Research on Speech and Writing and the Composition Class

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In my position as Assistant Director of Composition at Wayne State University, I observe many instructors teach, and I often hear what they say to students in conference. Too frequently I hear things like this in the classroom: "The problem with most of your writing is that you write like you speak. Because you don't read very much, you don't know how writing differs from speech." or I hear things like this when teachers diagnose student problems in conference: "You know what your problem is? You don't say the 'ed' when you speak. That's why you never remember it when you write." Clearly, research on speaking and writing has finally touched the composition class, but not with invariably happy results.

Descriptive studies of observable differences in the form and function of speech and writing have been "raided" by eager teachers looking for ways to label error or to defend teaching methods. Many of these studies were not designed to explain how speech and writing are produced, how skills we employ naturally as speakers in different contexts translate to writing, or how language works as effective communication. Yet teachers have adopted their conclusions wholesale, making them "maxims" for the teaching of composition.

In this essay I will examine three "maxims," embraced by composition instructors, that have grown out of research on speech and writing.

(1) **Speech and writing require different kinds of thinking;**
(2) **Speech and writing are structured differently;**
(3) **Speech and writing require access to different language codes.**

I believe that, though grounded in research, these maxims have limited relevance for the teaching of writing. They exaggerate distinctions that suggest the interference of speech in writing, and thus they ignore the very important ways in which our skills as speakers enhance our writing.

Maxim one: Speech and writing require different kinds of thinking

Maxim one is derived from (the observation) that speech is concrete, proverbial and lost once it is uttered, while writing, in contrast, is abstract, inductive and heuristic.

Because speech is concrete and writing is abstract, theorists tell us, thinking in writing is more difficult. Handling ideas in written language, Vygotsky claims, is complex not only because written language is often used to express relationships between abstract concepts, but also because written words themselves are more abstract than spoken words. Written language is one more step removed from the concepts it symbolizes because it lacks the "sensory aspect of speech" (p. 98). Paralleling Vygotsky's claims, Foucault notes that Western writing systems involve an even greater degree of abstraction than Oriental writing systems because of the use of the alphabet to create words instead of ideograms:

> (T)he ideogram . . . directly represents the signified, independently from a phonetic system which is another mode of representation. . . . (S)ince writing refers not to a thing but to speech, a work of language only advances more deeply into the intangible density of the mirror, calls for the double of this already doubled writing . . . (p. 56).

Writing not only must represent our ideas, but also must serve as a permanent record of speech. This puts a dual burden on writers — to know what needs to be said as well as how to make it "sound" right to a reading audience.

The notion that speech is proverbial while writing is inductive has its origins in studies of the differences between pre-literate and literate communication. In observing the language of literate and preliterate adults and children, Olson drew these conclusions:

> 1. Speech is coded for action, premises are proverbial – they are generalizations that reaffirm cultural assumptions for behavior, not generalizations based on inductive study of particulars; and
>
> 2. Writing talks about the principle behind action – it generalizes particulars in such a way that true statements can follow from an inductive assessment of what is said. In speech, the values behind the words constitute their argument – the speaker who has the last word, whatever it may be, wins, whereas in writing, words are assessed inductively – the winner of the argument is he who can draw the best conclusions from what was previously stated (pp. 13-16).

That writing is heuristic and speech is not is a popular concept extrapolated from Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning." Here Emig suggests that reviewing what one writes helps the writer transform literal representations into "symbolic" representations. When writers read the written record of their thinking, they experience a "revision" of what they thought they knew. Because speech is ephemeral, here one moment and gone the next, it does not permit this

opportunity for learning from thoughtful review of an artifact (p. 125).

None of this research "proves" that writing involves a different kind of thinking than speech. In fact, using this research to tell students that writing involves a different kind of speaking than speech can lead teachers to some awkward "moments of truth" in the composition classroom.

Can we, for instance, really claim that writing is abstract, and if we do, will students believe that it must be profound, full of ideas and themes, never concerned with people and things — the everyday stuff of life we talk about to those we care about? Is it not the lack of the concrete, of the here-and-now, that makes some of our students' writing so terrible? Certainly some of our best literature, our most informative newscasts, our most handy reference works record everyday concrete things.

Can we claim that writing is inductive and never proverbial, analytic rather than supportive of cultural attitides? This conclusion is proven false even when we examine scientific reporting. The development of argument in scientific discourse is often not inductive at all, but is made to look so through the use of discourse performatives, language features which signal the development of a factual argument, something we *should* believe (Gremmo, pp. 5, 27).

Furthermore, can we really say that writing is heuristic and that speech is not? After all, what is the process of revision that Emig described but an attempt to create a dialogue between self and paper, in the act of retrospectively structuring one's discourse to match what's in one's head, or a dialogue between self and a probable audience in the act of projecting an effective rhetorical structure? (Perl and Egendorf, pp. 125-26). What can encourage this kind of dialogue better than talk — talk in the classroom, talk about writing, about ideas, about talk itself?

Our efforts to express both concrete and abstract ideas, analogic and analytic arguments, explicative and exploratory thinking can be realized in both speech and writing. Students who do not have experience communicating in writing do not need to be taught how to "think" differently, nor do they need to be taught new language functions. They do need, however, to become consciously aware of what makes their speech work as communication so that they can more readily learn what will make their writing work too. More on this later.

Maxim two: Oral language and written language are structured differently

Some methods of teaching composition have been vindicated by research on speech and writing, primarily research which concludes that oral language is spontaneously developed, lacks embedding, and is dependent on context for coherence, while writing is planned, contains multiple embeddings, and is dependent on structural devices for coherence.

Sentence-combining practice, for instance, is justified by observations about typical grammatical differences in speech and writing. Speech, as Stalker notes, reflects the consistent use of "'clausal' rather than sentence syntax" and in speech "sentences that are completed are usually independent clauses (matrix sentences) with little or no subordination (embedding)" (pp. 276, 274). Mature writing, as Hunt has told us, includes more subordinated clauses and fewer independent clauses or clauses connected by coordinators (p. 307). Thus sentence-combining, which increases students' facility with subordinating structures (Mellon, pp. 51-52), can help them write "less oral" and "more mature" discourse.

The advice to "make more connections" or to "use more transitions," which teachers often write on student papers, is also supported by research on the structure of speech and writing. Speech, Crystal and Davy tell us, creates overt inter-sentence linkage through ellipsis, personal pronouns, articles, and determiners which cross-reference items previously stated (p. 112). Writing, however, involves more complex structuring, Emig tells us, establishing "systematic connections and relationships" through text features that signal the nature of "conceptual relationships" (p. 126).

