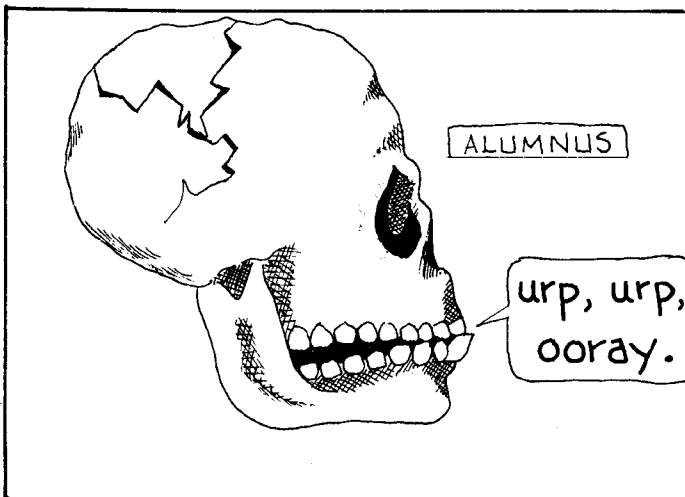
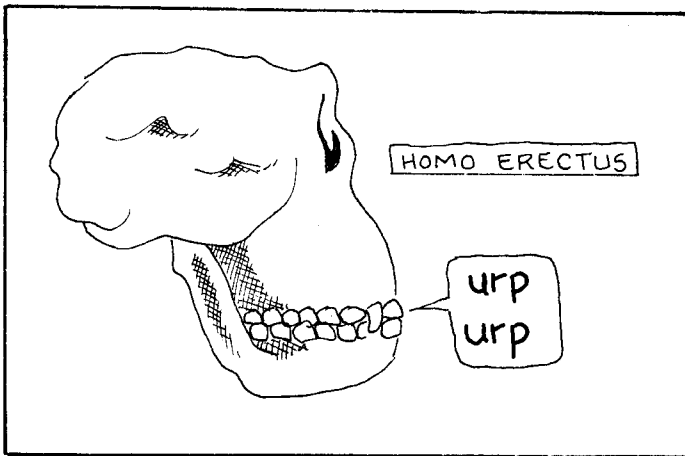
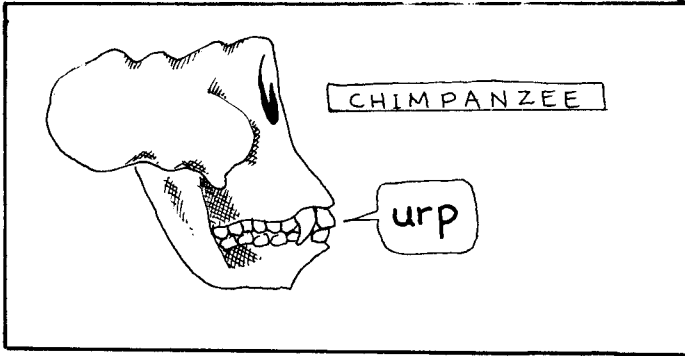


closely related to teaching than Britton's. For Moffett the practical reality that schools existed which taught language arts inadequately came first; his theory was a response to this problem. He wrote his major theoretical work, Teaching the Universe of Discourse, to sketch "a pedagogical theory of discourse" which could provide a fuller rationale for the curriculum and help advance the task of reconceiving education in the native

language (xi). Moffett approached the formulation of his theory as an astute teacher would. He emphasized the pragmatic: he analyzed and articulated what was happening as his students used language; he believed in students' natural linguistic capacities and created materials which would extend those capabilities; he observed what helped students and revised accordingly. All of his major works are written for professional educators, especially English teachers who want to improve instruction for their classes.



Britton and Moffett differ not only in the origin of their theories, but also in what they have done with them. Moffett has taken more elaborate steps than Britton to facilitate the application of this theory in the classroom. In this light, it is especially interesting that he has not undertaken any research to test his theory or the application of it. In contrast to Britton, he warns vigorously of the limitations of research in schools:

No school program can truthfully claim to be proved by scientific fact. It is impossible to control scientific experiments in school....Proof, then, of the effectiveness of methods must come from massive accumulation of experience in and out of school (Student-Centered, 44-45).

In Teaching the Universe of Discourse, Moffett hypothesizes that verbal communication is composed of a series of discourse types, "a 'discourse' being defined as any piece of verbalization complete for its original purpose" (10-11). The elements of discourse are a speaker, a listener, and a subject. Different discourse types are created by shifts in relations among these three elements. Moffett identifies four major types: **interior dialogue** (or egocentric speech), **conversation** (or socialized speech), **correspondence**, and **public essays**. Earlier discourse types are closer to speech, written for a familiar audience, and usually about a recent experience. Hence, these types are easier to produce and a natural place to begin teaching writing. Only later should a student be expected to produce types which require the author to write for an unknown audience.

From B. Schammbackler, The Phourteen Phylogenetic Phases of Phootball: A Theory of Recapitulation (Misthaufen Paperbacks Whole Child Foundation, JHS, SJG.)

As a student grows older, not only does he become less egocentric and more aware of a wider range of social relationships, but also his ability to abstract increases. Early on, a student is more comfortable writing about particular, personal experiences. As he matures, he is able to make generalizations, sometimes original ones, and support them.

The intersection of discourse types and levels of abstraction forms a taxonomy which indicates both the range of discourse types and the sequence in which most students develop the ability to produce these types. Moffett recommends that the content and order of the curriculum be based on this taxonomy.

