Inkshed

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Inside Inkshed

M-L Craven	What's New
R. Graves	Computers for the Professional Writing Classroom: A Bibliographic Essay
H. Hubert, S. Dueck, G. Deer, M. Procter	Post-Secondary Composition as a Liberal Study

Co-Editors

James Brown, Mary-Louise Craven, Tom Greenwald, Jan Rehner,
Leslie Sanders, Ron Sheese, John Spencer, and Gail Van Stone
from the Writing Programmes at York University
(including the Faculty of Arts' Centre for Academic Writing, The Computer-Assisted Writing Centre, and Atkinson College's Essay Tutoring Centre)
% Mary-Louise Craven
530 Scott Library
York University, 4700 Keele Street,
North York, Ontario M3J 1P3
email: inkshed@yorku.ca
Fax: 416-736-5464

Consulting Editors

Phyllis Artiss
Memorial University
Neil Besner
University of Winnipeg
Russell A. Hunt
St. Thomas University

Richard M. Coe
Simon Fraser University
Lester Faigley
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James A. Reither
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Inkshed provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use. Subscribers are invited to submit informative pieces such as notices, reports, and reviews of articles, journals, books, textbooks, conferences, and workshops, as well as polemical discussions of events, issues, problems, and questions of concern to teachers in Canada interested in writing and reading theory and practice.

Inkshed is published five times during the academic year. The following is a schedule of submission deadlines and approximate publication dates:

15 September, for 1 October 1 February, for 15 February
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Back to Table of Contents

What's New

1. Inkshed on the Web

Soon Volume 13 and the first two issues of Volume 14 (September 1995 and December 1995) will be available on the Web site at the Computer-Assisted Writing Centre. The address is:

http://www.writer.yorku.ca/newsletters/ink/Inkshed.html

So far, 3 issues are there. You'll notice that I haven't done anything to make the newsletter any "snappier" on-line. There are a lot of Homepage fanatics around here (as you can see from the staff pages), so I'll try to get some creative "helpful hints" for future issues. As the Inkshed newsletter gets published, it will appear simultaneously on-line.

If you are happy to find Inkshed yourself on the Web, and don't need hard-copy anymore, please let me know (mlc@yorku.ca) and I'll take you off the Inkshed newsletter list-you will, of course, remain on the mailing list for your copies of the Inkshed Publishing Initiative.

2. New Books

Curriculum Planning in the Language Arts K-12: An Holistic Perspective

edited by Trevor Gambell and Mary Clare Courtland

"Curriculum Planning in the Language Arts K-12 is the first book to deal with the planning and implementation of

holistic language arts curricula and programs in schools. Teachers, as professionals, are at the centre of curriculum planning and implementing. This book demonstrates the process by which they can develop effective language arts programs for students across the grade spectrum. Contributors include highly respected members of the education community whose diverse experience and expertise ensures a broad coverage of the subject matter. The book will appeal to all levels of educators with an interest in language arts education...."

[Contributors include Trevor Gambell, Mary Clare Courtland, Marilyn Lewis, Mary Maguire, Sharon Rich, Dennis Sumara, Patrick Dias, Larry Miller, Rebecca Miller, Marion Crowhurst, Jane Baskwill, Sam Robinson, Marilyn Chapman, Victor Froese, and David Dillon.]

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edited by Margaret Gillett and Ann Beer

"Twenty-eight women-students, professors, administrators, and graduates of McGill University-reflect on their lives. With emotions that range from humour to angst, they discuss the problems they encountered and the achievements they made. Coming from different cultures, environments, professions, and age groups, the authors of these essays have their own agendas and individual styles. Yet amid this diversity they deal with recurring themes that give vivid insights into what it means to be a woman in Canada in the 1990's."

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3. Kudos

Congratulations to Roger Graves whose book, Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities has been nominated for the CCC's Outstanding Book Award. (The book was published by the Inkshed Publishing Initiatives!)

4. CASLL and the Newsletter

This past fall on CASLL there was an interesting discussion which started with a request for advice on how to handle a homophobic student's request for a letter of reference; this was followed by a spirited discussion about whether our roles as writing teachers were limited to being technicians. Perhaps one of the on-line participants would agree to edit the remarks so that we can publish it in hard-copy to continue the discussion?

5. Canadian WAC at the CCCC

Philippa Spoel would like to hear from you if you're interested in being part of a roundtable presentation on "WAC in the Canadian Context" at the CCCC in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She can be reached c/o Dept. of English, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario P3E 2C6.

6. Happy Holidays

During this Christmas Break, may we all enjoy some respite from constitutional crises, underfunding woes, and cranky colleagues (...you know, the ones who aren't in Inkshed)!

