Minnesota English Journal

Topics:

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*
Profile of a Student Writer
Classroom Exercise:
Minority Literature
Technical Writing in High School

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MCTE Membership Information

Annual membership is $25.00 for teachers, $10.00 for students. The membership year runs from October to October or April to April. One year's membership entitles a member to two journals and four newsletters. MCTE is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, open to elementary, secondary, and college teachers interested in improving the teaching of English. Membership information is available from Jean Dummer, CSJ, MCTE Executive Secretary, English Department, College of St. Catherine, St.Paul, MN 55105. Single copies of the *Minnesota English Journal* are $3.50. Manuscripts and other correspondence concerning the *MEJ* should be sent to John Schifsky or Nancy Lund, Department of Languages and Literature, College of St. Scholastica, 1200 Kenwood Avenue, Duluth, MN 55811-4199.

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CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

For the Winter/Spring 1993 and the Fall 1993 issue.

We encourage articles on wide variety of topics of interest to the English profession in Minnesota. Here are some suggested topics:

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- Rhetoric/teaching composition
- Language issues
- Literary theory
- Composition research
- Literary criticism/analysis with an awareness of teaching
- Censorship issues
- Teaching critical thinking
- Discussions of unique courses or programs in English/ Language Arts
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- Canadian literature for American students
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- Review of current books
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- World literature
- Literature for young adults

Deadlines - Winter/Spring 1993 - February 1, 1993
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We encourage teachers of English/Language Arts at all levels to submit their work to the Minnesota English Journal for possible publication. See the editorial statement on the inside back cover for further information.

Send manuscripts to:

John Schifsky or Nancy Lund
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College of St. Scholastica
1200 Kenwood Avenue
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TO OUR READERS:

The Achievement Award in Writing and the Promising Young Writers awards are conferred by the National Council of Teachers of English to recognize the accomplishments of high school juniors and seniors as writers. We have included poetry written by two award winners, Andi Key-Sobiech from Hopkins and Jennifer Isley from Willmar, in the issue.

Ron Barron, MCTE president in 1990-1991, was one of five runners-up in the Senior High division for the 1991-1992 *English Journal* writing awards. Ron's article, "What I Wish I Had Known about Peer-Response Groups but Didn't" was published in September 1991 EJ. He teaches at Richfield Senior High School.

The NCTE/NRA Joint Task Force on Intellectual Freedom has prepared a brochure titled "Common Ground." The two organizations hope to make it clear that they speak with one voice against censorship and in favor of a free flow of materials and ideas in public school classrooms. Their joint statement reads: "All students in public school classrooms have the right to materials and educational experiences that promote open inquiry, critical thinking, diversity in thought and expression, and respect for others. Denial or restriction of this right is an infringement of intellectual freedom." The brochure includes principles, strategies for action, and resource lists. Single copies are available at no cost from Wendy Russ at IRA, or Don Robbins at NCTE. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

We apologize for the delay in publishing this issue.

"I've Almost Always Done What They Wanted": A Profile of Chris

by

Linda Miller Cleary

We generally see our best students as tough and ready to succeed forever, but the story that Chris is about to tell us shows us that even our most successful English students are vulnerable. Chris was his school's NCTE Achievement Award nominee, and though he found out how to please his teachers, both praise and criticism took their toll on his view of himself as a writer. At the time I interviewed Chris, he was having difficulty writing. I was studying the writing experience of Chris and forty other eleventh graders through a series of three in-depth interviews, classroom observation, and written protocols. Had I interviewed Mr. Schultz, Chris's eleventh grade writing teacher, he might have described himself as many English teachers would: committed, rigorous, and uncompromising in correcting students to obtain good writing. But Chris's view of himself as a writer was formed in response to Schultz's criticism of his work rather than to Schultz's good intentions. Students like Chris yearn for praise from yet another teacher. Without learning to please themselves, they lose desire to write unless assigned.

Listening to what Chris said as we sat in a conference room in his suburban high school during the in-depth interviews helped me understand both the complexity of the dynamics that affect even our best students' writing and the strong role that teachers play as responders to writing. As responders, we need to rethink our use of praise and criticism in the writing classroom. In this profile, constructed of interwoven interview material, we can learn from Chris as he makes sense of the experience he has had with writing across the years.[1]

My parents both encouraged us to read a lot. My father taught fifth grade for a couple of years before he and my mother got married, and my mother had been teaching elementary school, too. They read to us all the time. We had a giant chair. Usually my father would sit on the chair, my younger two brothers in his lap. I would sit on the back of the chair above him. And that got me really interested. I learned to read by hearing words a couple of times,

[1] If you are interested in other facets of the research with Chris, see Linda Miller Cleary, *From the Other Side of the Desk: Students Speak Out About Writing* (Boynton/Cook of Heinemann, 1991) and "Affect and Cognition in the Writing Processes" (*Written Communication*, 8[4], 1991, 473-507).

and then you look at the words and figure out the same words have the same meaning. I also read comic books, and I still like comic books. I've got to admit that.

In kindergarten they had you draw a picture and explain it, and they would write down what you wanted them to write. I don't remember the first time that they had us write ourselves. They taught us how to do our names. That was a real achievement if you could only have a few letters backwards. At the library they would give you little stars to encourage people to read. I was on the top of the list for awhile.

When I first started writing, there was a tremendous influence from the books I read. I was reading these books about a boy inventor, and so I stole one of their plots, and I just wrote it and made a cover, and I drew some pictures to go along with it. I would kind of make up the sentence as I went along, without thinking about it ahead. I had a whole string of "said the boy." It was fun. I wrote a lot of that kind of story, copies of things I had read, science fiction, giant robots, things like that.

We didn't really do much writing until fourth grade. [Then] we had little essays, and in fifth grade you had to turn in a certain amount of stories, one a month, a monthly booklet. I was turning out this high class stuff. I think part of the reason that my writing gets too wordy, too many thoughts in one line is because I'd like to make these complicated sentences even when I was in elementary school, and teachers encouraged that cause not a lot of kids were doing it.

I never had too much trouble with grammatical errors. In fourth and fifth grade we learned about nouns and things, but grammatical rules never really sunk in. I didn't make many grammatical mistakes, maybe because I had done all this reading. I knew how it was supposed to read. I knew what punctuation to use and things like that. So even now I would probably do very poorly on a test that had me diagraming sentences, but I won't make any mistakes in grammar when I write.

I get frustrated now when I am writing. It is a chore, but when you don't have much work in elementary school, and you can write about anything you want to, then it was enjoyable. I won this little contest; it was Halloween, and you were supposed to write about something supernatural. When they read it out loud, I knew it was mine, but I didn't recognize every single line. It had just kind of poured out instead of being contrived. Then it was fun to write. Now when I hear something that I have written, I have it all in mind because I agonize over it when I write it.

I remember one time that I was trying to write something for a contest, and I couldn't get off the track of this television show I had been watching. My dad kept saying, "You have just copied down what they have said." He wasn't nasty about it, but after that I enjoyed writing more when I had my own original idea. All that reading kind of directed my thoughts. I couldn't always

think of something original. I was really conscious of it. I took it really seriously.

I can get a lot of pleasure out of writing if things are going smoothly, and I know what I want to say, and I don't have to agonize over it. I do better when I am not too concerned. Last year we were supposed to write some historical story. I wrote about a boy that worked in some factory in London, and it went really well because I was really interested in it.

This might sound kind of strange, but when I was doing papers in European history, that was easier because I didn't have to come up with any original ideas. Maybe that goes back to what I was talking about before. Sometimes I get an assignment that has a lot of creativity, and that's the stumbling block. After I get the ideas, I will be all set.

In the sixth grade I wrote this story about a terrific battle. And I read it out loud to the class, and I was surprised. I had put all this intensity and emotion into it. He [the teacher] was a little surprised. I could see by his face. I had gotten so involved in the story. And it wasn't a heroic story about sacrificing your life and honor; it was pretty unpleasant. I finished and my face was all red. I wasn't blushing. My heart was beating faster, and he had this really thoughtful look in his face, and said, "That was powerful." Generally in school I behaved. I would just sort of sit and do what they told me. But I felt like I had exposed myself to the class then, that I had made myself prominent. I was nervous because all these people were staring at me all of a sudden. I would rather not have put my feelings out on the line like that for everyone to see. And then I had a sort of block that happens to everyone once in a while. On two occasions I didn't turn in a paper, and the other kids in the class did. I guess the teachers overlooked that, but I felt badly, guilty about it for a long time. Once I couldn't think of anything original. The other...they always taught you to cross things out with a line, instead of scribbling it out, and I scribbled, not hastily or in a sloppy way, but because I had changed a lot of things while I was writing. We just did one draft, and they asked me to do it over, and I ended up not doing it at all. I guess I didn't appreciate the criticism, and I was kind of afraid to deal with it after that.

In sixth grade we had to write a letter as if we were the main character, Huck Finn, in the author's style. Something about that bothered me a lot. He said, "You look really unhappy," and I said, "I don't think I can copy someone else's style." I never really figured out why it bothered me that much. Maybe it was because all that time I was worried about thinking of my own original ideas. I was not happy that someone was telling me that I had to copy someone's style. Also, I never particularly liked it when teachers told you that you had to do things in a certain way.

[In seventh grade] I worked a lot harder because we had very little homework in sixth grade. That was a wrenching transition. I found though that English teachers were still impressed by the complexity of my writing. We had to make up some stories. I was trying to be impressive in my language, and in

my depiction of events. I would describe things with too many adjectives and that kind of burdened the writing.

One time the teacher read one of them out loud, and I sat there and heard all these adjectives, and I realized that it just didn't flow at all. I was thinking that it must have been hard for her to read. It was fancy, but it wasn't really substantive. I was not pompous, but I was really more serious than some people were. I had a teacher tell me once that it was part of older child syndrome. She sat in class and said, "You are probably the oldest. They are eager to do well to show the parents, and then by extension later, become successful adults, be responsible." She was right. There are some disadvantages, too, to being the oldest.

In eighth grade the teacher told us not to use passive voice, but we really didn't understand exactly. So we'd try to avoid "have" and "was" words. In that class I remember feeling really proud because the teacher, one of the hardest teachers, had raised my grade because she liked the way I wrote. She told me I was a good writer, so that gave me a lot of confidence. Coming to your own conclusions and having the burden on you to make statements, that is difficult. That started in ninth and tenth grade.

I was always confident in my writing in school, and I always did very well. The English Department nominated me for a National Council of Teachers of English Achievement Award. Two of us submitted our entries, and they were accepted. They had to be sent to the finals. That was this fall before my problems started.

