

Con (cont.)

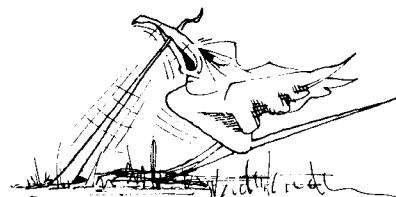
tive writing are developed by the class. The typical class list includes: word usage, figurative language, communicating clearly with the printed word, and so on. Seldom is grammar (the naming of word classes and of their syntactic functions) mentioned. These lists demonstrate that students have definite feelings about what constitutes effective writing.

Because the students have access to a repertoire of linguistic competence, good writing instruction does not try to put language data into the brain. Realizing that we are not filling empty boxes, writing teachers should make students conscious of the sophisticated linguistic and rhetorical skills they already possess, and then design classroom work to enable students to control their skills with precision and effectiveness. If students are forced to focus on the structural accuracy of their use of language, it gets in the way of ideas. Often students either won't write, won't write anything significant; or they will produce grammatically correct, but empty compositions.

Recently, my eleven-year-old son brought home two of his writing assignments. One was a "book report type." It lacked purpose; it was dull; and it was filled with errors. The second was a writing on the imagined life of an apple. Of course, he had an interest in the second topic--he knows about apples; his dad has a fruit farm, and he helps his dad on the farm. This writing was filled with memorable lines, delightful ideas and knowledge about the raising of apples. As the style came to life, most of the mechanical errors disappeared. No, he had not had an extensive grammar review during the time between assignments. No one had taught him the "magic" of composition. He is, after all, only a sixth-grader. In the apple assignment, he had a purpose and an interest. The assignment was real for him--it was not something he was doing simply to please the teacher, or worse yet, his "English teacher-mother."

Writing Instruction Should Focus on Process, Not Product

Writing requires practice; we can not simply teach all about writing and the rules of the language without letting our students practice, anymore than we can teach all about swimming without making the student get into the water and swim. One does not learn to drive by memorizing the parts of the car, the names of the muscles involved in the actual driving task, and the laws of physics which are operating on the driver and vehicle. Driving requires practice and assistance in the acquisition of the skill. It is a process beginning with the desire to get a car moving and progressing to parallel parking. Rules and procedures must be learned when the need for them is created; otherwise they are series of meaningless exercises. While we do not expect the child to skip or run before he toddles, traditionally we have expected a correct writing product before the child has experimented sufficiently with the writing process.



Progressing at successive levels, the student writer needs the freedom to try, the security and support of someone who cares, the encouragement to try again, and, most of all, the desire to write. Once the student freely expresses his ideas and understands the process, he can begin to learn to control it for his own purposes.

It follows that the writing program in an English classroom must facilitate language use and language experimentation. Integrated language study should be at the center of the program--not isolated grammar study. Using a variety of techniques, the teacher may provide the student with useful writing experiences, "fun" language activities, and even games
(cont. on p. 51)

From the Notebook

USING INDUCTIVE STANDARDS TO EVALUATE ARGUMENTS

Catherine E. Lamb

As recently as three years ago, I remember confusing the definitions of "induction" and "deduction" in a class discussion. But not being able to remember which went with "general to particular" and which with "particular to general" was a minor embarrassment compared to my increasing awareness that much of the logic I was teaching in my advanced expository writing classes--one aspect of our heritage from classical rhetoric--had little or no application to constructing and analyzing informal, everyday arguments, the sort my students were working with in their essays.

When I used these patterns of particular and general in my teaching of Aristotle's logic, I was classifying and evaluating arguments with form as the primary criterion. Once I changed the criterion from form to strength of relationship between premises and conclusion--another of Aristotle's criteria--I had a way to talk about arguments that worked for my students and me as rhetoricians.

Here are two arguments to illustrate the differences between how these criteria work (the premises are above the line, the conclusion below it):

No. 1. Ontario is in Canada.
We backpacked in Ontario.

We backpacked in Canada.

No. 2. All the backpacking trips we have been on have been both pleasant and demanding.
The terrain on this next trip is similar to what we have hiked on before.
We are as well equipped as we usually are.
The time of year is about the same.

We can expect this trip to be pleasant and demanding also.

With form as the criterion, the first one is "deductive," with its general to particular pattern, and the second one "inductive," since there the pattern is reversed. When we test the adequacy of this classification system on this single example, difficulties quickly become apparent. First, the categories overlap. In Argument No. 2, "All the back-

Once I changed the criterion from form to strength of relationship between premises and conclusion--another of Aristotle's criteria--I had a way to talk about arguments that worked for my students and me as rhetoricians.

packing trips we have been on..." is more general than the conclusion which follows from it and the other premises, "We can expect this trip to be pleasant and demanding also." Admittedly, I am generalizing from one example, but it is not difficult to find other similar examples. Even if form provided a consistent basis for classification, using it does not permit us to say much more about these arguments beyond what pattern they follow, something we knew intuitively anyway. Finally, we can use the absolute standard of deduction to evaluate the validity and truth of arguments; but in doing so, we are using a standard that applies to very few of the arguments our students (and we) construct as rhetoricians working in the realm of the probable.

