

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
(6) and this.

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
(7) Another person (identified by his/  
\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
her work) did this,

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
(8) in this place different from the  
\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
place in (2)

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
(9) did this and this--vaguely against  
\_\_\_\_\_ .  
or in conflict with (6)

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
If \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(10) this second person (in 7) saw  
\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
this happen

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
if \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(11) he/she believed/imagined or  
\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
felt this

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
(12) he/she did not reveal it.

Our yet-unproved hunch is that first-rate professional writing is our best source for the **given language** we might want to use in developing **Generating Frames**. We are trying to construct sequences or catalogues of **Generating Frames** that focus on particular qualities such as concrete imagery, personifications, or even sound and rhythmic patterns. We can control the difficulty of the **Generating Frame** and the amount of writing it invites by careful selection of texts, by the number of words or phrases we withhold from a text, and by how much specific help we offer through cues.

What we like most about **Generating Frames** is that the writer must produce most of the language. Other **given-language** techniques, including most sentence-combining exercises, give

most of the language to the student and ask only for manipulation. Also, with **Generating Frames**, the cues can provide a kind of tether to imagination without limiting it severely. Many of our students say they are "turned on" by **Generating Frames**.

We also like the idea of going to the masters for our model sentences, but the search for particular patterns, rhythms, or for sentences with given linguistic characteristics, is slow and sometimes frustrating. Nonetheless, we're building several sequences of **Generating Frames** and hope to test them out carefully: Do **Generating Frames** make writing easier for some kinds of students? Do they help some students write more vividly, or with considerable pleasure or pride? Do some students write more concrete images after practice with **Generating Frames**? What kinds of students respond what ways?

The key question seems to be: Will students be helped by **Generating Frames** to write good sentences they wouldn't have otherwise written? If you try **Generating Frames** and want to share samples of your students' work, or tell us how students felt about the work, please write us. Should you want them, we'll provide the original texts from which these **frames** were built. One came from a well-known, living poet. The other came from a prominent novelist of the 20th century.

We think these two **frames** may be of average difficulty for ninth- or tenth-grade students. We know some middle-school students and some adults who have been able and willing to complete them. If you write, let us know where you tried them and with what results.

Stephen Dunning, Kathe Kohl, Lawrence McDaniel  
English Department  
The University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Stephen Dunning has most recently added a volume of poetry Handfuls of Us to his extensive list of books and articles in the field of English education.

Kathe Kohl is a Ph.D. candidate at The University of Michigan.

Lawrence McDaniel is Director of the Writing Center at St. Louis Community College, Kirkwood, Missouri.

# Resources in the Teaching of Composition

Robert Root

## Basic Books

Previous RTC features in forum have described classroom-oriented collections; this month I'd like to turn to some basic books for the composition teacher's library, books sometimes of theory but most often of theory meant to be put into practice.

The following collections give a range of current and traditional responses to theory and practice in the teaching of composition:

**Cooper, Charles R., & Lee Odell, eds.** Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1977.

*An important collection of articles on evaluation of writing, including Richard Lloyd-Jones' influential explanation of primary trait scoring plus Cooper on holistic evaluation, Kellogg Hunt on syntactic structures, and Mary Beaven on "Individualized Goal Setting, Self-Evaluation, and Peer Evaluation."*

**Cooper, Charles R., & Lee Odell, eds.** Research on Composing: Points of Departure. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1978.

*A very useful anthology attempting to bring us up-to-date on developments in composition theory and pedagogy and related fields. Chapters include one by the editors on discourse theory, one by Britton on the functions of writing, one by Donald Murray on revision, one by Walter Petty on the writing of young children. Janet Emig writes on hand, eye, and brain; Barritt and Kroll, on cognitive-developmental psychology; Young, on invention.*

**Graves, Richard L., ed.** Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, 1976.

*A fine collection of articles for "practicing and prospective" teachers of writing on all levels, with appeals to both theory and pedagogy. Part Five is particularly on pedagogy; Part Two is on Motivating Student Writing. Part One includes a useful overview by Squire and Applebee. Other sections are on the sentence, the paragraph, and classical rhetoric.*

**Larson, Richard L., ed.** Children and Writing in the Elementary School: Theories and Techniques. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

*Moffett and Britton both make clear the developmental nature of writing ability; Larson's collection of articles and excerpts reinforces their findings and offers on-target readings in theories of written discourse and teaching techniques, and responding to student writing.*

**Petty, Walter T., & Finn, Patrick, eds.** The Writing Processes of Students. Report of the Annual Conference on Language Arts No. 1. Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975.

*Directed toward writing in elementary and secondary schools and also valuable for college teachers. Articles deal with research on how students actually write. Samples: Emig, "The Biology of Writing"; Graves, "The Child, The Writing Process, and the Role of the Professional"; Sawkins, "What Children Say About Their Writing"; Bodkin, "Observed Differences in the Written*

*Expression of Boys and Girls"; others by Squire, Cooper, Odell, Clapp.*

**Tate, Gary, ed.** Teaching Composition: Ten Bibliographical Essays. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.

*An indispensable research tool, including essays by top scholars on research in such areas as invention, structure and form, style, modes of discourse, basic writing, media, linguistics, rhetorical analysis, dialects, and related fields (philosophy, speech, education).*

In addition to these collections are several landmark studies which deserve attention. These include three books described elsewhere in this issue, The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18) (Britton et al), Language and Learning (Britton), and Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Moffett). Other landmark studies are:

**Emig, Janet.** The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders. NCTE Research Report No. 13. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1971.

*Emig based her understanding of how children write upon an observed process rather than a prescribed procedure grounded upon analysis of a finished product. Her research methods are being widely imitated and refined, with fascinating results at all levels, elementary through college. She concludes with recommendations concerning changes in the way composition is taught in secondary school and the ways writing teachers are taught in college.*

**Shaughnessy, Mina.** Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing. NY: Oxford University Press, 1977.

*Because she understands the logic underlying error, Shaughnessy is more capable of responding constructively to it than the teacher who can merely spot error. An indispensable book for the teacher of basic writing and a valuable resource for all writing teachers.*

#### **New and Recommended**

Two new books both seem to be essential reading at this moment, for they both discuss the responses of educators and the public to language and the language of students.