We must remember, however, that most comparisons of the structure of speech and writing have examined spontaneous conversation and planned written composition. Gross differences are bound to be apparent. The function of spontaneous conversation is to explore, to find out what is going on, to explain what is happening moment to moment; its structure must be loose to allow for new possibilities. The function of written composition, on the other hand, is to communicate a planned message, to tell what one knows rather than to initiate dialogue. It is not surprising, thus, that linguists have found conversation to cover subject matter at random, to have no overall theme, to consist of utterances that are often incomplete and contradictory. It is also not surprising that linguists characterize writing as directed to one topic and composed of fluent and complete sentences (Crystal and Davy, pp. 95-121). Both teachers and students are aware that readers expect organization, standard English and minimal error in written texts.

Planning composition instruction based on research that directly opposes typical structures in each mode really doesn't get us very far. For one thing, such instruction ignores the fact that we structure our language, both speech and writing, to respond to specific situations. Written expression will often closely approximate functions and structures "typical" of speech. When we ignore this, we overlook some very important kinds of writing. What's more, we imply that "typical" features are effective in every instance.

To insist, for example, that speech is "random" while writing is "planned" is to discount the developmental kind of writing that Elbow, Macrorie, and others advocate. Teachers underrate the importance of evolutionary writing as a step to finished composition when they ask to see only finished products instead of drafts. They deny that much writing is not "planned" but rather "planning." The first draft is an opportunity for dialogue between students or between teacher and student about that "planning" that could insure a more meaningful final product.

To assert that embedding and subordination are more desirable than coordination in writing is to ignore how language structure reflects purpose. Newspaper writing, some of our most readable prose, makes use of simple sentences connected by coordinators, rather than subordinators. This style, Crystal and Davy note, gives newspaper writing a sense of urgency and immediacy which maintains reader interest (pp. 184-95). The prose runs forward, rather than traces backwards or spirals inwards. Christensen claims that the most frequent sentence type in published prose of all kinds is not the complex sentence, but the cumulative sentence which presents an idea and then elaborates it with a series of free modifiers, explanations that are merely "added on" to the base loosely, as detail is added to a point in conversation (p. 156).

To urge students to "make more connections" is I believe, to urge them to use subordinators and coordinators with abandon. Students following this advice form prose "habits" that are hard to break. I found it very difficult, for instance, to convince a good freshman writer that the following paragraph contained dysfunctional connecting words:

> *To find the exact cause of rising costs is not quite clear;* ***however,*** *big city critics are putting the blame on unstringent government aid and on insurance policies which finance expensive treatments and elaborate facilities with a blank check. This means that physicians will probably be reimbersed for just about any amount they charge. . . . So, as you can see, it is very difficult to beat a system which favors the physician.* ***Hence,*** *a stringent health insurance policy must be put into law in order to take this fee control from the doctor.*

This student passage suffers from "connection" overload. It also reflects the writer's perception that subordinators and coordinators are things you insert between written sentences to *make* them connect.

An argument could be made that students misuse connectors, transitions, or structural markers in writing because speech requires no such features. Yet, features do exist in conversation which anticipate function. Paired sequences, for instance, can indicate intention to clarify, continue, or terminate discourse. Likewise conventional strategies exist for introducing a topic so that it will be accepted by a listener or for suspending the "turn-taking" system so that one speaker may insert a story (Coulthard, pp. 69-92). As

with any tool that has become so handy that we forget its importance to completing a task, the devices we use to structure conversation are so familiar, so directly functional, we do not easily recognize them without deliberate study.

Why, then, do comparable devices in writing, devices which direct the illocutionary force of discourse, pose such problems for our students? Could it be because most student writing is non-functional? In school, Britton tells us, students almost always write to teachers — an audience who will regard little they say as informative or engaging (pp. 63-64). It's perhaps not surprising that student writers fail to use features that clearly direct readers to functional intent.

Students will write well not merely because they can manipulate structures peculiar to writing, but because they can aptly relate structure to function. Discourse should be planned if the purpose is to inform rather than to explore; sentences should be short and coordinated if the purpose is to narrate with urgency; connecting devices should be used when they truly and correctly mark the intent of the statements which follow. Teachers who assert that language in a composition is inappropriate because it is structured like speech have made a simplistic assessment of the choices involved in writing effective prose.

Maxim three: Speech and writing require access to different language codes

Code, as defined by Gregory and Carroll, embodies the range of linguistic behavior to which an individual has access when communicating: "Code therefore determines which options will be selected as appropriate to a given situation" (p. 80). Codes that will dictate appropriate options in speech and writing are, of course, different. Yet there is great variety in the range of "correct" options in either speech or writing for a given situation.

Composition pedagogy often assumes that the only "codes" students must control in writing well are "standard English" and the conventions of a loosely defined, authoritative yet personal style called the writer's "voice." In teaching standard English, teachers must fight the influence of local dialects, and in developing "voice" they must wage a war on clichés and aphorisms borrowed from speech.

I find it troublesome that some composition instructors feel that class time should be spent teaching students standard English. In emphasizing skills that students don't have, this instruction does not build on those they do have. I find it more troublesome, however, that teachers urge student writers to develop a single "voice." Asking students to write with a single voice, Schor notes, is to condemn them to failure:

> *How many beginning writers have one 'voice?' A nineteen-year-old who cannot decide on a major, who cannot see a job out there in his or her future, whose*

handwriting slants in a different direction in every parag-
raph, sometimes in every line? (p. 76).

When teachers tell students to write honestly, to find their own "voices," they ask students to do something that many of them are not mature enough to do. What's worse is that they ask students to do something most adults never do.

Adult speakers and writers change their language depending upon whom they're addressing, where, and when. The "codes" they bring to bear are those that work within the constraints of a particular situation. In many cases these codes are so definite that they constitute a "register" of language specific to a given context, such as the register of "CB radio talk" or "legal writing."

Teachers trying to get students to write with conviction would be more successful if they required them to write to a specific audience for a specific purpose rather than to search for their own voices. Yet in giving students different situations to address as writers, the problem how to teach them the range of appropriate reponses remains. We know that speakers depend to a large extent, on immediate audiences to monitor their expression, and studies have suggested that good writers rely on an internal "monitor," checking their writing against rules and conventions for specific writing situations (Kroll, pp. 87-88).

We could conclude that the job of teaching writing then boils down to "programming" students' writing "monitors" so that they can serve for all writing situations. What a hopeless task! We can't possibly teach what is appropriate for all situations. Fortunately for us, in real-life as opposed to classroom writing, few writers depend solely on their own judgments.

In business and industry, documents summarizing progress of a project, proposing a bid, or describing a procedure are often the work of a team of writers or are the end products of a series of rewrites that have passed from worker to co-worker to supervisor. In the real-world, writers know when to adjust their writing to meet the needs of their audiences because their audiences are often right there telling them to do so.

