Writing across the CURRICULUM

Plymouth State College Journal on Writing Across the Curriculum

Volume II, Number 1

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Requests for copies:

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Preface

Early this summer I received this letter from a young man who was house-sitting for one of my husband's colleagues:

> I just pulled down a copy of the *Plymouth State College Journal on Writing Across the Curriculum.* I read the first chapter and would like to read more. Could you send me a copy and, if possible, a second one that I might pass on to the people in the SUNY Albany Biology Department.

This request for Volume I of our publication was one of many I received from as nearby as Plymouth and as far away as Texas. I was delighted that our "in-house" journal reached a wider audience than anticipated, but I was even more pleased that the journal was used in several courses on Plymouth's campus—in Bob Garlitz's rhetoric class, in Dennise Bartelo's graduate education courses, and in Terry Downs's art class. In fact, Robert Morton's article in this volume chronicles student responses to an article published in Volume I.

Volume II also contains excerpts of interviews with faculty who attended writing workshops between 1986 and 1988. Every department on campus is represented in these lively, anonymous "Voices."

The other articles give practical and theoretical responses to Writing Across the Curriculum, a continuation of the dialogue about writing, teaching, and thinking begun last year. We offer them to faculty, students—and house-sitters.

Mary-Lou Hinman, Chair
Writing Task Force

Acknowledgements

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Volume II, August 1990

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Faculty Voices on Writing Across the Curriculum

Editors' note: These responses and comments from faculty were culled from a series of interviews conducted by the Writing Across the Curriculum Task Force on Assessment this past year. While obviously not a comprehensive listing of faculty opinions, it is representative of the comments submitted during the assessment process. For an in-depth look at the assessment, see Dennise Bartelo and Mary-Lou Hinman, "Faculty Evaluation of Writing Across the Curriculum at Plymouth State College," 1990.

Describe your current attitude toward a Writing Across the Curriculum Program. Has it changed?

In response, faculty frequently expressed a new or continued appreciation of Writing Across the Curriculum:

> I always thought it was a wonderful idea, but I was skeptical about its practicality. Now I'm able to see how much Writing Across the Curriculum has accomplished.
>
> My attitude has changed from "I wonder what it is" to "this is neat stuff" to "this is really working."
>
> I'm a believer.... It is accomplishing its goal. I'm seeing better writing from students.

> I'm much more positive now. At first I thought students weren't ready for this. The workshop. . . conveyed the idea that people cared and were doing positive things.

Only a handful of respondents voiced skepticism:

> Initially I was very interested. In the last year I've become less interested. I don't find any evidence that it's being encouraged by anyone but me.

> I have the feeling the Writing Across the Curriculum movement is an effort to get an improved curriculum on the backs of the faculty.

Many interviewees expressed a new awareness in their attitude about writing as a tool for learning in their courses and outlined ways in which they had integrated more writing into their classes:

> It's important to have students think. [But] before I came to Plymouth, I hadn't thought about [using] Writing Across the Curriculum techniques.

> Writing Across the Curriculum has had a wonderful effect on my teaching and relationship to students. I got started on a different style of teaching—it was revolutionary for me. It makes teaching more interesting, and I've begun to think about writing in a different way.

How important is Writing Across the Curriculum for Plymouth State College?

Faculty responses generally emphasized the importance of the program in terms of student success and the mission of the college:

> It's incredibly important [because] students come here with poor writing skills.

> We have an obligation to see that students leave here with solid writing skills.
>
> It provides continuity.... The chances of a student taking a course without writing are less now.
>
> Nothing else is happening on campus that can compare in importance.

Some faculty reported increased student comfort with writing:

> Our students will behave differently. In getting them to write and talk, they begin to take themselves seriously and admire themselves.
>
> Freshmen I saw were getting worse and worse. [Now] I do see a change. I use Writing Across the Curriculum techniques and they help students think logically... and gain communication skills.
>
> *Maybe* students are writing more clearly.

Some faculty mentioned the influence of Writing Across the Curriculum on collegiality and stressed the need to keep the program as a college priority:

> [Writing Across the Curriculum is] important for my classes and valuable for the college because it provides training, support, and encouragement for faculty.
>
> It has started people talking about their teaching. It's improved classroom teaching techniques.
>
> Writing Across the Curriculum is important for Plymouth State College and every college. The program itself brings attention to the value of writing in all disciplines. It is

a kind of "consciousness raising."

The program is important only if it accomplishes something.

In what ways have you and your students benefited from the implementation of Writing Across the Curriculum at Plymouth State?

Faculty most frequently mentioned motivation, interest in writing, and improvement of skills when they discussed benefits to students:

Students are more aware of their language. Some you'll never reach, but the majority recognize the importance of it.

It allows students to shine in different ways. . . and to express what they know in a less stressful way.

Students get hit with writing so much, they don't consider it an onerous task. That is the biggest impact. Writing is not the shock for them it was ten years ago. Also, their skills are getting much better.

Colleagues saw the most benefit to themselves in the introduction of new practical teaching and learning techniques:

After the workshop, I took others' ideas and incorporated them into my own course.

It provided me with a way to facilitate class discussion. It gave me an alternative way of assessing where students are with course material.

It encourages me to see student progress, and I *do* see progress.

I have benefited immensely as a new instructor talking to other instructors.

I have a greater level of understanding of my students and a greater appreciation of students' abilities.

Do you have other suggestions, comments or ideas?

New faculty should be required to go to the workshops.

It's up to the individual instructor, but it should be encouraged.

I wish there were a way to persuade people to include more writing in their classes.

Teachers should not be mandated to do something. Show by example.

Keep an on-going bibliography in all disciplines. Send new faculty the bibliography.

More faculty need to share what they do in W-courses. Pool ideas and exercises that have worked.

Publish a newsletter of Writing Across the Curriculum ideas, or send anecdotal reports, descriptions, blurbs to "Speare Points" to tell what faculty are doing.

The workshops and the journal are helpful. Continue to make the workshops available.

Spotlight the program with a contest for students.

Smaller classes are needed so we can concentrate on writing.

Provide a list of courses ("W" and other) where Writing Across the Curriculum is done.

More grammar should be taught.

We need to include part-time people who mostly deal with freshmen.

Continue the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee and program, so we don't lose the network.

Writing Across the Curriculum opened a whole new world to me and my students.

Class size is a problem. We need assistants to help with the sheer volume.

We should be doing a lot more. Student skills reflect on the college. *But how do we lighten the load?*

I'm not using it as much as I could, but colleagues have helped me by sharing ideas.

We need to keep it going. We're ahead of other schools.

I am very pleased at the openness and approach of Writing Across the Curriculum. The college needs to keep it up.

Regular articles in the *Clock* are important. They show writing can be fun.

It's great. I have begun to see the faculty in a different light.

Keep doing it!

Writing Through the Disciplines

The Pleasure of Product and Process: Poetry and Philosophy—A Few Things We Learned

Gerald Zinfon and Herbert Otto

When we began to plan an integrative course, one of the few notions that we agreed upon was that the poet and the philosopher share a passion for inquiry. Both begin somewhere in the search for truth to explore how life reveals its meaning. The poet does this through an exploration of the concrete details of daily existence, wooing with words the insights that poetic process discovers and expresses. The poet discovers meaning in tactile and palpable experience, and expresses it in language graced artfully by images, metaphor, and forms. The poet sees and expresses the inherent value and beauty in the things of our sensed world. Frost calls the result, when it's right, "a momentary stay against confusion" (Frost, "The Figure a Poem Makes" 125-128). The philosopher pursues with words, but also with ideas and logical thought, the insights that dialectic process uncovers and expresses.

The philosopher discovers (or at least tries to discover) meaning and truth beyond the fleeting, tactile, raw elements of sensuous experience, in order to express it in language made clear and explicit by the forms, propositions, and universal content of such ideals as value and beauty in

their primary nature as objectively real, not merely in their secondary representation as things of our sensed world. Plato calls the result, when it's right, "wisdom" (*The Republic*, Book V).

John Dixon probably wasn't the first to observe that language is at the center of all learning activity, all discovery. In the strictest sense, all of us, whether we are teaching history, math, literature, poetry, or philosophy, are teachers of language. As we explore our individual disciplines with our students, we attempt to nurture our students in our area of specialization, often in the manner of a parent or coach urging the individual to say it, to rethink it, to rewrite it one more time. It doesn't matter what the subject or discipline may be; anything that we introduce to our students that is new material involves the instructor and learner in a nurturing process. The parent, professor, or coach reviews the learner's effort and says, "Look, you're fine here in this description, movement, or historical association, sketch, theorem, or argument, but there in the follow-up, follow-through, just try this, or maybe you can move just a bit more that way. . . want to try?" While the student engages in the process, the instructor may intervene as audience, confidant, coach, or whatever is required by the nature of the project undertaken. When the instructor thus intervenes at timely places in the process, discovery becomes possible. The "what if," thoughtfully explored, stimulates discovery, growth, and personal satisfaction. Teaching a learner the fine points in a discipline can be a gentle art when the instructor looks on sympathetically while a task or assignment is being drafted.

The importance of this concept was noted by Dixon in his report on the landmark study, the Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English (Dartmouth Seminar):

> If I can work with students sharing the responsibility for planning our joint enterprise [Dixon notes] . . . the transactions they get involved in will offer them new opportunities to master a wide range of participant roles. Then there should be room for me to act as a sympathetic and

> critical audience, as the need arises. This means thinking again about the best ways of broadening and generalizing the insights . . . .

This process approach requires that instructors and learners engage in the process as participants, not merely as passive observers.

When we designed our integrative course for students at Plymouth State College, we were at the same time exploring some of the integrative possibilities in our own disciplines of philosophy and the art of poetry. The course that eventually emerged we titled, "Philosophy and Poetry: In Search of the Universal." In that course, along with "content" in philosophy and poetry—which we took to include literature, music, art, nature, and (boldly) opera—we believed an important and integral feature of the course should be an emphasis on process. That belief was rooted in part in our urge to engage in some of the fun of learning along with whatever students we could lure to the course. It was a concept, a pedagogical common ground, that we discovered, and which we hoped could be shared as a guiding approach to our own respective academic responsibilities and interests. We knew, of course, that the focus on process had already had a revolutionary impact on the participants in the Dartmouth Seminar and had influenced English studies and classroom practices increasingly over these past two decades. Research studies, along with the Seminar, had challenged successfully the long-held belief that what we ought do as instructors is to pass on an inherited body of knowledge—a package or corpus—intact to our students. Thus, as Dixon reported,

> It [was] for this reason that the . . . [Dartmouth] Seminar moved from an attempt to define what English is—a question that throws the emphasis on . . . skills, and proficiencies, set books, and the heritage—to a definition by process, a description of the activities we engage in through language. (7)

Still, there were crucial issues that we needed to confront and resolve.

For almost two decades, during visiting poets' workshops, at readings, in the College Union coffee shop, in corridors, in our offices, and over Harp's lager during our annual two weeks of summer in New Hampshire's mountain country, we had carried on a collegial debate concerning poetry and philosophy, education and life. Without ever a thought that we might someday teach in the same classroom, we played verbal thrust and parry: "The universe is only perceived and understood through its expression of the concrete"; "Nonsense, the concrete is but a temporary scaffolding, a shaky and tentative starting point, from which if we persist we may eventually, by abstraction, arrive at a true understanding of the universe."

Philosophers' big chunks of thought don't fit into lyric poems. While it's true that philosophers sometimes articulate world scale notions surprisingly convincingly, as an English instructor, I find the vagueness unsettling. At times I have followed along carefully for a while and have become charmed by an overwhelmingly exciting abstraction. That abstract always turned out to be one that not only became ultimately ambivalent (predictably) but also an idea that appeared to have no referent—no dirt under the fingernails, no cat fur on the lip, no orange peels on the wood stove. So, not only did I end up confused concerning where the philosopher's logic had taken me, I couldn't any longer find the beginning: no burnt-orange-peel-cat-fur-nails-to-clip-clean stuff. Another world of thought, not mine.

But the fairness, decency, persistence, learned, and good-natured character of my colleague's side of the matter—the philosopher's side—calmed my reluctance to hear, and encouraged my willingness to explore with him, our different approaches to the "what if?" of our perspectives. We explored, appraised, and brought together a wide variety of material for the course. Along with that, we devised pedagogical strategies based on assumptions that we came to agree upon. The first and most important of these was that all members of the class would engage extensively in languaging—in speaking, listening, writing, and reading—with as much regularity and as much challenge and fun as we could draw out of the material and our own passion for our disciplines,

and from the design of the course itself. Our next belief was that, just as people learn to appreciate music in a special, heightened manner when they study music theory and practice a musical instrument at the same time, so also the same might be true in other areas of esthetic and intellectual endeavor. In other words, we hoped that through the same underlying principle—by writing as well as reading poetry and philosophy—our students might experience a similar personal and educational growth.

We, therefore, developed and implemented course strategies and activities that served to engage, induce exploration, and generate lively discussion about the students' responses to their original poetry, to paintings, and musical compositions, as well as their critical responses to essays in philosophy. We believed that reading and discussion, appreciation and reflection should be followed by active engagement in the actual process of writing poems, expressing philosophical ideas, and assessing philosophical arguments. We hoped that having the students combine musical and artistic composition with other forms of expression might lead them to create personally meaningful statements reflecting mood, attitudes, values, and ideas in poetry and philosophy in a culminating group presentation.

To avoid a haphazard or potentially confusing jumble of poetry and philosophic pieces, we chose an array of materials that would reflect a cycle of specific lifethemes. The idea was to explore themes that universally characterize actual human experience, themes which have perennially found expression in poetry and philosophy, music and art. Our syllabus for the course therefore focused on youth, love, ambition, conflict, war, death, time, change, and the future. In the context of these themes, we asked them to reflect on their daily challenges, their responses to assignments, musings, reflections on their feelings, on cultural field trips we took, and on our classroom activities. They were asked to keep their thoughts in journals. While many other activities which we used could be described here, the use of student journals and their potential validity in any course across the curriculum will best serve to illustrate our finding. Some of

the most rewarding insights we gained concerning the manner in which some of the students experienced our activities evolved from their journal entries.

One example that illustrates a developing integrative sensitivity is an entry from the journal of Ed Bunnell following our reading and discussion of selections from Toffler's *Future Shock.* In his entry, Ed expresses his grasp of the concepts of accelerated time and the pressure of high velocity change in modern culture:

> Time is so mysterious, we waste it as much as, if not more than, we value it. My typical day starts at 5:30 a.m.
>
> > Baseball practice, shower, classes, lunchtime, meeting important people [friends, getting to be like family!], studying, research in the library, projects . . . on it goes and all the while I try to please the most important person in my life, Beth. She understands, but still fumes if I'm not with her. Dinner at 5:00, study, more baseball practice, and then to my job 9:00 to midnight. Lucky to be in bed by 1:00 a.m.—which means five hours sleep, tops!
>
> This life has taught me a lot in a very short time! To wit:
>
> 1. Time is money or something of equivalent value—maybe grades, or something even more valuable, like time with Beth. . .
> 2. You'd be amazed what a well-rested body can do for you!
> 3. Wasting time—at least a little each day—is probably a very healthy thing to do.
> 4. Music has a powerful role in my life. I don't know what I'd do if I became deaf. Music in the background, it's like a security blanket. But now that I think about it, any sound

should be treasured. . . .