The Inductive Leap

In contrast, notice the possibilities when we use strength of relationship between premises and conclusion as the primary basis for classifying and evaluating arguments. We begin where we did with form, but with a different emphasis. On the one hand, in Argument No. 1, the link between premises and conclusion is as strong as possible if we assume the premises are true. We claim no more in the conclusion than is implicit in the premises. This sort of argument remains

the absolute standard. In contrast, in arguments such as No. 2, which I used before a recent backpacking trip, I claim more than is contained in the premises: as a result, I can say only that I am predicting the nature of the upcoming trip, not guaranteeing it. I am, of course making an inductive leap.

We can now apply inductive standards to differentiate among arguments such as No. 2. For convenience, we assume all the premises are true, allowing us to continue examining only the link between premises and conclusion. In Argument No. 2, the link seems strong, especially to a self-confident backpacker. I can easily alter the strength of the link, however. Notice that additional information, if true, makes my conclusion less warranted because the strength of the link between premises and conclusion is weakened:

The trail is incorrectly marked on the map.

In some places, the trail disappears for up to half a mile.

The black flies and no-see-ums are biting later than usual this year.

My conclusion is now considerably less probable, depending, of course, on how I define "pleasant" and "demanding." I can also add a premise, which, even if true, does not affect the strength of the link because it is irrelevant: "I live in Sturgis, Michigan."

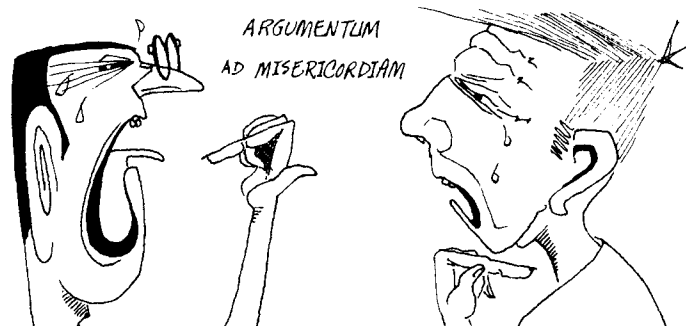
With this overview of what affects the link in an inductive argument, we examine next what is usually a prior step in evaluating an argument, the basis for the claims made in the premises. Here the standards are more familiar. In evaluating factual statements, we test their inductive probability by examining how the statement was arrived at: for example, if the statement is a generalization, whether the sample from which it is derived is large enough, representative, and precise. Further, has all relevant knowledge been considered? For evaluative statements, we take into consideration the statement's correspondence with an ethical or aesthetic system, the simplicity or economy

implicit in it, and the amount of relevant knowledge considered in arriving at the statement.*

In short, we ask two questions in applying inductive standards to an argument:

1. What is the basis for claims made in individual premises?
2. If the premises are true, what is the strength of the link between premises and conclusion?

Consider just one, relatively straightforward example of using inductive standards to evaluate students' arguments. In my advanced expository writing



classes, I always ask students to turn in a written evaluation of an argument along with the essay in which the argument is developed. A student, Laura, maintained in her evaluation that the link between premises and conclusion in this argument was strong:

Many people in the United States cannot afford health care.

Health care facilities are not evenly distributed.

Our health care system is inefficient. Health care costs will continue to rise.

The United States must have a national health care plan.

With inductive standards as the basis for
(cont. on p. 52)

*For a more complete introduction to inductive standards, see Brian Skyrms, Choice and Chance: An Introduction to Inductive Logic, 2nd ed. (Belmont, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1975).

In the Limelight

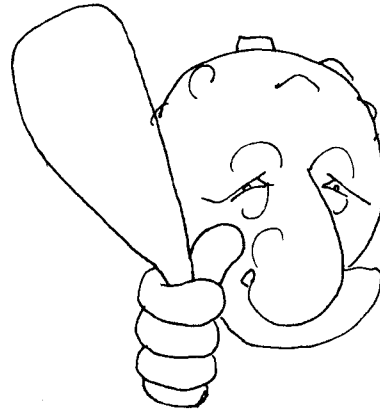
READING, WRITING, AND THE CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS: MCTE TAKES A STAND

Stephen Judy

Teachers of writing and teacher educators interested in writing should know that the State of Michigan is considering the addition of required course work in reading to the certification programs of prospective elementary and secondary school teachers. In the spring of 1979, two separate movements to this end got underway: One, an effort to revise certification code requirements through the State Board of Education; the second, an attempt to pass legislation (Public Bill 4460) to mandate reading instruction. Both proposals require six semester hours in reading for high school English teachers, six semester hours for elementary teachers, and three semester hours for secondary school subject-matter teachers. The legislative bill, which passed the House of Representatives in the spring and was sent to the Senate Education Committee, requires the work for an initial or continuing certificate, while the Board of Education proposal aims at undergraduate programs only. Both proposals were scheduled for additional action toward the end of 1979.

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English has carefully studied both proposals. In drafting a position statement, the Council officers expressed concern that the proposed code revisions totally ignore writing and oral English. The Council has therefore gone on record as recommending that the phrase "teaching of reading" in both proposals be changed to "teaching of communication skills, to include the teaching of reading and writing, and the related areas of listening, speaking, and language development." The umbrella term "communication skills," which admittedly has overtones of educationese, was selected after long discussion because it has been used previously by the State Department to describe the language component of State Assessment. Thus "communication skills" has fairly precise meaning in the minds of many Michigan educators.