This fall I had "Masterpieces of Western Civilization" from Mr. B. You were spending a lot of time drawing your own conclusions. We had an exceedingly hard teacher, too. When I took a test, I wrote furiously on four or five pages while everyone was doing the same thing, but when I got the grade back, and I got one of the highest grades in the class, I was overjoyed. Another time when we were talking about what Plato was saying, I didn't really have any original thoughts of my own. It wasn't a spectacular piece of writing. But I had a few ideas that were what he was looking for. I did well.

At the beginning of the year I wasn't having trouble with my writing. Once I thought of something concrete, I could write about it. At the end of the term I had achieved all of my goals, all A's except in Chemistry. But the pressure had been so intense. I wasn't ready for more pressure. And then the writing block set in, and I've had trouble doing this writing second semester for Mr. Schultz.

There have been times when my self-confidence wasn't as high as it should be. When I'm gone on my confidence, that results in writing blocks, and frustration. I get to the point where everything I think of... when every word that I think is not satisfying. There's nothing I wouldn't rather be doing. I wander around, and I eat a lot. It's really serious. Sometimes it takes hours to build up to the point that I can say something. And I can't just say, "I have

to get this done, so I have to start right now." It just doesn't work. Nothing of value occurs... though that is just my interpretation because no one else gets to see it.

[My parents] were always supportive in my education. Now that I'm having trouble in school for the first time, now they're telling me I have to work. I was terrible in Math because that isn't the way my mind works. It makes me less inclined to do my work. My mother doesn't understand that I can't just study and do better. It doesn't work that way. That's my limitation, end of the line. I am going to take science and math as long as I have to and then forget it. The talent I have in language, in writing ... maybe I have that because I don't have other abilities, abstract math.

I've been a little worried because I've lost my self-confidence. It was apparent to Mr. B. that I lost confidence in my writing. He went to school with my father. He told me that my father had been one of the better students in the school. I asked my father about that, and he just brushed off his ability. He skipped a grade, and maybe he felt out of place. So he went to the university, and he dropped out and then got back in and finished. He wasn't really doing what he wanted to do. He had had a lot of different jobs. Mr. B. told me that at just about my age my father lost some of his self-confidence, too, and his direction. When I heard it, I thought maybe there's something in our background—not genetic, but like environmental—that causes this failure to happen, a failure—not as a person or human being, but as a student. Mr. B. meant it as an instructive conversation.

Now I have trouble concentrating. I don't know if it's just Mr. Schultz' fault. I can't say exactly what the problem is, or I would do something about it. It's something emotional I suppose. It's involved with academics in school. It's not an outside thing in my life that's causing the trouble. It's a real problem because it's started to crowd my other work. I'm sure Chemistry and writing aggravate each other, having two classes that weren't going well. One class requires that kind of thing that I always thought I was good at, and the other requires things that I wasn't confident about at all. Once I lost my confidence in the one, it aggravated my feelings that I was having with the writing because I was having criticism from the teacher there too.

This wasn't the first time my writing had been criticized, but for some reason it really bothered me. And then I subjected the writing myself to even greater criticism that was really devastating. My writing this year is cut into last semester and this semester. They're entirely different experiences. Part of it might be the teacher, and part of it is the pressure of the second semester, junior year, grades, and everything.

I used to write papers pretty spontaneously, and it would be fine. Before I'd get a thought [and] put it into words. Now everytime I have the thought, I can't express it the way the teacher is looking for, like non-passive, non-Victorian, non-colloquial, so that ruined the way I wanted to start on it, to build on it. It just made everything take more time, and finally I would do papers in my free periods [or get them in late].

I think my writing is as good as anyone else's. [Other students] aren't openly critical of me—probably they aren't at all. But that's just what I think about, [that they will] find out that I'm not doing well and alter their perceptions of me. That's pretty unrealistic because if they're really my friends, then that won't change their minds at all. Next Tuesday I have to take a ditto master and copy one of my papers, pass those out, say what revisions I made, and talk about the writing process. I want to pick one out that people won't mind listening to. Every person in the class wants to be witty. I thought I was good at making little puns and sarcastic remarks in my papers; now I am worried whether my writing was funny enough, good enough.

I had a 3.75 grade point average, top member of the class. My grades aren't going to come close to that this quarter, and my whole average will come down. I might even get some C's and that bothers me a lot. I've never been too wrapped in grades, but last grading period I got a C from Mr. Schultz, my first C. I just want the year to end now.

Mr. Schultz says I have to really change everything to do the way he wants. And I can't. Underlying everything [is] my writing style. He calls it: "Victorian, archaic"; "It's too cluttered"; "It's too nineteenth century." I admit that teachers have told me that before, even the ones that liked it. They say, "It's too tight; have some shorter sentences, give the reader a break every once in a while." Mr. Schultz didn't like that at all, so I was changing every thought into some other form. And it started to sound simplistic to me. But I knew I wasn't going to get anywhere with him if I kept on doing things the way I had been doing them before.

He would say to do ten revisions incorporating sensory language, [when I already had] more than enough. The idea of doing ten separate changes and setting them down on paper instead of going over the whole paper–that's like bits and pieces and really disorderly. The complaint I've had in the past was that I hadn't really said anything of value. And now I've been told the problem is the way I'm saying it. That's a real switch.

When I went into Mr. Schultz's class, the English Department had already nominated me for that award. So other teachers had told him about me. And I saw this class as really a test because it was pure writing. It was like I had to prove myself all over again to someone new. He said, "You have some talent; don't lose it. We have some things we can work on." And that didn't bother me; that's the mildest form of criticism I can possibly think of. Everyone in the class was surprised when they got back their first few things, low grades. I turned some things in late, and he thought that I was trying to talk rings around him. And the reality of the situation was I was having trouble with getting the work done. And although I didn't exactly worship him as human being, he's another teacher that I could be on good terms with. At the end of the quarter, you were supposed to put on a little slip of paper what grade you thought you deserved, and I gave some thought to it and looked over my work, and I put a B-, and I got that C+ for the term. That was a real blow to my confidence.

One of the things bothering me is that I've lost some of my creativity. Generally I try to think of something that's really exotic for a title, but the last time I passed in a paper, I couldn't think of anything for about twenty minutes, and finally I put down something I didn't like. I looked on his desk, and about twenty people had the same title .

I don't really write much on my own anymore, although I always say I'm going to. In ninth grade we started this note, and the note eventually became "The Note" and stretched to about five hundred pages. We would start stories and then give it to someone else. Most of it was really ridiculous humor, but you didn't have to please any teacher. One of my friends still has it. We would start stories and then give it to someone else. You could do whatever you wanted to do. Now I'm just not motivated to write when I have the time. I've thought of my own stories, and something different too. Now I think I'm more satisfied with the thoughts I have in my head than what it will look like when it's written.

Most important to me right now is getting out of this school for the summer, to get over all this academic trouble I'm having right now. In college, my major will be in English. Sometimes I see myself as teaching courses in English, maybe high school or college. If I do that, I'll probably have to write in my spare time, to make a living off of it, I don't know. I could end up anywhere, working on any kind of literary thing. I'll hopefully get rid of my over-crowded style of writing. I think that'll be an improvement. I think that in human situations everyone needs to be entertained. And then some writers have the serious task of examining life. Mr. B. brought in some quotes by James Baldwin who said that writers are the conscience of society, to educate the people. I thought about this for awhile. At least I'll be writing in the future, you know, for my education. You have to be able to write to really understand what you read. You have to find out whether what you're saying is true to you or not.

I've almost always done what they wanted. I was never perfect, but in terms of what the people who have control over you, like teachers, expected of you, I got used to being, to doing exactly what everyone wanted. I wasn't used to criticism. In elementary school, I just went along with the rules instead of thinking things out.

I really feel bad, being so frustrated that I can't deal with my work. I used to wonder how people could not do school work. I wondered..."that's really bad for you, damaging to you." I was mature earlier, and then I lost some of that later, I guess. I didn't like to get criticism, cause I wasn't exposed to it. But this problem worries me a little bit. I've started to wonder if I was able. I got to a point where I couldn't handle all the tensions, especially the ones that I'm imposing on myself. And I feel bad about that. After years of doing well, I've started to wonder how did I possibly do well earlier? I can't possibly do that well again. When I got my college boards back, I got a 750 on the verbal and that really made my day! But I didn't feel like I was able to do it again.

This thing is about doing so well all your life and having trouble all at once. You feel like there's something wrong with you. I still have to do the work, but I don't have the confidence to do it. And also I see these other people; they're my friends and they're doing just fine where I'm sliding down. I've had friends who have some standard classes, who still see me as this great student. "Well, Chris you're going to go to Harvard. I'm going to community college," and they are giving me this all the time. We had a little award ceremony, and they say, "Oh, you're going to win ten awards," a vicious little circle of humor that's designed to cut. They're putting more pressure on me. I never thought it [grades] made me a better person.

This year was definitely the worst year of my scholastic life. That's the way I feel. I did good work and ended up with okay grades, but it took a lot out of me. It shows even when people thrust a yearbook into my hands and say, "Write something." You try to sum up everything that they have meant to you in one paragraph. I wrote to two girls that have been a great help, just keeping my spirits up while I was having all these problems. And I ended up writing something for one that sounded a lot like what I had written to the other person. I wasn't satisfied; it was pretty lackluster. I dread yearbook signing cause it's a little too much to ask right now, and everyone else is going to read it. For the few things I have learned, like to avoid the passive and colloquial, it really doesn't match up to all the damage that had been done in terms of my self-confidence.

Transient

by Andy Key-Sobiech

I am light as a milkweed pod,
my throat is lined with silk parachutes.
I go where the wind takes me,
clinging to anything tangible.
These images will someday weight me down,
giving me reason, giving me place.
Stillness will become an occupation.

The Inner Child Motif in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

by

Barbara A. Olive

The character of Beloved at the heart of Toni Morrison's novel of the same name implies the psychological dimension of Morrison's novel. Morrison's definition of the quality and location of the psychological dimension in this story about the unspeakable effects on human life of slavery and oppression remains ambiguous throughout the novel, for Beloved is both person and ghost, real child but unnamed. Morrison teases the reader with a possible literal explanation of Beloved's existence—that Beloved didn't actually die but was taken up and kept captive by a white man, upon whose death Beloved sets off to find the mother who attempted to kill her. However, Beloved is also the baby whose life literally runs out in Sethe's arms and for whose murder Sethe is imprisoned.