Ed's stocktaking in his journal entry may appear typical. It may not be. The dimension that we found pleasing was Ed's heightened awareness of the value of time in his life. Another member of the class, David Krause, waxes philosophical as he records his perception of both time and change as he recalls an item from his high school yearbook:

> The Zen notion of the whirlwind (stay at the center and grasp for such of the truth as is visible) seems, more and more, a bit of wisdom that transcends time. But I think of *Future Shock:* information anxiety, the high-speed, watch-distorting jet set, all of modern society and its flurry, whirl, and stress. It demands a response: either ride the crest of its chaotic spiraling turbulence, or... try for the center. I'm reminded of something I wrote for my high school yearbook,
>
> > It has been hypothesized that a genius is one with the ability to step out of the universe, stand back and observe.... We watched and laughed at what we saw. That fine line between genius and insanity? They say two minds sharing the same illusion is proof of reality.
>
> I no longer wish for the ability to step out. I think I would now sooner wish for the position at the center.

We were delighted by the reflective mood that discussing Toffler had evoked, but we were especially pleased that for Dave, the reflections resulted in a synthesis and personal growth.

One of the women in the class, Kim Kamieniecki, encouraged along with the rest of the class to attend a Woody Herman concert that had come to our campus, later wrote this entry in her journal:

> Wow! What a day. Just came home from the "Woody Herman's Young Thundering Heard" concert. Spectacular! Throughout the whole concert my toes were tapping, my hands were clapping, and I couldn't stop smiling. "Apple Honey" and the "Brothers Four" were my favorite pieces along with "Samba's Song." These songs gave off so much energy, I could have run ten miles after the show.
>
> Being a disk jockey and a great listener of current and past rock 'n' roll, I thought I was satisfied with my musical experience. But after attending this invigorating ensemble, I feel much more fulfilled. In fact, in my lifetime I had heard a very limited amount of jazz.
>
> At the conclusion of the concert the conductor said, "I hope we inspired all the young musicians out there and satisfied all the fans." Well, the only problem I have with that is that I am neither a musician nor a fan—just simply an individual who was touched and inspired through this one concert. It was an experience I will never forget and I plan on attending many more jazz concerts. As a matter of fact, I also plan on doing a little research on jazz and thereby starting a jazz show on our station, WPCR.

We were as excited to see Kim broadening her musical tastes as she apparently was in hearing the Herman Band. Jeff LaBombard's journal observations provide one further illustration of a heightened awareness that integrates some poetic and philosophic insights at a personal level:

> Wednesday's are particularly busy. Four classes and other time constraints. Difficult to relax, stress level up—I find the need for exercise,

> some sort of stress relief. As my knowledge and desire to learn grow, time available for action awareness (exercise) decreases. I work out now in the early morning, so my time for sleep has been cut. Yet, I haven't felt any ill effects—so far I feel strangely at one with myself. Awesome. And I'm not really dissatisfied with my busy schedule. I enjoy it; if I start to dislike it, then it will be time to decide what to leave out. [But in the meantime, who's afraid of Prufrock??]

We found that the journal, as a pedagogical tool, provided the students with an excellent medium for private, reflective thought. In their journal writing, they integrated their experiences and the content of the course with much greater personal understanding and sensitivity. Even in those instances in which the poetry (e.g., Eliot's "Prufrock") and philosophy (e.g., Bacon's "Novum Organum") seemed difficult or complex in the classroom, students made remarkable discoveries when reflecting with their pens in their journals. Perhaps the journal writing was experienced as a private time for thought, but the students were made aware from the beginning that they would be sharing those private reflections with all of us.

Such private time for thinking, and the need to express those thoughts to our class as an audience, motivated their care in jotting down their personal responses to our discussions of assigned readings and class activities. The private writing activity, audience-oriented in this way, engendered, it appears, a significant synthesis. We are encouraged—no, convinced—that such results are possible in any writing across the curriculum effort. The content of any curricular offering may be treated as a process of discovery when students are asked to engage in the writing process regularly. Reading, analysis, discussion can be accompanied by disciplined thought and reflections on content through imaginatively designed writing tasks of all kinds.

Still another assumption that we held was that presentation of poems,

essays, musical or artistic compositions, or other creations the students might produce—either individually or through group effort—should develop and be understood as integral to their search for the meaningful, the valuable, and if possible, the universal in human experience. This last assumption also focused heavily on the "doing" as well as the "done." Our emphasis attempted to balance engagement in process with appreciation of the product. Experiencing the process of creation was at least as important as viewing, reading, and analyzing classics.

The aim was to motivate and challenge the abilities of our students to integrate their own knowledge and humanity with an awareness of standards established by significant classical, modern, and contemporary works. As an explicit goal, this was embodied in the design of a culminating semester project. The students were to work with one another in groups engaging in a process aimed toward completion of an integrative multimedia presentation. There were four groups of 4-5 students each, and in each group, individual creativity had to be incorporated by negotiation into the final presentation. All members of the group took part in its performance, which was videotaped and subsequently critiqued. We were very pleased with the results, so we not only videotaped their work, but documented it in a class "yearbook." This effort contributed considerably toward development of an *esprit de corps* that greatly enhanced the students' course experiences. The four group projects that evolved were:

> *Nature and the Cycle of Love*, a sensitive treatment of the beauty of Nature's seasons and their analogy to the beauty and sadness of the many kinds of human love;
>
> *Change: The 50's and 60's*, an insightful review of the values, feelings and philosophies of youth in two critical decades past;
>
> *The Demise of Intellect*, an incisive satire of the rise of commercialism, selfishness, purposelessness,

and decline of educational and intellectual standards; and

Ireland: Love and War, a striking contrast between idyllic Ireland, its poetical wordview and lust for life juxtaposed against the stark reality of its internal strife and bloody internecine war.

The first of these projects was produced on location at a beautiful old horse farm in the foothills of the White Mountains. We had been concerned about the feasibility of this project—particularly logistics and the problem of having it videotaped. It turned out, to our relief and pleasure, to be quite successful. The other three projects were produced and videotaped in the College TV studio. An authentic Irish Stew was served by the last group as the finishing touch to their project. The work on student productions enhanced the feeling of community among the students and ourselves that had been building throughout the semester. They had worked with one another, and we with them as "coaches" and guides. As a community of learners, we all participated in various discussions, periods of musical appreciation, poetry readings, philosophical discussions, and field trips. One after another, the groups startled us with the amount of content they had integrated creatively and effectively in their final projects.

In the last session of the course, we viewed, analyzed, and discussed the videotapes of the group projects. The rewards of hearing and participating in the sometimes thoughtful, sometimes boisterous, often joyfully receptive session, were enormous. At the end of that session, each student received a copy of the class "memory" book which, in yearbook style, highlighted all the main activities, assignments, and student achievements of the semester. This included pictures, drawings, journal entries, essays, and poems—material either produced by the students themselves or favorites for one reason or another chosen from the "masters." The classbook even managed, with the help of digitized computer images, to include reproductions of some scenes from the videotaped student productions and thus served as documentary testimony of our learning

process. This, then, was the nature and shade of our experiment in integrative education.

The Dean's Office as well as the General Education Program at Plymouth State College, of which our integrative course was a part, had stressed the importance of assessment. It was our feeling, however, that traditional methods of testing and grading were inappropriate for the course as we had designed it, and for the goals which we had set for it. Nonetheless, we knew that a valid measure of student success, as well as a measure of success or failure of the course objectives, particularly its integrative validity, was necessary. To accommodate that requirement, we designed a special "final exam." The questions in the exam engaged class members in a process of self-evaluation both as individuals and in terms of their group contributions. In addition, the final contained questions on course evaluation. Each student was given the dreaded take-home final. Eleven essay questions asked about the course: its design, content, activities and assignments. These included questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the course as an integrative educational experience.

Although we cannot provide a completely quantified characterization, we were pleased with the outcome of our assessment effort. The students were as candid in their suggestions for improvement of the course as they were generous in their enthusiasm and praise for it.

In response to asking how the student's understanding of the two disciplines had developed, one student wrote:

> In both. . . I have gained new insights. . . It has made me appreciate art more. . . e.g., the Poetics [of Aristotle] gave me insight into how they [the arts] are philosophical in their own way.

while another said:

> . . . my understanding of both has expanded. You

> can't put a philosopher and a poet together without having some kind of an argument.

Regarding the semester group project:

> I believe the projects . . . contributed greatly to [our] understanding of the integration of philosophy and poetry. However, next time there needs to be more definition of what you expect. Overall the projects encouraged people to be creative in their approaches to express their philosophies and beliefs. . . . there was a lot of work involved but it was also a lot of fun.

> . . . the idea of a group leader should be enforced, . . . making that person specifically responsible to the professor with weekly updates. This would stop some people from slipping through the cracks and not contributing.

> It was helpful to have [the professors'] input and recommendations in putting together the projects; [their coaching] helped us develop our projects much more fully.

And, regarding the question what relationship do you perceive between philosophy and poetry, these responses stood out:

> As the [visiting] poet, Greg Delanty, said, "Philosophy is like the sea and poetry a fish." I think that is a good characterization. Catching fish gives one a specific look or feel into philosophy. . . . Our project tried to capture this same essence by tying nature (philosophy, the sea) and man (poetry, the fish) one with the other.

Finally, to a summary question regarding the classroom environment and the lecture/activity/discussion format:

> I can't think of anything that would improve this . . . It was the best course I have ever taken. The classroom environment was wonderful, the music was great, the cookies [and coffee] were great, though you need something for non-coffee drinkers. Meeting once a week was a great idea, and I liked that . . . format . . . I loved this course.

The students' responses evidenced a solid endorsement of the integrative concept, and of the value of concentrating on their creative and critical processes of thought and communication. Many of the students remarked that they enjoyed the course more than any they had taken, and they felt that what they had learned was valuable to them in their own lives because it had been presented from an integrative perspective. We were delighted by a letter about the course that one of the students later wrote to the president of our college, and which she subsequently shared with us. In it, the student sums up her feelings:

> This course . . . has cultured me in a way that I can understand these two aspects [philosophy and poetry] together. . . . I had never had the opportunity to go [to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts] . . . I have since then visited the museum two more times. If we hadn't gone in this class, I probably would never have made it there. . . . Overall . . . I have never had a class that has broadened my views on several topics such as Poetry and Philosophy . . . has."

Our experience with this course confirms our original conjectures that 1) involving students in the processes that characterize the disciplines enhances their comprehension and interpretations of complex and intel-

lectual challenging contexts; and 2) that writing and reading, listening and speaking, imagining and interpreting are at the core of all disciplines. Learning and communication are indeed such that the processes themselves are crucial pedagogically. Too often students are expected to memorize or mimic, rather than engage in—think *in* and *about* the subject matter of their courses. Any course, therefore, can be vitalized in its form and content by following an integrative strategy that emphasizes the priority of process and the centrality of language.

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The Drawing Sketchbook Revisited

Robert Morton

I recently had the pleasure of sharing my article, "Iconology: An Alternate Form of Writing" (published in the first Plymouth State College Writing Across the Curriculum journal in the fall of '89) with Terry Downs, a colleague in my department. This article, which described an artist's sketchbook as a journal and its importance in the development of visual literacy, impressed Terry because he, too, has always required a sketchbook in his classes. At the beginning of each semester, Terry and I each show the students in our classes some pages from our sketchbooks as a model for how sketchbooks have worked for us in our art. A sample fragment of Terry's sketchbook and my sketchbook are displayed on the following pages.

Terry and I had never talked formally about our similar requirement, and I found it reassuring that my theory and personal experience could be of use to another faculty member. Terry wanted his students to read and reflect about the iconology article. So, I gathered for him from Mary Lou Hinman, the Director of Writing Across the Curriculum at PSC, ten copies of the WAC journal to give to his students. Below are examples of some of the students' responses to the journal article and some of Terry's replies to their reflections.

Student Journal Responses

S. - "The sketchbook is a catalog of ideas. I go back to old drawings all the time—it's my 'library to draw from.'"

P. - "My ideas do come mostly from my sketchbook."

D. - "A sketchbook can be a valuable asset for myself or any other artist."

K. - "I realize how important a sketchbook is and I enjoy working in my sketchbook."

E. - "My sketchbook hits the reflection of my mind at different points of drawing, writing, etc. The point of my sketchbook is to draw many or as many needed sketches to come to a conclusion in my head."

Student Responses and Terry's Replies

H. - "The problem with me is that when I come up with one good idea, it is hard for me to expand on it."
Terry - "You did this with your last print. Realize that the good ideas can bear revision and expansion. They stop only when you say stop."

L. - "I've been brainstorming more and having more creative ideas."
Terry - "They go hand in hand."

K. - "From reading this, I have realized that I should incorporate drawings everyday to go along with my writings."
Terry - "You have the motivation to do it."

J. - "So far sketches were very important in developing ideas for my

embossing project because of the exactness (on my part) of the intended result. . . . Sometimes, for me, I need to get the feeling for the individual project, materials, etc., before a sketch is desired (needed?)."

Terry - "These were 'sketches' created in the same spirit."

K. - "Doodling, to me, is the best way to get my frustrations out. I can tell by my drawings if I was in a good or bad mood. The pencil marks on a piece of paper say something. And if you can read what it says, then you can get many of your thoughts and ideas from your old sketches, and make new ones."

Terry - "The more marks you make, the more you say."

J. - "Robert Frost carried a pen and paper and Bob Morton carries a pen and paper and each one uses it for communication. . . I think of my sketchbook as a personal reference. Maybe that's being selfish but these are my thoughts, feelings, and emotions."

Terry - "The artist *must* be selfish so as to share *more*."

A. - "I enjoy working in my sketchbook. But I believe that many of the teachers think that we students only have one class—their class."

Terry - "You mean you have another!?"

W. - "I have numerous drawings in my sketchbook, mostly figures. But I want my work to say something about me; something universal—like love. . . Until I can find a way to say these things, my sketchbook isn't any good to me."

Terry - "Don't separate your sketchbook from your art."

The Multi-Demensional Learning Tool

In looking over these comments, one can see an exchange system in operation here beginning with my sketchbook article, then Terry's assign-

ment of it for reading and review, the students' written reflections on my article and their own sketchbook, Terry's responses to their reflections, and finally my own reflections on teaching and learning. In any other subject, this interchange would probably be typical of a journal assignment. What makes this situation unique is that in art, this dialogue started with the visual language of the sketchbook. The visual literacy aspects of the sketchbook created linkages to other language processes of listening, speaking, and reading. One can see in Terry's comments the personal and sensitive attention he gave to his students, as well as his wit and sense of humor.

My Reflections

I was very pleased to read the students' responses Terry shared with me. I felt it made the effort of writing the article worthwhile. The responses were all very positive, except for one which talked about my methods as a teacher. The journal entry and Terry's reply are listed below.

K. - "I feel that my sketchbooks are lacking, though I already knew that before I read this iconology article. Having Bob as a teacher, you learn how you are supposed to keep a sketchbook—which seems to be his way. Sure his ideas are good, but he expects you to do things the way he does. I know that I need help in my sketchbook. But I feel someday my flow of sketches will come."

Terry - "Start now."

The student's very significant reaction of avoidance to criticism speaks for itself. This one negative comment by a student who disagreed with me caused me the most reflection. It forced me to question the value of my system. I am somewhat particular about the development of good habits in the production of works of art, and I consider the sketchbook a vital part of that generation and development of ideas. A Zen master once said, "We teach best what we most need to learn," and I thought

maybe this truth was connected to my method. After rereading the journal entry several times, I went beyond being defensive and realized that the student agreed with the maintenance of the sketchbook. The student was objecting to the fact that she believed I expected her to do what I do. Now I had a handle on the problem.

I do have an idea of what the ideal, well-kept sketchbook should contain. I also know that a volume of work produces a flow of ideas or what I call thematic material. Yes, the sketchbook is of value to me, but was it something peculiar to my way of working or did other artists find similar efforts meaningful? I had seen the Da Vinci sketchbooks in Windsor Castle in England, so I did have an "art historical" defense of my requirement. But somehow, I still was not really at ease with this student's comment.

