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INTRODUCTION

The articles in this issue reflect the diversity of philosophies and approaches current in training teachers of basic writers. The first three articles describe doctoral programs, hypothetical or actual, which intend to provide the kinds of instruction believed to be most useful to basic writing teachers. The differences in these programs point to fundamental differences in perception about what basic writing teachers really need. Harvey Wiener argues that larger amounts of writing and peer evaluation are needed in graduate literature courses. He goes on to say that it is a combination of more writing and traditional belletristic literary training which best develops those finely honed skills of analysis and synthesis needed to read basic writers perceptively and which imparts the intimate working knowledge of the writing process necessary to teach writing effectively. While a few courses in non-literary subjects would provide useful insights, Wiener maintains, the best teachers of writing have usually been people interested in language as literary art who have established themselves professionally by their own writing, usually on subjects other than the teaching of composition.

In direct contrast, Joseph Comprone makes a case for diversified training in such non-literary subjects as cognitive psychology, descriptive linguistics, non-literary research methods, reading theory, and writing protocol analysis. While a few courses in traditional literary areas such as rhetorical theory and narrative literature are useful to the basic writing teacher, in-depth historical and generic surveys and literary analysis of the customary sort are, he believes, better suited to experts in a specialized variety of cultural criticism than to the specialists who will teach the skills of basic writing. Given the fact that so much must be learned or tested out first hand, he argues for academic credit for supervised teaching and administrative experience. It follows from his premises that doctoral dissertations of writing specialists should have a pedagogical orientation.

The course of study described by John Brereton strikes a balance between these two programs. It provides a double major for students able to undertake rigorous literary and non-literary studies in equal measure.

Because of the numerous required courses and required electives, the program leaves no room for academic credit for supervised teaching and administration, requires a dissertation in a traditional literary subject, and aims to train prospective teachers of basic writing so that they will comfortably fit in English departments.

To some degree, the differences in programs endorsed by these authors reflect the different institutional settings in which the teaching of basic writing has gone forward and the accidents of our collective personal histories as writing teachers. While there are important similarities in the programs, we do not yet appear, as a profession, to have reached a consensus about that balance and synthesis of writing, critical reading, teaching writing, and hard information about various subjects which will best prepare the beginning teacher of basic writing. Nor do we seem agreed on the kinds of experience and information useful—and perhaps rather readily accessible—to teachers of writing in general and other kinds of experience and information in addition that may be necessary for those who will teach at the college level across barriers of dialect, language, and almost complete inexperience with writing.

The last three articles describe programs aimed not only at meeting immediate institutional needs but at training the next generation of high school and, sometimes, elementary school teachers. These programs attempt to reform the way English teachers are trained so that they will actually teach writing, so that entering college students will have already learned more of the fundamentals of writing.

Richard Gebhardt describes programs developed to meet the needs of a small liberal arts college and its graduates. He outlines the informal techniques used successfully in staff meetings with undergraduate writing center tutors and his English Department. He details, too, the more formal instruction provided in an undergraduate course for prospective elementary and secondary school teachers and writing center tutors and in a series of workshops for faculty from other disciplines.

James Moran spells out the principles and methods he and his colleagues have found most effective in training teachers to teach writing, whether the format is a single two-hour workshop or series of workshops, an undergraduate or graduate course, or an eighteen month institute. More important, they have discovered, than any particular format or design or assignment is what the teacher believes to be true about writing, for that will inform whatever he does.

Finally, Donald McQuade and Marie Ponsot describe the substance of a program for training in-service secondary school teachers and—a bold stroke—undergraduates who go into high schools and actually team

teach, as opposed to tutor, writing. The program addresses directly the competencies needed by basic writers, building proficiency in skills of observation, inference, and analysis and bridging between oral traditions, classical literary forms, and expository prose.

We have asked two of our authors, Gebhardt and Comprone, to furnish lists of the readings they consider most important in training teachers at the undergraduate and doctoral levels respectively. Such lists fall slightly out of date almost before they reach print. Yet they provide useful reference points for those of us beginning programs of teacher training and those of us who wish to read in some depth in a new area.

The editors wish to thank Edward P. J. Corbett, Frank D'Angelo, Janet Emig, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Lee Odell, Edward M. White, and Joseph M. Williams, who have agreed to serve on our National Advisory Board. We also wish to express our affection and appreciation to Sally Heaphy, who has served as business manager for many years and now leaves to begin full time teaching, and Marilyn Maiz, who, from our inception, has been our most helpful critic. Both now join the CUNY Advisory Board.

Harvey S. Wiener

PREPARING THE TEACHER OF WRITING

In her article, "Those Undertrained Ph.D.'s in English," Gertrude S. Fujii raises important issues about the qualifications of college teachers. Ph.D.'s in English, she says, are not by their intense work in literature overqualified, as some have argued, to teach the freshman writing courses filling most English instructors' programs these days. Her point is that these Ph.D.'s, fresh from graduate school and unskilled in teaching the rudiments of the language, are undertrained. For these teachers, limited in experience with concepts in grammar and spelling, Fujii maintains it is insufficient "to be able to recognize a structural error in a sentence. The teacher must be able to explain why it is an error and must understand the principle that makes it an error."¹ Fujii's point is not unfamiliar: good graduate instruction would train Ph.D.'s to teach freshmen how to correct their mistakes. Yet, anyone teaching basic writing over the last decade knows that before students can address error—and certainly they *must* address it—they must understand and practice the writing process in order to learn to think of themselves as writers. The instructor's task is as much an effort to bring about synthesis as it is a guide to analysis.

I do not quarrel with requiring good language skills of college writing teachers or with the assertion that training at our graduate schools does not adequately prepare teachers of English to meet classroom challenges today. The interesting question for me is just what aggregate of skills and talents *will* qualify an instructor to help beginning students best in becoming writers? Four years ago when I addressed a related question, I raised ten more that focused on what seemed to me then and now as well

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¹ Gertrude S. Fujii, "Those Undertrained Ph.D.'s in English," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 23 February 1981, p. 25.

to be essential skills for instructors who teach writing. I return to this issue of qualifications, however, for several reasons.

First, I believe that the profession, through its national organizations, is turning its attention at last to college teaching and to the best way to prepare those who will have to do the job in the next decades. At open hearings, Modern Language Association members have pressed MLA's Commission on the Future of the Profession, for example, to address in its final report the issue of appropriate graduate preparation. There is reluctance to charge colleges of education with responsibility for prescribing correct programs for college writing instructors, given a general dissatisfaction with past and current programs of teacher preparation and a growing awareness that specialists with advanced degrees in language and literature should assume a more active role than before in training their future colleagues. Only professors of content in the profession can help avoid what Francis Bacon calls in *The Advancement of Learning* "the over-early and peremptory reduction of knowledge into arts and methods."

Second, I note the growth in size and number of graduate programs in teaching writing over the last few years. That, too, encourages me to discuss qualifications for instructors because I suspect that these programs, unfortunately, are mushrooming in much the same way that basic writing programs have mushroomed since 1970—in response to a perceived audience but, ironically, uninfluenced by the kind of consensus college English instructors (through the MLA and other associations) seem now just on the verge of sharing. This is a consensus that only practitioners can develop: a definition of just what successful graduate training for prospective writing teachers entails. With little agreement about what works where and for whom, programs and courses proliferate.

Third, after many years as a teacher in the basic writing classroom and in various positions as a writing program administrator where I have had to evaluate the qualifications of teaching faculty, and after a few years as an instructor of graduate students preparing for careers in writing instruction, I want to update my earlier recommendations by adding some and by elaborating upon others. And last, I want to draw together some of the important suggestions I have read and heard about suitable

²Harvey S. Wiener, "Questions on Basic Skills for the Writing Teacher," *College Composition and Communication*, 28, No. 4 (1977), 321-324.

training for teachers from colleagues who have addressed this issue in a variety of forums.

I now believe that the first and most important qualification for teachers of basic writing is that they be practicing writers who apply whatever formal training or finely tuned instincts they have about the creative process, about linguistics, grammar, and stylistics, about editing, revising, and polishing a piece of work. Only teachers who write—stories, poems, novels, essays, books, speeches, articles, reports—can continue to broaden their vision of the incredible challenge that inheres in the production of words and sentences on a page. Only writers who frequently write in different contexts can develop the range of skills their beginning students require of them.

Richard Marius, head of Harvard's Expository Writing Program, points out quite correctly "that writing teachers should themselves regularly publish and that their publications should not all be about teaching writing."³ Extending this point, James Raymond argues that teachers who are not good writers and editors will not develop as good teachers. Tracing the sorry history of language training, Raymond believes "that teachers are often insecure as writers and editors, and that the guidance they give their pupils is chancy at best." He suggests that "proper training for English teachers might reasonably include healthy doses of writing and editing courses in addition to courses that view language from the value-free perspective of linguists."⁴

Programs that provide the kind of balance Raymond suggests—I would add intensive training in literary analysis for reasons I shall come to later—are few and far between, so far as I can tell. Departments seeking teachers of basic writing advertise for those with degrees in rhetoric or in linguistics, but I have not seen much to support the idea pretty well accepted in many quarters that such programs of study make major contributions in producing teachers who write, in helping them create strategies that encourage reluctant writers to explore language, or in stimulating the kind of expansive approach to student writing that beginners require. We must await evidence that connects graduate

³Richard Marius, "Faculty Indifference to Writing: A Pessimistic View," *Writing Program Administration*, 4, No. 2 (1980), 9.

⁴James C. Raymond, "Epilogue: Literacy from Five Perspectives," *Literacy as a Human Problem*, forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press.

programs in rhetoric and linguistics with the day-to-day lessons by which basic writing teachers must unravel the writer's craft.

I do not mean to suggest with my doubts, however, that I think the more traditional graduate study in literature currently prepares basic writing teachers to achieve these goals. As it stands now, the "straight English" advanced degree does not achieve them adequately either. However, it is inadvisable to reject out of hand literary training, with its demonstrable strengths, in favor of other, less proven, training. Undoubtedly, all graduate programs that prepare writing teachers must offer courses in writing, in editing, and in language study; and there must also be courses in how to teach writing to beginners offered by experienced and successful writing teachers with impressive publication records. (Strong programs over the country do include some of the training I am suggesting, but in too many institutions it is insufficient, unfocused, and intermittent.) In this sense, graduate students *are* undertrained. It is particularly ironic that at the City University of New York—where the basic writing effort began, really, with the advent of Open Admissions in 1970—there is no systematic instruction for doctoral students in the kinds of writing, editing and teaching skills demanded for the writing classroom.

Recognizing the shortcomings in graduate instruction and the dearth of hard data that would suggest the prototype for a full course of study, I am convinced, along with many colleagues, that skills in literary analysis are exactly the kinds of skills that, placed in the appropriate perspective, have the strongest potential for creating the best teachers of writing. In a paean to Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*, Kenneth A. Bruffee establishes the perspective I am talking about. Bruffee says that Shaughnessy "puts much conventional academic research in English to shame" because she applies to the work of beginners what "other scholars in English reserve exclusively for conventional problems in literary criticism."⁵ There is in this statement, of course, censure of the kind of one-track activity by which much of our profession moves. But Bruffee's point is, finally, very positive. Shaughnessy's efforts are a model for us. They imply that the teacher's goal is to make a real difference in the lives of other human beings by helping them to know and to use their minds. *Errors and Expectations*, he continues, "shows how much highly intelligent, truly sophisticated, engaged scholars can do with the tools of

⁵Kenneth A. Bruffee, "A New Intellectual Frontier," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 27 February 1978, p. 40.

their trade to generate new knowledge through serious research into their subject, and into the process of teaching it, at the basic and introductory level."⁶

The point I am trying to make here is that conventional training in literary analysis does equip writing teachers to deal intelligently with student prose—if they learn to apply their skills to it. I agree with Fujii when she praises the advanced degree because I believe, too, that it provides essential perceptions about literature and language and that it offers the kind of knowledge that helps not only to improve skills for students, but also to give them “appreciation of cogently expressed thought, recognition of logic and ethics, and comprehension of the greatness of the human spirit expressed through the written word.”⁷ Further, writing a dissertation and completing it is an experience of great value, beyond whatever contribution it might make to personal knowledge of content or to literary scholarship. The long creative effort of the thesis is the work of a writer suffering the craft; the practice with language on paper is precisely the kind of practice with process and product that teachers can learn to recall and to reexamine in developing a course of study for beginning writers. Certainly, it is not the doctoral degree in literature per se (Shaughnessy had none, although her academic training was, in fact, in literary criticism) that creates conditions for excellence in the basic writing classroom. However, the habit of mind nurtured by advanced degree programs, the kinds of insights about writing that such programs in literature cultivate, are what basic writing teachers must bring into the classroom and to a page of a beginner’s efforts. Questions we ask about an essay by Bacon, a poem by Shelley, a story by Faulkner are questions we must ask in order to interpret and to evaluate student writing, too. It is regrettable, as Nancy Sommers points out, that “we have been trained to read and interpret literary texts for meaning, but, unfortunately, we do not hold the same set of assumptions for student texts as we do for literary texts.”⁸ Experienced writing teachers who now serve on advanced degree faculties can help correct this dislocation of assumptions. Equipped with skills for examining literary prose closely and intelligently, literature Ph.D.’s must learn to bring those skills to bear on student writing.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Fujii, p. 25.

⁸Nancy Sommers, “Responding to Student Writing,” Section A1, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Dallas, 26 March 1981.

My earlier recommendations for writing teachers were that they develop the basic skills of research and evaluation, learn to identify objectives clearly and to influence budgets, offer instruction in grammar that is appropriate to growth in writing, develop textbooks and classroom strategies for effective teaching, train others (both newcomers to the discipline and those in other subject areas), and see the task of instruction in basic writing as one eminently worth doing.⁹ Still I emphasize those skills as crucial. I would add all the personal, human qualities that distinguish any professional who works with people: patience, determination, energy, dedication, sensitivity, sincerity, gentleness, honesty. There are others, certainly. Yet for the basic writing teacher, the skills I have laid out in this paper are the most important qualifications: preparation for the specialized teaching we do must continue to emphasize literary criticism, along with other language study and along with editing skills that teachers can use to help beginners. (I am not suggesting that instructors edit student writing, merely that they be able to guide students to do it.) Equally important, writing teachers must *write*. And they must learn to apply their talents as writers and as critics to the work produced by their students.

The question of how to achieve these goals as I have laid them out is by no means easy to answer. Our first response might be to create new courses; and surely, as I have suggested, we can enrich graduate programs by adding a few courses that would teach critical reading skills to advanced degree candidates and show them how to teach those skills to undergraduates and other courses that would teach non-literary research skills, rhetorical and composing process theory, and the kinds of linguistic and grammatical information useful to basic writing teachers. But given the financial conservatism currently plaguing higher education, I do not think batches of new courses are the answer.

In the first place, we must bring to masters and doctoral programs a sense of the riches in intellectual inquiry awaiting those graduate professors who teach and study writing, no matter what their particular literary interests. Shaughnessy's work already has captured the imagination of some of our best scholars and writers, among them E.D. Hirsch, Adrienne Rich, and Irving Howe, and will inspire many others. Next, we must ask literature faculty to attend more than they have in the past to the

⁹Wiener, 321-24 *passim*.

centrality of writing—of producing pages of sustained prose—to courses currently offered for graduate students. Surely, many professors already focus in their lectures and class discussions upon the composing process as some great writer worked it through to achieve a magnum opus. We look, for example, at Milton's drafts for *Lycidas*, at Eliot's drafts for *The Wasteland*, at Fitzgerald's drafts for *Tender is the Night*, at the two editions of *Sister Carrie*, and we know that there is much to learn about the creative imagination by following the record of a writer's choices on paper. But I have more in mind when I ask for a central role for writing in the graduate program. We must help English faculty, as Elaine Maimon argues, to "formulate a consistent philosophy for teaching composition"¹⁰ within the literature courses they now teach. Maimon points out there will be problems in developing that philosophy: "A consistent theoretical formulation of this kind requires many English teachers to break old mind-sets and to reflect seriously on unexamined prejudices about teaching composition."¹¹ As she notes, we must "work with English instructors, frequently senior colleagues, who were nurtured to expect that professional advancement meant no more 8:30 a.m. classes and no more teaching composition."¹²

I am not suggesting here that graduate literature faculty should teach freshman writing (although I would welcome it, certainly); but I am suggesting that they demand of their students in graduate seminars enough writing and enough good student responses to writing so that students immersed in analytic explication are, at the same time, synthesizing ideas in original prose and are reflecting on the process that stimulates sentences and paragraphs. Such an approach would require the production of drafts in a healthy collaborative setting, where students think on paper, write in an atmosphere that encourages risks with language, work with their peers, and revise, edit, and rewrite whatever they produce.

Of course, with this plan graduate instructors will need to read more of what their students write; but with students counseling each other on drafts and of course improving content, instructors will be evaluating

¹⁰Elaine P. Maimon, "Writing in the Arts and Sciences: Getting Started and Gaining Momentum," *Writing Program Administration*, 4, No. 3 (1981), 9.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 10.

papers at more advanced stages of completion than before. Thus, more writing for students need not mean more editing and grading for teachers. Students responsive to collaboration and guided by their teachers can evaluate the work of classmates. The instructor should see himself, ultimately, as one reader alongside others who are less skilled in subject matter, certainly, but who are no less able than the instructor to explicate the prose of their peers. Reading graduate students' papers is work not much different in kind from literary explication.

Studying in a program where more of their courses followed the plan I propose, modern graduate students along with colleagues thirty years their senior could begin to see the fruitful connections between what one studies in graduate school and what we teach in the university. And yet, it will not be easy convincing literature faculty that they can and should direct energies toward helping their apprentices to write. Ironically, just as we are convincing colleagues in disciplines other than English to assume more and more responsibilities for advancing skills in writing, we discover the disorder in our own houses. Maimon reminds us with her reference to Walt Kelly that the enemy we have met is us.

But there are no enemies here. Those of us with backgrounds in literary scholarship who, for whatever reasons, have given much of our time to writing instruction and who have discovered the rewards in such a plan must urge senior colleagues to join us in a collaborative spirit. At one institution, perhaps a series of workshops like those Toby Fulwiler describes at Michigan Tech¹³ will spur graduate faculties to reevaluate their courses. At another, perhaps a consultant from outside the university will stimulate a new direction for graduate seminars, like those to be offered by Robert Lucid, Humphrey Tonkin, and Peter Conn in the University of Pennsylvania's graduate English program. At another, a talented department chair or a strong writing program administrator, perhaps, can lead the way to change among colleagues who teach advanced degree candidates.