The novel, moreover, though given the name that Sethe puts on her daughter's tombstone, is not about Beloved but about Sethe. And although about Sethe, the story is also about Baby Suggs and Sethe's mother and Halle and Sixo and Stamp Paid and the Pauls—Sethe's story is told among their stories and the implied stories of many others, whose meanings give Sethe's life coherence and significant admidst the seemingly unstable "unmemory" of her own life. These histories of many others help fill in for the reader the origin of the empty wells that are Sethe's eyes.

If Sethe's story is made comprehensible by the conjoining of many stories, it is Beloved who makes possible the way into Sethe's story. She evokes the motivation to reveal and express the story that "was not a story to pass on" (274). The psychic space that Morrison is identifying in the novel, then, is not unique to Sethe—Sethe's story is the story of an oppressed people,—yet it is Sethe, through Beloved, who manifests this space.

Beloved, finally, is more answer than enigma, for her presence is key to defining the psychological space in Sethe that Morrison captures in the novel. Beloved is real but, before her physical appearance in Sethe's life, also invisible, as if she is from a place before or beyond. As Paul puzzles, "she reminds me of something. Something, look like, I'm supposed to remember" (234). In this place between the real child and the ghost, between the young woman who is seducing Paul and the spirit who is pushing him out of Sethe's house, lies the motif of the "inner child." This currently popular concept in counseling literature has a long and rich history and can open for the reader of Beloved ways to understand the nature of the simultaneously visible and invisible space in Sethe's story that Beloved occupies.

The Motif of the Inner Child

C.G. Jung is often credited with the rediscovery and articulation in our century of the ancient idea that in every adult "lurks an eternal child," a child that "is always becoming, is never completed" (*Works*, 17: 169-70). This eternal child is "not only something that existed in the distant past" but "a system functioning in the present" (*Psyche &Symbol* 125). Jung described the child as "the part of the human personality that wants to develop and become whole" (*Works*, 17:170). Psychologists since Jung have interpreted the inner child to hold meanings, among others, of one's identity, one's life force, one's divine being.

The metaphor of child for this core identity refers to its source in early childhood: "the infant's inner sensations remain the central, the crystallization point of the 'feeling of self' around which a 'sense of identity'" will become established" (Mahler 11). Like other archetypes, the inner child is not, as Jung points out, the "empirical" child but "the means . . . by which to express a psychic fact that cannot be formulated more exactly" (*Works*, 9.1: 161 n.).

Lying closely behind the conception of the inner child is that of the divine child, who is both human and spirit. Jung connects the inner child with religious observations, noting that religious rituals bring child images to consciousness (*Psyche & Symbol* 125). The child motif, Jung explains, is characterized by "potential future" in that it unites the conscious and unconscious into a single personality, an act that brings healing or wholeness (*Psyche & Symbol* 127-28). The "child" is also characterized by her persistence of being. Although continually imperiled by life's threatening forces, she "is endowed with superior powers and, despite all dangers, will unexpectedly pull through" (*Psyche & Symbol* 135).

In its recent form in popular counseling literature and practice, the inner child is defined as the child place that has been wounded and/or frozen in a certain stage of development due to trauma. Jung anticipates the counseling technique of deliberately contacting this child place when he recognizes "psychological experiences which show that certain phases in an individual's life can become autonomous, can personify themselves to such an extent that they result in a vision of oneself—for instance, one sees oneself as a child" (*Psyche & Symbol* 124-25). Jung attributes the experience of this phenomenon to earlier experiences of disassociation (*Psyche & Symbol* 125), often a result of unprocessed trauma.

The more wounded the child, the more hidden from the person's consciousness the inner child can become, having taken refuge from danger in the recesses of the person's psyche in order to avoid further hurt. When the hurt has been severe, disassociation can occur, resulting in division within the psyche. Jung notes that such "fragmenting of the personality" is often manifested in the appearance of pluralities, for examples in "numerous homunculi, dwarfs, boys, etc." who possess "no individual characteristics at all" (*Psyche & Symbol* 128) (one might think here of Morrison's deweys, or

of her repetition of names in the Sampsons or Pauls). In such a condition of fragmentation, according to Jung, one cannot experience "wholeness" within one's individual personality (*Psyche & Symbol* 129), for one's identity and one's divine potential appear dead. The child, however, is not dead, only buried, and the signs of it, though often unrecognized, abound. With the recovery of connection to one's child place comes the reemergence of the life-bearing potentials it holds. Although the "child," in all these manifestations, is a positive phenomenon, it can also manifest destructive behavior, the latter occurring as one form of response to hurt or abandonment. Thus, the "child's" actions, as Jung notes, can be "miraculous or monstrous" (*Works*, 9.1: 161).

Morrison plays out both these potentials—redemptive and destructive—in her character of Beloved, having prepared for the motif of traumatized child place in her preceding novels, each of which explores some dimension of the motif, ranging from the source of the traumatization and the resulting division within the psyche to the miraculous possibilities that the child holds. These several dimensions of the inner child motif that Morrison explores in her major fiction come together in bold form in *Beloved*, whose title carries reference both to spiritual hope and to a state of inner psychic connection that Morrison posits as necessary to help resurrect and heal the identity and life force of a people whose "child" or life force has suffered under unspeakable oppression.

Morrison's Earlier Fiction

Morrison's novels are about the condition of fracture and on-going separation that begins in divisions of race and class, moves through families fragmented by economic and social oppression (Paul D finds himself fascinated as if in a foreign land when he encounters an intact family), and ends up residing deep in the individual psyche. The novels' central characters and the communities surrounding them show clear signs of this latter psychological separation. Their child centers, which contain their identity, their futurity, their attraction to wholeness, have been seemingly killed and buried.

With these several elements in Morrison's world brutally fractured, her characters and plots do not fulfill conventional expectations. Morrison commented indirectly on this quality in her characters when she described how the behavior of people who are seeking new forms of psychological nourishment often "looks erratic . . . but isn't" (Jones and Vinson 143-44). Morrison's plots are similarly disturbing, for a number of them do not move towards reconciliation but exist in and around fractures in people's lives and psyches, providing compelling insights into the nature and effects of internal division that is a permanent condition.

Because this condition of psychical fracture dominates Morrison's plots and characters, discussions of her fiction using conventional moral measures lead the reader away from, rather than into, the novels' centers. In the instance of Sethe's killing of her child, for example, Morrison signals in a

number of ways, including the community's wrong-minded response in their rejection and isolation of Sethe, that discussions attempting to determine the moral quality of Sethe's action are not fruitful. For Sethe's action is not primarily a moral choice but an act of psychological defense against an overwhelming traumatic event. Sethe defends her children with the only resource she has available in the circumstance where the only other options, fighting and flight, are not possible. Her response is instantaneous; what she has to do is without question, without conscious thought: she protects her children in the same way she protects her inner child when the trauma is too much to comprehend or bear—by killing them, burying them so they do not have to feel the pain. Her response in this instance captures the act she commits simultaneously upon her exterior and interior child(ren).

In her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison offers her most literal depiction of the victimizing of the inner child. At the novel's opening, Pecola as literal child has already substituted for her own identity or "child" center an exterior, one-dimensional picture of a white child. By the novel's end, Pecola's already precarious identity becomes irreversibly fractured when her father, whose own inner child lies buried in humiliation and anger, can find expression of his feeling only in raping his daughter.

It is only the children, Claudia and Frieda, who observe with some understanding Pecola's plight. They wait in vain for the words from adults that recognize the damage to Pecola's child center: "We listened for the one who would say 'Poor little girl' or 'Poor baby,' but there was only head-wagging where those words should have been" (149). That the adults do not respond to Pecola, whose primary fault lies in her inner child remaining too long alive and thus vulnerable, points to their fear of acknowledging their own abandoned child centers. The community cannot afford to show more than indifference to a person who carries their own victim state, their socially defined mark of ugliness, their lack of access to life's abundance: "When the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live" (164). That their own child centers must remain hidden for protection is clear in Pecola's psychological condition at the novel's end: her experiences have led to psychical disassociation, limiting her to communicating only among the fragmented parts of her psyche.

Morrison includes a literal child in *Tar Baby* as well, with Michael's absence from the novel except in the form of brief flashbacks implying subtly the psychological presence of the "child." As both literal and psychological child of Margaret and Valerin, Michael hides in a small place, never emerging to tell his sadness. His is a condition of perpetual alienation, for neither his father nor mother can recognize him, Valerin blocked by his unknowing ("he was guilty . . . of innocence"), Margaret by her guilt. Valerin responds out of his unknowing by forgetting—not expecting—Michael, Margaret out of her guilt by obsessively expecting Michael to return. Both responses determine that Michael will not return, for both deny the truth of his existence, and thus Valerin and Margaret live in a condition of stasis, of continual abandoning and abandonment. Nor does Michael, as the "child," have a

literal or psychological place to reside without this reintegration. Thus his condition as wanderer from place to place in order to feel for others those sorrows they "were embarrassed to feel for themselves" (145).

If the child submits quietly in *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby* to a state of detachment, *Sula* captures the extravagant way the "child" can make its presence felt when it has been violently cut off and abandoned. Sula's childhood context contains literal represention of such violence, actions whose goal, ironically, is to protect children. Eva cuts off her own leg in order to insure her children's physical survival; she kills her children to rescue them from psychological misery. Both actions are physical manifestations, as in *Beloved*, of the process of killing one's "child," or life force, out of necessity.

Rather than diminishing Sula through the violation of her life center, the acts of violence against the "child" that Sula inherits exaggerate the child in her. Sula is the child run rampant. Unpredictable, uncontrolled, seemingly destructive, Sula damages relationships (Nel's marriage) and people (she turns Eva out of her house), and even herself (Sula's early death seems a result of her extravagant behavior). Although Sula's actions appear destructive, they are an expression of a life force, however distorted, that only Sula, of the people of Bottom, possesses. The community denies and fears what they see in Sula, but this response awakens feelings and rouses the Bottom out of its deadness, out of the stasis of the dead inner child. Their own buried life centers appear in magnified form in Sula: if Sula's heart appears cold, theirs have long been cut off from feeling. The people of the Bottom are impelled finally to act in an outrageous gesture, similar to Sula's actions out of her dominant child place, a gesture that leads them simultaneously to life and destruction. The creative/destructive nature of this act by the Bottom community is forecast early in the novel in a single motion of Sula's, as she swings Chicken Little with the joyful spinning movement of a child in play to his death.