An Awakening

I was still pondering this one negative comment when I recently traveled to Washington, D.C., for a conference on sculpture. One of the morning lectures was held at the new Sackler Gallery of Eastern Art, and it was during my exploration of the collection of Indian works that I put my sketchbook problem to rest.

In one of the gallery rooms, I came across two cases containing accordian folded sheets of exquisite drawings that were Indian equivalents of sketchbooks! The sketches were obviously meant to be kept together and were a plan of some kind for a larger, more formal work. I now had my justification for my sketchbook requirement. The Indian artist was from a different time and culture with a completely different aesthetic. Yet, I recognized his method of storing ideas as so very similar to mine; and of course to DaVinci's as well. The application of the design of the sketchbook is where an artist's display of thinking is revealed. I now understood that I had never told that student that her sketchbook had to be my way. I had shown my sketchook as *one* way. But I had asked that

the sketchbook be *a way* of thinking for the generation and production of art.

To that student whose comment was so provocative--- thank you. I would like to offer that student this advice: "In the absence of a sketchbook method that works for you, take what is offered. You are in good company with many of the greats of the art world."

***Robert Morton** is Chair of the Art Department where he teaches courses in sculpture and design. This is his second article for the* Plymouth State College Journal on Writing Across the Curriculum.

Writing Assignments in World Politics Courses

Thomas O. Schlesinger

Walking out of Rounds Hall with me after class, Benny, a sophomore in one of my international relations courses, asked for, and received, some pointers on the required paper. "You've just told me to write exactly as I've been taught not to write," said he.

"And who, pray tell, taught you?" asked I.

He gave an over-the-shoulder nod across the street, toward Ellen Reed House—the English Department.

"Hmmm. . . fine—I'm not surprised to hear they tell you something different," I told him. "The English profs teach you to write in a generic way, say, fiction, or generically expository stuff. I want you to write a social science paper."

With some "Hmmm-ing" of his own, Benny shuffled off, wearing a mildly annoyed and not altogether convinced frown. How dare they teach different ways to write in different departments at the same college!

Benny did make an effort to heed my suggestions, but it took persistence. For example, the introduction to his first draft, included a vague

statement like: "Conflict between Arabs and Black Africans in the Sudan is a serious problem and should be examined in greater detail... including its history, causes, and future." The purpose statement I eventually settled for read more like this: "This paper will examine social, economic, and political aspects of the Sudanese civil war. The geography and history of the conflict will be briefly reviewed, followed by discussion of population characteristics, agricultural and commercial organization of the country. Political outcomes of these circumstances will be analyzed, with special attention to the impact of Marxist ideology and the Islamic faith."

Such experiences have taught that many students find the requirements for a social science paper substantially divergent from other writing instruction and assignments. They learn of the need to adjust their writing style to the demands of a given discipline. This article will describe and explain typical writing assignments for courses related to world politics, with emphasis on apparent differences from other forms of writing. I will deal with assignment objectives, choice of topics, purpose statements, organization, sources, the normative aspects, and some typical problems.

Assignment Objectives

One of the college-wide assumptions of liberal arts education is that our students acquire or improve their skills in written expression. Thus we shall deal only with objectives that may take on a different orientation in social science writing. Generic writing-skill values aside, three themes bear mention here: motivation, knowledge of sources, and relationships among various social science concepts.

One assignment serves partly to motivate. Required early in the introductory course, it is designed to lead Benny, preferably as a freshman, to think of politics as something directly affecting his life. This essay asks Benny to relate a problem of world politics to his personal circumstances (e.g., to his family, lifestyle, or personal values). The idea is that writing what amounts to a quasi-personal letter to the instructor may help

Benny deal with common inhibitions about what is for him and many others a daunting and even threatening subject. At the same time, depending on variations in high school experience, this is for some students the first attempt to write about political reality.

The assignment is to discuss changing notions of patriotism with various generations in the family. Like others, Benny reported that he never had a serious talk with Grandpa, or even with Dad, about "the war," and results of such talks are sometimes startling. For example, by demonstrating a sincere and serious interest in the senior's experience, after encountering resistance to discussions of war or patriotism, he may finally have begun a closer relationship.

Another occasional essay assignment leads the student to learn new and different usage of terms and related concepts. "State" and "nation" are routinely misused in popular American discourse, and specific new meanings and usages for these are difficult for some to conceptualize.

Other assignments are designed to acquaint students with specific sources of information, such as the *New York Times* Index and *New York Times* Microfilm, the U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*, the *UN Monthly Chronicle*, the *Congressional Digest*. Increased skill in using specialized sources is a significant objective of political science courses. Regrettably, so far the technological revolution works against that. All too often students go to the computerized index relevant to the subject, punch in one or two key words from the assignment sheet, and in some cases end up with a bibliography identical with those of dozens of others in the class. The hope is that directing students to other specific sources will compensate for this.

Typically, in a foreign policy course, the assignments are designed to force the student away from commonly used abstract generalizations (e.g., "U.S. economic assistance should be given only to democracies"). These are avoided by using concrete and specific questions ("As an intern for Senator Jones, you've been told to write a position paper for the senator on a bill to provide U.S. economic assistance to Guatemala. You are to

consider constituent politics as well as foreign policy substance. How should the senator vote on the bill, and why?")

The traditional full-length term-paper assignments occur in upper-level "area studies" courses on the politics of Africa, Latin America, or the Middle East. Here the main objective is to improve understanding of how various political forces and movements interact. An acceptable comparative topic would be "How Islamic revolution affects the drive toward modernization in two specific countries."

The expectation and hope is that the student's interest in the subject will be stimulated, that familiarity with professional sources of information (e.g., regionally oriented journals) will be increased, that evaluation of relative credibility of sources will be practiced, that concepts and analytic approaches taught in text and class will be applied to different data, and that personal values will be engaged, and even committed, in statements of policy preference. (Example: "In region Y of country X, preservation of an indigenous culture may be a greater human rights value that modernization because. . .")

Often I find that developing an appropriate topic, scouting the general availability of adequate sources for that topic, and stating the topic clearly, are the most difficult— indeed sometimes agonizing—steps for students. This stage typically calls for the most intense interaction with me, which is not to say that it always happens. It is often difficult to get students to realize that this interaction is a crucial step in producing the paper.

Formal Requirements

For traditional term papers, I require an outline and at least a first draft. Both of these receive a grade that counts as a quiz, and definitely bears no relationship to the grade assigned to the paper in final form. What is being evaluated is the process of planning and drafting a paper, not the paper itself.

The three points for which I mostly check both outline and draft are 1) appropriate choice of subject; 2) sufficiently explicit and clearly defined purpose statement, hypothesis, or question to be answered by the paper; 3) sufficiently organized structure of the body of the paper.

Topic assignments almost invariably call for the application of some sort of theory to a specific set of "real-world" data. That's what social science is about. Getting typical American students to deal with theory beyond the most facile generalizations ("democracy si, communism no") is a painful process.

As I've already indicated, the purpose statement tends to be a major stumbling block. Often this is symptomatic of student failure to focus sufficiently on a clearly defined problem. This is perhaps the main reason for insisting that the purpose statement be elaborated in substantial detail. This is also a general perception that the title of the paper can adequately take care of that. I often urge students to formulate an actual question that the paper will finally answer in a head-on fashion—preferably not one that can be answered simply yes or no. Of course, testing a hypothesis as true or false does just that, but it should present many if's and but's and gray areas whose pro or con evidence is discussed.

One line of reasoning I like to give students for carefully delineating a research question goes like this: Here's one option. With the question you have now, go to the library and collect everything that seems to vaguely relate to it until you have enough to fill "n" pages—the length of the paper suggested in the assignment instructions. Simply fill 15 pages to satisfy grouchy old Schlesinger. The other option is this: if you have a definite question to answer, the things you find in your research will either help answer it or not, and the length of the paper will derive to a large extent from that. In the end you'll have the true satisfaction of having answered the question, rather than just having filled pages. One of my favorite graduate school profs defined explanation, I remind them, as "when the mind comes to rest."

The purpose statement should be followed by an equally explicit preview of the organization of the paper, i.e., how the reader will be taken from point A to point Z. Like good speakers, the paper should tell the reader where (e.g., what assumptions or historical takeoff lines) it "comes from," how it proposes to proceed onward, and where it expects to end up. Suspense and surprise are great in other kinds of writing, but have, as a general rule, no place in a social science paper. A typical exception might be some especially startling evidence.

Students preparing more advanced and comprehensive papers are urged to attempt some overview and discussion of the existing literature on their subject. This should lead rather naturally to an explanation of the student's particular choice of sources for the paper at hand and can, in some cases, be supplemented by a requirement that the bibliography be annotated.

An obvious follow-up for the structural preview is the use of sub-headings. These help the student-author to stay organized as much as they do the reader. For students who have the least experience with formal papers and whose mind is again set on writing in a more story-telling, rather than analytic style, this suggestion seems at times downright offensive. Why do you want to break up my beautifully flowing prose with your painfully obvious signposts? I like to be subtle, to make my reader feel and think. Sorry, Benny. There should be absolutely no doubt where the reader is at any given point in following your thoughts.

And as for the feeling, believe it or not, we do very much encourage it, but not by vagueness about the flow of the argument. Rather, the feelings should be engaged by clearly identifying the values implicit in specific choices of data, or problem formulations, and preferences adopted to resolve doubts. Once values are clarified, personal choices are strongly encouraged. The instructions typically contain statements such as "A good paper will contain some part of yourself, or your own personality; it will reflect and clearly convey to the reader your position on the values at issues."

The question of values often arises with the choice of evidence. It is sometimes mistakenly assumed that social science instructors require "balanced" middle-of-the-road papers which end up lukewarm. This arises from confusion between presentation of evidence, its evaluation, and implied policy choices. Social science does indeed require that the selection of evidence avoid *a priori* bias; it requires that a representative sample of evidence be presented and that evidence on *all* sides of the issue be discussed. And, contrary to what is unfortunately taught by debating and reinforced by American law, there are invariably more than two. The value choices associated with "feelings" should emerge in the interpretation of the evidence and most of all in the evaluation of policies that inevitably derive from these.

Some Taboos:

- When assigned comparison of "X" policy in countries A and B, a frequent result is what I call the tandem comparison. Eight pages of country A, eight pages of country B, and a page and a half of "comparison." Comparison should be conceptually organized.

- Usually, but not always, I urge avoidance of the sexiest subject of the day. A current example is terrorism. Despite the obvious motivation that comes from current relevance, the beginner's learning in social science benefits from a certain amount of distance. When one is nearly overwhelmed by the daily headlines, and by the liberties which the press takes with concepts and terms, that distance is reduced to zero. However, if the assignments lead students to dull topics, eventually there is retribution: once, when a professor moaned about the dull pile of student papers he had to read, a colleague replied, "You must make dull assignments."

- "Sending away" for material is a scourge. I suspect students learn this from some teachers in K-12 who tend to abuse the public relations resources of government, corporations, foreign embassies, and international organizations by having their classes write them for brochures and press releases. This rarely produces anything that couldn't have been found in the school library, except that the illustrations can be used in cut and paste fashion. For college papers the practice usually results in late papers and is detrimental to serious research and thoughtful analysis. Most of those who distribute a lot of material have big public relations axes to grind. I don't know where some of this nonsense (and surely the related plague of cut-and-paste as "learning") originates, but it's not my idea of education.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Social science writing assignments consist of a few rules:

1. Careful choice of topic.
2 Explicit and detailed statement of the problem being addressed.
3. Fully discernible structure and organization of the material.
4. Linkage of social science abstraction and generalizations to "data"—concrete historical events—as well as personal experience and values.
5. Proper use and evaluation of appropriate sources.

While I know what I try to *teach*, I clearly have no better way than anyone else of determining exactly what or how much of that students *learn* from formal social science paper assignments. At the lowest, most direct level, it may be the instrumental value of familiarity with the kind of papers that will be demanded of them in graduate school. We all have the occasional good fortune of observing that a senior's paper is much better

than earlier work. Yet the cause for that improvement may lie in anything from daily flossing to the regular Thursday night partying.

Thus the nagging final question remains how to measure *what* and *how much* my writing assignments achieve? Guess you'd better ask Benny . . .perhaps after his first few months of grad school, or some time on a job where he must prepare and present reports.

Thomas O. Schlesinger, *a professor in the Social Science Department, teaches courses in political science which focus on world politics, American foreign policy, and the politics of the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. His publications include* Austrian Neutrality in Postwar Europe *and various articles.*

The author benefited from a joint editing session with other Writing Across the Curriculum participants, as well as from the comments of Pat Schlesinger.

In Defense of Pluralism: An Essay in Trespass

Anindya Datta

As I read the "Call for Papers" for this second volume of the *PSC Journal on Writing Across the Curriculum*, I feel I can claim that this essay belongs to one of the suggested topics, namely, reflections on writing in the disciplines. Five years ago, Sally Boland put me on the original committee called the Task Force on Writing Across the Curriculum. I attended quite religiously the first few meetings of the Task Force and even made some comments from time to time as the ebb tides of adrenaline alternated with the flow tides. Much of my comments was not very well focused, partly because I did not, to start with, have an adequate idea of what writing across the curriculum meant. Instinctively, however, I made one comment, that the projects for writing had to be very different for the different disciplines, that we must eschew Procrustean uniformity. Mary-Lou Hinman was anxious to embark on the program and I was too ignorant to be of much help. So, I initiated and accomplished my replacement by a person whose certitude about the *summum bonum* of life allows me generally, albeit paradoxically, to preserve my own values at some safe distance.

The Task Force took off soon thereafter, and Mary-Lou's expostulations and remonstrations worked wonders with me. I was converted to her cause. I participated in a well-attended and well-orchestrated workshop, discovered some fascinating persons like Robert Hayden, and even

did some writing assignments in the presence of a mixed gathering and read them aloud. Shortly after that, I introduced "writing" (Journals, Reports, etc.) in my courses as a regular and systematic feature. Things were quite upbeat for some time and my original caveat, that the projects of writing had to be very different for different disciplines, was about to recede into oblivion, when suddenly came a rude awakening, the circumstances of which may be less important here than the question that was raised in my mind afresh.

There is a fundamental, but unresolved, question of what makes good teaching in a discipline which simultaneously enables the students to write well in that discipline. In what follows, I shall attempt to provide a sketch of some material, which veers around the problematique centered in this fundamental, but unresolved, question. The limitation of space will not permit me to do more.

Following Plato, a body of thought aspiring to resemble anything like a philosophy of education must have, to a greater or less degree, an ethical theory justifying a goal, a metaphysical theory supporting some of its operational implications, and an epistemological framework explaining the effectiveness of the teaching methods. Whatever the importance of it to the modern mind, a secularized refrain in terms of Locke, namely, the production and maintenance of a good society, defined as one in which people find pleasure or happiness in the performance of duty (or, perhaps, pursuit of life), gets inscribed on the mast of any modern-day educational project. With metaphysics being held at bay, therefore, the epistemological desideratum turns out to be the most contested ground in the modern education system.

In Europe in the inter-war period, and in America until as late as the early 60's, educational psychology fell under the domination of behaviorism, which sought to banish "mind" from all theory of education. It was almost a non-arguable thesis, a pronunciamento, a policy statement, in the name of objective methods. Fortunately, its spell was not too long-lived.

Today even among the behavioral revisionists the naive model of stimulus-response is no longer in use. The organism, O, as a black box, has been inserted into the the S-O-R model, and interactive feedbacks have appeared in other models. The decisive break with behaviorism, however, came first tentatively with the Gestalt psychologists and then more dramatically with Piaget and his followers, and the linguistic theorist, Chomsky. Although they offer very different perspectives on the nature of language and its development, both Piaget and Chomsky are firmly opposed to the view that human learning can be understood in terms of the reinforcement connections between stimulus and response. The fact, however, remains that the bane of behaviorism is still widespread, sometimes under different rubrics, often incognito, in our education system.

