DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 081 006 CS 200 660

AUTHOR Wimer, Frances N., Ed.
TITLE Focus: The Communication Arts. Virginia English Bulletin.
INSTITUTION Virginia Association of Teachers of English.
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 52p.
JOURNAL CIT Virginia English Bulletin; v23 n1 p7-55 Spring 1973

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Adolescent Literature; American Studies; *Communication (Thought Transfer); Composition (Literary); Curriculum Design; Editorials; *English Instruction; Independent Study; Instructional Television; Literature; Nonverbal Communication; Performance Contracts; *Periodicals; *Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the communication arts, the articles in this volume include "Communication: The Echo in the Lives of Your Students"; "Communication through Interacting Curriculum Design"; "American Studies Provide Opportunity for Communication"; "Humanities-Oriented Independent Study"; "Composing for Real"; "The Editorial: A Teaching Device for Writing"; "Communication and Nonverbal Behavior"; "Improvisations and the Teaching of English"; "Adolescent Literature: Once More to the Defense"; "Instructional Television: Vital Communication Media"; and "Contingency Contracting in English." (HOD)

VOLUME XXIII • NUMBER 1 • SPRING 1973

Virginia English Bulletin

FOCUS:

THE COMMUNICATION ARTS

Virginia Association of Teachers of English

Virginia English Bulletin

VOLUME XXIII, NUMBER 1 SPRING 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE COMMUNICATION ARTS

Articles are invited and should be submitted to the editor. Manuscripts should be typewritten and double-spaced. When possible, footnoted material should be incorporated within the article. Deadlines for copy are October 15 and February 15.

MEMBER OF THE NCTE EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

Virginia English Bulletin

Published two times a year in December and April by the Virginia Association of Teachers of English, an Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English and a Department of the Virginia Education Association. Subscription is included in the annual membership dues of $2.00; non-member rate for institutions and individuals is the same. Single copies are $1.00.

EDITORIAL OFFICE: MRS. FRANCES N. WIMER, *Editor.*

BUSINESS OFFICE: MR. FOSTER B. GRESHAM, *Executive Secretary; Department of English, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia 23901.*

In this decade of the open classroom, interdisciplinary team teaching, instructional television, non-graded instruction, and student-centered curriculum, the label "English" has been broadened into "Communication Arts." It means expanding into the world of language as it is conveyed through all the communication arts, expanding content so that it includes not only the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening but also dance, painting, filmmaking, sound essays, photo essays, and other areas which involve language—silent, written, and spoken. English teachers, consequently, are becoming increasingly aware that there are many ways of communicating, both verbal and nonverbal, and that a broadening of concepts must take place in their classrooms.

Communication: The Echo in the Lives of Your Students

DR. GEORGE L. WHITE

Teacher, Editor, Author, Consultant in English and Acting President, Center for the Study of Instruction

Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., San Francisco, California

Teaching is an act of compassion, a distinctly human act. "You tell it like it never was, man, and maybe we can see it like it is." (A line from Edward Lueder's poem, "Your Poem, Man.") It is not very far fetched to put this line along side of Emerson's description of the way of the scholar, in his "The American Scholar." Here is the thought: "The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went from him poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing."

Erik Erikson has always been right: "To teach is to offer a vision of a better life than the one lived by the student." And Archibald MacLeish has made it clear that the teacher's role "is to commit our students to the human experience, to the end that they will see the choices of their lives as will choose." (This is condensed from his essay, "The Teacher's Faith," published in his collection, *A Continuing Journey*.)

The thrust of teaching is a reaching out, a grabbing and sharing of the moment, before the revelation is lost. Always the teacher strives to bring his words beyond their own sound, to have them communicate as echo in the lives of the students.

Is the purpose of your existence to alter the world so new experiences can be created, or is it to alter yourself so that you may receive new perceptions from what is already present in the world? The heart of your

teaching is in your answer. (See Kenneth Keniston's book *The Uncommitted* for an excellent statement on this idea.)

Every teacher who walks into a classroom today faces problems some articulate, other inarticulate. The inarticulate ones sometimes control the climate of the class, just as surely as the laws of biology control the growth of the individuals. The haunting problem of over-population is felt every day. The world doubles its population every thirty years. Whether the student is aware of this fact or not, this happens. Today there are just over three billion of us on this planet; by the year 2000 there will be six and one half billion of us, occupying the same space. When the students in your high school classes are in their early forties they will be a part of this inescapable fact. When they will be in their sixties they will be among four hundred million Americans. Twice as many people will be available for jobs or social security, twice as many people will be seeking fresh air, green country, privacy.

Daily your class faces the problem of the destruction of our environment. In our national drive to destroy the soil, pollute the waters, smog the air, deplete all our resources, natural and human, we are well on the way to making the earth uninhabitable for man. And your students live with this dread thought every day. If you are a cynic, you will make the comment: "Why bother, brother? If the population increases, as you say it will, and the destruction of our environment continues at its present rate, by the year 2025 the earth will not be able to support life; the problem is academic." (Pun intended.)

The most disturbing problem to your students is this: the world they live in does not seem to be deeply concerned about human life. Of course they mention the poverty that exists everywhere; the hunger, the lack of good housing, the fact that thousands of American children go to school hungry, and because they are, become unteachable. But they also mention the fact that it is our country that keeps depositing atomic wastes in the ocean, letting loose gases that kill animal life for miles around, setting off nuclear missiles that churn the atmosphere. These inhuman acts—to them—make the profile of the society they have to grow up in an ugly mask, inhuman and dread.

It is hard to meet the problem of why we are depleting our energy sources. Why, student's ask, do we keep living off the future? Everyone knows that by the year 2000 our consumption of energy will be five times what it is now. Everyone knows that it costs us twenty billion dollars a year now to buy the oil we need to run our present machines. By 1985—one year beyond the Orwell magic number—we will have to import 50% of the oil we need. From where, at what cost? Shouldn't—the young keep asking—we begin to think whether we aren't paying too much for our electronic whistle?

But it is the war between two well-defined social theories that bothers the young the most. (For an excellent summary of this war of differing points of view about the future, see Philip Slater's powerful little book,

The Pursuit of Loneliness.) One theory stresses our ever-expanding social-industrial society. America, they say, is moving from technology to technetronics. Automation, high productivity, the demand for enormously well-educated leaders are the signs of this growth. Power will be in the hands of those who possess educational capital, not economic capital. This educational capital rests in how well man handles the machines, not in how well he handles his own life. The present day schools with their interest in humanistic learning do not seem capable of training the leaders we need for this future.

The counter theory, largely supported by technically untrained people, by people whose interest and talents lie in the arts, the humanities and the pure sciences, says the world will fall apart if we keep pursuing the theory of the welfare-warfare industrial progress state. What we need, they say, is a new life, new values, new aspirations, a new culture.

Your teaching problem is clear: where can you find the power, the experience, the awareness of humanity you must have to work with the young on these problems? In my opinion you can get such power only in the humanities, in the "things" of art, drama, music, literature, and the dance that best describe the human qualities that make life important. It is no surprise that the young people in your class respond to a singer, a voice that has something to say. They cannot take part in a society as verbal as ours without having words and music and ideas. Will you be the singer needed? Or will the singer be the Lorelei, Mick Jagger, the Beatles, marijuana, the open road, or the gun and the bomb?

By the "things" that describe humaness I mean the feelings, thoughts, actions that lead us to the basic discoveries of our own individual selves. They are roads that invite us to discover, define, and, therefore, possess our own experience. They are the roads that invite us to enjoy, understand, and, therefore, possess what the psalmist meant when he said that man had been made but a little lower than the angels. Some of the roads—the road of language, the road of physical pleasure in personal expression and sports, and the road of strong musical feelings—are main-traveled roads in our society. We recognize the "things" we encounter on these roads. Other roads—the road of motor and aesthetic movement, the road of symbolic meaning in art and sculpture, and the road of ethical and psychological role-playing are new to us. We have traveled them only a little; the "things" we encounter on them are strange to us.

What do we do about all this? Frye keeps insisting that we should keep the sense of "urgent necessity about learning to read and write", that it should never drop out of the teaching of literature. "We cannot take any part in a society as verbal as ours," he writes, "without knowing how to read and write: but, unless we also learn to read continuously, selectively, and critically, and to write articulately, we can never take any free or independent part in that society." (See his essay, "On Teaching Literature.") But the same sense of urgent necessity about learning to dance, and paint, and do music, and dramatize must never be dropped

from our teaching. We must move heaven and earth to communicate with the young about the pleasures and powers that can be discovered in all the arts. It is this eternal diligence that we put to motivational use their total verbal, physical, and mental experience. Every classroom is packed with the dreams, the ideals, the pains and frustrations, the determinations and beliefs of the young. It is these that we should move through the great expressions of man to give the students examples, to give them courage that someone else had the same kinds of feeling and ideas.

Now what has our teaching dialogue been about so far? Reading? Teaching English? Yes, but not just these things. We have been asking over and over, "What and how do I communicate with students? How do I get them involved in ideas and feelings? How do I get them to use their imaginations. How do I get them to sketch the outlines of their own imaginative worlds?"

I return to Northrop Frye because he has been so helpful in wording the ideas we have. "In literature we discover the world that our imaginations have already constructed. When poets and story-tellers talk about the cycles of human life, about the beginning of things long ago, or about wish and nightmare, they are using the same set of building blocks that we use ourselves, from infancy to old age. What we discover in the poets we recognize as what we already know, but we can never know that we know it without them . . . When we read poets who want nothing from us except a response to something we already have, we see that the imagination is not to be learned from the outside; it is something to be released from the inside." (Introduction to Frye's, *Uses of the Imagination*) Since every work of literature has a context within literature, it lights up a specific corner or area of our imaginative experience. And so the study of literature provides the student with a plan of organization for his own experience. (Ibid.)

The young find it difficult to put their imagination into words, so do all of us. Muteness is caused more by restrictive thinking nurtured by restrictive living than it is by shyness or lack of distinct instruction. Some of the muteness can be cured by reading and listening and by discussion. Reading gives the student a voice, just as music does, just as the dance does. Reading gives the student ideas, a pattern of expression. Casual and purposeful class discussion gives the student practice in getting "right" what he wants to say. Reading gives the student a plan to use for ordering his random experiences. Discussion gives the student an arena to defend his reason for being.

Stephen Crane wrote an article on the mules who live in the depths of coal mines. Because the comparison between what happens to the mules once they see daylight and what happens to students who, under good teaching, once read and have the chance to communicate what they think about what they have read, is very apt, I use this quote: "Usually when brought to the surface, the mules tremble at the earth radiant in the sunshine. Later, they go almost mad with fantastic joy.

The full splendor of the heavens, the grass, the trees, the breezes, breaks upon them suddenly. They caper and career with extravagant mulish glee . . . After being long in the mines, the mules are apt to duck and dodge at the close glare of lamps, but some of them have been known to have piteous fears of being left in the dead darkness. We met a boy who said that sometimes the only way he could get his team to move was to run ahead of them with the light. Afraid of the darkness, they would follow. To those who have known the sunlight there may come the fragrant dream of a lost paradise." (See a reprint of this article in *Circle of Stories: Two by* Alvin A. Lee and Hope A. Lee.)

Motivation for reading, thinking, and discussion can come from many sources so long as the response requested of the reader is a genuine one and so long as the teacher invites of each member of the class his response, his evaluation.

There is also great motivation in the read-to-become approach. Here's a part of John Brown's speech when he was taken prisoner: . . . "I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, as I have always freely admitted I have done, in behalf of His despised poor, I did no wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done." To emulate, to become the person admired, to take on some of his courage, is a worthy motive for reading. Emerson was not saying something very different when he wrote: "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles."

The power of a living experience, one not usually the subject of literature, is also a powerful stimulation to showing students the need they have to participate in some one else's life. Here's a favorite quotation of mine from Dick Gregory's essay, "Not Poor, Just Broke": "The teacher thought I was stupid. Couldn't spell, couldn't read, couldn't do arithmetic. Just stupid. Teachers were never interested in finding out that you couldn't concentrate because you were so hungry, because you hadn't had any breakfast. All you could think about was noontime. Would it ever come? Maybe you could sneak into the cloakroom and steal a bite of some kid's lunch out of a coat pocket. A bite of something. Paste. You can't really make a meal of paste, or put it in bread for a sandwich, but sometimes I'd scoop a few spoonfuls out of the paste jar in the back of the room. Pregnant people get strange tastes. I was pregnant with poverty; pregnant with dirt and pregnant with smells that made people turn away, pregnant with cold and pregnant with shoes that were never bought for me, pregnant with five other people in my bed and no Daddy in the next room, and pregnant with hunger. Paste doesn't taste too bad when you're hungry."

The point of much of this is that it is in the presentation of this kind

of experience in literature that the teacher becomes an identifiable object in the world of youth. Youth, as Erik Erikson said, must experience both fidelity and diversity. The experience of fidelity will be felt in your class when you present true experiences that students know are true. Why are the soul singers, James Brown, Al Green, the late Otis Redding, so popular with some of the young? Why is religious rock so well liked? Why are the sad, thoughtful lyrics of today's singers so memorized? Because these artists seem to express the experience of many young people, and present them faithfully. And when the teacher confirms that such moderns have something important to say, something worth talking about in class, then the teacher becomes an identifiable, necessary force in the daily cultural lives of the students.