Mary-Louise Craven
York University

Back to Table of Contents

Computers for the Professional Writing Classroom: A Bibliographic Essay

Do computers in writing classrooms improve the teaching of writing? This question vexes us because so many variables can affect the quality of teaching-attitudes of students to computers, support for new teaching initiative-and because the term "computers" has become an umbrella term for a variety of technologies. To come to some provisional answer to whether computers improve the teaching of writing we need to ask some more specific questions:

- How does computer software help students improve what they already do-collaborate, confer, and discuss their writing and the writing of others in the classroom community?
- What new things will computerized technology enable our students to do?
- How will computerized classrooms affect the role of teachers?
- What are the dangers/hazards/impediments that this technology brings with it?
- What hardware and software are needed to support this new technology (technology as a way of thinking as well as bits and pieces of electronic equipment)?

This bibliographic essay surveys research published in the past five years to build tentative answers to these questions. To compile this bibliography, I gathered references to articles using the CCCC Bibliography of Rhetoric and Composition 1991, 1992. From this list of sources, I consulted the following journals in library searches: Computers and Composition, Educational Psychologist, Educational Technology, Journal of Business and Technical Communication, Journal of Business Communication, Journal of Computer Based Instruction, Journal of Multimedia and Hypermedia, Technical Communication, and Technical Communication Quarterly. I then scanned the issues of each of these journals for articles published since 1991 that could help answer the research questions printed above. Readers could extend the findings I report here by consulting other journals I was unable to work with: Human-Computer Interaction, Computer-Assisted Composition Journal, Academic Computing, Computers and Humanities. My focus in selecting articles was to determine what published research has reported about the effectiveness, scope, pedagogy, dangers, and hardware needed to teach professional writing using computer technology.

Can this technology help us do what we already do only better?

Collaboration among members of groups, conferences between students and teachers, and discussions among students are all important dimensions of many writing classrooms. Seven studies offered insights into the promises and perils of using computers to collaborate, exchange ideas, and communicate with other members of the classroom community.

Forman (1991; see also Selfe and Hilligoss) reported on a study of MBA students who used word processing, electronic messaging, and telecommunications equipment to support group writing, including file transfers. She reported three problems the students in this study encountered with the use of this technology. First, the students in this study "did not use the new technology consistently or extensively to assist them in group writing" (64). Forman attributes this partly to the inexperience of the students with group writing; they did not foresee the number of drafts

required to produce a good report, and so they did not "foresee how helpful the integrated telecommunications and word-processing package could be at the end of the project when numerous iterations of the report had to be transferred among themselves and their advisors, and changes made by these readers had to be incorporated in the report" (65). In addition to poor commitment and attitudes, these groups did not establish effective policies and practices for using this technology. Forman concluded that "[c]omputing itself was a major generator of errors" because it forced students to learn a new set of skills while they were trying to learn to write in groups (68). In the end, these students "used only what they were [already] familiar with" (68). Forman recommended that all students must be made aware of the benefits of the technology at the start of the course, and that the learning curve for the technology be kept as short as possible and introduced incrementally (69). Other researchers also reported students dislike of the "impersonal" nature of computer exchanges and the problems associated with the lack of non-verbal cues (D'Souza; Lewis).

Forman's experience underscores the need for instructors to devote some teaching and learning time from "content" towards computer training. Is the exchange worthwhile? Mabrito (1992) contends that computer mediated communication supports collaborative goals of both expressing individual opinions as well as forging a sense of community within the classroom: "groups overall devoted more of their discussion time to writing during network meetings" than in face-to-face meetings (328). In their real-time (synchronous) on-line conversations student comments were "often more text specific and made more of an attempt to translate details of the rhetorical situation into specific writing strategies" (329). Mabrito concludes that the students using the computer network in his case studies "participated equally in the group discussion, generated more topics of discussion on an individual level, and shared a greater responsibility for directing the group conversation than they did during face-to-face sessions" (333). Other researchers have also found that students participate more frequently using computer-mediated technology (D'Souza; Poling). Reagan reports, however, that the lack of control of on-line conversations can allow homophobic students to express their feelings more freely than they would in a traditional classroom discussion. Mabrito is careful to point out that these results are based on several case studies rather than on a formal experiment and so are suggestive rather than conclusive.