Nel, who was a child with Sula, comes to recognize that Sula offers, though in negative form, what she and the people of Bottom most desperately need, the center/heart that has been taken out of them. At Nel's invoking of Sula's name in the novel's final scene, the image of the fish, all killed by the river, shifts to a stirring, a shifting, "the smell of overripe green things," a "scatter[ing] like dandelion spores in the breeze." The key, Nel discovers, is in the girl or "child" Sula: "We was girls together,' [Nel] said as though explaining something. 'O Lord, Sula,' she cried, 'girl,girl,girl girl girl' "(174).

Song of Solomon is the first of Morrison's novels that, by its end, moves away from the stasis of the dead or deformed innerchild. The central character, Milkman, inherits, like Sula, a negative, violently divided existence: the "Dead" family live on "Not Doctor Street"; Guitar's father is literally sawed into pieces. The latter image is manifested in Guitar's external actions that marry love and death and, more centrally, in Milkman's internal psychological division. Milkman, as the source of his name implies, displays a perverse form of childbeing, a form that signals division from his real child. Milkman's

lack of will, his chronic boredom, his "eagerness for death" constitute the reversed, negative image of the life force and divine being that characterize the inner child. Only when Milkman begins to search for the "gold" at his center does he experience exhilaration and laughter, the righted emotions of a child.

Images of children abound in Milkman's journey to his center. His literal search for his origins is facilitated by the children's song/game and by Circe, at whose house he sees the eyes of a child that "must be myself" (240). Pilate, who "had brought him into the world when only a miracle could have," is the embodiment of child. Pilate eats like a child, chews things like a baby; she sings and looks into people's eyes as allowed only "among children" (150). She is the strong defender of children, protecting Reba with violence as "the only child I got"(94) and saving Milkman's life at both its physical and emotional beginnings, the originating domain of the child. Because Pilate knows the eternal inner child ("you can't get rid of nobody by killing them" 208) and has learned to defend that "child" at all costs, she lives fully in its presence ("peace was there, energy, singing"), a presence that Milkman's search brings into his "own remembrance" (304). Pilate's living of this presence makes it possible, as her childsong repeats, to "touch the sun." The final secret of her being, as Milkman discovers, is her ability to fly "without ever leaving the ground" (340), a quality unique to the child spirit.

Beloved

In *Beloved* Morrison undertakes her most complete examination of the inner child motif. At the heart of the story is the killing of the literal and psychological child Beloved, and the novel's whole task is to unravel and explicate this experience. Morrison's use of the inner child motif in *Beloved* is also her boldest. Not only is the child's death at the heart of the plot, but it occurs through an extreme of violence and abandonment, with the resulting sadness at the center of the novel and of Sethe's existence, shaking houses and defying the boundaries between life and death. For Beloved is Sethe's daughter, but also, in a familiar form of the "child's" manifestation as a person's son or daughter (*Psyche and Symbol* 122), also the abandoned, suffering center of Sethe herself.

Morrison also explores further than in her earlier novels the possibility of reconciliation—of moving through the necessary emotional journey for the "child" to move from its condition of death or negative domination of a personality to a positive integration into the adult personality. Morrison prepares early in the novel for this latter possibility by having Sethe poised to meet her "child" Beloved. Although Sethe, like Margaret, appears entrenched behind barriers of resistance—"No moving. No leaving. It's all right the way it is" (15)–Sethe's response to the disturbances of the ghost—"if she'd only come, I could make it clear to her" (4)–implies that Sethe, unlike Margaret, recognizes her deed against the child and thus its real nature and presence.

It is no coincidence that Beloved is first evoked in Sethe's life through Paul D. Paul D brings intimate connection, a quality, according to James

Hillman, that often summons the child archetype (82). Paul D also brings Sethe's past, calling forth in Sethe a memory first of the context of her connection to Beloved and then of the child Beloved herself. And Paul D brings Sethe the support necessary to do the remembering. Beloved appears at the end of a day of play and connection for Sethe that Paul D has arranged, a day that allows Sethe to let down her guard for a moment, to relax that considerable life energy that she has used to keep at bay her "rememory." The redundant prefix implies that the past and Beloved are living, powerful, because unprocessed, forces in Sethe's life; that the experience of trauma and grief literally reoccurs when one allows the memory to return. For to *remember*, etymologically, as Gilda Frantz notes, is to mourn (70). That Sethe is at the point of this powerful experience of *re-memory*, an internal journey that parallels in its pain her physical journey to freedom, is made explicit by Paul D's offer to "go as far inside as you need to. I'll hold your ankles" (46).

Even with this permission, Sethe is able to remember (and thus to *remember* her life) only in stages. At her first sight of Beloved, her body remembers, as apparent in Sethe's rush to let out massive waters. Later, Sethe takes more deliberate steps to re-call her life, as apparent in her choice to focus on an interior journey of connection and integration with Beloved: "Whatever is going on outside my door ain't for me. The world is in this room. This here's all there is and all there needs to be" (183). Finally, Sethe is able to *re-collect* the scene of violence against her child, as the elements of the original scene—the yard, the gathering of people, the man wearing the white hat—appear together, offering Sethe the opportunity to relive the experience that killed her child. With the strength of her newly acquired integration with Beloved, Sethe is able to relive the scene in righted form, to aim the violent act in defense of her child at the external threat rather than at her own "child."

To capture the image of Seths's gradual reattaching to her inner child, Morrison blends the several characters of Sethe and Beloved and Denver in a variety of literal and figurative configurations. In reflecting on the "hand-holding shadows" of the day that begins Sethe's "rememory," Sethe realizes that they were not "Paul D, Denver and herself, but 'us three'" (182). And it is "three women" who gather in the Clearing, where "Baby Suggs, holy, had loved" (97) to begin Sethe's healing journey. By the end of the novel, the voices of the three blend in lyric until the speaker and spoken to are indistinguishable:

> She is the laugh; I am the laughter.
> . . . . . .
> Beloved
> You are my sister
> You are my daughter
> You are my face; you are me.
> . . . . . .
> You are my face; I am you. (216)

Although the primary psychological merging occurs between Sethe and Beloved (it becomes increasingly "difficult to feel who was who" 241), Denver plays a significant role in mediating the connection, and becomes herself part of the blending of characters. As she assumes the role of mediator and link to outside reality for Sethe and Beloved, Denver realizes that "whatever was happening, it only worked with three—not two" (243). Using a Jungian definition, if Sethe and Beloved are a form of parable, with the meaning lying not in their separate identities but in the combination of the two, it is Denver who assumes the form and knowledge of both, the "unknown third thing that finds . . . expression in . . . these similes" (*Psyche & Symbol* 119). Denver mediates the meaning of the merged identities: she is the child, who knows Beloved intimately even before she appears, and she is the adult who nurtures and protects and supports the child.

Morrison bridges between the psychic and physical not only in Sethe's story but in those Sethe has inherited and that surround her own. These stories in Sethe's heritage contain the common theme of the abandonment or killing of children. Sethe's mother threw away her children conceived by white men's rape. She holds emotional life back from Sethe by not looking at or acknowledging her connection to her except to reveal to Sethe her mark of pain and lack of self-ownership. Similarly, Baby Suggs has no memory of eight children, "'every one of them gone away from me. Four taken, four chased, and all, I expect, worrying somebody's house into evil'" (5). Through these images of abandoned and lost children, Morrison is suggesting the psychological condition that occurs when there is too much feeling to dare to feel and the consequent abandonment or numbing of the realm of the "child." Thus, even with the living memory of a child she has murdered—"124 was . . . full of strong feeling"—Sethe is "oblivious to the loss of anything at all" (39). The severing of Beloved's head from her body or heart provides a literal sign of the pervasive condition of such psychic separation, a condition characterized by the "killing" or denying of feeling and life.

Despite this heritage of stories of murdered and lost children, the "child," in its miraculous way, endures: "Life rolled over dead. Or so he [Paul D] thought" (109). Paul D doesn't understand, as does Stamp Paid, that the "child," like "people who die bad," shares with the divine child, Jesus, the inability to "stay in the ground" (188). The character in the novel who manifests this miracle of endurance, Baby Suggs, implies through her name this persisting child spirit. With most parts of her dead, the knowledge and being of the child spirit remains alive in Baby Suggs far beyond the point that should have ended its life. She employs this part of herself to help others reconnect to their "child," as she practices her ritual of calling forth the children—'Let the children come'!—so that the adults can smile and dance (87). It is in the same sacred grove in which Baby Suggs called forth the children that Sethe begins her work of connection with Beloved. The damaged Beloved responds through both giving and taking life from Sethe. For the child" is not impervious to life's affronts, and even Baby Suggs finally stops her efforts to help bridge in others' lives their irreparable separations from their wounded "children." By the end of her own life, a scrap of color

is the only remnant of Baby Suggs' child spirit: "'They don't know when to stop,' she said, and returned to her bed, pulled up the quilt and left them to hold that thought forever" (104).

This state of resignation that Baby Suggs withstands so long is Sethe's condition as the novel begins, her eyes showing "what emptiness held" (9). With the death of her child, Sethe has died: "the hot sun dried Sethe's dress, stiff, like rigor mortis" (153). This condition of annihilation of the self is the child Beloved's fear, as obvious in her two recurring dreams--of exploding and being swallowed. Sethe, after Beloved's death, experiences a psychological form of this annihilation—she can survive only by ceasing altogether to dream. In "killing" her "child," Sethe has shut herself off from life, locking even the small part of herself that continues to live, as symbolized in her child Denver, securely away from the world, from the past and the future, leaving her isolated and without life spirit, without "children willing to circle her in a game" (12).

That the "child" still lives on, though mechanically, in Sethe's broken spirit is evidence of the divine capacity of this child who is to all appearances destroyed. Despite the absence of a likely literal explanation for Beloved's appearance in the novel, she comes, like the third child in the Genesis 2 account, out of necessity for continued life, the first and second children having slayed and been slain. Sethe, who is herself both the slayer and the slain, is born, in her reconnection with Beloved, as the third child in the story, whose name, Seth, she bears. Jung describes this capacity of the "child" to live on in inhospitable circumstances by noting that at the same time as the "child" is "delivered helpless into the power of terrible enemies and in continual danger of extinction," she also "possesses powers far exceeding those of ordinary humanity" (*Psyche & Symbol* 135). Although the "child" is violated, overlooked, even fought off (as in Paul D's reaction to Beloved), she continues to tap the power of her divine essence in order to maintain life. Sethe carries a physical statement of this seeming opposition in the "tree" on her back. The tree marks Sethe's pain and near physical and emotional extinction, but, as Emily-Rose Rothenberg points out, the image of a tree also represents an "eternal spirit that sheds its leaves, dying in order to live" (88). The tree's divine essence is indeed implied in that Sethe cannot see the tree but only hear it described.