I think teachers disregard the value of consultation in writing. Instead of showing students ways to gain expertise through talking with others, they burden them with the responsibility of being expert without any resources. Furthermore, by insisting that students work alone as writers, they encourage behavior that does not prepare them for writing tasks in corporate environments where team work and team writing may be essential.

Teachers cannot continue to view speech simply as language conforming to codes which potentially interfere with good writing. If they do, they will miss the very significant fact that what we do as speakers to ensure that our words affect others is very similar to what we must do as writers. That is to keep talking — with other students, with instructors, with potential audiences — to get a feel for what they want to hear and read, and how they want to hear and read it.

How then should composition teachers regard the research that compares speech and writing? We need to think more carefully about how such research should influence teaching. It is important to know how writing differs from talk, but more important to know how writing works like talk. When we urge students to think inductively, to develop new syntactic patterns, to discover a personal style — in short, to make their writing different from their speech — we stigmatize facility in speech as a liability. We must look at research on speech and writing in hope of ascertaining what speakers do that is similar to what writers do. Writing instruction will then focus on not making student language "more literate" and "less oral," but on the mastery of operations that ensure effective expression.

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Litigation and Literacy: The Black English Case

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Though it began with far different objectives, the litigation generally known as the "Black English" case ended in July 1979 with a decision that had as its central issue the distinction between spoken and written English. At first, the plaintiff children and their supporters wanted to draw attention to the disparity between school achievement and social class. As has long been recognized, children who are poor and black are less likely to do well in school than children who are not poor and not black. The "Black English" case began in 1977 with the plaintiffs' hope that the courts would address that issue.

Since it was opened in 1969, the Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School in Ann Arbor has been a model of what many parents and children hope their schools will be. Housed in a handsome, modern building in a suburban setting, the school is a racial mirror of the Ann Arbor community. In 1977, 13% of its 500 students were Black, 7% Asian and Latino, and 80% white. Some children live in University of Michigan student housing, and many of them speak a language other than English at home. Children of students at the University of Michigan live in an environment where school and school values are highly prized: their parents have profited from education, whether in the United States or abroad, and most are working toward post-graduate degrees at the University. Children from the student housing area generally do well at King School and add interesting diversity to its population.

The majority of students at King come from affluent homes. Most of the housing in the immediate neighborhood of the school was constructed after 1970, when single-family houses began to be constructed on a lavish scale. One school administrator described his feelings during a visit to King School on a parent's night: the casual, after-work clothing of the parents, he said, was more elegant than his professional garb, and he liked to arrive early so he would not suffer the comparison between his well-used automobile and the "second cars" of the King parents. A central figure in the Black English case, this administrator had grown up in a large family in a poor urban neighborhood; but he did not recognize poverty because all his school friends came from similar circumstances. Even with a doctoral degree and a salary of $30,000, he felt acutely the difference between his income and that of most King parents.

As a consequence of affluence, many King School children have taken vacations throughout the United States and Europe. Their homes are well-supplied with books and magazines; most of them have visited museums, attended theatrical productions and athletic events; they feel at home throughout the Ann Arbor community; and are eager to learn in school, where they find parent volunteers to help them with extra tutoring, should they have difficulty, and a rich variety of extra-curricular scouting and club activities.

One group of children is a dramatic exception to the general pattern of affluence among students of King school: children from the "scattered site" public housing development located within the King boundaries. All of the children from this project are Black; most of them come from single-parent familes; nearly none of them has had either "enriching" travel or the resources in the home that are routinely available to their schoolmates. Since the housing project is isolated from surrounding residential neighborhoods by a four-lane highway with no nearby traffic light, small children from the project are unlikely to have spent much time visiting and being visited by children they meet in school; and are less likely to participate in scouts or clubs. They do play regularly, of course, with their neighbors in the project, those with whom they share common experiences and a common language, Black English.

Parents from the housing project have typically not completed secondary school, and at least some of them regard the schools with a mixture of fear and animosity. But a few of the parents place a very high value on education and see it as a means by which their children may escape from the cycle of poverty. Most of them, like the school administrator, are daunted by the affluence that prevails at parent-teacher meetings, and they are sometimes reluctant to press teachers for explanations of decisions made about their children's educational progress. Since designating children for special treatment opens opportunities and resources for extra help, the school moved to "label" many of the project children in the hope that extra assistance would improve their performance. Of the fifteen plaintiff children in 1977, three were categorized as "learning disabled" and two were identified as "emotionally impaired." Still others were being given speech therapy or experienced extra help from community volunteer tutors. Because their children were not doing well in school, despite the special attention given to them, four parents from the project accepted the help of the Student Advocacy Center and Michigan Legal Services Corporation in bringing the "Black English" suit in 1977. The schools, they felt, *could* help their children; the litigation would compel them to do so.

In 1978, after a series of legal manuevers, the federal district court denied those arguments brought by the plaintiffs that

would oblige the schools to eliminate "cultural and economic barriers." Nothing in the cited statutes, wrote Judge Charles W. Joiner, required schools to address the disparity between the affluent majority and the impoverished minority in the King School population. With that intermediate decision, the issue of "Black English" emerged as the principal issue to be litigated.

In 1972, as part of a series of amendments designed to eliminate busing for racial balance, President Nixon had sent to the Congress a series of prohibitions concerning the denial of equal education opportunity, among them "the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs." Eventually enacted into law in 1974, this provision was not immediately cited in suits brought on behalf of children whose "language barriers" impeded their educational progress. Most court decisions concerned with bicultural and bilingual education followed a different tradition, usually the "Lau Guidelines" that were issued by the federal government as a consequence of the Supreme Court's ruling that special help must be provided for children entering school with "no knowledge of English." The legislative history of the statute invoked in the Black English case did not specify precisely what "language barriers" were to be "overcome," and the Ann Arbor case was one of the first to provide a judicial interpretation of the language of that law.

In deciding in favor of the plaintiff children, Judge Joiner recognized that they suffered from the effects of "language barriers." As testimony by experts and the children themselves made clear, the children from the project used Black English in the home and in speaking to friends. It was the spoken language in which they were "most comfortable." In school, the children had variously mastered the skills of "code-switching" that enabled them to speak in a more formal style of Black English generally intelligible to their teachers, a variety of English sharing some features with nonstandard varieties held in low esteem by most educators. While placement tests were not a major subject of argument in the case, specialists at King School had made use of tests that increased the likelihood that the children from the project would be given speech therapy or labeled "learning disabled" or one of the other categories that would lead to their being given "special treatment."