Mabrito and Forman's research suggests, then, that computer-mediated communication (E-mail, conferencing systems, file sharing software) can both help and hinder instruction. Palmquist studied the interrelationship between networked classrooms and the curricula employed in them. In his summary of the research related to networked writing classrooms, Palmquist noted the benefits of networked writing classrooms: immersion in writing, more timely feedback on drafts from both peers and teachers, the ability to review brainstorming or peer-review sessions, more frequent contact between less-able students and their teachers, and better use of peer responses by high-apprehensive writers (26-27). This body of research suggests that there are good reasons to use computer networks to teach writing. Palmquist's concern was to identify how the different approaches used in two different writing classes-one teaching research writing as conveying information to a general audience, and one teaching research writing as interpreting and responding to texts written by members of an academic or professional community-resulted in more or less effective use of the computer network. In the class that was taught research writing as conveying information, Palmquist found that the networked computers were not used fully. The class that was taught research writing as an exchange among a community of scholars voluntarily used the network to exchange ideas both inside and outside of class. In both classes student use of the network supported their membership in stable, collaborative groups throughout the term (46). Lewis also concluded that "communicating on the network can strengthens the quality of team work" (69).

There may be a connection between computer use and grades. Palmquist that students in both classes who used the network outside of the class meetings earned higher grades than students who did not use the network. D'Souza found a similar effect in her study of students in a business course: students who used E-mail "scored significantly higher than students who used only the traditional modes of handouts and communications" (109).

How will computer-networked classrooms affect the role of teachers?

Duin commented that computer networked collaborative writing systems encouraged a change in the hierarchies that traditionally govern classrooms: "Instructors in computer-supported environments report becoming coaches instead of lecturers, and collaborators instead of evaluators" (143). She offers only a personal anecdote and references to two other articles to support this claim and is careful to use the modal auxiliary "should" as in "these systems should allow

for the control of an interaction to shift from collaborator to collaborator, including from instructor to student " (143). This is an important distinction because Klem and Moran report that the two teachers in their study did not relinquish control in this manner. The technology allows for such a change and may even suggest it, but unless teachers change their teaching strategies no such change will occur (see also Selfe, Chapters 2, 3).

Klem and Moran conclude, based on over 60 hours of observation, interviews, and transcripts that "computer technology, of and by itself, does not magically change the ways in which we teach" and that, in fact, we will persist in using the techniques we used in regular classrooms (20). Hannafin and Savenye argue that "The teacher's role does not change simply by using the computer in the classroom. The change occurs only to the extent to which a shift of responsibility to the learners occurs" (28). Teaching patterns that make appropriate use of the computer technology will only appear as a result of "carefully-designed and extensive staff-development programs" with the following aims:

- to increase teachers' familiarity with the hardware and software they will be using;
- to help teachers become "screen-writers" in an environment that helps them see the differences between screen text and print text as media;
- to develop teacher awareness of models of good teaching in non-computer classrooms;
- to help teachers develop new models of good teaching for computer classrooms;
- to limit demands upon teachers who may be under employed, without health insurance, and full-time graduate students. (Klem and Moran 20-1)

Other researchers have suggested new metaphors to describe the technology-centered teacher as coach, guide, organizer, initiator, diagnostician (Hannafin and Savenye) and as multi-discipline specialist, learning manager, or co-learner (Joyce). While suggestive, these metaphors must be actively created or even re-created for the computer classroom setting.
What new things will computer-networked classrooms enable us to do in professional writing courses?

What new things will computer-networked classrooms enable us to bo in professional writing courses?

Computerized classrooms offer opportunities to reconfigure the teaching of professional writing in several important areas: desktop publishing, editing, and electronic publishing. Of these areas, only editing can be taught effectively without the use of computers.

Three articles discuss the use of computers for editing. Oliver reported on a study of students' proof-reading in two media: paper and computer screens. His results show that students who had no experience editing on screen were markedly worse as proofreaders when using screens rather than paper text. With experience they were able to proofread at the same level as they achieved with paper. Computers, then, present a liability at first rather than an advantage.

Rude and Smith reported on a survey of the ways professional technical editors used computers. They reported that computers increase the speed of editing, make it easy to implement major changes in documents, and automate some of the more tedious aspects of editing such as indexing, alphabetizing, and generating tables of contents (340). However, the editors they studied cited computer limitations for substantive editing, for formatting, and for creating various technical difficulties (340). They concluded that

> computers have changed editing practice to some extent, but more in the area of responsibilities than procedures. Editors who use computers have more responsibility for the visual aspects of the text and for managerial tasks. However, the procedure of editing remainsessentially the same whether the editor uses the computer or hard copy only. (342)

Some special editing problems, however, may be next to impossible to use effectively without computerized help. Thomas et al. report on a study of students learning to use "simplified English." Simplified or basic English is as it sounds, a variety of English reduced to 1,500 words and about 40 writing rules for grammar and syntax. Companies

such as Caterpillar Tractor Company, the Douglas Aircraft Company, and the Association Europeene des Constructeurs de Material Aerospatial have all developed their own versions of basic English. The impulse behind these varieties of English is the need to provide understandable communications for both native speakers of English (assembly instructions, insurance policies) and non-native speakers of English. Thomas et al describe SEAN, a computerized Simplified English Analyzer. The program is an "authoring aid" that checks writing samples against a simplified English dictionary and suggests replacement words from a simplified English thesaurus. The software cuts rewrite times by 21% and cuts down on disallowed words by 15%. This kind of program would make it feasible to focus our students' attention on editing for international, multilingual audiences.