Morrison plays out this contradiction within the child motif in Sethe's relation to Beloved, who at one moment tries to cut off Sethe's life as her own has been cut off and in the next saves and nurtures Sethe. Beloved brings her own pain to Sethe, pain that ultimately is healing: "anything dead coming back to life hurts" (35). By submitting willingly to suffering in her abandonment to Beloved's pain, Sethe moves through a process that Frantz describes as a "dissolution of the personality in tears and despair" in order to "begin building" (67). Sethe moves imperceptibly (with frozen tears) from the deliberate child play of skating, her form of entering into relationship with her child Beloved, to crying: "but when her laughter died, the tears did not and it was some time before Beloved or Denver knew the difference"

(175). The emotion that Sethe is expressing at this point may be explained "as the descent into the unconscious for the purpose of beginning the journey." From this place, one's tears, now unfrozen, as Franz explains, turn into invincible diamonds of "Self" (68).

Despite the exaggerated way in which Beloved manifests herself, she, the one who has suffered, is the (divine) center of Sethe's being. She is, as Marion Woodman describes the inner child, the neglected part of the psyche that "the Self will attempt to push . . . forward for recognition" and that contains "energy of the highest value" (23). Sethe's giving herself over to this energy, of bonding fully to Beloved, moves Sethe through a series of stages, from adult to child to infant state and finally to a pre-conscious, pre-verbal state where the "vital meaning" of myth lies (*Psyche & Symbol* 117). In this new place, Sethe is able to realize a revised response to the threat against her child that forced her in the original circumstances to do "violence against the very object of her love" (82). Sethe's fierce defense of her child, aimed by necessity at her own being in the first instance ("If I hadn't killed her, she would have died" 200) can now, through reconnection with the very child she killed, be aimed at the source of the threat. At the moment when she defends Beloved in righted way, she and Beloved become fully integrated—Beloved is no longer visible as separate person. Imagery suggests that the two, in this blending, have given birth/life to one another; they are experiencing the integration of child with inner nurturing mother and of adult with the inner abandoned child, thus fulfilling the quest or "fate," as Frantz calls it, of the abandoned child within her lifetime (65).

Despite Sethe's emaciated physical condition at the end of *Beloved*, the novel's resolution contains an optimism, however severely shadowed. Although Sethe's condition implies her nearly severed ties to life, she is not resigned to death, only exhausted from an emotional journey that has opened wounds even deeper than those physical wounds from her first journey. Each experience is too much for Sethe—had she known the results, she would not have entered upon either journey. Yet both carry with them the only hope for release, whether from the physical restraints of slavery or the related, deeper psychic restraints that have kept Sethe cut off from life around and within. The unspeakable difficulty of the two journeys—of Sethe's story that is "not a story to pass on"—summarizes the condition of life for the characters and communities in Morrison's fiction and implies the extent of the trauma that Morrison is describing in her construction of the Black American experience.

Toni Morrison has acknowledged that she attempts in her fiction to examine archetypes (Jones and Vinson 138). That this particular archetype of the inner child takes on exceptional power in Morrison's works lies in part in the power of archetypes: "Archetypes were, and still are, living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously (*Psyche & Symbol* 119). It lies in the power of a psychological experience with a rediscovered "child," as is apparent in Jung's description of his own personal encounter with the "child" ("the small

boy is still around"), to whom he had to give himself over by doing what the "child" wanted even though Jung found it "painfully humiliating . . . to realize that there was nothing to be done except play childish games" (*Memories* 174). Finally, the power of this archetype in Morrison's novels lies in Morrison's intimate understanding of the inner child. Morrison gives the "child" room to play out its meaning and feeling in the creative and disturbing turns of her fiction. The conjunction in her novels of the childlike and disturbing, seemingly contradictory impulses, points relentlessly to the painful degree of separation in Morrison's characters and communities between the divine potential of the "child," and its suffering and sadness. Morrison knows the latter most of all and the social and psychological violence that has caused it ("she had to be safe and I put her [by killing her] where she would be" *Beloved* 200).

Adding to the depth and seemingly endless sadness of the lost inner child that Morrison depicts is the long delay in expressing its outrage and consequent underlying grief, a state of continuing trauma that composes the very condition of life in Morrison's fiction. That the grief cannot be expressed in standard patterns—often not in words beyond the simple, barely articulated pleadings of a child—reveals something of its depth. Its nature can be defined only in signs, as in the disturbances and undulations of red light of 124, or sounds, as in that of Nel's long-delayed cry that captures the condition of the "child" in Morrison's world: "It was a fine cry—loud and long—but it had no bottom and it had no top, just circles and circles of sorrow" (*Sula* 174).

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The Teachers Of Hate

by

Jennifer L. Isley

We are not born to hate,
But rather taught.
Taught at some point in our lives by the ones we loved.
The people we trusted and cared for
Turned away,
Whether in our time of need or
Just simply in the midst of our false happiness,
consciously or subconsciously,
Attacked our heart and soul without mercy,
By spiteful words thrown in our minds or
With deeds that clawed at our spirit.

Our delicate souls were glass,
And they threw the first stone.
They broke it into pieces,
But not small shattered bits.
Instead, they carefully left pieces with jagged edges and
Sharp points,
Which could rip at us causing greater pain.
Pieces too small to put back together,
Too large to ignore.

Little did these people realize that those dangerous edges
Were also on our outsides, thus,
Inflicting pain upon undeserving innocence.
Those corners and edges were exposed to the others that
Enabled us to hurt them,
To hate them.

Our first and only lesson in hatred was given, and
The teacher was the person that
We loved the most.

Teaching Technical Writing at the High School Level in Minnesota

by

Nancy MacKenzie

Most of us probably did not become English teachers because we wanted to teach technical writing. A combination of teaching and practicing creative writing and literary analysis is more likely to have been our original motivation for majoring in English. In fact, to some, technical writing and literature use language to such different purposes that the two belong in separate curricula, English as distinct from communication studies, for example.

While it is not my aim to demonstrate the commonalities of technical writing and other kinds of writing traditionally taught in English curricula—though all types of good writing share the requirements of precision, clarity, and critical perception, to name just a few common qualities—I do wish to argue for the incorporation of some technical writing instruction into the English high school writing curriculum.

This article offers and examines answers to three questions: 1. Is technical writing taught at the high school level in Minnesota? 2. If technical writing is not currently being taught, should it be? 3. If students would benefit from increased instruction in technical writing, what is the most effective way of incorporating technical writing into the secondary English curriculum?

Report on survey research

To discover the status of technical writing instruction in Minnesota high schools I conducted a survey. The main objective of the survey was to determine the extent to which technical writing is currently being taught, who is teaching it, and to which students.

A survey questionnaire was sent to the English department chairs of 484 Minnesota high schools, both private and public. A total of 122 usable completed surveys were received, for a response rate of 25%. (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.)

Based on these survey findings, technical writing is being offered in some Minnesota high schools, but to a limited extent. Six survey respondents said a course titled Technical Writing is offered at their school; 19 indicated that a course in business writing is offered, and 16 responded that their school offers a specialized writing course similar to technical writing. (Respondents identified these similar courses with titles such as Word Information Processing, Practical Writing, and Vocational English.) The majority of these technical writing, business writing, and related writing courses are one

semester long. Respondents also indicated that these courses are most frequently required for "vocational" or "general" track students; they are not designed for the college bound or honors students.

Along with seeking information regarding courses dedicated to technical writing, the survey study also sought to determine the extent to which elements of technical writing were being incorporated into more general writing courses. Figure 1 represents a list of selected technical writing elements that survey respondents were asked to choose from, indicating those that were currently being taught in any writing courses in their schools with which the respondents were familiar (see the "percent teaching" column). Respondents were also asked to indicate the grade level at which such instruction received the most attention (see Figure 1 "most frequent level" column).

Figure 1: Percentage of survey respondents who identified designated elements of technical writing as being taught in writing classes in their schools, and level at which those elements are most frequently taught (n = 122).

T W Element	Percent teaching	Most frequent level
Business letters	75.4	11 & 12
Audience adaptation	71.2	9-12
Collaborative writing	44.3	11 & 12
Procedures & instructions	40.2	11 & 12
Other non-literary reports	30.3	11 & 12
How to use graphics	30.3	11 & 12
Document design/page layout	30.3	11 & 12
Technical oral presentations	26.2	11 & 12
Evaluation reports	22.1	12
Memos	21.3	12
Mechanism descriptions	16.4	11 & 12
Meeting reports	13.1	11 & 12
Proposals	10.7	10, 11 & 12
Progress reports	6.6	11 & 12
Case studies	5.7	11 & 12
Technical bulletins	4.1	11 & 12
Budget reports	4.1	11 & 12
Equipment justifications	2.5	10
Other	1.6	11 & 12

These 18 elements (plus an "other" category) were listed on the questionnaire because they represent a manageable list of the topics currently receiving the most attention in textbooks and published scholarship on technical communication. It is not, however, a list of elements uniquely representing technical writing. For example, audience adaptation and collaborative

writing (both of which receive a significant amount of instruction, according to the respondents; see Figure 1) are writing approaches applicable to various other types of discourse as well as technical writing. Furthermore, it must be clarified that according to survey respondents a number of these elements are taught in writing courses outside of the English department, business departments in particular.

While seeking information regarding technical writing instruction, the survey also attempted to determine what other kinds of writing are being taught in Minnesota high school English curricula. Figure 2 represents five categories of types of writing to which respondents were asked to assign a percentage indicating the relative portion of instruction time devoted to each writing type in their school's curriculum. The percentages in Figure 2 represent the mean frequency counts in each category. Whereas the first four categories (exposition, creative writing, persuasion, and self-expression) were accompanied by parenthetical examples, as shown in figure 2, the "other" category was open-ended; a blank line was provided for the respondent to fill in. The final item in Figure 2 includes in parentheses some of the most frequent examples that respondents provided in that category.

According to survey respondents, exposition receives the most instruction time (mean = 41.3%) . Reaching meaningful conclusions from this is problematic, however, for several reasons, primarily because exposition is such an elastic category. Even so, as the examples of exposition (i.e., lab reports, feasibility studies, diagnoses, research papers, news articles, analysis of literature, proposed problem solutions) provided in the survey question are intended to indicate, there are important similarities in forms of expository writing which might at first seem disparate. That is to say, literary analysis can be viewed as a very specialized type of technical writing.