These suggestions by no means exhaust the possibilities for achieving a program that I think might train a generation of successful teachers of writing. Whatever the method, the goal is the same. Already in place as fertile seeding grounds, American graduate programs in English need to broaden their emphases and, in so doing, to propose courses that connect

¹³Toby Fulwiler, "Writing Across the Curriculum at Michigan Tech," *Writing Program Administration*, 4, No. 3 (1981), 15-20.

solid research in literature, a commitment to writing and editing, and instruction in writing in the classroom. This combination of offerings will bring us all much closer to the “new intellectual frontier” Kenneth Bruffee sees for opportunities in basic studies.¹⁴ It is a frontier only somewhat more developed than in the past, a frontier still awaiting critical exploration from those well enough trained to carry the work forward.

¹⁴Bruffee, p. 40.

John Brereton

THE DOCTORATE IN COMPOSITION AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Within the last few years, many English departments have begun offering Ph.D. programs in composition. These programs have varied enormously, depending on local needs, institutional capabilities, and the ideologies and beliefs of individual faculty members. This variation seems entirely appropriate. Though composition has been around for a very long time, it is just now becoming a discipline within English, so it is far too early to settle upon a single curriculum for training future teachers and researchers. What follows is a description of one new Ph.D. program, begun in 1980 at Wayne State University. I have provided some historical background on the program's beginnings, for, like programs at other universities, Wayne's has evolved through a unique combination of local conditions and national perspectives and reflects its institutional setting.

THE SETTING

Wayne State, located in Detroit, Michigan, is a comprehensive urban university enrolling some 34,000 students. In addition to a medical school, law school, business school, school of social work, and school of education, Wayne State has a College of Liberal Arts which offers graduate work in some forty-four disciplines, including the Ph.D. degree in fourteen separate areas. The English Department has M.A. and Ph.D. programs which, until recently, offered work only in English and American literature. In 1980 Wayne State began a Ph.D. in English with a concentration in composition.

As a setting for a doctoral program emphasizing composition, Wayne's English Department has certain important assets. Perhaps the most

John Brereton has taught at Rutgers, Columbia, and the City University of New York and is currently Director of Composition at Wayne State University. He is the author of A Plan for Writing (Holt, Rinehart), a basic writing text.

telling is that English at Wayne State includes much more than literature. Linguistics and creative writing have long been integral parts of that Department; recent additions include American Studies (shared with History), film, and folklore. The setting for the program, then, is not a narrowly constituted notion of English as literature only, but instead a wide, encompassing sense of what English as a discipline can mean. Interestingly enough, the early history of English departments reveals that literature came rather late in their development; composition, linguistics, and folklore were all taught before the way was made clear for literature.

Another of Wayne's assets is the important part composition plays in the English Department's work. Approximately 6000 students take writing courses each year, adding up to sixty-five percent of the Department's total teaching load. Besides the regular basic writing and freshman composition courses, we provide an English Language Institute for students of English as a second language; a large Writing Workshop, founded in 1959, which offers tutorial and support services in English at all levels; and a growing technical writing program which serves students in the College of Engineering. Other composition coursework includes Writing from Evidence, Advanced Expository Writing, The Personal Essay, and Scientific Report Writing. Composition is taught at every level, from required freshman courses to electives for seniors and graduate students. In addition, the English Department provides faculty at Wayne's extension division, the College of Lifelong Learning, which offers composition courses at branches all over metropolitan Detroit. (Wayne's creative writing program, not part of the composition program, enrolls over five hundred students annually in courses in the writing of fiction, poetry, and drama.)

This varied effort of teaching different kinds of composition at so many levels is a valuable asset for students interested in the teaching of writing. While Wayne has consistently attracted graduate students on the national level, it has also played an important role in continuing the training of teachers already employed in schools and colleges throughout South-eastern Michigan. Many of these students have been attracted to Wayne for its variety of programs and for the chance to pursue a doctorate while already teaching. Thus, all graduate classes at Wayne have always had students with some classroom experience, and many classes have had very experienced teachers who brought their practical expertise to bear on the intellectual issues at hand.

These three factors, the breadth of the Department, the extent of composition teaching already going on, and the experience of many of the graduate students, were all present well before a decision was made to

offer a Ph.D. with a specialization in writing. The assets were in place, but it took the nationwide interest in writing as well as the concurrent decline in job openings for graduates with Ph.D.'s in literature to focus the Department's attention on devising a suitable program.

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

The program that eventually evolved was the work of a number of faculty members who approached the issue from different perspectives. Various models of doctoral programs were examined. One model was similar to programs found in schools of education, providing a range of methods courses, coursework in reading, language development, statistics, and literature, all leading to a dissertation of a pedagogical nature. This model did not find favor, since from the first the Department envisioned a degree that would be almost entirely research oriented, with no room for extensive methods coursework or dissertations on pedagogy.

Another model involved linking the composition degree to an already existing program in an established social science, in Wayne's case, psychology or anthropology. Students would get their empirical work in, say, cognitive development or sociolinguistics, while the English Department would provide the pedagogical and theoretical components. Though the English Department spent a great deal of time exploring a formal linkage with the Department of Psychology, faculty felt such a link would provide too narrow a framework for the professional training needed for today's writing teachers and researchers.

Wayne decided to follow a third model, based on a combination of one half literature courses and one half courses bearing directly upon composition. Neither literature nor composition is narrowly defined. For instance, reader-response criticism usually falls into the literature half, while rhetorical theory fits into composition. Additionally, students interested in composition may apply their knowledge of rhetoric and the composing process in literature courses. So, for example, a paper on Renaissance drama might employ rhetorical theories, or an essay on Yeats might examine his revision process. There were three reasons for Wayne's decision to adopt this model. First, the literature program already had a number of staff members with a strong theoretical bent who were doing research in fields—semiotics, rhetorical criticism—that would complement a composition program. Second, there was a distrust of narrow composition specialists who could not make their research available to those trained in more traditional literary fields. Third, it seemed sensible to stress the closely interrelated processes of reading

literature and writing prose in order to give students a full picture of how language may be employed. Finally, and probably most important of all, it was assumed that graduates of the program would be taking their place in English departments and would often be called upon to teach surveys and introductory literature courses. Since composition is almost always based in English departments, it seemed essential that graduates fit in with their colleagues and not be viewed as people unequipped to teach anything but their specialty. It could be argued there are far too many of such types in English departments already, specializing in literature, not composition.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

A Ph.D. at Wayne State requires sixty credits of coursework, half in literature and half in composition. There are four comprehensive examinations, two in literature and two in fields related to writing. One of the literary fields must be a chronological period, such as Romanticism, while the other can be literary criticism. The dissertation must be an original contribution to scholarship; the research can be empirical or critical, but dissertations with a pedagogical focus are not permitted.

The composition part has as its core three required courses: Survey of Research in Writing, Teaching Expository Writing, and Classical Rhetorical Theory. Additionally, all students must take two of the following three courses: Introduction to Syntax, Psycholinguistics, and Sociolinguistics. The intention behind the core is to provide a common body of knowledge for all students, an overview of the main research areas a composition student might specialize in. Students are expected to pursue their interests with coursework that builds upon the core requirements. Thus, someone interested in rhetoric would also take Rhetorical Criticism, Contemporary Rhetorical Theory, and some criticism courses that stress rhetoric. Someone interested primarily in psycholinguistics could take additional coursework in the Psychology Department, including Higher Mental Processes, Theories of Learning, Development of Intelligence, and Psychology of Language. To secure an adequate foundation, such a student would probably take statistics courses as well. Other options include a wide range of linguistics courses as well as additional work directly in composition, including Writing Theory and Writing as Process. This variety of courses, many of them already offered in other cooperating departments, allows for an in-depth concentration, while the core requirements insure that students in differing areas will have a great deal of coursework in common.

DESCRIPTION OF CORE COURSES*

Survey of Research in Writing introduces students to the current models used in composition research. The first model discussed is empirical, which includes case studies such as Emig's *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* on the one hand, and empirical studies such as Hunt's *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels* on the other. The second model is theoretical, which includes work by Kinneavy, Booth, and Corbett in rhetoric, as well as reader-response criticism as practiced by Iser and Fish, to name two of its most prominent exponents. The third model of composition research is developmental, as espoused by Britton, Bruner, and Moffett. Survey of Research in Writing grounds students in the basics of research; they become intelligent readers of writing research and have the chance to develop beginning projects of their own.

Classical Rhetorical Theory, as the name implies, covers writers from Plato to Augustine. Particular emphasis is placed upon Plato's *Phaedrus*, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, on Longinus, Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, and on Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*. Secondary reading provides critical interpretations of the classical theory as well as modern applications.

Teaching Expository Writing, the one pedagogical course in the program, must be taken upon entrance by candidates who do not possess suitable teaching experience. It covers the writing process, curriculum design, and classroom techniques. Readings include Emig, Irmscher, Moffett, Murray, and Shaughnessy.

Introduction to Syntax presupposes some training in linguistics at the undergraduate level. It examines differing approaches to syntactic analysis, including traditional grammar, structural linguistics, and transformational grammar. Readings include Jespersen, Bloomfield, Gleason, for background, and Chomsky and contemporary transformational linguists. This is the basic course of the graduate linguistics program and can lead to advanced work in phonology, case grammar, stylistics, and discourse analysis.

Psycholinguistics treats the mental processes involved in speaking and writing. Students are introduced to a psychologist's point of view in doing

*Lists of authors and texts studied are for illustration only; course content changes with the addition of new courses or instructors. There is, as yet, no "required reading list," though one may be developed as the program—and the discipline—evolve.

writing research. Writing students will concentrate on Vygotsky, Luria, Chomsky, Bever, Fodor, Frank Smith, and Kintsch. This course, currently taught in the Psychology Department, leads to a wide range of work on cognitive development and higher mental processes.

Sociolinguistics focuses upon language users, speech communities, and the role of social context in the production and reception of language. An important aspect of the course is the role of different dialects, both in speech and in writing, with particular attention to Black English and its relations to the standard dialect. Authors studied include Bernstein, Dillard, Labov, Goffman, Hymes, and Stewart.

INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSEWORK

The Ph.D. option in composition is interdisciplinary. Though most courses are given in the English Department, a significant number are taught in the Departments of Psychology, Anthropology, and Speech. Classical Rhetorical Theory, for example, taught in the Speech Department, attracts students of drama, speech, communications, and literature, as well as composition. Sociolinguistics, taught in the Anthropology Department, attracts social scientists as well as writing researchers. This kind of cross-registration is particularly valuable to students who will work in writing-across-the-curriculum programs, for early in their graduate training their advanced courses outside of the English Department expose them to alternative points of view. These mixed classes ideally build a respect for and understanding of the demands of other disciplines, and at the same time train students in a body of knowledge that goes well beyond the standard fare available in most English programs. The alternative method, to provide such courses within the English Department, runs the danger of watering down the subject, making it "sociolinguistics for English students," a dangerous enterprise, at least until writing researchers have produced a body of knowledge large enough to justify such a narrow specialization. A further advantage of the cross-registration is that students in other disciplines can receive a corresponding understanding of the theory and practical applications of English language and literature.

It should be clear that the mix of coursework required and the demands of the very different disciplines inevitably limit the program to highly capable students. The doctoral candidates in the program have to compete with and be held to the standards of literature students in their literature courses, psychology students in their psychology courses, linguistics students in their linguistics courses. This built-in rigor was planned. If composition is to grow as a discipline, and graduates of Ph.D.

programs in writing are to contribute to the body of research, there is no room for an easy curriculum. For too long composition has suffered from the notion that anyone could do it, that thinking about the writing process does not entail much hard work. There is a good analogy with the early days of English literature studies. To counter the common nineteenth-century criticism that studying English would degenerate into "chatter about Shelley," the first English programs required an extraordinary amount of scholarship, including intensive work in philology, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic, and Old Norse. Only such a difficult program could hope to convince skeptics that English as a discipline had enough intellectual content to be fully respectable. Fortunately, those days are past, but the lesson seems clear. Composition studies will gain respect and prominence only to the extent that they produce graduates who can make significant contributions to knowledge, and small, demanding programs are well-suited to providing prospective researchers who can do the kind of work needed.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

No responsible program can hope to train teachers and researchers without placing heavy emphasis upon actual classroom experience. One way to provide this experience is to supply coursework on methodology, as has been done, with mixed success, in schools of education. Wayne's program takes an entirely different approach. Since the degree is designed to produce composition theorists and researchers, adding on methods courses would reduce the time available for other work bearing more directly on writing theory and research. At the same time, theory must connect with practice, and since students are expected to become competent teachers, a full program of supervised classroom instruction is provided.

The pedagogical course, Teaching Expository Writing, operates in tandem with many opportunities for part-time teaching. Candidates can serve simultaneously as tutors or adjunct instructors in the Writing Workshop, working with students, usually freshmen, who need additional help in their composition courses. A full time coordinator oversees the tutoring sessions, holds workshops, and prepares materials. Recently, much of Wayne's tutoring has taken the form of small group instruction, with three to five students signing up for a one to three session sequence on some troublesome aspect of language. These sessions provide prospective composition specialists with practical experience that can enrich their theoretical studies. The Writing Workshop also gives the remedial course for students who fail Wayne's junior year proficiency

examination. Instruction here is in groups of five to seven, and is coordinated by the full time director of the Workshop, who plans the curriculum and works closely with the instructors. Other adjunct work, available for those with a master's degree, usually involves teaching up to two sections a semester of freshman composition, which at Wayne is divided into a two-course sequence, with about half the entering freshmen exempted from the first part.

By their second year, most doctoral candidates can expect to hold graduate assistantships, with a teaching load of three composition courses a year. Assistants receive pedagogical training in their course in Teaching Expository Writing, and also from the Department's extensive mentoring system, in which all full-time faculty participate. Each semester all graduate assistants, whatever their program, are observed once by a senior faculty member and once by the director or the assistant director of composition. Sets of graded essays are examined after every observation, and a detailed report is sent to the graduate assistant. Additionally, the graduate assistant discusses the classes in a follow-up conference with the director of composition. This mentoring involves a good deal of time, but it is deemed absolutely necessary if potential composition teachers are to receive proper preparation for their careers. There are also monthly composition staff meetings focused on different aspects of writing instruction. One of these meetings, required of all writing teachers, is a grading session to determine departmental standards. The assistant director of composition, whose task it is to supervise all graduate assistants, also holds informal gatherings in order to compare notes and discuss teaching strategies. In addition, the Department holds bimonthly composition discussion groups that deal with a book or article the participants select. Attendance at these groups is optional—the only stipulation is that everyone have done the reading—but a large percentage of students find these sessions valuable, for the discussions encourage exploration of the connections between different courses and disciplines as well as an interchange between graduate students and full-time faculty.

Wayne State's Ph.D. program in composition was consciously designed to be modest in scope. Seven full-time English faculty (three in linguistics and four in composition) presently teach in it, and more full-timers may be added in the near future. The composition program, which in 1981-82 will enroll ten Ph.D. students, operates in the context of an entire graduate program of two hundred students, of whom fifty are Ph.D. candidates. It is expected that the first dissertation will be finished in two or three years, assuming those who entered in 1980 continue to make

steady progress. In a department where everyone teaches composition, this small but growing program offers professional training in the branch of the discipline that has always provided the bulk of English departments' work. With this type of program English departments can supply the training in teaching and researching writing that has been missing for so long.

Joseph Comprone

GRADUATE PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS OF BASIC
WRITING:
THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE'S PH.D. IN
RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

BACKGROUND

Five years ago, at a time when the teaching of basic writing and reading skills was being "rediscovered" and reestablished as an important part of the undergraduate curriculum in American universities, colleges, and secondary schools, the English Department at the University of Louisville began to develop a Ph.D. program in Rhetoric and Composition. Our program's goals were to provide the following:

- An integrated concentration in rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and pedagogy for students who wished to enter the secondary and college teaching professions
- The opportunity to combine academic work in these areas with practical experience in teaching and administrating in college and secondary writing programs
- Access to recent research in the disciplines of cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, discourse theory, and sociolinguistics to students doing research in the composing process
- The opportunity to learn how to conduct empirical studies in composition and its teaching
- The kind of integrated training and experience in composition and literature that would enable students to synthesize the two in English Department curricula without sacrificing the integrity of either discipline.

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The program we have developed to achieve these goals reflects the situation and specific needs of our institution. The University of Louisville is a public, urban university of approximately 20,000 general and professional students. Like many public universities across the country it has grown enormously over the past fifteen years and in ways that its English Department was not traditionally prepared to accommodate. Many of Louisville's new students, for example, are open admissions students who formerly would not have been admitted to college. They hold high school diplomas, but very few of them have had the background in reading and writing that was traditionally expected of college students. Some have never written formal papers in high school; very few have recently taken literature surveys; even fewer have done the critical analyses of reading material that freshman English teachers used to assume their students had experienced in high school. Older than traditional college students, many have been employed for years, and they continue to hold jobs and raise families as they attend college. Most are, in other words, less well trained; they usually read much less than moderately motivated traditional college students, and they are often not highly motivated to learn to read and write precisely because exactness in reading and writing has not been emphasized.

This profile of the new student at Louisville accounts for many of the particular and subtle changes in emphasis that have occurred over the past five years in the development of our graduate program in rhetoric and composition. Graduate students in that program are the teachers who have shouldered most of the responsibility for teaching writing to this large number of new students at Louisville, usually about twenty percent of the entering freshman class. They have tutored and taught basic writers in the University's Writing Clinic, which provides supplementary tutoring and course training (in English 100, required of all students who score below a designated level on the ACT and the Department's English Placement Examination) for the majority of the University's basic writers. They do most of the administering and grading in the complex testing program that the Department has developed to regulate the flow of students into different writing courses. And they have gradually become the most active of the composition staff in revamping English 101 to meet the needs of these new students. The basic writing teachers have come to function as the English Department's pedagogical conscience, alerting the composition and literature staffs to the weaknesses of the traditional curriculum in serving non-traditional and poorly prepared students.

Because of the important role they play within the Department, basic writing teachers have helped shape the courses they take as graduate students in the English Department's Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition.

First, they have helped define the integration of rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and pedagogy within the Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition. Second, they have helped define the nature and kind of practical teaching experiences needed to develop the skills required of basic writing teachers as they face new students. Third, they have helped the Department understand that traditional methods of teaching and evaluating writing had to be supplemented by useful strategies and methods growing out of recent composition theory and research—strategies for defining the rhetorical contexts within which basic writers write and more valid and reliable methods of measuring and evaluating growth in writing skill. Fourth, and finally, basic writing teachers who are also graduate students in the rhetoric and composition program are helping the composition staff understand what has recently come to be called the *developmental* or process approach to teaching writing. In fact, the concept of developmental learning serves as an effective way of generalizing all the contributions basic writing teachers have made to the evolving Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition.

