



WLA Newsletter

. . . writing as a liberating activity. . .

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VALUES CLARIFICATION, JOURNALS, AND THE FRESHMAN WRITING COURSE

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"I liked writing in the journal because it helped me to see myself when I reread the journal entries."

"This journal has helped me to get my thoughts down on paper. It has made me realize how much I have learned and how much more there is to learn."

"Through my entries in this journal, I have been able to determine my values, see what I am, and find out what I want to be. The journals were valuable in that they brought out my bad points as well as my good points."

These student comments are typical of those made at the end of a recent term of Findlay College's required writing course, "Self-Awareness Through Writing." The positive response is partially the result of the novelty of keeping a journal--many students had never had such an experience. But the primary cause of the success was the nature of the journal entries, a carefully planned series of values clarification exercises.

Journal-keeping in a writing course is, of course, not a new procedure. Teachers at both the high school and college levels have in recent years used the technique as one effective means of getting students off "dead center," of helping them overcome their fears of the blank page, and ultimately of assisting them to build fluency and confidence in their writing. Donald Hall summarized the theory behind the technique when he wrote: "Continual application of pen to paper will ease the work of writing, and will give you a collection of words and sentences in which to look for ideas and for work to revise. . . . Practice is a necessity. Maybe the best method is daily dated entries in a notebook" (Writing Well, Little, Brown, 1973, p. 19).

Values clarification techniques, though not totally new, are relatively recent phenomena. Louis Raths, Brian Hall, and Sidney Simon among others have argued that the increasing complexity and confusion of modern society have created a need for young people to learn a process for selecting and judging values from a wide range of alternatives. Their values clarification methods, explained in works like Hall's Value Clarification as Learning Process and promoted by such organizations as CEVAM (Indianapolis) and the Adirondack Mountain Humanistic Education Center (Upper Jay, NY), are designed to encourage students to make responsible, mature choices rather than unthinking acquiescence to peer pressure, propaganda, authority, or any other force which would impose values.

Values clarification techniques and journal-keeping may seem at first unrelated, yet they actually work well together. Both activities assume that the process of

discovery has more realistic educational merit than traditional attempts to impose "content" (a given set of values or a theory of writing). The values clarification theorists' insistence on the need for a person to manifest the values he has chosen finds a natural outlet in the written affirmation of a journal entry. The possibility of values being rethought and modified by new awareness is matched by the contingent nature of journal material, its susceptibility to being shaped and reshaped again and again.

Once I realized the compatibility of the techniques, it seemed appropriate to combine them for use in a "Self-Awareness Through Writing" course. Though I had used journals in previous courses, I had never been completely satisfied with them. Often students seemed bothered by the problem of inertia ("What do I write about?"); students who did write often felt frustrated because their entries appeared to them trivial, dealing repeatedly with inconsequential matters like the previous night's water fight in the dorm. By using values clarification materials as part of the journal "exercises," I was able to overcome these problems by confronting students with significant questions and problems. In this way, students were stimulated to discover, through writing, knowledge about their values and attitudes.

My primary resource for the exercises was Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students, written by Sidney Simon, Leland Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum (Hart, 1972). The book is a compendium of 79 "strategies" which can be used in many ways to engage students in reflection about their values. It is impossible to detail all these ways here, but the following methods I used suggest a range of possibilities.

I normally used one of the "strategies" as the core of a three-part daily exercise. The first few minutes of class were spent in free writing, a warm-up period to get the students thinking. Then one of the strategies was presented--a values problem to be worked out, a consideration of possible alternatives to a given situation, or a question about a daily activity that might reveal values--in order to direct student attention to a specific, significant values issue. The exercise was concluded with a few minutes of free association with an object or situation related as much as possible to the strategy. In short, the written exercise became a way to help students get at matters of personal concern, a way to put into practice an assumption that good writing is often the product of personal conviction, the intimate involvement of a writer with his subject matter.