**Gere, Ann Ruggles, & Eugene Smith.** Attitudes, Language, & Change. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1979.

*Explores the attitudes teachers hold about language, their sources, the ways of understanding attitudes and implementing change not only in ourselves but also in our colleagues and our community. A fascinating, challenging book.*

**Judy, Stephen.** The ABCs of Literacy: A Guide for Parents and Educators. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

*An accessible book aimed at a wide audience, not only educators but members of the community as well. Its premises--that change in literacy instruction needs an overhaul of aims and alteration of teaching conditions, that the time is right for such a change, that it must begin in the schools and the communities, and that it must involve other disciplines--lead to a vital review of attitudes toward literacy instruction and sound approaches to improving it.*

#### **Events**

**October 10, 1980 - October Engfest,** Western Michigan University, conference for elementary, middle school, and secondary language arts teachers. Theme: Teacher Processing. Sponsored by WMU and MCTE. Contact Maryellen Hains or Kathy Drzick, WMU English Department, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

**October 10, 11, 12 - MCTE Boyne Highlands Conference.** Theme: Winds of Change--Problems and Practices in the Teaching of English. Boyne Highlands Inn, Harbor Springs, MI. Guest consultant: John C. Maxwell, NCTE. Contact Stephen Judy, English, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

**October 24 - MCEA Conference,** Central Michigan University. Includes a Writing Across the Curriculum workshop. Contact Hans Fetting, Dept. of English, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

**Fall Meeting (Date to be Announced) - Flint Area English Society (FLARES).** Contact Donna Cummings, 1069 River Forest Drive, Flint, MI 48504.

# A Reader's View

Marv DeMilio

*"I hate school. I'd rather be out in the woods or fishing. I won't do anything else when I leave this place anyway."*

*"I have such a hard time in school everything is hard espeshly righting get intrubel for not taking part of talking."*

*"School's ok. I suppose I'm just average. I get average grades. It satisfies everyone. My teachers say I could do better. Maybe later when I have to."*

*"I love school. I get all A's. My teachers like me. My parents are happy. It's easy, possibly too easy. Will it be more difficult after I graduate? Will I make it?"*

*"I enjoy school. It's challenging to help these kinds of kids and the others that fall into other areas of the learning spectrum. Helping them realize their potential and showing them the unlimited choices they can make when they leave me, enriches my life."*

After the 1978 Summer Writing Institute held at Northern Michigan University, and with the voices quoted above in mind, I sat down to compose my thoughts about the teaching of writing which I wish to share with fforum's readers.

Because I have taught writing for six years and because I see roughly 7,000 pieces of writing from students in grades 7-12 in a given nine-month period of time, I have had to use traditional techniques in a humanistic approach to my writing classes. I'm a **realistic idealist**. Realistic idealism is not so much a philosophy as a responsibility to do everything I can to help my students realize their potential, to transcend their limitations, and to give them an appreciation for the multiple possibilities and choices that lie before them.

My responsibility is not only to them but also to the adults who are already out there, myself included, who will someday come to depend on them as the backbone of our society. These young people will be the leaders, the consumers, the decision makers, the teachers. My life and the lives of my children will somehow be affected by how I carry out my responsibilities to my students now and in years ahead. What I consider my responsibilities to my students grow out of my philosophy of grading as out of my sense of the relationship of hearing and speaking the language to reading and writing it.

## Grading

In forming a philosophy of teaching writing, one must take all levels of learning into account, K through 12. Although I teach at the secondary level, I am concerned about what teachers are doing at the elementary level. As I consider the K-6 program, I am influenced by the recommendations made by the National Council of Teachers of English. The NCTE suggests that at this level, no grade lower than C- be given on any writing assignment. This grading recommendation addresses a concern for the students' perceptions of themselves and their abilities. I support the NCTE recommendation because as a junior-high teacher, I don't want my students stifled or turned off to English by the time they get to me. I will probably turn them off myself unless I'm careful. If a student is told at an early stage of his development as a writer that what he conscientiously puts down on paper is a failure, how can I expect him to make a sincere effort again? (He probably will though, in spite of our nearsightedness.)

## Reading and Writing

I see no practical separation between reading and writing. Together they shape childrens' awareness of the world in which they live or think. Reading sparks

students' imaginations and reinforces their image-making abilities. Since it is in the first few years of school that students begin to make value judgments, choosing between what they like and don't like, between what they perceive to be the good and evil around them, often their values are developed and organized in their own minds when they begin to examine them in writing.

### **Speech and Writing**

Because students know their language and speak it effectively when they enter school, I would hope the teaching emphasis would be put on helping them communicate as effectively in writing as they do in speech, not on making them self-conscious about what they already know by tearing language apart and beating them senseless with the rules and regulations of structured or traditional grammar. I view grammar as a tool that can function as a common ground of understanding between the teacher and the student. But when the teacher requires that the student dismantle the tool rather than use it, the tool becomes an end in itself, and the task is unattainable. When too much emphasis is put on grading and testing of grammatical structure, teachers and students lose track of their purpose: using the English language more effectively in writing and in speaking.

### **Looking at the Seventh Grade**

At the middle-school level, especially in the seventh grade, the techniques used by the teacher are tremendously important because this particular year is crucial in a child's life, socially and physiologically. In most school settings, it is the first time the student has to move from room to room and teacher to teacher, facing four or five different authority figures daily. Students are not only responsible for organizing their work but for not losing it; just getting the right books to the right classes for the first few weeks is mind-boggling to the seventh grader.

The teacher must develop an atmosphere of mutual respect in his classroom if he expects students to trust him not only as a teacher, but also as a person. However, in spite of all our best efforts, some

will never write for us or for themselves. Personalities can sometimes get in the way of our expectations. It is this reality that tempers my idealism. I realize that I cannot touch all students. I have also come to believe that some kids don't belong in a typical school setting. Most of us are not prepared professionally or psychologically to deal with all students.