Developmental learning must first be distinguished from remedial learning. Developmental describes an approach to teaching that applies generally to all learners. When applied to writing, developmental learning is characterized by six basic principles:

- Teachers are able to make both general and specific approximations of their students' cognitive abilities
- Teachers understand writing as process, as a sequence of interdependent stages in which thinking and writing interact to produce a final product
- Teachers can combine their understanding of students' cognitive abilities and their understanding of the composing process
- Teachers approach the problem of error from an empirical basis and with a systematic methodology that has been drawn from recent research in learning theory—having studied systematically and having understood the patterns of error in student texts, the theories that best explain the reasons behind these patterns of error, and the teaching strategies that can be used to teach students to diminish error naturally, as they learn to make the transition from oral to written language
- Teachers respond to student writing in ways that are similar to the responses that writing would get from different audiences in the real world, that is, bound to and defined by rhetorical considerations that are functional and realistic as well as good preparation for academic discourse
- Teachers and program administrators clearly distinguish between

evaluation for placement and matriculation and *measurement* of student progress, so that students' sometimes dramatic improvement can be taken into account when they fail to meet standards for passing a course and so that writing programs can shape and reshape curricula to reflect the ways basic writers acquire skills.

These developmental principles account for the University of Louisville's approach to training basic writing teachers in its rhetoric and composition doctoral program.

A GENERAL THEORY FOR TRAINING BASIC WRITING TEACHERS

Rhetoric, linguistics, and literature function as core course areas for all graduate students in rhetoric and composition at Louisville. The history, the methods of teaching and analysis, and the subjects of each of these areas are represented by groups of English Department courses. Permeating every graduate course in rhetoric and linguistics are three more general concerns: how these disciplines can help a teacher of writing apply theory to teaching; how these disciplines can draw on information from other disciplines to inform the teaching of composition; and how these disciplines can help potential writing program administrators develop the skills necessary to construct curricula that will serve both basic writers and traditional students. The program was constructed with the following questions in mind: What should basic writing teachers be able to do? What do basic writing teachers need to know? What kinds of practical experience should basic writing teachers have as they complete graduate degrees? I shall now consider each of these questions from three general perspectives—theory and practice, interdisciplinary contributions, and curricular concerns—to establish a foundation for the training of basic writing teachers.

What Should Basic Writing Teachers Be Able To Do?

First, a basic writing teacher must know how to teach developmentally. That means, as I briefly indicated before, knowing how, generally and specifically, to define the cognitive abilities of basic writing classes of different levels and kinds. Accomplishing this end requires background in several related areas of research and theory, most of which are represented in recent composition theory. All the remaining functions are essentially subsumed under this first.

A basic writing teacher must be able to diagnose individual writing problems, usually on several levels at once. A student's problems with

syntax, error, conceptual patterns and organization, and attitude are equally important. Diagnostic and evaluative skills must be developed through both theoretical study in courses and practical experience in administering tests, devising new instruments for placing and evaluating basic writers, and teaching and tutoring basic writers of different backgrounds and abilities.

Basic writing teachers must be able to help construct curricula—to shape courses, supplementary teaching aids, tutorial strategies, and peer workshops and teaching models that will provide basic writers with consistent and appropriate emphases in content and learning strategies.

Almost every basic writing teacher who makes a career commitment to the field will need to conduct empirical studies of writing, the writing process, student behaviors, classroom techniques, and other teachers' methods. These studies may use longitudinal or case-study methodologies, and they will most often be used to measure the success or failure of competing methodologies, to articulate the need for new course materials or emphases, to evaluate the effectiveness of program strategies, and to evaluate teaching.

In many institutions, basic writing teachers take on primary responsibility for creating needed supplementary programs. They may be asked to develop writing centers that provide walk-in tutoring, mini-courses in the writing process, review courses, and diagnostic packages; they may also coordinate peer and professional tutoring programs, individualized learning packages in composition, and traveling workshops for agencies, businesses, and corporations that wish to improve basic writing skills. In these areas basic writing teachers often become administrators who must be familiar with different learning theories and their practical implications, and who must be able to help select materials that are consistent with program philosophy and goals.

Finally, those who become leaders in the basic writing field will increasingly be called upon to teach other teachers of writing, to help traditional English professors who have taught only literature seminars return to composition to develop writing center and clinic staffs who can teach basic writing using a variety of instructional formats and models, and to help regular composition staff learn skills that will enable them to teach non-traditional students.

This very general outline of what basic writing teachers will need to do assumes two basic needs at the Ph.D. level: first, a grasp of theory that can provide a base for comprehensive program planning, teacher training, and professional leadership in a new field and, second, numerous opportunities to apply aspects of that theory to actual programmatic and

pedagogical situations. A basic writing teacher synthesizes disciplinary theories, learning technologies, and pedagogical methods. M.A., M.Ed., or M.A.T. programs in basic writing may be more completely practical and technical, particularly in the study of linguistics and empirical research methods, than a doctoral program.

What Do Basic Writing Teachers Need To Know?

The Composing Process. Above all, basic writing teachers must understand current theories of the composing process. This understanding should result in several teaching skills:

- The ability to develop a conceptual model that can account for the writing habits and behaviors of professional and successful student writers
- The ability to explain the differences among thinking, speaking, and writing—particularly as these differences explain the problems that are experienced by students who are not accustomed to using language in academic or written contexts.
- The ability to intervene in the basic writer's writing process to accommodate it to more effective strategies for directing the processes of prewriting, revising, editing, and proofreading
- The ability to draw from different theoretical models for explaining the writing process and to perceive when cognitive approaches to writing as a particular mode of thought are appropriate and when behavioral approaches to writing as a set of defined and arranged skills are appropriate
- The ability to recognize and analyze writing anxiety and writer's block, and to devise strategies for relieving both
- The ability to examine a series of writings and diagnose both the structural problems that appear in the product and the potential causes of those problems in the student's writing process

A small number of courses in composition research, theory and practice should provide at least a base for developing these skills.

Rhetorical Theory and Practice. Basic writing teachers also require a good deal of training in rhetorical theory and practice. They must be sensitive to the different demands various types of discourse put on inexperienced writers. They must help basic writers establish a sense of audience for their writing since most basic writers are unable to "read" an academic audience's expectations. Showing basic writers, for example, how to include detail or evidence in a piece of writing does nothing to

explain why the detail or evidence is necessary, why most academic readers expect it, and how it functions in helping student writers accomplish their purposes. Finally, basic writing teachers must use formal and informal methods of rhetorical invention to help students discover and use content and structure. Basic writing teachers need model sets of heuristic questions to guide prewriting and more formal sets of procedures to help basic writers arrange their material once they have discovered it and given it preliminary shape. Another small group of courses would provide basic background in these areas of rhetorical theory and practice.

Linguistics. Linguistics, particularly theories and methods of analyzing syntax that are especially relevant to teaching the writing process, should provide the third area in the basic writing teacher's program. Generally, basic writing teachers must first know how to use basic syntactical units and patterns as heuristic devices that will help students shape thoughts on paper. They must also be able to describe deviations from written syntax in jargon-free terms and to teach methods of correction that will enable basic writers to perceive deviations from expected forms with their own eyes. But most important, the teacher of basic writers must be able to "read" disjointed syntax well enough to predict what the writer wanted but failed to express.

Several areas of linguistic research help accomplish these ends. Syntax-as-heuristic-device is represented in recent research on sentence combining, in the work of stylistic critics such as Richard Lanham, Walker Gibson, and Francis Christensen, all of whom develop rhetorical approaches to composition, and in the work of conceptual theorists such as Frank D'Angelo, Linda Flower, and Ross Winterowd, all of whom posit using common or new modes of thought as methods of controlling and directing the flow of sentences and paragraphs.

Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* establishes a base for describing patterns of error. She has developed workable broad categories of patterns of syntactical errors that relate to the basic structure and flow of sentences, and she has provided a systematic and functional method of describing and explaining common usage and surface grammatical errors in basic writers' texts. Both approaches derive from structural and transformational theories of grammar; basic writing teachers require an understanding of both if they are to understand and apply these approaches in their own teaching.

Two additional areas should supplement basic writing teachers' understanding of applied linguistics. As a result of open admissions

policies in many urban public universities, many students who speak English as a second language have entered the colleges. Training in English as a second language, in contrastive linguistics and error analysis, and in sociolinguistics provides a basic writing teacher with both the cultural-linguistic understanding and the empirical-analytical skills to develop more effective writing programs for such students. In addition, all writing teachers should receive training that will provide them with theory and methodology for helping these beginning writers, whether native or foreign speakers of English, who need to make the transition from primarily oral to primarily written cultures. Even students who do not come from oral cultures often experience similar writing problems simply because they are not fluent readers and have not fully perceived or used the technology of formal, written discourse. They are learning new codes, if not totally new languages.

Several types of linguistics courses will help basic writing teachers teach writing skills. Theory courses in structural and transformational grammar should provide models for applied work in syntax. Courses in sociolinguistics, history of the English language, and teaching English as a second language will prepare teachers for the cross-cultural and dialect-interference problems their students have when they write academic English. Finally, one or two courses in which linguistic theory is applied to the writing process, as in recent sentence combining and syntactic measurement research, can help basic writing teachers apply linguistic research to the classroom, for example, to alert inexperienced readers to the cues that fluent readers follow as they decode written language. A course reviewing current discourse theory and research as it pertains to composition can be indispensable in helping writing teachers teach coherence and sensitivity to rhetorical context.

Cognitive Psychology. Basic writing teachers need to be familiar with recent research in cognition in order to apply learning theory to the teaching of composition. General cognitive research of the type done by Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, and Luria might be combined with basic research in psycholinguistics (George Miller, Frank Smith, Kenneth Goodman, Walter Kintsch, and recent work in memory theory) in one bellwether course that would give basic writing teachers a foundation in developmental-cognitive psychology or incorporated in existing rhetoric, composition, and literature courses whenever appropriate. Further work in cognition and writing could then be done in elective courses and independent research for comprehensive examinations and dissertations. Some familiarity with research in cognitive styles, right and left brain

theory, and cognitive mapping can supplement general work in cognition, but these fields, as experimental and new as they are, should be directly applied to the composing process only after careful consideration. But certainly anyone training to teach basic writers should be familiar with the work suggested—and now being conducted—by Janet Emig at Rutgers.

Reading Theory and Practice. Most basic writers are not experienced or skilled readers. Basic writing teachers must know enough reading theory and practice to create workable models of the fluent reading process, and they must be able to diagnose the reading skills of their students. Psycholinguistics provides a consistent and useful model of the reading process, and in its practitioner's use of cloze and miscue-analysis tests, psycholinguistic research has begun to produce practical and relatively accurate methods of diagnosing reading skills. Recent work in composition theory is also helping to shape a composition pedagogy that integrates writing and reading in the composing process. Graduate programs training basic writing teachers need not require particular courses in reading; they should, rather, include segments on psycholinguistic methods such as cloze and miscue-analysis procedures to the reading process in courses in cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, the composing process, and current literary theory.

Literary Theory and Practice. The place of literature in training programs for basic writing teachers has been and will most likely continue to be a controversial issue in the profession. Certainly, extensive and appreciative studies of literature for its own sake are less appropriate for teachers who will be teaching inexperienced readers and writers, most of whom are unable to take the types of objectified stances toward written literature that the academic world requires. The more obvious abuses of literature by specialists who foster highly abstract academic-critical introductions and overly formalist perspectives, however, should not be used as reasons to keep literature and literary theory from the professional training of basic writing teachers. Rather, the English profession must clearly perceive those ways literary study can be a useful part of a basic writing teacher's broader more functional knowledge.

Literature—particularly narrative literature—may prove to be the most appropriate reading material for basic writers from primarily oral cultures. Stories drawing on basic human themes, well-taught, provide basic writers with an effective transition from writing about personal experience to writing academic-informative and analytical prose in the

highly objectified manner called for in most college courses. Basic writing teachers, familiar with developmental learning and current composition theory, may be best prepared to broaden the profession's approach to literature, to make it an effective basis for learning to read and write as well as the underpinning of refined forms of cultural criticism.

In addition, two perspectives on literature should prove useful in training basic writing teachers to use literature effectively in these functional contexts. First, current discourse theory should help basic writing teachers understand the different stances required of readers as they read different types of discourse, and to understand how these different stances affect writers who wish to produce a particular type of discourse. Rhetorical considerations of audience and purpose, as they have recently been treated in work by James Kinneavy, James Britton, Walter Ong, Wayne Booth, and current re-applications of classical rhetorical criticism in the work of critics such as Edward Corbett, Richard McKeon, and others can help basic writing teachers mark the general boundaries of discourse and, subsequently, lead students to more subtle and specific perceptions of audience and purpose. Literature, in this more general context, becomes another type of discourse, with its own intrinsic definitions and functions, useful as a means of contrast to expressive, informative (referential), and persuasive discourse.

Current literary theory, however, provides a second and even more potentially useful perspective on literature. A great deal of current literary theory can contribute to a writing teacher's understanding of what Wolfgang Iser terms the "act of reading." This perspective, combined with psycholinguistic reading theory, provides a more precise description of what actually happens as we read than new or traditional rhetorical criticism with their emphases on analysis of the internal features of a literary work. The act or process of reading literature has pedagogical implications of various kinds for basic writing teachers who wish to explain and use certain writing techniques with their students. Indeed, the current literary theorists' attention to the processes of readers—the effects of the text and the author-reader transactions that surround and permeate the text—is beginning to provide understandings as potentially useful to writing teachers as recent researches into the composing processes of writers.

Literary understanding, to summarize, can be a potentially effective way of selecting and approaching reading material in a basic writing class; it can provide useful insights into reading theory; and it can become an extremely useful way of integrating writing and reading in the teaching of the composing process.

Basic Learning Patterns in Disciplines Other than English. Basic writing teachers are usually the first to confront the basic writer's lack of orientation to conventions of academic discourse. These conventions are not shared or even recognized by students who come to college from predominantly oral backgrounds. Basic writers from oral backgrounds have problems that have both practical and theoretical implications for any basic writing program. Above all, the lack of shared expectations hinders basic writers as they attempt to imagine the audience and its expectations when they write for college courses; as a result, complex rhetorical problems compound the basic writer's structural and surface problems. The lack of shared conventions also creates attitude and motivational problems for basic writers. Learning to write analytical, objectified, and abstract academic prose is characterized by endless mystery and disappointment for students who do not understand why particular conventions, skills, and styles are expected in college writing.

Basic writing teachers who have done research in cognition, linguistics, rhetoric, and discourse theory will be prepared for these problems on a general, theoretical level. But they will have to have these cognate areas supplemented by practical inquiry into how other disciplines shape writing assignments, the kinds of audiences and purposes they implicitly or explicitly construct for these assignments, and the expectations they have about student writing when they evaluate it. This research should be translated into strategies for preparing basic writers for entry into academic worlds of discourse.

Aside from concerns with these specifically rhetorical matters, research into the methods used by other disciplines as they construct writing exercises should include some analysis of learning models in those disciplines. Do the social sciences incorporate case study and quantitative methods in their exercises? Do art classes apply processes of learned visual perception and representation in their writing assignments? Is the scientific method applied to writing laboratory reports and analyses in the natural sciences? Even general answers to these questions would help basic writing teachers construct particular structural models for teaching composition, and develop heuristics for inventing and revising that would enable their students to use these structural paradigms in their writing.

General familiarity in these six general areas—composition theory, rhetorical theory and practice, applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, reading theory and practice, and literary theory—combined with practical research into writing as it is assigned in other disciplines, would serve as general background for the basic writing teacher's more specialized research and writing toward the close of a Ph.D. program, carried out in

preparing for examinations and in conducting research for dissertations. This more specialized research can be made practical and specific as well as theoretically consistent by a component that has traditionally not been given formal status in most English Ph.D. programs—supervised practice in teaching and administration, preferably including supervised teaching internships and pedagogical research.

What Kinds of Practical Experience Should Basic Writing Teachers Have?

Theoretical and practical research of the types already described must be combined with supervised teaching and administrative experience if basic writing teachers are to take on administrative, teaching, and teacher-training functions in English departments that serve basic writers. Several kinds of supervised activities are required to provide this experience.

First, student teachers should do a large amount of supervised basic writing instruction using a variety of instructional formats. They should have first-hand experience with workshop classes, tutorial methods, small-group work, self-paced instructional materials and individualized conferences.

Second, they should have supervised administrative experience that will prepare them to develop and evaluate basic writing programs. This aspect of practical preparation should include applied work in developing curriculum, selecting and testing course materials, administering collaborative learning centers where more advanced students help less-prepared students, and measuring and evaluating student writing for both placement and advanced placement purposes.

Both the teaching and administration should be carried out, whenever possible, in the types of systems or institutions—secondary, junior and community college, and college and university—where the teacher intends to develop a career. Obviously, this arrangement for practical work during graduate training suggests a broadened concept of how English departments use teaching and research assistantships and fellowships, and it assumes the gradual development of supervised teaching internships in local and regional secondary schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges. In addition, to evaluate these work experiences, English departments will develop more subtle and precise methods of measuring the development of teaching and administrative skills than they have traditionally used.

TRAINING BASIC WRITING TEACHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

Is it possible for an English Ph.D. program to cover so many areas, both theoretical and practical, and still retain the most important of its traditional humanistic goals? The curricular problems suggested in this question are central to the entire post-secondary English profession, not simply to the question of teacher training. Current English studies have already begun the process of examining the knowledge of other disciplines. To deny the presence of this knowledge and its influence is to deny the obvious need English departments have to serve non-majors and non-traditional students. The following outlines the English Department at Louisville's approach to synthesizing interdisciplinary and traditional areas of study.

Course Requirements

At Louisville, students who enter the English Ph.D. program in Rhetoric and Composition receive general training in composition theory, applied linguistics, reading theory, cognitive psychology and learning theory, rhetoric, and literature by taking a required number of courses in each of three general areas: Rhetoric and Pedagogy, Linguistics and Reading, and Literature.

Rhetoric and Pedagogy. Each student must take at least three semester courses in this area. Rhetoric courses include a general survey of the history of rhetorical theory and its pedagogical applications, a basic practicum in which composition and rhetorical theory are applied to the teaching of English 101 at the University of Louisville, a survey and application of rhetorical theory to the teaching of literature, and a research-based course in which current rhetorical methods of examining student writing and their writing processes are applied to actual situations in University of Louisville writing classes. These regularly offered rhetoric courses are supplemented by rhetorical topics courses, usually offered once a year, in which rhetorical theory is applied to different problems in the teaching of writing and reading. Topics have included "rhetoric and the reading process" and "current rhetorical problems in teaching composition."

The area is filled out with composition pedagogy courses in literature and language, which are offered at least once a year and at least once each summer. These courses encourage students to apply theory to practice by developing teaching units, sets of teaching strategies, goals and objectives that are theoretically consistent, and writing exercises and assignments

that are consistent with this current theory. Pedagogy that has been based upon current theory in composition and rhetoric, then, becomes one of the program's primary means of showing teachers how what they know about reading literature can be put to use in basic writing classes.

Linguistics and Reading. Students must take two semester courses in this area. They may choose from a wide variety of theoretical or practical linguistics courses from either the English Department or the linguistics program. Most potential basic writing teachers take applied courses in syntax, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. Students in rhetoric and composition must also have taken advanced undergraduate courses in English grammar and history of the English language before entering the program, or they must complete them during their first year in residence.

