



**Jacksonville State
University
Writing Project
Anthology**

2005

**Jacksonville State University
Writing Project Anthology**

Summer 2005

Jacksonville State University
Jacksonville, Alabama

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DEDICATION

*"We cannot live for ourselves alone."
Herman Melville*

This anthology is dedicated to the 2005 Jacksonville State University Writing Project Fellows for their support, patience, and inspiration of each other during their infinite quest for knowledge for themselves and their students.

Foreword

Despite a summer of record-breaking temperatures and an interruption of our schedule due to classes called off by Hurricane Dennis, twelve fellows stepped into the spotlight in the frigid climate of Stone Center to learn about writing and the teaching of writing. Nourished by lots of great food, we worked to wrap our minds around the complex issues involved in the process. A diverse group of unique, perhaps even eccentric, individuals gradually became a cohesive body as we read, discussed, wrote, argued, ate, studied, researched, demonstrated, taught, laughed, sang, and shared our strategies and concerns. United by a theme centered on Hollywood, each of us stepped up and accepted the challenge of discovering and directing writing talent among our students. The many ideas, friendships, and teaching strategies we shared with our colleagues more than compensated for the difficulty of leaving home and juggling our professional and personal responsibilities. With renewed energy and enthusiasm, we completed production of the 2005 Summer Institute and called it a wrap, feeling that we deserved an Oscar for our performance as teachers, as writers, and as leaders. We can hardly wait to see the box office returns when we implement our new knowledge in the classroom.

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DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00-9:30.....Journal Readings, group time
9:30-11:00.....Teacher Demonstrations
12:00-1:00.....Lunch
1:00-3:00.....Anthology Tasks
Reading, Writing, Research
or
.....Response Groups
3:00-3:50.....Round Table Discussion
3:50-4:00.....Wrap Up

SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS

- Multi-Genre Projects—Dr. Dolores Johnson.....July 6
- Interviews with the Chanticleer.....July 7
- Luncheon at the President’s Dining Hall.....July 6th and 12
- Alumni Refresher.....July 12
Differentiated Instruction—Millie Harris
- Karaoke Luncheon.....July 8th and 15
- Group Picture with the Photographer.....July 18
- Student Visitors from English Composition 430.....July 21
- On Going Compassionate Project of JSU Writing Project Fellows.....July 12
(St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital)..... through July 25
- Graduation.....July 26

Response Groups

Group I

Rodney Bailey

Roberta Dorning

Mary Greenwood

Mary White

Group II

Latoya Campbell

Brook Finlayson

Valerie Rimpsey

Jackie Sockwell

Group III

Latorria Harrison

Becky McDowell

Valerie Womack

Millie Mostella

Demonstration Summaries

Motivating Students: New Ideas for Writing

This demonstration will introduce students to different ideas for writing essays, paragraphs, journals, and more. The demonstration will also use the senses to motivate students to write. During the course of the demonstration, several tools will be used including the Internet, movie clips, sound clips, and various other sensory materials. At the end of the demonstration, students will create group projects that demonstrate their knowledge of sensory writing as well as answer questions based on group presentations.

Rodney Bailey

Vocabulary with a Purpose

The teaching of vocabulary has been pushed out of the education forefront. This may be attributed to teacher apprehension about the teaching of vocabulary. This demonstration gives teachers numerous strategies to use in the classroom when teaching vocabulary. The strategies within the demonstration can be used across the curriculum. Teachers will leave the demonstration with a renewed interest and positive attitude toward vocabulary.

LaToya Campbell

Avoiding Pitfalls in Teaching Writing

Educators who have been teaching for quite a few years can fall into a routine and lose the enthusiasm they once had. This demonstration gives these teachers fresh ideas about teaching and encourages them to try new things in their classrooms. In the book *Situations*, the essay "From Grammar to Writing" states that research shows today's student learners need more stimulation in the classroom, therefore, more 'hands-on' activities. It also states that the retention rate has been shown to be higher when students are exposed to lessons that they can relate to and lessons in which they have done some of their own creative work. Thus, teachers need the resources to incorporate emerging ideas into their lesson plans. The Internet is a very valuable source for new ideas, and there are numerous books teachers can use as resources. This demonstration lists some of these resources and shows activities that can be used in the classroom. It is very important to keep the classroom a learning environment and yet still have students enjoy what they are doing. When students are actively involved, research shows the student retention rate is increased, therefore creating an active learning environment.

Roberta Dorning

Six Steps to Writing

Traditional methods of teaching the writing process often face two great obstacles. One is a lag between talking about writing and actually writing, during which students grow bored. The other is a lack of unity in the composition caused by poor planning on the student's part due to skipping, or skimping on, parts of the writing process. This six-step process for writing a five-paragraph essay compels students to construct essays in a logical and unified manner by not allowing them to skip any of the steps of the writing process. All of the steps are performed in outline form, and only after these six steps are completed is the essay committed to paragraph form. With this process, students are writing within the first ten minutes of the demonstration as the class participates in an essay composed on an overhead projector. After this hands-on introduction to the Six Steps, groups of three engage in writing an essay in which they compose certain steps as a group and complete the essay individually. When time for the activity has expired, not all participants are likely to be finished. At this point, the importance of revision may be emphasized as participants are given the option to publish what they have or to continue revision with the final essay due the next session. Publication consists of posting the final essay draft next to the Six Steps worksheet. Not allowing the use of pencils or correction fluid, but requiring the use of different colored pens for different editing and revision stages, affords the teacher a clear trail of each writer's process from first to last draft.

Brook Finlayson

Using Literary Devices in Descriptive Writing

The demonstration introduces students to literary devices (simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration, hyperbole, and irony) to use to paint a word picture when writing descriptively. Reading and discussion of sample poems shows students how to use the literary devices in a more meaningful way. This procedure provides students a strategy that helps them relate to the concept taught. The demo includes a game of "I have.....Who has?....." to review the definition of the newly learned vocabulary words. This demonstration encourages enthusiasm in teachers to teach these literary devices in a creative manner to capture students' attention to improve their writing.

Mary Greenwood

Persuasive Writing

Fifth, seventh, and tenth graders are responsible for taking the Alabama Direct Writing Assessment. The four modes for students' responses are narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. Generally, students find it difficult to write persuasive essays. This demonstration provides pre-writing techniques and strategies for students to overcome their fears with this mode. Also, the information offers students an

opportunity to critique essays, which helps them to organize their own writing. As students become familiar with this mode, they soon realize that persuasive writing goes beyond the classroom.

Latorria Harrison

Presentation on Medieval Banquet Activity

The planning and execution of a medieval banquet is a great way to involve students in writing activities centered on the Middle Ages. High school students spend more time writing ballads, romance stories and plays when they know they will be performing them for peers and parents. They gain valuable research experience in finding recipes from medieval cookbooks and putting together costumes from “found” items like pillowcases, bathrobes and duct tape. The idea fosters multiple talents as students can choose to sing, play musical instruments, or dance, in addition to reading and performing from stories, poems, and plays they’ve written in class.

Rebecca McDowell

Observations and Inferences

According to Kylene Beers, author of *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do*, we must teach all students how to observe and analyze the printed and visual words as we read and write about our life experiences. Research shows that if students fail to sharpen their observational skills, they will fail to develop reading comprehension to a higher level. This demonstration, geared to reach reluctant writers, will broaden their experience base by sharpening their ability to read or see between the lines. An inference is an explanation of an observation. These opportunities can be provided through the use of cartoons or any descriptive pictures. Students will list their observations, then make inferences as to what is happening or what will happen in the rest of the story. Students may use the same picture, then share and/or compare their stories.

Millie Mostella

Geolit: A Creative Approach to Teaching Literature

Geolit is defined as the use of geometric shapes applied to the study of a literary work, concept, or theme. It entails using geometric shapes—circles, squares, triangles, lines, etc—as graphic organizers to help students better understand a particular literary piece. Some of the advantages of using geolit include these: (1) it deviates from the traditional manner of teaching literature, (2) encourages students to think critically, (3) prevents students from summarizing and/or responding inappropriately, (4) organizes

information for easier recollection, (5) prevents improper note taking, and (6) appeals to a majority of students.

Valerie Rimpsey

**Denotation, Connotation, Euphemism:
It's okay to play with your words at the table.**

This presentation informs the teachers of ways to incorporate word play into the classroom. Student vocabulary—and interest in language—improves dramatically when the learning environment is reshaped to allow generative language activities to take center stage. *Denotation* was defined as “dictionary definition of a word,” *connotation* as “the associations evoked by a word,” and *euphemism* as “synonyms for words we are uncomfortable saying.” The presentation demonstrated several word play activities, inviting teacher-fellow participation, and everyone participated with enthusiasm. Activities included matching the birth names of several performers to their stage names; assessing group reaction to certain words, names and terms; rating insults from least to most insulting; generating terms associated with the words “female,” “male,” “redneck,” and “virgin;” the “conjugation” of connotations; and the creation of new words. The packet of information for the teacher-fellows included a list of book references and websites, including online dictionaries and puzzle makers.

Jacqueline Sockwell

101 Ways to Problem Solve: Writing Across the Curriculum K–2

The demonstration provides a wide range of activities to encourage and support teachers who teach writing across the curriculum. Selecting a theme and developmentally appropriate activities before instruction allows the teacher to be well prepared and enthusiastic. Research indicates that reading and writing are ongoing processes of learning. Therefore, child-centered classrooms include a wide range of reading and writing activities that will address the learning styles of all students, individually, in whole groups, or in small group activities.

Mary Louise F. White

To Kill a Mockingbird: Going Beyond Traditional Assessment

Finding an assessment tool that adequately measures student knowledge is one of the greatest challenges to teachers. Traditional pencil and paper tests often evaluate the student's knowledge of facts, but rarely do such tests allow for student interpretation and understanding. Creative projects allow the student to express all facets of knowledge—facts, understanding, interpretation, and personalization. Portfolio projects

are an option as an alternative assessment tool. Quilts also provide a unique way to express comprehension and internalization of key novel themes while also incorporating Southern culture with Southern literature. Cloth quilts provide a cultural experience, while Ziploc baggie and duct tape quilts provide an outlet for creative assessment and easy display.

Valerie Womack



Rodney Bailey

"We cannot live for ourselves alone"

Moby Dick

Pumpkins

Orange sumo wrestlers
side by side
in a grocery store.

Customers carve holes in their
baby soft bellies
to make a face

Which one will I pick?

Endless Fight

I'll never forget
daylight battling with night
ending in a draw

Ode to the Earth

Green aerosol cans
release misty white powder
into the blue sky.

Tears

While lying in the snow,
I watch as blood
drips from my
cut body.

Flashbacks
of knives slicing my flesh
and slivers of glass
ripping me open

I could have run
but my home is here
where my blood has
stained the virgin snow.

I try to breathe,
the air refuses
to enter my lungs

As my tears melt the snow
beneath me, I look to the sky

and wonder

How many more tears must melt the snow
before the clouds disappear

Winter Delight

Snow makes its peace with the Earth
covering every block,
a bleached white blanket.
My window is framed
with carrots of ice.

How cold it must be out there,
yet, the sounds of laughing children
grow stronger with each snowball
thrown against our rusty, iced
mailbox.

My ex-girlfriend builds a snowman
while Duchess, my black lab,
circles her
like a boxer in a prize fight.

Duchess bites her leg,
I shriek with delight.
Who could ask for a better season?



LaToya Campbell

"Everybody loves me, and I intend to keep that way."

Kathryn (from Cruel Intentions)

Queen of the Castle

Life was great! Being recently divorced and finally back on my feet again, I felt that I was on top of the world. I was financially stable and taking care of myself. My two-bedroom apartment was lonely at times, but I had learned to deal with it. I was now able to go and do exactly as I pleased. I could entertain guests whenever I liked. However, freedom only lasted for a little while. Then suddenly, it was gone.

During the discovery of my newfound freedom, my sister, Antonia was expecting the birth of a baby girl. The thought of this new life excited me tremendously. I love babies! I love them even more when they do not belong to me. On July 30, 2004, at 3:00 p.m., my niece, Jordyn Tayana finally arrived. I had wondered for months and months what this little person would look like and what personality she would have. I could have never imagined the wealth of emotion I felt the first time I saw her. Even though Antonia had no idea what was going on, the eighteen hours of labor that she endured were worth it. After a few days at the hospital, Antonia and Jordyn went to my parents' house. This journey was not out of the ordinary. It is customary with my family, as well as my African-American culture, for new mothers to go to the home of their parents after the birth of a child.

To our surprise, while they were gone, my brother's fiancé gave birth to my second niece, Cadence. Two babies were born during the span of eight days and eighteen minutes. Life was definitely not going to be the same. After a two-week stay at my parents', my sister (still apprehensive about being alone with the baby) and Jordyn finally came back home to Gadsden. Antonia put in a request to her husband to have Jordyn's

room ready when they arrived at home. My sister knew that she and the baby could not stay in the house with paint fumes, so that meant they would have to stay at my apartment. Now when I look back at the request, I know that it was a plot to divert everyone from the fact that she did not want to go her home; therefore, my quiet two-bedroom apartment had been invaded. My quaint little bachelorette pad had been transformed into a nursery. One night turned into one week. One week turned into two weeks. After two weeks, Antonia, her husband, and Jordyn finally went home. They were finally gone but not for long.

In today's society, some couples have this belief that having a baby will somehow save a marriage or keep it together. My sister and her husband shared in this belief, and like most couples, they quickly found that the belief was not true. With nowhere else to go, my sister and Jordyn moved in with me. I immediately turned into a part-time mother. I did not mind Antonia and Jordyn's living with me. Jordyn was only two months old. She was still fairly quiet and sweet at this time. Jordyn was a great baby, and she always slept through the night. At this point in my life, I only thought that I knew what it was like to love someone.

In the months to come, Jordyn would dominate the household. If she was not happy, no one was happy. She took total control and still has it to this day. Rarely do I make life decisions and not consider Jordyn. When looking for a new apartment and a new job, I had her in mind the entire time. Even though she is not my daughter, she controls so many aspects of my life. I wake up everyday wanting to be a better person because of her. I want Jordyn to say with pride, "That's my YaYa!" (as she

affectionately calls me). At times, it drives me crazy having them here with me, but I would not want them any other place else.

In a couple of weeks, the "Queen of the Castle" will celebrate her first birthday. I cannot believe how fast this year has passed. My life has been better for having Jordyn in it. When I get down about the trivial things in life, I know there is one person who can always make me smile. Jordyn is truly the love of my life. Each day, I thank God for my little angel. This has been the best year of my life. I know that my experience with Jordyn has taught me so many things. These are things that make me a better teacher now and things that will make me a great mother in the future. I am fortunate to have had this "trial run" at being a mother.

The Importance of Being Prompt

Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines *prompt* as being ready and quick to act as occasion demands present at an appointed time. All employers look for promptness in perspective employees. Coincidentally, very few employees or students possess this trait or find it important. This perception can be attributed to a variety of things. In today's society, promptness has been put on the back burner. Many of today's youth do not put a value on promptness. Individuals who feel that this characteristic is not important probably do so because they face no consequences for their inappropriate behavior.

Our society has accepted that tardiness is no longer a major problem. Even young children in elementary school find it acceptable to be tardy for school. This attitude grows and follows the children throughout school and into the work environment. Each year, schools must combat the growing problem of tardiness.

Author James St. Pierre, a fellow teacher, discusses, in Tabulating the Tardies, techniques that school administrators and teachers can use to decrease the problem of excessive tardiness. St. Pierre states that most students who are consistently tardy are those who believe that "the school is a waiting area until they can find full-time work or who know what vocation they wish to pursue and consider other disciplines a waste of time" (2000). Parents and students rarely face consequences for this action; therefore, they believe it to be acceptable. St. Pierre suggests contacting parents about the tardiness of students (whether it be a class tardy or an all day tardy). St. Pierre further contends that school officials should continually warn the students of possible consequences of

their tardies. If parents fail to respond to the notifications from the school, this behavior is now instilled in the children. The characteristic of promptness should be taught to a child by example. If children see their parents constantly late for work or persistently are late for school themselves, they will find the behavior to be acceptable. This allows both parties to create excuses for their actions. How can people be depended upon if they are never prompt?