In addition to improving the teaching of editing, computerized classrooms offer opportunities to teach desktop publishing. Desktop publishing has changed the nature of publication by combining the various elements of the publication team-editors, artists, and production staff-into one person (Tharp and Zimmerman 78). While technical editors may have been slow to adopt computer technology (Rude and Smith), the move towards using this technology has begun: "The emerging norm for the production of written communication in a business environment is desktop publishing" (Mayer and Nelson 458). And, in fact, the move has not stopped there. Tharp and Zimmerman assert that "[t]oday more and more technical communicators, public relations practitioners, newspaper journalists, and other communication professionals are moving from paper and pencil editing to on-screen writing and editing" (77). In the three years since this article appeared the World Wide Web (WWW or "web") and the prospect of "publishing" on the "web" have become increasingly important. These new modes of communicating and distributing information have profound implications for our students, and by implication, for our courses. Many employers now specify the software packages commonly used to produce technical documentation that they expect applicants to be familiar with before hiring them.

Three articles comment on desktop publishing. Mayer and Nelson outline the questions and answers they went through to design a desktop publishing course: purpose and objectives, instructional resources, instructional methodology, and assignments and evaluation techniques. They also provide a course outline (465). Tharp and Zimmerman established a desktop publishing course and then evaluated it over the first two terms of operation. They concluded that "incremental learning and step-by-step instruction resulted in a less frustrating learning experience" (83). They also found that assigning individual assignments before assigning group or collaborative assignments worked to lessen frustration (82). Students were able to learn adequate desktop publishing skills in a semester, but they note that it was very important for the instructors to be able to use both the hardware and software (89). Flammia describes a similar system of instruction, but her focus is on how a course on desktop publishing can provide internship-like experiences:

> [S]tudents learned several important "real world" skills in the course. They had mastered a corporate electronic publishing system; they also had at least two documents to add to their portfolios. Most importantly, they learned how to adapt to a new piece of software while in the process of working on a project. (54)

In the Spring '95 quarter, a group of five students in my graduate technical writing course participated in such a project. They wrote copy and designed a procedures manual and a brochure for a multi-generational housing project called Laboure House in Chicago. Clearly, this is an approach with much promise for both our students and for the organizations they write for.

Beyond desktop publishing, the greatest change affecting the professional and technical writing fields is the prospect of electronic publishing. Many word processors (including Frame Technology and Microsoft Word) already offer options to for writers to publish their documents in electronic forms rather than or in addition to printed forms. Little has been written or researched about the classroom implications of this technology for professional writing classrooms, but more general articles have been published. A special issue of Educational Technology includes many useful articles on electronic publishing (December), virtual textbooks (Siegal and Sousa), and hypertext technology (Staninger). Because the technical writing industry is dominated by computer documentation, it is imperative that professional writing students have opportunities to create electronic as well as print documents. At present, the hypertext markup language (HTML) is the easiest way to incorporate electronic publishing in professional writing courses. Perhaps the most useful resource available for learning how to use HTML is Laura Lemay's Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML in a Week. Electronic publishing is only one aspect of using the internet in professional writing classrooms. Listservs like

BIZCOM and TECHWR-L are also useful resources for students to learn more about the field. Eisenberg provides a useful summary of six skills that students need to make full use of the internet's ability to support information gathering:

Task definition	E-Mail Discussion/Interest groups
Information seeking strategies	Electronic libraries WAIS, Gopher, E- mail, Discussion/Interest groups
Location and Access	Archie, Veronica, WAIS, Gopher Telnet, Remote login, ftp
Use of Information	Download and file transfer, ftp
Synthesis	E-mail, listservs, newsgroups, Electronic journals, ftp, Gopher sites
Evaluation	E-mail, listservs, newsgroups

(adapted from p. 63)

These resources are increasingly expected or at least in high demand by employers and by students. In a computerized classroom, they are easily made available, though much greater effort must be invested to learn how to use them and to use them well.

What are the dangers/hazards/impediments that this technology brings with it?