There is a lot of talk about making the teaching of literature and the arts and reading relevant to the student. I never quite know what this means. It certainly does not mean being able to put a subject across to a class. All that takes is a ham actor. Nor does it seem to mean knowing class psychology well enough to identify the personal problems that youth has. To be relevant to the young today has to mean to be able to understand both the present world of the young and the past world out of which they came and yet to keep poised in that enviable position of being able to look at both with good objectivity. No teacher can bridge the generation gap and keep his own authority. When the teacher loses the authority of his own personality as a teacher, he loses the bone and muscle of his own humanness. It is not important for the teacher to get excited about all the groups, individuals, music, dancing, recordings, actions that the students get excited about. It is only the fool who pretends such excitement. But it is important for the teacher to respect the changing opinions of his students. He does not down-grade their tastes. But, at the same time, he does not want his tastes down-graded. He wants his students to respect his opinions. By such mutual confidence of what both like and dislike, by such sharing of tastes, the class and the teacher will be able to build a solid means of direct communication.

It is contact with the significant that helps a student to grow up to be significant. I believe that if the teacher offers the young many kinds of rich materials, all of which help them to form new values, to find new approaches to the needs and problems of society, to discover the new concepts about themselves that will make them feel significant in their world, then communication is easy.

Let me end this dialogue with a short tour through a single literary theme, just to demonstrate how, as teachers, we can move in and out of the present and the past and take our students with us. The word "love" seems to be on the lips of everyone today. It is a favorite of the young. Take any motivation you wish: "Love Me, Baby, Baby", or the plaintive cry from "Down in the Valley": Take the latest song, or the latest poster, or the latest saying and then move with it through such literary experiences as: "The choice to love is open till we die." Here W. H. Auden asks

us to bring some very complicated experiences to the understanding of love. How personal is the plea?: as personal as "Love Me, Baby, Baby"?

"Love is a bird in a fist/ To hold it, hides it;/ To look at it, lets it go." Is Archibald MadLeish "with it"? Is this a modern feeling about personal love? "More bitter than the love of youth". This is T. S. Eliot's irony. What makes the love of youth more bitter than the love of others? Is this true for your classes' age? "Love can do all but raise the dead," wrote Emily Dickinson. Is this true for the young? "The laugh that love cannot forgive." What does E. A. Robinson mean by this line? What kind of laugh is he talking about? Have you ever heard this kind of laugh? And finally, "Nature is fine in love and where 'tis fine, it sends some precious instance of itself after the thing it loves." This is Laertes' line about Ophelia in "Hamlet". What does nature send in its precious instance? What does "after" mean in the line?

Yes, to communicate we have to care, about their world and about ours. We have to have a grip on the meta-values that make our own lives important before we can make them understood by our students.

When Camus was a young writer he wrote an essay which he called, "Prometheus in the Underworld". (See *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, edited by Philip Thody, p. 138ff.) One paragraph will serve as a good close to this essay about teaching. "I sometimes doubt," Camus wrote, "whether men can be saved today. But it is still possible to save their children, body and mind. It is possible to offer them at the same time the chance for happiness and beauty. If we must resign ourselves to living without beauty, and the freedom that is a part of beauty, the myth of Prometheus is one of those that will remind us that any mutilation of man can only be temporary, and that one serves nothing in man if one does not serve the whole man. If he is hungry for bread and heather, and if it is true that bread is the more necessary, let us learn how to keep the memory of heather alive. At the darkest heart of history, Promethean men, without flinching from their difficult calling, will keep watch over the earth and the tireless grass. In the thunder and lightning of the gods, the chained hero keeps his quiet faith in man. This is how he is harder than his rock and more patient than his vulture. His long stubbornness has more meaning for us than his revolt against the gods. Along with his admirable determination to separate and exclude nothing, which always has and always will reconcile mankind's suffering with the springtimes of the world."

Communication Through Interacting Curriculum Design

RUBY LEE NORRIS, M. H.
Literature and Journalism
Richmond Humanities Center
Richmond, Virginia

In an argument for integrating more effectively all modes of life, learning and work at all levels of society, Jerome Bruner says, "To begin with we must change the role of schooling in the life cycle. Presently it is conceived as preparation. . . ."

"Let me urge that the process of education (whether in established schools or by other means) be conceived not just as a preparation but as a form of enablement selectively available throughout the life cycle."[1]

In the spirit of this idea, the Richmond Humanities Center endeavors to offer opportunities, open new avenues and seek new directions for the eductional community in the Richmond Metropolitan area.

Focused on an awareness of and a respect for the individual, the activities of Richmond Humanities Center have revolved around interdisciplinary programs. The Center exists not only for thoughtful inquiry but also for the opportunity to assist in answering inquiry with creative curriculum design. The design of all programs is intended to promote and foster the foremost objectives as stated in the proposal to ESEA, Title III, namely.

1. Students will be able to verbalize concepts and to create subjective material to indicate awareness of the value of the individual . . .
2. Teachers and students . . . will be enabled to exhibit respect for the worth of other human beings.

These humanistic objectives, reflecting the focus of the New Humanities, are the bases of the efforts of the resident staff as well as the visiting staff of the Center. Interaction among the disciplines is effected as each staff member coordinates his discipline in special thematic units evolved through conferences with cooperating classroom teachers. In another way the disciplines are interrelated when visiting artists, authors and dancers visit various teachers and their classes in history, art, English, and elementary education.

The two most recent instances of such interaction will serve to illustrate these two ways of incorporating teachers, artists and students into active involvement in order to demonstrate the linear quality of knowledge. First, a nine-day mini-course was taught by the staff members in cooperation with the teacher of American history, Mrs. Zelphia Watson, at Thomas Jefferson High School. The second instance was the two-week visit of the Allen Barker Dance Family to approximately 80 elementary classrooms. Descriptions of these efforts which combine the resources of

[1] Jerome Bruner, "Continuity of Learning," Saturday Review of Education, (March, 1973), 23.

teachers and professionals to interrelate disciplines reflect the flexibility and focus of the Center activities.

As the mini-course is considered, it is necessary to state that classroom activities may vary from one day to three weeks depending upon the needs, ideas and energy of the participants. In this case there was one classroom teacher, mentioned above, and the Center teaching team. Viewed as an entity, the schedule, objectives, Personal Code Checklist and Overall Evaluative Checklist reflect the direction of this particular mini-course.

THE PAST

To know where we are, we must know where we've been.
The past is not behind us, it's all around us.

Schedule

History and media	Day 1	Introduction (slide-lecture-discussion presentation)
Music and religion	Day 2	The Musical Perspective
Art and history	Day 3	The Art Perspective
Media and history	Day 4	Photography and Cinematography in Perspective
Literature and film	Day 5	Film and Discussion—"The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson
History and literature	Day 6	Personal Codes in Historical
	Day 7	Perspective
Literature and technology	Day 8	Student discussion of certain facets of *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler, following a reading of a review found in a magazine
	Day 9	Coordination of varying facets of each discipline into a music-slide-collage presentation
	Day 10	Evaluation Checklist and Related Composition

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. At the conclusion of the nine-day mini-course, eleventh grade students will have a greater comprehension of the truth that the present rests upon foundations that were built in the past because of group, studio and individual experiences in history, music, art, photography, film and literature as measured by
    1. 75 per cent participation in oral discussions
    2. 75 per cent involvement (facial, bodily, etc.) as observed by the teachers
    3. 100 per cent response to an evaluative checklist
    4. 75 per cent contribution to the group collage and development of photographs.
2. At the end of the nine-day mini-course, eleventh grade students will be required to write a two-page paper which will reflect an analysis and/or a synthesis of values gained from the course and a greater

awareness of the relative importance of the past to the present.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

1. Three team members will engage in slide-lecture-discussion presentations, one team member per day for one period (55 minutes), in history, music and art, to be documented by a daily student response to a list of four related questions.
2. Two team members will demonstrate and explain various techniques and terminology employed in filmmaking and photography, historically and creatively, for four hours one day, to be documented by the creation of a film collage, development of student photographs and student response to four related questions.
3. One team member will lead an examination and discussion of historical personal codes of conduct in relation to and as bases for current codes of conduct for two days, one period per day to be documented by student response to a checklist and development of a personal code of conduct by each student.
4. The teacher will distribute and collect the daily evaluation form as evidenced by 100% student participation.
5. The teacher will encourage 5 to 10 volunteers to read selected chapters of Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* in order to make a class presentation of ideas the book considers.

The following checklist was developed in connection with Process Objective Number 3 above and gives an idea of content in one area.

CHECKLIST: PERSONAL CODES

Key: SA—*Strongly Agree*, A—*Agree*, N—*Neutral*, D—*Disagree*, SD—*Strongly Disagree*

1. Martin Luther King believed that freedom and justice can be obtained by maintaining dignity and discipline.

SA	A	N	D	SD

2. Booker T. Washington believed that the obstacles one overcomes on the way to success are things by which a person is measured.

SA	A	N	D	SD

3. Theodore Roosevelt's creed indicates that he believes in hard work, hitting the line hard when you are right and in speaking softly and carrying a big stick.

SA	A	N	D	SD

4. Among other beliefs, Benjamin Franklin believed that self-improvement can be obtained by practicing silence, sincerity, cleanliness, chastity and humility.

SA	A	N	D	SD

5. Among other beliefs, Jonathan Edwards believed in using every moment of time and living with all his might.

SA A N D SD

6. The code of chivalry taught a young man not to run from the enemy and not to lie.

SA A N D SD

7. The Athenians believed that the responsibility of a citizen in a democracy is: "My country I will hand on to others not less but greater and better than I received it."

SA A N D SD

8. Among other teachings, ancient Hebrews' commandments taught young people to honor their parents.

SA A N D SD

The entire teaching team contributed to the following checklist in order to obtain student response to the entire mini-course.

OVERALL EVALUATIVE CHECKLIST

Key: SA—*Strongly Agree*, A—*Agree*, N—*Neutral*, D—*Disagree*, SD—*Strongly Disagree*

1. The introduction (slide-lecture-discussion presentation) made me more aware of the relative importance of the Past to the Present.

SA A N D SD

2. The introduction reinforced for me the truth that the Present rests upon foundations of the Past.

SA A N D SD

3. The introduction created for me new insights and new interests in some aspects of the Past.

SA A N D SD

4. The music lesson showed that old and new music have some elements in common.

SA A N D SD

5. The art lesson demonstrated how certain artists of the Past (and Present) earned (earn) a living.

SA A N D SD

6. The art lesson showed how societies of the Past and Present differ in the value placed on an artist's work. (Example: the monetary difference in what Rembrandt received for his paintings during his lifetime and what the present society would pay for the same paintings.)

SA A N D SD

7. Many of the ideas and ideals which we incorporate in our personal codes can be found in expressions of belief by individuals or groups from our Past.

SA A N D SD

8. In the four development novels or *Bildungsroman* considered, the main characters or protagonists, like ourselves, are achieving self-awareness and a realization of personal ideals through struggle, suffering and isolation.

SA A N D SD

9. The lesson in filmmaking demonstrated that editing, or cutting, is rarely used today in creating a film.

SA A N D SD

10. The lesson in filmmaking showed that many of the techniques used today were employed by some of the earliest filmmakers.

SA A N D SD

11. After the lesson in filmmaking, I understand better how some of the special effects in filmmaking are achieved.

SA A N D SD

12. The lesson in photography demonstrated that, with proper facilities and simple equipment, developing and printing procedures are within the grasp of any interested person.

SA A N D SD

13. The lesson in photography showed how one can use a visual medium (photography) to communicate ideas and emotional response, as well as to show what has gone on in the past.

SA A N D SD

14. After the lesson in photography, I understand better some basic photography techniques as developing and printing film.

SA A N D SD

By utilizing many kinds of communication—oral, written and visual—this mini-course, entitled *The Past*, sought to define one idea which con-

tributes to self-awareness.

The second most recent instance of interaction among the disciplines coupled the Barker (music-dance) Family talent with student-teacher enthusiasm. Prior to working the schools, the Barkers met about 80 participating teachers and student teachers in two-hour workshops. (Teachers were given released time during the school day.) At this time Neta, who has her own dance studio in Wayland, Massachusetts, and continues to study in Yugoslavia each summer, explained the projected classroom work and content of the performance as Noble, her son, and Allyson, her daughter, joined in demonstrating. Allen, her husband, accompanied the family on the piano; he teaches piano at Wayland College, along with teaching in his own studio.

Following the workshop, the Barker Family visited eight schools to dance with the children and their teachers. In one particular school, Woodville Elementary, Neta, Noble and Allyson danced with about 120 fourth graders and their teachers to Allen's "Turkey in the Straw." After a similar exercise at Blackwell Elementary, a class recreated their experience in art, using tempera paints, newsprint and construction paper.