Today even a freshman knows something about cognitive science, the most active field in the theory of learning. Cognition is defined as the "mental activities—how information enters the mind, how it is stored and transformed, and how it is retrieved and used to perform such complex activities as problem solving and reasoning. Thinking—the manipulation and transformation of information in memory—and language—a sequence of words—are important aspects of cognition." (Santrock, *Psychology*, 2nd edition, 1988). And how is language defined?—"a sequence of words that involves infinite generativity, displacement, and rule systems. The rule systems include phonology (sound system), morphology (meaning of sounds we say and hear), syntax (how words are combined for acceptable phrases and sentences), semantics (meaning of words and sentences), and pragmatics (ability to engage in conversation effectively)."

So, language, it would seem, is a highly complex, but strictly rule-governed, infinitude. And the newly emerging cognitive science seeks to deal with the mediation of our knowledge of the external world by *representations*, i.e., by mental objects that stand for things outside. It should follow then that the mediation that connects mental representations in different disciplines with their corresponding expressions through written language will call for different kinds of facilitation for its efficiency. When a mathematical discipline is at issue, there can be some fascinating, though

unsuspected, features involved.

Philosophically speaking, cognitive science has very pronounced Cartesian implications. The first such implication is that representations have no necessary connection to the things they represent (often a mathematician's stock-in-trade), known as representational skepticism. The second implication is that it is possible to study the mind without paying any attention to the reality it is supposed to represent (again often a mathematician's stock-in-trade), known as methodological solipsism. The third implication is that mind and body are two different kinds of things, known as Cartesian dualism.

When a discipline (say, a mathematical discipline) is so characteristically imbued with the first two implications, is it possible that the mapping into language in such a case is best accomplished with a stricter adherence to the structural formalism? At a lower level of abstraction, we may point out that the cognitive science, as it is developing, is not free from very thorny ontological and epistemological issues. When a mathematical statistician deals with the concept of R^2 (goodness of fit), is she dealing with a propositional attitude or an example of qualia (felt experience)? Is it know *that* or know *how*? Is it procedural, declarative, or tacit knowledge? One may know declaratively that a bicycle has two wheels and that one must balance in order to ride it. One may not know how to ride a bicycle on that basis. That requires prolonged problem-solving, which a learner of mathematics must undertake (one can also learn to work out a mathematical problem by rote, without learning). As Kohler showed, such problem-solving needs insight, preceded by cool, quiet, prolonged pondering.

Incidentally, take this questionable, but standard, claim. Integration of ideas is supposed to be facilitated when there is a direct relation between two ideas, and impeded when the relation must be inferred. A textbook example is as follows:

> Intergration facilitated:
>
> Ed was given an alligator for his birthday. The alligator was his favorite present.
>
> Integration delayed:
>
> Ed was given lots of things for his birthday. The alligator was his favorite present.
>
> (Weiten, *Psychology*, 1989)

Will it be invariably wrong to say that the second case, by creating a momentary suspense and the appropriate atmosphere, makes a deeper impression on the mind? The second one is cooler, quieter and more effective. A mathematician may prefer the second one! It may be more like a mathematical conclusion.

What I am driving at is that a discipline like mathematics, for example, is a uniquely structured discipline, and human language, too, is a complex, but highly structured, matter. It is possible that lectures in mathematics, for example, at the college level should be more structured, not less; that students may both learn mathematics and write about it better when a cool, quiet, formal, non-emotional environment prevails in the classroom, free from the excesses of noisy catechism. Such an environment may not be created successfully overnight. We may need to teach our students of the IAC (Introduction to the Academic Community) course what to expect in some of the disciplines in particular, that neither being couch-potatoes nor behaving hyperactively in the classroom is appropriate or beneficial, that emotion can also be recollected in tranquility. Or, alternatively, it takes the right emotion to control emotion. (Incidentally, one of my nephews finished College Algebra at the age of eight or nine, helped non-intrusively along by me. Later in life, he also earned the National Science Foundation, U.S. President's Award for young investigators in science. It was all accomplished in tranquility. He has *written* two books and many papers since then. I am also finding my students writing their journals quite well on the basis of my relatively structured lectures.)

Indeed, the connections between mathematics and language may be

very deep and organic. In his Managua lectures, Chomsky speculated on the mathematical ability of human beings, considering that it was never a factor in evolution. He thought the mathematical ability of human beings might just be a reflection of some other ability. What is that ability? Probably language. In a certain abstract sense, the structure of mathematics is abstracted from the structure of language.

But that is a deeper matter which may never be resolved. In the meantime, we may quite advisedly ponder over the following remarks of Bertrand Russell on the contrast between Behaviorism and Gestalt psychology:

> Animals studied by Americans rush about frantically, with incredible display of hustle and pep, and at last achieve the desired solution by chance. Animals observed by Germans sit still and think, and at last evolve the solution out of their inner consciousness.
>
> (quoted in Johnson-Laird, *Computer and the Mind*, 1988)

That should inhibit any unthinking zeal on the part of anybody for regimenting our teachers' styles.

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Born in Dhaka in Bangladesh, ***Anindya Datta*** *had his early education in Calcutta, India. He did his graduate work at the University of Calcutta, Washington University and Florida State University. He taught in the University System of Florida for nine years before he came to the Plymouth State College in 1983, where he teaches economics. Professor Datta was recently named the 1990 Distinguished Teacher at Plymouth State College.*

Thoroughly Departmental

Mark R. Christensen

During the course of the previous year, several members of the English department have been collaborating, however loosely, in the writing of poetry. This collaboration has taken several forms, including discussion of works in a weekly writing group, exchange of poems and responses via the departmental mailbox, discussions of poems over lunch, and guest presentations of poems in our classes. We have talked about our poems in homes, offices, classrooms, hallways, restaurants and, occasionally, while sitting on a stone bench on campus. All of us are aware that these interactions have affected our writing. The following poems have all, in some way, been influenced by our collaborators.

***Mark R. Christensen** was an assistant professor in the English Department where he taught literature, writing, and English methods courses before leaving to accept a position at Bemidji State University.*

The Bare Truth About Bernini's Baldacchino

Professor Hunnewell asked us to write
A freewrite on Bernini's Baldacchino.
My notes record his words, "Precious protected contents,
the focal point of the great church."

Here is what I wrote, more or less as I wrote it:

No mystery or religion here.
Power.

Gaudy, ornate, offensive.
Do some Catholic critics feel free not to like this?

Ugly exquisite and hideous monstrosity

Wholly alien
Can't be assimilated in any human scale.

A grotesque mistake.

(When I go to St. Peter's, I look at the Pieta and the old bronze statue
of St. Peter.
The one where pilgrims have kissed his foot off.
But that's just the way of saying which statue I mean.
It's demeaning to a great work to talk like that.
Like reducing the Romanesque structure in Pisa to The Leaning
Tower.
Sure, it leans, but it also glows.

But that's an aside.
Back to the Baldacchino.)

Vast serpentine pillars.

Toilet paper tubes twisted and bronzed.
Flapping flags draped from the lofty platform
Grandly misshapen figures atop it all.

Loathesome golden toad.
Signifying nothing to me but opulence and waste.

A waste, a waste, a waste, a waste.
Bernini—great talent and energy
Wasted wasted wasted.

Only an oxymoron will express my view of Bernini.
Let's warm up to it: loathesome bronze idol
Exquisitely hideous.
Hideously exquisite
Opulent waste

Ravishing decadence.

Richard Chisholm

London: My Brother Describes Murder

Torso draped on the top
bunk's edge, he explains
it really happens. I look up.

He means it used
to happen—the bloodied head
of Anne Boleyn, the Tower

where Richard
had the princes smothered.
It happens nowadays, he says, his slick

white face back-lit
by an oldest smile.
I fit my head

to a wooden groove, I try to gasp
through linen. *And Mom can't stop it*
and Dad can't stop it—

I throw my hands
against my ears to block
his leaning down: *no one can.*

Bonnie Auslander

spring dance

I saw a woman dancing with children
like a maid in a minuet of poppets and scarves.

she smoothed through schools of
child-voiced murmurs,
humming her play-along laughter.

like minnows,
children were coming together and
splitting and coming together
in a game of
someone touches someone you're it.

they spilled over the walk,
milling and scattering
before me.

she skimmed near the walk,
as though she thought
to approach me,
then danced away spinning,
dancing and spinning,
drawing the children
around her.

she shimmered light
footed to the littlest child,
touching a gentle you're it.

he followed her graciously,
sure of his welcome and of
someone to touch.

he wrapped his arms around her legs,
his face pressed firmly
between her knees,
holding his partner you're it.

she caressed the back of his suppliant head,
with each hand welcoming
someone to touch,
and shivered
in her
grace.

why,
since she is not mine,
and the child is not mine,
why, then,
do they stay with me?

Mark Christensen

Taking the Course

I go more often now
to be a student. True,
the lesson is always
the same, more or
less. I never quite
get it. The expectations
are so high; they
make me feel more
happens than just
the learning talked
about, the drama
enacted. The way
we interact always
amazes us. Someone
always brings a
bite to eat, we
break it into pieces
and everyone always
gets a little bit, just
enough. And the whole
thing is always
like that, not just
the sharing of food.
When it is over you wake
up sort of and feel tired,
in a strange way, from
boredom, or remembered
pain; you've just been
out of it and let down,
sometimes hard, yet
somehow, at some point,

you remember later,
taken up. Do I want
to go back again? you wonder.

Robert Garlitz

Good Friday - Afternoon

I peeked beyond the
curtain - a thread fell on me:
oh, the pain of it!

Passion Saturday

Must I sing and talk
today, a grave day, when you
demand soul silence?

Easter Morning

Was it really
Jesus Christ, Superstar? God,
No! Super servant.

Henry Vittum

Journals

A Professor and Her Student Respond to Academic Journals

Mary-Lou Hinman and Beth A. Loring

The professor begins.

Several years ago students in my Introduction to Literature class were debating spiritedly about a Robert Frost sonnet when one student turned to me, seeking arbitration. "What *is* the tone?" she asked. I shrugged, wanting the class to work through their own understanding of the poem. "Well," the student demanded in exasperation, "look it up in the Teacher's Manual."

I remember the incident with both amusement and sadness because it clearly shows how often the American education system emphasizes "the right answer" over the process that teaches students to find their own answers. In the interest of helping students find that process, I began using academic journals in my literature courses five years ago.

The journals were a substitute for the essay quizzes I had given for years in an attempt to force students to read the assigned material. But quizzes (at least ones I gave) had built-in problems. Students didn't like to take risks with material that would be graded. Instead of reading the literature, they tried to read my mind, to write on the quiz what they thought I wanted to read.

As I thought about incorporating journals into my classes, I could see that they, too, might have built-in problems. What would keep students from writing fifteen entries all at once instead of writing individual entries after each reading assignment? What would the quality of the writing and thinking be if I didn't grade each entry? Would the students consider the journals busy work rather than a legitimate academic endeavor? I knew I didn't want to read "diary entries"; could I convince students to go beyond gut-feeling to serious and reflective critical thought? I assigned the first journals with some real doubts.

Five years later I view journal writing as one of the most important and challenging aspects of my courses. I know journals are not universally loved by students; some of them are quite blunt about their feelings on course evaluations. But over eighty percent of my students endorse the concept of journal writing—some begrudgingly, most enthusiastically. All students view journals as more work, but most see the work as productive, pertinent, and helpful. I wondered, however, what a student who had written academic journals for a variety of professors in a variety of modes might say about the benefits and pitfalls of this kind of writing. I approached one of my ex-students, Beth Loring, who agreed to collaborate with me on an article assessing journals as a pedagogical tool.

Professor and student find areas of agreement.

Beth and I were able to agree on a list of positive benefits derived from the use of academic journals in classes I had taught and she had taken:

- First of all, students learn the important thing is to think, not necessarily to be right. They are able to explore ideas in their journals without being penalized and are therefore more apt to take risks.

- Second, because students are more often right than wrong in their assessments of what they read, their confidence increases when they understand that they can read critically. When they begin to believe in their own abilities to read and think, students are more apt to challenge their teachers' assumptions. Therefore, classes are livelier and more productive for students and professor alike.

- Third, student retention of material increases dramatically. If journal entries connect with class discussions, other assignments, and examinations, students understand more and retain material more effectively. Students seldom forget material they have worked through on their own and become increasingly adept at separating the important from the unimportant.

- Fourth, students have to think about the material before they come to class, for it is impossible to write a good journal entry without some thought. Beth insists that education is most successful when students react to what they learn; an academic journal provides an opportunity for expressing such reactions. She also sees the journal as a place for students to express ideas that they cannot comfortably state in class. In this case, the journal becomes not only an intellectual and creative outlet but also an agent for fostering more productive and fulfilling student-teacher relationships.

- Finally, in spite of the emphasis in journal writing on content rather than mechanics, the student writing in journals is often far superior to their work in revised essays. Beth and I noted that the quality of writing in student journals improves as the semester progresses, and that improvement is often mirrored in the profes-

> sor's comments. In one of Beth's own journals, the professor's comments changed from "Okay, but . . ." to "A wonderful entry!—a fine reading of the story." Beth had a written record of her improved ability to analyze literature and her improved writing skill.

Professor and student find areas of disagreement.

Beth and I agree that academic journals, for the most part, effectively push students to greater understanding. But some of the aspects of journal writing I find most positive, Beth questions. I have felt that because students know they have to write about what they read, they are less apt to give up on difficult material. I always cite a classic student entry from one of my American Literature classes:

> Emerson says on page 898 that the essence of life is spontaneity or instinct. I'm not quite sure what he is getting at. Are spontaneity and instinct the same thing? Wait a minute, I think I can answer my own question now that I've thought about it. Is he saying that if we acted out of instinct, that is truly act the way we feel is right to act, then we would inevitably be acting virtuously or correctly—?

I am fairly confident that in pre-journal days, this same student's thought processes would have stopped with "I'm not quite sure what he is getting at." Beth responds that she and other students are still apt to give up on particularly difficult assignments. Instead of confronting such difficulties, Beth says, students mostly find a way to avoid them. She suggests more faculty guidance for particularly difficult reading assignments.

I had anticipated another problem which I have encountered in a few student journals. My goal is to have students write journal entries after they complete their reading but before class discussion. Some students, however, inevitably write their entries after discussion. I have not been

particularly concerned, for I have felt the students were at least synthesizing class discussion and therefore writing useful entries. In my discussion with Beth, however, I discovered that other students are angry at these "leeches," and she reminded me that students must react to assignments on their own if they are ever going to move from passive to active learning. Although she agrees that synthesis is useful, she believes that academic journals are most successful when the professor insists on independent thought and work. She reminded me of my own statement that journals allow instructors to work with students at their own level of understanding and sophistication.

Journals help the professor.

I assign academic journals because I believe they benefit students, but student journals help me in ways I never anticipated:

- Students show me in their entries which assignments work and which ones do not. I now give more careful preliminary comments and instructions to assignments that have proven in the past to be unclear or challenging.

- I immediately discover when students have misconceptions about their reading or about comments I have made in class. I can respond to individual misconceptions in the journals themselves, or I can take class time to return to material that has troubled the group as a whole. I find problem areas *before* examinations.

- Often students force me to look at material in new ways. Sometimes they amaze me with their attention to detail or with their fresh observations.

- I play a different role when I read student journals. Since

how students write is beside the point, I concentrate on *what* they write. I respond to their ideas as a peer—which means I can agree or disagree with their comments and explain why. I find the activity a pleasure, not the drudgery that "grading" exams and papers can be; therefore, I do not begrudge the time I spend reading journal entries. And, as Beth reminds me, this role makes the professor less intimidating. Students react more positively, she insists, and work harder.