As the handbook points out, some of the strategies work well in series. I found it useful to order them according to two purposes: one, to get the students aware of their value systems at the beginning of the term, and another, to help them find material for different kinds of writing. I began the term with a value survey (strategy No. 7) in which students were asked to rank-order items on two lists, one containing values such as equality, pleasure, and a sense of accomplishment, and the other comprised of human qualities like ambition, forgiveness, and logicalness. The ranking process was followed by a request that students try to determine and explain in writing what influenced their choices. I also asked them to list their choices (anonymously) on another form which I collected. By collating the choices, I was able to get a feeling for the general value scheme of the group as a whole and in that way gain a greater awareness of my students' attitudes. (If a teacher has several sections of a writing course, such information could be valuable in helping adapt to the needs of each class.)

By choosing appropriate strategies as the term progressed, I was able to engage students in different rhetorical tasks ranging from personal narratives to comparison/contrast essays. For example, about mid-way in the term, when I thought it was desirable that they affirm some of the values they had been discovering, I asked them to write argumentative essays on subjects of personal concern. To help them get at some concerns, I presented them with "forced choice" and "spread of opinion" strategies which made them confront controversial issues about which they had strong opinions. They were then asked to review their responses to these strategies, to

investigate values and attitudes which were opposite to their own, and to formulate well-reasoned position papers.

In other words, the values clarification strategies are often adaptable for exercises that stress the process of writing. "Pattern search" strategies are especially useful for they can be easily segmented into daily exercises forming a cumulative series. The initial exercise asks for a wealth of specific details (e.g. about the kind, color, use and quality of items in one's wardrobe). Succeeding exercises require the students to order that list of details according to some principle (e.g. what I want my clothes to say about me) and, finally, to formulate a paragraph or an essay stating and supporting a conclusion.

As the end of the term neared, I used strategies which forced students to think about values they wanted to develop in the future. Their last assignment was to write an "autobiographical" statement which demonstrated that they had seriously reviewed the entries they had made in the journal to date. In this way the course "content," the students' own writing, became a meaningful learning experience.

Besides overcoming the problem of inertia and helping students discover significant materials worth writing about, the values-clarification-journal combination has other advantages. First, it personalizes the writing process and composition course, without making the teacher a kind of guru or forcing the course into the dangers of "Relevance. Involvement. Meaningful Relationships. Confrontation" which William E. Coles, Jr. has so persuasively opposed ("An Unpetty Pace," CCC, Dec. 1972, p. 378). Secondly, the range of values clarification strategies does not allow the student to, in a manner of speaking, "contemplate his navel" all term. Some of the strategies prompt students to write about personal experiences, but many of them force the students outside of themselves, force them to consider issues larger than themselves. They are thus required to write convincingly in "academic" pieces like expository and persuasive essays. Using these strategies can therefore help avoid the disjunction of "subjective" and "objective" essays which John Greenfield and William Woods discuss in "Ken Macrorie and His Loyal Opposition" (WLA Newsletter, Issue Four, October 1974). In a writing course employing such strategies, subjective and objective essays become natural and efficient modes of expressing conviction about one's experience, values, and ideas.

In short, I have found the Values Clarification Handbook an effective, flexible tool. It can be adapted in many ways for many writing tasks and purposes. If I were teaching writing at the high school or grade school level, I would probably use it because many of the strategies include special considerations and materials for different grade levels. In fact, the approach has been developed into a writing program for grades 7-12 in a book entitled Composition for Personal Growth: Values Clarification Through Writing, by Sidney Simon, Robert Hawley, and D.D. Brinton (Hart, 1973). Though the values-clarification-journal combination does not provide a total package for a writing course, it does help students realize that writing can be a liberating activity.