The categories of writing tasks and the sequence in which writing abilities develop as proposed by Moffett are similar to those suggested by Britton. Indeed, Britton and his colleagues recognized that Moffett's work helped them in defining the categories used to classify scripts (Development of Writing, 15). Furthermore, their research indicated "corroboration of Moffett's developmental categories" (Rosen, 55). And thus it is that Britton confirms the intuitions that they have in common with methods that Moffett would not.

Moffett's subsequent work is directed primarily toward facilitating the application of his theory. A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers, a companion book to Teaching the Universe of Discourse, contains specific, highly imaginative, and seemingly enjoyable language activities for implementing Moffett's ideas in a single classroom or a curriculum for an entire school system. The suggestions for such things as dramatic presentations, writing workshop activities, games, writing memoirs, stories, and essays are arranged according to four levels which increase in difficulty and correspond roughly to skills students should be expected to perform at certain grades. Regardless of the activity, Moffett insists that most classroom learning should occur in small groups. "The teacher's role must be to teach the students to teach each other" (TUD, 12).

Because teachers requested more help in carrying out Moffett's ideas, he directed the development of a new, comprehensive, and expensive program of school materials entitled Interaction: A Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading Program. In this program, the diverse suggestions of the Handbook provide concrete materials. Interaction consists of more than 1,000 items such as activity cards, cassette listening libraries, and games arranged according to the same four levels outlined in the Handbook. The use of these materials increases the amount of individualization possible to the extent that different students can now do different things at the same time more easily. Traditional texts are unnecessary, and the teacher is freed from planning lessons and giving directions "to do all the things that really make education work--coaching, counseling, and consulting" (Student-Centered, xiv).

Moffett's ideas and the implementation of them, particularly as contained in the Interaction materials, offer a dramatic alternative to the traditional English classroom. Although change may be urgently needed, it does not occur easily for either teachers or students. Some of the initial reactions to Interaction reflect the frustrations of change. Some critics believe that teachers did not have the training to use these materials well: "And who, Mr. Moffett, is to teach the teachers--not just the few with whom you have collaborated so successfully to prove that it could be done--but the hundreds and thousands of others?" (Ruth Reeves, 104). Also, a teacher who used the materials commented:

Although extremely well-received, Interaction has given many a teacher more than one headache: 1) Children are too often overwhelmed by too many choices. 2) Children can too easily disregard those activity cards that require a high level of reading or writing. 3) Teachers find themselves constantly repeating general directions in such things as writing mechanics (Fred Sarke, 104).

Moffett's Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13 - A Handbook for Teachers co-authored with Betty Jane Wagner and published in 1976 differs from

the 1968 edition of the work in several important ways. First of all, discussion of the theory and the means for applying it are fully treated in one book in the 1976 edition, not two. Consequently, it is easier for the reader to see the relationship between theory and practice. Key concepts such as the need for individualized learning and the importance of small groups are discussed persuasively and numerous suggestions for implementing these concepts are provided. Another change is that the suggestions for specific classroom activities are no longer arranged according to age levels but according to activities: Basic Processes (talking and listening, dramatic inventing, performing texts, reading, writing); Literacy - "The Basic Skills"; Developmental Reading, Speaking and Writing; Aims and Assessment. Because some reference is made to Interaction items in this 1976 edition, it is helpful to a teacher using Interaction materials. However, the book can be used independently also.

How Britton and Moffett Changed My Teaching

Many changes have occurred in my teaching of freshman composition as a result of what Britton and Moffett have said, but three stand out. First, I sequence writing assignments more carefully. The initial assignments are more personal and written for a familiar audience even though the emphasis of the course is on composing argumentative essays for an unknown audience.

Second, I have varied the purposes and audience for writing assignments more. For example, in the first essay of the course, the student is asked to describe an experience which caused him to change his mind about something important to him. The audience is a sympathetic friend or family member with whom he wants to share this experience, perhaps because he wants the audience to know the author better. In the second essay, the student is asked to share an insight gained from his personal experience. However, the audience is a friend or relative whom the author cares about but who will doubt an insight or conclusion based solely on the author's experience. Hence, the writer must include additional evidence for his

insight, usually the experience of someone else which led to the same conclusion. Subsequent essay assignments are arguments written first for a familiar audience and later for an unknown audience.

A third change is that I include an exercise early in the course to help students consciously experience the changes in moving from telling an experience to a familiar audience to writing about it in a formal essay to an unknown audience. This is the exercise entitled "Four voices," the "FreeB" (p. 42) of this issue of forum. Among other things, the assignment introduces students to one useful approach for working through the immobilization which can occur when staring at a blank page; for instance, they can imagine writing or telling the subject to a friend if they get stuck. In addition, the completion and discussion of this exercise helps students better understand why it is difficult to write formal essays.

More subtle changes in my teaching include more discussion of the relationship between speech and writing, more demonstration of student's intuitive knowledge of language, more work in small groups. Certainly this does not exhaust the possibilities for how the work of Britton and Moffett could improve what happens in the English classroom.

Although I have no research results to prove it, these changes seem to have been helpful to my composition students. They appear to get started more easily, to retain more of their own voice in a final paper, to better appreciate the considerable resources they bring to a writing situation, and to respond more sensitively to the needs of a particular audience.

For reasons I have discussed, Britton's and Moffett's work can be invaluable, especially to the teacher planning the content and sequence of an English course or program. They make an additional contribution: they remind us of the significance of our work as teachers of writing. Britton and his colleagues are confident that the importance of writing will not decline, regardless of the sophistication and efficiency of telecommunication systems. Writing will continue
(cont. on p. 46)

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A theoretical statement including a taxonomy of writing activities from handwriting through revising inner speech.