- Finally, I can see intellectual growth from the beginning to the end of the term. In a profession where tangibles are few, I am delighted to have a written record of a student's intellectual progress in the course.

The student offers suggestions for better journal assignments.

Academic journals are used in a myriad of ways across the disciplines at Plymouth State College. Of necessity differences in course objectives dictate the guidelines established for the use of journals. Keeping those facts in mind, I offer the following suggestions to the faculty for their consideration:

- Students generally participate in more than one course where academic journals are assigned. Since each professor has a slightly different concept of what a journal should be, faculty should give students *written instructions* to clarify their expectations for students and to avoid misunderstandings.

- Assigning specific topics for journal entries may make more difficult pieces seem less threatening. Furthermore, helping students focus on certain themes and

issues will encourage them to read and think more critically, eventually on their own.

- Professors should collect journals early in the term and frequently after that. This way, any questions or misconceptions about the journal itself or reading assignments will surface, and the professor can deal with them immediately.

- Even though debate is healthy, professors should avoid imposing personal interpretations on students. Instead they should try to work with students at their own level of understanding. The fastest way for faculty to destroy student enthusiasm is to smother students' ideas with their own.

- When possible, faculty should connect journal entries with class discussion, examinations, and assignments. Through this connection of material, students gain more understanding and retain material better.

- Finally, teachers and students alike should do their best to keep the lines of communication open. Students should look to professors for guidance, and professors should look to students for their insights.

As always, the professor gets the last word.

I will continue to use academic journals. I think students learn by writing journal entries, and I learn from reading them. Two years ago Beth enrolled in her first course with required academic journals. Since she had never encountered journals before, she was apprehensive about the experience. Looking back, however, she says, "I realize that those

journal entries encouraged my growth as a student, not to mention my growth as an individual." If that is the case, the experiment I began five years ago has succeeded beyond my expectations.

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Writing Beyond the Form: Professional Dialogue Journals in Elementary Education Methods

Dennise M. Bartelo
Kathleen Birkitt
Lynn Davis

Evaluation forms. Every discipline has some. The Education course, Elementary Teaching Methods I, has used a particular observation form to record sophomore students' practicum experiences in the public schools for the past ten years. In this course, students participate as interns at local public schools where they are supervised by a cooperating teacher and PSC faculty for one morning per week throughout the semester. The students observe classroom teachers, present large and small group lessons, and develop and implement a variety of learning activities. This course is one of the major core experiences before students submit their application for teacher education candidacy.

Observation/participation forms for the Methods I course were constructed with the *intention* of helping students structure and focus their writing in reporting their teaching experiences. The form looked like this:

Observations:

1. Participation: Describe your interaction with particular students and teachers. Discuss activities you conducted.

2. Application: Explain how you might utilize the above observations/participation in your classroom.

3. Signature of Student:
   Signature of Cooperating Teacher:
   (You are encouraged to make comments on the back of this form.)

In retrospect, this structure which we (the instructors of the course) thought might facilitate students' writing seemed to *inhibit* their writing. For example, some students would actually write very large to "fill-up" the space; others would write only a few sentences; and some would attach a typed page with detailed and reflective responses.

Sample student responses:

Susan's observations: "The middle reading group is taking a break from the basal. The math group leaves to go to four different classrooms. My teacher is teaming for social studies and science. . . ."

Steve's observations: "I've conducted several special area programs which focused mainly on the holidays. I've done Columbus Day Bingo, a book on Halloween safety. . . ."

A more insightful entry reviewed a group's discussion based on a children's literature book:

Sarah's observations: "One of the books was about a very tall girl who

felt out of place because of her height. We talked about what it would be like to be an outsider. The children reacted very sympathetically. They said that they would be nice to the girl and treat her like everyone else."

Perhaps because the form discouraged them, the cooperating teachers very seldom responded on the Methods I form. Without the cooperating teacher's feedback, some students' interpretations of classroom events were inaccurate. As the instructors of the course, we found the students completing the form as a mere exercise, rather than using the opportunity to write as a tool to think, clarify, and reflect on their classroom experiences.

Course Changes and the New Form

This past September, we decided to try something new to counteract this passive, lack of ownership, and "bare-bones" reflection-type of writing by students. We modified the Methods I course to include more cooperating teacher participation in the evaluation process. We also concentrated the students at two selected schools (site schools), and did away with the observation/participation form. In place of the form, we asked the students to keep a journal of their teaching experiences. This journal would show their "response ability" to the teaching situation and their "responsibility" in keeping a log of the things they were learning about in the schools. These aspects of response are mentioned as key points in ownership of writing in the process approach described by Hansen (1987).

The students' journal assignment was to comment on "What you saw and heard" and "What you want to know more about." Weekly topics were suggested as possibilities for discussion of student's self concept as a teacher, analysis of the classroom environment, cognitive and affective characteristics of children at specific grade levels, and the curriculum and materials used in the classroom. Students turned in the journal to their cooperating teacher on a weekly basis, and the teacher responded to the questions and made comments on the observations made. The students

then turned in their journals to us for further review and comments.

Journal Results

As a result of this free-write/non-form technique, we found several changes in the interaction and communication between the student intern and the cooperating teacher. The following are some of the things we noticed over the semester:

1. The interactions between the student and the cooperating teacher improved as students used the journal as a "conversation tool" to ask about their experiences. Cooperating teachers wrote more than just their signature in the students' journals. Suggestions for alternative ways of presenting a lesson were given as well as the teacher's personal perspectives on issues in teaching.

2. The dialogue between the students and the cooperating teachers expanded to include the college instructors as well. The result was a three-way line of comments and questions.

3. Students asked more questions in their journals. They also acknowledged the value of the journal as a communication tool when time limited conversations between cooperating teacher and student.

4. The journal helped the cooperating teacher and the college instructors develop an understanding of the student's attainment of course competencies and professionalism.

5. The instructors addressed writing problems that surfaced in student journals and referred appropriate students to the Reading/Writing Center.

6. The seminar topics for classes on campus were revised to address students' questions in their journals in the order they asked them, rather than in the order we had previously outlined in the syllabus.

New Directions

As students became more comfortable with their journals over the semester, the quality of their writing continued to improve. Students wrote personal comments on their experiences and wrote to clarify events and gain insight into the how's and why's of teaching. A partnership seemed to form that allowed the reader—the cooperating teacher—and the writer—the student—to take risks and reflect. An example of one entry that illustrates this improved reflection is seen below:

Jackie's journal: "There seems to be very little off task moments in this classroom. This must say something about my teacher's directions and her class. I wonder what's her secret? I'll have to ask. I wonder how she gets the kids to pay attention without even asking them. I hope I can do this someday, but I don't know. She makes it look so easy and I get so nervous that I'll forget to do something in my lesson. . . ."

Teacher's response: "It may look easy but some days it's not. I said the same thing when I started teaching. You really have to try to develop your own style. . . ."

PSC faculty's comments: "Jackie, you are getting better at focusing on the kids and their reactions to your lesson. Don't be afraid to take the time to wait if you don't have their attention. . . ."

Overall, we found the journal to be a worthwhile experience for our student interns that helped them write about their perceptions and develop a conversational rapport with their cooperating teacher. We plan to continue the use of the journal in the Methods I course next semester. These journals will be part of the teaching experience portfolio that documents progress through the courses to the final student teaching experience. The journals have served as a dialogue for the expression of the joys and the frustrations of working with children in the classroom. We look forward to reading and sharing our students' personal journies into teaching.

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A Journal Revisited

Russell Lord

In my classes journals have lately become one of several innovative tools to develop fluent and reflective writing. I hesitate, however, to advocate too great a control over their subject matter or their method and effectiveness. To be sure, they need to be encouraged and "checked" periodically to keep many students active; but just how far to carry this oversight becomes problematic, and I believe that in this case like Thoreau in "On Civil Disobedience," perhaps the best government is no government at all.

I say this with good reason. Recently I looked back at a series of diary-journals I kept during preparatory school and college years, in which I freely expressed, without thought of audience or constraint, but with several gaps, observations and judgments during the period from 1938 to 1945. Motivation for these records is not hard to understand. Probably the initial reason for keeping them was that around Christmas time, a local insurance company kept giving my father fine leather diaries which I hated to see wasted. Perhaps a stronger motive was the desire to preserve a record of what was to be (I felt) a remarkable life.

In reading over the record for 1941, a critical year in American history, I have discovered an account of growing intellectual awareness, but at the

same time, a critical self-analysis that becomes almost stifling in retrospect. On the periphery is the developing awareness of World War II, which ascends in influence, and then for a time diminishes as personal concerns replace it. I shall cite a chronological selection of items from the year, my own second-semester Upper-Middler (Junior) and first semester Senior years at Andover (note: the following selections are quoted verbatim, although spelling and punctuation have been normalized):

* * *

Year: 1941

January 4: School is looming nearer. . . I shall be sorry. . . to begin again the long grind. . . .

January 12: Practically all the American news of this time is about defense. President Roosevelt is now trying to get power of leasing arms to Britain, etc. There is much dispute over whether he is trying to become a dictator.

January 19: [On the radio] I heard Joseph Szigetti, a violinist who sounds, to me, perfect—without a single flaw.

January 24: I went to the concert given by Mischa Elman after supper—it was the best violin concert I have heard; though he is perhaps not the best violinist, for he made a few mistakes. However, his playing, in general, is masterly.

February 4: . . .I cannot help feeling that Hitler has some plan, which will not be long in coming, and against which England will have a hard job to stand up.

February 17: I spent all evening in reading Maurois' "Ariel" (a life of Shelley). (It took me 4 1/2 hours). My first impressions are that it is very good.

February 23: After supper I went to see a large fire, which entirely consumed a small factory: said to be recently hired by the government. Perhaps sabotage? This was the first real fire I have ever seen, and it was an awe-inspiring sight. Think how London must look, with several fires larger than this, every few nights.

February 27: I finished Strachey's "Queen Victoria," the best biography I have yet read.

March 2: I have only 1 1/2 weeks till vacation, thank goodness. It is always the looking forward to a vacation which is better than the vacation itself; at least in my case.

March 11: The Lend-Lease Bill, for all out British aid, was passed today.

March 15: President Roosevelt this evening spoke on our aid to Britain in a clear speech.

March 20: I read in the evening, finishing the following plays today: Sidney Howard's "They Knew What they Wanted," George Kelly's "Craig's wife," Paul Green's "In Abraham's Bosom," and Elmer Rice's "Street Scene." I liked the second and last best. The first was too ordinary, and the 3rd too gruesome.

March 25: Yugoslavia has joined the Axis: Greece beware! I have been planning all vacation to go on a trip to New York Friday with Mr. Baldwin. I would go on a boat with Dad, but now mother says I cannot go—I would pay my own way, but Dad has to accompany me (I am not capable of going myself?), and it would cost him too much. I suppose it is wrong of me, but I still want very much to go there for the first time.

April 13: I read Maurois' "Disraeli," an excellent biography.

April 18: The Yugoslavs have surrendered and the British are being pushed back in Greece. Slowly, but surely, this country is approaching war. Our

history teacher predicts that by the end of the year, we shall have entered it.

April 26: On the way home 1 cigarette—the first since summer.

May 1: The British are said to have saved 80% of their troops in Greece, by a second Dunkerque; but I fear the Suez Canal is in grave danger.

May 5: Although many are speaking against Lindbergh, I believe that it is right for him to be allowed to speak his views—defeatist though they may be.

May 9: The apple blossoms are out, and these, mingled with lilacs and many other flowers, make the air very fragrant.

May 12-16: Concern with Hess's flight to England. My conclusion: ". . . Hess probably came to England because he disagreed with Hitler's joining the Russians."

May 25: The "Hood," the greatest English battle-cruiser, was today sunk.

May 28: The President made a historic speech last night proclaiming us in a state of emergency: War is soon here.

June 9: After supper I went to the Competition in musical instruments. I played the first movement of Mozart's E flat Concerto, and they say I did well (for me), but, since they wanted to give the prize to a young beginner, Graham, I got none.

June 17: U.S. and Germany broke off diplomatic relations yesterday.

July 28: Well, today I started out on a new experience, that of assistant dishwasher at Langsford House, a hotel of about 110 guests, at Cape Porpoise, Maine. We arrived at 11:15 a.m., and I got right to work. They have an electric machine, so that we merely have to stack the dishes.

August 7: I am having a very good time here, but I would not want to live like this very long, for there is nothing constructive to do in your spare time.

August 9: Today after the breakfast dishes, one of the boys (Charlie Beattie, a bell boy) was fired for stealing a bracelet and some money. As a result the dishwasher became a bell-hop, and I became the chief dishwasher; I receive $7 per week now.

August 14: Roosevelt and Churchill, it was announced today, had a secret (?) meeting and formulated an eight-point peace program. This is a momentous meeting, but we will not feel the effects of it for a little while.

August 19: My present philosophy of life is this: We are all given certain abilities. We are supposed to use these as well as we can. The purpose of life is to see how well we can use those abilities, however slight they may be.

August 31: All phases of life and art are concerned with developing a theme.

September 9: Today it was learned the Germans sank an American ship in the Red Sea and one in the Atlantic. Added to the Greer, these could seem to show that Hitler wants U.S. at war.

September 18: I saw, this evening, the Northern lights. But, unlike the customary appearance, these were of all hues, like huge candles, from all sides, even the south. At times they formed a vault, which covered the entire sky with streaks and shimmering light. I have never seen them as clear.

September 25: An example of the lower living standards necessitated by the decrease in ability to buy the metal products desired, brought about by the war, is brought home. This morning our water boiler broke. We cannot get a similar one except by an order that may take many days to

fill. The only way we can get one now is to buy a more expensive one which the gas company has in stock.

October 1: The unrest in conquered Europe is steadily mounting. Beware Nazis!

October 2: I thought, today, that common sense must enter into any argument; that logic alone is not enough, for things do not always occur as we would expect. Instead, ironically, they often happen the way that no reasoning would reach.

October 5: I today wondered if anyone on earth could ever be truly happy; I think not. They can't because the future is uncertain, and for complete happiness security is necessary.

October 9: I have almost made up my mind to write on this question for my 1500 word English Essay: Is anyone ever truly Happy?

October 11: Mr. Blackmer, my English teacher, seems to me to have the elements of greatness. He is absolutely logical, he is thorough and fair; but, above all, he is a human being.

October 16: The Germans are pushing on to Moscow. They have captured Odessa on the Baltic, and are, all along the 2000 mile front, advancing. Japan, the sly fox, is now probably going to actively join the Axis because she wants to be on the bandwagon.

October 17: Today Germany torpedoed an American destroyer!! and America passed the bill to arm merchant ships. That the U.S. will enter the war is almost inevitable. It is up to Germany how long she will stay out.

October 18: After studying I went to Boston to the Symphony for the first time in my life: It was excellent, and since I had a seat near the front, I could see Koussevitsky's mannerisms very well. The program was fair:

a Mozart symphony (the Haffner), the initial performance of William Schuman's 3rd Symphony and Tchaikovsky's 6th, but the playing was superb.

October 23: Boston was, today, made the clearing port for all ships from the U.S. to Russia. The night curfew on gasoline, too, is to be lifted, since Britain has returned 40 tankers she had been using.

October 27: Roosevelt made a speech at 10 p.m. in which he tried to arouse us against Hitler. It was not constructive, however, since it merely gave again what he has been repeating for months.

November 2: The leaves are almost all off the trees now, though a few remain like tattered rags to flap in the breeze.

We are nearing war. Another American destroyer was sunk a few days ago, but Germany claims this ship attacked her sub first.

November 8: In the evening I went with a group of English classes to Boston to see Maurice Evans in "Macbeth." The scenery and presentation was excellent and the acting of the majority superb, especially Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the gate-keeper. The only criticism was that the music, consisting of organ and muted trumpets, was "corny." This is the best play I have yet seen (I have seen only 2 other actual professional ones).