I have practically eliminated failure in my seventh-grade classroom by following NCTE recommendations. Although students must turn in all daily assignments and longer papers, they are graded according to their ability only, and unless they hand in something totally foreign to the assignment, they earn no less than a C- on written work. If they fail a test (below 70%), they have two more chances to pass it. For the most part this system works, but there are always a few students who refuse to try. When this happens, I contact the students' parents because parental concern in addition to my own usually helps. I have tried not grading at different levels on several occasions, only to be forced by the student to reinstate the system: students wanted something to work for and the measure of comparison.

In my classroom, I try to function as a resource person, helping students to exercise their talents and abilities by structuring classroom activities which motivate them to learn. I set the stage on the first day:

"I am concerned about your growth as students and my growth as a teacher. Writing is difficult and you will do a lot of it in thirty-six weeks. How many of you think can improve your writing? Help me to help you and you will."

They forget this neat little speech after three or four weeks, but they see improvement and that reinforces everything.

At the seventh-grade level, the teacher's personality is an important component of the learning process. Discipline, the kind that dreams are made of, also helps. By discipline, I mean their understanding of the need to sit down, write more than one draft, and complete a final paper as

best they can. I also let them know that I perceive each of them as an individual, having strengths and weaknesses, and I grade each on an individual basis. They learn to trust me after a few assignments, but the idea that I am human and fallible--must be discussed freely with the class many times throughout the year.

### Macrorie and Warriner

I am very much influenced by Ken Macrorie's Writing to be Read. If I review Macrorie before each school year begins, I quell the Mr. Hyde side of me that wants to scribble red ink on all papers I read. Macrorie reminds the students to be **honest** in their writing and teachers to be tolerant when evaluating and discussing student work. Although I don't follow Macrorie religiously, I do use his recommendation for having students keep journals in both writing and literature classes. I stress **honesty** of tone, usage, and dialect. I also teach more formal lessons on sentence combining and organization. For example, I stress that writing helps organize and sort out thoughts: it stimulates and reinforces concepts or ideas sometimes laid aside or misplaced.

My students write daily, three to four assignments a week. The assignments are simple enough for students to understand how and why they are doing them, and unlimited in scope so as to enable them to come from as many angles as possible. In eleventh-grade composition classes, I use Warriner's Models for Composition, which as department head I took off the endangered species list and made a requirement. The book is not as restrictive or prescriptive as some think. There are only three or four sentence-skill sections and those deal with sentence combining, not grammar. I first tried this book for a semester with tenth- and eleventh-grade students. Most of the students enjoyed the book. The writings Warriner includes deal with an assortment of points of view and are interesting. Students actually want to talk about them afterward! Class use of the book enables advanced writers to do independent study, freeing me to work with the ones having more difficulty.

Dealing with abstract ideas is one of the toughest writing problems my college-bound

seniors have. Warriner's Advanced Composition text helps them to develop certain techniques that I have a more difficult time teaching them without the book. Let's face it, we are human and many of us do not have the time to do the research or attain the background necessary to develop individual, original creative writing units. If we don't limit ourselves to a text or become dependent on it as a bible for writing, we can still utilize the material and expertise of accomplished writers and editors in these texts.

As a **realistic idealist**, I know most of my composition students will not go on to college or choose writing as a career; and I adjust my curriculum accordingly. For example, my students and I explore how to word a letter for the best results in different situations. Since there are social pressures on all of us to speak, act, and write in the currently accepted polite style, and since I am not going to change the world in my lifetime, I do what I can to make it easier for my students to get along in this world by dealing with realistic life situations.

Writing in our society can be considered a valuable tool for survival, and at its very best, an opportunity for self-discovery and understanding; therefore, my students write. I assign realistic daily writings and deal tolerantly and conscientiously with students' writing. My classroom procedures grow out of what produces growth in my students' writing. I do not change methods in response to theorizing or philosophizing. I change them when I am convinced a new idea or technique works in the classroom.

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Marv DeMilio is chairman of the English Department at Baraga High School, Baraga, Michigan.

# Drs Fidditch/Foilitch

Dear Dr. Fidditch and Foilitch:

I've read as much as any busy teacher can read about so-called "developmental cognitive theory." I admit I'm no expert, but my students know the difference between "keeping school" and "being oneself."

When I give my students assignments to exercise the expressive uses of language, I think they wonder: "Who or whom does he think he's kidding?"

Sincerely,

Abram Martin, Jr.

Dear Mr. Abram:

When I try to recall my own days as a school child, it seems to me that I had only instincts for who or whom teachers were or were not "kidding." I believe that such instincts are all that students have in our own time.

I take heart from this belief: For it implies that a trusted teacher who trusts students can make much of almost any theory, however, "cognitive-developmental" or more traditional.

For that reason, I like both Stephen Bernhardt's misgivings in his "Language

Acquisition and Writing Ability" (p. 19) and the open-minded concession of its conclusion.

Sincerely,

Bertrand M. Fidditch

Dear Mr. Abram:

Because it is a jungle that your pupils will occupy when they leave school, it is fitting that they should have, before leaving, the skepticism on which survival depends--which needs always to know--whom is kidding who.

I suggest, then, that you augment your developmental assignments with ones discreetly selected from a no-nonsense textbook that is "kidding" no one, in demanding of students that they display the only skills that count in the jungle that is life itself, the jungle whose denizens scorn the frag, the infinitive and other constructions that are split too commonly up, and misspellings themselves.

I refer, of course, to the skills that are basic.

Sincerely,

Ignatius Foilitch, B.S., Ph.D.



THE MODIFIERS  
(SUMMER, 1979)

# Writing Across the Curriculum

From the ECB

Daniel Fader

"What's the most pleasing sight you've seen in two decades of teaching at the University?"

"I'm glad you asked."

I have conversations every day that begin this way. A pollster, an interviewer, a stranger on the street...someone stops me and asks the question I'm ready to answer. Not, like so many of my students, the question I'm unprepared for. Unfortunately, my students are real and the others are not.