Satran points out that computers are a means, not an end for instruction (25). Too often, as Maddux notes, advances in educational technology have been ballyhooed as magic machines that will solve educational problems of all descriptions. In short, they will not. Maddux identified several problems with the use of computers on the internet, including availability of up-to-date hardware and software, the cost of privatizing the internet, technical and curricular support, internet vertigo (unstable, undocumented character of it), censorship, and the lack of quality control over what is posted there (37-41).

The most important critical examination of computers in composition classrooms comes from Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology. Selfe and Hilligoss note that computerized technology is not good or bad in and of itself; they see it, rather, as a "complexly crafted mirror that we ourselves have shaped, as cultural artifacts that reflect our society and its ideologies, our educational system and its values" (1). Barton, for example, argues that "the benefits of technology are not extended equally to all institutions, instructors, and students" and that this "may well maintain inequalities in education by denying technological learning and literacy to less-privileged students" (75) . Bowen makes much the same point in her essay in this collection (127). Graves and Haller report on two computerized writing programs that prospered when new but have declined as a result of lack of support from the administration (149). Dobrin attacks the hype infusing discussions of hypertext by those who see it as a fundamentally new way of reading and writing. These essays suggest that those who would advocate the use of computerized classrooms must ensure that they obtain and maintain administrative support, that the instructors who work in these classrooms are trained and continue to upgrade their knowledge and skills, and that the claims made for using computers in the classroom are tempered with common sense and a determination to evaluate the actual rather than the potential benefits to students.

What hardware and software are needed to support this new technology?

No articles describe how to choose the hardware and software for a professional writing classroom. Two reasons may account for this. First, the specific technology changes constantly. Second, the specific needs of each institution vary

widely. Tuman, for example, comments on how the change to a campus-wide network changed his institution's thinking about how to use computers for word-processing. The move to such a network, or the lack of this kind of network, would influence hardware and software decisions.

To Compute or not to Compute?

This body of research shows that there are some distinct advantages to setting up a computer classroom for professional writing students. Document design software, electronic publishing, and "plain" English style processors can all be taught more thoroughly and create better portfolios than in non-computerized settings. The possibility that these machines can be used to help real-world clients, both within the university and in the community, is a distinct advantage of the computerized classroom. The composition research reviewed here also suggests that classroom communities can benefit from this technology if it is used to help students collaborate and exchange ideas. This community can also be extended beyond the class room through asynchronous technology (e-mail, listservs, bulletin boards, web sites). None of this will happen, however, if the administration doesn't support the efforts of teachers who are willing to recreate their pedagogies in the light (glow?) of this new technology. Successful teachers in computerized classrooms must rethink their roles, the ways they use authority, and the outcomes of their teaching to take advantage of the benefits and minimize the problems of computerized writing technologies. I think we should take advantage of the "affordances" of these new technologies (see Norman, Chapter 4), but we must be very careful to delineate exactly what we are using these technologies for and assiduous in evaluating whether or not they are accomplishing what we hope they will.

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Roger Graves
DePaul University, Chicago

Back to Table of Contents

Post-Secondary Composition as a Liberal Study

(The following paper attempts a synthesis of some of the concerns regarding the skills approach in writing vs. the liberal studies approach. This was the final paper at Inkshed 13 for the group consisting of Sandra Dueck (SFU), Glenn Deer (UBC), Margaret Procter (U. of T), and Henry Hubert (UCC))

The discussion of our group at Inkshed 12 contrasted the utilitarian, "skills now" emphasis of literacy versus learning to write as part of a balanced education in critical thought. This dichotomy in the uses of education reflects the different approaches to higher education in British universities in the nineteenth century. Chiding the English for their elitist education in Victorian Oxford and Cambridge, the Scottish MP and reformer Lyon Playfair in an 1871 House of Commons speech stated, "the English universities . . . teach men how to spend one thousand pounds a year with dignity and intelligence while the Scottish universities teach them how to make one thousand pounds a year with dignity and intelligence" (qtd. in Anderson, 35). Since the end of the nineteenth century, Canadian higher education, especially in English studies, has chosen the English approach. Before the advent of specialization in the 1880s, however, Canadian higher education had followed a strong Scottish tradition, combining the critical and cultural with the useful. The study of post-secondary composition especially offers the potential for that Scottish orientation. A review of the traditional icons of a liberal education, John Henry Newman and Matthew Arnold, confirms rather than denies this potential.