WLA NEWSLETTER NEEDS MATERIALS FROM WRITING TEACHERS AT ALL LEVELS

Most of the teachers who wrote and read the first issues of the WLA Newsletter were innovative and energetic composition teachers in American colleges. But with the fourth issue--which contained Vivian Davis' report on a "liberating" conference for high school teachers in Texas--the WLA Newsletter broadened its scope to include public school teachers and their attempts to teach writing in creative, liberating ways. So, regardless of the level at which you teach writing, the WLA Newsletter is interested in receiving your Teaching Plans, Course Reports, Reading Lists, and brief articles related to these three subjects: freeing student imagination and creativity, broadening student outlook and opinion, and expanding the curricular and pedagogical options of writing teachers.

TEACHING PLAN #4: What We Did About Reading: Student-Written Materials in Grade Six
 CONTRIBUTOR: Elizabeth F. Pace, 110 Carter Ave., Winchester, KY 40391.

ORIENTATION: Children fail in reading because the text books are too hard. How often have we heard this statement coming from classroom teachers? I'm not saying that I am the innocent one, because I'm just as guilty as any other teacher of making this remark. Lots of times the text books are too hard for our children, but I feel that it's the teacher's responsibility to do something about this, and do something about it was just what we did.

Several of the sixth graders in my class were not reading on their grade level, so the class members and I decided to do something about it. In the classroom we completely did away with our reading text books and started writing our own stories.

There had recently been a severe tornado in our town. The children had all observed the ruins of the tornado and they were aware of tornado dangers.

UNIT SCHEDULE:

The first procedure used was a forty-five minute discussion on tornadoes. The children were extensively involved in the discussion. The following day the children brought newspaper clippings and pictures of tornadoes to school. This was the beginning of our reading level groups.

We visited the library and got information on tornadoes. We were then ready to start writing our own stories. Each child wrote his own story and read it to the class. Certain sentences were chosen from each story and written on the chalk board. Each child was given a scrap piece of paper and asked to punctuate the sentences correctly. The words that the children were unfamiliar with were written on the board and they were asked to copy them on paper for study time later.

On the third day the stories were reviewed orally for paragraph structure and pronunciation of unfamiliar words. In addition, subjects and predicates were arranged in alphabetical order on the chalk board.

On the fourth day of the study, each child drew a picture to narrate his story. Charts were made to emphasize the dangers of tornadoes. Current Event bulletin boards were kept up to date with tornado stories and art work.

On the fifth and final day of the tornado study, a resource person was invited in for a discussion on, "The Anatomy of a Tornado." Slides were shown and a question and answer period followed. Several children wrote poems about tornadoes. Follow-up and evaluation were the last steps taken in this study, but reviews were held periodically.

CONCLUSIONS:

This procedure was found to be very successful with elementary children working on all grade levels. Writing their own stories enables the students to work on their own level at a faster rate with a much simpler process.

In my opinion, one of the best ways to discover the success of a program or procedure is by the happiness and interest of the students. Happiness brings interest and interest brings success.

This group of sixth graders was interested in its work because students were contributing to the content and they knew their contributions were needed as well as wanted.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER WAYS TO TEACH "OTHER THINGS" WITH WRITING?

Elizabeth Pace's article about using writing to help teach reading prompts this question. Can you suggest creative ways to use writing activities to teach literature, language arts, history, psychology, career preparation, and the like? Do you know of creative applications of writing being used by guidance counselors or school psychologists? What about the place of writing activities in the education programs of churches? The WLA Newsletter is interested in such uses of writing.

Excerpts from
SOMETHING OF OUR SOULS: A COLLECTIVE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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 and
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EDITOR'S PREFACE, Debby Rosenfelt

This manuscript is the result of an experiment, based on these beliefs:

- That students write better and have a better time in the process if they write for a real purpose, a real audience, rather than grinding out exercises in a vacuum;
- That the work of writing can be a collective, cooperative endeavor rather than a private competition for grades;
- That students, like anyone else, write best about what they know best--frequently themselves;
- That their lives and thoughts and feelings are interesting, worthy of the effort needed to shape the casual insight into the final form;
- That such self-expression leads not only to better writing but to new understanding of the relations between the individual and society, self and world.