November 11: I do not believe that a person should be lauded for his abilities; instead, for what he makes of those abilities which he does possess.

November 13: The repeal of the Neutrality Bill passed Congress today. We shall soon be in war.

November 14: After supper I studied, practiced singing and violin and finished Shaw's "Saint Joan." His genius is obvious in this play, a magnificent work.

November 15: After dinner I went with the Elliots (Gordon was kind

enough to invite me to go with him and his family, except for Mrs. Elliot) to Exeter to watch the great Andover-Exeter football game. We won by the close score 14-13. After getting home (we were lost for a while on the back, and found ourselves in Newburyport), I had supper, then went to my second Boston Symphony concert. I enjoy them a great deal.

November 18: We had been planning to have Dorothy, Priscilla and Rossy here for Thanksgiving, but we called it off. It seems to me that this family never invites anyone to the house, with the result of a missing freedom of action when we are among other people; a reticence and shyness which is exhibited by all of us except John [my brother].

November 19: After dinner I practiced, then went with May [my sister] and Gordon [a friend mentioned above] to see "La Femme du Boulanger," ("The Baker's Wife") a truly great motion picture entirely in French, with English captions. The greatness of the picture lies not in an exceptionally original plot (a baker's wife runs off with a shepherd, but eventually returns, repentant) but in its intently potent picture of the suffering of the boulanger; indeed in its portrayal of true life. It is unlike the usual Hollywood productions, for it presents a view of actual life, without artificiality: it is the best movie I have ever seen as an approach to art.

November 28: I had to miss a lecture by Margaret Bourke-White, one of the most famous photographers in the world, because of my theme on "Ability: Its Significance in Success."

December 1: I finished Tolstoy's great novel "War and Peace." War with Japan will occur unless Germany suffers a defeat which is impressive enough to make Japan doubt whether the Axis can really win.

December 4: Dr. Darling [history teacher] is an extraordinary teacher. He realizes the dynamic power of certain historical facts and tries to impress them upon us. He has not once become angry at one class, although he keeps us alert every second of the time.

December 5: Japan is threatening even more to be a source of conflict with the United States and Britain. Since the Germans have not yet made her sure of success against Russia, Japan is holding off. But, I believe, when Moscow is taken we had better look out; for Japan will not.

December 6: After dinner I spent my time preparing for our annual trip to Roger's Hall in Lowell. We gave a moderately successful concert and then met our partners, ate and danced. A Lowell girl whose father is a jeweler, Millicent Cotter, was my partner. Although she was only a Sophomore, nevertheless she was a very likable girl, and I enjoyed the evening with her. I was not impressed with any other girl except Joan Thomas, my first year's partner (3 years ago), who is now president of the school, and I danced a few minutes with her.

December 7: Clear-Cloudy and Cold: 20-40 F

It has happened! *We are in the war*! At 2:22 p.m. today Japan declared war on the United States, and, before that, bombed Pearl Harbor, killing 300 American soldiers.

I was wrong in believing that Japan would wait until Moscow fell. But, I cannot see what she gains by this attack, except perhaps to draw American resources away from Europe, under Hitler's orders. My own reactions are as follows: I have no hatred for Japan; I have no liking for the war; I am excited, but not outwardly; I cannot realize how much the war will affect me personally.

There was a large fire in Lawrence today. I saw the engines pouring water on the Brocklman Market Building and I saw the Central Building; both shells in the upper floors.

December 8: As was expected, we today declared war, by a resolution of both Houses, against Japan. Roosevelt made a speech at 12:30 p.m. to which the entire school listened before the resolution.

It seems, sad to relate, that the Japanese had planned this war well, for they have attacked nearly all the Pacific Island possessions of the United States, and have greatly damaged Pearl Harbor.

In Europe, the Germans have given up hope of capturing Moscow

before spring, a piece of good news.

The war is having a decided effect upon us as students. Aside from taking away our interest in our subjects, it causes a highly keyed excitement which the slightest unexpected occurrence will aggravate and cause I don't know what results.

December 9: Today the East Coast had an air-raid scare. Somehow the rumor of enemy planes attacking circulated so that all precautions were taken: schools let out (even we had no athletics), traffic stopped, factories let out, stores closed, etc. There was great excitement, but everything was carried out systematically except for a few untrained people making it harder.

When it was found it was merely a test, some felt really disappointed; I did.

December 10: We are beginning to become used to the war. A great change has come, however. We have an enemy now, and we are using means of getting the public anger aroused. The word "Jap" is used, with a disdainful sound; 3 new songs have come out against the Japanese. There are pleas for everyone's help in the defense. Now, I believe that these measures are justified, although I do not like them; for I can see that we are beginning to lose our self control. We are losing the war, however, at least, both our ships and British ships are being sunk rapidly.

December 11: Today, after Germany and Italy declared war on us, we declared it on them. How fast events are taking place. It is impossible to realize the extent of the implications of this war. If we should lose, which I cannot foresee unless Russia changes her side, it would be truly terrible. But, meanwhile, we have to continue to study.

December 13: At assembly today, sheets of instruction about what to do during air raids. I hope they will not come to be needed. I hear, too, that the infirmary is to be used as a hospital for the town in case of air raids, with beach wagons as ambulances.

The war itself seems to be progressing very favorably. It is strange,

but I feel that it is impossible for us to lose. I feel as if the Axis is the "underdog," and almost pity them in looking ahead to the results of a victory.

December 14: For the next 3 days I shall have to delegate the War to a secondary position while preparing for exams.

December 22: After dinner I went skating at Gordon's.

At 4, Gordon and I went to Lawrence and from 4-7:45 we were at the Lawrence District Air-Raid warning center. There we received one good check call from the Boston line. But, Gordon accidentally pushed down all the buttons on the telephone, thus locking them and throwing the telephone out of order. On the 2nd check call, therefore, we could not report back. We had to go through a great deal of worry until a service man fixed the phone.

December 24: This Christmas is to be my first War one. There is an atmosphere of recklessness. "This is our last chance to have a good time, so let's make it a good Christmas." And, that feeling may be justified, for we are beginning to feel the effects of the war. A 10% tax is on practically all luxuries and even some necessities; and, besides, dealers are running low on stocks which cannot be refilled.

December 26: Today Winston Churchill addressed the combined Houses of Congress in an expression of Anglo-American unity, at the same time voicing the optimistic view that we shall win the war, although this will entail much hard struggle.

I was for 3 hours an air raid spotter of planes at the Andover listening post. We report all planes seen or heard to the army in Boston. The work of preparing New England for air raids is going ahead steadily, and if there can be a few more weeks, we will be fully prepared.

December 31: After dinner I went to Lawrence and had some pictures taken for my Harvard application. I then practiced.

In the evening I went to MacFarlan's and, after taking a while, took

Margaret to the midnight show at the Playhouse. This is the first time I have ever taken a girl to a movie that I remember, and I enjoyed welcoming in 1942 in that way. As for Margaret, I cannot tell yet how well I like her. It is queer; I cannot understand why I should suddenly start seeing any girl so much.

* * *

It is doubtful whether the selections above would have been written for an assigned journal. Several tendencies of teachers (myself included) would work against the spontaneity which such expression required. First, the very fact that the material was required would dampen the enthusiasm for direct self-expression. Second, and even worse, if a specific assignment were made requiring, say, a reaction to a play or a book, it would stifle somewhat the enthusiasm which free choice makes. Third, some observations (like those made about teachers) would hardly be expected in a journal to be passed for a class.

Yet I see no real cause for alarm. Journals for the classroom might, indeed, encourage students to continue on their own, in their own way. Thus they might become the catalyst for some future Pepys or Evelyn.

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Strategies

Coping with the Problems of Collaborative Writing

Richard M. Chisholm

Sometimes just making people aware of potential problems helps them.

—Rebecca E. Barnett

Group members sink or swim together.

—Tom Morton

Our most consequential human problems will be solved not through competition, but collaboration.

—Ernest L. Boyer

"If you use your imagination," Lucy remarked to Linus and Charlie Brown as they looked up at the clouds, "you can see lots of things in the cloud formations. . . What do you think you see, Linus?"

Linus pointed to clouds which "look to me like the map of the British Honduras in the Caribbean." Another cloud looked "a little like the profile of Thomas Eakin, the famous painter and sculptor." And a third group gave "the impression of the stoning of Stephen. . . . I can see the Apostle

Paul standing there to one side."

"Uh hun. . . That's very good," Lucy commented. "What do *you* see in the clouds, Charlie Brown?"

With a bewildered look on his face, Charlie Brown answered, "Well, I was going to say I saw a ducky and a horsie, but I changed my mind!"

—from Schultz

* * *

An Array of Problems

"When the instructor told us we would collaborate and be graded as a group, I thought 'Uh-oh. I'll have to do someone else's work. It *always* goes that way.'"

This comment is surely familiar to faculty who mount collaborative projects in college courses. Here is the way one student put it: "Group projects: I dislike them from the bottom of my heart! They are never fair. Members do not contribute evenly."

Problems with collaboration won't go away. But we can devise strategies to help students recognize them, accept them as normal and inevitable, and find tactics for coping with them.

When I say *collaboration,* what I have in mind is primarily a class project in which student groups work collectively to produce a joint product and are graded on it as a group. Students meet to devise a plan for a joint project, then work individually to do research and write drafts of the product. When they have something in writing, they review each other's work. (These strategies work as well for peer reviews, where individual writers retain control of their own work.)

Oh, but collaboration raises lots of problems! There are pushy, dominant personalities. There are slackers and sluggards who need to go to the ant. Underachievers and overachievers, eager enthusiasts and resisters—the range is broad and rich with problems. And all of them, all types, agree on one thing: they always need more time.

Out of this plethora of problems I have selected four that I think cause the most trouble for groups of students who collaborate on writing projects: resistance, inexperience, friction, and fairness.

Strategies for Coping with the Problems

We can best meet these problems, I think, by planning the project well, explaining the plan, and helping students think problems through ahead of time and plan strategies to deal with them. What we need are appropriate procedures: how we plan the project, give the assignment, train students, monitor their work, give opportunity for groups to work together, encourage participation, and evaluate the processes and products. But at the same time I believe that students need to work through their own problems as much as they are able. No doubt there will be crises where the instructor needs to intervene, but if we set up the class with an environment congenial to collaboration and provide students with problem-solving strategies, they can cope with the problems themselves. In this way, they will learn something about processes and procedures they probably won't learn anywhere else. They will learn how to participate in a learning community.

Problem 1: Resistance

I have met few cases of overt resistance to group work, but I know that a good deal of it swirls beneath the surface. Many students place a low priority on a collaborative project. They may be unwilling to invest the time and effort that a group project requires. Some of them simply don't

want to participate in group work. They may be reluctant, shy, disdainful, or lazy, but for one reason or another they don't commit themselves to full participation.

Students readily admit their reasons for resisting the out-of-class work that collaboration entails. One student will miss meetings because she writes for the student newspaper, another because she runs the campus radio station. One man is on the soccer team and another an officer in his fraternity. "Add these factors up," a student says, "and you get nothing but scheduling conflicts."

This comment, which is not unusual for college students today, exposes a severe problem. Even 20-year-olds fill their pocket calendars weeks in advance with appointments. Another student's comment reveals a lack of commitment:

> In a corporate structure, everyone that is on a team to do a project of this sort is in the same building so it is very easy for them to get together. Also, it's their job, so writing a paper is on the top of their priority list. Here on campus that isn't so. Finding time to meet with the group was almost impossible for me. Because of Student Senate I go to an average of 5-7 meetings a week, take 6 classes, and work. That's why I wasn't too thrilled when I found out I had to do a group paper.

This student has no doubt idealized the work world. But such comments show where some students' priorities lie. We should not be surprised that collaborative projects do not always attract their immediate commitment.

Comments such as these, fortunately, are not typical. Most students report that they enjoy working on collaborative projects, get a lot out of them, and willingly accommodate their schedules to the work of the group. Yet these comments no doubt reveal what many students feel. The problems of scheduling, priorities, and interest account for a good deal of the resistance

some students feel toward collaboration. What can we do about them?

Strategies for Coping with Resistance. Several strategies mobilize even the Lone Rangers in the class by replacing negative expectations with positive ones.

1. Devise a well-conceived project: Plan well so that you reduce resistance. (This strategy also reduces the severity of other problems.)

   - Select a project that is inherently worthwhile and interesting.
   - Select a project that is feasible within the limits of time, abilities, and resources of the class.
   - Give adequate instructions.
   - Break the project into phases and work on a specific aspect of the task during each phase. I provide way-stations during the semester that require abstracts, synthesis essays, outlines, and drafts at various times. Ensure that students produce concrete results at the end of each phase.

2. Run the collaborative project during the early part of the semester, before schedules fill up, patterns are set, interest wanes, and students find alternative ways to perform in your course.

3. Execute the plan systematically and matter-of-factly. Treat all aspects of the plan seriously but as a matter of course. Make clear your intentions from the first and stick to them. Tell them what you are doing and why you are doing it.

4. Announce clearly that you will give one grade for the group's project; everyone in the group will receive the same grade. Explain that the purpose of collaborative writing is to produce an integrated final report, not merely a collection of parts. Then grade as you said you would.

5. Provide sufficient time for students to complete the project— but not too much.

    - Groups need time to form, storm, and norm before they can perform efficiently (Tuckman). Since most students are unaccustomed to collaborative procedures and are naturally gregarious, the forming and storming time may take longer than for more experienced groups. Build that time into your plan. Help students learn to distinguish unproductive fooling around from pre-productive talk.
    - Provide specific class time for students to plan their work, outline the project, assign responsibilities to individuals, review each other's contributions, and assemble materials in a complete report.
    - Expect students to meet out of class. Schedules being as tight as they are, students tell me that they can find only one or two hours a week to meet out of class. But they need to do it, however tight their schedules. Make this clear from the beginning.
    - Don't allow too much time. Keep to your schedule.

6. Emphasize the positive values of collaboration.

    - Make clear the importance of collaborative writing in college, on the job, and, in general, in a democratic society. One recent study, for example, shows that professionals in various fields spend more than 40% of their time writing—much of it collaborative. As Caryl Klein Sills put it, "Human progress has been as much a record of group effort as it has been a consequence of individual genius. Everyone needs to learn to work productively in groups; writers are no exceptions."
    - Show the benefits of group collaboration: pooled

resources, pleasant associations, and a chance to perform a specialized function. As one student said, "Collaborating with the group is a great learning experience."
- Emphasize both of the benefits of collaboration: learning group skills and gaining knowledge of the subject itself. Tori Haring-Smith put it this way: "The end product is important. How you got there is more important."
- Help students understand the importance of learning to know each other, to rely on each other, and to be accountable to each other.

7. Have groups devise their own projects (for example, "We are writing a report on industrial robots for Ford Motor Company.")

Problem 2: Inexperience

In teaching collaborative writing, we are trying to create learning environments in which newly-formed groups can move as quickly as possible to become mature, systematic, and habitual collaborative units. But most students have very little experience with collaborative writing. They have everything to learn about it. As Dana Herreman says, "The group process must be taught . . . Just because individuals can be configured into a circle does not mean that they will automatically become good communicators."

Our society affords students so little opportunity to practice collaboration that few of them know how to work productively in a group. Oh sure, they play on teams and they mix and mingle at parties and such, but rarely do they contribute to genuinely collaborative projects. They are uneasy and apprehensive. They work inefficiently and ineffectively and become discouraged.

Students who lack experience are likely to be timid. "I am going to have a hard time reading my drafts aloud and having other people evaluate

them," one student wrote. "I am going to have to overcome my stage fright." Recognize that most students begin with some trepidation. We have to find ways to help them overcome their timidity.