In working with small children, teachers are confronted by the differences between spoken and written English in a way that is different from the issues presented to teachers of older children and adults. When tested for reading readiness and "special needs," young children can be reached only through their ability to articulate in speech their responses to oral and visual stimuli. Teachers who are unfamiliar with Black English or other varieties of English that differ systematically from their own speech must be particularly sensitive to the difference between "errors" or "miscues" and the systematic features of language that differentiate dialects. This distinction is even more crucial for reading teachers who assist children in discovering the "alphabetic

principle" of our written language. The "language barrier" identified in the Black English case consisted, then, of two parts: the use of Black English by the children and the uncertainty of teachers in interpreting the English they heard from these children in their classrooms. As Judge Joiner recognized, "the problem in this case revolves around the ability of the school system, King School in particular, to teach the reading of standard English to children who, it is alleged, speak 'Black English' as a matter of course at home and in their home community."

As Lee Hansen explains elsewhere in this issue of *fforum*, the remedy designed by the Ann Arbor schools in response to the Judge's opinion involved in-service training for teachers to make them aware of the feature of Black English and the interactional styles that promote good learning. As one of the children said in interviewing her younger brother, the issue ultimately resolves itself to the answers to these questions: "Do you be respectin' your teachers?" "Do your teachers be respectin' you?"

The main source of argument and ruling in the Black English trial involved the interpretation of the statutory phrase, "language barriers that impeded education opportunity." Less noticed, however, is the fact that the defendants in the case were not school personnel but the Ann Arbor Board of Education. The decision rested on the Board's responsibility as an "educational agency" to provide teachers with current "knowledge" that bears on the ability of educators to open educational opportunities to all. As a precedent, the case has implications for Boards and administrators: they must make good faith efforts to keep teachers abreast of ideas and innovations that will make education more effective.

In his decision, Judge Joiner noted that the remedies to the problems raised in the case "involve pedagogical judgments that are for educators and not for the courts." Presumably, any reasonable course of action proposed by the Ann Arbor School Board in response to the decision would have been accepted by the court. A more recent case involving "language barriers" — *U.S. v. State of Texas* (506 F. Supp. 405 (1981) — mandates a more stringent standard: the "appropriate action" must be effective. As the court said in the case, "good intentions are not enough. The measure of a remedy is its effectiveness, not its purpose." The Black English case, then, is part of an emerging interpretation of a statute that will profoundly affect teacher training and in-service programs, our understanding of the nature of "language barriers," and the means by which we provide equal educational opportunity for all children.

* * * * * * *

Major documents involved in the Black English case and important interpretative essays by educators and community leaders are gathered in *Black English and the Education of Black Children and Youth,* edited by Geneva Smitherman. The book is available for $8.00 from the Center for Black Studies, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202.

The Black English Lawsuit In Retrospect: A Participant's Postscript

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On July 12, 1979, after a long and often contentious litany of legal proceedings, Judge Charles Joiner ruled in the Federal District Court in Detroit on what was to become known as the "Ann Arbor Black English Case." The fact that all but one of the charges were dismissed was lost on most people. Instead, they turned their attention to the one indictment that Judge Joiner sustained: The charge of plaintiffs that the school system had permitted teachers to create a potential language barrier with plaintiff children, all of whom were black children of low income families from the Green Road Public Housing development and most of whom were purported to speak some variation of Black Vernacular English.

Since then, much has been written about the politics and legalities of the case. I do not propose to retrace that ground. Rather, I would like to share briefly what the Ann Arbor School System did to comply with the Judge's order, what has happened since, and what I have learned from the experience.

A Program of Compliance

As a result of that federal court order, the school district developed and implemented a program that had as its central focus the in-service education of the King Elementary School teachers. In his Memorandum Opinion and Order, Judge Joiner seemed to focus on two issues. First was the extent to which the King School teachers had knowledge and understanding of the linguistic and socio-linguistic features of the non-standard English dialect Black Vernacular English (BVE). Extensive study of this dialect in the 1960's and early 1970's showed it to be a pervasive dialect among black people, but especially among urban lower socio-economic black children, many of whom were labeled under-achievers. Second, Judge Joiner pointed to the instructional barrier that could be created by classroom teachers who lacked an understanding and an appreciation of BVE. Consequently, the in-service program we developed and implemented sought to relate to both the linguistic and pedagogical issues raised by the court.

The in-service program itself took place during the 1979-80 school year and involved all classroom teachers, special teachers, and consultants who were assigned to King Elementary School. The first semester of that school year was devoted to 20 hours of workshop learning spread over five separate sessions. Instruction was provided by local school district staff in cooperation and consultation with Bill

Hall and Roger Shuy, nationally recognized scholars in linguistics and dialectology. Upon completion of this formal workshop phase, it was the hope of the planning committee that in-service participants would:

1) be able to describe in general the concept of a dialect and dialect differences within the English language;
2) be sensitive to the value judgments about dialect differences which people often make and communicate to others;
3) be able to describe the basic linguistic features of Black Vernacular English as it contrasts with standard English;
4) have appreciation for the history and background of Black Vernacular English;
5) be able to identify without prompting the specific linguistic features by which they recognized a speaker of Black Vernacular English;
6) be able to discuss knowledgeably the important linguistic issues in code switching between Black Vernacular English and standard written English;
7) be able to identify possible instructional strategies that can be used to aid children in code switching between Black Vernacular English and standard English;
8) be able to distinguish between a dialect code switch and a decoding mistake when analyzing an oral reading sample;

Instructional activities were designed to help participants master each of the objectives above.

The focus of the second semester of 1979-80 was implementation of what had been presented during the first semester. With the help of a full-time language arts consultant, follow-up visits by Drs. Hall and Shuy, and the support of the building administrator and central administrative team, the teaching staff began to put into action what they had been taught during the first semester. Again, it was the hope of the planning team that by the end of the second semester in-service participants would:

1) be able, using a variety of informal and formal techniques, to identify students in their class who speak Black Vernacular English;
2) be able to recognize specific code-switching problems encountered by individual Black Vernacular English speakers attempting to read standard English material;
3) be able, in the classroom setting, to distinguish between a dialect code switch and a decoding mistake as

a student speaking Black Vernacular English is orally reading from standard English material;

4) use a variety of possible instructional strategies to help students speaking Black Vernacular English overcome code-switching barriers as they are learning to read standard English;

At the close of the school year a comprehensive evaluation was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the program. That evaluation included an independent field assessment by Drs. Hall and Shuy, including classroom observations and 30-minute interviews with participating staff; an analysis of a questionnaire responded to by all King School staff; and case studies of the academic performance of each of the plaintiff children. As a result of this evaluation as well as our own "gut" feelings, many of us concluded that the in-service program had been quite useful in helping us to better understand and help the speaker of the BVE who was an under-achiever. We also concluded that the "court-ordered" attempts to assess student progress in light of the in-service program were premature and inconclusive. Finally, we confirmed what we had sensed all along: That, like any group of learners, there were individual differences among us participants with respect to the in-service program, its content, and its application. Some participants were already knowledgeable and enlightened. Others acknowledged a need to learn more. Some were prevented from learning by their own linguistic and cultural attitudes. Still others who had been stung deeply by the accusatory tone of the lawsuit and court trial viewed the whole in-service drama as punishment and were not equipped to learn effectively.

