

focus

approaches to composition: new-BORN and RENEWED

Mr. Bacig's "A Humane Rationale For Composition" and Mr. Larmouth's "Models in Remedial English: an Intermin Report" are planned as complementary articles. The writers have team-taught a course in remedial composition and have co-operated in writing the articles. Neither feels that the different approaches illustrated by the articles are sufficient in themselves. An effective composition program, like effective writing, will balance the demands of freedom and discipline. In addition, the writers feel that effective writing programs demand a careful analysis of the various tasks involved in the composing process. Such an analysis suggests that we may need to use radically different techniques to help students achieve freedom of expression and technical competence. The articles, then, are an attempt to suggest some strategies for helping students to write, speak and think imaginatively and skillfully.



A Humane Rationale for Composition

by TOM BACIG

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In my first year of teaching I told my class of high school seniors that while I would justify most of what I taught on "shaky" humanistic grounds, I could with equanimity claim that what I taught them about writing would be useful, would help them to achieve success in college, or would make them better equipped to survive in the business jungle. At this moment I can only attribute my arrogance at that moment to a view of the arena of discourse no wider than the Freshmen English course and the college paper, and a naive faith in the efficacy of teaching a paragraph rhetoric. That same naivete produced a three week writing unit, taught simultaneously to three sections of senior English, requiring students to write a paragraph a day and the teacher to read 75 paragraphs a day.