Literature. Every student in the program must take three Ph.D.-level literature seminars. The program encourages that these courses be broad in conception, theoretical in approach, and appropriate for students who will be adapting literature to the needs of the writing classroom, and to writers and readers of varying abilities and experience. Coupled with the occasional use of literary examples in rhetoric, pedagogy, and linguistics courses, the literature seminars provide students with an understanding of how literary discourse functions in the larger universe of written discourse.

So far, this discussion of course requirements illustrates how the synthesis of composition, rhetoric, linguistics, reading, and literature becomes part of a student's curriculum. Cognitive psychology and learning theory are usually covered as part of the theory offered in rhetoric and linguistics courses, or they are covered in one or both of the elective courses that a rhetoric and composition student takes.

Examinations

Integration and application are key words in explaining the examinations that are given at the beginning and end of course work in the rhetoric and composition doctoral program. Students are asked to prepare by integrating insights and methods from at least two of the three course areas—rhetoric and pedagogy, linguistics and reading, and literature—and they are expected to apply what they know to the solving of problems in the teaching of composition. Individual examination questions either combine theory and practice or deal with content and application separately, usually according to the goals of a particular student.

The program's synthesis of traditional English teaching skills in literature and rhetoric and these new areas enable these teachers to keep the discipline's traditional goals intact as they improvise new techniques drawn from some of the newer disciplines. The dual emphasis on integration of different disciplines and their methodologies and on their practical application to composition teaching methods helps basic writing teachers draw on several disciplines in order to solve new kinds of teaching problems. But, above all, the emphasis on integrating theory and method encourages graduate students to consider problems of application—in the classroom, on the job, or in planning a course or unit.

Dissertation Options

The rhetoric and composition program at Louisville includes two dissertation options. The first asks the student to research and write a traditional-length scholarly-critical dissertation in which some aspect of current rhetorical, linguistic, or literary theory is applied to problems that are common in the composition classroom. One student who is doing this type of dissertation has drawn on contemporary literary theory and psycholinguistics to develop a theoretical model describing the fluent reading process. She has then applied this model—using the case study method—to an examination of the reading processes of six fluent readers as they read John Fowles' *Daniel Martin*. The dissertation will close with a chapter exploring the implications of the results of these case studies for the college-level composition and literature class.

The second dissertation option is more strictly empirical in nature and purpose. Students who choose to do it are required to produce two 10,000-12,000 word monographs: an essay in which either rhetoric, linguistics, or literature—or some combination of two or three of these areas—is used to construct a theoretical model that explains a particular teaching unit or classroom approach; and a research essay—similar to the National Council of Teachers of English research monographs—in which a relevant sample of students from an identifiable student population, secondary or college, would serve as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching unit or classroom approach that had been defined in the first monograph.

Finally, the two monographs are to be used to produce a public teaching demonstration, preferably done on videotape and examined and discussed by the student and his or her dissertation committee. The teaching demonstration enables the student to transfer whatever had been learned in researching and writing the monographs to an actual teaching situation, and it enables the committee to function as an informed group

of pedagogical critics, able to evaluate the student's teaching according to the terms set up in the monographs.

Basic writing teachers will probably benefit most by choosing the second option. It enables them to conduct interdisciplinary research in composing the theoretical monograph, to apply that interdisciplinary theory to a particular group of basic writers and their teachers—perhaps in the University's Writing Clinic or developmental English 100 classes—while doing the research monograph, and to illustrate the most significant implications of this theory and research in developing the teaching demonstration. Such a series of projects ought to give career basic writing teachers the opportunity to study systematically the disciplines they will need to know something about, the students they will subsequently teach, and the teaching methods they will later use.

Practical Experience

I have previously mentioned that Louisville's composition program affords graduate students who wish to emphasize research and teaching in basic writing many opportunities to work in different developmental programs. Tutoring of unprepared writers, in one-to-one and workshop formats, is available in English 100 and the Writing Clinic. Trained graders are always needed for placement and other tests, and this training always includes work with approaches to measurement and evaluation—holistic, primary-trait, and others—that are based on current research. And, of course, there are opportunities for a variety of teaching experiences in the regular and advanced composition programs, where curricular changes that are based on current composition research either have been established or are undergoing experimentation.

The doctoral program in rhetoric and composition also offers students the opportunity to participate in several types of administrative and research internships as they complete coursework, examinations, and dissertations. These include year-long positions as assistant directors of composition, as research assistants in rhetoric, and as directors of the Writing Clinic. Each of these positions is supervised, but a great deal of autonomy is given to interns to help them develop independent administrative and decision-making skills. These internships provide practical experience beyond that provided by the program's regular teaching assistantships, clinic tutoring jobs, part-time composition teaching positions, and part-time administrative jobs. The English Department hopes, over the next year, to supplement these University internships with internships of similar kinds at regional community colleges, four-year colleges, and high schools.

Students are given credit or remuneration for internships. The Department is now arranging for a block of independent-study credit—probably up to fifteen hours—to be available for students as they incorporate intern work in the overall graduate program. These hours will most likely count toward the total number of hours normally granted for dissertation research, but not as Ph.D. coursework. Particularly able students, especially those carrying out independent and original research during their intern period, will receive tuition remission for their work.

Other students have been and will continue to be paid on part-time rates for their intern work. Holders of University Fellowships, for example, who are enrolled in the rhetoric and composition doctoral program are now allowed to receive pay for teaching one course. Such teaching, done under a composition program advisor's supervision, will count as a teaching internship although the student will not receive academic credit for the teaching. Traditional Graduate Teaching Assistant work will continue to account for all or part of some students' intern experiences.

In every instance, these internships will be located in programs and schools where non-traditional and open admissions students regularly attend. These programs and schools will require careful placement and competency testing programs, will include both developmental and regular composition classes, and will require reliable and valid means of course and program evaluation. In other words, every internship would be a potentially ideal opportunity for basic writing teachers to try out and improve upon what they had already been studying and researching in their regular program requirements.

Evaluation

Generally students have responded positively to the Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition at Louisville. The opportunities for interdisciplinary study and for applied work in composition and rhetoric are highly praised. Students who have held administrative internships have been very successful in the job market because of their practical experience. Two are assistant professors in developmental programs at the University of South Carolina at Aiken; another obtained an assistant professorship specializing in composition and rhetoric at Ohio State University; a fourth was recently hired as an instructor in Ohio State's composition program. A fifth is running a writing program at a small liberal arts college in Missouri, and a sixth has a full-time position at a local junior college. No rhetoric and composition student who has seriously looked for a teaching job in an English department has failed to find one. Many

other students already hold full-time positions and have enrolled in the program to advance themselves professionally—at institutions such as Western Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, Kentucky Wesleyan, and Jefferson Community College in Louisville.

Initial negative response focused upon the need to combine traditional and innovative content areas and theory and application in comprehensive examinations. After some initial tough going, however, the Department has developed a consistent policy for developing examination questions that integrate knowledge of particular areas of rhetoric, composition, linguistics, and pedagogy with the traditional language and literature areas.

Louisville's Ph.D. program probably will not suit several types of basic writing teachers. Those teachers who wish a less theoretical and broad-ranging program, one that would enable them to focus upon a particular research philosophy or educational technology, might be more comfortable in programs with more strictly linguistic or pedagogical focuses. Those who, in contrast, might prefer an even larger array of rhetoric, linguistics, and pedagogy courses might be served best by larger and more traditional departments of rhetoric, linguistics, or pedagogy. And many basic writing teachers who wish to teach on secondary or community college levels without involving themselves in curricular development or administration might best be served in applied master's programs in English or education. All these are, of course, legitimate professional options, and they are best carried out in programs with more specialized missions.

But for those potential English teachers who wish to enter the profession at a time when the ability to teach basic writing is important at almost every level of the secondary and college curriculum, Louisville's Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition should help them develop the breadth of knowledge and the practical skill necessary to meet the needs of program development and individual basic writing students. Basic writing teachers, theoretically and practically trained, might then be able to show the profession how to serve both traditional and non-traditional students simply because they will have integrated new disciplines that are related to the language and learning problems of basic writers with the knowledge of literature and language that has been traditional to English departments.

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Richard C. Gebhardt

TRAINING BASIC WRITING TEACHERS AT A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

BACKGROUND

In *Teaching Basic Skills in College*, Barbara Quint Gray and Virginia B. Slaughter note that "the phrase 'basic writing skills' designates a spectrum of ability that can be divided into three broad categories," ranging from "the semicoherent, misspelled, syntactically fractured first attempts of marginally literate high school educated adults," to writing that is "grammatical most of the time although it may retain some lapses" and that "exhibits the writer's ability to establish a topic and stick to it, to create sensible paragraph divisions, and to produce an orderly essay."¹ Generally, basic writing students at Findlay College fall in the middle of Gray and Slaughter's spectrum of ability:

Writing at this level may retain some grammatical errors, but they should not be as pervasive or as disorienting as those at the first level. Sentence structure problems are likely to consist of fragments and run-on sentences rather than the nonsyntactic structures that appear in the work of less skilled writers. . . .

Development of thought in Level 2 writing may be quite disjointed at the outset. Writers may start off with a sentence that looks as if it intends to establish a topic but is too vaguely expressed to establish the topic with much certainty. And they may abandon that topic altogether. . . . Such writers also evince little understanding of the convention of paragraphing and remain unfamiliar with the traditional rhetorical modes, continuing to present highly egocentric writing which evolves by a private logic of associations. . . . However, their impromptu passages may continue, albeit

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¹"Writing," in Alice Stewart Trillin and associates, *Teaching Basic Skills in College* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), pp. 16 and 19. Gray and Slaughter provide more detail and examples for each of these ends of the spectrum.

repetitively, for several hundred words, suggesting the Level 2 writers' conviction that they have something to say and that they can say it in writing. (p. 18)

Our students have a wide range of writing abilities. By and large, though, basic writing papers at Findlay College do not look like the most extreme examples in Mina P. Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* or like the paper with forty errors in two hundred words that David Bartholomae discusses in "The Study of Error."² To put it in Shaughnessy's terms, even though some of the students lack the command of language they need to "bring off the consolidations that are called for in writing," the most typical problems of Findlay's basic writers are lack of writing experience, lack of confidence in academic situations, and lack of positive motivation to learn.³

Much of this lack of academic confidence and motivation stems from reading problems and inadequate study strategies,⁴ from unproductive academic habits and expectations fostered by former schooling,⁵ and from the outright uncertainty many of Findlay's basic writers feel about attending college at all. But problems of attitude and motivation also reflect, as Andrea Lunsford has pointed out, the connection "between poorly developed writing skills and poor self-image, lack of confidence, and lower levels of cognitive development."⁶ Cognitive limitations, for instance, combined with limited writing experience, can interfere with student ability to revise papers⁷ and to write for other people. And so difficulty moving beyond "writer-based" drafts⁸ is a significant problem for Findlay College's basic writers.

²David Bartholomae, "The Study of Error," *College Composition and Communication*, 31 (October 1980): 259-260.

³Mina Shaughnessy, *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing* (New York: Oxford, 1977), pp. 73, 79, 85, and 124-125.

⁴In "Reading," Margaret M. Waters suggests the influence deficiencies in reading ability and study habits can have on student attitude and performance. *Teaching Basic Skills in College*, ed. Trillin, especially pp. 91-95, and 134-137.

⁵See Richard Meeth and Robert Pitcher, *Overcoming Underachievement in College* (Arlington, Va: Studies in Higher Education, 1980), pp. 30-33.

⁶Andrea Lunsford, "The Content of Basic Writers' Essays," *College Composition and Communication*, 31 (October 1980): 284. Also see Lunsford's "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer," *College English*, 41 (September 1979): 38-46.

⁷See Shaughnessy, p. 80.

⁸See Linda Flower, "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing," *College English*, 41 (September 1979): 19-37.

Cognitive ability also bears on student performance in academic assignments requiring abstraction and generalization from written materials. When Findlay's basic writers have to summarize material, respond to main points in articles, or compare pieces of nonfiction, they exhibit special problems. To use Thomas J. Farrell's words, they "read with cognitive tunnel-vision." That is, students judge details to be important because of the new information they contain, and so "they do not effectively differentiate between main ideas and supporting details."⁹ As a result, summaries and related assignments often overlook or underemphasize key ideas, treat minor or supporting points as if they were theses, or completely miss important similarities or differences between articles.

Findlay College's basic writers, then, are most prominently marked by their lack of experience with the writing process and with the need to use the process to communicate to others, by their lack of academic confidence and motivation, and by difficulties abstracting and generalizing from written materials. Thus, Findlay's basic writing program tends to follow the second option Lawrence Kasden outlines in "An Introduction to Basic Writing": "While the types of writing problems that warrant the concern of the basic writing teacher at one school may primarily . . . be surface ones—syntax, grammar, standard dialect—at another school the basic writing teacher may start a course with more rhetorical concerns, such as organization, development, coherence, audience. . . ."¹⁰

The college administers a placement test (brief samples of narrative and summary writing, the College Board's Test of Logical Relationships, and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test) in order to determine which students need English 100 before they take the required English 102, College Writing I. English 100, Writing and Reading Review (and English 101, a second-semester continuation for some students) is a four semester-hour course stressing writing process, the need to communicate to audiences, and the fact that writing and reading are reciprocal parts of written communication. The course is organized into units based on a number of the "basic thought patterns" Mina Shaughnessy recommended: this happened, this is the look of something, this is like or unlike this, this caused this, and this is what someone said (pp. 257-269). Sentence

⁹Thomas J. Farrell, "Developing Literacy," *Journal of Basic Writing*, 2 (Fall/Winter 1978): 42.

¹⁰Lawrence Kasden, Introduction in *Basic Writing: Essays for Teachers, Researchers, and Administrators*, ed. Lawrence Kasden and Daniel Hoerber (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1980): p. 7.

combining and other sentence-level work fit within this organizational structure, much of it taking place in lab sessions in the writing center. The culminating three-week unit on writing summaries probably is English 100's most direct attack on the common student need to build powers of generalization and abstraction. But throughout the semester, students also work with the reading teacher to locate main ideas, find organizing relationships, identify author assumptions, and draw inferences using nonfiction materials that serve as examples and models in the writing instruction.

Writing and Reading Review is the backbone of Findlay College's basic writing program. It has been designed as direct preparation for College Writing I, a course in which about two-thirds of the grade hinges on understanding, summarizing, analyzing, comparing, and drawing supporting evidence from nonfiction prose. Both courses are supported by a writing center staffed by undergraduate assistants who work with students in group lab sessions and individual conferences. The writing center also provides referral services for students who come for help with assigned papers in many courses or who are sent by teachers who stress writing in their courses.

In order to meet the needs of these formal and informal programs, Findlay College's efforts to train teachers of basic writers are aimed at several different groups:

- English faculty members teaching Writing Skills Review and College Writing I.

- Faculty members who stress writing in courses throughout the college.

- Undergraduate assistants who work in the writing center.

And these efforts range from a course in the teaching of writing and a less rigorous tutor training course, to faculty development workshops and informal staff discussion of useful articles on composition and the teaching of writing.

TRAINING WRITING ASSISTANTS

Teaching of Writing Course

Most undergraduate writing assistants take English 345, Teaching of Writing, an advanced composition course for students interested in teaching—elementary education majors, prospective high school teachers in English and other areas that stress writing, and students preparing to work as assistants in the writing center. This course evolves a bit from

what I laid out in "Balancing Theory with Practice" each time I teach it.¹¹ But several consistent threads have run through it: the need for frequent writing in composition classes, the importance of audience and the usefulness of having students write for their peers, the fact that writing is a dynamic process of discovery as well as communication, the importance of positive instruction by teachers who themselves are writers, and the value of helping students become their own teachers. Consistent, too, has been the assumption that such ideas should not be presented as abstract subjects removed from the act of writing. And so, as I wrote several years ago, readings, class discussions, and guest presentations "cannot be allowed to become ends in themselves."

They are grist for the writers' mills; they are substance for papers. To guarantee that students think of their readings as a prelude to writing, I ask them to maintain a looseleaf notebook with sections for "Writing Tips," "Teaching Tips," and "Reactions." I also ask students to write papers... that require them to develop their own perspectives on ideas contained in the readings. (p.140)

At present, Teaching of Writing requires students to keep a notebook of information and responses, and to write a series of five hundred word summary-reaction papers on important readings. Students also write a reaction report on their observations during a practicum experience in the writing center. Throughout the course, students meet in small writing groups to discuss their own writing. And they prepare three 1500 word papers developing limited topics within these general areas:

- What writing teachers should know about the writing process
- What teachers should know about rhetoric
- A productive climate for writing instruction
- Using writing process or rhetoric in the kind of classes I will teach
- The basic writer
- Sentence combining.

Those requirements weave into a curriculum that highlights nine subjects. During each of these units, students read between three and five

¹¹ For a description of the underlying philosophy and original structure of this course, see Richard C. Gebhardt, "Balancing Theory with Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers," *College Composition and Communication*, 28 (May 1977): 134-140.

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Sommers, Nancy. "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Writers." *English Language Arts Bulletin*, Winter/Spring 1980.

Winterowd, W. Ross. "Pre-Writing." In *The Contemporary Writer*. Harcourt, 1975.

Rhetorical Forces of Audience and Purpose (Two Weeks)

Ede, Lisa. "On Audience in Composition." *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1979.

Flower, Linda. "Writer-Based Prose." *College English*, Sept. 1979.

_____, and John Hayes. "The Cognition of Discovery." *College Composition and Communication*, Feb. 1980.

Knoblauch, C. H. "Intentionality in the Writing Process." *College Composition and Communication*, May, 1980.

Tibbetts, A. M. "Rhetorical Stance Revisited." *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1975.

Ulanov, Barry. "The Relevance of Rhetoric." *English Journal*. April, 1966.

Walshe, R. D. "A Model of the Writing Situation." *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 1977.

Writing Processes, Rhetoric, and Young Writers (One Week)

Clay, Maria. "Exploring with a Pencil." *Theory into Practice*, Dec. 1977.

Douglas, Wallace. "On Value in Children's Writing." In *English for the Junior High Years*. Ed. Stephen Dunning. NCTE, 1969.

Fichteneau, Robert. "Teaching Rhetorical Concepts." *Elementary*

English, March 1972.

Graves, Donald. "Let's Get Rid of the Welfare Mess in the Teaching of Writing." *Language Arts*, Winter 1975.

Larson, Richard. "Rhetorical Writing in the Elementary School." *Elementary English*, Dec. 1971.

Petty, Walter. "The Writing of Young Children." In Cooper and Odell. Smith, Frank. "The Language Arts and the Learner's Mind." *Language Arts*, Feb. 1979.

***Productive Climates for Writing Instruction* (Two Weeks)**

Arbur, Rosemarie. "The Student-Teacher Conference." *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 1977.