In a continuing effort to create climates conducive to self-awareness, the Center staff has scheduled other professionals in classrooms from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Among these have been twelve Virginia artists, a mime, a drama troupe, several poets and a novelist. With emphasis on communicating creatively one's experience, one artist, A. B. Jackson, has invited students in English, history, humanities, art and science classes to try some of his techniques after a brief demonstration. One of Jackson's techniques to which many students have responded consists of crushing a rag, dipping it in paint and transferring it to paper. In an aside, Jackson quipped, "You get acquainted with rags, in this case, Fruit of the Loom No. 409."

In another situation, Tony Montanaro, a mime, took the teachers through acrobatics through which he and they later led the children. In Montanaro's words, "We'll now do forward rolls. Put your heads down here. Reach out and over you go! You might get a slight touch of the floor, but it won't hurt."

Over they went at all angles and amid groans, sighs and squeals. Montanaro urged, "Repeat! *The pay-off is so sweet. The confidence is unbelievable.* These acrobatics the children will love."

When several apprehensive teachers resisted and/or hesitated, Montanaro admonished, "Don't act your pain; you're heralding trouble. You must get a good relationship with your body. You must tell it what to do. About the age of 20, you settle in and your body tells you what to do. You should have a happy communion with your body."

There were more successful forward rolls and Montanaro continued to build their confidence, "Join in, participate, do something for yourself."

Prior to the Montanaro visit, Children's Theatre International, a teaching-dramatic troupe, presented an original play based on American history, "Arrows to Atoms". Following the performance, and teacher work-

shop, each actor worked with elementary classes and their teachers to assist students in writing, costuming, designing sets and performing their own plays.

Meanwhile the writers, supported also by the National Endowment for the Arts, created, with teachers and a staff member, climates where children responded to exercises and techniques designed to help them discover their own voice. Quietly, Michael Mott, poet and novelist, suggested "Let the message be from you; make it news from you."

In this case the students were second-graders at Patrick Henry Elementary School. The poet told an original fairytale, "Douglas the Dragon." Then he, the children, and their teacher created a story together. As each person called out his addition to the story, a Center staff member recorded it as follows:

"Raymond woke up with a sore throat and couldn't go to school. His mother gave him sore throat pills. Alas, they were the wrong pills! Suddenly flowers began to grow all over the bed. Along came the gardner to water the flowers. Raymond sneezed and blew all the flowers up into the air. Nothing was left but a puddle of water and Raymond. Because of his sore throat, Raymond couldn't go back to school, but he could join a school of fish. One of the fish used his scales to play the piano. Suddenly the fish swam away, and they must have got the sore throat because Raymond's sore throat was gone."

By utilizing the kind of communication singular to their craft, these professionals lead students and teachers down varying avenues toward discovery of their individuality and that of others. In these ways—an idea and technique translated into a picture, a feeling into a dance or drama, a thought or experience into a story or poem—the various disciplines became the "language" of communications for the individual, be he teacher, students or professional.

The staff and facilities for Richmond Intercultural Center for Humanities are at the Ellen Glasgow House, 1 West Main Street, Richmond, Virginia.

The Center program is available not only to the schools in the city of Richmond, but also to those in the surrounding counties as well as to the parochial schools of the area. The staff has two departments—resident and visiting. There are ten resident staff members: Henrietta Kinman, who has demonstrated for many years a strong commitment to interdisciplinary education and the humanities, directs the Center activities. Supporting her are Sam Banks, art and photography; Paul Canady, filmmaking and media; Linda Ferrell, studio art and art history; Alexia Kolias, dance and music; Ruby Lee Norris, literature and journalism; Jo S. Washington, history and research; and Harvey McWilliams, artist and printmaker.

An adjunct to the resident staff, the visiting staff varies from year to year depending upon availability, schedules and propensity for teaching combined with artistic talent. These professionals conduct teacher workshops, followed by classroom activities which they, participating teachers

and a Center resident staff member plan.

The facilities of the Center include: (a) resource rooms containing books, films, tapes and slides; (b) work areas containing equipment for viewing slides and films as well as facilities for making these materials; (c) studios for print-making, pottery and ceramics, filmmaking, photography, listening and recording, creative writing and studio art. Also, there are four conference-classrooms used for consultation and classes. These resources are for the use of the Center staff, teachers, and students. The Center also has resource materials which differ from conventional educational materials in that these books, tapes and other materials are selected for specific units and classes.

In addition to cooperating with school systems other than the city of Richmond, the Center enlarges its program by involving the staff and facilities of the Virginia Museum, the Valentine Museum, the Richmond City Public Library, University of Richmond and the Academic Division of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Summer '73 Institutes for English Teachers

(Continued from page 6)

The Composing Process, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, June 18-August 10. Credit: 8 semester graduate or upper division.

Tuition fee: $656

Contact person: Dr. Winterowd, Department of English, University of Southern California, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007.

Classroom and Stage: The Teaching of Dramatic Literature, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, June 24-August 3. Credit: 6 semester hours, graduate level.

Tuition fee: $240

Contact person: Mr. Michael Nelson, Director of Summer School, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri 63130, Telephone: 314-863-0100, Ext. 4628.

Current Trends and Issues in English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, June 4-July 27. Credit: 8 semester hours, graduate.

Tuition fees: $206 for residents, $353 for non-residents.

Contact person: Dr. Richard Braddock, Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Community College Teaching of English, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, July 30-August 10, 8:30-5:00. Credit: 6 semester hours, graduate.

Tuition fees: $141 for residents; $161 for non-residents.

Contact person: Dr. Clara Lee Moodie, Director, Community College, English Program, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

America Studies Provide Opportunities for Communication

CLAIRESE HARRISON
Chairman, English Department
Hermitage High School, Henrico County, Virginia

That the Hermitage High School programs in American Studies provide effective opportunities for communication as well as effective channels for improving communication skills and knowledge of aspects of American culture is proved by their growth in the last five years from one section of twenty-five *selected* high-performance students to three double sections of juniors (approximately 150) who have *elected* the programs and by the enthusiasm of the three teams of teachers involved. The plural *programs* is a key to the nature and success of our courses, for, although all three double sections (one high performance and two standard) follow primarily chronological organization, all three are different and vary from year to year, depending on student interests, strengths, weaknesses; teacher interests, strengths, weaknesses; the availability of art and music consultants; current events; and fortuitous occurrences such as presentations of plays and films in the metropolitan area; unique opportunities to secure outstanding speakers; and various student and teacher "brainstorms."

Because the major strong point of the programs is their individualization, I will not here attempt to give a full outline—in fact, to do so would not be possible. Anyone can copy headings from textbooks or otherwise delineate chronological periods. We deal with these chronological periods; but one class may spend a month on the Colonial and Revolutionary periods; another may spend two weeks on these periods and twelve weeks on the Twentieth Century. For example, this year two of the double sections began in the Twentieth Century and the other, at the beginning. However, the same teachers may elect to do the opposite next year. The two things other than basic content that the teachers of the different sections have in common are the aim to make the people of history come alive in the minds of students and the feeling that teaching in the American Studies programs is fun—as well as hard work.

Since this issue of the *Virginia English Bulletin* focuses on communications, perhaps the inclusion here of one of the most successful and exciting portions of high-performance American Studies last year is appropriate and will illustrate the spirit of the programs better than a more general and comprehensive description or course outline. A product of student-teacher communication (as you will see, its creation was stimulated by a student's remark), this part of the program involved communication in many forms. It is reproduced here as it was presented to the students:

AMERICAN STUDIES, MAY 1972

You have a choice to make.

(1) You may elect to do your poetry or essay supplementary reading unit, as your schedules indicate, and conclude your year's work

with a final examination which will come on Friday, June 2, during the 03 examination period. You will then report to class on Monday, June 5, during the 04 examination, to go over the examination, for, as you know, there is little good to be derived from a test which you never see after you take it.

(2) About three weeks ago, one of you asked, "What about our exam? Will it be an *exam?*" We hope that question was inspired by the fact that perhaps she (and the others of you) expected an American Studies examination to be different. Therefore, if as a class you so choose, you may instead of doing the last supplementary reading project and instead of taking a traditional examination, express in any art form you choose your feelings about one of the following:
   (a) some important aspect of the society in which you live
   (b) the significance of your year in American Studies
   (c) the meaning of liberty today
   (d) the next three decades of the Twentieth Century and your place as our "best hope"
   (e) the values that you must maintain if our representative democracy is to survive
   (f) yourself now that one important phase (high school) of your life nears its end
   (g) the rapid changes of today (events, predictions, attitudes, educational trends, etc.) as a turning point in history and their effects on you as an individual
   (h) the fact that your teachers of American Studies look *at you* and fail to see a "sick society" but see instead every hope for a "healthy" one (What makes you different?)

   If you choose #2, half of you must volunteer (or draw straws!) to be prepared on Friday, June 2; the others will be ready on Monday, June 5. Your creations must be "share-able"—within a period of three to five minutes. They must be completely individual efforts—no group work this time. If you paint, draw, sculpt, prepare a scrapbook, etc., you must be well able to present and explain your work to the class. If you wish to write something, it need not be short; but you must be able to present the essence of your work to your classmates and teachers in the allotted time. This should not be busy work. You should not vote for this alternative if you feel unable to produce something of which you will be proud. You are to give this choice your careful consideration this weekend. On Monday, you are to bring to class a piece of paper with either #1 or #2 written on it. The assistants will tabulate your votes and we will know then what our plans will be.

The administration of the school approved the opportunity for choice before it was given; the assistant principal in charge of instruction came to the "examination" sessions and was so overwhelmed by the knowledge, aplomb, and delight of the students he almost caused us to fail to finish in the time allotted because of his questions and comments! All students except one attended both sessions; their projects included unusual collages, *junk sculptures, paintings, and slide-tape* presentations.

The experience was exciting and rewarding. It was also unique. Because it grew out of one particular year with one particular group of forty-eight young people and particular teachers, it may never be repeated. However, because there are American Studies programs at Hermitage with interested students and teachers, something even more exciting and rewarding may happen this year!

Humanities-Oriented Independent Study

WILLIAM E. BROWNE
Resource Teacher for the Humanities
Highland Springs High School
Highland Springs, Virginia

The humanities program at Highland Springs High School this year was redirected (from the exposure-type program which was basically teacher centered) to encourage greater student participation; in fact, the responsibility for effective production has been placed on the students' shoulders in a program of "Humanities-Oriented Independent Study."

Operating through 12th grade English classes, the program allows any student, with his teacher's approval, to opt for independent research on a subject of his choice. For a maximum period of three weeks, the student is excused from his English class activities to produce in some form a program suitable for presentation to his fellow students. Under the guidance of the Resource Teacher for the Humanities, with extensive usage of the Henrico County Instructional Materials Center and other sources in the metropolitan area, the students research, create, and prepare for presentations that are varied in nature. The individual prepares his own slide program, chooses his own films, selects recordings of his choice, makes his own transparencies, or otherwise organizes his presentation to communicate most effectively with his audience.

Although most projects are handled by individuals, some have been the products of several students collaborating to present an aspect of the subject. In some instances, English teachers are encouraging independent study as an alternative to the traditional research paper, that perennial nemesis of senior English students. Typical subjects which have been presented are "The Genius of Michelangelo," "The Gothic Cathedral," "The Influence of Jesus Christ on Fine Arts," "The History of Jazz," "Our Changing Language," "Suckering a Gullible Public-Commercial Advertising," "Drug Rehabilitation in the Richmond Area," "A Comparison of Contemporary Song Lyrics with Romantic Poetry," "The Renaissance—Florence," "This History of Exorcism," "The U.F.O. Phenomena —Extraterrestrial Visitors?" and "Astrology—An Art or Hoax?"

We feel that our program is a step in the right direction, even though we know it has flaws. Having attempted in years past, however, to expose vast numbers of students to the "humanities" via the teacher/presenter route, we feel that this program is more meaningful to the learner.

Composing for Real

RALPH W. RAUSCH
Senior Editor
Laidlaw Brothers
River Forest, Illinois 60305

Until fairly recently, the words *compose* and *composition* have had rather restricted meanings and applications in the American classroom. To compose has meant to *write* and a composition has most often been a *theme*, that curious genre which survives only in the unique atmosphere of the English class, never in the "real" world.

However, the current trend toward reifying the language arts as the communication arts has reestablished more accurate interpretations of these key terms, definitions closer to those found in the dictionary:

compose—to design and execute, or put together, in a manner involving adaptation of forms of expression to ideas, or to laws of harmony or proportion

composition—the formation of a whole or integral by placing together and connecting different things, parts or ingredients

A careful reading of these definitions reveals an emphasis on process, not product—the process of bringing together and effectively ordering seemingly disparate pieces or parts to create a new entity, a new whole.

As a result of this emphasis, students in today's classrooms compose not only the written word but other media as well. And the products of this creative process—the compositions—take a variety of forms, not just the written theme.