Most important, the Michigan Council of Teachers of English feels that State officials must be persuaded to promote an integrated approach to language skills,



one that places writing on a par with reading and acknowledges the role that oral language plays in developing both reading and writing. In arguing its point, the Council has noted that:

--writing, listening, and speaking skills, like reading, are critical to success in school at all levels.

--public concern and dissatisfaction with the schools includes all communication areas, not just reading.

--a great many skills basic to reading are also basic to writing, speaking, and listening.

--the Michigan Assessment program includes communication skills, not just reading.

--research shows that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are learned in concert.

Representatives of MCTE presented their position statement at public hearings held in Lansing and Traverse City in September, and copies have been sent to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and members of the State Senate, including the Chair of the Education Committee, Senator Jack Faxon. Meetings have also been held with Douglas Smith, the Governor's Educational Specialist, and Dr. Eugene Paslov, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(cont. on p. 52)

Between Classes

A POTPOURRI OF POEMS

Richard McMullen

Bubble Gum

The day he quit
teaching, he walked down
the hall from class as if somewhere:
shoes scuffed,
clothes a little out
of style, pens and pencils stuck
in his breast, eyes
smoky behind thick
glasses, hair gray, both
ears hairy.

From head to waist, he
was sheathed with gum, a bubble of pink,
like a beekeeper's hood.
Out of habit, he picked
at the gum, but it stuck to his fingers.
Some youngsters turned
to look. Some friends
got up from desks, stood in doorways.
Someone cried
as when dreaming. He didn't notice,
thought he had another class.

The Great Bass

Tonight the fisherman tells of the great
bass, pulled out of Houghton Lake
thirty years ago. The flesh
of the bass, eaten the same night,
has moved through many systems; now
its cells lie lost in other
things far from any water.
Yet in the fisherman's dark aquarium
brain, the great bass swims
and grows in the midst of thousands. Most
are only keepers; most are only
part of a catch; some are beauties
like the bass. They share that instant
when the water flowed away,
when the straight, hurting line led them
struggling to the light. Tonight
it is the bass's time again:
he lies in the weed bed; he sees the fly
touch the water; he moves to the bait.
Longer, heavier, stronger now,
he puts up the best fight yet.

December House Fire

Old Mrs. Griswold in her bed downstairs
dozes under her quilts. Inside the wall a copper
wire's cambric wrapping falls away. The fire
rises slowly. Gropes into the kitchen, putters around the
wood stove. Limpes up the narrow stairs. Shuffles through
other bedrooms, smooths bedspreads. Fumbles in wardrobes,
chests of drawers. Fingers photographs without names or
years, unfolds doilies, embroidered pillowcases. Gazes out
windows, sighs, goes back downstairs. In the bedroom
by her bed, stumbles over shoes, in the
right heel for the rheumatism, a copper coin.

Richard McMullen, author of Chicken
Beacon and soon-to-be-published Rural
Route #2, teaches creative writing at
Pioneer High School, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

On the Bulletin Board

RESOURCES IN THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

Robert Root

Organizations

In addition to being a vital national organization, NCTE encourages affiliate groups throughout the country to reach out to language arts teachers on every level. In Michigan the affiliate is the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, whose newsletter, The Michigan English Teacher, appears eight times yearly, keeping its membership informed of publications and events both in the state and nationally. MCTE also sponsors or co-sponsors regional conferences and meetings, like the Engfest at Western Michigan University, the FLARES activities in Flint, and the articulation workshop in Mt. Pleasant. Its next annual conference will be held in East Lansing, at the Kellogg Center, MSU, May 2,3,4, 1980. Currently MCTE is encouraging the legislature and the State Board of Education to broaden the scope of the reading bill to include all communication skills, especially writing. For information, membership forms, and publications, write MCTE, P.O. Box 36664, Detroit, MI, 48236.

Publications

Many of the state affiliates of NCTE publish periodicals or other materials. MCTE, for example, has a mini-monograph series, offering "concise overviews of theory and practice in current issues and problems in the teaching of English." Two of particular interest are:

Kortwright, Judy, Teaching Correctness: An Alternative to Grammar, MCTE, 1977, 16 pp.

A junior high teacher discusses practical ways to teach correctness without grammar drills and lectures.

Yesner, Seymour, Responding to the Basics Crisis: What Do We Do Next? MCTE, 1979, 12 pp.

Yesner, Consultant in English for the Minneapolis Public Schools, responds

to the concerns of beleaguered English teachers over public political reactions to "the basics crisis."

MCTE has also initiated a yearbook, beginning with:

Maxwell, Rhoda J. & Stephen Judy, eds., Composing: The 1979 Yearbook of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, MCTE, 1979.

It contains articles from teachers on all levels about the kinds of units, lessons, activities, and approaches they find successful in their own classrooms. Some titles: "Writing and Self-Concept," "Creating Simulated and Real-Life Audiences," "Strategies for Collaboration," "Steps Toward Self-Assessment."