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A compressed version of his later theory of discourse, exploring the dual movements of the speaker outward toward his subject and toward his audience.

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A companion volume to A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum but an independent work highly influential in humanizing language arts teaching and keeping theory always in sight of pedagogy. It depends on an idea of the student's intellectual growth and the insistence that the student be the center of the curriculum rather than its subject. Argues against grammar instruction and for learning to write by writing; against teaching parts as parts and for teaching wholes and parts in the contexts of wholes.

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(cont. on p. 48)

Prime Movers: Britton and Moffett

Toby Fulwiler

Moffett and Britton are movement makers. Their books influence entire elementary, secondary, and university curricula as well as individual classroom teachers. To be more specific, James Moffett's "sequence assignments" form a critical component of the National Writing Project while James Britton's research provides the theoretical foundation for the movement known as "writing across the curriculum"--in Canada, England, Australia and the United States. Both authors are respected among writing researchers for their work in discourse theory, and few theorists have had more immediate practical implications for the teaching of writing.

Moffett's Spectrum of Discourse

In 1968 James Moffett published Teaching the Universe of Discourse. The universe Moffett describes expands the traditional four rhetorical modes-- 1) narration, 2) description, 3) exposition and 4) argumentation--into a broad **spectrum of discourse** that more accurately accounts for the variety of rhetorical situations found in the real world. Moffett's spectrum ranges from egocentric speaking before an immediate known audience to abstract theorizing before a distant unknown audience. He suggests that as student writers move from the subjective bands of the spectrum toward the more objective bands, more rigorous demands are placed on their thinking and writing skills; thus, a writing curriculum designed to move students progressively from

the easier narrative modes toward the more difficult theoretical modes will enhance writing skills as it promotes cognitive growth.

Moffett insists that as student writers are guided from mode to mode, their writing tasks should be kept as realistic as possible. Teachers should assign whole pieces of discourse--rather than sentence and paragraph exercises--as only in a whole context do sentences and paragraphs make sense. Students should write as often as possible and use classmates, in addition to the teacher, as an audience for their writing. In Moffett's words: students need to be "taught naturalistically, by writing, and the only texts [should] be the student productions themselves" (TUD, 210).

Moffett's beliefs about writing are central to the National Writing Project, directed by James Gray of the University of California. The NWP includes over sixty sites throughout the United States; each site conforms generally to the model Gray developed in the San Francisco Bay area in 1974: a five-week Summer Institute for 25 teachers with a regular rotation of daily activities including 1) teachers teaching each other their best practices and 2) small groups of teachers writing for each other, varying the mode from week to week according to Moffett's sequence. The general philosophy of NWP is eclectic; however, Gray provides handouts on Moffett to project directors, and he requires the Moffett writing

sequence of all participants. When I co-directed the Upper Peninsula Writing Project (NWP) during the summer of 1978, most of the participating teachers spoke of the Moffett-inspired groups as the strongest single part of the Summer Institute. Since teachers return to their home schools to begin regular in-service programs for colleagues and work on curricular change in the teaching of writing at the conclusion of a NWP Institute, it is not surprising that many NWP teachers reform the curriculum according to Moffett.

Britton's Function Categories

James Britton's work in England complements Moffett's work in the United States. Britton's research team at the University of London Institute of Education began a major research project in 1966 to examine the kind of writing required of British school children. The results of this study were published in The Development of Writing Abilities 11-18. Like Moffett, Britton was dissatisfied with the modes of discourse as traditionally formulated; he too fractured them, seeking more accurately descriptive categories, and arrived at **function** and **audience** as the prime determiners of rhetorical mode. Following is a brief summary of Britton's reformulated function categories:

1. **Transactional writing:** "the language to get things done; to inform people to advise or persuade or instruct people...where the transaction demands accurate and specific reference to what is known about reality." Reports, proposals, term papers, and most school writings are examples (DWA, 88).
2. **Expressive writing:** "the kind of writing that might be called 'thinking aloud on paper.'" This is writing "intended for the writer's own use," and is often found in diaries, journals, and first drafts of formal papers (DWA, 89)
3. **Poetic writing:** "language as an art medium...a verbal construct, an object made out of language." Fiction, poetry, and drama are examples (DWA, 90).

In studying school writing, Britton discovered that **expressive** writing--the language of "thinking aloud"--was ignored by most teachers, especially in science and social science, while **transactional** writing dominated the curriculum. The fact that students were seldom required to write in the **expressive** mode suggested to Britton that writing was taught almost exclusively as a means to communicate information rather than as a means to gain insight, develop ideas, or solve problems. Britton writes: "The small amount of speculative writing certainly suggests that, for whatever reason, curricular aims did not include the fostering of writing that reflects independent thinking; rather, attention was directed toward classificatory writing which reflects information in the form in which both teacher and textbook traditionally present it" (DWA, 197).

Britton's hypothesis is that students who learn to use **expressive** writing to explore and discover ideas gain an important learning edge over those who do not; furthermore, regular practice with **expressive** writing should actually enhance cognitive growth. Therefore, Britton wants "to claim a developmental role for writing in school" (DWA, 201). **Expressive** writing is a tool with which to sharpen one's own mental abilities as well as a first step toward more public forms of writing.