Figure 2: Breakdown of time spent teaching designated types of writing in respondent's curriculum

Type of writing	Mean percent of time
Exposition (e.g., literary analysis, lab reports, research papers)	41.3
Creative (e.g., stories, plays, poems)	20.9
Persuasion (e.g., advertising, speeches, editorials)	18.3
Self-expression (e.g., journals, diaries, manifestos)	17.0
Other (e.g., resumes, job correspondence, mechanics)	16.7

The survey also asked respondents to list titles of courses they teach and to identify the types of writing they assign. The respondents provided more than 60 courses titles, ranging from unique ones like "Intensive Writing" and "English/Social Projects" to traditional ones like "Composition." The single most frequently listed course was an honors English writing course of some

kind (n = 48), with various titles, such as College Prep English, Advanced Writing, Honors English, and the like. The next most frequently listed titles belong in the creative writing course category (n = 28), with titles like Creative Writing, Short Story, and Poetry. Courses with "Composition" or "Communication" in the title were listed next most often (n = 19).

For the survey item which asked respondents to list the types of writing they assigned, many listed the same types that were given as samples in the survey question itself. Survey question number 4 read: "What types of writing do you assign (e.g. narrative, analysis of literature, reports on content material, etc.)?" Respondents listed analysis of literature most frequently (n = 83), then narrative (n = 68), and reports on content (n = 26). Other types of writing frequently listed for this survey item include research writing (n = 52), creative writing (n = 48), and journals (n = 33).

The purpose of this particular survey question was to determine whether technical writing was likely to receive much interest or attention from the individual respondent given the type of writing he or she typically teaches. The fact that a high number of these respondents teach honors courses and thus most likely do not also teach vocational track students suggests these respondents would not automatically view technical writing of primary importance. Nonetheless, a noteworthy number of them said they thought technical writing in high school should be increased.

Figure 3 represents respondents' views on three related issues: their awareness of plans to increase technical writing instruction in their curricula (Figure 3, part A); their belief that technical writing instruction should be increased (Figure 3, part B); and their choice of the best method by which to accomplish an increase in technical writing instruction (Figure 3, part C). Although a relatively high percentage of respondents were uncertain whether technical writing warrants increased instruction (35.2 %), an impressive number said yes, such instruction should be increased (41.0 %). The question of whether these respondents see themselves as being the teachers responsible for providing such instruction, however, remains unaddressed. Even so, a noteworthy number of survey respondents (28.7%) did choose incorporating technical writing into existing courses (perhaps they had in mind their own courses) as the most feasible way to increase instruction.

Reasons technical writing is not frequently taught at the high school level

A number of arguments can be made against teaching technical writing at the high school level: there is not enough room in the curriculum; there is not enough available teaching material appropriate to the secondary level; or technical writing is not the English teacher's responsibility, and furthermore, English teachers are not qualified to teach it.

Some of these arguments are stronger than others. The weakest arguments hinge on time and space in the curriculum. Expanding the current curricula to include a course dedicated to technical writing is not completely infeasible, but neither is it the only possible approach. Adjusting existing courses to accommodate more of the technical writing elements listed in Figure 1 would not be unduly difficult or problematic.

Figure 3: Responses regarding increasing teaching of technical writing at high school level

Part A: Respondents' awareness of plans to increase the teaching of technical writing in their curricula in the near future

No plans	92	75.4 %
Yes, there are plans	21	17.2 %
Did not answer	9	7.4 %

Part B: Respondents' belief that the teaching of technical writing *should* be increased

Yes, it should	50	41.0 %
Uncertain	43	35.2 %
No, it should not	23	18.9 %
Did not answer	6	4.9 %

Part C: Respondents' choice of best manner in which to increase technical writing instruction

Did not answer	65	53.3%
Incorporate elements of technical writing into existing courses	35	28.7 %
Add a course in technical writing	20	16.4 %
Other method	2	01.6 %

The argument concerning availability of material is not as easy to discount. A review of secondary English textbooks (primarily for grades 11 and 12) published by Harcourt Brace, Heath, and Prentice Hall revealed that none included a section on technical writing. Each did include a unit on the business letter, but the focus tended to be on format rather than rhetorical stance. For example, in one text one-third of a twenty-page chapter on the business letter was devoted to placement of the parts of the letter (i. e., salutation, complementary close, signature, and so on).

Even so, material, ideas, and approaches are available from other sources. Ten percent of the survey respondents indicated that faculty at their schools do corporate or community training and consulting in technical and/or business writing; these individuals represent a potential source of insights and first hand examples of on-the-job writing. Furthermore, Jerine Berndt discovered in her survey research of two hundred manufacturing employers in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area that a surprisingly high number of managers volunteered to serve as resources on technical writing, some offering to visit schools and talk to students and teachers about the technical writing they and their coworkers do. Scholarly materials are also becoming more available. A recent issue of *English Journal* (February 1992) devoted a section to teaching technical writing in high school; articles were

written by high school English teachers from Minnetonka, Minnesota, and Houston, Texas. Another useful source for beginning technical writing teachers is *Teaching Technical Writing in the Secondary School* by B. E. Fearing and J. Allen, available from NCTE/ERIC.

But there are additional arguments against teaching technical writing in English classes which are more philosophical than situational and thus not easily dismissed. The issue of responsibility is an example. Persuasive arguments can be made that teaching corporate communication survival skills is not the English teacher's mission. In the first place, some believe that English teachers ought to be teaching that which no one else is equipped or inclined to teach, an appreciation of literature or creative writing, for example. One can assert that those who want to climb the corporate ladder will figure out a way on their own to obtain the communication skills to do so, and furthermore, this kind of communication training is the financial obligation of companies, not tax-paid high school English teachers.

On another level the issue of responsibility is also not clear cut because the distinction between technical and business writing is not obvious. Whereas 49 of the 122 survey respondents provided no answer to a question asking whether their curricula defined technical and business writing differently, 56.2% of those answering the question said that there is no significant difference between the two. Some of these respondents may represent that portion of English teachers who believe technical writing to be a part of the business teacher's domain.

The issue of the instructor's qualifications to teach technical writing warrants examination. Survey responses to a question regarding the educational background of teachers of technical writing indicated that only six respondents (from the total of 122) identified teachers of technical writing in their schools as having taken coursework in technical writing. Even so, a remedy for this lack of educational training is not difficult to come by; graduate level courses in technical writing are currently offered at a number of colleges and universities within the Twin Cities area, as well as outside of it (Mankato State University, for example).

The most serious consequence of high school English teachers' lack of coursework in technical writing is not the fact that they have inadequate preparation and confidence in doing technical writing. After all, English teachers all produce technical writing themselves: budget justifications, multi-media equipment descriptions and requests, course proposals, student and colleague evaluations, conference reports, word processing program directions for their students, professional development plans and reports, and the like. All English teachers know enough about this sort of technical writing to produce it because doing so is a professional requirement. Instead, the more far-reaching consequence of the typical high school teacher's lack of training in technical writing is the failure to appreciate its intellectual challenge. The practical value of technical writing is not often refuted. Indeed, the essential practicality of technical writing is the basis of some high school English teachers' disdain for it.

Kinds of writing high school English teachers enjoy teaching

A review of selected NCTE *English Journal* articles provides some insight into the kinds of writing instruction that excite high school English teachers. One teacher discusses how she works toward "empowering students to use their own voices, to plumb their lives for stories, poems, essays, to engage them in a dialogue with their peers about their writing (Christenson, 14). Another writing teacher asserts that "repeated, prolonged translation of experience nourished the power of a growing writer" (Sullivan, 55). And a third teacher believes that "the most important thing you can teach your students about letter writing—any writing—is to write in a way that reflects their personalities, their ideas, their visions, their uniqueness" (Mayer, 63). Clearly, teaching writing as a means of self-expression, an outlet for one's feelings, a way of finding one's own voice, and a means to empowerment is exciting, rewarding, and truly important for both instructor and student. As I shall show shortly, this view is not incompatible with teaching technical writing.

English teachers, like all teachers to some degree, like to teach what they have been taught. William Zinsser points out that for many English teachers "their real subject is literature—not how to write, but how to read; how to extract meaning from a written text. . . . Inevitably, much of the writing that English teachers assign is based on literature—on what somebody else has already written—and therefore has little reality" (13). My survey findings support Zinsser's assertion regarding English teachers' preference to teach literary analysis: 83 of the 122 respondents listed literary analysis as a type of writing they taught. Teaching literary analysis is not in itself a mistake; but when we overemphasize it at the high school level we promote a "literary style" of writing that some students are intimidated by, a style many students do not see the relevance of to their own areas of interest and expertise.

It is important to note that most of the arguments against teaching technical writing in the high school which have been discussed here represent difficulties faced—not reasoned proofs demonstrating the lack of need or value in teaching technical writing to high school students. Furthermore, many of the difficulties connected with teaching technical writing that have been discussed here represent a teacher-centered approach to curriculum development—that is, relating to teachers' preferences, qualifications and, in some cases, biases—rather than a student-centered approach.

Reasons for teaching technical writing in high school

Student-centered arguments in favor of teaching technical writing at the high school level are plentiful and varied. A feature characterizing all of the best arguments in favor of technical writing instruction in high school is not the one related to survival skills—although the practicality of technical writing is not to be dismissed lightly—but rather that students stand to benefit most from the critical thinking strategies demanded by technical writing. For example, even a relatively simple technical report calls on the writer's powers of accurate and close observation, classification, analysis,

and synthesis. Furthermore, the writer of a technical document is seldom able to confine himself or herself strictly to interaction with a single text, as the writer of literary analysis may; the author of technical writing must know the audience, consider the context, and deal with both primary and secondary data. The student writers of technical assignments may not be encouraged to convey their personal feelings or emotional responses, but they are usually expected to express their opinions and beliefs about the advantages, validity, merits, and ramifications of their own findings and observations, as well as those of their peers. Such reasoned and substantiated expression offers the writer significant opportunity for self-knowledge, empowerment, and creativity.

Hesitancy among high school English teachers to commit to teaching elements of technical writing may be grounded in a too-limited definition of what constitutes technical writing. Definitions of technical writing provided by some of the survey respondents illustrate the lack of consensus about definition and the limited view of technical writing held by some high school English teachers. Respondents provided the following definitions: " technical writing is manuals and instructions for assembly," "technical writing includes reports and instructions," "technical writing involves technology," "technical writing defines some technical aspect of equipment," "technical writing is for science and engineering areas," " technical writing is the explanation of how to use products," "technical writing is aimed at high-tech industry . . . ."