Promptness should be taught at an early age. The importance of the characteristic should be stressed as it pertains not only to the workplace, but to life as well. In life, we are often asked to participate in teams. To be a productive team member, one must possess the qualities of dependability and promptness. These qualities can be related to participating in a sports team, academic team, or a team at work. The only way a team can be successful is if all the members are working together. If one person cannot be depended upon, the whole team could fall apart.

If the characteristic of promptness is not present by adulthood, one can do several things to correct it. First, proper planning would prevent one from not being prompt. Many individuals are often late to school and/or work because of poor planning, and this habit can prove disastrous. For example, a particular Methodist minister was notorious for always being late. He often left his congregation waiting due to his tardiness. This minister was on his way to a doctor's appointment for which he was fifteen minutes late. Driving at 90 mph, the minister lost control of his car and died in a car crash. The minister lost his life because he was running fifteen minutes late. Proper planning could

have prevented this car crash. If a person maps out the week and/or day considering all possible responsibilities, goals, and obstacles, this can prevent tardiness.

Second, an individual is forced to pay consequences. Facing consequences for tardiness can also lead a person to change this undesirable behavior. If an individual is faced with failing a class, losing a job, or risking a promotion, this could encourage him or her to reassess current behaviors.

Finally, a person could be moved to change his or her behaviors if he or she were offered incentives for promptness. Many schools and companies offer rewards, incentives, and prizes for perfect attendance without tardiness. Just as a student strives to have perfect attendance because he or she wants a certificate, adults can be moved to change their behaviors for more age-appropriate rewards.

Many jobs base promotions on attendance, dependability, and performance. If these characteristics are put on the forefront, they may gain more importance. When individuals know that they are being evaluated on areas such as promptness, he or she will be more likely to conform to those standards.

St. Pierre, James. "Tabulating the Tardies." Techniques: Connecting Education & Careers 75.6 (2000).



Michelle Chesson

So much depends
upon time.
Eating healthy,
exercise, and
house cleaning.
So much depends
upon time.

So much depends
upon time.
Creative lessons,
student feedback,
and preparation.
So much depends
upon time.

So much depends
upon time
visiting loved ones,
calling old friends,
and spending time
with your spouse.
So much
of our life from
beginning to end
depends upon time.



Roberta Dorning

Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.

From The Wizard of Oz

Then There Was Anthony

After so many years of teaching, most educators have those few rare students that they will remember forever. Some are remembered for the wrong reasons and some for letting us view that special person deep inside. It would be easy to write about the 'good' students, the ones who won all the honors, went above and beyond, and those who displayed special talents. However, my thoughts lead to another type of student. His name was Anthony.

One of the greatest challenges I have ever had in my classroom was dear, dear Anthony. He was a stout, handsome, and extremely polite student. Anthony never entered or exited a room without everyone knowing it, but in a good way. He had the softest deep voice that made his words melt you with their charm. And, oh yes, let us not forget his wardrobe. Anthony was one of those rare males who could make a baby pink shirt look masculine. He also wore hats and jackets of such a variety that other students could, and did, use his extensive wardrobe for their descriptive essays. Not many people could enter a room the way Anthony did!

Nothing about Anthony's physical appearance and manner would even hint to a teacher that he was one of the 'worst' type of students. What could be so bad that this teacher shudders to remember it? Well----Anthony could *not* write. He had no idea what a complete sentence was, let alone an individual paragraph. That may not sound too bad, considering many students have similar problems, but Anthony refused to change. For an entire year, he did not change his writing style. And this style was bad, I mean *really* bad. He used entire paragraphs as single sentences. These one-sentence paragraphs rambled on

from one thought to the next so haphazardly that even with my years of deciphering, I could not understand what he was trying to say. His thoughts flip-flopped so badly that even *he* could not tell you what he meant. If he could not understand what he had written, why did he defend his writing so avidly? That is the part I never really figured out.

In the beginning, I would just put a big R on the top of his paper after reading (trying to read) it. This meant rewrite. Unfortunately, he usually earned a succession of R's. His rewrites, which were usually turned in weeks later, were as bad as the first drafts. He just rambled and rambled, and it frustrated me so badly to try to grade any of his work. New week, new assignment, and I still got the same type of writing from him. The worst part of the grading was his attitude. He went from anger to hurt feelings, and I didn't know which one made me feel worse.

Then I remembered that, after all, I was the teacher. I started giving him numerical grades like the rest of the students were getting. No more nice teacher stuff with the rewrites. Boy, he really got mad then. I also got other teachers to evaluate his work to see if they had any ideas. Most gave the same comments I had given, and no one came up with that magic combination I was seeking. I wanted to help Anthony, but somehow what I was saying was not registering in his brain. As a last resort, I decided to try some peer tutoring. With that flashy smile of his, he listened to each comment and read each revision his peers provided, but he still *didn't get it*. This is when I decided that I had done all I could do, and so unlike me, I gave up on him. Well, sort of. He did pass my class, but he left that final day with a binder full of readings and suggestions and copies of other students' well written papers. I hoped it might some day sink in.

After I had time to reflect on my 'Anthony' problem, I came up with a somewhat satisfying conclusion. First, I believe that someone (previous teacher, mother, friend) had gone way overboard on their praise of his work. Second, I was not firm with him in the beginning when I let him submit so many rewrites. Third, I can't turn every student into a great writer. And finally and most importantly, I have been teaching formal writing for so long that I have forgotten that informal writing does have a place in the world (just not in my room). I will never forget Anthony and I love him to death, but I swear no other student will put me through the trials that he did. I must face that he is of the, what I call, e e cummings state of mind. This, to me, means no rules and grammar in the garbage.

High Speed

High tech,
high speed,
Racing down I-565.
Day in,
day out.

Same things,
same scenes.
Traffic heavy,
traffic light.

Billboards glaring.
Bright headlights at night.

Always in a hurry,
but knowing,
Take time for self.
Always thinking,
take time for self.

Brain racing.
Scheduling events.
Cell phone ringing.
Obligations not yet met.
Endlessly organizing life.

Then--the mind is slowed.
Then --- the mind takes time.

Because,
caught by the eye,
a train rushes on.
A train filled with
unforgettable sights.

Painful truths.
Harsh realities.
A train filled with
ravaged war machines.

Tanks
jeeps,
trucks,
humvees.
All battered.
Some flattened.
Some tireless.

Some recognizable,
some not.

Questions then loom.
How many lives?
Men?
Women?
Children too?
How many lives?
Reality has seeped in.
High tech.
High speed.
Day in.
Day out.
Reality has seeped in.

Teaching Troubled Youth

Unfortunately, there are always students that are labeled troubled, disruptive, or given any number of derogatory names. What they all have in common is that they are not enthusiastic learners. Because of this, they try various antics to get out of doing their class work. These antics most commonly result in anything from minor classroom disruptions to student suspensions. It is a rare school that does not have this problem; so, what can be done about it? What can a teacher do to change this type of student's attitude toward learning? That is a hard to answer question, and as with most things, there is not a simple solution, but there are many ideas available for teachers to use.

During the early years of teaching in America, students who did not want to attend school usually did not. As time passed, students were required to attend school at least until they turned the age of 16. When this requirement came into place, teachers were seeing more and more students who did not want to be in school. In the beginning, most teachers had no idea what to do with this type of student, and he/she was either ignored or punished. Fortunately, in the twentieth century, many teachers have discovered ways to reach these students.

Janet Allen, a reading and English instructor, is one of those teachers. She successfully uses many creative ideas to teach the heretofore labeled unteachable students. In her book, *It's Never Too Late: Leading Adolescents to Lifelong Literacy*, she shares various strategies used in her own classrooms. One of the most interesting of these strategies is her program of reading. At the beginning of a new school year, Allen starts reading out loud to her high school students. She was not sure of the student response but

she was determined to at least try. "Although many students thought being read to was stupid, as the stories of rebellious kids taking control of the system and of teenagers grappling with love and sexuality began to unfold, they gradually decided that perhaps they weren't too old to enjoy hearing a good story" (4). She learned reading aloud was a way to turn her class into one group and share literature with students who thought they hated to read. From these reading lessons, her class graduated to reading books on their own, especially when they were able to choose the books in which they were interested. Allen believed in having time for students to read everyday of her class. She also allowed her students to get comfortable (within reason), so she acquired beanbag chairs and couches to replace the hard desks students usually sit in.

Allen discovered that she could redefine her curriculum. She could create, try new things, get rid of things that did not work and continually update it. All of the changes would depend on the reactions and needs of her students. From the reading aloud strategy, she branched out into other areas of English, such as the writing process. She began with having her students write notes in their journals. These notes were sometimes results of prompts such as "why do you dislike English class, and what would you change about it"(49). From prompts like these, she had the students' writing expand from lists to paragraphs, writing about something they had feelings about.

As Allen shows, teachers can be successful when they continue to use different strategies to spark the interest of those seemingly unmotivated learners. There are numerous ways to keep abreast of nontraditional ways of teaching, and all educators owe it to their students to be knowledgeable about them. This can be done through workshops,

in-service, reading new books and publications, and using the Internet. Allen states that she had not been the one to motivate her students; “it was something that happened when she moved out of the way” (14). This exemplifies that sometimes it is what a teacher does not do, rather than what he/she does. Allen further indicates that she had no overnight successes, that her teaching years had it ups and downs, but she was the one who learned the most. She wanted to do her job, and when she encountered obstacles, she discovered new ways to go around them. It was an ongoing process with its share of defeats, but more than enough wins. Allen has proven that educators can be successful when using a variety of strategies to guide the less than enthusiastic learners onto the road of success.

Why I Teach

When my children were entering middle school, I became very concerned and actively involved in their academic lives. The stories I heard from my children were startling. It sounded as if most teachers did not teach but only gave busywork and dull assignments, and worst of all, just didn't care. Because of this, I would volunteer for the clinic, substitute teaching, or anything that kept me abreast of the happenings at their school. I wanted to be there. I wanted to see this firsthand. I wanted to fix this problem.

It did not take me long to realize that quite a few of the teachers at this school did not want to be there. Many complained constantly about "this child" or "that teacher" or "that policy." I dared not enter the teachers' lounge; what a depressing place that often was. I could not help but cringe when I heard a child called "terrible" or "heathen." Why did these teachers not realize that if they put as much positive effort into these so-called awful situations, that maybe they could change things? But, the worst moment I have ever observed is when I saw, with my own eyes, Coach XX actually pop in a video, put his feet firmly on his desk and---I won't go into the rest. Yes, he had his "pets" that ran to the office or next door with notes to others like him. Yes, those were the kids that got the A's.

Momma always said I thought I could change the world---so what the heck!!!! There I went. My mission was to finish the education that my having children interrupted and then teach, actually teach! It could be done. From pure anger sprang the roots of my determination to teach. Almost 15 years later, I love the job I do, and I love the people like me, that no matter what, want to teach and know it can be done.



Brook Finlayson

Remember, no matter where you go, there you are.

Buckaroo Banzai in *The Adventures of Buckaroo
Banzai Across the 8th Dimension*

The Gathering at Dusk

The gathering is solemn with delight
At dusk of day to watch a new day dawn.
The clouds, dispersed, with rain have taken flight;
The sun prevails against the forecast storm.
You wed against the weather of the fall.
Too well you know the trial love does bring--
Your unique challenge, common to us all--
And still you sense the source of love's true spring.
With human care beside, divine above,
As step you step in sympathetic pace,
May what cannot be done alone by love
Be filled beyond request by unseen grace.
So we, your parents, balance loss with gain,
And find our own love's vows renewed again.

Confessions of a Pulp Reader

I came before the day of “juvenile fiction.” Not that there was no such genre—the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew were certainly around. I mean, there was nothing like the rich, intelligent works available to teens and pre-teens today. I had to find what I could, where I could.

As a child, I often scouted the built-in bookshelves in our large living room, shelves which, with the exception of a passageway from the foyer, filled the entire wall. I looked for anything of interest. These were, for the most part, my father’s books. Some I read in pieces. Winston Churchill’s *History of the Second World War*, in five volumes, was intimidating. Much of it I could not understand until years later. Robert Ruark’s *Uhuru* was too slow going anywhere, although it always seemed promising, being about Africa and all. It was scanned and replaced more than once. *Cheaper by the Dozen* was on the shelf because someone on my father’s side of the family wrote it. I never got past the ink inscription on the title page. A story about life in a large family held no special appeal to me, the eldest of six children.

There were two shelves which always proved rewarding: one contained a series of historical biographies for younger readers, and the other held the *World Book* encyclopedia. The biographies I read. Perhaps that’s where I learned to love history. More likely, it was war movies and westerns like *Wake Island* and *Fort Apache*. Still, those books marked the beginning of my enduring appetite for histories, especially military histories. The encyclopedia volumes were books of magic. I could pull out any volume,

thumb through a few randomly chosen pages, and find something interesting. It was pure alchemy.

Of course, none of that satisfied any desire for fiction. At first, comic books filled that niche, especially war comics. I favored Marvell's *Sgt. Fury* series and collected every issue I could find. I honestly believe that those comics initiated my interest in foreign languages. What French and German words I couldn't decipher on my own I would look up in my paperback French and German dictionaries, purchased for a dime apiece at Matthew's Used Book Mart. The crackling, clever, often humorous dialog in the balloons of those garishly colored frames was a joy to read, a joy unmatched until I entered the world of Evelyn Waugh, Jane Austen, and Flannery O'Connor. Ernest Hemingway's dialog might be pure genius, but it was never as much sheer fun.

As I became a teenager, growing self-consciousness about reading comic books left me looking for a substitute. I found it in pulp fiction. I can't remember where, how, or why I read my first Doc Savage novel, but as soon as I did, I was hooked. The stories were originally published in the 1930's in pulp magazines with colorful, provocative covers and the text printed on cheap newsprint paper. When I read them, they had been reissued in crisp Bantam Books pocket editions with contemporary artwork on the covers. In a year or so, I read over thirty. One or two favorites I reread.

Doc Savage was not a superhero in the Superman sense; he was more a superhuman. He had the intelligence of Sherlock Holmes, dressed a lot like Indiana Jones, saw the same type of exotic sites as Dr. Jones, and had the physical power (and tan) of Tarzan. His comrades were all experts in their fields of law, engineering,

archaeology, research chemistry, but with spirits of adventure which would have them risking their lives for a good cause every dozen pages or so. Traveling with this group, I sweltered under a copper sun in the breezeless Sargasso Sea where ships were ensnared mid-ocean by seaweed and accosted by prehistoric sea creatures. I sat in the corner of a remote inn in a Tibetan village drinking hot buttered tea to thaw my bones after the frigid, precipitous trek up the Himalayas while Savage and his crew chased some evildoer. I flew in open-cockpit biplanes barely able to hear the dialog over the noise of the engine, the wind, and the leather flying helmet I wore. I ate in a mahogany-paneled dining car as Eastern European pastoral scenes passed my window to the steady clacking of the steel train wheels over the steel rails while Monk and Ham swapped endearing insults. I traveled with them because Lester Dent, the actual writer of the series, could paint a picture with words, and he painted the reader into the scene. I came to know interwar Paris, London, New York, Chicago, Tokyo, and Singapore as well as mysterious islands, jungles, and mountains, all hiding elaborate enclaves of twisted geniuses bent on creating some international catastrophe, the types found in James Bond movies.

Colorful characters, witty dialog, and now, vivid imagery added the necessary ingredients to make an action-adventure story worth reading. Suspense and conflict moved the stories, but they were not what made the reading fun. I can see, in retrospect, that setting, character, and dialog were what I found valuable. Plot was important, motivating me to turn the next page, but experiencing places and knowing characters were what I took with me after I had closed the back cover with a silent sigh.