Gebhardt, Richard. "Teamwork and Feedback." *College English*, Sept., 1980.

Gray, Barbara and Virginia Slaughter. "Methodology," a section in "Writing." In *Teaching Basic Skills in College*. Ed. Alice Trillin. Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Koch, Carl, and James Brazil. "The Comfort Zone." In *Strategies For Teaching the Composition Process*. NCTE, 1978.

Moffett, James. "Learning to Write by Writing." In *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Murray, Donald. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Houghton Mifflin, 1968. Especially sections 22, 23, 27, 33, 34.

Welch, Jack. "On the Importance of Cohesiveness in Writing Classes." *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1973.

***Grammar and the Sentence* (One Week +)**

Calderonello, Alice, and Thomas Klein. "Grammar on the Firing Line: Its Relationship to Composition." *English Education*, Dec. 1979.

Collins, James. "Dialect Variation and Writing." *English Journal*, Nov. 1979.

Cooper, Charles. "An Outline for Writing Sentence Combining Exercises." *English Journal*, Jan. 1973.

D'Eloia, Sarah. "The Uses—and Limits—of Grammar." *Journal of Basic Writing*, Spring/Summer 1977.

Gorrell, Robert. "Usage as Rhetoric." *College Composition and Communication*, Feb. 1977.

"Students' Right to Their Own Language." A Special issue of *College Composition and Communication*, Fall, 1974.

***The Basic College Writer* (One Week +)**

Bartholomae, David. "The Study of Error." *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1980.

Carkeet, David. "Understanding Syntactic Errors in Remedial Writing." *College English*, March 1977.

Halsted, Isabella. "Putting Error in Its Place." *Journal of Basic Writing*. Spring, 1975.

Linn, Bill. "Psychological Variants of Success." *College English*, April 1978.

Lunsford, Andrea. "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer." *College English*, Sept. 1979.

_____. "The Content of Basic Writers' Essays." *College Composition*, Oct. 1980.

Shaughnessy, Mina. "Diving In." *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1976.

_____. "Basic Writing." In *Teaching Composition: Ten Bibliographic Essays*. Ed. Gary Tate. Texas Christian, 1976.

Reading and Writing (One Week)

Emig, Janet. The articles listed under Writing Processes.

Ginn, Dorothy. "Composing an Abstract." *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 1976.

Sternglass, Marilyn, "Composition Teacher as Reading Teacher." *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 1976.

_____. "Sentence Combining and the Reading of Sentences." *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1980.

Waters, Margaret. "Reading." In Trillin.

Wresch, William. "What Reading Research Tells Us about Writing." *English Language Arts Bulletin*, Winter/Spring 1980.

The Paragraph and Coherence (One Week)

Cohan, Carol. "Writing Effective Paragraphs." *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 1976.

Irmscher, William. "Teaching Structure." In *Teaching Expository Writing*. Holt, 1979.

Stalter, William. "A Sense of Structure." *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 1978.

Stern, Arthur. "When Is a Paragraph?" *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1976.

Winterowd, W. Ross. "The Grammar of Coherence." *College English*, May, 1970.

Making, Responding to, and Grading Assignments (Two Weeks)

Coleman, Mary. "Individualizing Instruction through Written Comments." *Language Arts*, March 1980.

- Cooper, Charles. "Measuring Growth in Writing." *English Journal*, March 1975.
- Hoffman, Eleanor, and John Shifsky. "Designing Writing Assignments." *English Journal*, Dec. 1977.
- Judy, Stephen. "Writing for the Here and Now." *English Journal*, Jan. 1973.
- Kelley, Lou. "Is Competent Copyreading a Violation of the Students' Right to Their Own Language?" *College Composition and Communication*, Oct. 1974.
- Larson, Richard. "Teaching Before We Judge." *The Leaflet*, 1967.

This curriculum does not look like a program exclusively for basic writing teachers—certainly not like the graduate course Constance J. Gefvert outlines in "Training Teachers of Basic Writing."¹² But Teaching of Writing does address the needs of Findlay's basic writers for instruction that emphasizes the process of writing for other people about academic subjects. It also reflects the fact that Findlay College is a small, undergraduate institution which can support, at best, an annual teaching-of-writing course for writing assistants and prospective teachers of the language arts. For instance, unit three, "Writing Processes, Rhetoric, and Young Writers," is important in a course in which up to half of a given class may be elementary education majors. But there are connections between writing difficulties of basic writers and their experiences in earlier language learning. So this unit is in no way inappropriate for students who later will teach high school or college writing. Similarly, unit nine, "Making, Responding to, and Grading Assignments," fits into the preprofessional training of future school teachers. It also helps writing assistants work with students who have difficulty understanding their assignments, and it helps them understand the kinds of comments teachers make when they refer student work to the Writing Center.

Typically, each unit of the course opens with an overview presentation in which I suggest the emphasis of the unit and orient class members to the items on that unit's reading list. After that, students read assigned articles, recording key ideas and responses in their notebooks, and they prepare summary-reaction pieces. Frequently, students exchange these summary pieces for "practice marking"—each student adding comments

¹² *Basic Writing*, ed. Kasden and Hoerber, pp. 119-140.

along lines dictated by the grading guidelines of College Writing I.¹³ And periodically, papers are duplicated for class discussion. Students also work on longer, more wide-ranging papers that integrate their personal perspectives, their experiences in the writing center, and information from several articles. A great deal of class time is spent discussing student writing, though there also is some discussion of key readings—their ideas and their effectiveness as pieces of writing.

To a large extent, *Teaching of Writing* illustrates the form-follows-function principle. Since college and high school writers need experience with the writing process, the course demands much writing and re-writing. And since a major problem that basic writing teachers will face is student difficulty reading, understanding, and writing about nonfiction prose, the course requires close reading and the writing of summaries. Similarly, the course employs classroom techniques (such as the questioning strategy outlined in the next section) that help students understand assigned articles and, at the same time, give students ways to help their future clients read more effectively. Finally, since writing instructors, whether assistants in the writing center or future high school teachers, must have a real feel of what it is like to write for a genuine audience, *Teaching of Writing* emphasizes small, collaborative groups in which students

...practice the concepts of feedback, diagnosis, and prescription about what they are reading. In these groups, students learn about audience definition and audience response, and about how it feels to have a key point missed by readers interested in little but well-placed commas. In these groups, students come to understand the importance of cooperation, the power of peer pressure, the difficulty of opening up to a critic, the bitterness of a writer under attack. And all of these things reinforce what the students are reading and writing about and thereby help students prepare to be effective writing teachers. (p. 140)

Less Formal Training of Writing Assistants

Even though Findlay College offers a formal course in the teaching of writing, some writing assistants cannot take the course, or they cannot

¹³In the future, I plan to handle practice marking so as to follow Kenneth Bruffee's idea of a "progressive process of peer criticism" through which students learn to "distinguish three types of analytical readings: objective, rhetorically descriptive analysis; evaluative or judgmental response; and reaction to the issues and point of view developed in a paper." "Staffing and Operating Peer-Tutoring Writing Centers," *Basic Writing*, ed. Kasden and Hoeber, p. 148.

take it before they begin work in the writing center. Such students usually are majors in English, communications, elementary education, or bilingual studies; they have done well in College Writing I and then have taken additional work in College Writing II, Advanced Composition, or English Language. They begin working in the writing center in controlled situations in which they can observe writing teachers and more experienced assistants, provide general reader-feedback on drafts, and begin to develop experience working with students.

In the semester before they start to work, these students spend some time in the writing center and read a pamphlet that explains the operation of the center and anticipates questions new assistants are likely to have. They also read the sound, non-technical advice Donald M. Murray offers about "The Writing Teacher's Seven Skills" and "The Techniques of Teaching Writing" in *A Writer Teaches Writing* (Houghton Mifflin, 1968). Then the new assistants turn to a selected group of articles which they read and discuss in staff meetings while they work in the writing center.

Feedback and the Climate of Conferences:

Moffett, James. "Learning to Write by Writing."

Arbur, Rosemarie. "The Student-Teacher Conference."

Kelly, Lou. "Is Competent Copyreading a Violation of the Students' Right to Their Own Language."

Linn, Bill. "Psychological Variants of Success."

Problems in Student Writing Processes:

Flower, Linda and John Hayes. "The Cognition of Discovery."

Sommers, Nancy. "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Writers."

Grammar and Error:

Gorrell, Robert. "Usage as Rhetoric."

Calderonello, Alice and Thomas Klein. "Grammar on the Firing Line."

Bartholomae, David. "The Study of Error."

Paragraph and Structure:

Cohan, Carol. "Writing Effective Paragraphs."

Irmscher, William. "Teaching Structure."

In order to help new assistants understand such readings and learn an effective teaching strategy they can use with clients who have poor reading comprehension, I have students reread carefully a critical few

paragraphs in an article, instead of asking for a general discussion. Then I have the students ask *me* questions about the passage—an exercise that stimulates their critical thinking about the article and gives me a chance to reveal my own thinking about ideas in the article and to talk about related ideas and resources. Finally, I have the assistants put aside their copies of the article while I ask questions that require the assistants to probe their memories, form generalizations, apply the reading to experiences they are having in the writing center, and relate the selected passage to other parts of the article and to other things they have been reading.¹⁴

Staff meetings also focus on what assistants have observed from their work in the writing center. Here, the effort is to let people talk through their experiences, sharing insights and approaches and profiting from the broader background of writing teachers and more experienced assistants. Other parts of staff meetings are given to role playing and discussion about how various assistants and teachers would approach specific writing problems and selected student papers.

TRAINING FACULTY MEMBERS

English Faculty Members

Professional discussions about the training or re-training of English faculty members to teach writing frequently focus on the kind of teachers Robert Lyons has described: “senior members of the department who have not taught writing for a number of years. These faculty members are now teaching composition because shrinking budgets and low enrollments have reduced both the staff and the number of electives in the English department. . . .”¹⁵ In a department like this—a department in which, to use the words of Thomas Bonner, Jr., “suddenly everyone has to teach composition”—faculty training is quite a problem. For training efforts must begin with rock-bottom issues of attitude and motivation. As Bonner puts it: “teaching composition must be established as a common objective of the whole department,” faculty members “must be convinced that a comprehensive approach to teaching composition will help both themselves and the department,” and “the department must identify

¹⁴This approach is a modification of the “reciprocal questioning” strategy developed by Anthony Manzo and John Sherk and recommended as a way to increase reading comprehension and cognitive ability in Deanna Martin and others, *The Learning Center: A Comprehensive Model for Colleges and Universities* (Kansas City: University of Missouri, 1977; ERIC: ED 162 294).

¹⁵Robert Lyons, “Faculty Development through Professional Collaboration,” *Writing Program Administration*, 4 (Winter 1980): 13.

specific skills for each level of undergraduate instruction so that the nature of the job becomes clearly defined.”¹⁶

Happily, professional development work in writing at Findlay College does not need to begin at this level. The six full-time faculty members (a professor and three associate professors of English, all tenured, an English instructor, and an assistant professor of reading) all teach developmental courses and recognize the importance of this teaching to the college, to their own careers, and, most importantly, to their students. Beyond this, the English faculty has a tradition of working together on the first-year writing program, of jointly reading placement tests and final examinations, of sharing teaching problems and successful teaching strategies, and of working to improve English 100 and English 102. In short, the English faculty is actively and cooperatively engaged in teaching writing.

This commitment to writing and to the common experience of teaching writing means that English staff “training” to teach basic writing can be a much more informal enterprise than it may need to be elsewhere. A few years ago, for instance, the department bought paperback copies of *Errors and Expectations* for the staff, and all of us got together to discuss the book, one chapter at a time. On other occasions, the staff has convened to discuss a specific teaching strategy one person has found useful, or to consider the applicability to our courses of an article one staff member has reading in the *Journal of Basic Writing*, *College Composition and Communication*, or another journal.

Many of these discussions take place while the staff is trying to evaluate and improve Findlay College’s first-year writing courses. In such curriculum development sessions, the writing director does exercise formal leadership—announcing a series of meetings, setting agenda, organizing materials for discussion and drafts of changes that grow out of discussions. In 1979-1980, for example, the staff worked together to rethink the basic English 100 course as part of a federal Title III SDIP grant. Together, the English faculty examined the writing and reading needs of our incoming students. And we studied materials such as Mina Shaughnessy’s chapter on “Basic Writing” in Gary Tate’s *Teaching Composition* (Texas Christian, 1976); Andrea Lunsford’s “What We Know—and Don’t Know—about Remedial Writing” (*CCC*, Feb. 1978) and “Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer” (*CE*, Sept. 1979); and

¹⁶Thomas Bonner, Jr., “Six Steps toward Departmental Engagement in Composition,” *Writing Program Administration*, 4 (Winter 1980): 20.

Thomas Farrell's "Developing Literacy," (*JBW*, Fall/Winter 1978). We also reviewed a half dozen basic writing texts and a similar number of reading texts, in the process of developing the integrated writing and reading course sketched in the background section above. Through all of this, it is clear, we were helping "train" each other to teach composition better. And yet, this training was fairly unobtrusive, since the real motive behind our work was to improve Findlay College's basic writing program.

Similarly, an unobtrusive sort of "training" continued after the program was developed and the writing and reading teachers began working with the general course outline, the texts, and the grading methods the whole English faculty had developed. When the basic writing and reading program first was taught, Findlay had a new person on the staff. The course outline, and a number of memos summarizing thinking that had gone on during the development of the course gave this teacher an immediate point of reference and an agenda for discussions with the writing director and other English faculty members. And staff meetings of the English 100 teachers inevitably turned to what was working and what was not. These discussions generally returned to the theories and the practices the staff had tried to incorporate from earlier reading, and more often than not, they led one or more of the teachers to modify strategies they were using.

I do not mean to suggest by this optimistic view of staff training that Findlay College's English faculty does not need to work continually to keep up with developments in the profession. But the staff has at its disposal many excellent sources of information: library or departmental subscriptions to the *Journal of Basic Writing*, *College Composition and Communication*, *Freshman English News*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Writing Lab Newsletter*, *Journal of Remedial and Developmental Education*, and other periodicals; good library holdings in the teaching of writing and a library acquisitions policy that encourages staff members to order new titles; a departmental budget that lets teachers photocopy and circulate interesting articles. Moreover, Findlay College is interested in writing and in faculty development—right up to its Academic Vice President and its President—and it fairly frequently sponsors workshops for all faculty members. Clearly, though, the English faculty's greatest strength is that, by and large, its members are interested in trying to use ideas from articles and workshops to improve their teaching of writing.

General Faculty Members

The interest that the English staff feels in teaching writing well is not

matched by the faculty at large. The faculty is not hostile to efforts to promote writing in a wide range of courses, and a fair number of individuals in education, science, business, humanities, and social sciences do realize that, no matter how effective a first-year writing program is, students must receive reinforcing writing demands later, in their major courses. But, in general, the situation at Findlay College resembles one Toby Fulwiler has described:

Biology, music, and chemistry teachers know, experientially and intuitively, that revision, for example, is necessary for good writing; at the same time these teachers seldom make multiple draft writing assignments. . . which reflect that tacit knowledge. Their understanding of writing has not been translated into classroom pedagogy. While a few teachers continue to insist that writing is strictly the business of English teachers, most teachers simply have not thought about teaching writing nor felt confident enough to teach it.¹⁷

These last two attitudes—not thinking about teaching writing and lack of confidence in one’s ability to teach it—have been the special targets of Findlay College’s efforts to help general faculty members work more effectively with writing. Over the past few years, there have been several formal workshops and follow-up sessions, all of which have tried to raise faculty awareness that they *can* do things in their classes that will help students write better.

The first of these seminars, “Writing as a Way to Learn,” was attended by about half of the college’s faculty and by a sprinkling of administrators, including the Academic Dean, Dean of Students, and Business Manager. In planning this workshop, I tried to appeal to the vested interests of teachers committed to helping students learn accounting, chemistry, history, and other subjects. So, instead of slanting the session so that it might seem to be asking teachers in other disciplines to *help teach writing*, I organized a seminar to demonstrate that writing is an activity through which students can *learn whatever subjects* they are taking.

I paid twenty-five dollar honoraria to five volunteers who agreed to read an article, write an abstract of it, and bring ideas from the reading into the workshop. When the workshop began, I was able to list these

¹⁷Toby Fulwiler, “Interdisciplinary Writing Workshops,” *CEA Critic*, 43 (January 1981): 27-28.

resource people on the program: an education teacher prepared to talk about Janet Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning," a sociologist ready to report on Myrna Smith's "Bruner on Writing" (CCC, May 1977), a philosopher able to comment on Sondra Perl and Arthur Egendorf's "The Process of Creative Discovery" (*Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition*, ed. Donald McQuade, (L&S Books, 1979), an historian who had studied Ann Berthoff's "Tolstoy, Vygotsky, and the Making of Meaning" (CCC, Oct. 1978), and a business professor able to talk about Linda Flower and John Hayes' "Problem-Solving Strategies and the Writing Process." And since I had sent out reading materials to teachers who registered in advance, the workshop began with a fair number of people who had already familiarized themselves with William Irsmscher's "Writing as a Way of Learning and Developing" (CCC, Oct. 1979), Lisa Ede's "On Audience and Composition," Andrea Lunsford's "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer," and a collection of *WLA Newsletter* articles on ways to teach writing in various disciplines.

This workshop barely scratched the surface of its subject, and yet it did introduce teachers to some genuinely important ideas:

- That "writing" is a complex activity that varies from person to person
- That writing pulls the resources of brain, hand, and eye together so that it creates as well as communicates ideas
- That writing about complex, abstract subjects generally takes more time than most academic writing assignments allow
- That teachers can combat this time problem by helping students use discovery strategies and by insisting on revision of early drafts before grading papers.

Faculty found the ideas interesting, partly because I tried to keep the session theoretical—focused on learning generally—rather than too explicitly aimed at how to teach writing. And as the session drew to a close, a chemist asked whether I could lead a second workshop, one stressing techniques of teaching writing.

"Writing as a Way to Teach," the follow-up workshop I offered some time later, was attended, again, by nearly half the faculty. Because several new teachers had joined the faculty since the previous seminar, I began with some review. But, in keeping with faculty interest, this workshop had a more strongly "practical" flavor than the first one. Using demonstration and discussion, I introduced the following materials:

Hoffman, Eleanor and John Schifsky. "Designing Writing Assignments."
Flower, Linda and John Hayes. "Problem-Solving Strategies and the Writing Process."

Flower, Linda. "Writer Based Prose."

Larson, Richard. "Discovery through Questioning" (*CE*, Nov. 1968).
An assortment of collaborative writing guides, grading guidelines, and peer-evaluation worksheets used by teachers in first-year writing courses.