Other students fear group work as an intrusion on privacy. Being inexperienced, they are not used to dealing with the intense intimacy that collaborative work demands. Before they build personal relationships with people in a collaborative group, they are unwilling to disclose private thoughts and feelings. Disclosure—even of their ideas— makes them feel vulnerable, and until they develop trust, they hesitate to participate. When the power of restraint outpulls the power of candor, we need to help them conceal less and reveal more.

The low level of skill at writing, analyzing writing, and talking about writing is even more difficult to deal with. As one student said, "You cannot expect 'group critique' to work on a group of people with limited skills." From time to time we run into students who give others bum advice and others who receive it eagerly. One student wrote "choppy" in the margin beside a fine paragraph written by a colleague, and the writer did not have the sense to leave the paragraph alone. A student told another student to put an apostrophe in "Dickens." Lack of experience is a serious problem, all right. Yet students do learn from each other and thrive on companionship and improve their skills in "group critique."

Strategies for Coping with Inexperience. The remedy for inexperience is training and guided practice. We need to teach collaborative learning skills, and we need to support and monitor students' use of those skills.

The strategy is to train students to collaborate effectively. And *training* seems the appropriate term for what they learn and the way they learn it. Students can learn to interact fruitfully in a way similar to how they learn to ski or swim or roller skate. The things they do and say to each other can thus be taught "as a kind of motor skill" (Argyle 52). They first learn about the way people interact, and why. Then they learn some actual things to say to each other. With practice, their acting soon becomes reality

and their learned behavior becomes habitual.

In teaching students new ways to act toward each other, I give them four kinds of instruction: 1) theory, 2) strategy, 3) tactics, and 4) appropriate language. The theory comes first: I explain the need for praising a colleague's paper. I make the point that praise oils the machinery of interpersonal relations and that people need praise because they are shy or because they doubt the value of their work and they crave esteem. I make similar explanations about the need for describing a colleague's paper, for asking questions, and for giving suggestions (Spear).

When I talk strategy, I urge participants, "Give your colleagues genuine praise early in your collaborative session; your words of praise will echo in their ears throughout the session." And for tactics suitable for this strategy, I urge students to find the strongest parts of the paper and to praise them.

When it comes to appropriate language, I give students some statements they can use to praise a piece of writing: "I like the way you started," or "I learned a lot, especially about how cooperation among mole rats is different from collaboration." (A colleague once wrote to me, "This is a lovely piece. . . . I like the talky, amiable tone." I won't soon forget that comment.)

At first, this learning is bound to seem awkward and self-conscious, especially using language that is new to them. Some students will have trouble understanding what I mean by theory, strategy, and tactics. But eventually it begins to make sense and the language itself comes naturally.

Here are the specific things I have tried:

1. Explain that what you are doing is training them in collaborative writing.

    - Determine what students currently know about collabo-

rative techniques and how much they use them.
- Give practice collaborating with an instructor-written piece of writing. Prepare an essay of your own and have students respond to it. This procedure will show that you believe in the process enough to use it yourself.
- Give additional practice, under supervision. "At first, we were slow to offer any thoughts on each others' work," one student wrote, "but we became comfortable when the paper started taking form."

2. Provide suggestions for leaders. Thrust into a leadership role, some students find the experience unsettling. One student, who was appointed leader in a collaborative group, wrote, "At first, I felt apprehensive in giving out assignments." Other members of his group, though, helped him out, he explained. To judge from his group's report, he became an effective leader.

3. Brief students on the psychology of interpersonal relations. (I take this tip from a student who urged me, "Spend at least one class period describing the characteristics of groups—how they work together, roles people play—so people know what to expect.")

4. Have students agree on an explicit plan of work. Have them list their goals, timetable, assignments, and so on.

5. Devise ways for groups to develop a unified plan, including descriptions of audience, main idea, style, outline, and content. Have them agree early on what this report will include, their individual responsibilities, the timetable, and the way the final report will fit together.

6. Encourage groups to get all of their agreements on paper in order to identify possible areas of disagreement and to iron them out before they invest time unwisely.

7. Help students revise specifications at various stages of their project.

Help them begin with preliminary specifications and make them increasingly detailed until the report "falls out."

8. Provide a way for teams to reconsider, revise, and redraft the specifications and outline as their project matures. (There is excellent material on revising in Paul V. Anderson's award-winning *Technical Writing*, chapter 23.)

Teaching Peer Feedback. Peer feedback is the heart of the collaborative process. In a workshop atmosphere, students get together in groups to review the work of others. Specific strategies to improve the quality of peer feedback include the following:

1. Facilitate peer feedback at every stage of the writing process, from first inception through final editing. Have students exchange ideas, notes, and drafts to share insights and points of view, explore meanings, and reconceptualize their papers. Show them how to do this, beginning with simple procedures such as Karen Spear's four-part Praise, Describe, Question, Suggest. Have them make notes, talk together, and exchange ideas.

2. Provide increasingly detailed checklists for peer review and editing.

3. Provide explicit training in procedures for review, for fruitful writer-editor relations, and for proofreading.

4. Know when to step aside and let students do their work. "I think the best help you gave," one student commented, "was to be there to answer questions and then let our minds run wild." (I like the "run wild" part. I see myself as facilitator as often as instructor, and if the best thing I can do is get out of the way and let their minds run, I try to do it. In helping them become self-sufficient writers, I can serve them best by setting up a context for their work and then letting them work in it.)

5. Provide for a test reading by an outside reader. Devote time to this task when drafts are nearing completion but early enough so that students can make use of the input from the outside reviewer. (Again, see Anderson's book, chapter 24, for procedures.)

6. So that students will know how to collaborate better next time, conduct a post-project evaluation:

    - Have students explain how their groups solved problems.
    - Have students write about their own personal responses to collaboration. Perhaps frame it this way: "Now that you have had this experience with collaboration, what responses to similar kinds of groups do you expect to make in the future? What would you tell students in later classes about collaborative writing—the problems they will face, how they can cope with them, and the benefits they will derive?

I hate to see students wasting the time they spend in groups. If the problem is that they do not know what to do or how to do it, I need to train them how to be productive in groups. I need to give them guided instruction and practice under supervision. Then, when they have learned how to collaborate, they can join a student who commented, "We taught each other."

(On the other hand, when students are sufficiently motivated, even inefficiency can have its brighter side. One student of mine went to Boston to find sources not available locally: "I personally killed a *day* in Boston," he reported. "I went to four major libraries, picked up two parking tickets, and got caught in the evening rush hour. But I actually had fun doing this because it was good to be in a group, and I didn't want to let them down.")

Problem 3: Friction

Some friction in human interaction is unavoidable. Sometimes ordinary rivalries and clashes burst into quarrels. Especially when people are thrown together to produce a piece of work that is important to them, there are bound to be conflicts.

"Perhaps our opinions will clash so violently that we get nothing done." This comment came early in the semester from a student who anticipated conflicts. Friction which brings about bad feelings is probably the stickiest problem we need to deal with.

Strategies for Coping with Interpersonal Friction. The general strategy for coping with interpersonal friction is to encourage students to find solutions themselves. We can help them take charge of problem situations, take responsibility for coping with them, choose their own procedures, work out the problems themselves, analyze them, and exercise control and choice.

Here are some specific strategies for coping with interpersonal conflict:

1. Help students anticipate problems.

    - Elicit from students problems they anticipate.
    - Have students devise guidelines that specify expected behavior for participants in collaborative groups. Help them agree on acceptable standards for meeting outside of class, preparing drafts on time, interacting, and so on.

2. Help students accept the problems they encounter as a given.

    - Acknowledge the fact that there will be problems because friction is a natural part of human interaction.

- Help students understand that there may indeed be no *solution* to a problem but that there are values, guidelines, alternatives and procedures that are appropriate for coping.

3. Help students treat friction problems objectively but with compassion and understanding. Show them how to admit the problem openly. Try to get it out in the open so that it does not rankle.

4. Help students accept a problem as *their* problem, not the problem of the instructor. Make it clear that the problem is theirs to work out. Let them figure out how to solve it.

5. Help students prepare creative ways to encounter problems.

   - Help them to be ready, when problems arise, to say, "Yes, we expected this problem; now let's find a way to cope with it."
   - Help students devise strategies for coping with the problems and tactics for implementing the strategies.

6. Have students role play or negotiate a solution.

   - Volunteer to observe their negotiation. Refrain from being directive or supplying a solution from the outside, but help them work it out.

7. Train students to refrain from *defending* their work. Have them ask as many questions as they want, but not defend what they have written.

8. Be alert to severe problems and prepare to deal with exceptions.

   - When necessary, help students work through serious or chronic problems. Sit down with them in the group and try to help them work out their problem. But make it

clear from the beginning that part of the group's assignment is to iron out problems.

- Determine whether students can handle the problem on their own or whether they need outside help—from you or from somebody else. If someone seriously falls down on the job, for example, ask them whether they can complete the project by filling in the holes left by others.
- Ask students if they want you to intervene.
- Insofar as possible, resist being arbitrator; take on the role of consultant or facilitator.
- If all other tactics fail, re-form the groups.

9. Try to avert disaster. When severe clashes or other problems have crippled group efforts, give a good amount of credit simply for a project that is completed.

Problem 4: Fairness

The biggest complaint I used to get from students about group work was about the "hitchhiker," who goes along for the ride but doesn't contribute.

—Tom Morton

"I just think of it as cheating," a student wrote, "when people who did nothing get the grade that others got . . . I don't think it is fair to give the slackers a free ride." Some students prefer to work alone and to receive individual credit for individual work because they do not want to be dragged down by a sluggard. Such attitudes are well founded.

In many groups, someone will work hard and someone else won't. We all know that's not fair. One of the values our society holds dearest is "Equal Pay for Equal Work," and since grades are seen as rewards, it is impossible to reward the workers equally. On the other hand, our society severely taboos tattletales. We are caught in a nutcracker.

The fairness problem becomes most acute when older or more highly-motivated students are thrown together with immature students. The immature students are willing to have the go-getter do the work, but the older student soon learns to resent the load. Our goal is to lead students to the kind of success that one student reported: "At first I wondered if everyone would pull their own weight, but I was wrong to doubt them. They did a great job." But things don't always work out that way.

Grades are a primary motivation for students, so it is not surprising that a change in grading system—indeed of the whole basis of grading—should cause discomfort. Yet the main idea of collaborative learning is cooperation; one purpose is to develop a cooperative team spirit. We want to replace competition and individual rewards with a system in which all will pitch in and share the load. We want students to say, "We helped each other out in tough spots." In trying to convert competition into contribution, however, we must not forget the students rightly value their own individual work and expect to be credited for it.

Strategies for Coping with the "Fairness" Problem. As with the friction problem, it is important to face this one well ahead of time. Get the problem out into the open. Early in the semester, have students describe their experiences with slackers and identify their worst fears and apprehensions. This activity will help them anticipate problems they may encounter and to plan their own reactions to them. Forewarned is forearmed. Then it is useful to get students to freewrite on the topic. Have them participate in a written brainstorm and discussion or make a journal entry. Help them understand the shortcomings of human nature. Discussing the values and problems of collaboration will help students see the problem in context.

Specific strategies for coping with the "fairness" problem include the following:

1. Assign an individual grade to some portion of the project.

2. Require students to append an acknowledgements page to their joint

efforts. Giving credit to contributors will encourage contribution (Haring-Smith).

3. At the end of the project, give students the occasion to assess the project. Have them evaluate the group's procedures and product and explain their own part in it. Letting everybody tell what they did at least gives them a chance, as one student told me, "to let off steam."

4. Devise a grading system that permits students to drop one grade at the end of the semester. It may be the grade on the collaborative paper.

* * *

In sum, the strategies require adequate planning, explanation, assigning and mounting of collaborative projects, followed by insistence that students design their own tasks and execute their own strategies for coping with problems.

These strategies won't make the problems go away. But they will reduce the degree that problems hinder collaborative efforts. And as we think of ways to cope with the problems that collaborative writing raises—and they are formidable—it is helpful to keep in mind what students are learning. In a well-run collaborative classroom, students learn theory and practice of brainstorming, collaborative writing, and problem solving. They learn how other people work. They learn about different styles of writing and ways to meld them. They learn to interact in a creative process, dealing with tight schedules, deadlines, and time constraints. Most importantly, they learn how to draw on individual abilities and how to cope with personal differences. What they learn from the collaborative experience itself may be more valuable than the substance of their report. It will surely be more valuable than the grade.

I find, finally, that collaboration stimulates students to do their best work—or at least better work. They will often work harder for their peers than they will for me. As one of them put it, collaboration "helped my writing a lot because I was very conscious of how my group would accept it. I felt like it had to be perfect." The method itself encourages students

who write casually to write seriously. Sometimes it helps those who normally write seriously to write strenuously. And even the slackers are less slack. That is quite a bit to say about any method.

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Note: I have slightly edited the quotations from students, but only to remove irrelevant topical references.

***Richard M. Chisholm** is a professor in the English Department and a member of the Writing Task Force. His chapter, "Improving the Management of Technical Writers: Creating a Contest for Useable Documentation," appears in* Effective Documentation: What We Learned from Research. *Ed. Stephen Doheny-Farina. MIT Press, 1988, voted Best Collection of Essays in Technical Communication by the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing.*

Research Paper Evaluation Forms: A Better Mousetrap?

L. Michael Couvillion

The chore of evaluating research (or term) papers and providing meaningful feedback to student authors while minimizing faculty burnout is particularly difficult with large class sizes. Over the years, I have typically resorted to handling this problem by simply writing a letter grade, or its numerical equivalent, together with a one-sentence "executive summary" of my thoughts, on the cover sheet. I have identified specific problems in the text with a liberal use of red ink and question marks.

Problems

Many problems have been associated with this approach, however. Some of the more serious ones include:

1. Assuring consistency in marking papers among different students in the same class, as well as the same students in different years. It becomes difficult to explain why the paper of a student who received a "B+" is inferior to that of a roommate who received an "A."

student must choose a paper topic which I then approve.

It quickly became apparent that students were not only curious about this new grading strategy, but also perplexed. While their initial reaction was not unmitigated joy, most seemed intrigued by the novelty of this grading scheme and willing to give it a chance. To address their concerns, and to turn anxiety into a positive rather than negative motivator, I devoted two hours of class time to planning the paper.

The first hour was spent going over the form and answering questions. As a stimulus to class discussion, I learned that just distributing the form elicited more questions and comments than I have ever received. Some sample questions were:

- What's the difference between footnotes and bibliographies?
- Are we penalized if the spelling checker doesn't catch spelling mistakes?
- Do we have to have graphs and charts?
- What do I do if the paper is too short?
- What do I do if the paper is too long?
- Why do we have to use headings?
- I don't understand how to outline a paper: Can you give us some good examples?
- Is the *Wall Street Journal* a journal for grading purposes?
- If we are supposed to use scholarly journal articles, how do we find them, given the available library resources?

The second hour was devoted to specific research procedures that represented problem areas for student authors. I worked with the class to completely outline a hypothetical research paper on Social Security and wrote the headings on the board so students could see the logical flow of ideas. Of course, I subsequently received six papers on the subject, all amazingly alike in organization! I explained the use of the New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics and copied a sample subject heading on Human

Capital so that they could see how valuable such a resource could be. But the heart of this discussion centered on the proper way to most efficiently use the many indexing tools available in the Journal of Economic Literature. Most students had no idea that such a resource was even available in the library.