What brought all this to an end for me began as a disquieting notion, grew to the

point of serious distraction from enjoying the stories, and was finally seen as a fatal flaw. I didn't like Doc Savage. He was too perfect. He had no faults, and that was fault enough. I preferred his comrades with their weaknesses. I even liked the villains. They were evil, no doubt, and had to be stopped, even destroyed, but their darkness added a dimension the hero lacked. I quit buying the novels and despaired of finding a substitute. At least I still had the characters of history where even the worst were in some ways admirable, and the best were, well, not always good.

As my life became more complex, I required more complexity in the characters I read. The first James Bond movies inspired me to read Ian Fleming's books. Bond, in print, was still debonair and a man of elevated tastes, but he was fallible. Sometimes he was outsmarted, and twice grieved the loss of a woman he loved but was unable to protect. He also experienced moral conflict. In the short story "From a View to a Kill," Bond confronts the morality of assassinating a man he does not know, even if the job is in Her Majesty's service. Moral conflict is something as a teenager that I could understand.

From there it was not a great leap to real "literature." By the time I was in college, I could appreciate the humanity of the characters of William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Graham Greene, or Anthony Burgess. Look at the great stories: Achilles pouts, Stephen Crane's "young man" is a coward, Captain Ahab is an obsessive nut-case, Mr. Kurtz is a magnificent failure, and Lancelot betrays his best friend and benefactor. Even in the fantasy and mythology of Tolkien, reality is always as close as all of human nature.

Admittedly, most of the literature I now love, or at least admire, was forced upon

me in the course of my education, but without the immature appetites which I fed with pulp fiction, I doubt I would be here among my fellows--a writer, a teacher, a reader.



Mary Greenwood

Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary.

Actor – Robin Williams
“Dead Poets Society” (1989)

Revising in the Classroom

“Teachers of writing need to be students of writing” is the most famous line Lucy Calkins writes in *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Calkins stresses the importance for teachers to read the best literature they can find, and study what works (196). In chapter twenty, Calkins points out that teaching grammar has no effect on the quality of student writing. She suggests using more innovative teaching methods to improve the quality of student writing. Some methods mentioned were the reader’s theater, writing workshops, literature response groups, and editing circles.

Although Calkins says that teaching grammar has no effect on the quality of student writing, some formal grammar is expected (197). Teachers should keep in mind the infrequency with which students write is a major reason for their problems with mechanics and spelling. Writing is an unnatural activity; therefore, we need to make it more natural by having students write more often. Calkins emphatically declares that the single most important thing we can do for students’ syntax, spelling, penmanship, and use of mechanics is to have them write often and with confidence. Furthermore, students must be encouraged to write without worrying whether they are making errors in the first draft. Once they have written a draft they will have time for editing, but during composition, correctness should not be competing with the more timely concern about context, word choice, voice, tone, and rhythm (197).

Calkins explains that there should be no erasing allowed on the draft—writers should just cross out and keep going. Spelling does not matter during the rough draft stage, so students should not use the dictionary. Teachers should not tell students writing

rough drafts how to spell. It is essential to help children separate transcription from composition. If children keep asking for spelling help, it means that during the composition process, they focus too much on editing. Calkins informs us that when students worry about spelling and neatness while composing a draft, their writing becomes so slow that it is hard for them to maintain logic and coherence. She mentions that we talk, listen, and read at a rate of two hundred to three hundred words per minute, yet we only write twenty-five words per minute. Some students may only write six words per minute. She says to encourage students to spell and punctuate “as best you can” and to postpone worries until the final draft. If the teacher is very clear and consistent, the children will come to trust the teacher and themselves, and the mechanics of writing will begin to improve.

Calkins goes on in chapter twenty-one to say, “Students learn to punctuate and spell correctly when they have a need to use unknown spellings of words in their writing” (198). Then she reminds us that Piaget drives the point home by describing errors as “windows to the mind” (201). There is logical thinking helping us see what our pupils are thinking. Errors are worth careful study, and if we use them as a “window into our students’ minds,” we can be more knowledgeable and timely in our teaching (199).

Calkins offers some effective methods for a revision of the first draft, instead of just editing, or simply copying the paper over, with only insignificant changes. The list includes students’ changing the piece from one mode to the next (personal narrative to poem, journal entry to a published narrative). Students may rework a confused section of the piece—the title, the lead, etc. Writers should read and reconsider the tone or voice,

and explore a different sort of voice to see if it is preferable. Another strategy is to take a short piece and expand it into a longer one. Students may be required to select a functional purpose for the piece of writing and then, if necessary, reorient the writing so that it accomplishes the task. Calkins suggests students should predict a reader's list of questions and then revise to be sure all the questions are answered. Some teachers may ask students to reread the draft, evaluating what works and what does not work. After selecting what works, students then write another draft or portion of a draft, building on that strength. This process allows the student to decide whether to delete, repair, or ignore what does not work. After writing a draft, a student may want to read the draft again, listening to how it sounds. Other times, students should put the draft aside and return to it another day. Sometimes students talk with someone about the topic, and then they rewrite the draft without looking back at the previous version. Finally, Calkins recommends that students take a jumbled piece and rewrite it in sections or chapters.

There is no one certain way to teach students to write, edit, and revise. When teachers provide many avenues for revision and improvements of compositions, students are sure to succeed in becoming astute writers.

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Writing: last but not least*.
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986. (195-211).

Effective Spelling Strategies

Sometimes, in the elementary setting, a dilemma occurs concerning the continued need to teach spelling strategies to upper elementary students. This raises concern because teachers teach these strategies and skills religiously all through the elementary years. Some educators believe that the continued need to teach spelling strategies is an unnecessary evil. Shane Templeton clearly addresses the topic as he clearly states the need for continued spelling instructions and offers suggestions for teachers (48). He points out that the spelling system of English makes sense most of the time and that the spelling system does not only represent sound—it represents memory as well. Students learn they can “fix up” spelling errors such as definition, by thinking of the relationship the word has with the base word and using meaning connections (words that are related in meaning are often related in spelling, despite the changes in sound.)

Effective spelling instruction powerfully supports the nature and development of the reading process. Students examine written words from a variety of perspectives, better enabling them to remember and understand spelling words. This knowledge in turn enhances a more rapid and accurate perception of words during reading. (Students learn to compare and contrast in the search for patterns and generalizations learned through spelling instructions.) Assigning students the task of searching their writing pieces for words with the long vowel sounds “ea” or “ie” is only one way to make students aware of this spelling pattern. Then the student should sort the words out by short vowel sounds for “a”, “e”, “i”, “o”, “u,” look at the patterns used to make the sound, and then compare each word. Words students read, but misspell can be explained by connecting the words

to unknown words that are similar in spelling and meaning. For example, if a student understands the concept of the word “determine,” s/he can relate it to the word “determination” by asking questions to guide her/him to a clear meaning. By directly discussing the connection between a familiar but misspelled word and a related but unfamiliar word, teachers address two important objectives at the same time. First, they establish a powerful framework for students of the word as the key to detecting and understanding a sentence, and second, they provide a clue to a problematic spelling error. If a particular student confuses the spelling of “mean” and writes “maen,” a short mini lesson is required. I would use other words like “lean,” “team,” “cream,” and “dream” to teach the spelling skill. Templeton suggests to teachers that they develop spelling assignments to pinpoint students’ levels of spelling development. Students know that they are not all on the same level. Templeton addresses several non-favored ideas for teaching spelling. For example, he discusses writing each word several times as a negative because the student doesn’t focus critical attention on the specific word or on the detection of spelling patterns that apply across a large number of words (49). He further states that simply immersing students in a lot of reading and writing will not cure spelling errors. Templeton insists on the teaching of vocabulary and spelling separately. Spelling is a bridge for vocabulary development, and spelling knowledge underlies reading as well as writing, so as long as the ability to decode printed information is valued, attention to the students’ spelling of words will be necessary.

Templeton, Shane. *Spelling: Best Ideas=Best Practices, Voices from the Middle*, 10.5(May 2003): 48-49.

Gathering Eggs

One fine summer morning, Mary went outside to do her morning chore. She always collected the eggs from the hen house. She skipped happily along the trail to the hen house, which was located on a 40-acre farm in a small town, of Tyrone, Georgia.

Mary strolled into the chicken coop and began collecting the eggs from the hens' nests. She realized she had forgotten her egg basket. "No problem," she sighed, "I'll just roll up my shirt tail and put the eggs there where they'll be safe." All was fine, and Mary went about collecting the eggs.

Eager to visit the ducks on the pond, Mary slowly and very carefully bent over, making sure that she did not crack a single egg. She knew she had already gathered about a dozen and Mama would be proud. As she squatted down to check the duck nest for eggs, Mary said "Yikes! That hurt!" Crunch, crunch!!!! was the next sound she heard. Scared to death and upset too, Mary knew she had crushed every one of the eggs. She knew this meant she was in big trouble. "If that mean red rooster hadn't climbed up my back like a monkey after bananas and pecked me on the neck, I would not be in this situation. I should have Daddy wring his neck. That dumb rooster!" Mary knew that Red was the meanest rooster, but he was Daddy's favorite rooster on the yard, so he would never think of wringing its neck. Meanwhile, she had to figure some way out of this mess.

All Mary could think of was, "how in the world can I tell Mama that there'd be no eggs this morning?" Puzzled at just what to do, Mary ventured into the woods a little ways so she was out of sight. She sat on a horse (just make believe—a fallen tree) to think for a minute. "I've got it!" Quickly to cover the evidence in the chicken pen, Mary

ran to cover the crushed eggs with dirt and pine straw. Then she ran behind the chicken coop and turned her shirt inside out. This is probably what any six-year-old girl would do to protect herself when in such a fix.

The little girl went on to the house and slipped into her bedroom to change her shirt. She secretly hid it in the bottom of the dirty clothesbasket so maybe Mama wouldn't notice. Mary went in as usual to wash her hands and face before sitting at the table for morning snack acting as normally as possible. That's when she heard Mama's dreaded voice. She was shaking in her boots about this time.

"Mary."

"Yes, Mama?" Mary answered softly.

"Did you put the fresh eggs in the refrigerator?"

"Oh no, Mama, there weren't any eggs today."

"Well, I have her fooled," thought Mary.

That was until she heard these two words come hollering out of Mama's mouth, "Mary Emma!" She knew she was trouble bound. "What is this on your shirt (the one Mary thought was safe in the clothesbasket)? I don't suppose this is the eggs you didn't collect this morning, is it?"

"Yes, Mama, it is, and I can explain," Mary whimpered. She began to whine about forgetting to take her egg basket to the hen house and the big red dumb rooster running up her back.

Mary hoped Mama would begin to feel sorry for her by this time, but to no avail. The wrath of Mama's anger was about to be administered. "Go get a hickory; I'll teach

you to always tell the truth.” Of course, Mary followed instructions and went to the edge of the yard to break off a small switch, still hoping Mama would have a little mercy upon her. However, that didn’t happen. The spanking is still as fresh in Mary’s mind as if it were only yesterday. She still testifies to this day that lying to Mama does not pay. Also, Mary never forgot her egg basket again.

Stepping Stones to Becoming a Teacher

As some of you may already know, I was raised in foster homes most of my childhood, at least from the age of two years until the age of twenty when I married. There were a few years of my childhood when I lived with an aunt or some other family member. Those times seemed to be the gloomiest years of my life. I seemed to function best when I was in foster care. I do not remember much about school until after the fourth grade. When I was taken from a long stay with one foster family, the Lasters, and placed with my aunt. We were poor and lived in one run-down house after another. We had very little money and no means of transportation, but we lived in town. We were accustomed to walking to such places as school, doctor's office, grocery store, laundromat, and church, so I guess transportation wasn't that important to us. We didn't seem to need much. I did babysit, cut grass, and help out at the little store to earn a few dollars to help my aunt. We needed every dime we could find to survive.

I continued to do well in school with few problems. There were never any conferences or special phone calls home and very few visits to the principal's office, so you could say I was making it fine. I do remember a couple of teachers who seemed to take a special interest in me during grade school, which made a huge difference in my life. Mr. Rice nicknamed me Smiley and was the first teacher to paddle me. He made a lasting impression in my mind forever. Then, I had an English teacher who was always kind and gave out hugs and smiles.

It wasn't until I was 16 and in high school that a teacher really made a difference

in my life. In fact, this teacher is why I'm here today. She found out that I was practically living on the streets and going from friend to friend for a week at a time without any place to call home. I was struggling to make it day by day.

I asked the school counselor to help me to get back into a foster home because I had no family, no guardian, no clothes, no money, nor any transportation. I was alone, but at least I got free lunch at school. I had a job, but I always had to bum a ride. Being without money wasn't a major problem, but not having a home, family, a bed, a place to take a bath was a problem. After talking to the guidance counselor, my typing teacher, Mrs. Ragan, asked me to come home with her. It took a couple of weeks of her approaching me gently before I felt I could trust her enough to go home with her. I was afraid she might trick me and try to send me back to another stay with my aunt. Finally, I did trust her. I went home with Mrs. Ragan now known as Mother. Her family took me in and made me a part of their family, which I am still a part of today. I knew I wanted to be just like Mrs. Ragan. I wanted to reach out and touch a child that no one else believed would make it. It took one teacher reaching out with a helping hand and a kind heart. My becoming a teacher had nothing to do with the typing or business skills taught by that wonderful lady, but it had all to do with the selfless love she gave me. I am proof that a teacher can make a difference.



Latorria Harrison

Timo Cruz: Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. Cooach Carter (2005)

Mr. Boss Man

Does the mere thought of a person's name make your body cringe? One of my least favorite people causes unpleasant feelings to occur. This middle-aged man is an egotistical, self-centered all-knowing alien. Even though he fully understands his job responsibilities, there should be a limit to his boastful nature. His hair is a blend of brown and black with "do-it-yourself" blonde highlights. In addition, the sight of his unattractive pear-shaped body is horrid. Every step he makes seems to strain every muscle and bone in his body. His awful breath always reeks of ranch flavored potato chips and cigarette smoke. All of the other workers hate to see or hear him coming for fear of being made to feel inferior.

"Good morning," he said in a stern husky voice as he passed by my office. I cheerfully responded "Good morning." I was at my desk attempting to do my morning routine of checking messages and e-mails, from the previous day. All of a sudden, I saw none other than Mr. Know-It-All standing in front of my desk. I quickly hung up the phone and gave my boss my undivided attention.

"Marion, I would like to meet with you in about thirty minutes in my office," he said.

"Yes sir, Mr. Johnson," I replied. I was so anxious to know what the meeting was going to be about. I did not have a clue. My mind started running back to last month's numbers. I even tried to make sure I hadn't said or done anything out of the ordinary. Surely, he wasn't calling me in because of last week's incident at the bar with one of our top clients. I had to make sure that all my I's were dotted and my T's were crossed.

The longest thirty minutes finally passed. I made sure that I had my pad and pen in hand before I journeyed into his office.

“Have a seat, will you?” he replied in a more relaxed tone than ever. “You probably won’t need to take any notes, Marion. I have reflected on the day when we hired you,” he commented as he paced back and forth with his hands tucked away in his Armani pants pockets. “I was a little apprehensive, considering you did not have a lot of experience. Somehow, your persona convinced me to believe that you could handle the pressure of this firm. I am quite impressed with your job performance over the last few years. Though you’ve had a few bumps in the road, who hasn’t,” he noted while looking at the beautiful city from the 18th floor of his high-rise investment office. “As a result, I think you need a chance to soar in another facet of my multi-billion dollar firm”, as he adjusted his twenty carat white gold diamond ring.

I was glued to my seat. I literally could not move. I was at a loss for words. In fear of saying the wrong thing, I quickly shifted in my seat to regain my composure. “I was thinking about moving you to the senior advisory team with the other five advisory members. I have contacted Rachel in HR, and she will go over all of the information about the position. This is a six-figure salary position, requiring a lot of hard work and possibly some late hours at the office. Give yourself a couple of days to look over the paperwork, and get back with me once you have made a decision,” he replied before relaxing in his Italian leather, swivel desk chair.

“Mr. Johnson, I am appreciative of the opportunity that you have given me here at your firm. I plan to look over the paperwork and discuss this with you in a couple of

days,” I affirmed without seeming anxious about the good news.