And the workshop offered information, and a bit of practice, on these five practical suggestions for using writing as a way to teach in any discipline:

- Develop writing assignments likely to help students learn, rather than assignments that exist only as evaluation tools.
- Structure early assignments and/or classroom activities to help students generate ideas and find focuses for the papers they will write eventually.
- Handle assignments and class activities so that students cannot pretend that they are writing for their own clones.
- Set expectations and structure assignments so that students must look critically at the logic, clarity, and evidence of first drafts before they can complete their papers.
- Encourage students to go to the writing center when they are starting on papers and after they have finished their first drafts.

Such suggestions did not fall into limbo as soon as the workshop was over. Because Findlay College had begun a new supporting skills system, including a writing center among its other services, interested faculty members were able to refer students for work on papers in their courses. They also could arrange for special class presentations on topics like "Brainstorming," "Narrowing a Topic," and "What Is 'Revision?'" Then, too, the Supporting Skills System gave me the time and resources to develop materials, host informal faculty sessions about writing, and buy coffee for teachers who seemed interested in talking about how they might modify their writing assignments to help students learn more effectively.

Clearly, Findlay has a continuing need for writing programs aimed at general faculty members. Still, I am heartened to know that over a third of the faculty refers students for work in the writing center, and that at least some teachers have changed the ways they handle writing assignments so that they are helping students to learn and to write more

effectively. And, if I need more encouragement, I can always pull out my correspondence file and read this kind of unsolicited letter from one teacher in a team-taught biology and ethics course:

In my Freshman Seminar last semester, my partner and I assigned a term paper. As you know, we had you come into class and lead the students in exercises designed to help them to choose a topic. These seemed to be helpful to many students.

In addition to that, we had each student bring to us a rough draft of the term paper. We found that the most common and glaring errors were those of clarity of purpose and organization and development. In other words, the students could not state clearly what they wanted to say, nor could they organize the material in a systematic way. . . .

We sent them to the writing center where assistants worked with them on these particular weaknesses. When the students re-wrote their papers, the improvement was marked indeed. A much higher degree of clarity and organization was quite apparent.

Charles Moran

A MODEL FOR TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD OF WRITING

At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, in the past ten years we have developed training programs for teachers of writing at the secondary and post-secondary levels, both in-service and pre-service. We work with experienced secondary-level writing teachers, grades five to twelve; we work with undergraduates preparing for certification in secondary English; we work with graduate students who are preparing to teach or are already teaching in our Rhetoric program; and we work with graduate students who will leave us to teach in four-year colleges and universities, two-year colleges, writing laboratories, and communications skills centers. I say that *we* have developed these programs because the effort has been collaborative. Involved in almost every aspect of this effort have been Walker Gibson, James Leheny, Joseph Skerrett, and Charles K. Smith of this University, and James Collins, originally of Springfield Technical High School and now at SUNY Buffalo. That I write instead of one of these colleagues is an historical accident.

The programs that we have developed differ in dimension only. The most extensive is the eighteen-month Institute for the Teaching of Writing, sponsored by the University and by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1977-8 and again in 1981-2. These Institutes involve in-service secondary-level writing teachers. Next in scope is the fourteen-week graduate course, English 712, "Writing and the Teaching of Writing," given at the University to a mix of in-service secondary-level, in-service college-level, and pre-service college-level writing teachers. This course has its undergraduate equivalent, English 290, taken by undergraduate English majors who intend to teach. Least in scope are in-service teacher training workshops given in secondary schools. We have designed workshop series, and we have designed single, two-hour after-school workshops.

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Each of these teacher training efforts, whether eighteen months or two hours long, is based upon the same assumptions about writing, about teaching writing, and about teacher training in this field. We assume that, in its essentials, writing is more properly considered an activity than a subject. The writer, we assume, is an active, fully-human being, engaged in making choices among alternative subjects, voices, structures, sentence patterns, and words. Teaching writing then becomes something like coaching, or teaching shop or studio art classes. The writing teacher, we believe, is most effective as an in-process editor, rather than as an after-the-fact critic. About teacher training in our field we assume that teacher behavior needs to be changed, and that if this change is to occur, it will occur as the teachers act, not as they listen to us.

I do not believe that in these times I need to support our assumption that writing is most properly considered an activity; and if not, I do not have to argue for our model of the effective writing teacher: the in-process editor. I do need to give some support, however, to our assumptions about teacher training in this field. Our first assumption, that teacher behavior needs to be changed, is shared by all teacher training programs in all fields, but it is seldom stated or supported. By change we intend both change of actual behavior on the part of in-service teachers and of potential behavior on the part of pre-service teachers. We see the need for change on the basis of a great deal of actual classroom observation of veteran and student teachers at all levels and our long and fruitful acquaintance with hundreds of writing teachers in our own careers, which have included work in writing laboratories, remedial programs, and writing classes in jails, schools, and colleges.

In our work we have seen, and still see, teachers teaching writing by reading to their classes from Warriner's *English Grammar and Composition*, despite the clear and ancient understanding that there is no useful correlation between learning formal grammar and learning to write. We see teachers giving their students advice about good writing, advice that is dead wrong: "avoid the passive," "use strong verbs," "vary your sentence structure," "be specific," and "avoid the first person." We have heard teachers tell their students to outline before they write, think before they write, attend to spelling while they write the first draft. My children come home from their schools with delightful, well-written essays that have been marked down because they were not five-paragraph themes. To teach writing by teaching grammar, to teach writing as a system of precepts, to assume that there is a single model of the good essay—all this seems to us, and to most who have thought about the matter at all, to be desperately wrong.

Yet, the teachers who teach writing in these ways are decent, intelligent people. They are not more prone to delusion than teachers of other subjects, nor are they less intelligent or less well-informed. How to explain this peculiar persistence in error? Our history accounts in large measure for the persistence of the belief that formal grammar is the route to good writing. In our distant past we have the trivium of the medieval academies; one-third of this trivium is still to be found in the generic term *grammar school*, an institution that might prepare a student to enter a school with a name like Boston Latin High School. In a time of inflation-fueled nostalgia and national insecurity, the myth of the golden age becomes overwhelmingly powerful. The operative word in the Back-to-Basics movement is *back*: we want to return to a golden time when men rode the range, women kept house, prices were lower, and teachers taught Latin grammar. In addition, our colonial beginnings survive in an exaggerated concern for correctness. We still believe that if we do not speak and write according to the rules, we will not pass. And, despite evidence to the contrary, in many quarters we still believe that the study of formal grammar is the most direct route to correctness in speech and writing. So it is that the study of grammar moves toward the center of the writing curriculum, particularly if the course is thought to be remedial or basic.

Another cause for our teachers' persistence in error is a fact of the American economy: it is possible to make a profit selling books, programs, and worksheets; it is much more difficult to make a profit without a tangible product. Teachers and their administrators are besieged by textbook salespeople who bring apparent security and the promise of a quick fix for a quick buck. And the textbooks and programs are founded upon assumptions that we know to be unsound: that writing is a subject, that one can teach writing by presenting a description of good writing; that one can usefully give the same advice to hundreds of writers at the same time; and that the acquisition of writing skill is a linear process that moves from sentence to paragraph to essay, or from description through narration to exposition. James Moffett, Peter Elbow, and Richard Lanham, to name just a few, have made the case against textbooks.¹ Yet, as the displays at any professional conference make clear, the textbook is still here.

¹ James Moffett, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), pp. 200-210; Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers* (Oxford University Press, 1973); Richard A. Lanham, *Style: An Anti-Textbook* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

American history and the power of the profit motive would be enough to explain the behavior we observe, but there is yet another cause to be found in the conditions in which our teachers work. It is the extraordinary writing teacher who writes regularly or at all. Teaching writing develops the critical faculty, perhaps at the expense of the creative. When I ask a physics teacher to write, I generally feel little resistance. When I ask an English teacher to write, there is typically great resistance. As the writing teacher loses contact with his or her own writing processes, this teacher becomes less able to test a textbook or program-suggested procedure against experience and thus becomes more open to the sorts of malpractice I have described. Two further aspects of the teachers' working conditions, the class schedule and the design of the classroom, also help move the writing teacher toward the textbook or program. Writing teachers find themselves in a schedule that brings writing students to them in blocks of twenty-five, all at once. The classroom has chairs or student desks in it, generally in rows facing the front of the room, the front defined by the presence of the teacher's desk or lectern and by the configuration of the blackboards. Both the schedule and the classroom encourage the writing teacher to treat writing as if it were a subject, not an activity, and to give grammar lessons, or diagram sentences.

This begins to sound like rant, and I do not mean it to. I do want to suggest the magnitude of the task that confronts the teacher-training program in our field, however. Given the powerful forces that drive writing teachers toward poor teaching methods, the program that changes the teachers' behavior will have to be designed to effect change in conditions that make this change most difficult. And this brings me to our second assumption: that if we are to alter our teachers' behavior as radically as we believe we must, and if in attempting to make this change we face formidable opposition from forces originating in our history, our economy, and our profession, the change we desire will occur only if it is brought about during action. If the teachers are to change their assumptions about writing and its teaching, they will do so only as they act—and for our purposes this action takes the form of *writing* and *teaching*. The change that we hope to bring about will not take place as the teachers listen to lectures about teaching even if, as the Bay Area Writing Project seems to assume, the lectures and demonstrations are delivered by fellow teachers. Here I find myself agreeing with Paulo Freire: if we hope to bring about real and lasting change, we must make it possible for this change to occur as the teachers are active as teachers and/or writers. As the teachers write, they will arrive at a new

understanding of their own composing processes; as they teach, they will arrive at a new understanding of their students' composing processes.

Given our assumptions about writing, about teaching writing, and about teacher training in this field, our goals become clear. We intend to help teachers develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of themselves and others as writers. We believe that if a teacher acquires this new knowledge and keeps it current, this teacher will not again readily adopt goals or strategies that are inappropriate to the nature of the activity being taught. In all our sessions, therefore, the teachers spend much of their time writing. They also spend as much time as possible teaching real students in controlled writing-laboratory classes. We believe that these two activities have approximately equal value, and we put them both at the center of our several teacher-training programs. If time permits, we will include as a third element reading and talk about topics in the field: heuristics, models of the composing process, the history of the discipline, peer-group dynamics, writing across the curriculum, contexts for writing, grammars and their relationship to composition, and so forth. The choices that we have made in designing our teacher-training activities and the steadiness of our principles in designing these activities, will become more clear as I describe the actual work that we do, beginning with the smallest complete unit, the one-shot, two-hour workshop, and concluding with the largest complete unit, the eighteen-month Institute.

The one-shot workshop creates the most difficult design problem because so much has to be left out. Agreeing to do such a workshop, however, forces me to make the final choice. If I can do only one of the activities possible in the range of teacher-training strategies, which one will I choose? After some unsuccessful experiments, I now regularly choose writing. In the single-session workshops the teachers spend all of their time writing and talking with each other about this writing. My objective in these workshops is to help the teachers discover through their own experience the fact that the writer is an active human being who actively chooses among alternatives and is then limited by these choices.

At the beginning of the single workshop, I ask the teachers to write for half an hour on the topic "Describe a Person." The topic is deliberately open-ended, one that forces the writers to choose a subject, attitude, strategies, structures, language. In addition, this topic allows the writers to choose a topic that is both meaningful and readily available to them. After I give the assignment, I am almost always asked, "Mr. Moran, what do you want in these essays?" I do not answer the question, but file it away for future use. The teachers talk for a few minutes—I will remind them of this at the end of the workshop and call it *avoidance behavior*,

perfectly normal, for all of us—and then settle down to work. After several teachers have clearly finished their writing, I ask one of them for permission to photocopy and distribute the freshly written essay. I am always given this permission. I distribute the photocopied essay and ask the author to read it aloud. I ask the teachers this question: “What has the writer decided to do, or not to do, in this essay?” I ask the author to read the essay again, and then repeat the question. “What choices has the writer made?” The writer has, it appears, chosen not to use the first person. Fine. Why? Would the essay be different if the writer had used the first person, and if so, how different? What problems would the use of the first person have created? What problems has the use of the third person created? The writer has, it appears, concentrated upon physical detail, rather than character, history, or behavior. Why? What does this choice make possible? Prevent? In the actual case that I have in mind the writer had chosen to describe her mother. Since she felt strongly about her mother, she wanted to achieve the distance possible with the third person. The lesson thus learned: choice of subject will influence other choices further down the line. The writer works in a fruitful tension between the power to choose and the factors that tend to limit that choice. After we have finished with this essay, I ask the teachers for their reaction to the exercise they have just completed. This gives them a chance to ventilate and recognize anger, anxiety, joy, or whatever the writing situation has produced. If it seems necessary and appropriate, I remind them of their initial reluctance to become active writers. Instead of making their own choices, they wanted me, through an assignment or through post-assignment coaching, to make their choices for them.

At this point in the workshop we break for coffee, and I have five copies made of each of the teachers' essays. After the break we divide into groups of five. Each group is instructed to proceed as we have just proceeded: each teacher reads his or her essay and then, with the group, examines the choices made. This part of the workshop takes approximately one hour. After the groups have finished their work I bring them together and ask them what they have learned. They usually tell me that they have discovered the variety of possible responses to the assignment “Describe a Person.” They have also discovered that they, and their colleagues, are remarkably good writers.

The problem with the single workshop is that it leaves the teachers with an understanding of the writer's process that may not fit into their next-day's classes. In addition to their new sense of themselves as writers, they need classroom strategies that allow them to bring this knowledge to bear upon their students' writing. Moreover, the teachers may not extend their

sense of themselves as writers to a sense of the student as writer. Given more time in a series of workshops, I try to fill these needs by adding the following elements: group diagnoses of actual student writing taken from the teachers' classes, and a demonstration of writing laboratory techniques.

The group diagnosing sessions are as close as I can bring the teachers to actual teaching in the after-school workshop situation. In the group diagnostic sessions the teachers confront their student writers indirectly, through the written work. In these sessions I distribute one student essay which we handle in the same way we did the teachers' essays: I ask the teachers to talk about the choices that the student writer has made. This part of the session moves along predictably and smoothly. Then we begin a second activity that is more dangerous because it opens the possibility that the teachers will return to their definition of the student as a maker of error. I divide the teachers into groups of five and ask each group to list in order of importance the three most evident problems in the piece of student writing before them. I ask each group to appoint a recorder who will write down the group's collective response. This statement must be signed by each member of the group. I do this because I find that teachers are unwilling and/or unable to give specific diagnoses of student writing, and when and if this is so, they, and I, need to know that it is so.

After the groups have completed their statements, their recorders present their positions to the group as a whole. I take notes, summarize, and comment sparingly as seems appropriate. In this part of the workshop series, I almost always discover that the teachers are not able to do accurate or creative diagnoses of student writing. Even given the most explicit instructions, as above, a group will more often than not report, "This student needs work on grammar." I point out that this is not a diagnosis, but a prescription. In talking with Charles K. Smith, colleague and author of *Styles and Structures*, I remarked once that writing teachers seem strangely unable, or reluctant, to do a real diagnosis of a piece of student writing. He suggested, and I think that he is right, that teachers tend to proceed from a general, unstated diagnosis: "This writing is not good." They then move from this general diagnosis to a general prescription: "This student needs work on 'X'." In this process, the teachers follow textbooks and workbooks which also must proceed from general diagnoses—"Readers of this book need help in general with their writing"—to one of a number of all-purpose prescriptions: work in formal grammar, sentence combining, paragraph building, or free-writing exercises. In designing our training programs, however, we assume, and the world seems to be swinging our way, that there are no universal or

even general writer problems, no wide-wasting disease that can be cured by a single prescription. Writer 'A' may be blocked one day and glib the next, careful in the treatment of one subject and careless with the next, able to discover voice in one situation and not in another. Writers are different; individual writers change. A diagnosis must be made of one writer's performance on a particular day, written in response to a particular subject and audience.

In my participation in the discussion, I try as best I can to extend the teachers' sense of the range of possible diagnoses. Is there anything in the nature of the subject that will cause particular kinds of problems for the writer? Does the handwriting tell us anything? Is it significant that the essay is exactly one page long? I try to introduce the notion of *genre*, avoiding as best I can the Scylla of absolute relativity and the Charybdis of the single standard. I suggest that there are formal and informal essays, personal and impersonal, essays written to teachers, peers, and to the self, essays evocative, narrative, meditative, descriptive, and persuasive, and that each of these genres has its appropriate characteristics. If I am successful, the teachers will substitute for the word "correct" the word "appropriate." I hope that the teachers will approach student writing with these kinds of questions: Is the structure, tone, voice, choice of sentence type, diction, metaphor appropriate to the writer's subject, audience, and situation? Given what the student writer has apparently set out to do, has the performance been successful? How might it be made still more successful?

At the risk of seeming self-serving, I want to point out again the magnitude of the change that I hope will take place. I want the teachers to put aside the single standard, the Ur-essay, a standard that is easy to apply, and adopt in its stead a multiple, flexible standard, which is difficult to apply. That I do not always succeed should not be surprising. But writing taught to a single standard is destructive and unpleasant for the learner. If a writer is simply following the teacher's paradigm, why bother? The motive for writing is, after all, to express the self, to compose—not irresponsibly, but responsibly, within the constraints of the writer's situation and of the choices the writer has made.

When time permits, I add to this workshop series a third element, an explanation and short demonstration of a writing laboratory class. In the sessions I have described, I have tried to bring the teachers to an understanding of themselves, and of their students, as writers. If the teachers are to act on what they have learned, they need a classroom management system that will allow them to treat student writers as individuals, twenty-five at a time. Here the work of Roger Garrison has

been most helpful.² We have adapted his description of a writing laboratory class to the exigencies of the high school and college classroom, and it is this adaptation that I present. At the end of this workshop, the picture is complete, although, like a hologram with half a target, the picture may be somewhat faint. The teachers should have an understanding of the writer's process, an understanding of the student writer's process, and a class format that will allow the teachers to bring this new knowledge directly to bear in their work with student writers.

As will be abundantly clear, our English Department graduate course, "Writing and the Teaching of Writing," is built upon the same foundation as the workshop series just described. In this graduate course, however, we have our students for fourteen weeks: a weekly seminar and about eight hours preparation time. Given the new dimension, there is time to work toward a new goal, knowledge of the field, and to proceed in a more satisfactory way toward the attainment of the goals that informed the workshop series; development of the teacher's sense of self, and of student, as writer. The graduate course has a syllabus—a list of readings and discussion topics—that is the "knowledge of the field" component. This syllabus is the least important part of the course, however. More important are the components of the course in which the students write and teach.

During the semester, each student works steadily and continuously on a writing project or series of projects. I stipulate that each student must spend at least three hours each week on this task. Every third week they will come to a thirty minute writing tutorial with me, bringing with them all drafts, notes, scratch sheets, and doodles, or, if they have been unable to write, an account of the time spent trying to write. The writing is to be expository—no novels, plays, or poems. Anything else goes, and the responsibility for discovering topics is theirs alone. I may help them find topics, if they are desperate, by asking questions, or by suggesting that they try a few of the heuristics that we have read about, if we have passed this point in the syllabus.