If someone, some kind English teacher had known last October how much I wanted to be asked about the most pleasing sight I'd seen in twenty years of teaching at Michigan, and if that person had actually put the question to me, I would have said:

"Come with me next Tuesday at 4 p.m. to the Old Regents' Room where I'll show you a sight rarely seen by eyes such as ours. You'll see some seventy-five faculty members and graduate students from the majority of disciplines that make up the curriculum of the College."

"There to discuss (shrinking budgets, teaching loads, tenure etc.), I presume."

"There to discuss their own writing and the teaching of writing to their junior and senior students."

The English teacher stares at me for a moment, then looks away with an expression of gentle concern on her face. Clearly I have lost touch with reality.

Please believe in the scene, oh gentle English teachers everywhere! For if the questioner were a figment of my wistful imagination, the roomful of teachers was not. October of 1979 had five Tuesdays. Between 4 and 6 o'clock in the afternoon

of each, 60 to 75 faculty members and teaching assistants from perhaps twenty departments--humanities, natural sciences, social sciences about equally well represented--gathered to discuss their own writing and that of their students. The lure? A few small posters placed strategically around the campus and a letter of invitation sent to each department and program in the college. Posters and letters invited all colleagues who would like to learn how to be better writers as well as better teachers of writing, to attend a series of five seminars offered by Jay Robinson and Daniel Fader that would teach them how to do both.

Did we fulfill the promise of our advertisements? As well as we knew how. For both of us, however, even more important than the content of the seminars was their attendance. It was the first indisputable evidence we had that members of the faculty would vote for a writing program across the curriculum **and** regard the teaching skills required by such a program as a significant part of their pedagogical responsibilities.

Now, as I write this brief piece, we are preparing for the second October series of faculty seminars on the teaching of writing. In addition to attendance from a broad range of disciplines within the College, we expect to welcome faculty members from schools and colleges throughout The University. Lawyers, architects, nurses, musicians, pharmacists, conservationists--all find that the practices of the new writing program in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts speak to their needs. Their presence at our seminars testifies to the timeliness of a composition program no less broad than the width of the entire curriculum.

From the formation of the English Composition Board in January of 1976 to the



installation of all parts of the new writing requirement in September of 1979, support for the program has come from a very wide range of disciplines: The chairman of the Chemistry Department stated before the faculty that the minimal written literacy of undergraduate students was one of the greatest problems in the teaching of chemistry. The associate chairman of the Division of Biological Sciences has been the moving force in causing his colleagues to offer the largest selection of upper-level writing courses in the College. Sociologists, historians, anthropologists, classicists, psychologists, philosophers--all have joined their colleagues in English in sharing responsibility for the quality of undergraduate writing.

The list which completes this report is composed of courses offered this semester that may be taken by junior and senior students to satisfy the upper-level writing requirement. Perhaps the most remarkable fact about this list is that only a relatively small number of transfer students has to take such a course before 1981-82, because the full requirement is incumbent only upon the class of 1983 and its successors. In spite of this, nearly every department and program will offer these courses this year, many having done so last year as well. Their reasons for beginning before they must are uniform and compelling: Their students write badly now and must be helped now. They join our English Department and English Composition Board in acting upon the belief that teachers of all subjects must teach writing or the writing of English will become, like the reading of Latin, a rare skill possessed by a few scholars and scribes.

**Junior/Senior Writing Courses:  
Fall 1980**

**American Studies 490:**  
American Film

**Anthropology 202:**  
Culture, Thought and Meaning

**Anthropology 463:**  
Expository Writing in Anthropology

**Astronomy 429:**  
Senior Seminar

**Biology 351:**  
General Ecology

**Biology 414:**  
Immunobiology

**Biology 475:**  
Evolution and Human Behavior

**Biology 512:**  
Microbial Physiology

**Botany 281/481:**  
Introduction to Plant Physiology

**Classical Civilization 371:**  
Greek and Roman Sport and Recreation

**Communications 302:**  
Writing for Mass Media

**Communications 428:**  
Writing for Radio and TV

**Communications 625:**  
The Michigan Journalist

**Economics Writing Program:**  
See department

**English 225:**  
Argumentative Writing

**English 325:**  
Intermediate Exposition

**French 372:**  
Problems in Translation

**Geography 465:**  
History of Urban Systems

**Geology Writing Program:**  
See department

**History 396:**  
Plantation Societies After Slavery (Sec. 004)  
20th Century American War (Sec. 005)  
Soldiers, Diplomats, Merchants, and Missionaries (Sec. 007)  
Comparative History of Scientific Criticism (Sec. 012)

**History of Art 446/MARC 446:**  
The Courtly Arts

**Linguistics 493:**  
Undergraduate Reading (independent study)

**Linguistics 495:**  
Honors Reading (independent study)

**Near Eastern Studies 445:**  
Introduction to Islamic Literature

**Philosophy 388:**  
History of Philosophy: Ancient

**Political Science 465:**  
Political Development and Dependence

**Psychology 486:**  
Attitudes and Behavior

**Residential College Core 300:**  
Writing and Theory

**Residential College Humanities 210:**  
Classical Sources of Modern Culture

**Residential College Humanities 410:**  
20th Century Literature of the Absurd

**Residential College Social Science 360:**  
Power in America

**Residential College Social Sci. 375/  
Environmental Studies 407:**  
Individual and Social Groups

**Russian 451:**  
Survey of Russian Literature

**Women's Studies 430:**  
Theories in Feminism

**Zoology 326:**  
Animal Physiology Lab

**Zoology 421:**  
Comparative Physiology

**Zoology 430:**  
Endocrinology Lab

# Editorial

Because with this issue we begin a second year of **fforum** for teachers of writing in Michigan and interested readers anywhere, it seems appropriate to review its brief history and restate its policies. The newsletter is only one aspect of the outreach work of the English Composition Board (ECB) of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts of The University of Michigan. In addition to **fforum**, the following activities are designed by the ECB to articulate the teaching of writing in secondary schools and community colleges with the writing program at The University: **writing conferences**, intended primarily to inform pre-university teachers of writing of the ECB's in-house program of instruction, and of its ability and willingness to engage in outreach projects; **one-day seminars** conducted in schools throughout the state, designed to familiarize pre-university faculties with the College's writing program and to discuss with teachers the current state of theory and practice in the art of teaching writing on all levels; **summer-term writing workshops**, held at The University of Michigan, designed to

provide teachers with three days of intensive work related to their teaching of writing; and extended **curriculum- and staff-development projects** undertaken with school districts which have requested such service.