Most teachers of composition have encountered students who follow the advice of their elementary school years that writing is simply "speaking onto paper." That view has a long tradition in the English studies, even at the post-secondary level. In 1904, John Cappon, Professor of English at Queen's University and editor of the Queen's Quarterly, wrote "Men can become good speakers and debaters, and even good writers, without more than the A B C of a literary education" (195). Though Scottish, as a new English specialist in the new English curriculum in Canada, he had turned his back on the strength of his own Scottish tradition in higher education. Cappon saw the reading of literature, not writing, as central to the development of a critical culture in his adopted land. English studies in Canada have now followed that tradition for a century. Roger Graves's study of writing instruction in Canadian universities reminds us of Northrop Frye's position in 1957:

The English teacher's ideal is the exact opposite of "effective communication," or learning to become audible in the marketplace. What he has to teach is the verbal expression of truth,
beauty and wisdom: in short, the disinterested view of words. (Graves 26)

Ironically, literary artists, the almost exclusive concern of English professors who disparage the teaching of college-level writing, have throughout history stressed the challenge of effective composition-even for artists blessed with genius. Unfortunately, many who teach post-secondary English do not see their students as writers mentally groping for their best thoughts. Such teachers fail to appreciate writing as a means of learning: they see writing only as a means of conveying already formulated information. As a result, their students fail to see the whole process of writing-searching for new knowledge, reflecting on what is already known, organizing and relating concepts to provide new insights, drafting sentences that assert new discernment, revising drafts to clarify inklings. Like their teachers, such students fail to see writing as one of the most powerful learning tools: writing as a "liberal" rather than only a "practical" art. Within English studies with roots in Victorian thought, writing has long been taught as a philistine pursuit rather than as a mean of attaining what Matthew Arnold termed "culture."

This paper argues, therefore, that if writing could be viewed as a liberal, humanistic enterprise, both teachers and students would change their attitudes to writing, thereby improving both the teaching and learning of composition. Recent literature defending composition within liberal arts programs, in fact, stresses composition not as a route to flawless text or financial gain after graduation (though neither of these is denied), but as a means of critical insight. Our late American colleague James Berlin was wary of an uncritical approach to composition theory in both the cognitive and the expressionist schools, fearing an easy co-opting of students into a narrow capitalist mentality. Of the former he wrote:

> Cognitive rhetoric, then, in its refusal of the ideological question leaves itself open to association with the reification of technocratic science characteristic of late capitalism. . . . The existent, the good, and the possible are inscribed in the very nature of things as indisputable scientific facts, rather than being seen as humanly devised social construction always remaining open to discussion. (484)

Berlin's reluctance to close the door on discussion reflects the liberal mentality. Within the ideology of a liberal curriculum, the purpose of writing is to foster thinking rather than doing. In this, it follows analysis of liberal culture in the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who holds that "working-class people expect every image to explicitly perform a function, if only that of a sign, and the judgements make reference, often explicitly, to the norms of morality or agreeableness" (4). Especially post-secondary liberal education, however, "sets an increasingly high value 'on general' culture and increasingly refuses 'scholastic' measurements of culture (such as direct, closed questions on authors, dates and events) as one moves towards the highest levels of the system" (23). The goal of a liberal education is a refined sensibility, not physical production. This concern for the aesthetic extends beyond art. "Although art obviously offers the greatest scope to the aesthetic disposition, there is no area of practice in which the aim of purifying, refining and sublimating primary needs and impulses cannot assert itself, no area in which the stylization of life, that is, the primacy of forms over function, of manner over matter, does not produce the same effects" (5).

In grounding itself in liberal rather than material culture, in criticism and analysis rather than production and profit, contemporary composition theory somewhat ironically aligns itself with the power of the traditional elite in society. Quoting Antonio Gramsci, John Trimbur argues that the present concern for student literacy is but a veiled class struggle. "Each time that in one way or another the question of language comes to the fore, that signifies that a series

of other problems is about to emerge, the formation and enlarging of the ruling class, the necessity to establish more 'intimate' and sure relations between the ruling groups and the national popular masses, that is the reorganization of cultural hegemony" (qtd. in Trimbur 280). In the United States, Bruce Herzberg notes that, whereas freshman composition has frequently served "as a curricular screen to filter out underprepared students admitted by the college," (in Canada, first-year English has served the same function), "composition may also offer a stepping-stone to academic skills and culture for these students" (99). In defining "critical writing," which combines writing with critical thinking, Toni-Lee Capossela cites Lauren Resnick, who argues that in the past sixty years "two separate strands of mass and elite education [have] been intertwined. One result of this merger is that higher order skills are now included among the objectives of mass education, which previously dealt only with minimal proficiency levels" (Capossela 12).