As time passed on, I could not believe that I was part of the senior advisory board of the largest investment firm in Chicago. I had settled in my position and had taken charge of the job duties that I had been assigned. One Thursday night, I found myself in my office double-checking the numbers for our regular end of the week meeting. All of a sudden, I heard a voice outside my office door. To my knowledge, everyone had left the office hours ago.

“Make sure there is no trace of evidence from this murder. I am paying you a lot of money, so don’t screw this up,” retorted some unknown man. I didn’t know what to do. The amber colored mosaic lamp that my best friend purchased from E-bay was on in my office. I thought about hiding under my desk, but the thought of my psychedelic pumps peering from underneath my desk would give my presence away. “Oh, shoot,” I cried. I couldn’t let this person see or hear me in here. After a couple of minutes, I didn’t hear anything. I figured I should call security for an escort to my car. I reached to pick up the phone and attempted to dial the number. “A-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h!”

Mr. Johnson quickly snatched the phone out of my hand. “Get up right now; sit down on the couch,” he stated as he gave my back a forceful push. I know that you must’ve heard my conversation, didn’t you?”

“I don’t know what you are talking about,” I muttered as large oversized tears began to cascade down my face.”

“Listen, you better not tell anybody about this incident. If you do, I promise, I mean I promise, you will regret it,” Mr. Johnson threatened while holding my face in his

hand. Mr. Johnson quickly left the office, and security never came to escort me downstairs. I gathered my things, and rushed home.

I did all that I could to avoid Mr. Johnson. I rarely took the time to talk to anyone at work. I avoided all lunches and dinners with the personnel at the firm. I had become a total recluse because I could not tell my secret. Every time I thought about the scare of my life, Alicia Key's notable song, *Pages in My Diary*, would run through my head.

One early Saturday morning, I was preparing for my morning exercise, but took a moment to read the front page of the newspaper instead. I couldn't believe my eyes. I sat down on the front steps to compose myself. "Johnson questioned about murder," I read aloud. After I read the article word for word, I knew I had to go for my morning jog. Thirty minutes into my workout, I heard the tires from a vehicle screech. I continued as if it weren't even there. Out of nowhere, two extra-large buff men jumped out and grabbed me. While one held me by my arms, the other one placed a huge piece of gray tape over my mouth. My body was frozen. I couldn't scream, move, or do anything, for that matter, but my heart was about to explode out my chest. I decided not to become emotional because I needed to think clearly. They shoved me in the back seat of a black stretch limousine.

"Honey, as long as you do as I say, no one will get hurt," Mr. Johnson stated as he pulled hard on a Cuban cigar. "It appears that someone has been running her little mouth," he retorted after choking from the smoke.

"I don't know what you are talking about, sir," I murmured through the tape.

"I don't want to hear any lies," he exclaimed loudly.

“As of today, you no longer work for my company. Your belongings will be delivered on Monday morning. I have a nice severance package for you. Marion, it is in your best interest to disappear for a while. Keep your mouth shut!!! If you decide not to follow my simple rules, you will not live to see another day.”

I could not believe this. The car came to an abrupt stop; one of the guys let me out the car. My body would not let me run. I could barely walk. I began to sob as I slowly trotted back home, my papers in my hand. “What had I gotten myself into? How could this have happened to me? I had the job of my dreams. What am I going to do with my life?”

After the long journey home, I forced myself into the shower. I cried hard as the water cascaded over my entire body, but I still felt no relief. For the next few days, I avoided all phone calls, and didn't answer the door. I stayed in my pajamas and ate everything in sight. I decided that it was time to look over those papers Mr. Johnson had forced on me. I attempted to read all the papers in the envelope, but didn't reach my goal when I saw the check with multiple zeroes on it. I had to pinch myself to make sure that this was happening to me. I jumped up and down and ran back and forth in my little condominium. “I am rich! I am rich!” When I came to my senses, I knew I had to be smart about the matter. “Think! Think! Think!” I packed my suitcases and secured my place for an extended stay somewhere else. Before I could leave, I had to get my money. I went to the bank downtown, and received my cash. I knew I had to drive the speed limit, but I was anxious to do something with the money. I drove to my hometown in record time. I made a couple of investments, opened several accounts in my middle

name, and padded my mom and sister's accounts. I told them I was taking some time off from work. Two weeks into my stay, I saw Mr. Johnson's face plastered on the 10 o'clock news. He had been charged with the murder of Lela Morris, his well-known mistress. Needless to say, he would not be able to post bail, either. I sighed. I felt a sense of relief. I was home free.



Gloria Horton

A teacher has two jobs; fill young minds with knowledge, yes, but more important, give those minds a compass so that that knowledge doesn't go to waste."

Principal Jacobs
Mr. Holland's Opus

Hurricane

Out in the warm waters of the gulf,
You begin innocently enough,
A tropical depression,
innocuous,
innocent,
unimpressive.

Those far away in sunny climes
Pay you too little attention,
unmindful,
uncaring,
unafraid.

Perhaps their lack of concern,
Their ignoring you, makes you angry,
whirling,
growing,
seething.

Whetted by your increasing power,
You become eager to wreak havoc,
tossing,
blowing,
churning.

Ultimately you make landfall,
Making your might known,
flooding,
destroying,
killing.

Those who doubted you earlier,
Out in the warm waters of the gulf,
wail,
complain,
marvel

at your awful devastation.

How I Plan to Improve My Students' Reading Skills

For the past two years, I have been part of the Jacksonville State University Writing Project's National Reading Initiative Team and, as such, have learned so much more about the teaching of reading than I ever thought I could need to know. After all, I am an English instructor with no training in the teaching of reading; besides, college students already know how to read, don't they? What I have discovered in my journey into the area of reading is that all good teachers should be reading teachers and that students at all grade levels need to be guided to improve their reading skills.

One of the things I have learned is that finding ways to improve reading comprehension is a necessity if teachers are going to enhance students' reading skills. Comprehension is the "why" we read; if there is no understanding, recognition of sounds and words and text has no significance. Since comprehension constitutes the primary reason for reading, improving students' comprehension skills must become a priority for teachers. Yet this improvement only comes when teachers provide specific strategies for students to use to achieve better understanding of what they read. Such reading comprehension strategies allow students to "think through" what they read by making predictions, asking questions, clarifying meaning, using word pictures, and relating text to themselves and their worlds, among other things (Alabama Reading Initiative: "What Do Skillful Readers Do?"). According to Kylene Beers, prominent expert on the teaching of reading, in her book *Reading Strategies Handbook*, active reading consists of "marking/highlighting text, asking questions, reacting and connecting, predicting, visualizing, and clarifying," which is what using reading comprehension strategies allows

readers to do (45).

I have determined, based on my new-found knowledge about reading comprehension, that I will incorporate several different reading comprehension strategies into the work of my English Composition classrooms from this point on. I will work with my students to make sure they understand how to use the strategies, and I will monitor their progress as readers. I have several strategies in mind to use with specific genres they will be reading. I also plan to have them use strategies that are pre-reading strategies, during-reading strategies, and after-reading strategies. Among the pre-reading strategies I plan to teach my students to use is the KWL Chart, basically because it allows the students to come back after reading to affirm new knowledge they have gained. The K in KWL is what students already know about the topic—their prior knowledge; the W is what students would like to know or want to know about the topic—their intellectual curiosity; the L is what the students learn about the topic from the reading they do—the reading comprehension that adds new knowledge to their knowledge base. A KWL chart might look like this for the topic of the Holocaust when students have been assigned Elie Wiesel’s *Night* (which my freshmen read in EH 101)”

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED
Killing of Jews by Hitler during WWII Concentration Camps Cremation of Jews Brought other nations into the war	Why did the Jews not fight back more? What was life in a concentration camp like? How could the rest of the world let something like this happen?	Many Jews were in denial; others felt passiveness was their only chance for survival. The prisoners lacked food, clothing, medical care, and all the things necessary for people to feel human.

This sample, of course, is just a skeleton chart; with my classes, we may brainstorm together to fill in the K column; they may work in groups to come up with items for their W column; and they may complete the L column while they are reading. However we use this chart, it will provide the students with a resource for better understanding of the Holocaust and of Wiesel's book, as well.

Another pre-reading strategy I plan to use is the prediction summary. To implement this strategy for a piece of text, I will choose five to seven key words from the text the students will be assigned to read and give the words to the students, instructing them to write a paragraph predicting what the text they will write will be about, using the words in any order in the paragraph. I may use this strategy with a descriptive essay by Eudora Welty, "The Corner Store," giving them such words and phrases as these: "dill pickle brine," "shelves," "boxes of sparklers gathering dust," "Crackerjack boxes," "Orange Crushes," and "Mr. Sessions." I would expect the students to be able to write a paragraph about the things one would find in a store with just these words. Once they have made their predictions, they will be ready to engage with Welty's text with their curiosity aroused. They will also be better able to discuss the sensory impressions descriptive writing evokes from the reader.

One of the genres my freshmen read text in is comparison/contrast. A during-reading strategy that I will be using this year with Bruce Catton's "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts" is the Venn Diagram. The Venn Diagram will allow the students a visual look at the differences and the similarities between Grant and Lee and will enable them to see more clearly the way Catton uses both the block method and the subject-by-

subject methods of comparing and contrasting in organizing the essay. Not only will the students enhance their comprehension through the use of this graphic organizer, but they also will have a model for organizing the comparison/contrast essays they will write.

So many other reading comprehension strategies exist that I will almost certainly use others in my classroom this year and in the future. Certainly, I will encourage my students to use text-marking as a comprehension aid, whether it be through actual notation on the pages of their text or by using Post-It notes. Double entry journals will more than likely make their way into my classroom. To complete such a journal on a particular topic, students will, in the left column, copy quotations from passages they are reading and, in the right column, write responses to the quotations. In EH 102 in the spring, I will use this comprehension strategy with plays like *Hamlet* and *Oedipus Rex*. We will do think-alouds in which students will make connections between text they have read and their own lives or the world. We will use this strategy when my students read *Newsweek*, one of the nonfiction texts they must have in addition to the reader.

As long as reading and writing experts such as Kyleene Beers, Kelly Gallagher, Jim Burke, and others keep writing books filled with strategies such as those mentioned above, teachers in all content areas will have at their disposal the tools to improve the reading comprehension skills of the students they teach. The strategies work just as well in the elementary classroom as they do in the college classroom and as well in the mathematics classroom as they do in the English classroom. All the good teachers of the world need to do is to acquaint themselves with strategies that are easily adaptable to the subjects they teach. Every teacher—not just the reading teacher—must engage students in

activities that will improve their reading skills, for as Sir Richard Steele said, "Reading is to the mind as exercise is to the body" (*The Tatler*, No. 147).

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Rebecca McDowell

Listen. Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no
basis for a system of government.

Dennis, Monte Python and the Holy Grail

Music, the Universal Language

In traveling with students in Europe for the past ten years, I have discovered that all people really do speak the same language, the “universal” language of music. Away from the comforts of home, many of us struggle to relax in a new environment, but there is something very calming about recognizing a familiar tune played by a lone musician on a narrow, winding street in a foreign country. Whether the tune is a Dylan or Marley song that dates back to my generation or a newer favorite of my students by Nick Drake or Elliott Smith, we suddenly feel a bond with the musician. We may acknowledge this with a smile or a nod, a coin or two if an open guitar case is nearby, or just a moment of humming along as we pass.

Several summers ago, I was enjoying a glass of wine in the Piazza Navona in Rome. One of my favorite students, who happens to also be my daughter, was invited to sing by a street entertainer who was tipped off by Emily’s friends that she might be persuaded. With a little encouragement, she was convinced, despite the fact that there were several hundred tourists and locals standing or sitting nearby. As he handed off his guitar, Emily thought for a moment and then chose Janis Joplin’s “Bobby McGee.” She relaxed as the familiar story of hitchhiking through the United States unfolded, from the “Kentucky coal mines” to the “California sun,” with all the wonderful sensory imagery of “windshield wipers slapping time,” “dirty red bandana,” and “playin’ soft while Bobby sang the blues.” The guitar owner, who didn’t speak much English but knew every word of the song, stood and began to quietly harmonize with her as she sang. By the time she reached the chorus, dozens of listeners from countries all over the world had joined in.

After she finished, there was a moment of silence, then applause and cheers. Of course, maternal pride brought tears to my eyes, but my favorite part of the story is a young waiter, who hurried out from the door to the restaurant's kitchen with a bud vase containing a single rose to set on the table before Emily. "For your song . . . for Janis," he whispered reverently.

On another trip, we happened to be in Italy during a music festival and learned that there was to be a classical music concert one night in the Piazza Della Signoria in Florence. When we arrived, the huge square was filled with people. While Americans seem unable to attend any event without their little Wal-mart fold-up camp chairs, the Italians were oblivious to their surroundings and excited about the music. Elderly people sat on the hard concrete, mothers fanned cranky babies in the summer heat, and rowdy children chased one another, even though it was nearly 10:00 at night before the event began. But when the large platform stage began to fill with musicians, probably 150 orchestra members and nearly as many in the chorus, an expectant silence descended over the crowd. The music was magnificent. To revel in the beautiful strains of Verdi's "Requiem" in the shadow of the Uffizi Gallery surrounded by Renaissance statues and tall buildings with ancient coats of arms painted across the top was a treat, even for those students who were not classical music fans.

Suddenly, the magic was interrupted by a terrible sound! A grinding, squeaking, clanking sound from a side street nearby was growing louder by the second, clashing with the majestic harmony of the music. Heads turned, and irritated looks were exchanged. Finally, the conductor stopped the orchestra, an action unheard of in the United States

where “the show must go on,” and 250 musicians took their seats with hands in laps until the problem could be investigated. As those near the source of the noise advanced toward the alleyway, it became evident that a garbage truck driver, just doing his job, had headed toward the square, totally unaware of the concert or the terrible commotion he was creating. Angry Italian music lovers advanced on his truck, shaking their fists and shouting words I’m glad I can’t translate. Finally realizing his mistake, he threw the garbage truck in reverse and backed down the street until the noise of his truck grew softer and disappeared. The people returned to their seats, the maestro lifted his baton, the musicians picked up their instruments, the chorus stood, and the music resumed. They refused to allow anything to interfere with their music.

I’ve found, in recent years, that I really enjoy listening to Latin American and French music. My daughter introduced me to the Buena Vista Social Club (along with a great documentary on how Ry Cooder sought out these octogenarian Cuban musicians and persuaded them to return to the stage and record again). I also discovered Manu Chao and Francis Cabral’s fun French CD Samedi Soir. Because I am a lover of language, I was surprised at the appeal of music I can’t understand. I decided that part of what I love is the beautiful sound of languages from other parts of the world-- the lilting liquidity of French crooning love songs, the wild abandon of lively Cuban rhythms (I dare you not to move your hips-- impossible). Also, it’s really fun to enjoy the sound of vocal music without having the meaning get in the way. Does that make sense? When I eventually sing along with songs I’ve learned phonetically by listening, I often look up their meaning and find that I understood the sense of the song without knowing the words. Igor

Stravinsky once said, "My music is best understood by children and animals." Perhaps he was referring to the total lack of biases brought to the listening process by those without language, the primitive level at which babies and pets show strong preferences to the sound of music. In the same way a Frenchman once told me he learned English through Beatles music, I find music such an accessible way to learn new languages, new customs, and new ideas.

On any trip I take with my students, there is always at least one day when everyone is cranky and homesick. On just such a day in Paris last year, I had tried everything to mollify my irritable charges. We had stopped in nearly every boutique in the Latin Quarter, made time for phone calls home, rested at sidewalk cafes when energy levels waned, and found a large square with enough dinner choices to keep even the pickiest eaters happy. Still, the group was restless and out of sorts as we sat down and glumly perused a menu written entirely in French. Then we heard it; a small band playing in front of the restaurant next door to us struck up "Sweet Home Alabama," and before I knew it, all of my peevish charges were on their feet, smiling and laughing and dancing in the street with a joy so contagious, even a few reserved Frenchmen joined in. I looked over at the lead singer, who smiled knowingly in my direction. No words were necessary to convey my gratitude; his kindness and our celebration of the home we love were both expressed in a mutual language recognized by all, the language of music.