Other NCTE affiliates have also produced interesting and useful publications:

Donelson, Ken, ed., Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom: Arizona English Bulletin, Vol. 16, No. 2, February, 1974.

The teaching of writing and its problems are discussed in a broad range of articles by classroom teachers on all levels, many offering practical classroom tips and means to solving problems. 32 articles, 210 pages.

Gallo, Donald R., ed., Confronting Writing Obstacles: Connecticut English Journal, Vol. 9, No. 1, Fall, 1977.

Elementary to college mix of theoretical and practical articles including "Writing Needs a Reason," "Talking and Writing," "Locating Real Writing Audiences," "Using Art to Teach Writing," "Visual and Verbal Exposition," "Spelyng Maydde Sympil," and others on linguistics, sentence combining, radio horror shows, correction, and "What's Expected of High School Graduates--A View from a College Department." 173 pages.

NCTE has itself published a new book on classroom practices:

Stanford, Gene, ed., Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1978-1979: Activating the Passive Student. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1978.

An elementary-college mix of classroom-tested methods to make students get involved with composing, including "Producing a Slide-Tape Presentation for a Public Audience," "Writing an Episodic Novel," "Reversing the Revision Blues," "An Exercise for the Day Papers Are Due," and articles on correspondence and speech. Other sections are on reading, poetry, and research. 151 pages. These last three publications are available through NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

The ERIC System

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is an organization sponsored by NCTE and the National Institute of Education in the administration of the Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (RCS). ERIC/RCS examines and makes available such diverse materials as conference reports, research papers, literature reviews, guides to curriculum, and program descriptions, all of which are indexed in Resources in Education (RIE) and produced in both microfiche and paper forms. Some sample titles, with their index numbers:

NAEP, Writing Mechanics, 1969-1974. ED 113 736.

NAEP, Expressive Writing. ED 130 312.

Carl J. Fisher & Catherine E. Studier, Misspellings of Children in the Middle Grades. ED 143 030.

Don Donlan, "How to Involve Other Departments in Helping You Teaching Writing." ED 145 452.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Student Guide to Writing a Journal. ED 147 829.

It is impossible to list all the available useful titles here but the ERIC system is a marvelous resource.

Some of the material accepted by ERIC finds its way into print as part of the NCTE/ERIC/RCS **Theory Into Practice** or **Theory and Research Into Practice** series. Three vital titles for teachers of writing are:

Beach, Richard, Writing About Ourselves and Others. Urbana, IL: ERIC/NCTE, 1977.

A synthesis of theory concerning autobiography, memoir, and portrait writing, theory concerning different characteristics of self, and composing process theory. The practice section has four parts: "Discussion: Introduction to AMP," "Choosing a Topic," "Researching," and "Writing a Draft." 27 pp.

Hawkins, Thom. Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing. Urbana, IL: ERIC/NCTE, 1976.

After an explanation of group inquiry techniques from personal, social, and pedagogical perspectives, detailing the advantages to student, class, and teacher, Hawkins goes on to apply theory to the teaching of writing. The practice section explains how to set up groups, how to make them work and help students to cope with them, how to help students make their own discoveries, how to create the mood to act on specific problems, and how to utilize peer criticism. Contains a set of sample cooperative and competitive tasks and an evaluation form. 41 pp.

Hillocks, George, Jr., Observing and Writing, Urbana, IL: ERIC/NCTE, 1975.

Hillocks tackles the problem of lack of specificity in student writing and discusses the need to relate the stages of observation to writing. Exercises are meant to develop students' powers as observers and recorders of sensory experience and involve them directly in observing. 15 activities follow, including: The Spy Game, the Bag Game, Blind Man's Bluff, Listening to Sounds, Observing Bodily Sensations, Listening to Dialogue. 25 pp. (cont. on p. 51)

From the Guidance Office

Dear Drs. Fidditch and Foilitch:

I have always explained to my junior-high students that the standard argumentative essay is what college writing is all about. I have developed good units on the syllogism, the enthymeme, and the logical fallacies; and most of my students learn to identify premises, conclusions, and other logical concepts.

Yet, when I read the essays of my students, I am disappointed to find the same old underdeveloped theses, the lack of transitions, the conclusions that do not follow. In short, those students do not think.

How can I help my students to practice what I teach?

Curiously,

Angus Poremba

Dear Mr. Poremba:

I think that we should not leap to hasty conclusions about our students' intellectual powers from their inability or unwillingness to commit their thoughts to formulaic handbook patterns. When generations of students fail to "get into their heads" what we expect of them in "standard essays," the inability and the unwillingness may be closely related.

The handbook formulae do vary, of course. Yet none seem so predictable and indefensibly arbitrary as this set, for example:

There are the so-called "modes"--description, narration, exposition, and argumentation (the capstone of them all). We expect our students somehow to isolate and practice these modes (as no other writers do) and then somehow to telescope these modes into a so-called "standard essay" (which we ourselves do not write).

Our insistence in the schools on the so-called standard essay is an alienating one: it defies what we can guess about

children's capacities, predilections, and needs; and it distorts what they can sense and we can know about writing as it happens everywhere but in our standardized assignments.

By the time our students are old enough for college or the unemployment office, they've long since abandoned Santa Claus and standard essays--and for the best of reasons.