During the writing tutorials I try to be as non-directive as possible. I try to listen, and not talk, to the extent that my nature permits. I have found much useful information about tutoring writing in Don Murray's book, *A Writer Teaches Writing*, and his many articles, and Alfred Benjamin's

²Roger H. Garrison, *Teaching Writing: An Approach to Tutorial Instruction in Freshman Composition*, unpublished manuscript.

The Helping Interview.³ At the beginning of the tutorial I will ask a question like this one: "Well, how has the writing been going since I saw you last?" Whatever happens after this question dictates the shape and direction of the tutorial. I may make the occasional connection between the writer's work and subjects treated in the reading. If the writer is having a difficult time getting started, I may suggest that he try prewriting techniques as described by Peter Elbow in *Writing Without Teachers*. Occasionally, I will bring materials from the tutorials back to the graduate seminar. In general, however, the tutorial stands alone, an adjunct to the graduate student's writing.

The graduate students in English 712 write, and they also teach. Attached to the course is a laboratory class, a section of English 350, "Advanced Expository Writing." Despite the word *advanced* in the course title, English 350 attracts student writers of every sort, from severe remedial cases to glib, hyper-verbal writers who need to learn to edit. The course is taught entirely by tutorial. I give the tutorials in the first two and the last three weeks; for the nine week balance of the semester, the graduate students from English 712 do the tutoring. Each graduate student is given full charge of one undergraduate writer. The graduate students hold weekly tutorials with their undergraduates, following closely the procedures that I have established in my tutorials with them. I require the graduate students to keep full records of their teaching, and at the end of the semester I require a full protocol, a careful record and analysis of the nine weeks of teaching. The protocol must include a diagnosis of the student's most important writing problems, referenced to photocopies of the student's writing; a list of strategies used to deal with one or more of these problems; and documented evidence of the progress, or lack of progress, toward the stipulated goals. In a final section, the graduate student must speculate, as responsibly as possible, on the reasons for the outcome of this teaching effort. The success of the teaching, I tell the graduate students, is not as important, for their purposes, as careful analysis of the success or the failure, and an honest attempt to account for the outcome.

The laboratory class is perhaps the most important component of this graduate course. Indeed, after years of teaching without such a laboratory, I cannot imagine teaching teachers without a laboratory

³ Donald Murray, *A Writer Teaches Writing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968); Alfred Benjamin, *The Helping Interview* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974).

experience of some sort available to me. In my teacher-training I frequently encounter the "teacher-fiction," a powerful and pervasive genre in which the teacher's class is always successful, the teacher always the hero, the student always improved and appreciative. The forces that drive these fictions are obvious: the tale-tellers' poor working conditions, low status and pay, and the fact that teachers, almost unique in the world of work, perform alone, not observed by other professionals. The teacher-fiction begins with "What these kids need is . . ." or "But the students in my class . . ." To the extent that these fictions justify present practice, they inhibit change. Without a laboratory class, there is no way of keeping these fictions in check, because the experience being described is in another country and, however much I may believe the fiction to be a fiction, I can not demolish it by calling it a lie. With a laboratory class, I can say, after the fiction has been spoken, "Fine, but what we are talking about now is not your class but this particular student whose writing is now before us and whom you will meet again next Tuesday."

When I first introduced the laboratory component into the graduate course, I worried about the teaching that the undergraduates would receive. They were, after all, my responsibility, for I was their teacher of record. After three years of experience, I no longer worry. To the extent that the graduate students are teachers, they replace me, and that's fine. To the extent that they are peers, they offer peer criticism, and *that's* fine. The evaluations of the undergraduate course tell me that the undergraduates are pleased with the level and intensity of the instruction they receive. Indeed, the experiment has proved so successful that I have added a freshman laboratory class to English 290, the undergraduate "Writing and Teaching of Writing" course, with equally positive results.

The final and, I believe, least critical component of the graduate course is its syllabus—the reading list and sequence of topics. It has two distinct and incompatible functions: it is designed to give early support to the graduate students in their laboratory teaching, and it is designed to cover topics that I consider important in the field. I begin with Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* largely because the graduate students will soon be tutoring my English 350 students. From this reading they get what the title promises: a redefinition of error and a recalibration of their expectations in the area of observed writing improvement. They learn that error is a part of learning, and that increments of improvement in their students' work will most often be small, even undetectable. The graduate students are invariably intimidated by the grammatical terminology that they find in this book, and the early concentration on error tends to inhibit their own writing. So in the second week, I assign

Constance Weaver's *Grammar for Teachers*. Shaughnessy assumes that knowledge of grammatical terminology is a necessary precondition to improvement in writing; Weaver waffles a bit but finally maintains that grammar, while it may be useful for teachers, is not useful for students. In this second seminar, then, we have joined in the great grammar debate, and I bring in Braddock and Lloyd-Jones' summary of the Harris study and its conclusion: that the study of formal grammar, insofar as this replaces actual writing, is at best useless, and perhaps harmful, to a student's writing.⁴ At this time also I bring in sentence-combining materials and introduce the controversy that now exists about this subject.

In the third week, partly to undo what has been done by our work on grammar, we read Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* and do pre-writing exercises that he describes. I do this early in the semester again because the graduate students soon begin to teach, and they should have some strategies ready for helping blocked writers. Elbow's assumption, that for some people some of the time writing is its own heuristic leads us naturally into other heuristics, the topic for the fourth week. We read, in W. Ross Winterowd's *Contemporary Rhetoric*, essays by Richard Young and Alton Becker, Janice Lauer, Ann Berthoff, Richard Larson, and Janet Emig. Any heuristic contains this useful and positive assumption: that people can be taught to discover, or create, interesting and complicated thoughts. From this perspective, a student who has not enough to say is neither stupid nor ill-formed. This student can be helped to think creatively. Most of my graduate students, although they would not put it this way, believe that some students can think and some can not—the old faculty psychology. They believe this not because they have a low estimate of human potential but because they have no alternative to the “some can, and some just can't” position. The work in heuristics gives them this alternative. We then spend the next two weeks working through Parts II, III, and IV of Charles K. Smith's *Styles and Structures*, the Norton freshman text. Smith demonstrates and teaches the use of definitions, assumptions, and criteria as heuristic probes, and to good effect. As the graduate students work through Smith's materials and exercises, they learn something of the old rhetoric and something of the new, and they experience the difficulty and the delight of the heuristic.

⁴Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, *Research in Written Composition* (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1963), pp. 70-83.

After this section of the syllabus, which I am pleased with and will repeat, we move on to topics that seem to me to be important at that particular time. Since the discipline is evolving rapidly, this part of the syllabus will change, indeed has changed, radically, and so I will not rehearse it here. We keep busy with reading and discussion, and as the semester progresses the graduate students report on the progress of their laboratory teaching, bringing partial protocols into the seminar for discussion.

The principles that directed our work in this graduate course, and in the workshops and workshop series that I have described, also governed the design of the two eighteen-month teacher-training institutes. These institutes have been fully described in an article forthcoming in *College Composition and Communication*, so I need describe them only briefly here. The essential difference between the fourteen-week graduate course and the eighteen-month institute is that in the institute we have more time and can therefore do more thoroughly and effectively what I attempt to do in the graduate course. As in the graduate course, institute teachers write and bring their writing to tutorials with us. During the six-week summer session in Amherst they have a weekly tutorial, and we expect them to bring the fruits of their six- to eight-hour writing time to the tutorial. We publish their work regularly, in-house. And as in the graduate course, the teachers teach. We have arranged with the Springfield school system to have ninety writing students made available to us for the six weeks of the institute. Our teachers travel to Springfield and tutor these students in laboratory classes, each teacher working for two weeks with six tenth grade writers. With the aid of extensive photocopying, the teachers discuss their day's work after the laboratory class in an hour long seminar. As they teach, they compile full protocols on two of their writing students, diagnosing, setting goals, choosing strategies, and measuring progress.

In addition to the teaching and to the writing, which are, as they have been in the other expressions of our model, absolutely central, the institute teachers cover the ground covered in the graduate course, but more thoroughly. Given the fact that the institute teachers are secondary level, the readings are somewhat different. As in the graduate course, we read Shaughnessy and Elbow and Weaver and Smith. Other readings are drawn from periodicals like *English Journal*, rather than from *College Composition and Communication*. We make these readings available to the teachers as weaponry: if the teachers need support for what they want

to do when they return to their schools, they can use the authorities found in the reading.

In the academic year that follows the summer session, the Institute moves to the teachers' schools in a follow-up program that uses the teachers' own classes as a laboratory. In this part of the Institute, the teachers implement the approaches and principles they have absorbed during the summer. Institute faculty visit the schools, visit the teachers' classes, and run after-school Institute seminars in which the teachers analyze and evaluate their own work. What are they doing that seems effective? Can they measure or document this effectiveness? What news do they bring of their students' writing process? Progress or lack of progress? What success have they had in passing on what they know to other teachers? The follow-up seminars give us a chance to see our teachers at work in their own schools and to estimate the effectiveness of our training techniques. In addition, our presence in the schools gives the teachers important support in their attempt to change their own, and perhaps other teachers', methods of teaching writing.

So there it is, a teacher-training model that can be expressed as a two-hour workshop or as an eighteen-month institute. The model seems to us to be effective. From my observation, the effectiveness of the program is a function of its length: the more full the program, the more effective it can be. The one-session workshops that I give receive positive evaluations from the participants. The teachers have had a good time, and they feel as if they have learned something. In a few remarkable cases where a teacher was at that moment particularly open to change, these workshops have made a difference. Aside from these isolated successes, however, I believe that the one-session workshop leaves teacher behavior largely unchanged. The multiple-session workshop can be more effective, particularly when it gives the teachers the writing laboratory techniques they need to utilize, in classroom practice, their new knowledge of the writer's process. The semester-long graduate course is still more effective. I know this because many of the alumni of the course teach at the University with me, and we engage in frequent, informal shoptalk. We have reasonably hard evidence for the effectiveness of our institutes. An outside evaluator found that the 1977-8 Institute had significantly changed the teachers' behavior in the area of the teaching of writing. After the Institute, teachers taught much more writing in their classes. Better still, they taught writing differently after the Institute, approaching the students less often as critics, more often as editors.

The evidence that we have, then, suggests that the model we have developed is effective. I want to conclude, however, with a caveat. It is not at all clear to me that the design of the program is primarily responsible for its effectiveness. It may well be that the assumptions that provide the program's conceptual framework are more critical than the design. We believe that writing is an activity, and that the writer is an individual actively engaged in making decisions and choices; we believe that the writing teacher is most effective as an in-process editor; and we believe that the facts of our history, economy, and profession make it necessary that our teachers learn as they write and as they teach. It is possible that in teacher training, as in other spheres of activity, what we believe is more important than what we do.

Donald McQuade
Marie Ponsot

CREATING COMMUNITIES OF WRITERS: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE QUEENS ENGLISH PROJECT

The dust finally seems to be settling from the rush “back to basics.” Yet, despite the promotion of any number of ready-made cure-alls, a fundamental problem remains—many high school and college students lack adequate basic skills. The two largest educational systems in the city of New York offer clear evidence of what is inescapably a *common* problem nationally. The percentage of New York City public school students able to satisfy the State Regents’ Competency Tests has been improving but remains depressingly low; correspondingly, despite a recent slight decrease, well over fifty percent of the City University’s entering class each year continues to require some form of compensatory work in writing, reading, and mathematics. These constraints—and the stark realities that attend them—impinge on nearly every aspect of our students’ lives. But just as the problems of two such vast educational institutions are intertwined, so too are the most promising prospects for lasting solutions. The high schools and colleges in this city—like most of those in the nation—are bound together in ways that those charged with making them work are only beginning to appreciate fully. For slightly more than three years, the Queens English Project has nurtured a

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collaborative effort among high school and college teachers, administrators, *and* students to solve these shared problems.¹

The Queens English Project began with the realization that dealing with underpreparedness at the college level over the past decade had become dangerously institutionalized. Our college, like many others, had been spending ever-increasing amounts of money to improve the basic skills of most of its freshmen. The financial cost was high, but more far-reaching were the costs of the dilution of a first-rate liberal arts education and the decline in faculty morale all too evident on our campus. Sponsored for the first two years by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Queens English Project proposed to reverse this trend by encouraging college faculty to work collaboratively with their colleagues in the high schools to improve the writing and reading skills of students *before* they entered college.

The project grew out of an informal alliance of college and secondary school English teachers in our county—Common Concerns of English Educators. Formed in 1972, this group meets to exchange significant information and to discuss mutual problems. Working professionally within a nonhierarchical environment on common issues and answers, several members of the Queens College faculty collaborated with colleagues at five “feeder” schools—John Adams, Beach Channel, John Bowne, Grover Cleveland, and Flushing High Schools—to graduate better skilled writers and readers.²

Several major features distinguish the work of the Queens English Project. First, several high school and college faculty participants adapted successful college writing curricula for use in the high schools and then

¹The Queens English Project has been—and continues to be—a collective professional enterprise. We would like to acknowledge the presence of *all* our colleagues' work in this essay, and in particular that of Sandra Schor, Judith Fishman, Janet Brown, and Betsy Kaufman. The project's success has depended on the continued support of our founding group of teachers and administrators: Louis Accera, Melinda Altman, Shirley Budhos, Robert Byrd, Saul Cohen, George Cohn, James Costaris, Eunice Danto, Jean Edison, Beverly Fenig, Carl Field, Eleanor Friedman, Robert Fullilove, Milton Gordon, Virginia Gray, William Hamovitch, Eileen Hudson, Lois Hughson, Jack Jacobsen, Jay Kaplan, Myron Liebrader, Mitchell Levenberg, Aaron Maloff, Maureen McFeeley, Neddy McMills, Esther Meisell, Stephanie Medina, Richard Mikita, Saul Novack, Patricia Owen, Eileen Petruzillo, Nathaniel Quinones, Robert Rappaport, Charles Roemer, Raymond Schaevitz, Sarajeon Sherk, Nathaniel Siegel, Willard Smith, Madeline Staffenell, Marvin Taylor, Steven Tribus, Philip Vitali, Paula Weil, and Dominick Yezzo, as well as the many talented undergraduate tutors who helped make writing pleasurable for so many high school students.

²Queens, like many other colleges, can identify the high schools from which the vast majority of its freshmen have graduated. The Queens English Project began working closely with five such “feeder” high schools.

adjusted college composition courses to fit the improved preparations of entering students.³ In effect, secondary school and college teachers collaboratively developed and implemented a three-year articulated curriculum in writing and reading that began in the high schools and continued through two semesters of required college composition. Second, the project prepared a seminal group of educators—including secondary school and college teachers, administrators, and student peer tutors—to teach this curriculum. Third, participants collaborated in developing practical, working models of programs that distributed the teachers' burden in responding to substantially larger amounts of student writing. At each high school and in the writing program at Queens College, these models included a writing/reading workshop, tutors-in-the-classroom, and a team-teaching program.

Over the past few years, conversations with our high school colleagues have taught us that students, curricula, schedules, and schools may differ radically from neighborhood to neighborhood and from one educational level to another. But in all of them, teachers of English share one need: to identify the skills that are essential in writing, and the methods that will teach them.

The Queens English Project worked from tested principles to practice a set of five skills known to be, from a writer's point of view, elemental. These skills are:

- Prolific writing, that is, generating and sustaining writing;
- working from a sense of the whole structure of a piece of writing;
- distinguishing between observation and inference, that is, holding off expression of inferences until after many observations are made, so that ideas are well based and original;
- writing both concretely and abstractly;
- re-writing, a skill dear to experienced writers but alien to many who have never tried it because they have never been shown what it is or how to do it.

These elemental skills can be practiced directly and repeatedly. Because they cannot be done wrong, they can grow through use without being measured, ramifying to show the characteristic voice of each writer. We discovered that these five skills could be taught, in the light of principles we

³A detailed description of an earlier version of this college writing program can be found in Marie Ponsot, "Total Immersion," *Journal of Basic Writing*, 1 (Fall/Winter 1976), 31-43.

could define and defend. They were tested over a decade in SEEK, Open Admissions, and writing workshops from basic through advanced. We tried them and found them useful in diverse circumstances: an intensive summer program for underprepared incoming freshmen; matriculated classes for senior citizens; classes as early as the second grade.⁴ This successful experience fit our view of what is elemental: elemental writing skills are those common to all writing, from Shakespeare to ESL writers with short vocabularies.

Participants in the project came together in a weekly two-hour seminar in which we moved inductively through a writing/reading course with a syllabus which eliminated everything but constant practice in writing/reading skills. Our hypothesis was that, since the same basic principles govern all writing and the teaching of writing, they would serve high school and college teachers and students equally and without restriction. If our identification of certain skills as elemental was correct, practicing them would elicit good writing from all writers. These skills would also give play to the situational differences between high school and college classes, and to the important presence of each school's and especially each teacher's style.

Our methods in the seminar and the classroom were inductive. We wanted *all* writers—students and teachers—not only to be moved by the personal experience of writing but also to discover a coherent set of skills in their writing. Those who reflect on their own histories of learning skills usually agree that induction is the method of choice. It is much praised for its power to effect lasting internal change, but it is rarely practiced. Too many external pressures and directives from administrators to teachers make teaching by induction seem difficult. Yet, the kind of attitude induction calls for is possible when teachers trust the deductive framework they already have. Teachers of English have, in their knowledge of literature and love of writing, an ideal deductive framework within which to work. From their knowledge of literary forms, they can derive coherence, system, and energy which—for the sake of induction—they can submerge in the structure of individual assignments, in the incremental practice of elemental skills, and in the conduct of the class.

The principles guiding this project were of two kinds, one about the writing/reading we want to teach and the other about how such teaching

⁴The latter two programs adapted the principles of the former described in the article by Marie Ponsot cited above.

might be done. (By principles we simply mean ideas which have clear implications for actions.)

Principles about Writing/Reading⁵

- Writing is a skill. Writing embodies in language a locus for vision and revision, and so extends a writer's thought. Writing is, in this sense, the natural extension of thinking.
- Reading is a skill inseparable from writing; it makes what has been written accessible. Through it, we intuit the mental structures which efficiently evoke our ideas and their development or support. Like the language itself, literature in its shapes and kinds is an analogue for what the mind can do. Our own writing is such an analogue. Even poor readers can read well what they themselves have written.
- As in any skill (driving a car, blowing glass, doing a jig), much of what constitutes mastery in writing/reading can be learned but not directly taught. Practice draws out what is potential in the learner. Though some potentials of student language, such as expressing experience in their own voices, coming up with original ideas, and finding words for mental life, *cannot* be taught, other potentials, such as the skills discussed below, *can* be taught and will give the unteachable parts a field to grow in.