There were problems, of course. Some of the students worked harder than others. Some never did learn to know a comma splice when they saw one. But that has been in my more traditional classes as well.

Mostly, they wrote hard. First they worked singly, on drafts. Then they formed small groups; and, with armloads of papers in front of them, they selected, edited, organized, rewrote, wrote new transitional material. I acted, at the end, as general editor.

The contents are self-explanatory.

STUDENTS' PREFACE

Who are we? On one level, we are twenty-six students in one English 100 class at CSULB. On another, we are individual human beings brought together for an instant of time. Yet across our individuality there is much more that we share. Our identity is the sum of the places we have lived in and visited, the people we have known, the accidents of birth that have placed us in a given family, a given social class, a certain ethnic or religious grouping; the shared experience of being young Americans at a given time in history.

On still another level, we do not know yet who we are. We are still making ourselves. Our identities, and that of our generation, are still, at least in part, a secret of the future.

PLACES

In our class our twenty-six young women and men--oddly, only five men to twenty-one women. We are Protestants, Catholics, Jews, agnostics, and nonbelievers; we are, like the majority of the student body at CSULB, mostly white, mostly vaguely middle class; but ten of us are Asian or Asian-American, one of us is Chicano, and four of us are offspring of racially mixed marriages--black and white, Japanese and white. We come, mostly, from California--but also from Philadelphia, from Hong Kong, from Japan.

Black-white female: I traveled around most of my life because my father was in the Air force. The place my family settled down was a city in Marin County near San Francisco.

Mexican male: I lived in the Mexican barrio of Compton, California, in my youth. Since then, it has become a predominantly black ghetto. . . . Halfway between my childhood and adolescence, our family moved to a white middle class community in Whittier, California. . . . Later our new father moved us away to the predominantly Mexican community of Pico Rivera, California.

Jewish female: Burbank, the community I grew up in, is typically WASP--White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant. There are two small synagogues in the community and about five times as many churches. There were three Jewish families living on my block, but they had no children my age.

Female: I grew up in a white, middle class neighborhood, conservative and rich, an unincorporated area of Orange County. About six years ago, we got our first black family. I'll never forget how upset some people were.

These are the places we have been, the places we know and have known. The essays from which we have chosen excerpts work together to give a many-faceted view of life in the place we all have in common right now--Southern California. We will take three views of this experience: our hometowns, our hangouts, and our excursions out of the area.

Hangouts. We all had our hangouts--candy stores, vacant lots, and, as we grew older, the teenage haunts of beach, boulevard, and Bob's Big Boy--the landmarks of our Southern California heritage. Each age group, then, had its special retreats and meeting places. Parents never seemed to grasp our reasons for gathering there.

What seems messy and dreary to adults may be rich in material for the imaginative play of young children. What through the eyes of an adult is just a dirty piece of bent pipe or a broken box may through a child's creative eye become a rare treasure.

Littered with beer cans, coke bottles, wooden orange crates, and other discards, overgrown with weeds, this lot wasn't a pretty sight to the home owners. I can recall my mother and father's complaining about this lot, how it devalued the property in the neighborhood. The youngsters viewed this rubbish-strewn lot with pleasure rather than disgust. Every mound of dirt and gravel was a steep mountain for a regiment of infantry soldiers. Empty cardboard boxes were delicate vases, and dandelion weeds were perfect centerpieces for packing-crate dinner tables. The tattered remains of old clothes were ideal blankets for dolls.

PEOPLE

There are people close to our everyday lives who have made a profound impact on our awareness, our personality, our values. Of these people, it is parents, teachers, and friends who play the major roles. Their influences, either positively or negatively, are most outstanding in the formation of our lives.

