly, it will sound close enough to the actual word to remind them of what the word is. Again, I emphasize that we are using the “chunking” tool along with the “making a guess that makes sense tool.”

When the children see the word “nevertheless,” they are encouraged to see chunks or even small words within the word. The students identified the words “less” and “the” which left “never” all by itself. They put the three words together and were able to read “nevertheless.” Not too bad! Once again, I get one of the laminated tool shapes and with the children’s prompting, I write the word “chunking” on the tool to be displayed on a poster or put in the children’s Reading Tool Boxes.

It is very easy to demonstrate “use the pictures” tool, so I won’t explain how to model this one. However, to demonstrate “read the WHOLE word” tool, I use this sample sentence: “I put a magnet on the refrigerator.” I then misread on the word “magnet” and say “magic” instead. I ask the students, “Does this make sense? I put a “magic” on the refrigerator.” “How about, I put a “magnificent” on the refrigerator.” Does this make sense?”

I next ask the students what letters the words “magnet,” “magic,” and “magnificent” have in common. The “m” and the “a” and the “g.” I ask the children, “Did I read the WHOLE word? What part of the word was the only part I read? What would happen if I read the whole word from beginning to end?” Once again, I get a tool shape and with the children’s prompting write down, “Read the WHOLE word” on a tool shape. *Note: I write “use the pictures” on one handle of the pliers and “read the WHOLE word” on the other handle of the pliers.

The “say ‘blank’ and read on tool” can easily be demonstrated with any word using the context clues. This tool is useful because it guides children into predicting an answer that makes sense within the context of the passage. It encourages the reader to keep the main idea in mind in order to predict a word that makes sense. I used an example from the same book that I used when demonstrating the other tools. Grandpa’s Slippers: “Leave my slippers “______” he told grandma. “Don’t try to hide them.” The children try to predict what word

would work in the blank box.
would work in the blank based on what would make sense from the context.

Sometimes, I slide the Post-It over until just one letter is seen so the children may use the letter clues to help them predict and to confirm their predictions. Be sure to write down the name of the tool, using the wording from the children, on one of the tools.

Finally, the last tool, which is the seventh one. I ask the children what happens sometimes when you don’t quite understand something that you read? What do you find yourselves doing? This may require some prompting to guide them to agreeing that if they don’t understand something, they should simply “read it over” until they do understand it. I now take the last tool and write down, once again, using the children’s wording, “read it over.” Display this last tool on the “Reading Tools Poster.”

After this demonstration, which takes about 30 minutes, I explain to the children that when they are reading and they come to a word they don’t know, they can refer to the “Reading Tools” poster display in the room or pull out their “Reading Tool Box,” and use the tools to help them. If they need to ask you for help be sure to ask them what tools they used and to have them demonstrate those tools. I like to review and demonstrate the tools frequently, especially when the students are about to read something new.

During guided reading, I ask the students to record the tools they used while they read. They record the tools they used and the page number they used the tool on. We then discuss the tools the students used and how they helped them with specific examples from the text.

Since the beginning of the school year this has been the emphasis of my teaching of Title I students. I also created a report card that reflected how the children were using the tools (see example). I review this at Parent/Teacher Conferences so parents can ask their children about the “Reading Tools” they are using at school. This approach to teaching the independent use of reading strategies (tools) has proven to be a successful teaching strategy. It has an empowering affect on children who don’t have confidence about reading.
2002 Resolution: On the Reading Initiative

National Council of Teachers of English

The Reading First initiative of the No Child Left Behind act of 2002 makes available to states $900 million for the teaching of reading. And in passing this Act, Congress has affirmed NCTE’s commitment to helping all students become more powerfully literate. However, states can only obtain these funds by committing themselves to professional development of all teachers of reading, based upon and limited to the view of reading instruction embodied in the Reading First initiative. Therefore, the No Child Left Behind Act attempts to impose a centrally mandated “one size fits all” method of reading instruction upon the nation’s children and their teachers.

This initiative is the culmination of a recent trend, as the federal government has increasingly attempted to define what reading is, to limit what counts as research on reading, and to dictate how reading should be taught in our classrooms. As a consequence, the government is channeling education funding to a few corporate purveyors of a limited set of methods of reading instruction. As a professional community actively involved in literacy research and instruction, the NCTE has systematically opposed these mandates, partly through resolutions (1997, 1998, and 1999) on government intrusion into professional decision-making.

We believe the Reading First initiative is potentially harmful to children for several reasons:

- Individually unique children suffer when they are subjected to a national, single, uniform model of reading instruction.
- Children are deprived of sensitive, responsive precision in teaching when a rigid methodology is imposed on teachers.
- Teaching that is based upon a limited, inadequate research base risks miseducating children about reading.