This extensive outreach program is one of seven responsibilities with which the ECB has been charged by the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at The University. The other six responsibilities, within the College, are the rating of an **Entrance Essay**, required of all incoming undergraduates; **Tutorial** instruction to students who need such assistance; **Introductory Composition**; **Writing Workshop** support available to every student who wishes it; **Junior/Senior Level Writing Courses**-- described in this issue in Daniel Fader's "Writing Across the Curriculum" (p. 37); and **Research** in the theory and practice of teaching writing.

Within this context, **fforum** is designed to provide teachers of writing in Michigan a

meeting place for mutual instruction and dialogue. By invoking the forum of ancient Rome and the agora of Greece before Rome, the name of our publication itself reminds us of our rich heritage of theory and practice as we teach writing in our time and look to the promising future of our work. The newsletter is an arena in which (1) experts present their views about the teaching of writing and related activities; (2) practicing teachers review the work of the experts and present a sampling of methods and materials they have based on the experts' theory; thus, making each issue a mini-course in the theory and practice of an approach to the teaching of writing; and (3) those of us interested in the teaching of writing share our own theories and practices with one another.

This issue of fforum is to be the first of two related ones. The excerpt from James Britton's Language and Learning and the essay "On Essaying" which James Moffett wrote for fforum are here to introduce our readers to the developmental writing theory that has influenced writing instruction in our time. As Toby Fulwiler notes in "Prime Movers: Britton and Moffett" (p. 17), James Britton provides one theoretical base for the common-sense principle that writing is not the sole province of English teachers. With this issue's attention to theoretical underpinnings in the work of Britton and Moffett, the next issue of fforum (Winter, 1981) will treat **Writing Throughout the Entire Curriculum.**

I would like to thank James Britton for permitting us to reproduce material from Language and Learning and James Moffett for "On Essaying." I am also indebted to Stephen Bernhardt, Edith Croake, Toby Fulwiler, Robert Root, and Mark Smith for their insightful evaluation of Britton's and Moffett's work.

So that fforum may be the vital vehicle for discussion that it was dreamed up to be, I urge you, its readers, to share your opinions and your practices by contributing articles to it. I would like to thank Paula Finkelstein, Susan Marwil, Dolores Montgomery, and Marv DeMilio for their contributions to this issue.

I would also like to remind readers that

the views expressed in all of fforum's articles are, of course, those of the individual writers. And, I invite your comments on any or all of the material in fforum, as well as reports on projects and essays on subjects of your individual interest.

Finally, I remind you that there are no restrictions at all on any use which you wish to make of anything that appears in fforum, which is published to be of use. And, you may receive fforum, without charge, by writing to the ECB at The University of Michigan and requesting that your name be placed on its mailing list.

Patti Stock

# Letters to the Editor

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English has a long history of service to language arts and English teachers in Michigan. As the state affiliate of NCTE we have kept our membership informed and in touch with national trends in English education, both in theory and in classroom practice. We have also sponsored or co-sponsored regional and statewide conferences, like the annual **WMU/MCTE October Engfest**, the **MSU/MCTE Gull Lake English Festival**, this October's **Boyne Highlands Conference**, and next April's annual convention at the Southfield-Sheraton. We have worked with local affiliates and non-affiliated organizations, like the Livingston-Oakland County Group, **LOCTE**, the Flint area group, **FLARES**, and other groups throughout the state, from Detroit through the Upper Peninsula, providing resources and encouragement for continued professional activity.

As regular readers of fforum are aware, last year we lobbied for expanded concern for communication skills in regard to the reading certification bill; we have also attempted to influence the direction of the State assessment program. Yearly we

have supported the **Michigan Young Readers' Award** and the creative writing awards of the Michigan Council for the Arts; at our annual convention we give the **C.C. Fries Award** to an outstanding Michigan English teacher. Finally, in addition to our newsletter, The Michigan English Teacher (MET), published throughout the school year, we have also published several mini-monographs and anthologies of articles on teaching English, including yearbooks on composing and reading.

Yet with all this activity, language arts teachers throughout the state are still very often unaware of MCTE. Of course I encourage membership--the cost is \$6 per year, \$11 per two years, \$15 per three, through Ray Lawson, MCTE Secretary-Treasurer, Box 382, Rochester, Mi 48063. But more important, I encourage awareness of a major professional resource for English Teachers within the state. Our membership includes nationally recognized figures in our field, available for in-service programs or regional meetings. We are familiar, and in close contact, with valuable programs throughout the state like the **ECB at The University of Michigan**, the **Writing Across the Curriculum Program at Michigan Tech** and the **Upper Peninsula Writing Project**; we are able to serve as a clearinghouse for identifying and contacting such programs.

Our primary goal is the improved instruction of language arts from kindergarten through college, not only in English, but in other disciplines, as well. We believe this will take active local efforts, which we, like the **ECB**, support and for which we are willing to offer our services. If you can be a member, please join us; please urge your school, as well, to take an institutional membership, at \$10 per year, which will expose the full staff to language arts instruction. Above all, feel free to call upon us for aid in improving language arts instruction in your school, your school district, or your community.

Sincerely,

Robert Root  
President-Elect, MCTE

TO THE EDITOR

I would like to give you a progress report on the composition planning grant which Waterford Mott was awarded last year and which was described in the October, 1979, forum. As you perhaps know, the governor has "frozen" all new IV C grants and cut back existing programs by 30%. Ours is considered new because we were entering the implementation stage. In addition to that problem, Waterford School District has been forced to cut back staff and programs--we currently have a layoff list of 138 teachers out of a total staff of 750.