Now, let me digress a bit to anticipate an objection that could legitimately be raised at this point: "But I'm an *English* teacher. My job is to teach children to write, and the written word is my stock-in-trade." That is true—as far as it goes. But isn't the English teacher's real job to help students become more effective communicators? And isn't the written word the most difficult medium of communication to master? Isn't it possible that, by emphasizing the general process of composing (employing a variety of media), the specific process of composing the written word can be made easier, more meaningful, more "real" to the student? In my opinion, the answer to all these questions must be yes. A few specific illustrations of composition activities in the modern classroom may serve to demonstrate why I think so.

Suppose, for instance, that a teacher wishes to introduce students to the composition of personal writing—writing as self-revelation. Instead of merely *testing* writing by assigning a 750 word personal essay, due Friday, the teacher first creates a lively context in which the need to communicate emerges as a natural extension of on-going activity. Such activity is initiated through a teacher-prompted but student-generated discussion concerning the difficulties of self-appraisal, perhaps using as a

catalyst questions like these: *Have you ever wished you could step out of your skin for a moment and take a close look at yourself from a friend's perspective? What is it that comprises that subjective phenomenon called the personality? What are the outward and visible signs of your own personality? Your walk? The way you dress? Your pastimes? Your favorite foods?*

Once the topical focus or climate is established through purposeful talk (actually a composing of shared experience), the teacher suggests an experiment in nonverbal communication. Since evoking an elusive abstraction like personality may often be more effectively accomplished by suggestion rather than by direct description, each student is asked to create a montage of clippings from magazines, the purpose of which is to answer "Who am I?" through the medium of a pictorial potpourri. Pasted to poster board, the clippings include pictures of favorite pastimes, possessions, articles of clothing, animals, expressive faces; swatches of favorite colors, scenes that suggest moods; and perhaps several cut-out words or phrases that are personally meaningful, like *alone, summer, love, pizza, football.* Simple art work and nothing else? Not quite. Rather, the composing of a fairly complex visual metaphor that communicates a unified impression of individual personality. Because disparate elements must be brought together to convey a unified impression, problems of order, arrangement, balance, appropriateness—in short, problems of composition—must be thoughtfully considered and solved.

The montages, unsigned, are displayed on the chalkboard and the class (or small groups of three or four students) interprets them by attempting verbal descriptions based on the impressions each montage communicates. And the students evaluate each montage according to its effectiveness in projecting a personality. Without a word being written, a successful composition activity could terminate there. Or the montages could serve as stimuli for individual writing. Each student is given a montage composed by someone else and asked to assume the role of the composer by writing a first-person character sketch based on details suggested by the montage. Whether the montage itself is the composition or whether it serves to motivate a piece of writing, students are involved in the same basic processes of composing to communicate.

Can such a media-mix be effectively applied to other areas of composition? Instead of asking for a paragraph of persuasion developed by reasons, what better way to teach the special demands and skills of persuasive communication than by having small groups of students work together to mount a campaign supporting an issue they feel strongly about—designing posters, creating bumper stickers (the aphorisms of the automobile age), taping one-minute spot "radio" announcements, writing editorials and letters to the editor, writing rhymed slogans, composing lyrics to campaign songs, creating public-service advertisements. Students interested in photography can plan and execute a photo essay, with accompanying written commentary, concerning topics like the need for an ecological cleanup of their community. Each group presents its campaign

to the class for discussion and evaluation.

And what about exposition, writing to explain and inform—the mode most universally required of and disliked by the student writer? Students usually *practice* the fundamental skills of exposition by writing expository paragraphs from given topic sentences or in "My Hobby" essays. These exercises serve no other end but to test skills and have no audience but the teacher/corrector. Instead, why not provide more realistic vehicles for exposition by finding real-life models that demand the application of expository processes—gathering facts, selecting and organizing them into a unified statement with a clear thesis, drawing conclusions, and summarizing. The ubiquitous opinion poll is one of many such vehicles An individual student, a small group, or an entire class can conduct a poll about some issue of current interest and publish its results.

First a purpose for the poll is decided upon (the thesis) and a list of appropriate questions to achieve that purpose is devised. Then comes the research, interviewing informants and recording their responses. Next, the responses are tallied under descriptive headings and organized in the form of a chart or table. Finally, the results are interpreted and conclusions drawn. Presentation can take a variety of forms—an article for the school newspaper, a panel using an overhead projector to illustrate its findings, a tape recording including sample responses and a summarizing commentary by the pollster.

These are but a few examples of composition in its broader applications, approaches involving a variety of media employed to form "a whole or integral by placing together and connecting different things, parts, or ingredients." Many other applications readily suggest themselves, but the point remains the same—nonverbal media, in and of themselves, can often be used to teach the fundamental processes of composition, and they can also provide springboards to the application of these processes in writing.

There are other advantages implicit in such approaches. For one, those students not naturally facile with the written word, those for whom the usual theme results in a bruised ego, are provided other avenues to successful experiences in composing. For another, there are more frequent opportunities for small group projects, for making English something to *do* in addition to something to study or practice. The classroom more often assumes a workshop atmosphere, allowing the teacher to function as a guide, consultant, and entrepreneur rather than as lecturer, critic and fountainhead of knowledge. Because students often work together to achieve a common objective, peer instruction and evaluation are natural and unforced. But, most importantly, students come to view composition as more than an isolated and artificial exercise having no purpose outside the English class. By mixing media to create compositions that have actual counterparts in "real life," they discover that composing is for real.

The Editorial: A Teaching Device for Writing

EILEEN N. WAGNER
Department of Developmental Studies
John Tyler Community College
Chester, Virginia

"They can't write a decent English sentence" is the pronouncement which in this school deports a student from regular credit English to Developmental English. My duties as the trustee of the deported students are to determine why they cannot write "decent" (read "standard") English and then promptly remediate the difficulty. When a student demonstrates ability to write acceptable prose, he is then allowed back into the regular English curriculum. It is a good system; at least, the system lets the student know that he needs help before it is too late.

But the purpose of the curriculum is not only to cushion the blow of college standards on poorly prepared students; it is designed to get weak students strengthened enough to make it in the regular curriculum and ultimately, out of college with a degree. The practical aspects of the design can be summed up with the question: How does one get an adult to write acceptable English prose in ten to twenty weeks? This single question has predominated my teaching research and as one might guess, I have come to some interesting conclusions which I wish to share with anyone who is faced with the similar dilemma of teaching remedial composition at any level.

Some of my more surprising findings concern what is *not* the problem. First of all, although my classes range in age from 17 to 45 years and average about 30% Black students, I have encountered only minor problems with dialect. It appears that students with serious sentence construction problems are the same students who have serious reading difficulties. Diagnosing and treating reading deficiencies is not in the realm of the composition teacher in our curriculum; this is handled by a team of highly trained reading instructors. However, students with high school reading levels seem to encounter only minor so-called dialect related sentence construction problems; the most obvious among these is the difficulty with noun-verb agreement especially in present tense. Writing requires a completely different dialect from speaking and most students have absorbed enough from English class in high school to have a fair working knowledge of writing's special dialect. It is a relatively easy matter to treat small problems in usage where they lie (that is, in the student's own work), provided that the student is sufficiently motivated.

Another popular diagnosis for composition deficiency has also not shown itself formidably among the composition students with whom I have worked. It is assumed by some that remedial students have been culturally disadvantaged to the point where they have little or nothing to use as reference for their writing. I cannot agree. It has been my experience that students need remediation because they are characteris-

tically nonverbal; they do not communicate in words for as many reasons as there are students. But to assume that because students do not verbalize, they do not have anything to say is begging the question. If students can be motivated to attempt to communicate what they know and if they are provided with adequate tools for communication, these students will unlock knowledge and experience which would floor any English teacher.

Furthermore, the problem with remedial students does not seem to be related to any lack of grammar lessons. The odds are each student learned grammar well enough in elementary and secondary school; they certainly do not need more grammar lessons. I am convinced that isolated grammar rules and exercises have little or no transfer to the actual individually composed writing of the student. Even if there is some transfer, I personally do not think that the amount of time spent on grammar studies is warranted by the results which are achieved.

So, what is it that makes the regular English teacher smile upon the writing of one student and grimly report the other into my developmental composition class? I have concluded that the true culprits are: inability to approach and solve problems systematically, poor spelling and lastly, a student's lack of confidence in his ability as a communicator.

I have treated the problem of a student's lack of confidence in another article which appeared in the *Virginia English Bulletin* in Spring of 1972. It is my conclusion that removal of grades and derogatory remarks in "correcting" student papers is the first step to building the student's confidence. Using the Skinnerian concept of "behavior modification," I have found that heavy use of praise and encouragement increases the student's desire for mastery and the assignment of carefully prescribed but relevant topics increases the student's need to be "heard" effectively. My purpose in this article is not to repeat what I have written previously but to expand upon an idea which was mentioned only in passing in the last article. Here I wish to develop the idea of using the Editorial form of the essay for remediating deficiencies in problem-solving technique in writing.

Every paragraph, essay or term paper assigned certainly presents the student with a problem. Some students are innovative enough to solve such problems entirely by themselves; others need only be pointed in the general direction. These students learn willingly by trial and error and due to past successes, are not inclined to avoidance behaviors. These are the students who populate college English classes and who earn the A's, B's and C's. But these "good" writers have been taught no more about *how* to write than the students who do not fare so well. Largely, what these good writers know about effective writing they have taught themselves in a sort of "sink or swim" attitude. Some pointers are given in high school English classes about beginning, topic and thesis sentences, about middles or bodies of paragraphs and about ending sentences. Unfortunately, little reenforcement is given to these pointers in our literature-oriented secondary English curricula. What practice there is in

writing papers in high school is positive to those who caught on quickly and utterly detrimental to those who were not so nimble. What is more, though most of these students understand what sentences must be arranged in a beginning-middle-ending form, they have no idea what to *say* in those sentences once they have the sentences correctly positioned. An example of this difficulty is the student who says the same thing sentence after sentence, only in different and yet, completely "correct" wording. Another case is the student who writes an excellent introduction (he had lots of practice writing topic sentences) and the middle of his paper falls apart grammatically while he gropes for what comes next. Though much emphasis is placed on the physical sequence of sentences in composition teaching, little or no emphasis is placed on the sequence of ideas in a paper.

The Editorial form of the essay as I teach it in my remedial composition classes eliminates both the problem of physical sequence of sentences and sequence of ideas in the content. By learning a simple Five Step formula for the Editorial, the student can quickly outline, research and execute a complete essay that is not only correct but interesting as well. The Five Steps of the Editorial are a simplification of what I have observed myself as conventional to Editorial writing especially in newspapers. I first came upon the Editorial as a prescribed form to use in teaching composition when I was using the newspaper as supplemental reading for communication ideas. It occurred to me that students would initiate the writing of the Editorial Page more willingly than published essays which appear in most composition texts. The need for a model which can be successfully copied is central to teaching composition. Furthermore, subjects treated on the Editorial page of the local paper are interesting and readable because the events and problems discussed are close to home. From the newspaper Editorial, then, this simplified formula arose:

1. State the *Fact* or the *Situation*.
2. State your *Position*.
3. Give 3 distinct *Reasons* for taking this Position.
4. Briefly *Summarize* the three Reasons.
5. Connect the Reasons and the Position in a *Conclusion*.

The first step requires the writer to describe the issue to be discussed. In the first sessions of class, students do various assignments designed to sharpen their observation of details both in print and in their surroundings. Group projects such as describing a penny only in concrete terms and individual projects such as describing a busy scene without using the sense of sight, serve the dual purpose of sharpening the mind's eye and relieving tension in the student (Developmental students seem to be anxious as a group in English class and no wonder, their past experiences with English give them good cause). Also, in the first step of the Editorial, students are cautioned not to let the audience guess their position. This restriction helps students achieve some degree of objectivity in their descriptions.

Assignments given for practice are already worded into Editorial Questions. But students are quick to see that any topic, no matter how it is stated, can be made into an Editorial Question. One needs only to make up a question concerning some major aspect of the topic which can be answered with "yes," "no" or "maybe." To reenforce this discovery, I usually assign a drill sheet in the middle of the course which asks students to write Editorial questions from common paper topics. Thus, the topic "Capital Punishment" becomes "Should Capital Punishment be reinstated?" and "Women's Fashions" becomes "Should women wear pants to work?"

Step One is a standard paragraph of at least three sentences and not more than six or seven sentences. Its function is to let the audience know the background details of the issue to be discussed. Step Two is what gives the paper life. When students are first learning the form, I require that they select a clear position for or against the Editorial question. A firm commitment to one side or the other of an issue seems to help students develop their papers cohesively without being diverted into irrelevant aspects. As ability to argue a single position improves, students are encouraged to take on more complex positions such as that of the Objective Middle-Road. Some developmental students reach this point in eight to ten weeks of work; many never reach it. Nevertheless, all the students understand that making a general topic into a question of contention automatically arouses the reader's interest in the paper.