Parents. When young, most people see their parents as something more than mere mortals. Parents are able to do the impossible, and just as important, they can do no wrong. Yet as children grow into young adults their eyes begin to see more objectively. Gazing through more scrupulous and clearer eyes, the young adults now find that their parents are but mere mortals, sickeningly capable, not only of mistakes, but of once unthinkable wrongs. This revelation . . . tends to make the young adult fearful, resentful, bitter, or even hateful toward his or her mother or father. Luckily not all parents are weak or bad. Indeed, the bulk of young adults mature to find that although their parents may have limitations, they are basically loving and well-meaning. Thus the growing youngster can begin to accept and love his parents as people in their own right.

- The love I once had for my father has faded. In retrospect, there never was any real love between him and members of our family, only the obligation one sometimes feels toward one's parents.
- There are many qualities about my dad that I admire and hope to acquire from him. I consider myself very fortunate that such a man introduced me to the world. His trust and understanding are two of his most remarkable qualities. I want to develop these traits and pass them along to my children, as my father has done to us.
- When I was young I was very "afraid" of my mother. I am not saying that she did not love me; in fact as a grow older I realize that she loves me very much. But when young, I feared her because she was quite strict with me, for she never wanted to spoil me.
- My mother was brought up under the typical Chinese discipline: punctuality, obedience to elders, responsibility. Under her influence I also was taught these values. On the first day I went to school, she required me to finish the day's work first. Then it was painful, but I'm glad that now I have the habit of completing my daily tasks.

OUR STRUGGLES, OUR GOALS

Making a debut into society is difficult, and holding one's own is even harder. When one is young, one must struggle to be considered a person with feelings, beliefs, and desires of one's own. "When I was young I always did what my parents wanted me to do. . . . As I became older my values and my beliefs began to clash with their's, especially my father's." Torn between being obedient children and knowing we must ascertain our rights, we have trouble choosing the plan of action and the right time to execute it. "After an exhausting battle of words I finally earned the freedom to choose my own dating partners on my own terms--something I should have fought for four years ago."

Sometimes, then, growing up is painful. Sometimes our own parents seem obtuse, tradition-bound. Sometimes we confront the prejudices of our society against our ethnic group, our religion, or our sex.

- I am of mixed blood. I am made up of many colors: black, brown, red, yellow, and white. My two dominating colors are black and white. When I was small my parents never emphasized, directly or indirectly, the difference in color between a black person and a white person. They never told me I was made up of different shades of color. But by the sixth grade I had begun to see that people were different colors and that prejudice sometimes accompanied the difference. . . . One summer at Lake Shasta a man whom I knew very well and who didn't know of my black heritage made the remark, "If you get any darker you might be mistaken for one of them."
- I never had any Mexican-American friends in Whittier, so I tried making friends with the few white students who attended the school. But they were the elite; they didn't associate with Mexicans. . . . There is a fraternity in the music department. The members usually encourage prospective pledges into joining, but never encouraged me, though I've been here longer than a majority of them.
- At sixteen the greatest issue at hand was dating. My father decided to bring me up according to the Italian way; that is, a girl still in school doesn't date, or associate with boys. He was not accustomed to the ways of Americans. He did not understand why I preferred them.
- I have done the same kind of work as males and been paid less. I find I have less freedom than my brother, despite the fact that I am older than he is. I find myself waiting at home for a guy to call because I know that if I called him it would look too aggressive.

TEACHING PLAN #5: Introducing Sense-Based Poetry

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ORIENTATION: Sight, sound, smell, and touch are important to the impact poetry has on readers, and the senses are effective starting points with which to help students write poetry. The senses, after all, are resources that students have at their disposal, though some simple sense-awakening exercises may be needed before students can use these resources fully. And the powers of the senses in published poetry are things that students can feel.

Sometimes we have begun work on sense-based poetry with the students' senses-- by providing tape recorded stimuli to be transcribed into letters and words, or by distributing objects with distinctive shapes, textures, or odors and asking students to describe them by touch or smell. Other times we have begun by looking at poems that are marked by sensory elements. Both ways have worked, and so the order in which we arrange our comments here is not necessarily the one to follow.