Liberal studies have traditionally been associated with the elite because the wealthy in Britain and Europe had the luxury of aesthetic reflection over material production. Liberal studies enjoyed strong support at Oxford College, the educational enclave of the upper class in Victorian England. John Henry Newman wrote Idea of a University just after leaving his professorship at Oxford. He states that in a liberal education as "A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom." He calls this the "philosophical habit" (Discourse V.1) Newman states, "that alone is liberal knowledge, which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be informed . . . by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation" (Discourse V.4). For Matthew Arnold, Newman's contemporary and also an Oxford College professor, the marking feature of "culture" is disinterestedness. Arnold asserts, "the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere if he wants to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things, which may perhaps one day make its benefits felt even in this sphere, but in a natural and thence irresistible manner" (434). This advice, to say nothing of the critical mentality that would give this advice, is difficult to cultivate for students accustomed to writing their term papers in last-minute, all-night sittings. Arnold's disinterestedness still marks liberal education today. Reviewing William Perry's scheme of intellectual and ethical development, the final stage of which reflects the ideals of Harvard University, Patricia Bizzell quotes Perry as follows: "the liberally educated man . . . has learned to think about even his own thoughts, to examine the way he orders his data and the assumptions he is making, and to compare these with other thoughts that other men might have" (Bizzell 450). Richard Paul, a scholar in critical thinking, offers as a cultural ideal the views of American anthropologist William Graham Sumner: People educated in "the critical habit of thought . . . are slow to believe. They can hold things as possible or probable in all degrees, without certainty and without pain. They can wait for evidence and weigh evidence, uninfluenced by the emphasis and confidence with which assertions are made on one side or the other" (Paul 10).

This critical, reflective mind is not a mind affirmed in a society that responds to the Nike advertisement, "Just do it!" It is not the mentality of high efficiency, of getting things done quickly. It is not the mind fixed on product. Richard Paul argues that it is not the mind cultivated in modern technology, which has a strong tendency to "operationalism." Unless we recognize the difference "between the logic of technical problems and those of a dialectical nature" writes Richard Paul, "there is a tendency to reduce all problems to technical ones and so to render all knowledge and all problems procedural, if not algorithmic" (10).

Inasmuch as technical thought as scientific deliberation fits into a "liberal" education, of course, thought in the area of science and technology is indeed critical in nature. However, scientific and technical matters are often perceived as having simple right and wrong answers, with the right answers able to be calculated (and if answers cannot be found, at least one knows that no answer is possible). This attitude is similar to the lowest level of intellectual development in the William Perry scheme. In Perry's dualist stage, student thought is characterized as dependent on authority that can provide absolutes. As described by Bizzell, "For the dualist, knowing the world means memorizing the Absolutes and applying them to individual instances. For the student Dualist, education is a process of finding right answers (correct applications of Absolutes), with the help of the teacher (Authority). The student Dualist resists exploring academic problems that have no one right solution, and prefers teachers who supply answers and disciplines in which answers can be securely quantified" (447-48).

Unfortunately, this "dualist" type of thought pervades much of what passes as a professional education in both the U.S. and Canada today. In a 1985 American study of 140 students in six baccalaureate (not R.N.) nursing programs, the "graduating seniors demonstrated predominantly dualistic modes of conceptualizing." According to authors Allen, et

al., these students perceived knowledge "as the accumulation of acts, unable to comprehend the significance of changing contexts. Their ability to conceptualize 'multiple, valid, intellectual perspectives was virtually absent'" (8). Studies of secondary student reading practices have found the same approach to knowledge. Robert Tierney et al. write that most secondary students read textbooks only once, attempting to memorize facts from this reading. "Not surprisingly," writes the Tierney group, "assessments of reading performance indicate that most secondary students tend to be unable to respond evaluatively to what they read, often remaining 'satisfied with initial interpretations' and demonstrating 'little evidence of well-developed problem-solving strategies or critical thinking'" (Tierney et al. 136).

To overcome this dualist pattern of thought, educators in many disciplines turn to writing. Composition thus becomes a central means of gaining the critical mind prized in a liberal education. This occurs not only in the traditional arts programs, but also in the sciences. The object of college-level writing is not, then, only to learn how to write well, but to learn how to think well. Allen et. al argue pointedly that illiteracy is not so much an editorial as a cognitive deficit (6). Mina Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations makes much the same point.

But what is "good" thinking and what is not? Following Maxine Hairston, Allen et al. offer the following erroneous attitudes in nursing education:

1. Students can successfully learn content whether or not they can write well.
2. Writing and thinking involve different skills. Each can, and perhaps should, be taught separately.
3. Knowing something is logically prior to writing about it.
4. Writing is a sequential, linear activity which involves the cumulative mastery of components like sentence structure or outlining.
5. Communication is the main purpose of writing. Written work is a product in which the student reports what he or she already knows.
6. The students' audience is most often assumed to be the instructor. Educators who use this traditional paradigm believe that students can gain the knowledge and skill necessary to become competent practitioners whether or not they are able to write well. They view writing as necessary only to communicate what has been learned through charting, care plans, or process recordings.