Step Three is the body of the essay. It consists of three carefully selected reasons for the author's position. Here the concept of explanation is explored. Students learn that simply *saying* something is not enough; they have an obligation to explain reasons why they have taken a position. Much practice is needed for students to get comfortable with giving three reasons for every opinion. Drills in thinking up reasons to support various positions on a given question supply some of this practice. Systematic thinking can be encouraged by this process. A student who once complained that he "couldn't think of *three* reasons," now finds so many that he expertly selects his reasons by discarding weak or invalid ones.

Students are told that the required number of supporting reasons is three because three is a number of strength. Supporting an opinion with a single reason is narrow if not risky; using two would leave the author vulnerable should one of his reasons be successfully disputed. But even if one reason is completely refuted, the author can still expound his opinion from a position of strength if he has used three supporting reasons. However, the "more the merrier" concept does not apply since four or more reasons would make the Editorial, a rather short paper by nature, too unwieldy and confusing to the reader.

Once the student has mastered the process of clearly explaining his reasons, he easily sees how other supporting facts and opinions can be incorporated into his reason section. This is the point at which the simple Editorial can become the research paper. In the simple Editorial, the

student will use from one sentence to a whole paragraph to explain his reason depending on the overall desired length of the paper. For the research paper, the student only needs to add a special sequence to his Editorial outline:

3. Give 3 distinct *Reasons* for the Position.
   A. Explain Reason Number One.
      (1) Introduce Evidence.
      (2) Present the Evidence with footnote.
      (3) Draw a Conclusion from the Evidence.
   B. Reason Number Two—repeat above.
   C. Reason Number Three—repeat above.

This addition to the Editorial formula solves the student's dilemma of what to do with research once he has found it. Dressing a piece of evidence up with an Introduction and a Conclusion helps increase its impact on the argument. Also, students themselves will point out that large quantities of evidence are unnecessary with this formula if the few pieces used are of high quality. I must admit here that I do not require research papers from developmental students. Information on how to turn the Editorial into a term paper is simply presented for their interest. Most students learn it on their own because they already understand the value of well-written research papers by the time they have reached college.

The Fourth and Fifth Steps go together. In the Summary, the author simply restates the three reasons briefly to refresh the reader's mind and the Conclusion restates the author's position. The Conclusion may also include a prescription, a call to action or a suggestion concerning the question discussed.

Although the Editorial has five steps, it really falls into a sort of three-part theme with the first two steps as one part, the reason section as the second part and the summary and conclusion going together as the third. For the short paper, the Editorial might appear as a three-paragraph paper; while for a longer paper, each reason might require a separate paragraph stretching the paper out to five or more paragraphs. The real beauty of the three- and five-paragraph paper yielded by this formula is that it has automatic unity. Some practice with transitions helps student attain coherence as well as unity.

There is another extra point of the formula which I reserve for the faster student. Its position in the outline is Part 3A—right after the reasoning section but before the summary. This part allows the student to take up the other side of the issue or "Anticipate the Objection." The Anticipated Objection which serves as a self-contained rebuttal gives an editorial a more sophisticated tone. By raising a good argument in opposition to his stand, the author creates the aura of objectivity: he indicates to his audience that he has thought about the opposing arguments as well as the ones which support his position. Generally, only one objection needs to be anticipated for either a short paper or a research paper of moderate length. However, for an extended paper, the author

can raise as many opposing arguments as he did reasons to support his position. Furthermore, by toning down the position statement, a reason section balanced with the anticipated objection section can yield an Editorial in which the decision concerning the position is left to the audience. I do not recommend presenting too many options to remedial students, however. As I stated in the beginning of the paper, the major problem of remedial composition students is one of solving problems systematically. Once the student learns the right methods of approaching and dealing with the problem of writing a paper, he must have much reenforcement in the form of practice. While the student is practicing these techniques, it is not a good idea to distract him with too many add-ons to his formula. I have described here various options to give the reader an idea of what is possible with the Editorial form as an expandable teaching device.

If students can master the Editorial form, usually various other problems in their writing can be worked out. Surprisingly, problems in sentence construction have not shown themselves in the student papers I see after some practice with the form has taken place. If a verb is left out of a sentence, it is usually due to faulty proofreading rather than any ignorance of grammar. Over- and under-use of the comma can be cured with repeated correction *with explanation* in the individual student's work. On the spot treatment of difficulties in grammar and usage seems to work the best in my classes. I have attempted to refrain from using traditional grammar terminology in these personal corrections. As I have said before, remedial students characteristically have a negative attitude toward English class and words like "fragment," "adjective" and "modifier" bring back bad memories for many. So, "Present Tense" becomes "Time—Now," a "run-on sentence" is "just too long" and a comma splice is explained "a comma is not strong enough to hold together these complete sentences—use a semi-colon (;) here." I have found it impossible to avoid the terms "noun" and "verb" but most students know what they mean and do not seem bothered by their use.

Poor spelling is a major barrier to perfection in writing. The only practical cure for poor spelling that I can think of is the automatic use of the dictionary. In composition, though, the main difficulty lies in his inability to recognize when a word is misspelled. One thing is sure: if the student has a serious reading deficiency, there is little hope of making him a good speller. One of the greatest strengths of the Developmental Program in which I am working is its strong emphasis on the interdependence of reading and composition skills and one is remediated along with the other. But wherever poor spelling is the result of phobia of the dictionary, this is some hope. I am convinced that long and boring dictionary drills assigned in grade school have produced a generation of dictionary-hating students. Only repeated emphasis on its practicality as a tool to achieve perfection in communication can get students to open its leaves willingly.

I distinctly remember being told during my own school days that "good

writing cannot be taught" and that "good writers are born and not made." But good writers report that they themselves were made by practice and a willingness to strive for perfection. In my work with large numbers of so-called "poor writers" who are deported into my classes, I have come to the conclusion that these students are not lacking any essential ingredients to the effective writer. Rather, somewhere along the line of their development in written communication, they were left behind. Once these students fell out of step with the rest of their fellows, their writing abilities began to degenerate. Why did they fall out of step? I hypothesize that their confidence in themselves as writers was somehow undermined. This could have happened in a variety of ways but the two ways which the students themselves report are: first, they were not provided with the proper tools to meet the standards set in their English classes and second, when they could not meet those standards, they were punished with poor grades while little or no attempt was made to assist these students in diagnosing and remediating their difficulties. What I have outlined in this article, then, is a concrete form which is highly teachable and which can serve to compensate many weaknesses in student writing. But provision of practical tools to the weak student is only the beginning of any Developmental Composition program: frequent and large doses of confidence-building praise for even the smallest successes are necessary if we are to begin to reverse the student's long-standing negative attitude toward composition and toward himself as an effective communicator.

Communication and Nonverbal Behavior

CHARLES R. DUKE
Department of English
Plymouth State College
Plymouth, New Hampshire

People tend to forget that speech has not always been with us. Long before speech appeared as we know it, man was using message systems that in some ways, at least, showed remarkable parallels with animal communication systems. The language of gesture, for example, can still be demonstrated today. Men without a common spoken language can communicate up to a point just as animals do. By pantomime, facial expression and other movements, elemental reactions of surprise, irritation, affection, desire and grief can be made clear. With somewhat more difficulty, simple messages of hostility, warning, welcome or rejection are transmitted. When man began to walk upright he gained an advantage over other animals, for by standing up he left his hands free for communication. When speech finally came it enabled us to express more complex meanings and to develop messages that were both more detailed and more precise.

The interesting factor in this gradual development is that the language of body movement has never completely left us, even though we now possess extensive vocal means for communication. It has been estimated that only about 35 percent of the social communication among people is verbal; the remaining 65 percent finds expression through nonverbal modes of behavior.[1] This 65 percent has caused considerable interest in the scientific community and from this interest has emerged a science, called kinesics which deals with the study of body movements and their role in communication.

The idea that the body betrays meaning has been suggested many times. We understand the functions of conscious gestures, the ones used to emphasize a point, to show size or shape, but what about all the unconscious movements that are made as well? Ask a friend who has been talking with you for a few minutes to recall what body movements he used during that time; if you asked him to recall what he had said, he could do that, but his awareness of what movements he had used to accompany his words will not be very strong.

These unconscious movements interest the kinesics expert. One pioneer in the field, Ray Birdwhistell, during a study of the Kutenai Indians in western Canada, discovered that the Indians, who spoke both their native tongue and English, changed their gestures and facial expressions, depending upon which language was spoken. Studying this phenomenon further, Birdwhistell determined that body motions and facial expressions are learned behaviors, not inborn; if such movements were inborn, people throughout the world, regardless of what language they spoke, would use the same body motions and facial movements. Birdwhistell's observations proved that such is not the case.

In 1952 Birdwhistell published a dictionary of body motions, each of which had a corresponding symbol: with the use of these symbols a trained observer could actually record an entire conversation. The symbols were simple: to record an open eye, one simply drew the outline of an eye: to record a wink or a closed eye, a straight line was used. The system is very similar to the special alphabet of symbols used by linguists to record basic sounds and units of speech. This similarity is no accident since Birdwhistell was an anthropologist and worked closely with linguists.

From various other studies it has been determined that the human face alone is capable of making almost 250,000 different expressions: add to these the infinite variations that an individual can supply with motions of the fingers, hands, arms, legs and feet and one can begin to see why the kinesics experts are still struggling to classify and interpret the nonverbal behavior of the human being. Of course the scientists got a late start. Shakespeare, for one, was quite aware of the language of the body. In *Troilus and Cressida,* Ulysses says:

> *Fie, fie upon her*
> *There's a language in her eye, her cheek,*
> *her lip,*
> *Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits*
> *look out*
> *At every joint and motive of her body.*

But if so much of this behavior is unconscious, do people really use in their daily lives what limited knowledge they may have about body language? Such use can be quite important. William H. Whyte, Jr., well-known author and editor, tells how in his days as a sales trainee for a drug company his supervisor would pass on little tricks; one of these was how to watch for the victim's shoulder to relax before throwing in a clincher for a sale. Marriage counselors often advise couples about watching for danger signals in body behavior. In fact, very often the advice given to couples is that it is more important to pay attention to what the partner is saying nonverbally than it is to hear everything that is said; hence eyes, muscles, ways of moving and even body odors become valuable assets in gauging another person's meaning and mood. Novelists have often used their insights about body language to develop effective characterization. A classic example is Captain Queeg in Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny:* whenever Queeg finds himself in a situation that produces anxiety, he reaches into his pocket and brings out two steel balls, rolling them around in his hand; the movement is either mild or violent, depending upon the degree of anxiety.

Some people because of professional training or natural insight are more perceptive and skillful than others at offering interpretations of body language. But anyone can do it, providing he exerts a little effort and he practices. The first step is simply to be aware that such signals exist, that they can have meaning, and that they are not accidental.

One of the first areas that anyone interested in kinesics will notice is

space. Biologists have known for over fifty years that animals have a territorial instinct—a basic desire to inhabit and protect a certain area. Many birds, for example, will claim an area and then drive off any intruders. Tigers will fight to the death to defend their territory. Although man may not go to the extreme of death, he will react strongly to invasion of his territorial claims.

Such claims may differ from country to country. Lack of knowledge about this can cause problems with communication and result in misunderstandings. For example, in many South American countries, people stand closer to each other during conversation than Americans do. Latins and Americans who are ignorant of this characteristic often experience discomfort and rejection during face-to-face interaction. While the South American will attempt to move closer and closer, the American will attempt to move farther and farther away. The resulting scene may be appropriate for comedy, but it does little to enhance communication. The United States Department has made efforts to school its people in these differences; anthropologists are brought in to explain the various cultural differences to Foreign Service diplomats, technicians and administrators headed overseas.

But what if a person never travels out of his own country? He still will find it useful to be familiar with how people handle space. Watch, for example, what happens when an elevator becomes crowded. Although the elevator may be filled to capacity, each passenger makes an effort to have at least a small buffer of space around him; consequently, a person makes every effort to avoid touching his neighbor, but if he does, an immediate apology is forthcoming even though the circumstances do not dictate it. Still another example of man's preoccupation with space is his desire to stake out territory. Petty disputes over property lines, right of way, and the planting of trees and shrubs frequently result in fence building marathons where each person attempts to make his fence higher, wider or denser.

A variation of the space sensitivity issue is found in the relationship between looking at a person and staring at him. A powerful prohibition exists among people against staring. The line that divides the element of staring from the act of looking is a fine one and it is often crossed. No one is quite certain what the roots of this taboo are but for whatever reason, human beings and even many animals interpret a direct stare as an immediate threat and invasion of privacy.

Another aspect of space control and communication may be seen in the various shifts of women's fashions. Before the age of the miniskirt, students of body gestures could tell a great deal about a woman by the way she positioned her legs. For instance, sitting with her legs tightly crossed, the woman was interpreted as being somewhat restricted in her behavior and a little nervous about her sexuality. In the opposite sense, the woman who sat with her legs uncrossed was thought to be more open and relaxed about her femininity. With the appearance of the miniskirt, the micro-skirt and the no-bra look, however, the old axioms are

no longer as trustworthy. A woman wearing the new fashions still has a choice of leg movements, but their meaning is not so clear. The woman, consequently, who adopts these fashions invites visual entry into her microspace to a far greater degree than ever before.