Instilling a Love of Reading

As a language arts teacher, I've always felt that one of the most important gifts I can give to my students is the gift of reading for pleasure. While I thoroughly enjoy those lengthy book conversations we all have with students who come to us with a love of reading, I am drawn to those students who profess to hate it. At first I was mystified when faced with such an attitude. How could anyone hate reading? I was shocked when some 12th grade students confessed to me on entering my class that they'd never read a novel. Some had survived in high school English classes by reading summary notes (now available in every form from the traditional nuggets from Cliff to more exotic offerings like Pink Monkey online). Others had chosen books with movie versions. A few had gleaned enough information from friends who'd read the book to "fake it."

I eventually came to realize that the only reading they'd done was from dry textbook assignments. They had no idea what rich stories, fascinating characters, and relevant conflicts could be found inside modern novels, what Bonnie Ericson calls "the wonder of living in another time, experiencing the life of a person completely unlike anyone we know." Ericson explains that reluctant readers are influenced by "the difficulty of a reading selection, their motivation, their background knowledge, prior experience, and interest in a reading selection" (Ericson 3). I knew I had to provide easy access to young adult novels that were interesting enough to overcome the biases against reading that students brought into my classroom.

I learned that our public library's "Friends of the Library" bookstore had great titles, rotated regularly, for \$3.00 and under, much cheaper than most used book stores. I

chose brightly covered, user-friendly paperbacks, selecting titles from suggestions of my students who love reading and from my own reading. Then I began to casually pick up one a couple of times a week and read to my students from it. I tried to choose passages that were somewhat “self-contained,” a chapter that could be taken out of context and still enjoyed without knowing the entire story. My 11th and 12th graders loved it. Many had not been “read to” since elementary school, and they viewed it as a break from writing in class.

I also learned from conversations with reluctant readers that one of the things they hate most about reading is the written book report at the end of every novel assignment. Often they were forced to plod through a boring list of plot, characters, and conflict on paper. Even though I tried to vary the type of “book reports” we used in class, the response was the same. I wanted to move to a less formal written assessment method but was apprehensive. Then I found that research actually supports a conference-type assessment of reading progress. “No precise, measurable standards are implemented for student attainment. Flexible standards are there in that the learner reveals levels of fluency in oral reading in the student/teacher conference. He/she also indicates degrees of vital comprehension setting” (Ediger 130).

When I first created “Book Interviews,” I was skeptical about their chances for success. First, it was really difficult to find class time to chat with each student about the novel he or she had finished. Since I required two outside novels per nine weeks, I only had to assign an in-class writing activity for four days per nine weeks, as it generally took two days to finish interviewing 25-30 students. Then I had to decide how much detail I

would require them to know. I decided to ask each student just six or seven questions about the book, questions that were general enough for recall but specific enough to determine comprehension. It took some time to make a list of twelve to fifteen questions for each book on my list (about 20 choices to begin with) but I felt I needed to vary the questions somewhat so they wouldn't be "passed on" among my students. I quickly learned the questions well enough that I didn't need to refer to my notes. Most of the books were ones I'd read, so I only had a few to read and develop questions for before adding them to my list. I discovered that if I offered "extra points" to those who came to me before the deadline, many students would stop by during my planning period, before or after school, or during the few minutes between classes, resulting in less class time required for book interviews. An unexpected benefit was that these conferences gave me more time to get to know my students and made them feel they'd had more individual attention from me.

What I discovered was that kids loved to talk with me about books. We often raced quickly through my comprehension check questions to more important issues. Some wanted to know what I thought about the ending. Many had strong opinions about which characters they loved or hated. They sometimes had questions about story nuances I was surprised they'd tuned in to. For those who were new to the process of reading and discussing literature, I pushed them to think about the underlying issues behind obvious plot and character elements. Again, the experts reminded me to be patient. "Throughout the classroom activities used to explore young adult literature, it is important to avoid superficial student responses. Students are so accustomed to trying to figure out what the

teacher thinks is the correct interpretation that in-depth responding may take some time”
(Bean online.)

I found that students were also more compelled to actually read the book when they knew they couldn't hide behind a pencil and paper summary. The grading system was simple – “100” if you'd read the book, “0” if you hadn't. Although I had to make a judgment in some cases as to whether they'd just forgotten details or had not actually read them, this was fairly easy to discern. Very few students can look at their teacher eyeball to eyeball and lie about what they've read. Some tried to garner partial credit, but they knew that even if they had only two pages left, they hadn't read the entire book and would receive a zero.

Ultimately, I learned that the time and energy it took to conference with students individually was well worth it. Students often come back to me after several years to say that the freedom to choose a book on their own and the enjoyment of discussing it with me were their favorite things about my class. By sharing my passion for reading, I hope I've garnered a few “converts” through the years. A survey of teens conducted by Linda Teran Strommen backs up my belief that students credit increased interest in reading to teachers who “demonstrated an enthusiasm for books, had “lots of books” in their classrooms, let students borrow books, and read aloud in class frequently.” (Strommen 197). Recently, when I ran into a mom of a special education student I'd taught several years ago in an inclusion class, she said the words all of us love to hear: “I've wanted to thank you for giving Jason the gift of reading for pleasure. He hated reading until he came to your class, and now he reads all the time.” Is there anything we can teach in a

literature class that is more important than that?

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Twilight

From my balcony perch above the lush leafy garden
I sit,
wondering and contemplating,
pondering and meditating,
ruminating, speculating.

Alone in my thoughts in the quiet of twilight,
Soft moist air, mingled muted sounds.
The complacency of sparrows is mocked by a raucous crow.
Hidden insects tune their bows,
warming up for this evening's performance
as soft jazz drifts down from the open door of the corner bar.

Chilled chardonnay cools and calms me,
Calling my attention to the serenity of silent reverie,
Bidding my swirling, churning thoughts
To thicken slowly into buttery stillness
Centered, now
I am
finally fully focused
on the magic of the moment.



Millie Mostella

"Carpe diem. Seize the day, Boys, Make your lives extraordinary."

Dead Poets Society - 1989

LOVE IS...

Two hearts beating as one
A joyful moment with an internal glow.

A frozen moment in time
Deeply embedded on the recesses of my mind.

Every thought, dream, and desire
Secretly possessing the heart, mind, and soul.

The melody I sing
Revealing a truth know only to me.

An artist's pallet, a garden bouquet,
Full of reds, yellows, greens, and gray.

Love is...
Mesmerizing.
Harmonious.
Eternal.

Patience

Patience is a gift from God
Deeply embedded within our hearts,
Stamped with our blood, sweat, and tears,
Helping others to endure through the lonely years.

Patience is the ticking of the clock
As we linger by the window on our solitary watch,
Waiting for our children's safe return,
Hearing every sound when no one else is around.

Patience is showing our concerns, not our fears,
As we listen with our hearts and not our ears.
With a gentle touch, assuring them that we are always near
Slow to judge or criticize, always willing to apologize.

Patience is exercising self-assurance, being persistent, and sincere,
The ability to wait knowing that the end may not be near,
Being tolerant of others' faults while acknowledging our own,
Eradicating ignorance, malice, and deceit.

Patience is a gift from God
Deeply embedded within our hearts,
Stamped with our blood, sweat, and tears,
Helping others to endure through the lonely years.
Patience is a gift from God.

Sisters

Deep within the treasure chest of life
Three sisters' love and devotion endures.
Although some moments have been full of strife,
Your thoughtfulness has been a rare jewel.

Ola, our lives are rich with many memories,
Some of sorrow, grief, and despair.
Yet, God's love will forever bind us.
His grace and mercy have taught us to care.

Time cannot destroy life's luster,
Nor hundreds of miles keep us apart.
As sisters, our love for each other
Will forever be embedded deep within our hearts.

Ola, you tended to our every care,
From sweeping the floor to washing our hair.
You wiped our noses and mended our clothes.
You listened to our troubles and woes.

You are more than a sister.
Ola, you're like a mother, a true friend indeed.
What a rich treasure the world would be by far,
If all who passed through it were as caring as you are.

Why Teach Comprehension Strategies

Many teachers fail to explain how an answer was obtained. When asked for help with a question, we quickly respond with the correct answer. The student nods in total agreement, returns to his desk, and records the teacher's response. Then the cycle starts all over again. There is a major difference in knowing how we got an answer and what the correct answer is to a particular question. When teachers teach comprehension strategies, students are able to apply those strategies across the curriculum. As stated in an old proverb, "Give someone a fish, they eat for a day; teach them to fish, they will eat for a lifetime." We must teach our students the necessary skills that will enable them to exact information from a given text.

The comprehension strategies that must be taught include clarifying, comparing and contrasting, connecting to prior experiences, inferencing, (including generalizing and drawing conclusions), predicting, and questioning the text. Teaching these strategies will cut into the time we have to teach content. However, in the end, students will encompass lifelong learning skills. Students' moving from dependent readers to independent readers should be the goal that every teacher tries to obtain. Independent readers will figure out what's confusing them, set goals for getting through the reading, use many strategies for getting through the text, and know how to make the mostly invisible process of comprehension visible. Once these skills have become intrinsic, the student will be able to dissect any question to formulate the correct answer. With comprehension comes understanding and knowledge. Goals and objectives will be met, and students will be successful.

Who's In Charge?

Discipline must be in place for learning to be acquired in any classroom.

Discipline is defined as the act of exhibiting control over one's actions, thoughts, or deeds. Learning cannot take place in the midst of chaos. Discipline does not require teachers to rule with an iron hand. Teachers must be facilitators of learning. They must plan a course of action and implement that plan with flexibility. Establishing rules early, being consistent, and maintaining an open dialogue between home and school are essential if learning is to transpire.

Rules and consequences, as well as rewards, should be posted in a visible place in the classroom. Rules should be kept simple and to the point. Teachers should discuss each rule with students on the first day of school. This will ensure that they understand rules are for their safety and not to force them into blind obedience. Teachers should never make empty threats. They should say what they mean and mean what they say. Early identification of challenging students is essential; then teacher must scientifically plan a strategy to minimize students' disruptive behavior. Some researchers believe that teachers should create the rules and consequences, then allow students to have a voice in formulating the rewards system for obeying the rules. The rules should address behavior and not label students themselves. Whole-class reward systems can be set up to encourage the appropriate behavior of challenging students as well as to recognize the others for not reinforcing inappropriate behavior.

Being constant professionals, teachers must be aware that many behaviors or changes in behavior can signal an underlying emotional or mental health issue.

Therefore, if teachers see a pattern developing, they should never hesitate to seek other professional assistance, for instance, the school counselor, for help. There will always be a battle raging between the saints and “the ain’ts” in any classroom. Nevertheless, it is vital that teachers make every effort to be fair and consistent. Being consistent means never ignoring the misbehavior of the saints while writing up the behavior of “the ain’ts.” Teachers should take on the characteristics of an effective manager—a hands-on-teacher. Effective managers intervene more quickly when disruption occurs than ineffective managers. Removing distracting materials, such as anything that encourages inattention to the on going academic instruction, sets a classroom up for success.

Finally, yet importantly, teachers should get your parents involved, letting them know that the knowledge and sage insight they have stored at their fingertips concerning their child is valued. Teachers need to communicate often with them, informing them of the “good, bad, and ugly” that has transpired since the last communication. Communication should begin and end with the positive statement with a dash of reality, the “bad and ugly,” in the middle. Teachers must assure parents that with the home and school working together, their child will develop into a stronger and more successful individual.

If learning is to transpire, it is essential that teachers establish rules early, be consistent, and maintain an open dialogue between home and school. After, executing this monumental task, then, and only then, will learning take place.

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Valerie Rimpsey

"Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're gonna get."

Film Title: *Forrest Gump*

Speaker: Forrest Gump

Giving Up The Ghost

In the darkest most quiet hours of the night,
Your ghost arrives.
In the crevices of my mind,
It lingers.
In the marrow of my bones,
It migrates,
Haunting me evermore.

Leave me, I demand you, immediately!
For the severity of suffering's now known
Leave me, I demand you to flee from me
For the meaning of love is unknown.

My presence's not possible to encounter
In that area where you roam so freely
For here in this realm, I'm empirical
Where proof's nonexistent to none

But your plateau's yet so far removed
From here where you once thrived so well
Your plateau's so painstakingly puzzling
To bodily humans of blood

So much distance's now placed between us
More distant than waves of heat
More distant than horizon of sky and sea
Of unfathomable confusion, complexity

Why—I ask—do you come to me
In the darkest most quiet of hours,
On nights where position of moon perfects
The contrast of darkness, 'gainst stars?

Be it not my stupidity, I think it's you
When I know true that you, it's not
Imperfection, it is—my commonness
Causation of image uplifted

In actuality you reside closely near me
Yet I'd rather pretend it not true
I'd rather pretend you're a ghost that lingers
Than admit I—
Was not chosen by you

So go away ghost, I demand you!
Linger not in the crevices of my mind
Migrate not in the marrow of my bones, but please,
Allow perfect sleep to defeat.

Geolit: A Creative Approach to Teaching Literature

This past spring (2005)—during its national cookie campaign—the Girl Scouts of America organization was responsible for sponsoring several television commercials, both locally and nationally. I am particularly fond of one of the commercials involving a precocious little girl, walking along the beach with her father. As they walk, she shares several interesting math and science facts with him. When the little girl's father asks who taught her these things she replies, "Mommie." As they continue walking, the commercial comes to its end with the little girl asking her father, "Do you know why math is the basis of life as we know it"? Obviously, the commercial serves two purposes: the first involves dismissing the commonly held notion that only boys excel in math and science. However, the second purpose is to establish a belief: math is the basis of life as we know. What a powerful statement!

The commercial allowed me to reflect on the importance of math in our world. I concluded that math encompasses everything and we rely heavily on it to function in our society. Cooking, telling time, traveling, balancing a checkbook, playing an instrument, building, selling, and sailing: These are only several areas that support how much we rely on math for meaning. Geometry comprising traffic language is another. This sole commercial validates one practice I used in my American literature class this past fall (2004): Geolit.

For the past five years, I have been teaching American literature at Jacksonville State University (Jacksonville, AL), and in those years, I've come to notice something quite disturbing: contrary to what I believed, most students find literature a challenging

study. This alarming discovery allowed me to wonder why. This past fall, I searched for an answer, and what I found is that most students enjoy the actual study of literature; however, they are not particularly fond of discussion questions during test time. Perhaps, this is due to their inability to respond appropriately. As a result, I conducted an investigative exploration, trying new strategies in hopes that students would improve in their abilities to perform better on essay responses. What I found to work best is Geolit, a strategy I developed through experimentation.

In Facts of File Geometry Handbook, Catherine Gorini says, “Concrete or abstract, every . . . concept needs a precise name that can be used to distinguish it from anything else” (vii). Geolit is defined as the use of geometric shapes applied to the study of a literary work, concept, or theme. To practice Geolit, I draw diagrams made of geometric shapes first. Next, I fill them in—either with illustrations, text, or both—and have students copy the finished diagrams into their notebooks. I thoroughly explain as I go along. Using Geolit applications, I find students are more equipped to respond more accurately on essay responses, because as Judith Langer (qtd in Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom) says, “teachers integrate test preparation into instruction” when teaching in this manner (xxi).

One particular assignment I used involving Geolit was applied to pairing Toni Morrison’s “Recitatif” with Paule Marshall’s “Reena.” The theme of the lesson was the exploration of friendships. In New Visions for Linking Literature and Mathematics, David and Phyllis Whittin assert “pairing books with a related theme, topic, concept, or other links is another way to encourage rich investigations” (93). This particular

assignment involved using circles as a teaching tool to help students better understand the relationship between the main characters in both books: Twyla and Roberta in Morrison's "Recitatif" and Paule and Reena in Marshall's "Reena."

To explore Twyla and Roberta's friendship, I used a diagram consisting of one circle with four additional circles/rings around it (the finished products resembles a target) each representing the four times the girls encountered one another after leaving the orphanage where they first met. Stick figures (representing each girl) were positioned inside the inner ring and the four surrounding it, representing the close relationship or lack thereof of the girls.