During the 1979-80 school year, Waterford Mott High School received a Title IV C planning grant in composition which enabled us to provide inservice workshop time for Mott's total English department and one representative each from our social studies, business, science, and math departments. Our immediate goals were to learn effective methods of teaching composition that would not result in increased teacher paperload, to take initial steps toward cross-curricular writing, and to improve our writing instruction. Our ultimate goal was to increase the quantity and improve the quality of our students' writing.

Our research prior to a two week English department workshop in July, 1979, and our own observations indicated that lack of organization and absence of details to support an argument were the greatest weaknesses in student writing at both the high school and college levels. Furthermore, students were being assigned too little writing and what writing was assigned was evaluative: teacher assigns; student writes; teacher grades; student discards. What our research suggested as most effective was what too few teachers had been doing: treating writing as a process and working with the student and his paper during the composition process instead of merely returning essays bloodied with our red pens.

We decided that in our writing courses we would emphasize pre-writing activities, establish a workshop atmosphere--including peer editing, revising, and most important, pupil-teacher conferencing--and have  
(cont. on p. 45)

# ECB FreeB

## Four Voices Exercise

Edith Croake and Hal Weidner

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate how to get from your everyday style of using language to the written style expected of you in college. It takes you from the informal style employed to address yourself and your friends through a series of modifications ending with a formal essay. The style changes because the audience and the situation change.

Read "Shoplifting", the model which follows this exercise. You are to produce a paper of your own like this example. Select an experience which had a strong emotional impact on you and discuss this experience from four points of view: **Inner Voice, Face to Face with a Friend, Letter to a Friend, Formal Essay.**

You will have about 15 minutes to write each point of view. Label each part. You will not necessarily complete each part. Don't pay close attention to such matters as punctuation. Rather, concentrate on what you have to say given the audience and situation.

Before you begin writing this exercise, select the experience you want to discuss and be clear about the differences in the four points of view. In addition to the example of this exercise, the descriptions below should help in identifying these differences.

1. **Inner Voice** - This part records your conversation with yourself while you are experiencing the event. The purpose is to make a partial record of the many things that go through your mind at the time. It is often fragmented and need not make sense to anyone else. You know what you are talking about.
2. **Face to Face** - In this part you want to tell a friend about your experience. The friend was not there so now you have to tell about where and when it happened, what happened, why it happened, and how you felt. Since you are talking to a friend of yours who already knows a lot about you, the account can be relatively brief.  
  
It is appropriate to use slang, incomplete sentences, run-on sentences, in short, to write the way you talk.
3. **Letter to a Friend** - The main difference between this version and the earlier one is that here you are changing from spoken to written language. The audience is still a friend with whom you want to share this experience. However, the audience will not be present when s/he reads your letter. Hence, s/he can't look puzzled, ask a question, or give some other signal which would encourage you to elaborate. You should do more thinking about what details the reader will need in order to understand the experience clearly. Also, this version should be more carefully arranged, and the sentences should be grammatical. Slang is still appropriate.
4. **Formal Essay** - In this version, you are not acquainted with the audience. Moreover, the audience is educated (very likely a professor), and s/he is expecting you to state a generalized insight or conclusion and then to illustrate or support this insight. In this version, the story of what happened is no longer at the center of your communication. Instead, you are supposed to look at

the impact which the experience made upon you. What did you learn from the experience? What did it teach you about life? --about yourself? Did the event teach you a lesson, a moral, or a general truth? Think back on the experience and try to make some sense out of it in terms of its meaning for you. Pretend that nothing happens to you that does not contain a hidden meaning message about the nature of reality.

After you analyze the experience, interpret its meaning in general terms. State this meaning as an insight or conclusion. The insight should be a single sentence or a short paragraph which contains a subject and an opinion and which does not contain the word "I." This generalized insight or conclusion will be the first paragraph of your **Formal Essay**.

Now, support your insight (i.e., explain how you arrived at this insight) by presenting selected aspects of the same experience you discussed in the other points of view. You tell the parts of the story needed to illustrate or provide evidence for the truth of your insight.

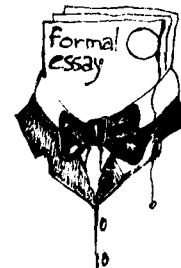
Notice how the author's point of view changes in the **Formal Essay**. She is distant from the event almost as though it happened to someone else. This is called objectivity. In this version of the story what happened is not so important as the meaning of what happened. Story telling is replaced by analysis of story. This approach to experience is expected in college. It requires you to go beyond the mere surface of experience and seek its underlying meaning.

#### **What You Should Learn from this Experience**

Often when you explore your thoughts, information will come to you in one of the earlier points of view practiced in this exercise. This is fine. Put it down any way it comes to you. Imagining the experience you want to recount as it was happening or speculating on how you might

discuss it with a friend can be an important resource for information while writing.

On the other hand, many times the style of the final version of an essay needs to be more formal than the initial draft. The reworking of your thoughts toward a more formal presentation is one of the things that necessitates the rewriting required for producing a polished, formal essay.



#### **Example of the Four Voices Exercise**

##### **SHOPLIFTING**

##### **Inner Voice -**

She crying... so scared... don't smash the bottle... stealing gets you into trouble... what a runny nose! no Kleenex a napkin will do... the policeman is too young to have children... he mistakes fright for hate and rebellion... how many times has she stolen things... the jacks are extra large and shiny... she should have them... or be able to buy them... the terror she feels must be awful... I don't like this... I want to leave... I couldn't steal anything... I'd feel too bad. Tall men in uniforms... clubs... helmets... guns... pads for writing on... break room is crowded... Coke left by someone... left over lunch small... claustrophobia... another lady... panic... fear... lose her license... no record... dumb thing to do... ruin her career... begging... can't quit talking... he'll think about it... can't sit... pacing... human being in trouble... anxiety in eyes... husband angry... you never listen to me...