While these definitions are not misguided or inaccurate, they are extremely limited (a consequence of the fact the survey did not provide much space for writing a definition, perhaps). Furthermore, these definitions, with their emphasis on specialization, overlook the more general applicability of technical writing.

The wide range of situations, contexts, and audiences connected with technical writing—both in and outside of academia—justify teaching it to high school students to help them prepare for college as well as for the workplace. But an even more compelling reason to include technical writing assignments is motivation; technical writing provides an avenue for students to explore their own aptitudes. People of high school age need an opportunity to experience writing as a mode of learning—not just about themselves and their feelings, as expressive and narrative writing allow them to do, and not just about other people's texts, as literary analysis enables them to do, but also about the material world around them.

If writing in high school English courses is limited to personal experience narratives and literary analysis, the student will not be encouraged to develop written problem solving skills. College instructors and employers expect students and employees to organize and analyze data and then reason inductively to a conclusion. This conclusion is to be presented with varying degrees of persuasiveness or objectivity, depending on the context. Thus by doing some technical writing students practice using analytical

skills, problem solving strategies, and organizational techniques which are necessary to master, interpret, and convey information to a reader who has a need to know.

The teaching of various kinds of writing calls for attention to the role of the audience. But a key difference between the audience's role in imaginative writing, personal narrative, or literary analysis that distinguishes these from technical writing is the element of accountability. Readers of technical writing typically need the information for their own purposes. Often there is a good deal at stake when they turn to a technical document, whether it be society's general welfare, employee safety, environmental impact, or company profits. Another reason for teaching technical writing is to offset a possible overemphasis on the process approach. For example, teaching various invention strategies assists students in finding something to say. However, in both academic and work world writing, inventing content or material is not the main task. More important and challenging to the writer is the selection, organization, and effective presentation of data, findings, observation, and the like. In the so-called college "content" courses, the content is not *found* or *invented* but arranged. Furthermore, the arrangement is not expected to reflect personal preference or the writer's expression of an inner self. Therefore, technical writing affords an opportunity for teaching students some common forms and formats for meeting certain audience expectations.

Thomas Dukes points out that many technical writing texts have been criticized for their tendency to be quite product oriented, with their samples of forms and formats and bulletted lists of do's and don'ts. But Dukes goes on to emphasize that there is a benefit in learning some formulas; they provide guidance that—if presented carefully—need not become prescriptive. In fact, it is not uncommon for college professors in the content disciplines to require students to follow rather rigid forms for lab reports and term projects, for example. Furthermore, a good deal of corporate writing is formulaic and form oriented. Using and reusing "boilerplate writing" is considered economically efficient in business; thus students need to be taught to see its benefits and taught how to conform to company practice with critical awareness.

High school students will benefit from practice in what Janice Redish describes as "reading and writing to learn to do" (223). Redish describes the typical textbook reading assignment followed by a test and/or written essay assignment as reading and writing to learn. However, Redish asserts, it is only in school that we read simply to learn, whereas in daily life most people read to learn how to do something. Redish points out that "the documents that are critical to people in the course of their lives are action documents" (224), documents which provide the necessary directions for processes and activities the readers must complete successfully.

Finally, a strong student-centered reason for teaching technical writing in high school is that its qualities of "clarity, conciseness, precision, and logic"

(Macintosh, 28) are applicable to all types and contexts of writing. W. Earl Britton argues the value of teaching technical writing because it "requires the exploitation of all the rhetorical devices of focus, logical partitioning and classification, and illuminating sequence, to name a few of the features appropriate to all writing" (73). Furthermore, as Carolyn Miller argues, training in technical writing becomes a kind of "enculturation" into a community (617). That community is one to which virtually all high school students seek acceptance—whether they are college, vocational school, or job bound. All high school students are in the process of entering the discourse communities of those who write about their work (which includes academic work as well).

How to teach technical writing in high school

Two methods of expanding the high school English curriculum to include technical writing are worth consideration: offer a course in technical writing, or incorporate technical writing into courses which have a more general focus. Some combination of these two is also potentially workable.

A course focusing strictly on technical writing would have the advantage of offering sustained study and practice but would risk the disadvantage of implied selectivity. It is all too likely that at the high school level such a course would be perceived as targetting the skills-deficient student rather than the academically advanced. This need not be the case, however; an inspiring description of a high school technical writing course is given by Marvin Hoffman, who explains that his course is not intended to train students for the profession of technical writing. Such "specialization is inappropriate for young people just beginning to explore broader avenues" (59). Hoffman goes on to describe the goals of his course, which needed to be broad, "to reach out for the virtues common to writing in any profession, whether the result was a report of an NCAA championship basketball game, a case history of a teenager suffering from bulimia, or a naturalist's account of the life of a termite community"(59).

The other method of adding technical writing to the high school English curriculum, that of incorporating elements of technical writing into other courses, would require selecting, at the very least, particular assignments which foreground such characteristics as audience adaptation, collaboration, rhetorical complexity, and visual effectiveness. Two assignments which would provide opportunity to accomplish these objectives are the resume and letter of application package, and a proposal. These assignments are pertinent regardless of the student's academic track. Indeed some high school instructors already include these assignments.

Hardly anyone would wish to argue against teaching students to write resumes and application letters; nonetheless, there are stronger arguments for doing so than straightforward practicality. Of course, everyone who wishes to acquire employment must consider how best to call upon his or her communication skills. However, the resume and application letter

assignment offer the added opportunity of satisfying requirements such as audience adaptation, selection of most relevant information, accuracy and conciseness in presentation, demonstration of knowledge of conventional forms, and format which achieves visual appeal, to name just the main features.

The other type of technical writing assignment that would benefit all high school students is a proposal—which need not revolve around a technological subject. A proposal represents a writing activity which enables students to sharpen their awareness of both process and product requirements. The experience can be enhanced by allowing students to work in writing groups to produce a more extensive project than would be feasible for a student individually. By producing a single document which has multiple authors, students have an opportunity to mature through collaborating with their peers. Students engage in active learning because they are encouraged to consider multiple perspectives. This exploration is accompanied by reduced reliance on the knowledge and authority of the teacher, thus transferring responsibility for and control of learning to the students. By taking part in this process of intellectual negotiation and collective decision-making, students prepare themselves for the collaboration that characterizes much of the activity in the workplace and increasingly has come to characterize some college course work. Even so, providing practice for students in the type of collaborative writing they will be expected to do in the future is not the most pedagogically sound of the arguments in favor of it. An even better argument for collaborative writing is that it assists students in coming to view written texts as "interpretive events constructed by communities of readers and writers out of their shared assumptions and on-going negotiations over discursive practices" (Lay and Karis, 123), according to collaboration researchers.

Collaboration in some form is likely to characterize the proposal even if students end up producing single-author documents. Each writer will be called upon to do some form of primary research, such as interviewing, which constitutes a form of collaboration. In addition, the proposal calling for both secondary and primary research allows the writers an opportunity to incorporate visuals from the beginning stages of the writing process. John Harris points out that English teachers tend to "think of graphics as 'aids' or even worse as decorative illustrations" (17.1). We need to keep in mind that visuals—tables, formulas, x-rays, tracings, photographs, blueprints, and the like—are integral to numerous and various disciplines. It is a disservice to students to deny them the opportunity to design, produce, and integrate their own visuals with their written texts.

Finally, the main advantage of the proposal is that it requires audience awareness. If the proposals address a real problem of significance to the writer (e. g., community issues, school policies, regulations or practices associated with their part-time student jobs), then these proposals will be directed to actual audiences. Reporting on a six-year study of writing curricula, Richard Larson says that a major omission in current writing

courses is the opportunity to write to a real audience, "a reader interested in the writer's subject and whose respect the writer needs to earn" (NCTE *Council Chronicle*, April, 1992, 9).

Furthermore, proposals all follow a format convention. These formats are not identical, but there are certain elements common to virtually all proposals: statement of the problem, background, identification of scope, needs statement, feasibility, qualification of personnel, costs, recommendations, and so on. Learning to shape their own findings, interpretations, and recommendations to a pre-established format can be valuable practice for student writers at a variety of levels.

Real world considerations become more apparent to the students as they come face to face with the fact that proposals elicit the desired action when they answer a perceived need of the person or entity being addressed. Students learn that it is not enough to identify a problem (especially if it is a problem with limited consequences or one which affects a disenfranchised group) and then recommend a solution. Students come to realize they must present their solution in a rhetorically persuasive manner, illustrating its feasibility as well as its advantages not only to the requester but also to those whose response and assistance is being solicited.

Conclusion

The three questions with which this article began can be answered as follows. Yes, technical writing is being taught at the high school level in Minnesota, but to a limited extent. In a handful of schools technical writing instruction is provided in courses specifically devoted to that purpose, but in a greater number of instances selected elements of technical writing are being incorporated into more general writing courses, not all of which are within English departments.

The answer to the second question regarding the need for technical writing instruction at the high school level in Minnesota is also affirmative. Of the survey respondents, 41.0% indicated they believed such instruction should be increased (35.2% were uncertain, 18.9% were opposed, and 4.9% did not answer the question).

There are a few reasons not to teach technical writing in the high school, namely that there is not enough room in the curriculum nor enough good specialized instructionmaterial available, and that high school English teachers are neither qualified nor particularly inclined toward teaching technical writing. It should be noted that these difficulties are not only teacher-centered rather than student-centered, but they can also be overcome with sufficient motivation.

The students' benefits from receiving instruction in technical writing are both numerous and varied. Technical writing assignments enable students to develop their own interests and aptitudes while learning how to convey useful information to readers who hold the writer accountable. The careful

observation and recording of empirical data, thoughtful interpretation and analysis, commitment to clarity and accuracy, and attention to conventional forms that characterize good technical writing also characterize the best writing of any type or genre. Thus training and practice in technical writing will benefit both the students destined for hourly wage employment directly after high school and the college bound honors students as well.

The third question forming a basis for the discussion addresses the method of how best to incorporate technical writing instruction into existing English curricula. Designing an effective curriculum which includes increased technical writing instruction must consider the context: students' needs and plans, teachers' training and areas of interest, and existing curriculum emphases. The technical writing instruction continuum might stretch from assigning a few specialized assignments, such as a proposal, in English classes and in some of the content courses as well, to devoting semester, or even year-long, courses exclusively to technical writing. The opportunities for enriched curriculum designs in this area are diverse and exciting.