Some of the weaknesses of Reading First stem from its dependence upon the National Reading Panel report (2000) as its research base. Mislabeled as an assessment of “the” scientific literature on reading and reading instruction, the National Reading Panel report is incomplete, narrowly focused, and flawed. The research examined does not represent the full range of scientifically valid research methodology, but appears chosen as selective support for a preconceived notion of what constitutes best practice. Furthermore, the Summary booklet, the most widely distributed and widely read version of the National Reading Panel report, does not accurately represent the findings of the full report (Joanne Yatvin, “Babes in the Woods: The Wanderings of the National Reading Panel,” January 2002, Phi Delta Kappan).

States apply for funds from a “short list” of approved approaches. They are based on alternatives that have not been compared with research on reading. The process imposing a specific curriculum and materials has not been compared with research on reading. The sufficiency of curriculum, instruction, and materials has not been compared with research on reading.

Teachers are being forced to adopt a “one size fits all” approach to reading instruction. The Reading First Act replaces the prominence that teachers had as purveyors of reading instruction with a new model of professional learning. This is a deprofessionalization process that imposes a specific curriculum and materials on teachers and students.

NCTE asks teachers to individually, to speak out against the Reading First Act. It is a narrow literacy teaching. We object to the Reading First Act’s refusal to acknowledge the professionalism of educators and the importance of research in shaping educational policy. We object to the Reading First Act’s refusal to acknowledge the professionalism of educators and the importance of research in shaping educational policy.

Resolution

Be it therefore RESOLVED, that NCTE support the tradition of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and the Reading First Act mandate a “one size fits all” approach to reading instruction.
States applying for Reading First grants have been advised to choose from a “short list” of commercial programs that claim to be more scientifically based than alternatives. In reality, alternative approaches to instruction have not been compared with the approaches of commercial programs as to their overall effectiveness. The professional community raises many areas of concern with respect to available commercial programs:

- The appropriate balance among components of reading instruction has not been adequately researched.
- The sufficiency of those components has not been determined.
- The appropriate amount of time allocated to and among the components of reading instruction has not been determined.
- Research does not support the sequencing in which instruction occurs.

Teachers are finding, too, that some of the mandated scripted programs are crowding out of the curriculum the time needed for reading aloud, independent reading of enjoyable and informational texts, writing, discussion, and in-depth exploration of literature. In short, the Reading First Initiative seeks to remove professional judgment and decision making by educators and to replace it with packaged materials marketed by corporate publishers. This process imposes a standardized methodology upon teachers and children, which is an inevitable recipe for failure.

NCTE asserts the responsibility of literacy educators, collectively and individually, to speak out about the limitations of the assumptions behind the Reading First Initiative. When our federal government attempts to narrow literacy teaching to a focus on a few isolated skills, we must protest. We object to the federal government’s unprecedented co-opting of American traditions of local control of curricula. Our responsibility as educators compels us to develop and communicate to federal, state, and local policymakers specific suggestions for revisions to the Act itself and to policies related to it. For example, we need to call for revisions in the evaluation plan for Reading First. The Initiative must be evaluated by knowledgeable professionals free from commercial and political relationships with the programs, research base, and agencies being assessed. Such evaluation must invite, entertain, and facilitate a broad critique of the Initiative, including its research base.

**Resolution**

Be it therefore RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English support the tradition of local and state control of English language arts curriculum, instruction, and assessment and oppose the use of the No Child Left Behind Act to mandate a “short list” of professional development providers or commercial products in reading.
Be it further RESOLVED, that NCTE call upon Congress to commission knowledgeable, independent professionals to critique the currently promoted research base for the Reading First Initiative, specifically the National Reading Panel report.

Be in further RESOLVED that NCTE call upon Congress to ensure that the five-year evaluation of the Reading First Initiative required by the No Child Left Behind act be conducted not only independently of the U.S. Department of Education but also independently of the influence of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, of other federal agencies and officials, and of corporations that have produced the commercial programs used to implement the Reading First Initiative.

Be it further RESOLVED that NCTE call upon Congress to expand the five-year national evaluation of the Reading First initiative to include

- implementation of diverse kinds of scientific research, including teacher research;
- determination of whether the “essentials of reading instruction” required by this legislation are sufficient as a comprehensive program for the development of reading;
- study of how implementing the Reading First Initiative affects the development of students’ writing, their understanding and appreciation of literature, and their oral communication skills;
- comparison of the effects of the isolated skills approach to reading instruction underpinning this legislation with the effects of more complex, integrated approaches to developing literacy; and
- study of the long-term effects on students’ reading achievement, behaviors, and attitudes.
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