##### **Face to Face to a Friend -**

It was an uneven day, Sally. The most difficult part occurred about 3:15 p.m. I was just finishing waiting on a woman who wanted advice on the books for her toddler. George came walking up rapidly, his face flushed. He said, "Carolyn you're

needed immediately in the 'break' room!" As we walked he added, "She's stolen some jacks. They found them in her coat pocket. A policeman is trying to question her, but she won't cooperate."

My heart sank. I wanted to leave the store. I knew George was counting on me to try and stabilize the situation. But I felt so torn. Sure stealing's wrong. But sometimes it is clear that there is no money for the child to buy a toy, especially these days.

As I approached the "break" room, I could hear her sobs. She was about seven, all hunched over in a chair in the corner. "Why did you steal these jacks?" the officer demanded. "Do you want to end up in jail?" Then she grabbed a coke bottle sitting on the chair next to her and it looked as though she was going to smash it on the floor. She was hysterical, and I didn't think she knew what she was doing. I grabbed the bottle and gave it to George. George convinced the police officer and the security guards to go to the other side of the room and let me talk with her.

She calmed down enough to tell me she thought the jacks were pretty, and she didn't have any money. Also, she was terrified to ride anywhere in the police car. She kept saying, "Dad's goin' to kill me for this!"

I talked to the policeman and he agreed to talk with her father and to let her friends ride with her in the police car. I can't help wondering what happened to her.

#### **Letter to a Friend -**

January 27, 1980

Dear Jane,

I am still upset about something that happened at the store today. A young girl was caught shoplifting a set of jacks from the toy department.

I had to stay with her until the police arrived. I really dislike this part of my job. She was so frightened that she threatened to break a bottle sitting in the break room where we were sitting.

The police were less than sympathetic. I suppose it's not their job to be sympathetic. She had no money to spend, though, and it seems to me that, in some crazy way, she should have been able to have those jacks.

I kept remembering something I had read at my children's school when I was a lunch room supervisor there. "People in trouble are still people."

I tried to get the officers to understand that the reason she refused to leave with them was that she was very afraid to ride in the police car.

Also, she was afraid of the spanking she thought she'd get when she got home. They agreed to talk to her father and also let her friends ride along on the trip home.

I hope she learned a good lesson and won't try it again. But I can't help thinking about what's happened to her.

Do you remember the time when our Sue was about seven, and she stole several small items?.

#### **Formal Essay -**

Shoplifting is a big problem for managers of retail stores, and most think someone who steals something is a criminal. After having some experiences with shoplifters, it is clear that they are people--people who are making big mistakes, but people still.

When a shoplifter is caught in the store where I work, I am sometimes asked to come to the room where everyone involved waits for the police to arrive. This is especially true if the person accused of stealing is a child or a woman.

One day a young girl was caught with a set of jacks in her pocket. The police were called. She was obviously terrified. Soon after I arrived, she became so frantic that she threatened to "bust" a bottle that was on the table.

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LETTERS (cont. from p. 41)

students engage in a variety of writing tasks. We now have students write in journals frequently, and we follow Moffett's suggestion that students engage in constant, free associative writing for the time allowed. Much of the assigned writing students do now follows extensive pre-writing activities and study models--published essays or portions of essays, but the content of their writing derives from the students' own experiences. All writing is kept in the students' files.

To help diagnose student writing skills and to determine the effectiveness of the **process approach** to teaching writing, we gave each sophomore an assignment modeled after The University of Michigan writing assessment. These papers were then placed in a central file and each semester at least one sample of the student's writing will be added to the file. The files will be useful in counseling students for future writing courses they may take.

We have also changed our curriculum at Mott. We now require that at least one

writing course be included in the 2 1/2 English credits required for graduation, and we have developed four writing courses that meet the composition requirement.

Our one week cross-curricular writing workshop enabled us: 1) to share the writing activities currently being required in other departments, 2) to adapt activities to various curricular areas, and 3) to devise new activities in and approaches to writing. In September we shared our findings and suggestions for cross-curricular writing with the entire staff and gave each of them a packet of sample exercises and suggestions.

Our ESEA IV C planning grant enabled us to buy the time and services to focus on the writing abilities of our students, to discover improved methods of teaching writing without overloading the teacher, to encourage cross-curricular writing, and to begin improving the writing abilities of our students.

Sincerely,

Norm Ballou



WELL-PLACED MODIFIER



MISPLACED MODIFIER



**James Moffett** (cont. from p. 6)

pediast's judgment on such a writer as Browne is nothing but smart-ass chauvinism: permitted to poison basic information sources, it makes "science" as deadly a censor as ever the Church was during its Inquisition.

We can avoid producing Brownes in our school system by having all youngsters read and write the same things--a goal we have closely approximated--and then their approach will not be unscientific, their assemblage odd, their facts obscure, nor their erudition haphazard. And we will have ensured that no one will be able to emulate the great essayists we hold up as models (or even read them with any comprehension). Real essaying cannot thrive without cultivation of the individual. Who would have any reason to read anyone else? (And I want to know how Browne's style could be worth so much if he were merely raving.)

The second example is personal. When I received the edited manuscript of the original edition of Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13 back from the publisher, I was aghast. "My" editor had re-written sentences throughout the whole book to eliminate first-person references and other elements of the author's presence and voice. This included altering diction and sentence structure at times to get a more anonymous or distanced effect. Faced with the appalling labor of restoring all those sentences, I called the editor, furious. She said righteously, "But we always do that--it's policy." It never occurred to her to exempt, or even to warn, an author who wouldn't be publishing the book in the first place if he weren't regarded as some kind of expert in writing.

#### **Remove the Double Standard**

You can't trust your encyclopedia, your publisher, your school administration. And you can't trust yourself until you learn to spot how you too may be spreading the plague, as Camus calls it. The double standard in "Look at the greats, but don't do what they did" naturally goes along with our era of Scientific Inquisition, which is really technocratic plague. Teachers stand in a fine position to spread infection. If you let yourself be

convinced that "personal" or "creative" writing is merely narcissistic, self-indulgent, and weak-minded, then you have just removed your own first person.

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James Moffett frequently consults, publishes, and lectures on the teaching of writing. He works at his home in Mariposa, California.