As a result of that evaluation, the central administrative team in the autumn of 1980 recommended that all professional staff, but especially those who teach the language arts, be encouraged to receive in-service training comparable to that received by the King School staff. To that end, the Director of Language Arts for the Ann Arbor Public Schools and his staff were directed to develop during the 1980-81 school year a set of instructional modules that can be used by each school to effectively study the issues and concepts raised in the King in-service program. Implementation will begin in October of 1981, hopefully as part of what can be a larger in-service effort in our school district to improve educational opportunity and to implement the "effective school" research findings currently receiving national attention.

Some Reactions

The insights gleaned from the in-service program and, more generally, from the entire dramatic episode are many and diverse. However, among them are four observations that stand out in my mind from all the rest. Let me conclude by sharing them briefly with you.

(1) In the final analysis there is no evidence that the agony of the under-achieving low-income, black students is a univariate problem. The linguistic and socio-linguistic issues raised in the law suit can make an important contribution to our search for answers to the under-achievement of students. However, they are not "lynch-pin" issues; attention to them alone will not suddenly dissolve the agony of black students' under-achievement. Disproportionate attention to or commitment of resources to the issue of the language barrier to the exclusion of other equally important alterable variables would be tragic and undeserving of the public trust we all hold. We have a multi-variate problem for which we must seek multi-variate solutions; hunting for panaceas is no longer fashionable and should never have been. The rhetoric during and after the lawsuit has failed to recognize this critical reality.

(2) Contemporary scholarship suggests that the dominant issues surrounding school-based learning for a child who speaks BVE may be socio-linguistic rather than linguistic. There is little concrete evidence that anything inherent in the linguistic process of moving from BVE to standard English or back again is inhibiting to the process of learning to read. There is some evidence that unwitting but well-meaning educators, by their attitudes toward non-standard language and by their ignorance of dialect variations such as BVE, may contribute to what is really a learning barrier, not a language barrier. If as teachers we unconsciously accept the prevailing societal view that non-standard dialects are inferior and that they are symptomatic of other inferior features and characteristics in people, and, moreover, if we communicate that belief to our students who speak those dialects, then we may contribute to the under-achievement of those students. If we associate Black Vernacular English with a reduced intellectual capacity, with laziness, with slowness, or with learning problems, and if we communicate those attitudes to black students in a variety of subtle ways, we have become part of the very problem we are conscientiously trying to resolve. All this is by way of suggesting that for *all* educators, a view of language and language development based on contemporary scholarship is important, even though it is not the only variable.

(3) Our in-service program set out to help all of us, teachers and administrators, examine and modify, as necessary, our attitudes toward language as a social phenomenon. In retrospect that was probably a mistake. Any kind of self-examination of attitudes and values is risky and threatening. To examine our attitudes toward language, and more particularly toward non-standard dialects under the accusatory pressures of a nationally highlighted lawsuit is totally unrealistic. Issues can be more profitably examined in the framework of teacher classroom behavior rather than attitude. If certain teacher classroom behaviors with respect to students' language patterns evoke certain responses from students that reduce learning, then we should spend our time apprising teachers of what those behaviors are and ask them to avoid those behaviors. We are not asking teachers to change an attitude; we are asking them to examine and, if necessary, change a behavior. In a sense we are saying irrespective of what you believe about language and non-standard dialect, it is in the best interest of *all* your students

to avoid those teaching behaviors and foster these." We say that, knowing full well that as people modify their behavior, their attitudes cannot help but follow.

(4) Finally, as the controversies swirled around me, I could not help but be concerned by the prevailing attitudes toward language and dialect that emanated from the media, from other educators, and from the larger society. Some observers of the case to this day will insist that we were teaching teachers to speak BVE so that they could communicate better with BVE speakers and provide instruction in BVE. Even though we vehemently denied these assertions repeatedly, the misunderstanding persists. I was amazed to find some educated people who openly placed moral judgments and values on BVE as a dialect and others who openly felt that learning to communicate in standard English was not important. There were even a few from across the country who, in their written communications to us, strongly implied that anyone who "spoke that Black English" was inferior, ignorant, and illiterate. If these are widespread attitudes about language and its function in our society today (and I believe they are), then we who educate have failed our students and our society more generally. But where will the leadership to move our society toward an enlightened view of language and dialect come from if not from those of us who educate? Maybe we need a new beginning.

A Model for Designing And Revising Assignments

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In one of the English Composition Board's first seminars on the teaching of writing, a faculty member explained with frustration, "I've been giving this assignment for five years, and my students still haven't gotten it right!"

Why did class after class — student after student — keep getting the assignment wrong? When we, the faculty member's colleagues, looked at his assignment, we realized we wouldn't have known how to "get it right" either. While he was clear in his own mind about what he wanted, his written assignment failed to convey those expectations to his students or us: unintentionally, he'd been getting what he asked for. His experience caused us to re-examine our own assignments which had failed to elicit writings we expected from our students.

In order to understand the assignment-making process better, we began to think about assignments as acts of communication between teacher and student. Our thinking led us to ask ourselves important questions: To what extent do students fail at writing assignments because we, their instructors, fail to communicate our expectations to them effectively? Are there criteria we can use both to evaluate our assignments and to revise them for greater effectiveness?

As we began to examine the assignment-making process with faculty and teaching assistants in writing courses across the curriculum, we saw that every assignment presents students not only with a complex set of demands but also with a series of opportunities to which they may respond — with explicit decisions or, as often happens, with unexamined assumptions. In order to make the assignment-making process a more explicit activity for us and for our students, we developed a systematic description of the elements of writing assignments as a basis (1) for revising our current assignments and (2) for designing new ones. We believe that as instructors make their expectations clearer to students, students' chances to succeed at assignments are increased significantly.

Goals for Writing Tasks

We see three conceivable goals, singly or in combination, for any writing assignment. One goal is **discovery:** Students are asked to write in order to clarify their ideas or feelings, uncover new information, integrate new material, understand a process or relationship, or in some other way generate new learning. Journals and other ungraded work commonly occasion this sort of writing-to-learn, but this goal may also be primary in more formal assignments.

A second goal is **communication:** The task for students here is to organize and present their ideas or feelings appropriately and effectively for specific readers, either real or hypothetical. With this goal in mind, the instructor will specify elements of the students' rhetorical stance — perhaps creating for them a hypothetical persona, situation and purpose, perhaps aiming drafts of their writing at the real audience of their peers. The case study, which analyzes a situation and recommends a course of action to a real or hypothetical audience, is an excellent example of an assignment focussing the student on the act of communication.