PHASE ONE: Examining Examples of Sense-Poems

Bring to class example-poems that rely on the senses for their impact. Have students read these poems aloud. Discuss specific things that the writers do to emphasize the senses; be analytical enough that students can see small copyable things they could do to emphasize the senses.

When you select the examples, look for poems that use one or two dominant senses. This makes them easier to discuss as sense-poems, and it better communicates the fact that, by emphasizing the senses, students can create statements of high impact.

Look, too, for a balanced assortment of poems including song lyrics, and simple "popular" poems (Scholastic Books' Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle and Other Modern Verse is a good source, here). Some possible examples:

SOUND: E.E. Cummings, "In Just Spring," Kris Kristofferson, "The Taker" (The Silver Tongued Devil and I, Monument Records), James Schevill, "Woe . . ." (Violence and Glory, rpt. How Porcupines Make Love, pp. 150-151).

SMELL: T.S. Eliot, "Preludes," sections I and II, Jeanne McGahey, "Oregon Winter" (Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle, p. 140).

TASTE and Related Sensations: John Tobias, "Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle Received from a Friend Called Felicity" (Reflections, pp. 142-143).

TOUCH: Genevieve Taggard, "Millions of Strawberries" (Reflections, p. 122).

PHASE TWO: Moving Toward Student Sense Poems--A Narrative*

Working toward sense-based poetry, students listened to a number of recorded sounds (e.g., small tacks being dropped one at a time onto the lid of an empty coffee can) and tried to transcribe the sounds into letters: "pu-iiing" or "chiii-nngg." Later they opened individual envelopes and described the contents, from dog biscuits to incense to granulated sugar, with their eyes closed. Later still, they worked in teams, one student blindfolded and the other armed with paper and pen. The blindfolded students described objects, such as a small candy dish, a toad-shaped incense burner, or an irregular piece of coral, while their sighted partners recorded the impressions of texture, weight, smell, temperature, and flexibility. Then, together, the partners arranged and recorded details into descriptions

Such exercises, obviously, were intended to let students practice using their senses as sources of imaginative description. Beyond that, though, they were ways to help students write about themselves, their lives. And so, after the sense-centered workshop, a very sports-minded man in the class wrote this:

Squeet, squeet, squeet-squeet, squeet, squeet

Is the sound that you hear when they're moving their feet

*This narrative is an excerpt from Self-Awareness through Writing, WLA Pamphlet Series #1 (Lexington, KY, 1975), pp. 14-15. Copyright © Richard C. Gebhardt and Barbara Genelle Smith 1975.

On the basketball court in some new Converse shoes.
The waxed floor and rubber make footing hard to lose,
But "Aheeeeekkk!" is the sound as the cager does fall
Into the cheerleaders chasing a loose ball.

Student Perspective*

INADEQUATE ASSUMPTIONS AND INEFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Denise O'Brien
Findlay College

Mrs. T. has been a writing teacher for twenty years. There is a rule for everything in Mrs. T's class, and she lectures daily on techniques of writing. She takes great pride in finding every technical error in her students' work. When accused by a fellow instructor of using archaic methods she said, "Young man, some things never change."

In Ms. C's writing class students escape from the drudgery and discipline of the typical high school. Students sit on the floor and talk about life. The only requirement for the course is that the students write when inspired. "In my class," says Ms. C., "there are no grades or assignments because I want my students to learn that writing is FUN! I don't hassle my kids with technique or revision because only spontaneous writing is truly creative. And creativity is what writing is all about!"

Students in Mr. D's writing class must write three sonnets in class every week. Mr. D. explains the structure of a sonnet on the first day of class, using this one as an example:

When I do count the clock that tells the time
You will write, rewrite, until the bell tolls.
When this day is done I know you will find
That writing is work, and writing gets old.
But fear not, dear class, the sonnets you write
Of death and sorrow, drudgery and sin,
Though I shall make you write all day and night,
I'll teach you the value of discipline.
Creativity, you'll soon realize
Was invented by some poetic jerk;
Talent, technique, all a mountain of lies;
There's nothing to writing except hard work.