To investigate Paule and Reena's relationship, I used a diagram consisting of one circle with two additional circles/rings around it, each representing the two times the girls were placed in company with one another after going away to college. Again, stick figures were placed inside the inner ring and the two surrounding it, representing Paule and Reena's relationship with each encounter.

The essay question for this explorative study was as follows: *The expression "circle of friends" takes on a new meaning with the exploration of friendships in Morrison's "Recitatif" and Marshall's "Reena." Draw diagrams showing the relationships of Twyla and Roberta and Paule and Reena. Be sure to use either direct quotes or summaries from each story to support the positioning of the figures, particularly in the final ring of each diagram. Lastly, note the number of rings in each diagram. Be sure to position the figures in each ring appropriately.* By using geometrical shapes for this particular assignment, I agree with the Whittins' stance that "

. . . the strategy of problem posing opens up new avenues for mathematical and language arts discussions and explorations” (93).

I notice several practical advantages of using this application which are that (1) it deviates from the traditional manner of teaching literature, (2) it encourages students to think critically, (3) it prevents students from summarizing and/or responding inappropriately, (4) it organizes information for easier recollection, (5) it prevents improper note taking, and (6) it appeals to most students.

In Jim Burke’s Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom, he agrees that using graphic organizers—in my case geometric shapes—has many advantages as noted: “Establishes a main or controlling idea, organizes information and ideas in logical, appropriate format, uses sensory, concrete, or illustrative details to support claims” and my favorite “prepares students to write” (97).

Lastly, Kathryn Braddon, Nancy Hall, and Dale Taylor also note how “the integration of mathematics into language arts . . . almost always raises the level of learning” (5) in the following ways: “[allows for] restatement of facts in [students’] own words, showing or doing, using information, making judgments from the facts, building a new whole from parts” and my favorite, “breaking a whole into parts” (5).

“Integration is a buzzword in education today, but too often the meaning seems to suggest that if the teacher throws any two subjects together, something better will happen” according to Braddon, Hall, and Taylor (5). Nothing better will happen though, unless teachers do what Braddon, Hall, and Taylor say next, which is “with a little more purposeful thought, teachers can easily raise the interest, complexity, and success of some

of their favorite activities” (5) and that is exactly what I intend to continue doing in my classroom by practicing Geolit.

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Jacqueline Sockwell

"Only a fool looks for logic in the chambers of the human heart."

Ulysses Everett McGill, in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

For George, In Response to Keats'

"When I have fears that I may cease to be"

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before I've stepped in waves of phosph'rous'd night,

Before I've counted stars in sky and sea,
And followed brigand swallows in blue flight;

When I behold the river heron's grace,
And walk a limestone creek bed under trees,

It comes to me I may not live to chase,
With palms outstretched, the trout or skink or bees.

But when I pause, and hear the owl's cool voice,

And feel vibrations of the cattle's lowing,
My heart is still, and, list'ning, gives up choice,

And finds, inside surrender, all of knowing.

Within each pause there's room to breathe, and leap,

And love, and find the moon, and sleep.

Denotation, Connotation, Euphemism:

It's okay to play with your words at the table.

I have come to the realization that anything I can do in the classroom to promote an experimental, playful attitude toward language, toward our own words, opens the door to increased student awareness of language as organic and evolving. If we are just playing around with words, we are not in an evaluative arena; what is more, I am encouraging creativity, and I am giving students back their own language. The learning situation is reshaped, and the students' language growth is nurtured.

I try to think of myself as my students' Word Guide. I love playing with words, learning new words, and trying to keep up with the way my own language is growing and changing. Language is alive and powerful, and students learn more in an atmosphere of wallowing in words than they do studying for a spelling test. They internalize the language as they have fun with it.

Denotation means "dictionary definition." I have both the *Merriam-Webster* and the *Oxford English Dictionary* on my class computer desktop, accessible online and off. I also have a two-volume hardback version of the OED in my classroom that students love to explore with the magnifying glass (the print is very, very tiny). The OED facilitates scavenger hunt activities for word roots, countries of word origins, the date of the oldest recorded usages of words, examples from literary works using the words, and even examples of how words have changed and evolved in meaning. Did you know that "fizzle" once meant "to urinate"? It's in the OED.

Appendix A is an "expanded definition" of the word "gambol." I have used this

handout to inspire and generate essays with college students, and I have scaled it down for seventh and eighth graders. The objective is to analyze—breaks into parts—the dictionary definition of a word, then springboard into an essay that adds personal connotations to the denotation, creating an expanded, extended, personalized definition. Some other words to consider for this exercise are *invective*, *prestidigitator*, *apocalyptic*, *narcissistic*, *wizardry*, *metropolitan*, and *license*.

Connotation was defined by the JSU WP '05 teacher-fellows as "the associations evoked by a word." Ask your students the questions in Appendix B for a lively discussion.

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2). Tell that to the performers listed in Appendix C! See how many birth names of certain celebrities your students can match to the mellifluous pseudonyms by which we best know them.

Yes, Virginia, there are degrees of insult. Take a moment to rate the following list of words from most insulting (#1) to least insulting (#16), based on the connotations each word has for you: *fleshy*, *portly*, *stout*, *obese*, *thick*, *big-boned*, *solid*, *corpulent*, *plump*, *chubby*, *brawny*, *rotund*, *pudgy*, *heavy-set*, *paunchy*, *beefy*, *roly-poly*.

Students of all ages like this exercise, which also springboards nicely into an essay assignment. You, and they, should be prepared to explain the connotations that influenced ratings. After justifying your ratings, check your connotations against the *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms* entry for the word *fleshy* in Appendix D.

Bertrand Russell, on a British Broadcasting Company radio program called The Brains Trust, gave the following "conjugation" of an "irregular verb":

I am firm.
You are obstinate.
He is a pig-headed fool.

The *New Statesman and Nation*, using the above as a model, offered prizes to readers who sent in the best "irregular verbs" of this kind. Here are some of the published entries.

I am sparkling. You are unusually talkative. He is drunk.
I am fastidious. You are fussy. He is an old woman.
I am a creative writer. You have a journalistic flair. He is a prosperous hack.
I am beautiful. You have quite good features. She isn't bad-looking, if you like that type.
I day dream. You are an escapist. He ought to see a psychiatrist.
I have about me something of the subtle, haunting, mysterious fragrance of the Orient. You rather overdo it, dear. She stinks.

Here are a couple of mine:

I am righteously indignant. You are annoyed. He is making a fuss over nothing.
I am well-rounded. You are considering your weight options. She is fat.

Now, you "conjugate," in a similar way, the following statements:

I am slender.
I collect rare old objects of art.
I don't dance very well.
Naturally I use a little makeup.
I am cautious.
I speak my mind frankly.
I have a sense of humor.
I love my country.
I have a cocktail or two before dinner.

Here are some irregular conjugations generated by the JSU WP '05 teacher-fellows:

I collect rare old objects of art.
You seem to gather knick-knacks.
He is an incurable packrat.

Naturally I use a little makeup.
You must sell *Clinique*.
She looks like Tammy Faye Baker.

I am cautious.

I speak my mind frankly.

You are obsessive-compulsive.
 He's so tied up in knots, he chokes
 himself when he speaks.

You're a lawyer.
 He's a liar.

I am slender.
 You are Twiggy's twin.
 She is anorexic.

I have a cocktail or two before dinner.
 You are a bit of a barfly.
 He should chair AA meetings.

Have your students explain, as accurately and in as concrete detail as possible, the pictures and reactions that are evoked when they read each of the following terms. Have them try to describe the personal associations and experiences that have resulted in the word's present cluster of connotations for them: *debutante, mangled, beer, acid rain, monster, bust, slither, cram, bus depot, gurgle, sopping, cathedral, stereo, classy, hike, dawn, mess, endurance, disco, chocolate, orchid, Frisbee, tea, bleak, airport, heavenly, prima donna, emporium, wrinkled, executive suite.*

Try to account for the connotative quality of the following words: *maggot, retch, funk, phlegm, miasma, raucous, gobbet, clot, bombast, reek, prestidigitator, udder, colossal, blitz, brillig, slithy, toves, mimsy.* Are their reactions due to the words' sounds, the pictures called to mind, or both? Does any word have connotative value even though its meaning may not be precisely fixed in student minds?

Now have students make up a new word (for example, *glert, manspac, parkine, stonk*). They need to assign it a meaning, write out its denotation, mark its punctuation, use it in a sentence, tell what its connotations are, give any euphemisms it may require, and illustrate it. Provide an ample stash of supplies. Mount their creations on the wall and admire.

I have found the following exercise fun as low-tech, old-fashioned board work, with me writing furiously as students call out their responses. Some words that arouse strong reactions are *male, female, addict, atheist, cheater, old-timer, punk, puritanical, redneck, virgin, pornography, macho, feminine, sophistication, filth, poverty, cancer, Christmas, Hiroshima, 9/11.*

I always begin with "male" and "female," writing the two words at the top of the board and asking my students to give me all the synonyms they can think of for each, including (even especially) current slang. Then I erase the board, and write another distinctly connotative word at the top, and ask again for synonyms, with the objective of creating a word-portrait of a person who exemplifies the term. With college students, I have had great success with "redneck" and "virgin." I once asked a class, after I had covered the board with their (hilarious) descriptors of both terms, if we could now combine the two and create a word-portrait of a "redneck virgin." They sat in silence for a moment, then one student said, "Impossible." If you are either a redneck (as I am!) or a virgin, and the stereotyping elicited by these terms offends you, please choose another term. Naturally, you would want to be particularly discriminating in your choice of term if you teach younger students.

Euphemisms are born of connotations. Euphemisms substitute for words and phrases that we are uncomfortable saying, and I have found they usually fall into one of three euphemistic categories: body parts, bodily functions, and religious allusion in the form of swearing or cursing. Write "death" (a bodily function) at the top of the board, and have your students dictate, as you write, all the euphemisms for "death" or "dying"

they can think of. You may well cover the board with their responses, as I did with college students' euphemisms for the word "urination" (another bodily function).

Most of us brought up here in the Bible Belt of the South regard swearing, or "cussing," as at least irreverent, if not downright blasphemous. But there's a reason for our English-speaking religious leaders' condemnation of what may seem like even the mildest of "swear words": they are virtually all references—some admittedly obscure—to God and/or Jesus or to bodily functions. The British epithet "bloody," for example, once referred to the blood of Christ. I'm sure your students can tell you many current terms; try to keep an open mind.

An English instructor I had in undergraduate school, Dr. Johnston, once told our class that he thought the loveliest-sounding words in the English language were "cellar door." "Cellar door, cellar door," he repeated to us dreamily. Years later I discovered in a book that Oscar Wilde was the first to proclaim "cellar door" as the loveliest sounding words in the English language; the discovery did not actually diminish the romanticism of the word-sounds for me, though. Say "cellar door" with the right amount of breathiness—perhaps gaze at the ceiling and let your hands float while you say it—and you will hear what I mean. My favorite words are "whippoorwill" and "twilight." There is a languid quality to all those "L" sounds and the evocation of evening light and the low hum of cicadas that entrances me. These sound and image associations I have with the words are, of course, their connotations.

By way of closing, I share my favorite poem, ripe with beautiful words (share yours, and have your students share theirs):

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things—
 For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
 Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
 All things counter, original, spare, strange;
 Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
 Praise him.

--Gerard Manley Hopkins

Pied: variegated
brindled: brindled, streaked
trim: equipment
spare: unusual

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Appendix A

1. CONTEXT (The text in which you found the word used): "Between the Georgia mansions of these plantations three deer gamboled in a field of new grain—a scene as genteel, I think, as ever a planter knew" (*National Geographic*).
2. GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION: Intransitive verb.
3. WRITTEN FORM: gam-bol.
4. SPOKEN FORM: gam' bəl.
5. SENSE: "To leap about playfully; to frolic; to skip" (*American Heritage Dictionary*).
6. LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION, GENERALITY, LITERALNESS (Compare this word to other, similar words): relatively concrete, able to be pictured; relatively specific compared to words like *ran* or *moved*; literal.
7. ETYMOLOGY (The roots of the word): "Earlier *gamba* (u)*de*, from Old French *gambade*, from Italian *gambata*, from *gama*, leg, from Late Latin, hoof, from Greek *kampe*, bend."
8. FUNCTION AND ASSOCIATIONS (How is it used, and what do you usually think of when you see it): both referential and emotive; there are quite positive emotional associations of joy, innocence, spontaneity, for *gambol* collocates (is found) with words like *fields*, *blue sky*, *green grass*, *spring*, *lambs*, *play*.
9. SCOPE OR STATUS (Are there any limitations on the use of the word?): not strictly limited, though the word tends to suggest writing rather than speech, an educated class, and a style that is not intimate or casual.
10. SEMANTIC RELATIONS: Homonyms—*gamble* (this allows for puns to be made); antonyms—no obvious single words, though *drooped* might be possible; synonyms—*leap*, *frolic*, *skip*, *frisk*.
11. STYLISTIC IMPLICATIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS (When is this word usually used, and is its use in this work effective and suitable?): probably the most important thing to note is that, apart from the concreteness and specificity of the word, it seems more literary, cultured, and positively resonant than its Germanic synonyms. It is effective in this context, then, because it contributes to the "genteel" scene which is being described.

Appendix B

1. What reaction do you have when you hear or read the name Florrie? Do you see any specific picture in your mind? How can you explain it? What about Ida Mae, Percy, Bobby Joe, Clyde, Bertha, Daphne, Myrtle, Elmer, Guinevere, Lancelot? Which name would you choose for your daughter, and which name for your son--Arlene, Jennifer, Shirley, Maureen, Norma, Constance, Lula, Kevin, Stephen, Fred, Barrett, Benjamin, Michael, George, Maurice—and why?
2. Account for the slight differences in connotation among the variants of these names:
Elizabeth, Beth, Liz, Lizzie, Bessie, Liza, Bess
Robert, Rob, Robbie, Bob, Bobby
Katharine, Kay, Kathy, Kate, Kitty, Kit, Kat
Edward, Eddie, Ned, Ed, Ted, Teddy
Margaret, Margie, Meg, Marge, Peggy, Peg, Maggie
3. By virtue of your chronological age, you may be eligible to be described by a number of terms: teenager, adolescent, youth, young person, juvenile, pre-adult, youngster, boy, girl, man, woman, mature, grownup, middle-aged, over-thirty, thirty-something, forty-something, mid-life, in the prime of life. How do you respond to those terms? What does each connote for you? Are there any other terms you prefer to describe your own age group?
4. Consider the term or terms you use to refer to some class of people—for example, those with high incomes. What are the connotations of the term you most frequently use for that group? What are some alternative terms (e.g., rich, well off, well-to-do, old money, self-made, affluent, comfortably fixed, wealthy, rolling in dough, loaded), and what are their connotations to you?

Appendix C

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Issur Danielovitch | A. Judy Garland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Norma Jean Dougherty | B. Natalie Wood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Reginald Kenneth Dwight | C. Slash (Guns'n'Roses) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Michael Gubitesi | D. Danny Thomas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Rodolfo Gugliemi | E. Piper Laurie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Frances Gumm | F. Kirk Douglas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Natasha Gurdin | G. Marilyn Monroe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Saul Hudson | H. Elton John |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Amos Jacobs | I. Robert Blake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Rosetta Jacobs | J. Rudolph Valentino |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Richard Walter Jenkins | K. Cary Grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Karen Johnson | L. Jerry Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Allen S. Konigsberg | M. Michael Caine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Doris Koppelhoff | N. Yvonne deCarlo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Benjamin Kubelsky | O. John Wayne |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Archibald Leach | P. Richard Burton |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Joseph Levitch | Q. Whoopi Goldberg |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| ___ 18. Maurice J. Micklewhite | R. Woody Allen |
| ___ 19. Peggy Yvonne Middleton | S. Doris Day |
| ___ 20. Marion Michael Morrison | T. Jack Benny |
| ___ 21. M. Orowitz | U. Roy Rogers |
| ___ 22. Michael Phillip | V. Ringo Starr |
| ___ 23. Shirley Schrift | W. Sting |
| ___ 24. Jerome Silverman | X. Vanilla Ice |
| ___ 25. Larushka Skikne | Y. Bob Dylan |
| ___ 26. Leonard Slye | Z. Michael Landon |
| ___ 27. Richard Starkey | AA. Mick Jagger |
| ___ 28. Gordon Matthew Sumner | BB. Shelley Winters |
| ___ 29. Robert Van Winkle | CC. Gene Wilder |
| ___ 30. Robert Zimmerman | DD. Laurence Harvey |

ANSWERS:

F -1, G-2, H-3, I-4, J-5, A-6, B-7, C-8, D-9, E-10, 11-P, 12-Q, 13-R, 14-S, 15-T, 16-K, 17-L, 18-M, 19-N, 20-O, 21-Z, 22-AA, 23-BB, 24-CC, 25-DD, 26-U, 27-V, 28-W, 29-X, 30-Y.