I respect the grit and good sense of students who resist, whether with dutiful ineptitude or sullen indifference, our efforts to impose handbook-formulaic, pseudo-collegiate demands on their written uses of language. I admire the teacher who rejects altogether the tired old scholastic distinction between "creative" writing and "the other (serious, academic, standard-argumentative) kinds."

There is room in any good curriculum for your good units on logical concepts. But Catherine E. Lamb is right, I think, in emphasizing to her students the "messy unpredictability and greater interest" of most rhetoric. Make room, as well, for varieties of writing with which your students can leap far beyond the tidy premises and careful conclusions of the dreary standard essay that none of us ever wrote for any reader but the teacher who demanded them.

Sincerely,

Bertrand M. Fidditch

Dear Mr. Poremba:

In this our age of permissive morals, pinball machines, junk food, and an easy-come welfare system, it is hardly surprising, when you stop to think, that none of our students can think. What else but intellectual flabbiness can we expect when not one of a thousand parents inculcates either the syllogism or the enthymeme in the modern home? Hasty generalizations and false analogies set

in as marriage and all other institutions break down.

It's in the home, after all, that twigs are bent.

Nor can you expect help from your colleagues--most of whom would rather switch (from one union to another) than fight (for the basics, on which our founding foreparents laid down their lives). According to research, when most inmates of our jails and penitentiaries were still in school, they preferred pot and pinball to the relevant supportive details, developed theses, and cogent conclusions of the standard essay. It is, in short, the same sad story: virtually all teachers, parents, and students having betrayed their sacred trusts in our time, it's the innocent taxpayer who picks up the tab.

As your bleeding-heart colleagues mollycoddle your students and overlook their bad thinking in ungrammatical papers, there is not much that, in any meaningful way, shape, or form, as far as the illogicality of your students is concerned, you, as a conscientious teacher, can do.

My advice:

- (1) Stick to the courage of your convictions.
- (2) Speak boldly to its vs. it's, lie vs. lay, infer vs. imply.
- (3) Pull no punches on the two differents--than and from.
- (4) Abominate cliches.
- (5) When in doubt, eschew.

One day your unthinking students will come to a rude awakening and wish too late that in the days of youth they had cultivated the standard argumentative essay. Their failure to do so will haunt them to their dying day--should they live so long.

Loyally,

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

John Warriner (cont. from p. 31)

Teaching the Mechanical Aspects of Writing

What about the mechanical aspects of good writing? Teachers know that they must not be misled in their evaluation of writing by the neat and mechanically perfect paper that says nothing. However, they also know that the examples of incompetence in their students' writing most often cited by their critics are errors in usage, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and word choice. All except word choice are mechanical skills that must be taught in any writing program. Ideally, the teacher's role is to examine his students' compositions for mechanical errors, point them out, and have the writer correct them. This, of course, leads us back to class load, and we must admit that this time-honored procedure is in many, probably most, schools unrealistically demanding.

Two things can be done. First, the rules can be taught, preferably by the inductive method, in which, by examining samples of good writing and bad writing, students discover for themselves the rules to be observed. Through classroom exercises in sentence improvement, students may eventually be brought to know the difference between a good sentence and a bad sentence. The carry-over from exercises to their own writing is not certain, but it can be made to happen if the teacher can give enough drill.

All we can do is work hard and systematically and hope that the themes that will ultimately grace the now blank pages of "The Rite-Aid Spiral Theme Notebook" will reflect an encouragingly steady growth in writing competence.

What, by the way, is a spiral theme?

John Warriner received his education at Central Michigan, Michigan, and Harvard Universities. He taught junior-senior high school and administered an English department for 25 years in addition to writing the Warriner textbooks.

From the ECB

Writing Workshop June 18, 19, 20, 1979

June 18, 19, and 20, 1979. These dates remain so clear in our collective ECB memory because they were the three days of our first Writing Workshop which was attended by 128 teachers and administrators from 54 high schools and community colleges throughout Michigan. For us they represent one of the happiest professional experiences we have had since we became an English Composition Board in January of 1976.

When June 20 was gone and Workshop '79 with it, we coupled our sighs of relief from some very hard work with equally genuine sighs of regret that we had to disband such a good group of colleagues and friends. And now, because evaluations of the experience were so positive from so many participants; and because we learned so much and had such a good time doing the first one, we'd like to do another; and because we're thinking about making it an annual affair as long as our energy and funding last...therefore, the ECB is happy to announce its Second Annual Workshop on the Teaching of Writing to be held in Ann Arbor in June of 1980.

As it was last June, this next workshop is intended to build upon Outreach seminars led by ECB members on high school and college campuses throughout the state. Consequently, enrollment will be limited to teachers, administrators, and board members who did not attend Workshop '79 and whose schools, either individually or cooperatively, held an ECB Outreach seminar in 1978-79 or 1979-80.

The dates for our Second Annual Workshop on the Teaching of Writing are again June 18, 19, and 20--Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the week after school ends for most secondary teachers in Michigan. In addition to taking the advice of last year's participants about opening our 1980 workshop on Wednesday instead of Monday, we are going to thin last year's dense schedule of meetings to give our colleagues an afternoon in Ann Arbor to use as they please.