The third goal — and the one students are most apt to assume unless there is explicit discussion between instructor and student to counteract that assumption — is **performance.** Students are keenly aware of this "hoop-jumping" aspect of assignments, and their anxiety about performance may block both discovey and communication. They may define performance in superficial ways — attempting simply to show that they did the readings, or to show control over surface errors while producing a shallow empty text — or anxiety about performance may also reach to the core of the writing task. Students trying wholeheartedly to engage their material may feel blocked by awareness that their writing will be judged by readers more expert than they. Writing to what James Britton calls the "teacher-as-examiner" is a task unlike any found in the world outside of school: Students are expected to write as if they were experts writing to peers, while in fact they are novices trying to impress experts. Convinced of the implausibility of discovering and communicating ideas new to an expert reader, the student most often hopes to merely impress the expert instructor by avoiding error.

Instructors may alleviate these problems in at least four ways:

(1) *by defining some writing tasks as private writing, outside the range of evaluation,*

(2) *by setting up writing tasks which allow students to generate information that is in fact new to the instructors,*

(3) *by directing students writing to an either real or realistic audience other than the teacher, and*

(4) *by evaluating students' success explicity in terms of their discovery or communication.*

Even as instructors alleviate students' problems by carefully defining the purposes of assignments, they must vary the criteria with which they evaluate those assignments; for example, if an assignment generates a series of leading

questions about relevant topics, or if it conveys a particular view of the course material, to an appropriate audience, the student writer can be said to have performed well on the assignment.

Product
While instructors often remain silent about their goals in a given assignment and about the rhetorical stance those goals may entail, they almost always specify some of the features they want in a final product: "Compare and contrast X and Y in 3-5 pages," "Examine the causes of A," or "Discuss the use of P and Q in the work of Z." And so on. Like a contractor's specifications for a bridge or highway, these specifications tell student writers what the finished product must contain or must be able to do. "Compare and contrast X and Y" directs decisions about subject (which must be comparison/contrast). In addition, this example gives minimum and maximum lengths for the product (3-5 pages). Such an assignment expresses the instructor's desire for the students to master a particular method of organization or body of material, and it also enables the instructors, in evaluating performance, to measure a given paper against an ideal three-to-five-page comparison and contrast of X and Y.

Process
Such an assignment does not tell students how to develop that written product. The benefits of a carefully crafted assignment may be lost by students who dash off their papers later in the night before they are due, making only a few typographical changes in the first draft. Help in development may come through the processes the assignment specifies — the activities the students must complete as they work on their papers. Specified processes might include pre-draft conferences, outlines, preliminary thesis statements, group discussions, or required revisions. If students are required to submit a first draft, either to instructors or to peer readers, and then to make substantial revisions of those drafts, they must reflect upon their ideas as well as the form they have given those ideas. Specifying processes such as these in an assignment requires that students abandon the quickly-written "first-draft paper" in favor of the more carefully developed one.

Revising and Designing Assignments
Whether or not instructors speak to each of these elements of an assignment, students must make decisions or act on assumptions about them all. They must envision a goal or purpose for writing (often performance) and a rhetorical situation (often that of novice trying to impress expert reader — a difficult situation in which to perform); they must decide on subject and structure (often these elements are determined by the teacher, at least in broad terms); and they must use some process to create the paper (too often combining the techniques of avoidance, of staring blankly at an empty page, and of filling up the blank page with last-minute desperation). Considering the decisions students must make, the instructor may want to revise assignments to guide those decisions more carefully — not necessarily

by specifying every element, but so as to make clear which aspects of this complex interchange are fixed by the instructor and which are left open for students to decide.

The instructor may choose to design a sequence of assignments which, throughout the term, systematically vary the elements about which students must decide. One such sequence might move from teacher control to student control. Initial assignments might be tightly structured by the teacher, with purpose and rhetorical situation specified, subject and structure defined, and check-points built into the pre-writing, drafting, and revision of a paper. Such assignments would make students aware of the elements with which they must deal and would demonstrate both the freedom and the constraints implicit in those elements. Later assignments might progressively turn over to students more and more decisions about a writing task. The final assignment in the sequence might require students to devise a rhetorical situation and purpose. To specify a subject and a process of composing, and then to meet the requirements that those specifications demand of them.

Alternate sequences of assignments might be designed around other models of development. Richard Larson suggested at CCCC, in March, 1981, that an assignment sequence should move students from the private and concrete to the public and abstract. The journal assignment below, taken from the writing course that one of us teaches on the Vietnam War, represents private and personal concrete writing that would be most appropriate at the beginning of such a sequence:

Divide your journal into three sections, the first of which is your reading log. Draw a line down the middle of each page of the reading log; label the left column "Passage" and the right column "Response." As you read the assigned readings, use the left column to describe any passages which puzzle you, intrigue you, anger you, or elicit some other response from you. Use the right column to set that response down.

The second section is your writer's sketchbook. Use it for any informal writing you do in class, and for times outside of class when you want to reflect on the discussions or readings and their connections to your experience. Ideas you set down in your sketchbook may be beginning points for more formal writing you do in the course. I will read material from this section only if you ask me to do so.

The third section is for letters. Each week I expect you to write me a letter at least a page long about your involvement in the course; each week I will write a letter in response to yours. You can use your weekly letter to discuss the issues of the course, to discuss problems in a paper you're working on, to suggest changes in the class, and of course to respond to issues I raise in my letters to you. This letter exchange is one way for us to extend discussion between us beyond what our time in class allows.

The final assignment in this course on the Vietnam War is a research paper — developed through draft and revision — whose real audience is both other students in the course and students who will take the course the following year. Whereas the journal writing is personal and concrete, the research paper is aimed at a public not fully known to the student writers, and it demands that they answer a research question by constructing an argument — by supporting generalizations with concrete evidence. Specified processes vary as students move through the assignments in this sequence.

It is of course essential that each instructor evaluate student work in accordance with what assignments require. In those areas where assignments are most specific, instructors should indeed ascertain students' ability to meet expectations. But instructors must also recognize that areas left open for students' decisions may pose more complex problems and may lead to unanticipated choices. The entire interchange — from the instructor's first speaking or writing the assignment to the students' finally submitting the finished product — is a process wherein teachers and students together can negotiate the assignment's meaning. The more clarity that instructors can bring to this process of negotiation, the more able students will be to form a personally meaningful conception of the assignment and its potential.

Write Write

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Teachers who have participated in in-service seminars conducted by the ECB in schools throughout Michigan have often expressed their desire for materials which appropriately describe **writing as a process.** Although instructional materials about writing abound, such materials usually do not portray writing as a process; instead, they approach writing as an activity in which students create "correct" forms out of script that somehow already exists. These instructional materials — both printed and visual — teach students that good writing is an exercise in "correcting," not composing. In reality, however, teachers note that effective writing begins with students' desire to communicate their ideas. Rules for improving or correcting writing become useful at the final stages of writing — the stages when students are editing and proofreading their texts. While rules governing "correct" forms in writing are important, they are only one of many parts of the process of composition.