Although the handling of space figures prominently in the interpretations of nonverbal communication, other areas are of equal importance. Research, for example, continues to suggest that nonverbal patterns differ from culture to culture. A good example of this patterned communicative behavior is found in the culture of Blacks. Kenneth Johnson, in an article entitled "Black Kinesics—Some Non-Verbal Communication Patterns in the Black Culture," states that many Black children have been taught not to look another person (especially an older person) in the eye when the person is talking. To do so would be to communicate disrespect. Johnson also notes that a culture clash can take place if people remain ignorant of the meaning of such action. He says:

> *. . . in the dominant culture, eye contact is interpreted one way; while it is interpreted in another way within the Black culture. Avoidance of eye contact by a Black person communicates 'I am in a subordinate role and I respect your authority over me,' while the dominant cultural member may interpret avoidance of eye contact as 'Here is a shifty, unreliable person I am dealing with.'* [2]

This avoidance of eye contact is also found in Western Africa and Japan.

Another instance of the cultural gap in kinesics is the behavior of some Black males when they are participating in a conversation. Often they will turn their backs to another speaker but this action communicates a friendly message instead of rejection. The action is especially noticeable when two Blacks greet each other. According to Johnson, after a verbal greeting, one or both of the participants frequently will turn his back to the other and walk away a few steps. The nonverbal message is probably: "Look, I trust you so much that I unhesitatingly place myself in a vulnerable position in greeting you." [3]

Kinesics plays other roles as well. In an age where we spend so much time viewing movies and television, it is not surprising that we find people reacting strongly to the visual images of politicians and performers. During political campaigns even a modern sophisticated public will frequently pay more attention to the gestures, the half-hidden smiles and other facial expressions of the candidates than they will to the verbal meaning and content of the candidates' speeches.

Even though he is often mimicked, President Richard Nixon is a perfect example of what impact body language can have on a message. Nixon tends to let his face carry most of the emotion while his responses and gestures, seemingly almost programmed, offer clues as to the intent of his meaning. The hand in the pocket offers the posture of casualness; in moments of rising emphasis, the hands come into play, the long fingers tending to clasp and unclasp, wring, point and chop. Such gestures

usually mark the moments of heaviest emotion. Once the moment passes, the hands return to a position behind his back or hang at his sides. If the chin begins to tuck down, we know that he is teaching us. If the voice drops and he looks at the floor, a staggering array of facts and statistics is forthcoming. When the going gets complex, the fingers are again brought into the open and used as if he were playing a piano; the pace may increase until the fingers become a clenched fist, suitable for punctuating a Nixon theory or fragment of philosophy and then the hands are spread in a gesture of peacefulness and slowly put away. If he begins to say, "I should distinguish . . ." watch for a long forefinger to be pointed at the questioner; it usually means that the question is not liked and that some effort will be made to discredit the direction of the question and substitute one of his own. Although such performances seem contrived, there is no sense of honesty to them as well. Richard Nixon is not a man to whom public performances come easily, and he works hard to perform well. Apparently many people appreciate the fact that he takes such care to talk to them.

All of these efforts to interpret body language take time and great patience. Coupled with this, however, is the problem of mixed communication. Usually nonverbal messages transmitted at the same time with verbal messages reinforce the spoken communication. If we are communicating honestly, we send out straight messages, both verbally and nonverbally. Sometimes, though, we lie in our teeth, and when we do, the truth may be revealed through the nonverbal messages being transmitted simultaneously with the lie. Sigmund Freud once claimed that no person can keep a secret; even if his lips are silent, betrayal will ooze from every pore. Often we are unaware of this facet in the communication process. The case is told of the woman who repeatedly told her husband that she loved him, but she continually scorched his breakfast eggs, decorated the living room in green, a color he despised, and overstarched his dress shirts. Often the deepest hostilities may appear through nonverbal modes of behavior.

Unusually obvious contradictions between verbal and nonverbal behavior are rare; under most conditions only the most sensitive observer will catch the full contradictions. Many people take the spoken message at full face value and ignore the nonverbal information that accompanies it. If we are to become effective in our communication with others, however, we must remain alert to the entire 65 per cent of communication which relies on nonverbal behavior. If we accommodate only the verbal in our speech, we may be diverted from our essential purpose which is that the other person should receive our message as we want him to receive it. Information sent and received should be evaluated in the light of the entire communication process. Anything less leads to misunderstanding and broken communication patterns.

Teachers can help students increase their awareness of nonverbal communication by involving them in a number of exercises. The following activities suggest some of the experiences that might be used.

1. Have students keep a journal for a day or two in which they record the nonverbal messages that they have responded to. Have them attempt to determine which messages had the most effect and why.
2. Ask students to spend part of a study period observing the nonverbal behavior of the people around them, including teachers. What messages are being sent? Do teachers tend to use programmed body movements more than students?
3. Let students select a proverb or axiom and construct a story around it; improvise without words until a satisfactory interpretation has been established; let them present it to the class and determine whether the message is clear.
4. Ask students to study news commentators on television; have them watch talk show hosts such as Johnny Carson, Dick Cavett and Jack Paar; have the students watch a program without any sound track; let them see if they can determine from the nonverbal messages what the flow of the conversation is, what its meaning may be and what effects it has on various characters.
5. Have students sit facing each other across a table; they are to let their eyes do all the talking; what messages can be sent and received?
6. Pair students and have them take turns blindfolding each other and then guiding each other around the room or building; let them talk about how they feel in this relationship with space; what kinds of messages were sent and received? What effect did this experience have on their perception of a familiar space?
7. Let students sit face to face with each other; have them close their eyes and then find each other's hands; let them explore each other's hands by touch, movement, resistance, etc. What kind of messages could be transmitted and received?
8. Allow students to select an emotion such as joy or fear and let them try to express it nonverbally.
9. Experiment with the following: try to communicate some personal matter to a friend by (1) whispering in his ear; (2) speaking to him at arm's length; (3) speaking to him about six feet away; (4) speaking to him across the room; (5) speaking to him outside at a distance of 25 to 40 feet. What differences do the distances make in the effectiveness of the message and the nonverbal messages being sent?
10. If students have access to a videotape camera, let them record the movements of various individuals in a variety of situations; play back and discuss what nonverbal messages are being transmitted.
11. View some silent films; have students concentrate on the different forms of body language used.
12. Encourage students to visit a factory or mill where the noise level is high; let them report on what means of nonverbal communication are used.
13. Introduce students to the game *Body Talk* (available from Psychology Today Games, Del Mar, California 92014; $5.95); players express emotions provided on cards and others must try to accurately determine these emotions.
14. Have students experiment with the effects of mixed communication. For instance, have them consciously send out contradictory

(Continued on page 53)

Improvisations and the Teaching of English

ROGER C. BERGSTROM
Chairman, English Department
Fairfax High School
Fairfax County, Virginia

> *The ability to create a situation imaginatively and to play a role in it is a tremendous experience, a sort of vacation from one's everyday self and the routine of everyday living. We observe that this psychological freedom creates a condition in which strain and conflict are dissolved and potentialities are released in the spontaneous effort to meet the demands of the situation.*

Neva L. Boyd, in her fascinating book, *Play, A Unique Discipline*, has thus given us three good reasons for introducing Improvisations, or Role-playing as a classroom activity in the teaching of English. Today, more than ever, students need the intellectual and emotional involvement which role-playing offers so uniquely.

First, role-playing is a valid educational experience which utilizes a different method of stimulating students to greater understanding and appreciation of materials often routinely presented. Second, improvisation or role-playing helps to ease the strains and conflicts which generate in every classroom—students watching and participating can explore, verbalize, and enact touchy, personal, or delicate themes or deep-felt emotional situations without fear of direct exposure. Third, role-playing offers another opportunity for creative activity in a form which elicits instant response from viewers. Situations in a role-playing activity are constantly changing, presenting a variety of avenues of creative exploration. James Moffett in his book, *A Student Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grade K-13*, states:

> *One of the main values of improvisations is the exploration of differences—differences, for example, between two-way and three-way relationships, in pace and rhythm, in language style of different speakers, in the dynamics and balances of interaction, in settings and circumstances, in the order of acts, in behavior strategies. (All of these are aspects of both literature and real life).*

How then can we put into practice this unique activity? I believe that role playing can be used as (1) a novel approach to the teaching of grammar, (2) a good method to stimulate better compositions, and (3) a way to enrich the understanding of literature. Presenting basic principles of grammar can often be boringly routine—"Open Warriner's to page 151 and review the rules. When you have finished the exercises be ready to take the test!"

Add role-playing to your repertoire of techniques for teaching grammar. For example: Purpose of lesson—Correct punctuation of dialogue. Three volunteer role-players will be needed: two boys and one girl.

Explain the scene: Father, Mother, Teen-age son. Time: 2:00 A.M., Place: living room of home. Situation: Son is returning home from a date two hours late. Coach students through a brief pantomime depicting what could have happened. Keep pantomime simple.

When class begins, ask these volunteer role-players to perform the pantomime. Allow students to react. Most will immediately identify the situation and note the missing dialogue. Ask role-players to enact the scene again improvising dialogue. When the second improvisation is completed, students normally find dialogue spoken by the role-players to have been stilted and often not as colorful and realistic as a real life situation. This is the moment for class participation in the creation of a more believable pattern of conversation. Record the best examples as quickly and accurately as you can. Ditto them for distribution on the following day. Pass out dittoed copies of the dialogue (transcribed in simple paragraph form.)

Show students how to arrange dialogue on the page properly and then proceed to teach the lesson on correct punctuation of dialogue. Students can continue creating additional dialogue and correctly punctuating it. This exercise has worked and students found it to be a painless and pleasant learning experience.

Another simple role-playing game which can be useful in the teaching of prepositional phrases is called "Attache." Teachers can be the role-players in this game. Announce to students that they are to record all the prepositional phrases that they see. Step out of the room. Open the door and enter carrying your attache case. Walk up the aisle to the desk. Place the attache case on the desk. Open it. Remove papers. Place them in the files, under the desk, etc. This is an effective way to see how observant students can be and how well they understand the function of the preposition.

Stimulating interesting composition is another valid use of role-playing. I have found the book, *Improvisation for the Theatre*, by Viola Spolin, to be a treasure-trove of games which can be adapted for use in the English classroom. "What's Beyond" is a game from this book which I have found successful.

> Single player. Player is either to leave or enter a room (or both). (Suggest that stage is simply an empty hallway leading to and from doors.) Stage is used only to walk through; no action is to take place other than what is necessary to communicate to the audience what room he has come from and what room he is going to.
>
> *Example 1.* (done by role-player pretending to be an adult). The character walks briskly to center, bows several times, throws kisses to imaginary audience, accepts bouquets of roses, bows again, and exits.
>
> *Example 2.* (done by role-player pretending to be an adult). The character walks rapidly on stage, wiping her hands on what seems to be a towel that she is holding. She unties something from around her waist and hangs it on the doorknob. She moves across stage, stopping

momentarily to take what appears to be a hat, puts it on her head, glances into a mirror, and briskly exits out another door.

Ask these questions: What room did she come from? What room did she go to? Did she show us or tell us? Is it possible to show What's Beyond without some onstage activity?

Upon completion of the improvisation ask students to write a paragraph or page on what they just viewed. Permit them to write from any point of view. Many excellent interior monologues have resulted from this exercise. To allow more students to participate, two or three students may improvise a "What's Beyond" situation. The viewers can choose which improvisation they wish to write up.

Another interesting game, "Watch The Sport", combines sensory writing with the development of point of view. Begin by asking students to think about and recall objects which they would encounter at the location of the sport to be watched. For example, surfing is the sport to be watched and the beach is the locale. Students bring to the front of the room imaginary objects found on the beach: sandals, surf boards, beach umbrellas, etc. This pantomime activity helps to set the scene. Next, show the short film, *Moods of Surfing*, to give students the vicarious experience of surfing. Then begin to play the game. Divide the class into two groups: one group will observe the other. Group A will begin the game by observing the actions of an imaginary surfer. Coach players to *see* the action with their whole bodies: focus on colors, listen for sounds, concentrate on smells—see movement, focus on what's above, below, around you. Observe the entire action of the surfer.

Writing assignment 1. Record sensory details—recreate the mounting excitement of the surfing experience from the point of view of the observer.

Group B will continue the game by becoming the surfer. Coach players to recreate the action of surfing: focus on the colors, listen to the sounds, concentrate on smells, feel movement, focus on physical tensions of the body while surfing. Try to capture the total surfing experience.

Writing assignment 2. Record the sensory impressions of surfing and recreate the surfing experience from the point of view of the surfer.

Improvisation games can help the English teacher in the interpretation of literature. Are your students having difficulty creating sharp, believable physical descriptions when they are developing fictional characters? Try using a simple observation game where a student pantomimes an action, for example, washing the dishes. Fellow students are asked to observe the improvisation and watch for and record details such as facial expressions, body posture, hand gestures, skin, eye, and hair color, and textures. If any dialogue is spoken, ask students to observe vocal inflections rate of speed, volume, and general qualities. These observations will help in creating a more interesting and believable characterization.