Speaking of last year, we want to welcome back alumni of the First Annual Workshop to special seminars and other festivities on Thursday, 19 June. To the limit of our capacity to accommodate them, participants in Workshop '79 are invited to lunch with us on the 19th, to attend three afternoon seminars designed to expand upon the substance of last summer's Workshop, to feast at our banquet and swing with us on Dance Band Night, then to rest themselves as our guests in University rooms before taking their leisurely departure on the 20th.

Because we want our Second Annual to be as comfortable and gregarious as our First, we are limiting enrollment to the first 120 teachers, administrators, and board members who send in their completed applications accompanied by a check for \$25 which will cover the full cost of the three-day workshop (including meals and housing) to each of its participants. For this very modest individual expense, we are again indebted to the generosity of the Mellon Foundation.

Dan Fader

EDITORIAL

fforum, the Newsletter of the English Composition Board, is designed to give teachers of writing throughout Michigan a forum for mutual instruction and discussion.

The instructional segment of the newsletter includes: (1) articles by experts in the field--theoreticians and practitioners; (2) essays reviewing the work and influence of these experts; (3) critical analyses--pro and con--of the featured experts or related topics; and (4) a sampling of methods and materials developed by classroom teachers who have translated theory into practice.

The discussion segment of the newsletter includes: (1) letters to the editor and editorial commentary; (2) a spotlight on a teacher or district willing to share methods, materials, approaches, or tech-

(cont. on p. 56)

Arlene Stover (cont. from p. 41)
in a natural language-learning process of trial-error-feedback.

The role of the teacher is vital to the success of any writing class: The writing class should not be teacher-centered; it should be student-centered. In a student-centered classroom, the teacher is a motivator, facilitator, and feedback source. Teachers must begin where the students are, not where they think students should be.

The purpose of writing is communication (to write about something, in some medium, for some purpose, and to someone). The writer knows that his obligation to the reader is to express himself in his best possible manner. Therefore, the emphasis in writing instruction must be on effectiveness of texts and not correctness of units of the texts.

Traditionally, grammatical punctilio in writing has been taught the wrong way, at the wrong time, and for the wrong reason. It should be meaningful and functional for the student. Usage and mechanics should be treated as editorial tools which can serve to make texts more generally understandable. As the student realizes the demands of the business world and the academy, he will want to know their writing conventions. Then he will learn them; not when he is told to correct ten sentences with agreement problems for homework.

The issue is not whether teaching correctness in writing is right or wrong. Rather it is one of timing and purpose. I believe Johnny can write--but only if we let him. Too often, we have imposed before the students have composed. We have filled them with rules for surface production while ignoring the deep structure of language. We have to stop frosting the cake before the batter has been mixed and baked.

Arlene Stover teaches eleventh- and twelfth-grade composition, English literature, and poetry at Lakeshore High School, Stevensville, Michigan.

Robert Root (cont. from p. 47)

Events

February 6, 1980, **Writing Across the Continuum Conference**, MCTE Region 6 and Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant.

February 14-16, 1980 Midwest Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Kalamazoo Center Hilton Inn, Kalamazoo, MI.

March 6 **Regional Conference**, Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City.

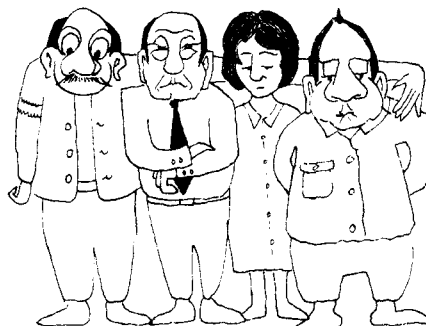
March 13-15, 1980. **Conference on College Composition and Communication**, Washington Hilton, Washington, DC.

March 21-23, 1980. **National Conference on Language Arts in the Elementary School**, St. Anthony Hotel, San Antonio, TX.

March 26-29, 1980 Joint Meeting: **Secondary School English Conference and Conference on English Education**, Omaha Hilton, Omaha, Nebraska.

If you are aware of upcoming meetings, conferences, and other events in writing, please send information for inclusion in this feature to: Robert Root, Department of English, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant 48859.

Robert Root directs Introductory Composition at Central Michigan University and serves on the MCTE Steering Committee.



Stephen Judy (cont. from p. 44)

In general, response to the MCTE proposal has been favorable. Governor Milliken noted that literacy was an important priority in his State-of-the-State message and wrote:

There has been a suggestion [that] to broaden the certification code revision to include writing, speaking, and listening along with reading would be a substantial contribution to code revision. There has been support for this broadened revision, and I, too, favor the expansion of the amendment to include the communication skills. (Letter of October 2).

But the final wording of the proposals, and whether the changes will go through the State Board, the Senate, both, or neither, remain undecided as of this writing. MCTE urges concerned teachers to express their opinions by writing the State Board, the Governor, and their State Senator.

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English is also concerned that passage of the proposals in their present form might have a negative effect on future developments in the teaching of writing and oral English in Michigan. For instance, though the present proposals are chiefly aimed at new teachers, it seems quite likely that in the future the State may want to extend the requirement to teachers in-service as well. It would be unfortunate if a massive retraining program for teachers were to exclude oral and written composition. Even more important, the proposed revisions present a one-dimensional view of literacy which places reading at dead center and ignores related language skills. That is an incomplete view, not acceptable to those who consider themselves teachers of more than decoding skills, who are, in fact, teachers and professors of "English."