Writing Across the Curriculum

The Development of Writing Abilities 11-18 is a report of the Schools Council Project based from 1966 to 1971 at the University of London Institute of Education. In 1971 the Schools Council approved a three-year development project called "Writing Across the Curriculum" to investigate the practical application of Britton's research; work on this project, now unfunded, continues in England. In the United States, Britton's work has received increased attention since 1977, when NCTE published The Development of Writing Abilities. In universities, as well as secondary schools, programs in "writing across the curriculum" have developed as one comprehensive way to combat poor writing. For example, at Michigan Tech, where we are actively promoting writing
(cont. on p. 48)

Language Acquisition and Writing Ability

Stephen Bernhardt

The influence of James Moffett's writings is widespread within the English teaching profession. Most teachers, especially in the elementary and secondary grades, have had their classroom practice affected by his ideas, whether or not he is acknowledged as the source of the ideas. Moffett draws upon ideas from cognitive psychology to develop a theoretical rationale for a student-centered, individualized approach to language learning which departs dramatically from the traditional subject-centered orientation toward literature, composition, grammar, and speech in the English classroom. For Moffett, the student's own languaging experiences are regarded as central to the English curriculum; beginning with them the student is led from a narrow, egocentric view of himself outward toward increasingly decentered, abstracted views of the world. In Moffett's words, "The teacher's art is to move with this movement, a subtle art possible only if he shifts his gaze from the subject to the learner, for the subject is the learner" (TUD, 59). The shift is revolutionary, demanding that the teacher leave behind textbooks, tests, and predetermined, full-class instruction in subject matter.

In Moffett's student-centered classrooms, the notion that English represents a certain core of content which all students benefit from learning and studying together gives way to English as a workshop in language use which draws other subjects and other "real-life" activities into its ken. Many teachers (and many school boards) would question the assumptions of instruction in an open classroom, with activity centers, resource materials, and a facilitator/teacher who encourages students to choose what, when, and how they will learn. This issue is critically important in gauging the acceptability of Moffett's ideas about writing, calling into question as it does traditional conceptions of the nature of the learner, the role of the teacher, the ends of education, and the student's decision-making power. I will leave the questions unanswered, however, as I examine more specifically Moffett's ideas on writing instruction.

Moffett's pedagogical recommendations are consonant with the ideas of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bernstein, all of whom



Van Boerijder's Acquisition Model, Stage 1:
"Garbage In" (Misthaufen Paperbacks,
Whole Child Foundation, JHS, SJ 7.)

postulate a developmental sequence of language growth in the individual from self-centered (language-for-oneself) toward decentered (language-for-others). Such a view treats self-expressive (language-for-oneself) as the starting point of development. Other positions, of course, can be cogently argued. For instance, one might posit a functional basis of language development, arguing that language develops as the child learns to get things done. From this viewpoint, language is from the start not an egocentric activity, but a tool for getting other people to behave in certain ways. With such a change in perspective, learning to use language is less a matter of increasing one's capacity to convey the full range and complexity of one's thoughts and more a matter of pragmatic efficiency. The question of language effectiveness changes, then, from "Did I fully express my ideas?" to "Did my words accomplish my intended effect?"

Moffett's Perspective is Developmental

The spectrum of written discourse which Moffett proposes follows from his developmental perspective. That is, suggested assignments follow a sequence from subjects close to the writer's personal experience, beginning with writing to and for oneself, and gradually moving to writing about abstract content for remote audiences. The problem is that even if one accepts a model of cognitive and linguistic growth moving outward from egocentrism, such development presumably takes place early in an individual's life. A child soon learns that his world is not **the** world, that other people and extenuating circumstances must be considered. Certainly by the middle grades, students have decentered sufficiently to operate within the objective constraints imposed by other people and the physical world. While some students may have difficulties in decentering their writing in order that it be understood by others, this is only one difficulty among many, worthy of attention, yet not sufficient to determine a whole course or curriculum.

To base a writing curriculum on a recapitulation of linguistic or cognitive stages already transcended by the learners seems misguided, even assuming there is some psychological validity to the theory--that

it corresponds to some real goings on in children. The modeling of such a curriculum presupposes first the reality of those stages and secondly the validity of attempting to devise a curriculum which reflects them in sequence. As Moffett himself notes, "This whole theory of discourse is essentially an hallucination" (TUD, p. 54). Such a curriculum, which seeks its motivation in a model of language or cognitive development, further risks confusion because it equates the process of linguistic or cognitive development with the development of writing ability. Croake's paraphrase of Britton on this topic (fforum, p. 9) applies to Moffett as well; the implications of both may be construed as their belief that writing, speech, and cognitive development are activities of a kind.

The result of this confusion is seen in the sequence of writing assignments recommended by Moffett. The initial steps typically call for reproducing interior monologue through detailed sensory description or freely imaginative recording of thoughts. The assumption is that writing is motivated internally and that we must help students get in closer touch with personal sources. It may be, however, that these sources are, for some students at least, the most difficult to tap. It might well be easier for students to begin with situations in which the writing is to accomplish a clear goal--request for information, a justification for one's actions, an act of praise or thanks, or an attempt to convince. Internally motivated forms of writing--description, narration, personal statements--may be difficult because they lack a context which gives them a purpose. Most of our own writing is externally motivated, derived from imposed rather than felt needs. Moffett's assignments are peculiarly unlike anything that passes for language activity outside the English classroom. Where but in school would anyone record random, on-going sensory impressions, then revise them so someone else might understand them? In the absence of imaginable contexts for narrative, descriptive, or personal forms of writing, Moffett's assignments are simply more school-type exercises which assume a transfer of writing ability from personal to purpose-

(cont. on p. 47)

Teaching with Britton and Moffett “And Glad of It”

Mark E. Smith

For several years now I have been relying on the theories of teaching writing proposed by James Britton and James Moffett--and I've been darn "glad of it." In one of his works, Britton quotes that phrase from an eleven-year-old girl's lab report on how to make oxygen. While most of this lab report is direct though unpolished and, in traditional terms, expository prose, Jacqueline ends her account: "Very soon you will find that you have made oxygen and glad of it." Britton points out that these last four words are strictly speaking, inappropriate in a lab report, even though they would probably please Jacqueline's teacher, since they show her enthusiasm for the experiment. Britton explains this unexpected concluding phrase as the intrusion of one kind of writing, **expressive**, into another kind, **transactional**. He characterizes **expressive** writing as personal, very close to the self; it's like written-down speech, whose context is usually unspecified; it's the language of a first draft, and thus relatively unstructured. **Transactional** writing, on the other hand, is the kind of writing used to carry on business, to get things done, often to inform, sometimes to persuade. It is more objective and less personal than **expressive** writing, as well as more structured and polished.