Appendix D

fleshy, fat, stout, portly, plump, rotund, chubby, corpulent, obese mean thick and heavy in body because of superfluous fat. **Fleshy** and **fat** are not clearly discriminated in use, although *fleshy* may imply overabundance of muscular tissue and *fat*, of adipose tissue; when a derogatory connotation is intended *fat* is usually preferred <the unreasonably *fat* woman with legs like tree trunks—*K. A. Porter*> <my appetite is plenty good enough, and I am about as *fleshy* as I was in Brooklyn—*Whitman*> <a *fleshy*, jolly man> <a dowdy *fat* woman> **Stout** implies a thickset, bulky figure or build, but it is often merely a euphemistic substitute for *fat*; **portly** adds to *stout* the implication of a more or less dignified and imposing appearance <a very *stout*, puffy man, in buckskins and Hessian boots—*Thackeray*> <one very *stout* gentleman, whose body and legs looked like half a gigantic roll of flannel, elevated on a couple of inflated pillowcases—*Dickens*> <a large *portly* figure . . . the very beau ideal of an old abbot—*J. W. Carlyle*> <an elderly gentleman, large and *portly*, and of remarkably dignified demeanor—*Hawthorne*> **Plump** implies a pleasing fullness of figure and well-rounded curves <the *plump* goddesses of Renaissance paintings> <she became *plump* at forty> <his wife was . . . *plump* where he was spare—*Sayers*> **Rotund** suggests the shape of a sphere; it often, in addition, connotes shortness or squatness <this pink-faced *rotund* specimen of prosperity—*George Eliot*> **Chubby** applies chiefly to children or to very short persons who are otherwise describable as *rotund* <a *chubby* cherub of a baby> **Corpulent** and **obese** imply a disfiguring excess of flesh or of fat <Mrs. Byron . . . was a short and *corpulent* person and rolled considerably in her gait—*Thomas Moore*> <a woman of robust frame, square-shouldered . . . and though stout, not *obese*—*Bronte*> **Ana** *muscular, brawny, burly, husky **Ant** skinny, scrawny --**Con** *lean, lank, lanky, gaunt, rawboned, angular, spare; *thin, slim, slender, slight--From *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms* (1978)



Mary Louise

Mama Klump: When the good Lord made you, He made you beautiful inside and out.

The Nutty Professor

Granddaughter

*I have watched,
Waited,
Worried, and
Anticipated
The results of
Hard work and
Determination.*

*Rewards of staying power:
Employment,
Motherhood, and
Marriage.
Continue to blossom!*

Reading Matter

Jacksonville State University Writing Project 2005 required professional reading. Therefore, I focused most of my selected readings on mathematics and strategies that I will be able to implement in kindergarten. I have taught kindergarten for fourteen years. Then, I requested a move to teach second grade. Permission was granted, and now after six years, I am going back to kindergarten. The kindergarten teacher plays a unique role in the educational process. I take this task very seriously. It is my tremendous task to assemble daily activities that will enable the development of a strong foundation for reading, language and mathematics. Constant preparation and a wide variety of resources will provide me, the teacher, the means to address the challenges the students bring to the kindergarten classroom. I especially want to increase my awareness of current trends that will help strengthen my teaching style. There are many books on the shelves in the JSUWP classroom. We were granted permission to check out the books. I spent most of my free time reading.

Richard L. Allington, Joan Countryman, Harvey Daniels, and Donald Murray discuss strategies I use, and they provide encouragement to continue the implementation of journal writing and small group activities; even the very young can enjoy journal writing. According to Graves and Murray, journal writing is a method that gives the students an opportunity to write about any topic. Usually, it is a topic of the student's choice. The teacher gives the student the time to brainstorm lists of topics. The topics in my class include, but are not limited to, family and friends, toys, games, nouns, verbs and adjectives. Daily writing practices allow the student to go to the list and select a topic.

Students add to the list as they listen to others during shared reading time. The young student is eager to write page after page of information about the topic of his or her choosing. All students look forward to having their writing published. Daily journal writing helps the teacher identify writing elements that need to be improved. Teacher/student conferences allow the student to identify ways to improve grammar skills that will contribute to the success of writing. Everyday, I have a conference with the students exhibiting the most problems. Conferences with the other students are scheduled two or three times each week.

Graves, Murray and Countryman agree that students should be encouraged to review completed written work to gain a sense of the best of the past. They encourage teachers to surround the students with a rich literature environment in content areas, especially in mathematics. Students need to read, write and draw daily because reading and writing are intertwined. The students hear, read, and experience the sharing of journal writing. The students will gradually learn how to choose good selections to read because of the reactions and examples given by other students.

Allington's article, "You Can't Learn Much from Books You Can't Read," suggests strategies to help the struggling readers in grades 5-12. It is my opinion that the suggestions can apply to K-3 teachers as well. The suggestions include such ideas as creating multi-sourced and multi-leveled curriculums, offering "managed choices" to students as they learn content and demonstrating what they learn. Individualized instruction is tailored to each student's needs and uses practices that foster improvements in student learning across the curriculum.

William H. Schmidt supports the idea of the critical impact teachers have on the progress of students. The success of the No Child Left Behind Act depends on the curriculum, the teacher, and the content expectation or standards, especially in mathematics.

In conclusion, the research indicates that the process of helping students realize their speaking and writing skills through journaling is worthwhile. However, this realization is slow. This is true in the early years because it is new to the student. Journal writing is a constant, conscious rehearsal of writing. Therefore, I will continue encouraging the students to make lists of words in content areas, providing the students with answers to the question, "What shall I write about?" Growth comes when the student solves journal writing, grammar, and content problems across the curriculum.

Allington, Richard L. "You Can't Learn Much from Books You Can't Read."
Educational Leadership November 2002: 16-19.

Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles Voice and Choice in Student Centered Classrooms*.
York, ME. 1994.

Countryman, Joan. *Writing to Learn Mathematics*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1992.

Graves, Donald H. *Writing: Teachers & Children at Work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann,
1982.

Murray, Donald. *Write to Learn*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1983.

Schmidt, William H. "Visions for Mathematics." *Educational Leadership* February 2004:
6-11.



Valerie Womack

Dead Poet Society: John Keating, "There is a time for daring and a time for caution, and a wise man knows which is called for. Phone call from God. . . Now if it had been collect, it would have been daring!"

Beyond Fort Dixie

A warm spring breeze gently blew through the crowded football stadium as a single tear escaped the pool welled up in my eye and made its way slowly down my cheek. I was so enraptured by the creeping line of cap-and-gown-clad students, looking like a proud army of marching ants, that I did not take the time to wipe away the tear. He was graduating, leaving the safety net of high school. He was not tottering, but leaping off the edge of childhood and diving into the pool of manhood at the bottom. My heart swelled with pride when he looked up in the stands and grinned when he saw me. We had made it.

How can it come to be that a twenty-five year old is so emotionally involved with the graduation of an eighteen year old? I am definitely not his mother! I am not even his sister. In reality, I am of no relation at all. But there is something stronger than blood between us, I was his teacher.

I had left my hometown, Fort Dixie, Alabama, and pursued my educational dreams only to find myself floundering for a job after college graduation. I envisioned myself teaching English to malnourished kids in Cambodia—something exotic, something big, something beyond the rural southern small town existence I had known my entire life. I spent the first eighteen years of my life battling to get out of Fort Dixie and had hit the road running after graduation with no intentions to settle there again. Imagine my surprise and dismay when the only job offer that came my way was teaching English at my old high school. I was desperate for a job. Suddenly, teaching as a

volunteer in the wilds of some third world country had little appeal. I sucked up my pride and became the newest (and youngest) member of the faculty of Fort Dixie High School.

The first day of school arrived, and I walked into my classroom with my shoulders back and my head held high. A group of thirty juniors quickly dissipated any sense of pride and dignity that I possessed. When the bell rang at 3:00 that first day, I collapsed into my chair and allowed the tears to flow freely. Life was definitely taking an unexpected turn. This was not what I had imagined for my life. Where were the thrills and excitement of being a professional? Was it simply because I was stuck in little backwoods Fort Dixie that I was not experiencing the excitement of being a college graduate striking out on the road to success? Did rejoining the ranks of the good ol' guys and gals who had never left the city limits of Fort Dixie (those who were unaware that life even existed outside of the city limits) somehow make my bachelor's degree null and void?

I struggled through my first semester as a teacher. Every day brought a new dilemma. Kelsey's cousin went to high school with me, and now Kelsey thought she knew all about me. Jake made a big production of finding and sharing all of the yearbooks from my days at FDHS. I lost all sense of anonymity. I was back in Fort Dixie, and the entire world knew because there was no one in town who didn't hear ten teenage girls scream, "Ms. Bass!" from the front doors of Wal-Mart (and I was at the very back refrigerated case getting a gallon of milk!)

Life in general became a struggle. Who was I? Was I the same Melanie Bass that graduated from FDHS in 1998? Was I Ms. Bass, a prudish English teacher? Was I

Ms. Bass, the “cool” teacher? Who was I? I quickly realized that growing up does not mean instant accomplishment of huge, wild dreams. Growing up means discovering who you are and the purpose you serve in the grand scheme of things. I was on a journey to self-realization.

It was not until the second semester change of classes that Drew walked into my classroom. This sixteen year-old boy intimidated me before he ever set foot in my classroom. He was walking in with a reputation. Originally, he was not supposed to be in my section of tenth grade English. He had gotten into some trouble during the fall, and his original teacher refused to allow him into her class. There was a small seed of trepidation planted in my stomach as I watched him walk through the door.

However, I soon realized that Drew would not be the problem child of that group. He sat quietly in his desk and did what was asked of him. Perhaps he knew that he could not afford to get himself into any more trouble. He was Mr. Football—as a mere sophomore, he was easily one of the best players on the team. Another round of trouble would cause all of his football privileges to be revoked. On the other hand, it was possible Drew was just a good kid who had made a bad decision and reaped the consequences of it.

Drew actually became a bright spot in my day. No matter what my mood, a smile always came to my face as Drew entered my classroom for third block. He was quite endearing when he greeted me at my door each day, “Hey, Ms. Bass! How are you today?” as he shook my hand. He had an uncanny ability to read moods. He could always tell if I didn’t feel well or if something was bothering me. Drew always went out

of his way to check in and see how things were going. Drew became protective of me.

It wasn't until I took up journals mid-semester that Drew and I forged a bond. He really opened up in his journal. That single subject spiral notebook became his venting source. He wrote all about his crazy family. His father had remarried and started "another" family, and his mother was single and acting like a teenager. His grandparents, who loved and spoiled Drew to death, were left to provide him a home. However, there was no discipline there. Like many teenagers, he just craved someone to lay down the law. Drew also opened up about his dreams for the future. For a sixteen year-old, he was very attuned to what he wanted out of life.

This young man had already endured real problems. Though these problems had left emotional scars, they had matured him well beyond his years. I, too, became protective. I stood my ground in a heated discussion with my colleague who had refused him admittance to her class. Drew was indeed a young man of character.

The school year ended, and I enjoyed the opportunity to relax and regain my sanity. One breezy June evening, I was curled up on my front porch swing enjoying a good book and a glass of lemonade when I heard the deep rumble of a truck in my driveway. I looked up from *Harry Potter* to see Drew getting out of his truck.

One look at him told me that he was upset. I quickly welcomed him onto the porch. As soon as he was on the top step, he wrapped his arms around me in a huge bear hug and buried his face on my shoulder. I was a bit taken aback, but I held him in the hug and tried to comfort him. It wasn't until he pulled out of the hug that I saw the unshed tears glistening in his eyes. He immediately unleashed his tongue and answered my silent

questions. His dad was on vacation with his “other” family, he couldn’t find his mom, his grandparents didn’t have a clue, and Jen, his girlfriend, was in Texas and the two of them were arguing via cell phones. He was freaked out because there was a possibility that Jen might be pregnant. Fatherhood was the last route he wanted to take at the age of seventeen. He just had no one to turn to and had, therefore, turned up on my doorstep. He just needed someone to talk to who would listen. I listened, and after a couple of glasses of lemonade, Drew left wearing his usual lopsided grin. Our bond of friendship had grown stronger. A couple of weeks later, I got a phone call telling me that the coast was clear; it had just been a scare.

Summer ended, and another school year began. I didn’t see much of Drew in school because his class schedule rarely brought him my way. My cell phone would ring occasionally with Drew’s number flashing on caller ID. He would just be checking in to tell me how football and classes were going and how he and Jen were doing. I began to reference Drew to my friends as “Little Brother Drew.”

Drew was the star of the football field the entire season. I didn’t miss a single home football game. Pride oozed from every pore of my body as I sat in the bleachers and cheered him on. Every time he was tackled, my heart would stop and I would suffer a slight panic attack until I watched him get up. “Gosh,” I thought to myself, “I’m becoming such a parent!” The exciting thing, though, was that Drew was already being recruited to play college football. In the South, it is a HUGE deal to play college football. Several coaches were telling him that if he continued to work hard both on and off the field, he could go to the college of his choice and play ball.

I was diligently trying to grade research papers during my planning one day, but my mind just wouldn't focus. I was relieved to hear my door creak open. I looked up to find Drew walking into my room.

"Where are you supposed to be?" I asked.

"Mr. Water's class. We had a test and I'm already finished. I asked him if I could come ask you for some help on my research paper."

"What research paper?"

"Oh, I've already turned in my research paper. I just wanted to come talk to you."

I could tell that something was on his mind. "What's up?" I asked.

"Jason just said something to me at lunch that ticked me off, and now I'm in a crappy mood," he blurted.

I questioned what Jason had said, and it was normal teenage boy fodder. I wasn't sure that I had the proper words of wisdom to dispense for the situation. But Drew wasn't looking for sage advice; he just wanted someone to listen. "I'll just be so glad when I can finally get out of this crummy little town," he blurted. "All my life I've been stuck here, and people just put you in a category and never let you out. Even from elementary school you are tagged as "cool" or "uncool," and that follows you around until the day you get out of this place. I'll be so freaking glad when I can walk out those front doors and say the heck with everyone here!"

"Everyone?"

"Everyone but you, of course! Your butt had better be in the stands watching me play ball!"

“Only if you send me tickets!” I teased. “And when you win the Heisman Trophy, I had better be mentioned in your acceptance speech.”

“Well, duh! I’ll be seen on national tv and quoted in the newspaper saying, ‘I owe so much to my high school English teacher, Ms. Bass. She was one of the few people who believed in me and encouraged me. She was there for me when I thought the entire world had turned its back on me. Ms. Bass is the greatest teacher in the world, and she deserves an NFL salary!’”

I had laughed and told Drew to get back to class. After he left, I had an epiphany. I suddenly understood why Drew and I clicked so well. In many ways, he was the male version of myself at seventeen—bursting at the seams to get out of Fort Dixie at the first chance. I kept pushing him and bolstering his football dreams because football was going to be his way out of town. Even if he had the misfortune of finding himself once again a resident of Fort Dixie after college, surely his experience would be more pleasant than mine because he would most likely be an Alabama or Auburn football star. An SEC conference title or a National Championship would seal his fate as a hometown hero.