Stephen Judy teaches at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, edits the NCTE English Journal, and is presently serving on the MCTE Subcommittee on Teacher Certification.

Catherine E. Lamb (cont. from p. 43)

our discussion, I could show Laura why I disagreed with her evaluation, while at the same time recognizing what she had done well in her argument. We both knew the criterion of completeness could not be met, given the limitations of the time she had for research, the resources available to her, and the length of the paper. I also agreed with her that her first two premises--statements about what is--were well enough supported with factual evidence meeting the other criteria of quantity, variety, and precision. However, in the third premise, she had not defined "inefficient." In the fourth, as she knew, she was speculating, but she also relied only on a quotation from then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Joseph Califano. Finally, she had not recognized that, even if all four premises were well-supported, they pointed to a different conclusion from the one she had drawn, something like, "The United States' health care system is in serious difficulty." These premises with their new conclusion could be the statement of the problem in a revised essay. She might then claim that any solution would have to meet the problems of high cost which will continue to get higher, uneven distribution, and inefficiency, and demonstrate that a national health care plan will do this best.

One other point becomes evident in a discussion such as this one. When students begin applying inductive standards to evaluate arguments, they see quickly that, at best, inductive standards can account for only part of why an argument is rhetorically effective--why people change their minds, or are moved to take action. The world of logic is neat and orderly; that of rhetoric, messy and unpredictable (and much more interesting, I tell my students). Because of what inductive standards are not, they help to show us what else rhetoric is.

Catherine Lamb teaches at Albion College, Albion, Michigan. She is especially interested in the relationship of rhetoric to other disciplines, error analysis, and literature by and about women.

This lesson is offered as a method of teaching a rhetorical model. A model should demonstrate an effective rhetorical structure. The structure should give a writer freedom to engage in two processes: imitation and invention. The Ann Arbor News article entitled "ISR Researchers Chart Societal Patterns" provides an excellent model. The article is pure definition; of course, a reader can perceive the writer's approval of the activities in which ISR researchers are engaged; the primary purpose of the text, however, is to explain the functions of the Institute.

The writer anticipates the reader's questions and, therefore, follows straight-forward sequencing patterns. Reading the article aloud with the class will draw questions answered by the writer to the class' attention, for example: What is ISR? Where is it? How important is it? How much does it cost? How many people work there? What are its parts? and so on.

Goals:

1. To familiarize students with an effective rhetorical structure.
2. To introduce students to the process of analyzing a logical plan for ordering information.
3. To provide a familiar structure into which students can incorporate their own individual choices of information.
4. To practice a method for organizing a great deal of information concisely.

Materials:

Ann Arbor News article printed on the reverse side of this sheet.

Procedure:

1. Distribute the article to everyone in the class and read it aloud, noting in each paragraph the questions the writer is answering for the reader.
2. Ask students if they have any unanswered questions about the institute.
3. Ask why an article of definition like this would be printed in the Ann Arbor News.
4. Ask students to create their own original organizations in which subjects of interest to them are researched and perhaps advanced. For example, the organization may examine Olympic training techniques, adoption procedures, or modern music. The important task of the student is to answer all the readers' questions in the systematic format of Sara Anspach. Ask students to draw a diagram which illustrates how the parts of the organization relate to each other. Emphasize that the organization should be engaged in an activity the student knows enough about to make its existence convincing. Ask for an acronym to match each part of the organization.

5. Read the descriptions aloud. Ask to have the diagram drawn on the board while the description is being read so that the class can see the parts and the whole together. Encourage students to anticipate what a reader needs and wants to know. Discuss the need to present good written descriptions in many work situations outside of school.

Note (from Barbra Morris):

I wrote a definition of an organization I invented. The acronym CRASS BORES stood for Center for the Reduction of Annual Social Security Benefits Owed to the Retired, Elderly and Sick. I proposed this as my choice when I gave the assignment to give students free rein to be humorous or serious in their choices of content.

If you adapt this lesson or parts for your use, will you please let Barbra Morris know of your successes or frustrations?

ISR researchers chart societal patterns

By SARA ANSPACH

Except for the few "guinea pigs" who choose to partake in psychological experiments at the University's Institute for Social Research (ISR), few are aware of what goes on behind the walls of the modern six-story building on Thompson Street.

But despite its low profile on campus, the ISR is known around the world for its social science studies and research projects. The organization—the largest of its type in the world—is said to be instrumental in maintaining the University's prestigious reputation.

ISR is a \$13 million yearly operation that employs over 500 people. The institute usually has about 100 different projects going at once.

ISR is divided into four components: the Survey Research Center (SRC), the Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge (CRUSK), the Research Center for Group Dynamics (RCGD) and the Center for Political Studies (CPS).

ISR is essentially financially independent of the University. It's usually up to the individual project director to come up with the funds for his research. The finances are most often obtained from private donations or from the federal government.

The Survey Research Center (SRC)

is the largest part of ISR, with a staff between 200 and 300 in Ann Arbor, and an additional 300 field interviewers working all over the nation.