When I first began teaching composition, I assumed, like many of my colleagues who were similarly unprepared for this awesome assignment, that I should concentrate solely on **transactional** writing. After all, I wanted my students to produce clear, effective, grammatically correct prose in the essay examinations and research papers they would write for their

future teachers. Thus, I assigned, almost exclusively, **transactional** essays; I was the one reader of my students' papers. On those papers I diligently marked all errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. One student left me an anonymous note: "Mark Smith owns a red ink factory." And I organized my courses according to the four traditional modes of discourse: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation.

Not until I read Britton and Moffett, discussed their theories with some colleagues, and experimented with their ideas in my classes, did I realize how wrong my first approach had been. I wasn't converted to the faith in a weekend; instead my conversion had been gradual and compromising. I still read all my students' papers closely; but from Britton and Moffett, I've learned a more meaningful process for achieving my goal of developing student writing.

From Britton I learned not only the distinction between **expressive** and **transactional** writing, but also to distinguish a third kind, **poetic** (not just poetry, but all creative, artistic writing). More importantly, I learned to think of **expressive** writing as the "matrix" from which the other kinds develop. So, in order to help my students improve their **transactional** essays, I needed to incorporate **expressive** writing into my classes.

Journals

With journals I integrate **expressive** writing into my classes (all of them, not just those in composition). We, my

students and I, keep journals. We write entries daily or almost daily, out of class and in class, sometimes at the beginning of the hour, sometimes at the end, sometimes when I can't get any of them to talk, sometimes in the middle of a heated discussion, from 3-4 minutes or 15-20. We write about anything and everything, but usually just one topic at a time: the weather, our feelings, a memorable experience, a puzzling issue, a paper coming up, an essay or story we had read and discussed, a scene from nature, and so on. Occasionally I ask them to write a particular kind of entry or choose a topic from a specific subject area, often directly related to a paper assignment, but mostly we write open topic entries. And sometimes we read and talk about our entries in class, but mostly we just let them sit and quietly germinate.

About the use of journals I say I'm "glad of it" for several reasons. For one, because I, too, keep a journal, it forces me to write more, and thus to remain more immediately aware of the problems students face in writing. For another, it makes my courses more interesting. Students enjoy writing on topics of personal concern to them, and I enjoy reading their journals certainly more than I enjoy reading a typical set of expository or argumentative essays; however, I don't believe it's imperative that teachers read students' journals.

But most of all I'm "glad of it" because keeping a journal improves student writing more than any of the hundreds of other teaching strategies I've tried. Students' writing fluency improves measurably in just a few months. At the beginning of the term, when I tell my students we will write almost daily journal entries, each of them about one page long, I hear many mournful sighs and a few disgusted groans. But, at the end of the semester, I often hear myself saying to a student in a conference, "Did you notice your latest journal entries are much longer? You used to write only about a half page for each entry, but now you write 2-3 pages for each one." The response is usually a wide-eyed stare and a quick thumb through the journal to check the validity of my claim. For most students writing ceases to be a consciously painful chore. Some

students even confess they enjoy writing in their journals.

Because we use the journals as an integral part of the course work, we frequently write about topics discussed in class, assigned readings, and papers in progress. Whenever students complain, "I can't think of anything to write about for a third paper," I immediately look at their journals. Invariably, I'm able to suggest several topics directly from the journal that make eyes light up and work on the assignment begin. Also, by writing journal entries about papers they are working on, students are able to generate more ideas on these topics and to sort out organizational problems. Occasionally, they use their journals for revising, by rewriting, expanding and improving earlier entries.

I'm convinced, then, that students write better papers as a direct result of journal writing, and that they're "glad of it."

Working in Small Groups

While the use of journals is my chief application of Britton's theories in my classes, I use another strategy based on his studies--working in small groups on writing assignments. Two or three times a week my students and I gather in small groups to read and discuss drafts of our papers. I tell them that, unless I or they specify otherwise, they should consider the entire class, not just me alone, as the audience for their papers. They soon realize that real writing is aimed at a particular audience. They learn from each other and begin to make choices in their writing to achieve a desired effect on their audience, not just to please the teacher.

For me the key phrase from Moffett's work is "the universe of discourse." Several years ago the title of the freshman English course to which I was assigned was **Modes of Discourse**, an obscure title that meant little to me and less to the students. Checking a few of the textbooks recommended for the course, I surmised these modes were description, narration, exposition and argumentation. After all, that was the explicit or implied message

(cont. on p. 47)

fforum

Looks at Two Schools

Paula Finkelstein,
Susan Marwil,
Dolores Montgomery

Akiva Hebrew Day School

Akiva Hebrew Day School is a bicultural school in Southfield, Michigan. Although it is a relatively young school, founded in 1964, Akiva has been successful in accomplishing its original goal, to commit to the educational ideals of academic excellence in general studies as well as Jewish learning. At Akiva, studies are integrated with beliefs for a harmonious interplay between general and Judaic studies--an interplay that begins in kindergarten and culminates with a senior year spent in Israel, a unique feature of our school and for which the students receive some transferable college credit. Because of Akiva's plan for sending twelfth graders to school in Israel, the high school endeavors to give the students a well-rounded curriculum in three years rather than four. Therefore, the English department has pursued a **traditional** college preparatory curriculum which has been most successful.