Many teachers having asked me for information about materials which demonstrate the composing as well as the correcting processes of writing, I applied to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) for a grant to produce an animated film entitled *Write Write*, a film that would illustrate the process in which writers engage as they compose for a purpose which is important to them.

Why use film to help students learn about Writing?

First, reports of some teachers who have studied student writers had led me to believe that students need to see why some composing behaviors are effective and others are not effective. Similarly, if student writers are able to see images of successful writers composing, students might have models of behavior to emulate. If student writers are able to see unsuccessful writers stuck in their tracks they might be able to identify how they got into their difficulties. Vivid examples of what makes writing work in specific situations and what sends it awry in other situations can be powerful tools for teaching. Because it establishes both sequence and situation as it presents content, film is a natural medium for providing illustrations of how both successful and unsuccessful composing processes unfold.

A second reason for the use of visual media to teach good composing strategies is based on recent research into the effects of television on viewers' systems of processing information: viewers tend to process photography, film, and television as if it were lifelike. Research conducted by Gerbner (1977) indicates that visual media exert a powerful influence upon viewers' beliefs about events. In fact, Gerbner shows that televised accounts of events have a greater impact on beliefs than do either personal experience or non-cinematic sources of knowledge. Perhaps film, unlike

Write Write in production: Tom Bray, Barbra Morris, Susan Le Van

any other medium, can persuade students to think again about their own composing strategies and to rethink questions of reader expectations as well. Film can construct a complete communication situation for the viewer: the writer, the text, and the reader can come alive individually and in relationship to one another.

Write Write was designed to emphasize some of the challenges writers must face: not only how they must order their composing tasks during writing, but also how they can identify the expectations readers bring to their writing. In *Write Write*, an imaginary family of line people live on a gourmet word farm on the island of Here. They must communicate with the world of There, inhabited by clay blocks who use computers to solve their daily problems. When a freak snow storm paralyzes the island of the Line People, they compose a letter. Elaborately written, this letter is misunderstood by the Blocks, who remain unaware of the real needs of the Lines. A Bridge Character, who has lived in both domains, helps the Lines make their letter readable to the Blocks, who then rush immediately to the rescue.

The Line People's intention — to relate their plight to a distant unfamiliar audience — mirrors a situation faced by most writers at one time or another. As the film demonstrates, writers can fail to communicate with readers because the writers have failed to understand the expectations and needs of their audience; readers who do not understand texts do not respond to them as their writers hope they will.

Formative Evaluation

The Research Coordinator for *Write Write*, Renee Hobbs, learned that instructional materials for use in schools are often produced without advice from teachers and consequently fail to be genuinely useful. We have sought teachers' advice during all production stages of *Write Write*; formative evaluation has been on-going since the FIPSE grant was awarded in September of 1980. A final phase of this formative evaluation was distribution and analysis of a survey questionnaire completed by many participants at the ECB Workshops and **Conference on Literacy in the 1980's** held in Ann Arbor in June. Teachers urged that instructional media dealing with topics of organization and audience analysis be produced.

The *Write Write* film is scheduled to be ready for distribution by Winter, 1982. I hope to conduct further research into the usefulness of *Write Write* in different educational settings, for different student audiences, and with different techniques for teaching. It is my hope that *Write Write* will yield insight into the value of giving students filmed dramatizations of composing processes that may figure in their success as writers.
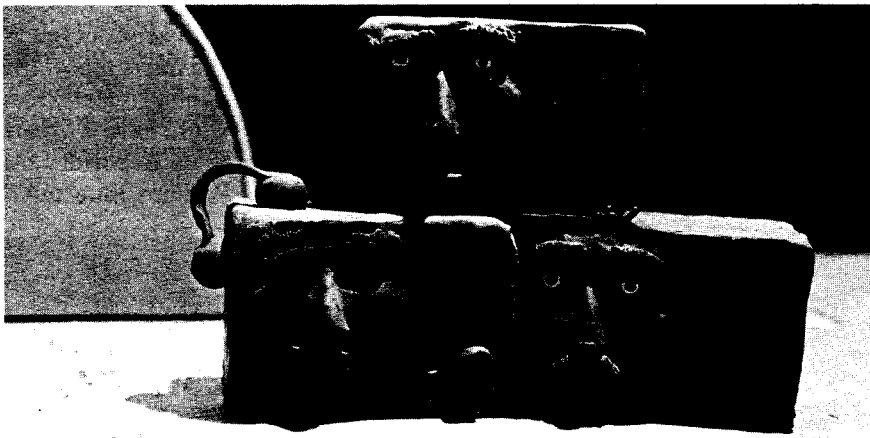
Clay Blocks by Michael Frierson and Martha Garrett

Line Drawing by Susan Le Van

Resources in the Teaching of Composition

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The Composing Process

Central to current theories about writing is a belief that student writing needs to be helped during the process rather than simply to be judged by the product. Since Janet Emig's ground-breaking case study in 1971, studies of the composing process have been conducted by numerous researchers and the results made available in professional journals and meetings. The following is a select checklist of past studies which offer some insights into what our students go through when they write and how we might help them.

Beach, Richard, "Self-Evaluation Strategies of Extensive Revisers and Non-Revisers," *College Composition and Communication,* 27 (May, 1976), 160-164.

Davis, Vivian, "Toward a Model of the Composing Process," *Arizona English Bulletin,* 19 (October, 1976), 13-16.

Emig, Janet, "The Biology of Writing: Another View of the Process," in *The Writing Processes of Students,* (Ed.) Walter T. Petty, ERIC ED 165-155.

——————————, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1971.

——————————, "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Composing Process," in *Research on Composing,* (Ed.) Charles R. Cooper & Lee Odell , Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1978

Flower, Linda S., and John R. Hayes, "Problem-Solving Strategies and the Writing Process," *College English,* 39 (December, 1977), 449-461.

Graves, Donald H. "An Examination of the Writing Processes of Seven-Year-Old Children," *Research in the Teaching of English,* 9 (Winter, 1975), 227-241.

Graves, Richard L., "Levels of Skill in the Composing Process," *College Composition and Communication,* 29 (October, 1978), 227-232.

Perl, Sondra, "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers," *Research in the Teaching of English,* 13 (December, 1979), 317-336.

Pianko, Sharon, "A Discription of the Composing Processes of College Freshman Writers," *Research in the Teaching of English,* 13 (February, 1979), 5-22.

Reviewing Recent Publications

Professional journals continue to provide lively debate over issues in composition teaching even as they keep us up-to-date on research into writing. The following list selects articles easily accessible to most of us dealing with issues pertinent to the teaching of writing. Many of the issues have appeared on the pages of *fforum*; these articles serve primarily as touch-stones — other articles of interest can also be found along with these.

