

From the ECB

fforum, the Newsletter of the English Composition Board, is intended to give teachers of writing throughout Michigan a forum of fact and opinion about their art. In another article in this first number, Patti Stock, editor of the newsletter, speaks of what she envisions for its future. This brief piece is intended to supply a context for that vision:

The ECB has accepted a seven-part responsibility from the faculty of the College of Literature, Science, and Arts at Michigan. Six of those parts--Assessment of all incoming undergraduate students; Tutorial instruction where necessary; Introductory Composition; Writing Workshop support available to every student; Junior/Senior Writing courses; Research on the effects of the program--are encompassed within the College. The Board's seventh function is to articulate its writing program with those of secondary schools and community colleges throughout Michigan.

A part of that seventh function, fforum has been preceded in its intent by two conferences in Ann Arbor in May and December of 1978, a workshop also held in Ann Arbor for three days in June of 1979, and eighty-four seminars on the teaching of writing offered during 1978-79 on the campuses of Michigan high schools and colleges. During 1979-80 the ECB will continue to provide seminars to faculties of schools it has not visited before, and it will convene a second writing workshop on the Michigan campus next June. In addition, the Board has agreed to offer in this academic year at least twelve half-day seminars to teachers at Bloomfield Hills Andover High School in order to assist them with further development of their writing curriculum.

The idea of fforum is exciting to everyone here at the ECB. Please help us to make it useful for you as well.

Daniel Fader

EDITORIAL

The ancient Roman forum, like the Greek agora before it, was a marketplace forming the center of public business and open discussion in its society. It was with this model in mind that the English Composition Board's fforum was conceived as a meeting place for discussion of writing and mutual instruction by teachers of writing in Michigan. Mindful of

the significance of the historical forum, we remembered the practice of another era. In the middle ages, some scribes used doubled letters to serve as capital letters; hence, our own distinctive, twentieth-century fforum. The name of the publication itself reminds us of a historical legacy of professionals who taught writing and leads us toward a promising future for a field of study coming to new understandings of itself.

FFORUM

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We who teach writing base our work on a rich heritage of theory and practice; moreover, we have current research and developing theory to assimilate as we teach. The challenge is great. To serve you in meeting this challenge, we designed fforum to include articles by experts themselves, essays reviewing the work of those experts, critical analyses of their contribution, and a sampling of methods and materials developed by classroom teachers who have translated their theory into practice. Each issue will focus on the work of a specific expert or
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Editorial (cont. from p. 2)

school of thought; or it will treat a topic important to the teacher of writing.

We are especially gratified that after we decided to make the work of Ken Macrorie and Peter Elbow the thematic center of this first issue of fforum, each of them agreed to write a brief piece especially for fforum readers. We are delighted, furthermore, by similar commitments from several authors who will be featured in future issues.

Balancing fforum's informational component will be one for discussion. At this exciting time of a first issue, we ask you to react to content and format and to tell us what you might wish were here. It is our intention to serve your needs and interests. Please address your letters to:

Patti Stock

fforum

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At present, we are assembling materials for issues dealing with schools of thought represented by the following writers: (1) Sheridan Baker, Edward Corbett, and John Warriner; and (2) James Britton and James Moffett. We hope you will write for one of these issues. If you are interested in contributing an article, please let us know as soon as possible.

Several other features of fforum specifically need your input. In each issue we plan to place "In the Limelight" a teacher, school, or school district doing work in the state which is of interest to all of us. We need you to share your newsworthy projects with us if we are to make others aware of them. In the feature "Between Classes," we will publish your poetry or prose or that of your students if you will share these with us. Finally, in their column "From the Guidance Office," a team of resident experts, Drs. Fidditch and Foilitch, are

ready to tackle, or grapple with, any and all professional problems you call to their attention. We plan to share with you in "ECB Reports" as well as providing an "ECB FreeB" in each issue. The "FreeB" is a lesson plan (complete with duplicatable materials) offered for your consideration.

There is this to say about "copyright": Everything that appears in fforum is intended for your use. For that reason there are no restrictions at all on any use you wish to make of it.

And this, about receiving fforum: This first issue is being sent to all secondary schools, colleges, and universities in Michigan. If you wish to continue to receive fforum or to begin receiving it, please notify us. There is no charge for subscription.

And this, about thank you's: To those of you who wrote for this first issue, who agreed to meet an unrealistic deadline, who encouraged the editor with your enthusiasm, thank you.

And this, for Bernard Van't Hul and Dan Fader: THANK YOU.

Waterford Mott (cont. from p. 18)

packet of materials and suggestions for increasing the amount of writing in non-English courses which we will offer to the entire staff.

Much of our effort is in staff development. If we can help teachers feel confident as teachers of writing, not significantly increasing their paper load, and let them see writing improvement in their students, we will have succeeded as staff development consultants. If we can help students feel confident as writers, significantly increasing their paper load, and let them see their own writing improvement, we will have succeeded as teachers.

Norm Ballou is English department head at Waterford Mott High School in Pontiac.