In our attempt to meet the needs of our students by providing the basics in grammar and composition, a survey of forms in literature, as well as studies in American, English, and world literature, we find our students excelling in Advanced Placement tests and the Scholastic Writing Contest sponsored by the Detroit News. Although we don't offer an Advanced Placement course, our first year in the Advanced Placement program, of the ten students who took the English AP exam, eight placed with a three or better. Students in succeeding years have met with equal success. Last year, too, we had a national finalist in the National Council of Teachers of English Writing Competition and our students won thirty-seven awards in the Scholastic Writing Contest. (This would not be remarkable, perhaps, except that our junior and senior high school combined enrollment is 65 students).

The Program

The school day is extremely intensive, with students in grades 9-11 spending the morning hours (7:30-12:30) in Judaic studies and the afternoon (1:00-5:10) in general studies. The following is a typical afternoon class schedule:

Grade 9: English
French I
World History
Biology
Algebra

Grade 10: English (Amer. Lit.)
French II
U.S. History
Chemistry
Geometry

Grade 11: World Literature
English Literature
U.S. Government/Economics
Physics
Advanced Algebra

In order to achieve a high level of competence within the compressed academic curriculum, our English composition and literature program begins in Grade 7, where study of grammar fundamentals and paragraph writing are coupled with readings from a literature anthology.

Literature study in eighth-grade introduces Shakespeare and emphasizes form and theme, exploring poetic forms and figures. Students compile an anthology of their favorite poems on a selected theme, such as seasons, friendship, feelings or technology, and compose three or more poems of their own, using traditional forms: Diamante, Cinquain, and so on. (This assignment is modeled on the Bay Area Writing Project described in Learning Magazine, September, 1978). In addition, we write letters to authors of books the students have read. Our writing instruction focuses on the topic sentence, supportive detail, and an introduction to the two-paragraph theme.

In the ninth-grade we use factual source material to study the Holocaust as we introduce students to non-fiction. The culmination of this unit focuses on student interviews with Holocaust survivors residing in the community and furnishes a plethora of writing activities, including short stories, diary entries, poetry, juvenile literature (explaining the Holocaust to beginning readers), and two- three- or four-paragraph informative articles. Other writing activities include a portfolio of essays: one each of description, process analysis, persuasive exposition, personal reaction,

and comparison-contrast. The literature program also includes a study of more difficult Shakespearean drama, usually one comedy and one tragedy, and a novel.

In the tenth grade, the students study American literature; in eleventh grade, world literature; and in twelfth grade, English literature. By tenth grade they write more formal, analytical papers of four and five paragraphs with introductory theses and formal conclusions. By twelfth grade they focus on a variety of writing experiences, including mock heroic poems, ballads, literary analyses, and the research paper.

Because our aim is to encourage critical thinking and effective written communication, we tend to avoid objective tests. Many composition assignments are completed under impromptu classroom conditions, which provide the challenge of pre-thinking, planning, and writing. In both oral and written work, we always encourage the students, especially those in seventh and eighth grades, to answer in complete sentences. Moreover, we expect the students to be able to validate their responses to literature questions with specific references to the text. On tests we prefer answers in compact sentences and begin encouraging sentence-combining skills as early as seventh grade. We try to offer as many opportunities for oral communication as possible, including oral reports, poetry recitation, literature dramatizations, and debates between author and character. Sometimes the students prepare their own scripts for their dramatizations of literature; other times, they write newspaper accounts or television journalists' accounts.

Although our school day places limitations on our offerings, we expose our students to a variety of creative and challenging reading and writing experiences which call for a variety of responses, and we are always searching for new methods, ideas and materials to incorporate into our English curriculum.

We are proud of our students' writing; therefore, we wish to share some of it with fforum's readers. The selections that follow are a sampler of Akiva students' work.

Machine

Machine
Computerized, Mechanized
Perfecting, Solving, Blinking
Television, computer - adult, child
Caring, Loving, Feeling
Affectionate, Emotional
Man

Deena Schramm, Grade 8

To illustrate the effect of living in Israel on our seniors, here are some writings from them:

It is sunset in the Old City of Jerusalem. The patchwork bricks of the stone buildings are all slightly illuminated: lacquered in a golden honey by the sun. The shadows of the palm trees stretch out over the white pavement like graceful fingers, belonging to hands which are preparing to fold in a pose of rest; a cue for the descent of dusk. Jerusalem glitters as the last shower of embers from the departing sun lightly settles over the well-worn bricks. The sliver of sun that is melting over the horizon of the Promised Land is reflected in the eyes of the cats that stalk the shadows. Their eyes flash like sequins of fire. Jerusalem at dusk: gilded, dipped into a vat of gold sheen with the expertise and perfection of the finest craftsman.

Eyes catch the last glare of the sun as it sinks beyond the Kotel (Western Wall). Faint whispers of prayer skim the air and blow gently against the cheek. It is the time of Maariv (evening prayers), and the Jews can now be seen entering the courtyard of the Kotel. Little children run along beside their fathers and tug playfully at their robes. Although it is almost twilight, the Old City is gleaming softly in a halo of light that is shed from the golden dome of the Mosque of Omar.