Life continued. I finally had a firm foothold in the classroom, and I absolutely loved what I did for a living (if only it weren’t in Fort Dixie!) Life continued for Drew as well. He gave a hundred percent to football and worked hard in his classes, too. He also strove to keep himself out of trouble. As spring rolled around and his days as a junior were numbered, coaches were calling from all over the Southeast, and many were beginning to drop in on spring training. Mr. Drew would indeed find himself playing for a school in the Southeastern Conference, if he wanted it badly enough.

That spring I began to date Lee. Drew asked me a million questions about Lee. Finally, one day I asked, "Why are you so fascinated with my boyfriend?"

Drew answered promptly, "I just want to make sure that he is good enough for you."

I was deeply touched by his caring. A couple of weeks later, Lee and I ran into Drew and Jen at the movie theater. Introductions and small talk were made. Lee and I made our departure. Lee and Drew shook hands. Drew lowered his voice and warned, "You better take real good care of her. If you don't, you'll have to answer to me!"

"Drew Browstone," boomed a loud voice from below. I shook myself from my reverie and watched the tall, broad shouldered young man walk across the stage to accept his diploma. I clapped so hard that my palms began to burn. After he shook the principal's hand, Drew looked up in the audience. He spotted me, flashed a boyish grin my way, and vigorously held up his diploma.

The boy who had entered my class two years ago as a troubled boy now strode off the stage below as a man. He had succeeded. He was getting out of Fort Dixie. We had succeeded. Reality suddenly struck me with a stiff blow. Drew was a ghost of who I had been in 1998. I was no longer that person. I had left Fort Dixie, and during my absence, I had grown and matured. I had come back and successfully started my professional path. The shocking part of reality was that I was proud of my accomplishments as a teacher at Fort Dixie High School. I was proud to call myself a member of that faculty. I was proud of my town. It was no longer that blasted redneck town into which I had had the misfortune of being born. No, Fort Dixie was now home.

My dreams of striking it rich out west or becoming a teacher with a mission in Cambodia swiftly changed shape. Now I envisioned myself marrying, settling down, and watching my children grow up in the same sacred town as I. I saw myself becoming one of the distinguished and renowned members of the FDHS faculty. I had been dreaming the wrong dreams! As two hundred mortar boards flew into the air, I felt like throwing my own invisible hat up in celebration, too. I had reached the end of a journey as well. I had spent three years trekking along life wondering who I was and who I wanted to be. Suddenly, I knew and I rejoiced as I graduated into self-realization.

I was chatting with colleagues when Drew found me after the ceremony. In one swift movement, he wrapped his arms around me in one of his infamous bear hugs.

“We did it!” he shouted as he released me from his hold.

“No, you did it,” I corrected, a smile stretched across my face.

“I never would have made it without you!”

“I’m proud of you, Little Brother Drew,” I almost whispered. I hoped he didn’t see the tears that were threatening to spill.

His grin lit up the night sky as he treasured my words. His hand disappeared under his gown, and when it reappeared there was a card in his hand. He handed it out to me.

“For me?” I stupidly asked.

He only nodded his reply. “Open it.”

I tugged at the envelope with slightly shaking hands. It was a simple card with a picture of a smiling graduate on the outside. It said, “I just wanted to say to my favorite

teacher. . . .” I opened the card. Two pieces of paper fluttered out. I caught them and finished reading the card, “Thank you.” Then Drew had written, “Thank you for all that you have done for me. I honestly don’t think I would have survived high school without you. Thank you for being the big sister that I never had. I love you. I can’t wait to see my number one fan cheering me on in the stands this fall! Here is the autograph I promised. Love always, Little Brother Drew”

I looked at the two pieces of paper that had fluttered out of the card. One was an autograph from Mike Shula, head coach at the University of Alabama. The second piece of paper was a season pass to Bryant Denny Stadium to watch Drew and the Crimson Tide. The tears that had been threatening to overflow finally escaped their prison. As Drew and I shared another hug, I was almost certain I felt tears splashing on top of my head.

Albright, Lettie and Ariail, Mary. "Tapping the Potential of Teacher Read-alouds in Middle Schools". *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48.7 (April 2005): 582-590

Albright and Ariail discuss research they conducted into the benefits to students of teacher read-alouds. They cite research by Beers in 1990 that shows that motivation, interest, and engagement are often enhanced when teachers read aloud to middle school students. An exciting voice and appropriate phrasing and emphasis help keep student interest and increase comprehension. Read-alouds also introduce students to books they might not locate on their own. In a small independent school district in Texas, Albright and Ariail surveyed 238 teachers, with 141 responding. They found that 85% of those studied do read to their students, primarily to model aspects of fluent reading such as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and style. Types of texts most commonly used were chapter books and textbooks. Albright and Ariail were encouraged that so many teachers valued reading aloud but concerned to see so little attention given to the aesthetic purposes for reading. Most teachers used read-alouds for instrumental, efferent, and managerial purposes rather than student enjoyment, promotion of positive attitudes toward reading, and enriching students' lives. Their speculation is that "covering" content and teaching to tests is the primary reason for this, but they added that many teachers may not be aware of the many benefits and possibilities of reading aloud in subject areas other than those related to literacy.

Rebecca McDowell

Burdick, Tracey. "Pleasure in Information Seeking: Reducing Information Aiteracy." *Emergency Librarian* 25.3 (1998): 13-17. Expanded Academic ASAP Plus. Infotrac. Jacksonville State University, Houston Cole Library. 07 July 2005 <http://web2.infotrac.galegroup.com>.

This is an in-depth article discussing *information aliteracy*, what it is specifically and what educators can do to diminish the number of information aliterate students in classroom settings. Burdick conducted a study using high school students assigned an English research paper. The initial study consisted of 80 such students, categorized as Involved, Detached, or Reluctant. Twenty were identified as being negatively involved in the research assignment. These were considered reluctant students lacking motivation and exhibiting no desire to use ideas and information effectively, and were labeled as *information aliterate*. Additionally, possible causes of information aliteracy were discussed as well as suggestions to not only promote, but increase information literacy in disinterested students displaying reluctant attitudes toward assignments involving research.

Valerie Rimpsey

Howerton, Dauna and Cathy Thomas. "Help for High School Students Who Still Can't Read." *English Journal* 93.5 (2004).

Dauna Howerton and Cathy Thomas examine the issues surrounding the poor reading skills of secondary school students. Howerton and Thomas, English language arts and special education teachers, offer knowledge from their different backgrounds that may help students move toward stronger reading skills. The authors discuss in depth theories as to why secondary school students have such poor reading skills. The authors contend that most reading problems developed long before secondary school and became progressively worse due to the lack of intense/direct reading instruction at the secondary level. This article provides several strategies for secondary language arts teachers to assist them in the instruction of reading.

LaToya Campbell

Keef, Charlotte Hendrick. *Label Free Learning: Supporting Learners with Disabilities*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 1996.

Keefe provides support for inclusion and the whole language classroom where the students are not considered disabled or deficient. The whole language approach is a child-centered curriculum where learners are allowed to develop from where they are and not rushed through an artificially designed curriculum with preset skills in a specific sequence. The concept expresses a global view of education that considers and addresses the uniqueness of the child. Children in public schools are becoming increasingly diverse. The whole language classroom promotes learning through social interaction. Collaborative and cooperative groups have been proven to be effective techniques, not only in boosting academic achievement, but also in increasing self esteem and encouraging positive attitudes towards others, including individuals with disabilities. The whole language environment allows the learners to explore and expand their mode or modes of literacy; as well as become independent and self-directed.

Mary Louise F. White

Knowles, Trudy and Dave F. Brown. *What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.

Piaget's four stages of intellectual development reflect those "characteristics related to a person's cognitive ability with respect to object perception" (17), and they include the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Knowles and Brown springboard from Piaget's stages to focus on the stages of concrete and formal operations, which comprise young people ages roughly eleven to young adulthood—the Middle Schoolers.

Knowles and Brown acknowledge the middle school student's ability to "classify and order objects, reverse processes, think of more than one thing at a time, and think logically about concrete objects" (17). This age group benefits from hands-on activities and manipulatives in the classroom more than from reading a textbook or enduring teacher lectures. The authors cite Richard Bordeaux: "[The middle school student's] identity is a patchwork of flesh, feelings, and ideas held together by the string of the moment" (29), and they state that one of their purposes in writing the book is "to explain the reason for and significance of designing middle schools sensitive to the developmental stages and needs of young adolescents" (51).

I highly recommend this book as essential reading for the middle school teacher. I have purchased a copy for myself, and plan to reread it often as I teach seventh grade English in the coming year.

Jacqueline Sockwell

Lipson, Charles. *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Despite the promise of the title, this brief reference guide could do a better job of helping those new to college level research writing. Lipson is careful to guide students through the warning signs of the laziness of copying and pasting from the internet by suggesting a type of "Q quotes" for marking information that is directly cut from a source. (A Q before and after the quotation in one's notes is supposed to stand out enough to not be tempted to drop the credit.) This guide separates sections for MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style, and Writing for Sciences (and even doing lab reports). Given the publisher, it is reasonable to expect a greater emphasis on Chicago Style than on the others (Chicago Style is covered in a 30-page chapter, MLA in a 20 page chapter.) There are additional chapters on writing in math and computer sciences, but Lipson seems to make it clear that this guide will not do for a college student's entire career if he or she plans to specialize in a science discipline. This reviewer missed the intense focus that is contained in other guides on MLA's expectations for signal phrasing and for quoting from multiple works from the same anthology. Where Lipson suspects that a style is in flux, he seems hesitant to lay down a hard and fast rule. For instance, he suggests that MLA currently recommends a "last update" for a web page citation, but seems to prefer CMS for no longer requiring it. He also frequently advises the student to check with professors, especially on the expectations for group work and lab partnering. Yes, students need clear warnings not to commit plagiarism, but one hopes that Lipson has not retained sole claim to the catchy phrasing that is his title.

Joanne Gates

McCann, T. & Flanagan, J (2002). A Tempest project: Shakespeare and critical conflicts. *English Journal*, 92.1 (2002): 29-35.

McCann and Flanagan discussed a four-week unit of study on *The Tempest*. The two used postcards to evoke student involvement with classroom discussions. The postcards were written for the students to become sympathetic and attached with the characters. Ultimately, this gave students a purpose to read. Also, the instructor introduced other strategies that would help students recall prior knowledge and develop appropriate themes related to the work. Though the postcards served as a character guide, study questions were given to the students to guide their reading. After the students read the play, they created a variety of book reviews. These two authors discussed techniques for educators that can be beneficial for play and novel studies.

Latorria Harrison

Noddings, N. *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. 101-116.

In *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, Nel Noddings attempts to emphasize her theory that to care and to be cared for are fundamental human needs that are absent in today's educational system. She also states that in the same environment in which children learn to respond to dependable caring, they can achieve academic goals and begin to develop the capacity to care.

Noddings attempts to prove her theories by analyzing the educational needs of a diverse student population. She challenges her readers to imagine being parents of a large heterogeneous family. In determining what would be best for each child's education, she advocates taking into account the unique interests and capabilities of each individual. In contrast, liberal education draws on a narrow set of human capacities and thus should be rejected as a model of universal education, according to Noddings. She claims a more balanced curriculum would help all students to discover their unique talents and develop respect for the talents of others. Noddings takes exception to the phrase "all children can learn," which she says leads to highly manipulative and dictatorial methods that disregard students' individual interests and purposes. Noddings identifies areas of care needing attention in schools that include care for self, intimate others, associates and distant others; non-human life, the human-made environment of objects and instruments; and the world of ideas.

Rodney Bailey

Pirie, Bruce. *Teenage Boys and High School English*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

It can be difficult, especially for female teachers, to capture the attention and interest of teenage boys in the English classroom. As a male English teacher, Pirie conducted research concerning why boys behave the way they do in English class. Boys are reluctant to admit their feelings; therefore, truer expressions of emotions are conveyed when boys are given assignments where feelings are deflected away from themselves. Boys relay deeper meanings and emotions when they are allowed to assume the role of a character in the novel or give an inanimate object life because then they are not risking their macho reputation in English class. Boys also take questions literally, therefore, teachers should carefully word queries. Boys also have trouble stating their feelings on demand. Instead, boys are more successful on assignments that allow them time to think and prepare before responding. Pirie provides a very useful insight to the inner workings of the male psyche and helpful ideas when teaching teenage boys.

Valerie Womack

Rief, Linda. "A Reader's-Writer's Notebook: It's A good Idea, Writers' Workshop." *Voices From the Middle*, 10.4 (May 2003).

In this article, "A Reader's-Writer's Notebook," Rief kept an academic journal, and she wished she had written a journal on her personal life as well because every time she wrote, her personal news crept into her journal writing. She was focusing on the details of learning and teaching when she noticed the same phenomenon with her students. "When a student truly keeps a notebook for herself, all that's important to her creeps in." The notebook becomes more than an academic journal kept by requirement of the teacher. It is not a diary, either, but it does begin to hold the honest thoughts, feelings, ideas and observations of the student; it is "a quiet place to catch your breath and begin to write." The purpose of the notebook is to gather the seeds of ideas for writing, recording, responding, and reacting to nightly reading. The journal responses can be used for comparing and contrasting thoughts and ideas about different novels read. When the journal becomes a safe place to hold onto memories, to record thoughts and observations of the world, to show growth over time, to keep ideas in one place; it is truly personal to the writer. The writer isn't keeping the journal for the teacher anymore, but for oneself. Journaling then becomes a habit--a wonderful habit.

Mary Greenwood

Roschelle, Jeremy, and William R. Penuel. "The Networked Classroom." *Educational Leadership*, 61.5 (Feb 2004).

In this excellent resource for all teachers, Roschelle and Penuel stated, "Technology has the potential to change how and what students learn in all content areas," especially science and mathematics. Classrooms that integrate dynamic software

environments with connectivity will enhance learning. Hardware and software show what students are doing; they also address students' prior knowledge. From a technological viewpoint, a classroom network enhances an instruction loop between teachers and students. Networking also enhances communication between students and teachers. In some of the most advanced uses of the classroom networking, students can engage in a simulation. Teachers can expect to benefit from a technology that makes them more efficient with their subject in the classroom.

Millie Mostella

Sitler, Helen Collins. "What College Writing Instructors Expect and Why You Should Join the Resistance." *English Journal*. 82.6 (1993): 21-25.

In this article, Helen Sitler suggests that much of college discourse does not conform to the models taught in high school or even college freshman composition courses. As the title suggests, this essay is a call to join a resistance movement. Actually, most of the ideas are not really that revolutionary. For example, her emphasis on invention and revision as central parts of the writing process would find little argument with most composition teachers. Neither would "encourage students to write copiously." Her admonition to "trust your students' instincts" is intriguing and warrants a second look. "Refuse to take responsibility for teaching writing in any discipline other than your own" is a statement which must be understood (as she explains it) before a reaction should be voiced. Her advice to "include multicultural and interdisciplinary reading in your course" is also worth a look; not all modes of thought and expression follow Western canonical lines. In sum, the occasional iconoclast can help us keep our goals and means in perspective. I am not ready to join the resistance, but I am willing to take a look at their manifesto.

Brook Finlayson

Spreyer, Leon. *Teaching is an Art*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002.

This book is written in conversational language and in very short chapters, making it an easy read for those who are always short on time. He gives advice on literally everything a teacher would want to know, from the first day of teaching to what to do when the teacher makes a mistake. His humorous style made this easy and enjoyable reading. It contains valuable information, even for the experienced teacher. He has a unique view on some often-debated topics. (For example, in some cases, nix the portfolio). I was especially impressed with his many ideas on how to add what he calls pizzazz to any classroom. One of these ideas was to have a pile of bones sitting in a classroom and tell students, as they walk in wide-mouthed, that you plan on getting them to help you build back the cow these bones came from. Spreyer says, "Don't get stuck in a rut." He has some fascinating ideas to keep from doing just that. The best thing about this book is its readability!

Roberta Dorning