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#### **Two Views** (cont. from p. 9)

to play an important **developmental** role in schools because certain more complex mental abilities are best developed by the practice of writing (Development of Writing, 201-02). In addition, while class size remains high, writing has to substitute for a great deal of interpersonal speech. As Moffett insists and as Britton's research seems to confirm, English teachers perform important educational tasks not accomplished anywhere else. To summarize, their remarks and research add considerable strength to our belief that despite its enormous demands, our profession is humane and worthwhile.

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#### **James Britton** (cont. from p. 5)

people we are'. In participant activity it is the construction we place upon the **new**--the current encounter with actuality--that we attend to: as spectators, it is essentially the **total**--the accumulated view of the world that makes us the sort of people we are--that we are concerned with. Thus, though we have assigned a function, a use, to the language of spectatorship, it is a use which is clearly distinguishable from that of a participant. 'Language to get things done' remains intact as a criterion for the one role, and the language of being and becoming may roughly describe the other.

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James Britton is the author of numerous books in the field of composition theory and research. He is associated with the University of London Institute of Education.

**Stephen Bernhardt** (cont. from p. 20)

ful. Whether such transfer occurs, whether, for instance, practice in writing dramatic episodes will help the writer control other, less personal writing, remains an open question.

The question will not be answered, but support for such transfer will be assumed; for Moffett, like other good cognitivists, believes in the value of creative play with the forms of language through non-directed, individual exploration in a non-threatening environment. In these days of competency testing, explicit objectives, and the general homogenization of curriculum under the cry of "the basics," Moffett's ideas about teaching English appear even more radical than when they were first proposed in the late sixties. I would advocate a rational balance of his speculative, exploratory activities with content-oriented formal instruction. But whatever position we finally adopt, reading and thinking our way through the wealth of ideas in Moffett's books can only help us understand our own behavior better as we go about our day-to-day teaching.

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**Mark E. Smith** (cont. from p. 22)

of text after text; all you had to do was look at the table of contents. So, for five or six years, I methodically plotted out and plodded through separate units on these four modes. But then I read Moffett: there were not just four modes, but a universe of modes, infinite in number. And more importantly, they all have a place in the English classroom. So now I offer my students a much broader scope of writing assignments than those in the four traditional modes. They write papers ranging in point of view, from subjective to objective; in content and concern, from immediate to remote past or future; in topic, from simple to complex; in style, from unedited transcripts of speech to polished, formal essays; in audience addressed, from intimate to public; and so on. Now, instead of assigning a comparison and contrast or process paper, I ask students to think of a topic or issue that strongly interests

them and then to write a paper which says what they want to say about that topic. Moffett quotes one teacher who says, "You can't write writing." But you can write ideas and feelings, which is what my students do more often now, and with stronger motivation.

To paraphrase Jacqueline, if you use journals, small group work on drafts, and assignments from a universe of discourse, you will find you have made better writers and "glad of it."

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Mark E. Smith is Director of Composition at Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan.

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**Two Schools** (cont. from p. 27)

But I didn't know if I could afford to let this muscled creature knock my ego around.

"We were just..."

"Just what?"

"Sheeuit," I mumbled, making my way to the end of the line, looking like a scolded puppy with its tail tucked between its legs.

**Gary Robertson, '81**

**Matisse**

I dreamed last night  
that i was chasing  
a butterfly  
through a crowded city  
and when he flew  
too high i  
sat down and cried  
because i think that  
that butterfly was  
you

**Anita Mantey '78**



SQUINTING  
MODIFIER

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**Robert Root** (cont. from p. 16)  
**\_\_\_\_\_**, and **Betty J. Wagner**. Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13: A Handbook for Teachers. 2nd Edition. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1976.

*Although originally the Interaction program was an attempt to overcome the limitations of this book, first published in 1968, the limitations of educational resources in most school districts has compelled Moffett to continually revise his initial classroom-practice-oriented book, expanding, and where possible, freeing the text from the constraints a one-book program imposes. Still a concrete and sound source of ideas to implement in pursuit of Moffett's concept of learning.*

**Reeves, Ruth**. "Interaction in Review-- Perspectives from Supervision," English Journal 63 (May 1974), p. 104.

**Rosen, Lois**. "An interview with James Britton, Tony Burgess, and Harold Rosen," English Journal, 67, 8 (November 1977), 50-58.

*An arresting interview with three members of the Schools Council Project, synthesizing, expanding, and elaborating on their work, and, interestingly, corroborating the work of Moffett.*

**Sarke, Fred H**. "Interaction in Review-- Perspectives from the Classroom," English Journal, 63 (May, 1974), 104.

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**Toby Fulwiler** (cont. from p. 18)  
across the curriculum, we regularly conduct workshops for colleagues in disciplines other than English to explore with them how they might use writing more actively in their daily classroom instruction. Many of the ideas suggested at these workshops, such as journal writing, freewriting, and brainstorming, are grounded in Britton's notion that speculative writing plays an important part in the learning process.

Britton's work provides the theoretical base to the common-sense principle that writing is not the sole province of the English department any more than numbers are the sole province of the math depart-

ment or speaking of the speech department. Writing activities must occur "across the curriculum" as a regular part of student life if such activities are to have a strong and lasting impact. Britton's work--along with that of Americans Daniel Fader, Janet Emig, Lee Odell, and James Moffett--has given rise to a genuine interest in writing as an interdisciplinary activity, something practiced in all areas of the real world by real people.

Both Britton and Moffett have had a significant influence on how we view writing at the beginning of the 1980's. They have helped us to see the developmental potential of good writing instruction, and they have provided us with personal and programmatic guidelines to carry out that instruction. By challenging the prescriptive--and proscriptive--rhetorical modes with which most of us grew up, and by suggesting more comprehensive alternatives, Britton and Moffett demonstrate that writing can be taught humanely and realistically. They show us, along with our students, a universe inhabited by human beings as well as English teachers.

Toby Fulwiler directs Freshman English and conducts seminars in Writing Across the Curriculum at Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan.

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