Eyes blink. The sun has long since melted onto the parched earth beyond the Kotel. Loud and mournful wailing of a taped prayer pierces the air and slaps the cheek. Moslems can be seen scurrying into the courtyard of their

sacred temple. Jerusalem still gleams softly, sparkling, illuminated by the Dome of the Rock. Tears are reflected in the eyes of the cats that stalk the shadows.

Zoe Levin

Your Hands

Your hands
had to turn
the pages of
the calendar as
you realized that
we would soon be gone

and

Your arms
had to let go
of a child
who, you believed,
was yet
unprepared for
life

and

Your eyes
had to watch
that child leave
and you knew
that he would return
a changed person

and yet

Your lips
did not ask
that
we remain at
home

for

Your heart
understood
that
we
were

Going Home.

Thank you, Mom and Dad,
for this year in Israel.

Annette Ryba

L'Anse Creuse High School-North

L'Anse Creuse High School-North is located in northern Macomb County in a primarily blue collar, middle-class area, which has rapidly changed from rural to subdivision living. Our student enrollment is approximately 1,600, 99 percent white with a small Latino, Arabic, Asian, and black population. Approximately forty percent of our students see themselves as college preparatory and an even smaller percentage actually go on to college.

English teachers at LCHS-North usually teach 125-160 students at different grade- and ability-levels in five classes each day. In spite of this demanding schedule, we have made a semi-elective English program, of which we are proud, available to our students. Our ninth graders are required to take an introductory course which emphasizes composition first semester; literature, second. General students begin an elective program in the tenth grade, while college preparatory students are required to take a year of American literature. Electives open to general students include such courses as: **Search for Values, Composition, Mass Media, Man in Conflict, and Mystery.** College preparatory students begin the elective program in the eleventh grade. Offerings for them include: **Science Fiction, Man and Society, Film Studies, Mythology, Advanced Composition, Creative Writing, and Of Men and Women.**

Our elective program is successful because we offer students a choice of equally demanding courses. At the college preparatory level all semester electives emphasize critical reading and thinking and writing skills. All literature courses include nine major works. For example, a student in **Of Men and Women** will read works such as: The Scarlet Letter, The Taming of the Shrew, Anna Karenina, and Harriet Arnow's The Dollmaker; while a student in **Man and Society** may read A Separate Peace, Lord of the Flies, Grapes of Wrath, and Brave New World. Although reading is less intense in our **Film Studies** course, we do require an essay per week of each student in the course.

Another reason for the success of our elective program is that students are aided by their English teachers in select-

ing their courses. We register students in English classes before they enroll in other courses during full-school registration.

Since we have had a separate course in creative writing, our students have been very successful in winning recognition and awards. More writing of sketches, personal essays and autobiographical articles is done in the **Creative Writing** class than can be included in all-purpose English courses. This is reflected in the large number of awards L'Anse Creuse students have won in the creative writing area.

One of our students, Al Huebel, has a state-wide reputation with participants, teachers, and judges of contests; in fact, he has won two college scholarships as a result of his placement in writing contests. Another student, Maureen Darmanin, won a fourth place award in the National Scholastic Short-Short Story division this year. We are indeed proud that L'Anse Creuse students have won a total of thirty-six writing awards this year. Within our school we publish some of our writers and artists in our literary/art magazine, Pencil Marks, which has also received the highest ratings from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

It would be inaccurate to lead fforum's readers to believe that all our students are talented writers. In fact, award winning students are not the norm at L'Anse Creuse: most of our students do not write well. Therefore, in addition to our college preparatory and general English course, we provide a remedial program for those students who need such instruction. Entering ninth graders with severe handicaps in writing take **Basic Language Skills and Reading Lab**. Their teachers then help them choose among electives geared to them, such as: **Communication Skills, Action and Adventure, Mass Media, and Individualized Reading.**

Our aim at L'Anse Creuse is to provide a diversified English curriculum which will meet the needs of all our students. Although we have a hardworking, well-prepared English staff, who give it at least

their best shot, the extent to which we achieve our goal varies.

The following selections from our literary/art magazine Pencil Marks illustrate the quality and diversity of the writing which our students do at L'Anse Creuse.

Ticks

When you live in Este, Virginia, ticks are a part of life. They grow about thick as ants, and you talk about bloodsuckers! Ticks will get hold of anything that's bloody--dogs, cats, chickens, and people.

Before we went to bed, Mom or Maw Maw, one would grab us for a checking. Our bodies were gone over quickly, but our heads were inspected thoroughly. Ticks love squeezing down deep as they can into a head of hair. And you can believe after a day of wrastling around on the ground and climbing trees they were plentiful. When one was found, it was yanked out quick as that. If the tick had his head under good, it would usually pull a piece of skin off with it, and bring a cry from us little ones getting the treatment. Then we were only hollered at and told to set still and that it was our own fault. The ticks were then handed over to Uncle Jim who would cut their heads off while us kids giggled over the bodies still walking around without heads.

Uncle Jim used to check out the dogs' ears. He would hold the hound between his legs, then pick the creatures out with a pair of tweezers. Sometimes they'd get big as a marble, or bigger, all filled up on blood. They'd turn real white and ugly. Those we just squashed with a rock, cause you couldn't tell front from back they were so fat. But those hounds sure were glad to have their ears cleaned out afterwards. They'd flop their heads all around and smile from ear to ear.

I was always wondering how it was the older folks never seemed to get ticks. Maw Maw told us that's what we got for rolling around on the ground. But I figured different. Their blood pobably wouldn't even taste good since they were so old and tough-skinned. And if I was a tick I'd rather have little children's blood, too.