In place of these, the authors follow Bazerman and Odell in offering new guidelines:

1. Writing is a process through which content is learned or understood (as opposed to memorized or reported).
2. Writing skills are primarily thinking skills (competence in one is inseparable from competence in the other).
3. Writing is a process of developing an understanding or coming to know something.
4. Writing is a dialectical, recursive process rather than linear or sequential.
5. Higher order conceptual skills can only evolve through a writing process in which the writer engages in an active, ongoing dialogue with him or herself and others. Learning and discovery are purposes as important for writing as communication.
6. Different disciplines utilize different conceptual processes and thus have different standards for writing. Students can best learn writing within their own disciplines while writing for real, concrete audiences.

These guidelines present writing as a cognitive process related to Matthew Arnold's concern for "disinterestedness"; the guidelines fit Arnold's concerns for a "liberal" rather than a utilitarian education. In discussing the combination of reading and writing together to learn, Tierney et al. quote John Gage as follows:

> Writing is thinking made tangible, thinking that can be examined because it is on the page and not in the head, invisible, floating around. Writing is thinking that can be stopped an tinkered with. It is a way of holding thought still long enough to examine its structures, it possibilities, its flaws. The road to a clearer understanding is travelled on paper. It is through an attempt to find words for ourselves in which to

> express related ideas that we often discover what we think. (Tierney et al. 136)

Reviewing a study in which beginning nursing students wrote weekly reactions to clinical experience, including an analysis of the experience relative to the past week's goals and the coming week's goals, Carol Sedlack notes that writing logs helped students to:

- provide an opportunity for student self-reflection on learning needs;
- facilitate communication/dialogue with students to foster student-teacher relationship;
- place responsibility with the student for active engagement in self-directed learning, thereby empowering the student; and
- increase self-confidence by enabling students to identify their own loci of motivation. (27)

The uses of composition in Writing Across the Curriculum have been documented in numerous articles and books, so a few more examples of writing in the content areas will suffice here. Christina Haas discusses the case of "Eliza," a science student who gains a "liberal" education in a biology program. Her education illustrates that the object of post-secondary education in science as well as arts is critical, creative thought as described by John Henry Newman, Matthew Arnold, William Graham Sumner or William Perry. Haas writes, "students need a metaunderstanding of the motives of science and scientists and the history of scientific concepts." An education in science involves not only the texts, but "a rhetorical understanding of the human enterprise of science" (45). Discussing how writing helps students become better problems solvers in physics, Judy Grumbacher relates the following example in The Journal Book:

> Stephanie, a bright, conscientious student, had trouble with physics in the beginning of the year. Her work improved dramatically, however, when she changed the way in which she kept and used her log. At first . . . she just 'copied problems from the board' into her log. But after a first, terrible quiz, her log writings began to change. She began to use her log writings to write notes to herself, to raise questions about things she did not understand. (326)

Grumbacher notes humorously the description of one student's comments on how writing helps objectify the learning experience: "One of my students told me, 'I enjoy finding out what's in my brain, what comes out, because sometimes I don't know what it's doing or thinking'" (329). In reviewing her own experience in teaching through writing, Grumbacher notes that personal reflection aids student learning:

1. the best problem solvers in physics are students who are able to relate the theories of physics to experiences in their lives;
2. writing helps students to find the connections between experience and theory;
3. students will do more work than is required if they are seeking answers to questions they initiate;
4. keeping learning logs on a regular basis encourages students to initiate such questioning. (328)

Considering writing as an avenue of reflection, therefore, differs from the tradition that considers writing primarily as a means of conveying information on concepts perfectly preconceived and simply transcribed. Using writing as a means of reflection in relating ideas to personal experience, relating ideas to other ideas, clarifying, organizing, and then reformulating ideas to meet the needs of an audience places demands on the writer that far exceed Cappon's "A B C of a literary education." Indeed, the reflection of this process gets to the very heart of what it means to be literate-it necessarily fosters the critical stance that Matthew Arnold termed "disinterested," and that John Henry Newman termed "philosophical." In trying to meet the demands for ever larger classes required by ever shrinking funding for post-secondary education, universities have turned more and more to short-answer and multiple choice responses, often marked by computerized scanners. Such regimentation of learning, however, merely returns to the objectification of learning that is proven faulty by Bitzer, Gradgrind's star pupil in Charles Dickens's Hard Times. Though contemporary graduates who have been denied the opportunity to learn critical, reflective thought through writing may not become

petty criminals, as did Dickens's Bitzer, they may well be left unable to offer the society into which they graduate the potential that a liberal education through writing would have offered.

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Back to Table of Contents