

On the Bulletin Board

RESOURCES IN THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

Publications

The teaching of writing is an area now rich in resources. The purpose of this regular feature will be to keep readers informed of upcoming conferences, current research, books, articles, and periodicals on both the theory and practice of composition teaching. A fruitful place to begin is with the largest and most influential organization in our profession, the National Council of Teachers of English. NCTE publishes a major periodical at every level: Language Arts, for elementary teachers; English Journal, for intermediate and secondary teachers; and College English. All three journals regularly publish articles on the teaching of writing, many of which are useful at more than one level. For auxiliary groups NCTE publishes English Education, for teachers of teachers of English, and Research in the Teaching of English, both of which also cover writing instruction and theory, as well as College Composition and Communication, a journal wholly devoted to the theory and pedagogy of composition. (Details on membership, publications, conferences, are available by writing NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.)

NCTE also publishes a wide range of books on language arts instruction, among them a number of collections of practical classroom techniques for teaching writing, most of which are adaptable to specific course and level needs. The books listed in the annotated bibliography provide a cornucopia of activities, exercises, and assignments for the composition class.

Berger, Allan, & Blanche Hope Smith. Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1974-1975: Re-Vision.

Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1974. Practices range from elementary to college level. Section Three is on writing, including such articles as: "How Does the Writer Write?", "How to Paralyze the Novice Writer," "Marginalia and

Other Feedback," "Getting to Know You: First Week Activities," "The Honesty of Anonymity," others. (107 pp.)

Clapp, Ouida, ed. Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1975-1976: On Righting Writing.

Urbana: NCTE, 1975. An elementary to college mix. Six sections: "Getting the Writer Started" (including "Methods to Motivate Composition Students"), "Finding a Subject," "Developing Point of View: Sensing an Audience," "Sharpening Technique," "Writing to Clarify Values" (including "Values Clarification, Journals, and the Freshman Writing Course"), and "Exploring Writing Systems" (including one on career education, one on research papers, one on fictional biography, and "Researching Old Murders"). (121 pp.)

Clapp, Ouida, ed. Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1977-1978: Teaching the Basics--Really!

An elementary-college mix. Two of the six sections are on teaching writing--one on prewriting, one on revising and editing. (148 pp.)

Geuder, Patricia, et al, eds. They Really Taught Us How to Write.

Urbana: NCTE, 1978. Students named teachers who "really" taught them how to write and those teachers wrote these articles based on their classroom experiences. The pieces are aimed at high school students but are adaptable. Part One: "The Student Prepares to Write" includes "Teaching Before the Composition is Written" and "Writing: A Wrestling with the Angel of Language"; Part Two: "The Student Writes" includes sub-sections on short term assignments ("Be Your Own Boswell," "Students Walk Out") and long term assignments, projects, and course descriptions ("The Community Documentary," "A Rationale for Teaching Composition"); Part Three: "The Student Has Written" includes "The Teacher as Editor" and "The Conference Evaluation: A Renewal". (140 pp.)

Judine, Sister M., ed. A Guide for Evaluating Student Composition.

Urbana: NCTE, 1965. Aimed at high school teachers. Four sections: 1. The Audience: For Whom Does the Student Write? 2. The Evaluator: What Standards Does He Meet, and How, with Large Paper Loads? 3. The Total Writing Practice: Does the Teacher See All Its Aspects When Evaluating? 4. Communication: How Do We Measure Its Success or Failure? Includes "Evaluating a Theme" and "How to Write an F-Paper." (162 pp.)

Koch, Carl, & James M. Brazil. Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process.

Urbana: NCTE, 1978. For high school and college teachers. A compendious collection of practical activities for the classroom, involving setting an atmosphere ("The Comfort Zone") and each stage of the composing process, Prewriting ("Value Exploration," "Self-Disclosure," "The Telegram: Form and Audience"), Writing (chiefly work on sentences and paragraphs), and Postwriting ("Peer Essay Reading" and activities to gain coherence, improve style and transitions, and correct mechanics.). Appendix A: "Setting Priorities for Diagnosing Student Writing" is particularly helpful. (108 pp.)

Laque, Carol Feiser, and Phyllis A. Sherwood. A Laboratory Approach to Writing.

Urbana; NCTE, 1977. A thorough explanation of and rationale for a laboratory approach to teaching writing.

Long, Littleton, ed. Writing Exercise from "Exercise Exchange".

Urbana: NCTE, 1976. Junior high to college collection. Brief articles, culled from Exercise Exchange, a periodical published by the Department of English, University of Vermont, Burlington. Sections include "Prewriting," "Diction," "Themes, Thesis, and Paragraph," "Style," "Ideas for Whole Papers and Special Topics," "Rewriting." (152 pp.)

Ohmann, Richard, & W. B. Coley, eds. Ideas for English 101: Teaching Writing in College.

Urbana: NCTE, 1975. A collection of reprints from College English, containing early manifestations of significant later texts and theories including articles by Lou Kelly on the open class, Peter Elbow, and William Coles, both on their unique writing classes, Kenneth Bruffee on collaborative learning, Francine Hardaway on "What Students Can Do to Take the Burden Off You," and Barrett John Mandel on "Teaching Without Judging." (234 pp.)

Palmer, Orville. "Seven Classic Ways of Grading Dishonestly,"

The English Journal (October, 1962), 464-467. Off-print. 1) Grading by abdication; 2) the "carrots and clubs" system; 3) by default; 4) testing zealots; 5) changing the rules mid-game; 6) psychic grader; 7) the impossible perfection rainbow. (4 pp.)

Events

The Northeast Regional conference on English in the Two-Year College will be held October 18-20, 1979, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English will be held November 22-24, 1979, at the San Francisco Hilton, San Francisco, California. Information is available through NCTE.

If you are aware of upcoming meetings, conferences, and events in writing, please send me the information for inclusion in this feature. My address is: Robert L. Root Jr., Department of English, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, 48858.

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