Do your students really know the people they read about? To reveal depth of understanding of a character studied, a teacher might ask a student to prepare an improvisation depicting the character in a different

time situation. For example, Holden Caulfield as a forty-year-old man talking to his children. What advice would he give them?

Perhaps you would like another method of evaluating student understanding of a literary work previously read. Improvisation can be an alternative to the traditional comprehensive questions. Select a scene which was either well-liked or one which students felt uneasy about. Agree on where to begin, select your role-players and begin the improvisation with the instructions that they are to explore other possibilities than are offered by the text. Players have to think about motivations and relationships in order to act out their roles. It is in the exploration of other possibilities of a text that makes the author's choices more meaningful.

A good way to bring alive problems or issues found in current literature is to improvise or role-play them. These moral, social, and psychological issues that are from group reading become more meaningful and lasting when presented via a vivid improvisation. The game could also become a basis for a topic-centered discussion or composition.

Don't be timid; give improvisation or role-playing a chance to add another dimension to your teaching of English. May I also recommend the following resource materials which I have found to be most helpful in understanding and applying the improvisational technique:

Boyd, Neva L., *Play, A Unique Discipline.*

Moffett, James, *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: Handbook for Teachers.*

Spolin, Viola, *Improvisation for the Theatre.*

Adolescent Literature: Once More to the Defense

G. Melvin Hipps

Department of English
Furman University
Greenville, South Carolina

Ever since literature for adolescents was invented, discovered, identified—however one might describe the genesis of that sort of writing—teachers who have attempted to include adolescent literature in the curriculum have had to defend their actions against legions of dubious or downright scornful colleagues, principals, supervisors, parents, and even students. I spend a good deal of my time trying to increase the number of teachers who are willing to take on this crowd of antagonists and use adolescent books in their classes. It is not an easy job. In my courses in literature for adolescents, students and I seem to hassle continuously over numerous variations of the same questions: Is there any such thing as adolescent literature? If there is, of what value is it? For my part, these are fair questions unless they are asked by someone who has already decided that the answer to both questions is a resounding "No" and who isn't in the mood to have his convictions tampered with.

My answer to the first question is a simple one. Adolescent literature is any literature appropriate for adolescents. Since adolescents are a rather variegated lot, the literature appropriate for them is not easily limited. Certainly one cannot point to a body of adolescent literature similar to, say, Twentieth Century British fiction. Nevertheless, one way of limiting the subject is to say that adolescent literature is any literature written primarily for adolescents or read widely by adolescents. (Of course many books read primarily by adolescents were not necessarily written for adolescents. Furthermore, many adult books are obviously well-suited linguistically and thematically for many adolescents.)

Early examples of adolescent novels were more often than not stories about young love, adventure, animals, and heroics in sports. Some fairly representative ones are *Bertie Comes Through* by Henry Felsen, *Prom Trouble* by James L. Summers, *Going on Sixteen* by Betty Cavanna, *Swiftwater* by Paul Annixter, and *To Tell Your Love* by Mary Stolz. Many critics dismissed these books and others like them as shallow, artless, and false in their representations of reality. I'm not sure how many of these critics were adolescents. Recently, writers of books for young people have broadened their subjects to include topics like violence, drugs, sex, war, political, sham, and seamy family conflicts. Examples of this new type of adolescent book are *The Pigman, My Darling My Hamburger,* and *I Never Loved Your Mind* by Paul Zindel; *Tuned Out* and *Don't Play Dead Before You Have To* by Maia Wojciechowska; *I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down* by Nat Hentoff; *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton; *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte; and *Mr. and Mrs. BoJo Jones* by Ann Head. Not surprisingly, many critics have dismissed these books as shallow, artless, and false in their representations of reality. But young people buy them, take them to class, and tuck them neatly behind their copies of *The Return of the Native.*

My answer to the second question (Of what value is adolescent literature?) is not so simple, since valuing is a bit more subjective process than identifying. In an effort to respond to the question, I shall list the four major objections to adolescent literature that I have encountered over the years in my reading and in my adolescent literature courses. To each objection I shall append my scattered, intemperate responses.

OBJECTION: So-called adolescent literature is ephemeral and faddish. It lacks the quality of timelessness that great literature possesses. When the particular situations explored in adolescent novels have changed, no one will read them any more.

RESPONSE: One thing really bothers me about this objection. What I suspect really lies behind it is the fear that if we teach ephemeral literature as part of our curriculum, we shall be continually having to change the curriculum. This of course would be a bit more taxing than teaching essentially the same "timeless" literature year after year.

We must distinguish between truly timeless literature (if indeed there is any such thing) and literature that has been rendered timeless artificially by its recurrence in a long line of tired old anthologies or cur-

riculum guides. "Official curricula" often bestow timelessness on literature that might otherwise be considered ephemeral. If the test of timeless literature is its continuing appeal to an audience somewhat broader than English teachers, then I'm afraid there are fewer classics than most of us would like to admit. Some novels, such as Knowles' *A Separate Peace* have become minor "classics" of adolescent literature. One might ask whether these novels have frequently been included in curriculum guides because they are inherently superior or whether they have been judged superior because they have appeared frequently in curriculum guides. If the latter is true, then timelessness and faddishness may not be as antithetical as we might have imagined.

After we have puzzled over what "timelessness" and "faddishness" *really* mean, we then have to ask: What is wrong with ephemeral or faddish literature? If one believes that it is better for students to read something than nothing, then faddishness may become a thing to be valued rather than scorned. Moreover, if one believes that a person develops taste only by wide reading of literature of different quality, then ephemeral literature becomes just as important as any other kind.

The question of whether students will read adolescent novels when the situations explored in them have changed is an interesting one. Hentoff's *I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down* concerns a teen-age boy's struggle to decide whether to register for the draft. He experiences considerable agony over the morality of the Vietnam War. Any serious reader of this book realizes that the conflict is more general and universal than merely a debate over the Vietnam War, however. Although it wouldn't bother me if students no longer want to read this book now that the Vietnam War is over and the draft is abandoned, I don't see how the novel is tied to the Vietnam War to any greater extent than any other book is tied to its setting.

OBJECTION: Adolescent literature is too easy. It doesn't challenge good students. The conflicts in most adolescent books are inconsequential.

RESPONSE: This objection was the major one voiced against earlier adolescent literature. Critics often condemned early adolescent romances in which the conflicts concern such matters as missing a field goal or breaking a date for the Valentine Dance. I'm convinced that there is still a need for the types of books written by authors like Cavanna, Stolz, and Felsen; but it isn't being quite cricket to lump all books for adolescents together with *Going on Sixteen* and *To Tell Your Love*. Certainly teachers should choose literature suitable for their classes. If a novel bores students, whether it is a children's novel, an adolescent novel, or an adult novel, then it is not appropriate for those students. If a book interests students, however, then it is a potentially appropriate book for use in class, no matter how easy the language may be or how devoid the book may be of traditionally "analyzable" subjects.

Some teachers who have been willing to accept adolescent literature in their slow or average classes have steadfastly rejected it for advanced students. What we often forget is that bright students are not necessarily

more advanced socially or emotionally than other students their age. The characters and conflicts in many popular adolescent novels, such as Zindel's *My Darling, My Hamburger*, would probably interest the good students as well as the slow ones. We also forget sometimes that conflicts that seem trivial or inconsequential to us are of earthshaking importance to young people. Bright students, who may have more capacity for enjoying subtle vicarious experiences than slow ones do, may still have great difficulty becoming involved with the aging, impotent, cynical characters in Hemingway or Fitzgerald. No matter how bright the student may be, his emotional energies are probably directed toward conflicts with parents, teachers, girl or boy friends, and fellow students. For him, these conflicts are not inconsequential. Naturally one would not make up the reading program for good students exclusively with adolescent novels, but these books shouldn't be ignored by teachers of advanced students.

I must ask here, as I did in the previous response: What is wrong with easy books? Must everything we do in our classes be an intellectual mountaintop experience? Teachers' reverence for the belletristic tradition often leads to the impression among students that literature is some sort of monument enshrined in the museum-like atmosphere of English classes. For my part, nothing would do more to enliven the study of traditional literature than to intersperse it (and perhaps relate it to) some popular adolescent books.

OBJECTION: Some adolescent books have profanity and graphic descriptions of sexual activity.

RESPONSE: This objection was of course never made against older adolescent literature, most of which scrupulously avoided taboos of every kind. But current authors who have attempted to explore current subjects and conflicts realistically have brought on a new wave of criticism of adolescent literature. The objection to profanity and sex in books is more often voiced by parents and administrators than by teachers, but many teachers have difficulty accepting books containing traditionally taboo words and situations. Again, teachers must exercise judgment in determining what is and is not appropriate for their students. But teachers should be wary of allowing books to be censored because they include sex and profanity, regardless of all other considerations.

To exclude everything that contains any profanity or sex is to exclude most significant literature of the last twenty-five years, whether it is adult or adolescent literature. Nothing I can think of would render the literature curriculum more irrelevant and inconsequential than this sort of arbitrary standard. To force students who have just watched *Goodbye, Columbus* on television to restrict their class reading to *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jude, the Obscure* is to widen further the gulf between the classroom and the real world.

Too often, I'm afraid objections to sex and profanity are masks for racial, religious, or political objections. When people object to the rare instances (and very mild examples) of profanity in Lipsyte's *The Contender*, I am suspicious that the real objection to the book may be the

portrayal of Blacks in a favorable, even heroic, light. Teachers should be especially sensitive to this problem. If they have strong racial, religious, or political feelings about books, they probably ought to be honest rather than to attempt to cover up their hostility by objecting to linguistic and sexual matters.

Teachers should also guard against allowing their prejudices against profanity and sex to cause them to misinterpret adolescent literature. This is what happened in the case of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Many teachers (and of course many other citizens) refused to look beyond Holden Caulfield's language to see the point of the book. Of course the controversy continued much longer than did most young peoples' interest in the book. Some teachers in my courses in adolescent literature have objected to the explicit sex in Zindel's *I Never Loved Your Mind*. Their aversion to the sex in the book caused them to miss the hilarious satire of the hippie culture in the novel. Ironically, this is precisely the kind of critical error we are attempting to get young people to avoid. I'm sure most adolescents would not miss the satire in the book; and instead of being tempted to imitate the characters, they would be highly amused by the totally ridiculous characters and situations. In short, adolescents may sometimes be more perceptive critics of books like *The Catcher in the Rye* and *I Never Loved Your Mind* than most adults, even teachers, are.

OBJECTION: Adolescent novels are not suitable for class study. After the students have read them, there's nothing else to *do* with them.

RESPONSE: Translated, this objection means: "Adolescent novels do not lend themselves to analysis of plot structure, archetypes, image patterns, and symbolism." Many teachers have been willing for some time to allow students to read adolescent novels for parallel, but few have used them for class study. One of the reasons, I suspect, has been their uncertainty about what to *do* with them in class. If all one can think of to do with a novel is to analyze it by a watered down "new criticism" approach, à la Brooks and Warren, then he probably shouldn't bother with adolescent books. On the other hand, if he believes that a class reading of a novel provides an opportunity for students to discuss their feelings, values, and attitudes in relationship to the conflicts in the novel, then adolescent novels can become a rich source of material for his classes. In order to conduct classes in this manner, a teacher must feel unequivocally that it is important for students to express their feelings and beliefs in class. He must then learn how to explore literature subjectively (as well as objectively) with a class.

Below are some questions which I used with a class of advanced eleventh graders studying *I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down*. These questions led (profitably, I think) to three days of small group discussion. They constitute my answer to the question, "What do you *do* with adolescent novels in class?" I list them not as a study guide for this novel but as examples of the kinds of questions on adolescent literature that may spark some interesting discussion.

GENERAL. Why does Hentoff change the point of view from chapter to chapter? Why does he choose Jeremy and his father as the narrators? How would the story differ if it were narrated wholly by one or the other of these narrators? Do you sympathize more with Jeremy or with Sam or are your sympathies equally distributed?

CHAPTER 1. Characterize Eric. How is he like Jeremy's father?

CHAPTER 2. During the conflict over the volume of the record, was Jeremy or Sam more to blame? Could the controversy have been settled? If so, how?

CHAPTER 3. Is Peter right that Jeremy is already a captive of the establishment? What is characteristic of Peter that would probably cause him to make such a judgment?

CHAPTER 4. What do you think of Sam's approach to Jeremy when he finds Jeremy did not go to a movie? What do you think causes Sam to act as he does? What causes Jeremy to act as he does? In what way is each both right and wrong?

CHAPTER 5. Do you agree with Tracy that all the people are "programmed and predictable"? If so, why?

CHAPTER 6. What do you learn about Sam's philosophy of life in this chapter? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?

CHAPTER 7. McDermott asks Jeremy to justify his long hair. He is obviously stereotyping Jeremy. Do people with long hair ever stereotype shorthaired people? Does Jeremy stereotype anyone in this chapter?