Anita Mantey '78, Scholastic Writing Award, Scholastic Art Award

Big Jake

Everything is relative, right? Well, next to Big Jake I'm Mr. Peepers, body and soul.

All I did was invite my two nearly-faint-from-hunger ninth grade buddies to stand up front with me in the cafeteria line. No big deal, right? Wrong! You see, Jake has a tendency to overdo things a bit.

"All right, gentlemen, why don't we kindly step to the end of the line!" he said as if he was bawling out the entire football team after another loss.

His massive body towered above the heads of my buddies and me. His humungous arms casually leaned against the wall and his thick lips juggled a helpless little toothpick.

I felt the situation called for an articulate spokesman. I didn't see any reason in hell why he had to carry on as if we were waiting for him to introduce us to Bo Schembechler.

The toothpick continued to bob from side to side. I shrank under his eyeball-to-eyeball gaze. His eyebrows cocked according to the position of the wooden object his teeth had entrapped. My buddies said nothing; together we stood frozen, glancing from time to time at each other.

Maybe he thought that the term "gentlemen" put us on a more man-to-man basis.

I chanced a reply, risking the wrath of the tiger. "Do you mean me?" I shook like a hooker in a Baptist church.

His muscle-bound body tightened as if to move into a defensive stance. "Don't question me, young man, or we'll take a walk down to the office!"

It wasn't what he said but the way that he said it that scared the daylights out of me.

(cont. from p. 47)

Given Language Exercises

Stephen Dunning, Kathe Kohl, Lawrence McDoniel

Three of us are developing **given language** exercises that seem to generate interesting sentences from at least some students. In a text provided by the teacher (**given language**), students are asked to make **text substitutions** or to provide **text fillers**. These exercises are preparatory to introducing **generating frames** which withhold portions of a text but supply cues suggesting language that will satisfy the gaps. Our goals are

1. To make writing easier for some students;
2. To help students write more vividly, with pleasure and pride;
3. To help students use concrete images in their writing;
4. To focus students' attention on concrete imagery, personifications, sound and rhythmic patterns or other specific uses of language which the teacher and students are studying.

To accomplish our goals we have developed the following procedures and materials:

Text Substitutes

Text Substitutes produce exercises in which students are given a piece of writing and asked to substitute their own words for words in the text. For example, students are given a sentence such as this:

In the winter, California grey whales migrate south to the Baja.

Students are invited to play with this sentence according to whatever rules the teacher imposes. The teacher may tell the student to substitute some word for Baja, for example, or invite the student to provide a substitute phrase for California grey whales. Students, in turn, may construct sentences like these:

In the winter, California grey whales migrate south to Mexico.

or

In the winter, Canadian geese migrate south to Michigan.

or

In the late spring, yellow taxi cabs flock to Paris.

Starting with the **given sentence** on the chalk board, students might be asked to think about possible changes, decide on preferable changes, and write the revised sentence on their paper. Then, sentences might be read aloud in small groups or used as **first sentences** for a piece of original writing, or strung together in ways students find interesting. The uses for such sentences may be as diverse as the teacher wishes them to be.

Text Fillers

Text Fillers produce exercises in which students provide words for holes made in a model passage. This procedure asks students to provide words to complete a partially given text. Since parts of the given text are withheld, **Text Fillers** may be both difficult and invite more imaginative responses. As an example, we return to our original sentence, but this time we withhold some of the text:

In _____, California _____ migrate south to _____.

A student might compose lines like these:

In autumn, California grape harvesters migrate south to the orange groves.

or

In cold weather, California surfers migrate south to warmer beaches.

Again, a number of rules can modify the play, increase the difficulty, or focus attention on particular aspects of language (such as kinesthetic imagery) or structure (such as prepositional phrases).

Generating Frames

The step from **Text Substitutes** and **Text Fillers** to **Generating Frames** may be a bigger step than some students want to take. But inviting students to try **Generating Frames** may be inviting them to achieve images, connections, and figures of speech they wouldn't otherwise attempt.

In **Generating Frames**, we withhold one or more of the "context-giving" portions of a text and provide "cues" to suggest what language might satisfy the gap. For example, beginning again with our original sentence, we create this **Generating Frame**.

In _____
(1) this season (2) these animals
migrate _____
(3) in this direction

(4) to this place.

A student might substitute language much like that of the original.

In (1) early autumn, (2) pelicans
migrate (3) south (4) to sun-filled
lagoons.

To introduce **Generating Frames** to students, a teacher may provide copies of one or more of the frames like those suggested here and have students fill in the blanks. The procedure we believe works best is to have students work quickly, letting the structure of the frame and the cues inspire the semantics. If they do move quickly through the frames, there will be some strange results. But the filled-in frame might be a first-draft for a later revision. In the transfer from **Generating Frames** to real writing, all changes that seem right are encouraged--including changes in the words in the **Generating Frame** that were given.

Some students will want to continue to revise their material. Almost surely there will be interest in sharing revised texts by reading some aloud. Just as surely, some texts will be left in the graveyard of failed beginnings. The teacher can encourage students to discuss their feelings about the process. Many students have interesting things to say

about both the invitations and the restrictions **Generating Frames** provide. The following are some **Generating Frames** you may wish to try in your own classroom.

Generating Frame I

On _____
(1) this topographical feature of

(2) this specific place (3) situated

this way between these two landmarks
stands _____
(4) this size, character, and

color of building.

(5) These decorative features do this

to the building
and before _____
(6) lies
stretches
stands

this natural feature
Lately _____
(7) this has been true of the building

(8) This long ago, this other thing

was true

Generating Frame II

When _____
(1) this ordinary event occurred

(2) in this specific place

(3) this person (4) did this

(5) and this