Results

This form was given to the students again in November, during the student evaluation period, for their input and to remind them of the writing task ahead of them. In December, I actually used this form to grade all papers. The results are given in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Term Paper Evaluation Scores

Raw Scores		Statistics
	97	High Score
	94	
	93	Class Size = 25
	90	
	89-4	Class Average = 80.11
	87	
	85	Standard Deviation = 9.87
A	84	
	80-2	Coefficient of Variation = 12%
	77-3	
	76-3	Curve Added = +7 points
	75	
B	74	
	72	
	71	
C	65	
	61	
D	60	Low Score

As you can see, I converted the numerical scores into their quality point equivalents or letter grades by adding seven points to each student's raw score. Why seven points? The mean score on the summary item (Overall

Impression) was 86.8 while the class average was 80.11. I assume that my overall subjective impression should set the curve for the class as a whole. In other words, the average paper grade should have been a "B+" and turned out to be a "B-."

Outcomes

At the end of this course, I gave the students the form once again (after returning their papers to them) and asked for comment. Table 2 presents representative student observations. Some of the feedback was negative, since I asked for it and since frustration levels were peaking as each student saw the consequences of his or her actions. For example, most suggested reassigning weights away from areas where they lost points to areas where they achieved perfection.

Table 2
Student/Author Observations

- Don't change anything.
- Topic should be approved first; therefore, it is a moot point to grade it as an afterthought.
- I think overall impression should be the major basis on grading.
  I feel some topics don't have much graphics.
- I like the grading system.
- I feel that since this is an economic course not English 101 you should grade the paper on topical area, overall impression and items within that realm. Having such a large breakdown is overwhelming for the student.
- Can the whole thing—JUST GRADE IT!
- I think it's a fair distribution.
- I think the overall impression is what counts. The others should be considered in the overall impression, but the overall impression is what counts.

A second outcome was my discovery of a better way to curve scores. In the past, I used some arbitrary method (such as adding the difference between the class average and 80, assuming that a "B-" was average for a junior/senior level class) which produced somewhat arbitrary results. Now, I use the last item on the evaluation form to gain an "overall impression" of the students' written work. The average of that line becomes my standard for setting the grading curve for the class. I am convinced

this "global" assessment is a more appropriate gauge of the worth of the stack of papers on my desk than any artificial standard would be.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of all, however, was the satisfaction of the students with their grade. Only one student out of 25 challenged his grade. I added 5 points to his score when he pointed out to me that his first paragraph was meant to be an abstract. I pointed out to him that without proper headings, it is difficult for the reader to find items of interest. For perhaps the first time in his college career, this student learned the value of outlining and topical subdivisions.

Advantages

The beauty of this strategy for evaluating research papers is its flexibility: each instructor can (and, I feel strongly, *should*) modify this format to meet his/her evaluative needs. Categories can be combined, items which are irrelevant for the course can be omitted, and pet peeves can be addressed before it is too late.

One additional, and unexpected, advantage of this exercise was the unique opportunity to set priorities and clarify expectations. Is organization really more important than appendices? Do titles matter, and if so how much? How does writing style affect the entire paper's evaluation? Can a hopelessly flawed paper be detected by this system, and how? Is top-quality work sufficiently valued?

My end product was a set of papers which were returned to the student authors with more feedback of value to them. They now at least understand why their work was evaluated as it was, and they are capable of independently conducting an academic autopsy to find out what went wrong and, equally importantly, what went right. Much to my surprise, I found that I was actually able to plow through the 400-600 pages of text, right before final exams, spending (investing?) *less* time in grading than with my old system.

Conclusions

Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for each individual grading item. Note the difficulty index variation. My students had the most trouble handling appendices (59) and the abstract (65) last semester. Not surprisingly, these two items had the highest coefficient of variation. Why? I was effective in communicating their importance to some, but by no means all, of the authors. I am encouraged by other paper dimensions, though, since 94% of the class footnoted perfectly and 87% provided impressive coverage of the topic.

Table 3
Descriptive Item Statistics

Item	Weight	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation	Difficulty* Index
Title	5	4.24	0.70	16%	85
Abstract	5	3.24	1.96	61	65
Headings	5	3.84	1.45	38	77
Organization	10	8.60	1.15	13	86
Exhibits	10	7.68	1.68	22	77
Spelling	5	3.80	1.22	32	76
Grammar	5	3.56	1.36	38	71
Topic	10	8.64	1.47	17	86
Coverage	10	8.67	1.53	18	87
Footnootes	5	4.72	0.66	14	94
Bibliograpy	5	4.12	0.82	20	82
Appendices	5	2.96	1.88	64	59
Writing Style	10	8.28	1.23	15	83
Overall Impression	10	8.68	0.90	10	87

*Difficulty Index = Mean/Weight

I am using this form, with minor editing, this semester in my Development of Economic Thought course. This time, I will be able to complete a cross-sectional multiple regression analysis of the form's data with the overall score as the dependent variable and each item score as independent variables. Based on this analysis of which factors really determine the final score, I will be in a position to make a wholesale revision and condensation of the form for future course grading.

This tentative evidence from actual classroom use of the Research Paper Evaluation Form means to me that the strategy is a successful one. I encourage other faculty to modify the form to best meet the needs of each different course.

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From Writing to Discussion

Katharine G. Fralick

The purpose of this paper is to consider ways of using writing to promote student discussion in the college classroom. A survey of the literature shows an abundance of material on writing and discussion for the elementary level, little at the middle and secondary grades, and only a few references specifically for discussion at the college level. Elementary teachers often have trouble with chatter and talking in the classroom, but in undergraduate college courses, instructors often have difficulty getting the students to talk and share ideas. Since classroom discussion is an integral part of the collaborative effort in education, it is critical to utilize strategies such as writing to enhance the discussion process.

In college level classes, students are expected to read chapters in textbooks, articles, journals, and other materials and be prepared to discuss them in class. Discussions are helpful in learning content material and are usually dominated by the instructor. Other discussions are conducted to allow students to share ideas, insights, or observations and are not dominated by the instructor. Sometimes college-level students are also expected to work in collaborative groups to complete projects. Often it is difficult to get students to have conversation without teacher question, student answer, teacher question, student answer, etc. These are not real discussions but actually oral quizzes. No student wants to be the first to say anything.

As stated, different methods of promoting discussion were researched. They are as follows:

Methods

1. Discussion:
   Without pre-thought or any writing exercises, students are asked for opinions or thoughts about a subject, usually one-on-one (teacher, student, teacher, student).

2. Pre-Writes:
   Students write in their notebooks for three to five minutes on a theme, problem, idea, or question given by the instructor. The instructor models this and also writes. When the time is up, students are asked to share their thoughts. At first students need to be encouraged to respond. After doing this several times students are not as reluctant to talk, since having their written thoughts to refer to provides confidence. All students are provided an opportunity to talk about what they write in the subject. Comments from the instructor are minimal. Pre-writes are not collected.

3. Pre-Writes with Partners:
   Both students discuss the issues and one writes comments down; these comments are shared with the class. The same structure is used as in individual pre-writes.

4. Small Group Discussions:
   Students do a pre-write, then divide into groups to discuss an issue, problem, or project. One student serves as the scribe and another the speaker. Groups are self-selected or the class is divided by the teacher. The purpose is to have different students interacting each time. Before coming back to the class, the scribe re-reads and adds to the report. This also provides student-to-student interaction.

The above techniques were used with undergraduate and graduate classes.

Results

In using any of these techniques the instructor explained the "rules of the game" to the class. Whether the class is large or small, the seating arrangement should be conducive to discussion. (A circle or semi-circle where all students can see one another and the instructor is best. The instructor should also be sitting in the circle.)

Method one, "Discussion," without pre-thought or pre-writes usually did not result in lively discussions but rather questions from the instructor and one response from a student. Students were hesitant to volunteer answers.

Method two, "Pre-Writes," writing individually, for 3 to 5 minutes on a topic or question without discussion before hand, resulted in better conversational discussions and more students volunteering to speak.

Method three, In "Partner Pre-Writes," the partners had to discuss what they were writing. When it was time to converse with the entire class, they were prepared and less reluctant to speak.

Method four, "Group Pre-Writes" and small group discussions were very successful. This resulted in good discussions and group cohesiveness. Students took turns being the scribe, but usually all the students took notes and were writing.

During the rest of the semester, using the above techniques, we had lively and academic discussions. Later, I explained to the classes what I was doing and why. I wanted to know from them which methods they thought were best to promote discussion in the classroom. The students thought any group method which included discussion with pre-writes took away

the fear of talking to the whole class. The small group discussions with writing were voted the best because they made it easier and less threatening to voice opinions. They also liked the individual pre-writes because they let them collect their thoughts before they spoke. In addition, the pre-writes provided a level of confidence as well as a way to focus thoughts. We concluded by talking about collaborative education and writing; my hope is the students will use some of these techniques in their own teaching.

Rowe (1986) best sums up why group discussion is so important:

> A complex thought system requires a great deal of shared experience and conversation. It is in talking about what we have done and observed and in arguing about what we make of our experiences, that ideas multiply, become refined, and finally produce new questions and further explorations.

What better way to encourage these explorations than to use writing in the classroom?

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Student Writers Sometimes Perish Before They Publish

Bonnie Auslander

"Nice!" says Lee as he scans the cover and then flips to the contents page. He's looking at the third issue of the just-published class magazine. "I'm glad that James put in that piece about the rooster."

I tell him the assignment for the week, which is to read through the magazine, decide which three essays have the best beginnings, and explain the criteria used to make that decision.

"Catchy beginnings are tough to come up with," Lee says thoughtfully. He sits down at his desk and starts reading.

* * *

To emulate real-world writers, many professors have their students do pre-writing, free-writing, post-writing, informal writing, journals, and multiple-drafts essays.

But the real-world writers aren't content with ending the process with the last revision. Real-world writers rip the pages out of the typewriter or tear the computer perforation and try to get the beast published.

Like Lee, students are usually engrossed in the class magazine before I've finished handing out the copies. It's because of this enthusiasm, in part, that Charles Moran, director of the freshman composition program I taught in for four years at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, encourages his instructors to collect final drafts of student writing four or five time a semester. These are then photocopied back to back, given a fancy cover—sometimes designed by a student—and stapled down the side. Back in the dorms, students informally swap magazines with roommates enrolled in different classes.

In the next class we discuss the magazine. The students praise each other freely, but they're also candid about what was boring. Over the course of the semester I see a sharp decline in dull essays. And students with messy, error-plagued final drafts often improve their proofreading without my urging after one embarrassing error appears in the class magazine.

I have found that students become more interested in communicating their ideas when they realize that someone other than just the professor is reading their papers. They produce higher quality work because they wish to impress their classmates; suddenly they are writing for a community, not just for a professor.

We have numerous examples of student publications already in operation here at Plymouth. In the Natural Science department, Larry Spencer publishes *The Inveterate Inverterbrate Reporter*. Peg Eaton's information systems students produce manuals that advise novices as well as pros. Sally Boland's technical writing students write, design, and print pamphlets and brochures for organizations on-campus and off. Jerry Zinfon publishes poems and stories from his summer and winterim creative writing workshops in *The Literary Review* and from his I-course, "Philosophy and Poetry," co-taught with Herb Otto. Once a year, the English Department publishes the best essays from freshman composition in *PROBES* magazine.

How could we further build on this tradition of publishing student work? Here are some possibilities to consider:

Contests. The Writing Across the Curriculum Task Force sponsors an annual "Writing Within Your Major" contest. Each department chooses the two best papers submitted, which in turn are read by a committee that includes representatives from all the disciplines. The top essayists are published and receive a $25 honorarium.

Tutorials. A more ambitious program imitates Boise State University's series of journals called *Soundings*. There, each department puts out its own version of the magazine—for example, *Soundings in Business, Soundings in Psychology,* etc. Each semester, faculty select papers from two or three student writers whose work is considered especially promising. During the spring semester, these students enroll in an independent study with the *Soundings* editorial board and spend the semester intensively revising their papers, drawing on the expertise of faculty mentors. The semester culminates with publication. The journals are then distributed to the students in the following semester's seminar class to serve as inspirational models. Student writers often go on to submit their papers to professional journals.

Library Reserve. Henry Abelove, a history professor of mine at Wesleyan University, uses a less showy method of publication. About a month before the end of the spring semester of European Intellectual History, students hand in two copies of their final project. Abelove keeps one copy and puts the other on reserve in the library. One of the assignments is to read each other's papers, all 25 of them; one of the five final exam questions refers to one of the papers. I enjoyed seeing what my classmates had researched and was impressed that my professor considered our work important enough to be included on the final.

Collaborative Conferences. Instead of completing a formal research paper, students in the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Program develop a collaborative presentation. At the end of the semester the "thinktank," as it is called, is delivered in front of the assembled writing students, whose classes have been canceled for the day. The summer I taught for the program, my students created a talkshow set one year in the future to look

at the impact of the Supreme Court ruling on abortion.

I suspect the thinktank works because it imitates the hoopla, tension, and drama of professional conferences. My thinktank students learned as much about conducting research as my freshman composition students who have been taught a more traditional unit on "Writing the Research Paper." But the thinktank students were a lot less bored.

Videos. Richard Chisholm's Communications students produce entertaining and creative collaborative videos on word derivations with the help of Media Service's Bruce Ritchie. These videos could be shown to other English classes to prompt discussion and lead to further videos; eventually the department could create in a department student-produced video library.

Some might argue that such videos do not constitute publication. While certainly there are important differences between writing and film, producing these videos requires writing a clever script and conducting serious research—two aspects of good writing that I try hard to teach.

Teleconferencing. The writer Steward Brand believes that electronic mail and teleconferencing virtually creates writers. He says in *The Media Lab: Inventing the Future at MIT*:

> I've seen dozens of professional writing careers begin with total inadvertance by people chatting away online, being encouraged by their friends, then being quoted in print somewhere, then getting paid for it, then they're hooked. Because their writing began as conversation, it's good writing. The magic ingredient is instant reinforcement by peers. (258)

If you set up a teleconference for your course, not only can students pass in homework and you hand out assignments without exchanging sheets of paper, you can publish a fine student paper over the network for all

your students to read. Or you can publish a student paper—with the student's permission, of course—showing your comments and suggestions at the bottom (one from a past semester is a good idea).

Furthermore, students can contribute to an on-going, on-line discussion that is limited only by accessible computer clusters. Such discussions will enhance the students' preparedness when they write research papers. You may get messages from the quieter students in the class who find the computer screen is a safer place than the classroom to express their thoughts. Anonymous contributions to on-line discussions can even be set up, as campus minister Phil Hart does with his students when teaching his Sexual Ethics class.

Each of these methods has its advantages. But regardless of the medium you choose, let me offer these publishing ideals.

Publish student work quickly. As Brand points out, quick turn-around generates excitement for the writers and provides instant positive reinforcement. Surveys reveal that journalists at daily papers have higher job satisfaction levels than magazine freelancers, who often have to wait months before seeing their work appear.

Publish student work attractively. Invest in a quality desktop publishing program and find someone who knows how to use it. Here at PSC, the Faculty Resource Center owns the software and laser printers needed for quick and attractive quality publications. (Both *PROBES* and *Good ReWriting*—the Newsletter of the Reading/Writing Center are produced using PageMaker.)

Pay to publish student work. This may be the hardest pill for some to swallow, but I believe an honorarium of $25 or more shows students their work is valued. An alternative form of remuneration is to convince local businesses to donate prizes in exchange for a modest advertisement at the end of the magazine. Also, levying lab fees can defray copying costs.

Publish the work of all students. From time to time, students can learn from unsuccessful examples as well as successful ones, as did my freshman composition students when confronted with boring beginnings. And student assessment of what constitutes good writing may vary (in healthy ways) from yours.

Whether you turn to the networked computer or the ditto machine, students will thank you for publishing their work. Mary-Lou Hinman describes one jaded freshman composition student who was told that one of her essays might be published in *PROBES*. The transformation was dramatic; she became a serious student strongly interested in writing.

"Publishing student work," as Mary-Lou puts it, "is the ultimate compliment."

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