Articles on Composing

Knoblauch, C.H. "Intentionality in the Writing Process: A Case Study," *CCC,* 31 (May, 1980), 153-159.

Perl, Sondra, "Understanding Composing," *CCC,* 31 (December, 1980), 363-369.

Rose, Mike, "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block," *CCC,* 31 (December, 1980), 389-399.

Sommers, Nancy, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," *CCC,* 31 (December, 1980), 378-388.

Sullivan, Patricia A. "Teaching the Writing Process in Scientific and Technical Writing Classes," *The Technical Writing Teacher,* 8 (Fall, 1980) 10-16.

Articles on Writing Across the Curriculum

The Forum for Liberal Education. 3 (April 1981), 6.
The issue is devoted to "Comprehensive Writing Programs" and includes an article by Harvey Wiener, "Administering Comprehensive Writing Programs Within Liberal Education," and descriptions of interdisciplinary writing programs around the country, including the programs at the University of Michigan and Michigan Tech.

"Forum. Writing Across the Curriculum," *WPA: Writing Program Administration,* 4 (Spring, 1981), 3, pp. 9-22.

Fulwiler, Toby, "Journals Across the Disciplines," *English Journal,* 69 (December, 1980), 9, pp. 14-19.

——————————— "Showing, Not Telling, at a Writing Workshop," *College English,* 43 (January 1981), 55-63.

Herrington, Anne J., "Writing to Learn: Writing Across the Disciplines," *College English,* 43 (April, 1981), 379-388.

Articles on Evaluation

Elridge, Richard, "Grading in the 70s: How We Changed," *College English,* 43 (January, 1981), 64-68.

Gere, Anne Ruggles, "Written Composition: Toward a Theory of Evaluation," *College English,* 42 (September, 1980), 44-58.

Odell, Lee & Charles R. Cooper, "Procedures for Evaluating Writing: Assumptions and Needed Research," *College English,* 42 (September, 1980), 35-43.

Articles on Tests

Bell, Barbara Currier, "Choosing a Reference Book for Writing," *CCC,* 32 (February, 1981), 38-46.

Dowie, William, "Rating Your Rhetoric Text," *CCC,* 32 (February, 1981), 47-56.

Rose, Mike, "Sophisticated, Ineffective Books — The Dismantling of Process in Composition Texts," *CCC,* 32 (February, 1981), 65-74.

Woods, William F. "Composition Textbooks and Pedagogical Theory 1960-80: A Review-essay," *College English,* 43 (April, 1981), 393-409.

Articles on Pedagogy

"Forum, Faculty Development in Composition," *WPA: Writing Program Administration,* 4 (Winter, 1980), 2, pp. 7-22.

Excerpts from three papers on the subject and two complete papers, "Faculty Indifference to Writing: A Pessimistic View" by Richard Marius and "Faculty Development Through Professional Collaboration" by Robert Lyons.

Gebhardt, Richard, "Teamwork and Feedback: Broadening the Base of Collaborative Writing," *College English,* 42 (September, 1980), 69-74.

Jenkins, Cheryl Sandford, "The Writing Assignment: An Obstacle or Vehicle?" *English Journal,* 69 (December, 1980), 9, pp. 66-69.

Kantor, Kenneth J. "Research in Composition: What It Means for Teachers," *English Journal,* 70 (February, 1981), 2, pp. 64-67.

Schiff, Peter M. "But They Make Me Use That Grammar Text!" *English Journal,* 69 (December, 1980), 9, pp. 23-25.

Ylvisaker, Miriam, "Writing Workshop: A Fantasy at Reality Level," *English Journal,* 69 (December, 1980), 9, pp. 70-75.

Literacy in the 1980's Revisited

Workshop I

Where's Lee Odell?

On Sunday, 21 June 1981, 165 teachers from 68 high schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities in 17 states and the District of Columbia began arriving in Ann Arbor as guests of the ECB. They came to study theories of teaching writing as well as methods and materials proven successful in that teaching. Participants began their work with an intensely focussed Workshop experience from Sunday evening through Wednesday afternoon: In small and large-group sessions they studied with Workshop leaders; in plenary and special sessions, they learned about ECB programs and practices and in organized and impromptu gatherings, they exchanged their back-home preoccupations.
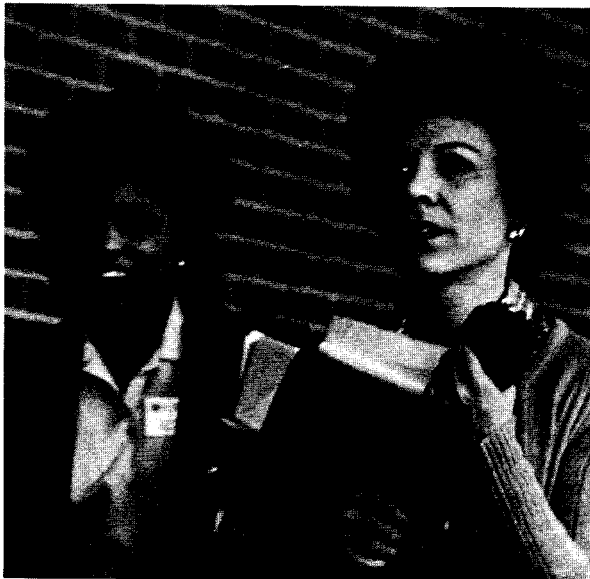
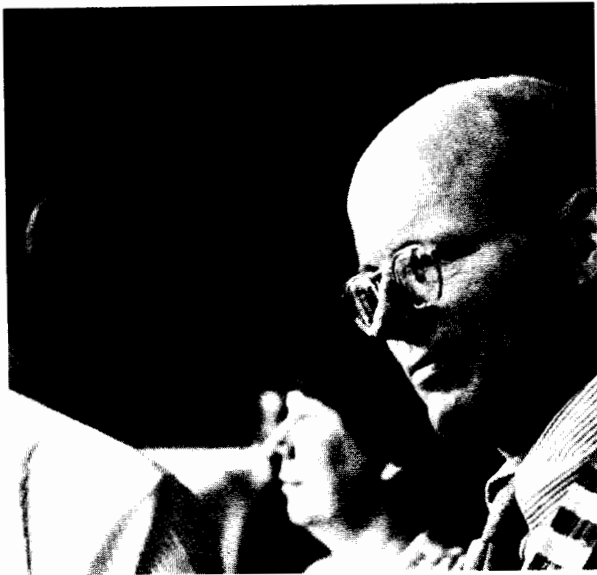*I think I hear my inner voice.*

This is the latest, revised up-to-date agenda.

I doubt it.

Is Walter Ong there?

Friendly overlap.

Does anyone know how to run the overhead projector?

Pipes and whistles in their sounds.

Eating it up.