So write, young friends, but remember one thing:

You'll never succeed 'til Discipline's king.

These three instructors have one thing in common: they are ineffective writing teachers because of their assumptions about writing. Mrs. T. thinks that good technique is the basis for writing; spontaneous creativity is the game in Ms. C's class; and discipline is king according to Mr. D.

These assumptions appear to influence their teaching methods. Due to Mrs. T's assumption, she stresses only technique and grammar in her class. With this emphasis, it is only natural that she lectures in order to explain all the rules; likewise she corrects all technical errors in order to enforce these rules. The students in Mrs. T's class are tired of grammar lectures and bored with writing. Many students have resorted to copying chapters or articles from other authors, knowing that she notices grammar, not content.

Ms. C's class is unstructured self-expression because she believes that creativity must be spontaneous. Since it is virtually impossible to structure or schedule spontaneity, Ms. C's assumption influences her methods. Her students think that writing is fun--it gives them a chance to think and write about something meaningful.

*From time to time, WLA Newsletter will feature comments on the writing teaching enterprise written by college or high school students. Ms. O'Brien is a student in Findlay College's Teaching of Writing course.

This positive attitude, however, is offset by their incoherent writing which lacks form, technique, and unity. By practicing uninhibited self-expression, Ms. C's students learn something about themselves, but very little about writing.

Mr. D. believes that "there's nothing to writing except hard work" and his teaching methods prove his point. His students must write for the entire class period and turn in three sonnets every week. Mr. D's students have very strong feelings about writing--they hate it. They have mastered the tedious task of imitating Shakespearean sonnets, but the science of sonnet composition hasn't helped them write a better biology paper--unless they choose to write a sonnet on the life cycle of a frog!

Of course these characters are not real, but their assumptions are alive and well and living in real writing teachers. Each of these teachers is partly right in his assumption, but the individual assumptions are at best weak bases for writing instruction. The basis of good writing is not technique, creativity, or discipline, but a combination of these. To quote Gary Jones, English Department Head at Findlay High School, as long as there are writing teachers who "put all their eggs in one basket" there will be ineffective writing instruction in our schools.

CONFERENCE FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TEACHERS IN HUMANITIES AREAS

The 1975 Conference for Humanities Educators will be held on 25-26 April at Findlay College. The meeting will bring together high school and college teachers interested in discussing mutual concerns in the teaching of writing, literature, drama, languages, and other humanistic disciplines.

Martha P. Brincklow, English Department Head of Dunedin High School, Florida, will be the Key Speaker. Ms. Brincklow is an adjunct professor at the University of South Florida, where she teaches a course in "Current Trends in Teaching the Humanities."

Richard Coe, whose "Rhetoric 2001" won the Freshman English News Essay Contest last year, will speak in a program on "Computers, Systems Theory, and the Humanist."

Dal Lawrence, President of the Toledo Federation of Teachers, will be featured in a session on "Dignity, Integrity, Power: Do We Deserve Them? How Do We Get Them?"

Other program topics include: Creative and Humane Writing Instruction, How the English Teacher and the Director Read a Play, and How to Start a Humanities Program.

SELF-AWARENESS THROUGH WRITING AVAILABLE

Self-Awareness through Writing, by Richard Gebhardt and Barbara Genelle is now available as the first offering in the WLA Pamphlet Series.

This pamphlet begins with a brief discussion of the nature and premises of the self-awareness-through-writing approach to writing instruction. Later chapters give a detailed description of one successful writing course; a specific discussion of twelve self-awareness-through-writing assignments; and a bibliography of textbooks and theoretical material useful to teachers interested in this approach to teaching writing. The book is a practical guide which will help the teacher organize an effective composition course.

Self-Awareness Through Writing is available for \$1.50 from Richard Gebhardt. Make checks to WLA Publications.

For further information and a registration form, write Richard Gebhardt, Humanities Head, Findlay College, Findlay, OH 45840.

WLA Newsletter
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