SRC researchers belong to just about all of the social science fields including economics, sociology, and psychology. As the name of the center implies, SRC concentration on sampling sections of the population concerning some particular subject and then analyzing the results of the survey.

One major study of the center that deals with some causes and remedies of poverty will be conducted for the 14th time this year. "We know a lot about what makes people poor," remarked Stephen Withey, director of SRC.

The Center for Political Studies (CPS) focuses on political science research. During every election year since 1948 the center has conducted the National Election Studies. These public opinion surveys are used in American government classes across the country.

Most of the senior researchers in CPS are political science professors. "The research they do here feeds right back into the classroom. There is a very definite loop," said Howland, who works at CPS.

Other studies CPS is involved with include research projects on international politics and international

organizations, and comparative surveys in Europe and the United States contrasting attitudes toward national symbols, authority figures and political parties.

Social psychology is the special focus on the Group Dynamics Center. "The combination of a research institute and a program in social psychology is kind of unique," Director Phillip Brickman said.

One innovative study being conducted through Group Dynamics is about black America. Almost every area of black life in the United States will be examined in the comprehensive study.

The fourth component, the Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge (CRUSK), is unlike the others in that instead of examining certain disciplines, CRUSK projects evaluate the way research is used.

Sheridan Baker (cont. from p. 29)

neighbors'." If you say, "This film is good," you transform the personal report into an evaluation, an intellectual proposition to be illustrated as valid before the whole universe. This is growing up, this shift from believing that ideas are good because you hold them to realizing that they are good because they are good, and can be so demonstrated. Writing confirms this realization as you persuade others that what you believe true is indeed true. Writing reveals that you can trust what you think, not because it is yours--that kindergartener's "I"--but because it has demonstrable validity. So writing is one of our essential means of realizing our maturity. Writing teaches us that our ideas are valid, not merely personal and adolescent whimsies, and it teaches us to think as we attempt to prove those ideas so.

Writing formulates our thoughts. It is our supreme teacher. All of us know that having to write about something is our most effective means of learning about it, grasping it for ourselves as we try to explain it to others. Our schools have sadly neglected this elemental means of learning. Do you want to understand how an internal combustion engine works? Get the basics in mind, and then write out your understanding for someone else, adding details and connections you hadn't even thought were there. You will understand it as never before. Writing is our supreme means of understanding, of discovering our thoughts, of learning, of grasping things in the mind. Reading a book is following a stream of understanding. Writing one is a whole Mississippi. The simplest single page of freshman composition writing demonstrates this process. Writing is discovery of thought. Writing is learning. Writing is maturity. We should use it in all our classrooms for all it is worth.

Sheridan Baker, author of The Complete Stylist and The Practical Stylist, teaches at the University of Michigan.

Amy J. Devitt, John Grove

(cont. from p. 34)

John Warriner's Warriner's English Grammar and Composition Complete Course, used extensively in high school classrooms, is divided into six parts: grammar, usage, sentence structure, composition, mechanics, aids to good English, college entrance and other examinations. The grammar and usage sections cover the familiar topics found in the earlier Warriner's texts such as parts of speech, parts of a sentence, subject-verb agreement, correct form and use of verbs, correct use of pronouns. Devotees of sentence diagramming will find everything from adjective clauses through subordinate clauses in the chapter on parts of speech. The glossary of usage at the end of part two is provided as a reference tool for correcting usage errors.

The greatest portion of the text is devoted to composition, including instruction on paragraphs, precis, factual reports, research papers, and business letters.

Amy Devitt teaches Introductory Composition and Expository Writing at the University of Michigan where she is a Ph.D. candidate in English language.

John Grove is a language arts consultant for the Warren Consolidated Schools, Warren, Michigan.

Edward P. J. Corbett (cont. from p. 28) just how much other systems of rhetoric and composition represent variations, extensions, refinements, or modifications of the classical system. I can promise quite confidently that readers will not find much that is wholly new in these other systems. The classical rhetoricians did not say it all once and for all, but what they said they said very well.

Edward Corbett has published extensively in the field of rhetoric and composition. He is presently teaching at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Editorial (cont. from p. 50)

niques--tried and true or new and provocative; (3) a corner for the publications of your creative writings or those of your students--prose or poetry; (4) timely announcements of conferences and publications of interest; (5) a column by Doctors Fidditch and Foilitch, a team of resident experts who will tackle, or grapple with, any and all professional problems called to their attention; (6) an ECB FreeB--a lesson plan with rationale and format in handy tear-out form; and (6) brief reports from ECB to you--updated news about one or another aspect of the program: assessment, research, the Writing Workshop, the junior- and senior-level writing courses, Introductory Composition, liaison with the schools, and so on.

At this time of a second mailing, it is important to repeat several items:

We need your reactions to both the

content and format of the newsletter if it is to meet your needs.

Everything that appears in fforum is intended for your use. For that reason there are no restrictions at all on any use you wish to make of it.

Since this is the last time we will be able to distribute fforum in a broadside mailing to all secondary schools, colleges, and universities in Michigan, we wish to remind you that you may receive fforum, free of charge, only if you request to be placed on a mailing list.

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