Principles about Teaching Writing

- Authority over writing belongs to the author. To usurp it wastes teachers' time.
- Great literature is the generative matrix of writing and reading at whatever level they are learned, and provides the teacher's deductive framework for teaching both writing and the study of literature.
 - a. Student writing is the central text on which students first practice close, objective reading, by writing their observations on each other's assignments. These assignments embody whole literary structures such as the fable, the parable, and aphorisms. They practice finding the literary structures in their own papers before using that skill to study great literature.
 - b. Rhetorics, grammars, logics, psychologies—valuable as they

⁵These principles about writing, reading, and teaching these skills are developed fully in Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen, *Beat Not the Poor Desk: Writing—What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why* (Sharon, Conn.: Boynton/Cook, 1982).

are—are not matrices for writing/reading. They are hypothetical, analytic sets of observations and ideas which define discrete parts of any piece of writing. Speculating about the process of writing produces another such highly informative but yet post-facto set of observations. These sets come after literature is written (and are for critics), not before writing (for writers). Though we do not teach these subjects directly, they give us convenient names for some parts of the work we do.

- Writing/reading together creates a strong sense of community. In writing/reading classes, we write and read to each other all the time. Shared work expands the minds of the members of the group, for we internalize something of each other's temperaments and mental skills.
- We learn skills through incremental repetition—doing work which exercises them, identifying what has been done well, and practicing again to extend these skills.
- Learners are motivated to go on practicing when they sense a new degree of skill as they work. Success energizes from within and gives rise to voluntary practice which is self-disciplined and appropriate. The ability to repeat success is perhaps the clearest measure of competency.
- Pleasure eases the work it rises from. In writing/reading, we count on that pleasure which is the natural reward for accomplishment. We avoid spoiling pleasure, and expect it to be enhanced, by following our principles.

In the project's faculty seminar, these ideas came together to indicate what should be taught and why. Underpinning our concrete experiences with students in the classes we were teaching, the principles also prompted individual teachers to invent a variety of new procedures. Since they are abstract, these principles proliferate into many different concrete strategies fitted to students' needs and to particular teaching styles. They make possible classes in which the dynamic element is not the teacher or even the students, but rather the work both do with language. Such a climate favors shared respect for the value, seriousness, and possibility of writing and reading well.

These principles were spelled out and discussed only after the seminar group had worked through them as a writing/reading class. The last half-hour of the weekly two-hour sessions was reserved for discovering, in the writing/reading we had just done, the underlying theory. The syllabus for the first hour and a half was that of a real writing/reading workshop. It differed from a syllabus used in basic writing classes only in the level of

work produced by the participants. In all instances, the instructor did the same writing/reading as other members.

The aim of the syllabus used in the faculty seminar, as in the basic writing course, was to provide a writing/reading course which would begin where everyone was able to produce something, and to proceed through practice in what we regard as the five teachable skills—to the point where everyone wrote expository essays.

In the faculty seminar, we practiced these skills, often simultaneously, all the time. We wrote strong, dominating literary structures that cannot be missed—like the fable, composed of two polar structures, the concrete narrative capped by an abstract moral in the form of an aphorism. We rewrote sentences many times. We wrote a version of the parable, a domestic variety using memories of much-told family stories (not autobiography, which we find inadaptable for all but sophisticated writers). After experiencing in fables the sound and effect of abstract sentences, we practiced deriving abstractions from our family parables, and moved with that into writing shapely little essays, beginning with abstract paragraphs, developed in the middle by family stories, and ended with a paragraph derived from the preceding two parts.

Whatever we composed, we read aloud. Our initial efforts to write with a new structure were read to the entire group; later drafts were read to small groups. After each reading, we all quickly wrote as many observations as we could in three minutes, then read our observations—excluding inferences as much as possible—to the author. Each session depended to some extent on a four-part work-rhythm: write, read, write observations, read them. All five elemental skills were introduced in the first two sessions of the seminar; the rest was development.

We took advantage of the fact that we were a class of approximately twenty. When a class is a community of active writers who practice being of definite service to each other, the scope of each writer is powerfully enlarged. Exercise of the elemental skills creates such community quickly. Moreover, high school teachers are particularly adept at imagining ways to put the rhythm of induction to work in their own classes, once they experience it for themselves. Perhaps that is because hostility and idleness (which sometimes create tension in high schools and cannot anywhere be banned or policed away) diminish where the lively, productive rhythm of inductive teaching keeps everyone engaged.

The syllabus for the seminar called for a great deal of writing in and out of class, since we define a writer as a person who writes. Our productivity gave us a chance to explore ways in which our methods may afford some

relief to teachers burdened with too many students. In high schools, even more than in colleges, teachers meet so many writers that they cannot assign and respond to all of their writing every day. Even once a week is a strain. Our methods helped students write enough without drowning their instructors. They all rely more on preventing than on remedying error. We discovered:

- Organized papers are more likely when the assignment is structure oriented rather than topic oriented.
- Instead of studying an entire large landscape of any grammar, it is better to focus on those few elements which affect literary quality and structure: governing pronoun, governing tense, the formal shapes of sentences. These elements, because they affect imagination, integrate a piece of writing. The shortest road to correct sentences is to ask for elegant ones. Inexperienced writers, asked for correctness, flounder; asked for elegance, they aim at it and are very often correct.
- Prolific writing helps students to learn re-writing, and active teaching of re-writing in class reinforces this skill, so that the papers students turn in are more ready for our scrutiny. Raw first drafts are often dull reading; second drafts are more likely to give us clues to forward the writers' intentions.

Writers can be useful to each other in many ways. Writers can offer each other immediate help by acting as a responsible, responding community. Groups of Queens College undergraduates have for a decade offered such help, and the Queens English Project profited enormously from their experience. They have worked with their peers on writing and reading in two English Department programs, one—faculty/student team teaching—in basic writing classrooms and the other—tutoring—in the Writing Skills Workshop.⁶ Both programs provide strong courses in reading/writing for the undergraduates who, by working in them, learn deeply in order to teach others.

In the Queens English Project, Queens College undergraduates are

⁶For a detailed description of the Queens College faculty/student team teaching program, see Donald McQuade, "The Queens College Writing Program," in *Options for the Teaching of English: Freshman English* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1978) as well as George Held, "Involving Student Tutors in Teaching Writing to Disadvantaged Students," in *Measure for Measure: Classroom Practice in Teaching English*, ed. Allen Berger and Blanche Hope Smith (Urbana, ILL.: NCTE, 1973). For a discussion of the Queens College student tutoring program, see Judith Fishman, "On Tutors, the Writing Lab, and Writing," *Composition and Teaching*, 2(November 1980); "The Writing Center: What is Its Center?" *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, 5(September 1980); "Training and Using Peer Tutors," *College English*, 38(December 1978).

chosen for work in one of the participating high schools. They come to seminars where they learn the principles and methods on which we base our program, and they practice them with high school classes and tutees according to the needs of each school. Most teachers have developed their own particular versions of tutors' tasks. In one school, students are rotated so that part of the class is with the regular teacher and part is in a writing laboratory working in several small groups with several Q.E.P. tutors. In another, tutors participate as team teachers during the regular class hour and later hold two (or three)-on-one tutoring sessions in the writing lab, for which high school students can be scheduled when they register for the course. In one high school, only college-bound students are in Q.E.P. classes; in another, most teachers of upper and lower tenth and twelfth year students are working with our methods and tutors. In three schools, a few high school students who have gone through the program are now working as tutors alongside college students. In nearly all the schools, there are some tutors who have returned to teach in the schools from which they have graduated.⁷

Participation of tutors, teachers, and schools has so far been self-generated; people have volunteered. They have been motivated by real and considered interest in making the changes toward inductive teaching that are called for by this different approach. From these original participants, we have learned the blessings of such self-selection. In addition, we were fortunate to enjoy the encouragement and guidance of the Executive Director of High Schools in New York City, the Superintendent of High Schools in Queens County and, on our campus, the President, Provost, Assistant Provost, Dean of Humanities, and the Chairperson of English. All levels of the educational system were not only represented but warmly supportive—a factor crucial to the success of such a program.

Since its inception in 1978, the Queens English Project has expanded to include seven high schools, their principals and English department heads, a few score teachers, six members of the Queens College faculty, seven CUNY graduate student workshop coordinators, well over one hundred Queens College undergraduate tutors, and nearly four thousand

⁷Now that our funds for seminars are extremely limited, we rely for replication of our work on teachers and tutors who are already experienced. We are experimenting with ways to respond to those who have heard of us and want to know more. We have introduced our ideas at faculty meetings in high schools and conducted some mini-seminars, both by going out to interested schools and by holding Saturday sessions at the College. We hope that *Beat Not the Poor Desk* will communicate the excitement as well as the ideas that we shared in the original FIPSE seminars.

high school students. Basic funding for the program is now provided by the New York City Board of Education, with a supplementary program of released time for faculty sponsored by Queens College. The most readily appreciable effects of the project have been the substantive changes in the ways in which writing is taught in the participating schools and the reduction in the number of students from the pilot sections in the high schools who must complete so-called "remedial" courses before enrolling in our college's two-semester sequence of required composition.

Somewhat less apparent but far more enduring has been a reduction in the personal costs of remediation. Made familiar with the discipline and pleasures of writing and reading in their high school classes, fewer students seem to suffer from the anxieties, embarrassments, and incapacities that attend a lack of preparation for college courses. By working intensely and cooperatively, colleagues in both the secondary schools and colleges have already expanded their understanding of how, what, when, where, and why we learn to read and write as well as of how to teach these enabling skills. So, too, the coordination of rationale, instructional techniques, and curricular materials has led to more successful and replicable teaching and learning.

Based on our ongoing work, we offer the Queens English Project as an example of what can be accomplished when the talents and resources of college and high school faculty, collectively prodigious, are pooled to develop a project. As a result of our work, students, faculty, and administrators can reasonably expect less duplication in the need for remediation. Institutionally, one of the most important outcomes of our work has been that two vast and, heretofore, surprisingly isolated educational systems—the Boards of Education and Higher Education in New York City—have recognized that their respective problems and resources are bound together.

The work of the Queens English Project also offers a useful paradigm for developing in-service teacher-training programs—primarily because it places writing at the center of learning. In fact, it demonstrates that writing is at the center of education. Once teachers have themselves inductively experienced writing as a method of inquiry and as a structured means to discover the nature and significance of their own work, they are better prepared to encourage similar humanistic values in their students. With practice in writing and training in the principles of collaborative learning, we can reasonably expect teachers trained in *all* disciplines to recognize the importance of writing as a tool for learning in *every* field of special interest.

The Queens English Project has re-examined the gaps that separate

faculty in college and high school and insulate all of us from our students. The need for better articulation among English faculty should begin with a demonstrated understanding on the part of those of us in the colleges not only about what the conditions for education are in the secondary schools, but also about what exactly can and can not be taught in writing and reading at any level. Through this understanding, the colleges can then continue where the high schools have left off—without too much disjunction and in a manner calculated to use and enhance all of the new college students' previous training, thereby building upon an already firmly established and stable foundation.

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Articles should be no more than 6,000 words (about 20 pages). Please follow the MLA Style Sheet, second edition, for matters of form. Include all footnotes at the end of the article. Enclose two copies of the article and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Manuscripts and correspondence should be addressed to: The Editors, Journal of Basic Writing, Instructional Resource Center, City University of New York, 535 E. 80th Street, New York, New York 10021.

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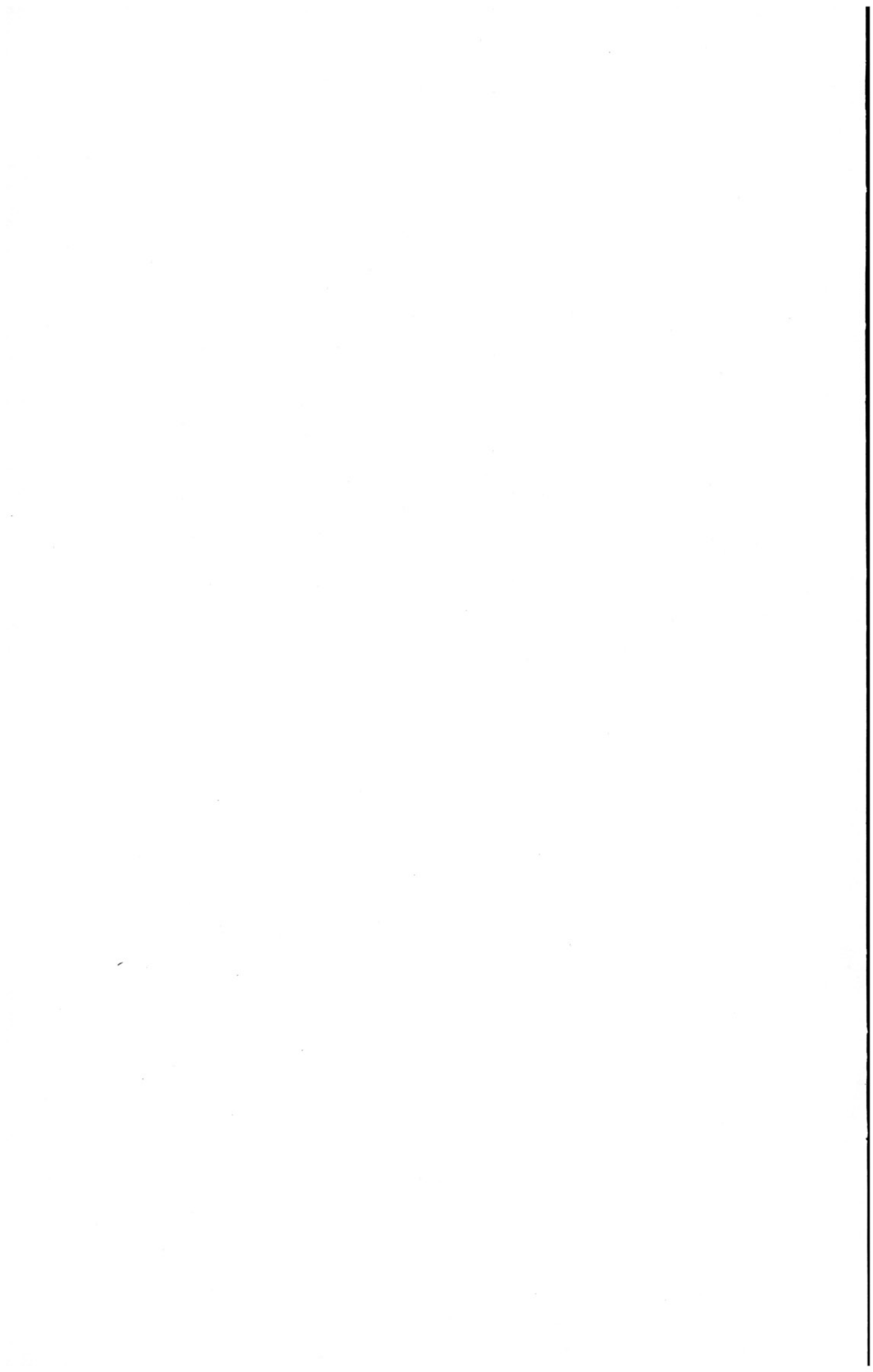
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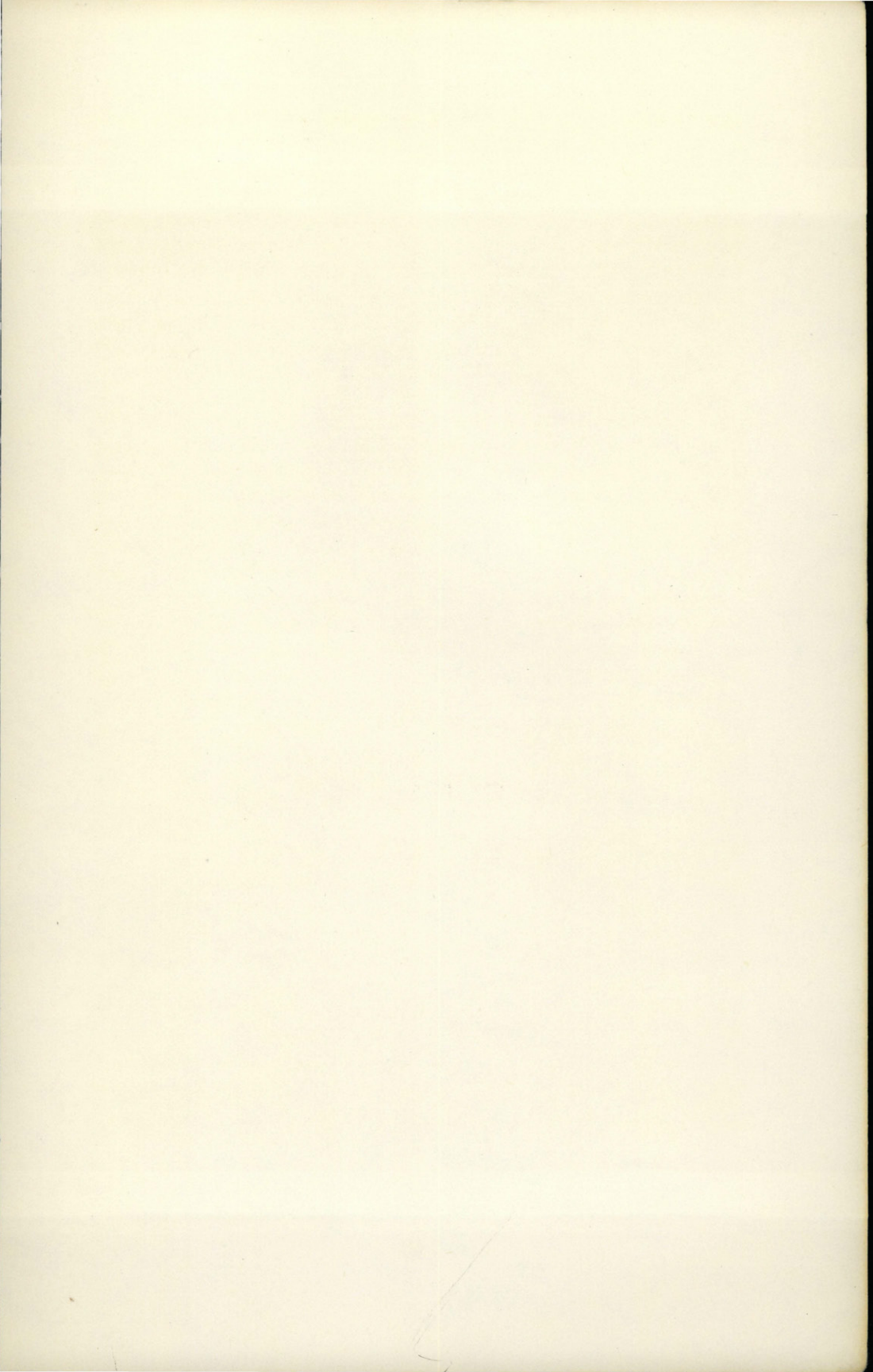
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