CHAPTER 8. Do you agree with Sam Wolf's assessment of Mr. O'Connor's character? (He says O'Connor is weak and is trying to mask his weakness by calling it idealism.) Why do you think Sam dislikes O'Connor? Why do Sam and his wife send Jeremy to a private school? What do you think of their motives for doing so? Mrs. Wolf says that the "trouble with Jeremy is that he has a father who doesn't know what he wants." Do you agree with her? Why?

CHAPTER 9. As far as the plot is concerned, what issue, the one that is the chief conflict in the novel, is developed in this chapter? With which character's views do you identify in this chapter: Eric's, Mike's, or Jeremy's?

CHAPTER 10. What do you think is the major reason Hershey and Sam have difficulty understanding their children? What do you think of Hershey's "it-wasn't-like-this-when-I-was-young" philosophy? Why do you suppose some adults cling to this idea? What is the thing Hershey seems to fear most concerning his daughter? What does this reveal about his feeling for her?

CHAPTER 11. What did the young boy mean when he said to Jeremy, "I can eat your brain without saying a word"? What do you think of the idea of students from a private school tutoring children in a ghetto school? Why does Jeremy have trouble with the tutoring?

CHAPTER 12. Sam is worried about death. Do young people have similar concern about death? Does Jeremy know about his father's fears?

CHAPTER 13. Do you think Lewis or Mike as the better arguments about an individual's responsibility in war?

CHAPTER 14. Jeremy says life would be better in Sweden or Cuba. Sam says it wouldn't. Jeremy says, "For you it wouldn't be. You've been bent too far." Do you agree with Jeremy about Sam? Sam keeps saying that life is simple for Jeremy, that he doesn't know what hardship is. Is Sam right? Do you approve of Sam's way of reacting to Jeremy's statement about the draft? If not, how do you think he should have acted?

CHAPTER 15. What is being satirized in the parenthesis on pp. 85-86? (Dell paperback, No. 3988) What are the devices used to ridicule the point of view opposite from Jeremy's? Do you think the author is "stacking the deck" here? Is there any evidence in this chapter that might make one doubt Jeremy's sincerity about his decision?

CHAPTER 16. What is it about Sam's character that makes him unwilling to consider having an extra-marital affair?

CHAPTER 17. O'Connor says, "That Criss is going to be a black national resource." Harkness replies, "If she doesn't corrode herself with hate. Power is one thing, hate is another. And hate can destroy power, your own power." Do you agree?

CHAPTER 18. Why does Sam defend Jeremy against Jack? Is his (Sam's) view essentially different from Jack's?

CHAPTER 19. Mike says he needs some jail time. Others have said this about him before, but he says it first on p. 108. Does this change your view of his character? If so, how?

CHAPTER 20. What does Sam's reverie about his childhood reveal about his character? How does the experience described help to explain Sam's present attitude?

CHAPTER 21. What further evidence do we get in this chapter that Jeremy does not come to his decision about the draft solely because of principle? Is this confusion of motives typical of adolescents who are trying to make an important decision?

CHAPTER 22. Do you agree with Hershey, that everyone except wild-eyed revolutionaries are interested only in comfort? Do you think Jeremy "cops out" at the end?

I conclude my responses to the critics of adolescent literature with yet another question: If adult books and much traditional *belle lettres* are too subtle and sophisticated for many adolescents and if writers like Zindel, Hinton, Lipsyte, Wojciechowska, and Hentoff are too easy, inconsequential, ephemeral, profane, or unanalyzable, then what are adolescents to read? Well, back to the grammar books.

Instructional Television: Vital Communication Media

JAMES ENROUGHTY
Secondary Utilization Coordinator
Central Virginia Educational Television
Richmond, Virginia

You're a good English teacher. You pay your professional dues and attend all faculty meetings. You're well-versed in the atrocities of straight lecturing about Keats and Shelley. You're a staunch advocate of individualized instruction and stress quality standards in your educational program. You're "up" on all the latest innovations in teaching—or are you? There's one medium, instructional television, which you may have been taking for granted for some time, but chances are, you won't for long.

Instructional television is not an infant: it's been going through an adolescent period of growth and change over the past couple of years. Like all adolescents, it needs understanding and an open ear.

The value of instructional television as a teaching tool has been demonstrated time and again—witness *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company* as examples. Maybe you have even crushed a clove of garlic, just as Julia Child demonstrated on television. But does television play a vital role in your classroom? Do you know how to use television successfully?

Chances are you've stressed group participation and espirit de corps to your students, be it during daily lessons or pep rallies. Participation and cooperation are ideals that most teachers want manifested in their students. It is this same spirit which the teacher needs to become aware of in successfully utilizing instructional television in the classroom. The television teacher and the classroom teacher by nature play complementary roles. The television teacher, after literally hours of preparation and rehearsals, presents a well-planned and visually interesting lesson to students via television. What, then, is the classroom teacher's role during this time? If you're the kind of teacher who seizes this time as the perfect opportunity to whiz to the teachers' lounge for a cigarette or sit in the rear of the classroom and grade papers, in all probability, television isn't proving itself very useful as an instructional tool for you. For successfully utilizing instructional television, it's virtually mandatory that you follow three simple steps with your class:

1. Consult your calendar and telecourse manual. Find out what lesson is airing at the time you wish to view it, and become familiar with the content of that program. Introduce this information to your students. Quiz them. Arouse their curiosities. Now you're ready for your "team member" to take over.
2. View the telelesson with your class. Display your interest, even if you're watching the program for the third time in the day. Nothing turns students "off" more quickly than to be viewing a program which the teacher doesn't deem worthy nor interesting enough to view.
3. After the set is turned off, it's your turn to "take the ball" from the television teacher. Unfortunately, the television teacher cannot an-

swer questions or reenforce concepts which may have been introduced. This is perhaps your most important job in using instructional television.

Television in the classroom serves as a resource for teachers. It is not intended in any way to replace the necessity of having a classroom teacher, rather to work with the teacher in the classroom, who is the most important component in the instructional television process. Without the teacher's understanding of the positive contributions and limitations of instructional television, it cannot be a successful teaching tool. Instructional television can be integrated into the curriculum as a whole and should be used to enhance the educational process. It can motivate students. It can magnify things to larger-than-life proportions. It can stimulate; it can provide specialized instruction to both teachers and students.

More traditionally-oriented teachers are exposed to contemporary subjects and methods. Children in lower socio-economic levels can be exposed to things they normally may be unable to see. Television has immediacy; the moment an earth-shaking event may occur, it may be televised simultaneously to millions of people. Unlike films, filmstrips and the like, television possessed the unique ability to remain current; obsolescence need not become a problem.

Central Virginia Educational Television (WCVE-TV, Channel 23, and WCVW-TV, Channel 57) is currently offering two series for secondary English classes. *A Matter of Fiction* is aimed at junior high school students. This series features dramatizations of selected short stories. In most cases, the plot is introduced and develops to a turning point, at which time the dramatization ceases. The intent here is that the student, his interest having been aroused, will wish to secure a copy of the short story on his own to "find out what happens." Hosted by John N. Robbins, Jr., the series is produced by WETA-TV, Washington, D. C., in cooperation with the National Instructional Television Center. Next year Central Virginia will offer the companion series, *A Matter of Fact*, dealing with non-fiction topics.

Repeating this year is *Franklin To Frost*, produced by the Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction, and taught by Dr. Arthur M. Eastman, Ph.D., Yale University. The series features both conceptual and topical themes in American literature.

Great Writing Through the Ages, distributed by the Learning Corporation of America, will be offered in the fall of this year and will feature units on The Bible, Shakespeare, the Middle Ages, Dickens and Romanticism. English teachers will have a larger selection of programs from which to choose; utilization of instructional television by English teachers should certainly reach new high levels. Next year promises to be a year of greater utilization for still another reason—more and more schools are purchasing their own video-tape recorders.

Secondary schools are usually rigidly scheduled, with little flexibility allowed in time periods. Oftentimes a class may begin to see a program

and then be interrupted in the middle of the program to move on to another class. Sometimes a program may be offered only during the morning, for example, and not in the afternoon. Video-tape recorders are saving many headaches in many of the schools within our coverage area, especially in secondary schools. A video-tape recorder enables a school to tape a program directly off the air and play it back through the school's own television system at any time. Through the use of the portable VTR, a program may be taped and played back to a class at will. VTR's are simple to use and invaluable aids to those schools who possess them.

Maybe you used instructional television when it first appeared; maybe you remember how teachers lectured to the camera, much as you do in your own classroom. If you're not already using the English series in your classes, just turn your set on and see how English education has changed. Instructional television could become a vital part of your curriculum, give it a new chance, and it probably will.

Communication and Nonverbal Behavior

(Continued from page 40)

nonverbal messages while someone is talking to them, i.e., a student could be talking to another about how terrible a test was; the other student could be listening but acting as if it were the best news he had ever heard in his life.

15. Encourage students to begin to compile a list of body movements and definitions; you might experiment with developing a symbol system similar to that of Birdwhistell.

[1] Randall Harrison, "Nonverbal Communication: Exploration into Time, Space, Action and Object," in J. H. Campbell and H. W. Hepler, eds., *Dimensions in Communication* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), p. 161.

[2] *The Florida FL Reporter*, IX (Spring-Fall, 1971), p. 18.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[4] Albert Mehrabian, "Orientation Behaviors and Nonverbal Attitude Communication," *Journal of Communication*, XVII (December 1967), p. 331.

Contingency Contracting in English

BETSY B. HARR
Salem Intermediate School
Roanoke County Schools
Salem, Virginia

Contingency contracting is teaching by the contract method and using activity reinforcers to modify behavior. Spending time in an interest area is contingent on working in class. I installed contingency contracting in my eighth grade English classes experimentally. Dr. Brian Austin, Counseling Center, University of Virginia, was instrumental in initiating the experiment and was most helpful throughout the program. I feel the experiment was most successful. For that reason, the experiment is worthy of being shared with English teachers throughout the state.

Pre-Teaching

Before a contingency-managed classroom can evolve, behavioral objectives must be constructed. I designed activities to correlate the behavioral objectives in establishing a group-oriented classroom.

After collecting the instructional materials, I selected materials appropriate for ungrouped classes. I constructed daily tasks for a twenty-day unit on Greek mythology. Required tasks for a desired grade were listed on a learning contract for the students.

I determined the evaluative measures and composed comprehension quizzes to accompany each myth. Students would have a variety of choices for class projects, presentations, themes, and research papers.

The final step in establishing a contingency-managed classroom is the most important and also the most difficult. Developing a positive reinforcement area requires a careful selection of tokens, activities, or positive reinforcers. The activity center in my classroom was composed of six interest centers. Spending time in an interest center was contingent on completion of one task per class period. There was one stipulation for activity time: Students had to work cooperatively.

The following is a brief description of each interest center:

I. Art Activity Center—Materials were available for making transparencies, slides, and filmstrips.

II. Game Center—An array of instructional games and puzzles were available. Some of these I made; others I purchased or borrowed.

III. Display Center—Students displayed references to mythology. The classroom bulletin board was used for the development of a collage. This was an activity continuing throughout the entire unit.

IV. Appreciation Center—Students could observe mythological prints on sculpture, gods and goddesses, architecture, and albums of mythology.

V. Library and Reading Center—Students could elect to spend activity time in the school library or choose to read from the classroom library.

VI. Communication Center – Listening stations, a record player, a tape recorder, slide projector, and a filmstrip projector were provided for listening to records, tapes, and viewing filmstrips and slides.

Teaching

Armed with instructional materials, contracts, and reinforcers, I presented the idea of contingency contracting to each class. Classes exhibited a remarkable degree of enthusiasm and prepared to begin a new unit of work.

All instructional materials were on a table in the center of the room. When a student completed work on an assigned myth, he would return his texts and secure a comprehension check from a folder labeled accordingly. The student placed the completed quiz in a class folder. Grading and social reinforcement were immediate. If a student successfully completed his task, then he could elect to spend time in an interest center or to continue working on his contract.

Results

The classroom becomes a functional laboratory in a contingency-managed situation. Activity is perpetual. More individual needs are met because a student progresses at his own rate. The student decides his task for the day and proceeds with it without pressure from the teacher. The student works more diligently because he knows what is required for a desired grade, and he is obligated by contract to complete his work. Observing the decrease in failures and the increase in enthusiasm makes contingency contracting an effective teaching method.

However, like any effective teaching technique, contingency contracting has its disadvantages. Finding appropriate reinforcers and planning contracting procedures are very time-consuming. The teacher must be constantly alert, grading papers, and applying reinforcers. However, I feel the disadvantages could be alleviated by a teacher's aid or through team teaching and are outweighed by the advantages.

FALL EDITION

FOCUS: THE COMMUNICATION ARTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *A great number of excellent articles were submitted for this issue which we could not use because of space limitations. We, consequently, hope to use the same focal topic so that we can publish them in our fall issue. The topic has proved a popular one. We invite additional articles on both the focal topic and other topics of interest to English teachers.*