But two recommendations are especially important. Technical writing instruction should be offered—even required—of *all* upper level high school students because job bound, vocational track, and honors students stand to benefit equally, though perhaps in different ways. And technical writing should not be taught merely as a survival skills course, with the limited status of practical techniques like map-reading. But rather, technical writing must be taught as a rigorous intellectual endeavor, a rhetorically diverse challenge, and a personally satisfying opportunity for creativity.

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Appendix A: Copy of questionnaire sent to English Department Chairs in Minnesota high schools

Survey to Discover the Status of Technical Writing Instruction at the High School Level in Minnesota

1. Which of the following elements of technical writing are taught in writing classes at your school? Check all that apply and circle the grade level(s) at which each is taught.

_____(1) Audience adaptation	9	10	11	12
_____(2) Collaborative (team) writing	9	10	11	12
_____(3) Case studies tailored to organizational settings	9	10	11	12
_____(4) Business letters	9	10	11	12
_____(5) Memoranda	9	10	11	12
_____(6) Proposals	9	10	11	12
_____(7) Progress reports	9	10	11	12
_____(8) Meeting reports (or minutes)	9	10	11	12
_____(9) Evaluation reports	9	10	11	12
_____(10) Budget reports	9	10	11	12
_____(11) Other non-literary reports	9	10	11	12
_____(12) Mechanism descriptions	9	10	11	12
_____(13) Procedures or instructions	9	10	11	12
_____(14) Technical bulletins	9	10	11	12
_____(15) Equipment justifications	9	10	11	12
_____(16) Oral presentations of technical and scientific information	9	10	11	12
_____(17) How to use graphics and other visuals	9	10	11	12
_____(18) Instruction in document design (page layout)	9	10	11	12
_____(19) Other (specify):_____	9	10	11	12

2. Approximately what percentage of time is spent on the following types of writing instruction in the writing curriculum at your school? Total of all percentages should be 100%.

_____% (1) Self-expression (journals, diaries, manifestos, declarations)
_____% (2) Creative writing (stories, plays, poems, songs)
_____% (3) Persuasion (advertising, speeches, editorials)
_____% (4) Exposition (lab reports, feasibility studies, diagnoses, research papers, news articles, analysis of literature, proposed problem solutions)
_____% (5) Other (specify)_____

3. What are the titles of the writing courses you teach? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What types of writing do you assign (e.g. narrative, analyses of literature, reports on content material, etc.? _____
_____
_____

5. Does your secondary school offer courses with the following titles? (Check all that apply.)

(1) Technical Writing ___
Brief summary of topics covered _____
_____
_____

Length of course (i. e. quarter, semester, year, etc.) _____
Number of years this course has been offered _____

(2) Business Writing ___
Brief summary of topics covered _____
_____
_____

Length of course (i. e. quarter, semester, year, etc.) _____
Number of years this course has been offered ___

(3) Other (of the same type as listed above) ___
Exact course title at your school _____
Length of course _____
Number of years course has been offered ___

6. Complete this question only if you checked one or more of the categories in question 5 above. To your knowledge have the faculty who teach the specialized courses listed in the previous question taken coursework in the teaching of technical and/or business writing? (Check all that apply)

_____(1) Have taken technical writing coursework
_____(2) Have taken business writing coursework
_____(3) Other (please specify type of coursework) _____

7. If either technical writing or business writing is offered at your school, what is the teacher's area of specialty?

_____(1) Neither course is offered
_____(2) English
_____(3) Language Arts

_____(4) Speech
_____(5) Business
_____(6) Other
(specify): _____

8. Do you (or does your department) define technical writing and business writing differently?
(1) Yes ___ Please explain the difference between the two as you see it _____
_____

(2) No, there is no significant difference ___

9. Are technical writing courses required of any students?
_____(1) yes _____(2) no

If you answered "Yes"above, which students take the technical writing courses?
_____(1) College preparation track
_____(2) Vocational track (e.g. industrial or mechanical arts)
_____(3) General
_____(4) Other (specify) _____

10. Are business writing courses required of any students ?
_____(1) Yes _____(2) No

If you answered "Yes"above, which students take the business writing courses?
_____(1) College preparation track
_____(2) Vocational track (e.g. secretarial or business school)
_____(3) General
_____(4) Other (specify) _____

11. Are there plans to increase the current amount of technical writing instruction at your school in the near future?
____(1) Yes _____(2) No

12. Do you believe instruction in technical writing should be increased (or introduced if not currently included) in your school?
_____(1) Yes _____(2) No _____(3) Uncertain

13. If you answered yes to the previous question, select the one you consider to be the most feasible way of increasing technical writing instruction at your school.

_____(1) Add a course in technical writing
_____(2) Incorporate elements of technical writing to a greater degree in current writing courses
_____(3) Other (specify) _____

14. Do faculty at your school do corporate or community training and consulting in the area of technical and/or business writing ?

    _____(1) Yes _____(2) No

15. Are your students aware of technical writing as a career field which requires an undergraduate degree in Technical Communication or Technical Writing ?

    _____(1) Yes _____(2) No

16. Would you be interested in receiving information regarding Mankato State University's graduate coursework in the teaching of technical writing and editing ?

    _____(1) Yes. Please provide name and address

    _____

    _____(2) No

    _____

    _____

17. How many students are enrolled in the school where you teach ? (Provide number) ____

18. What grade levels are included in your secondary school ? (Check one) _____(1) grades 9-12 _____(2) grades 10-12 _____(3) other please specify _____

19. In what town or city is your school located ?_____

20. How many English teachers in your school ?_____

21. What is the average number of years of experience teaching English of your faculty ?_____

If you would like a copy of the findings of this survey, please provide your name and address:_____

_____

_____

The Professional Reader Program: A Prescription for Beleaguered English Teachers

by

James Holden

Is your briefcase stacked with papers every Friday afternoon? Has your spouse stopped asking if you want to see a movie on the weekend? Do you have early symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome? Has coffee become a staple in your "diet"? If you are a conscientious English teacher, you probably answered "Yes" to all of these questions. And "Yes," you have petitioned your principal and the school board for relief, invoking the Utopian ideal promoted by the NCTE in its 1961 publication titled *The National Interest and the Teaching of English:* "...four classes of 25 students each is the teaching load necessary for effective learning" (Allen, et.al. 89). In addition, you have used peer editing, holistic scoring, and every creative suggestion described in *English Journal* articles in an effort to reduce you paper load.

Alas, while some of these evaluation schemes brought mild relief, none significantly eased your pain. And though you agree with James Biehl that excellence "...is slipping from our grasp as the demoralizing press of an impossible work load crushes our spirits" (27), you shrug your shoulders and carry on. Given the state of the economy and the reality of district-wide budget cuts, you realize that four classes and 100 students may be nothing more than an idealist's dream. But wait a minute, even though your district may not have money to hire additional English teachers to reduce class sizes—and your paper load, there may still be other options to consider. One such option, which I have called the *Professional Reader Program* (PRP), was implemented at Northfield High School during the 1990-91 school year with local grant money. In the remainder of this article I intend to acquaint readers with the program by focusing on the following topics: (1) how the program began, (2) an outline of the grant proposal, (3) a description of the assignments evaluated by the Professional Reader—or PR, (4) a few tentative conclusions, and (5) some recommendations.

How The Program Began

Many schools have budgeted funds to hire lay readers to assist beleaguered secondary English teachers—a solution that has produced mixed results and one I did not seriously consider for this proposal. Instead, I looked at the possibility of "hiring" a professional (in this case a retired English teacher) with local education grant money. A number of school districts all over the United States have made such grants available for teachers to use on classroom and schoolwide projects. These "local education funds" (LEFs) are sometimes raised by donations from businesses or private citizens. Gerri Kay, the executive director of an organization which

coordinates the efforts of LEFs nationwide, says, in an article called "Money for the Asking," "the local education funds focus on elements that go into successful schools, making the environment conductive to learning and improving working conditions for teachers" (Schulz 34). I am not familiar with LEFs in Minnesota, though there are districts such as Edina and South St.Paul which have established foundation funds. You may need to lobby your school board to budget some money for LEF projects.

In the district in which I taught (Northfield #659) the School Board set aside $6,000 from district-wide contingency funds for mini-grants that teachers could use to improve instruction in their classes. Since I had complained about my paper load for 29 years, I saw this mini-grant as a rare opportunity to "unload" part of that burden. So I applied for and received a $500 grant to pilot the PRP. I chose not to call it a Lay Reader Program, for I wanted it to involved more than a community volunteer reading students' papers, correcting mechanical errors, and making a general comment or two. During the first semester of the 1988-89 school year, when I taught 84 College Prep Writing students in three classes, I sought assistance for my hefty paper load by experimenting with a volunteer lay reader program. And though I valued the help provided by my five benefactors, I found that there were a number of problems with this volunteer system. Because the lay readers did not observe my classes, it took me a great deal of time (on the phone or at the reader's home) to explain the assignments to them. In addition, while two of them had been English teachers, the other three had no background in evaluating writing and needed a good deal of training. Another problem was that of logistics—it became difficult to coordinate the efforts of so many people. And because there were five different readers with varying agendas and approaches to correcting papers, there were mixed results; some of the readers did an excellent job of helping the students while others didn't have anything to say or were perceived by the students as being too critical of their writing.

Therefore, in order to minimize some of these problems, I decided to work with only one reader on this project, a recently-retired English teacher. Such a person (Gene Fox, the former English department chair at Northfield High School and an outstanding teacher of writing) was available, and he agreed to work with me. Because of his expertise and years of successful teaching experience, I believed that the relationship we would establish should not be the one most common in lay reader programs; i.e., boss (the classroom teacher) to worker (the lay reader). Instead, this proposal was designed to foster a collegial relationship between the English teacher and the PR. Too often when public school teachers clean out their desks for the last time, the have few opportunities for service to their school, unless they choose to substitute teach. This proposal provides such an opportunity for retired English teachers—in a diminished role which the retirees may relish. When long-time college or university professors retire, they are granted emeritus status, allowed to maintain an office on campus, and given an opportunity to teach a class or two. The PRP would allow the retired English teacher to ease out of retirement and still be involved in some aspects of teaching. In

short, a program such as this is an investment in people who still have creativity, energy, and expertise to share with young people.

An Outline of the Grant Proposal

My $500 mini-grant request was for the purpose of hiring one PR to assist in planning assignments and evaluating papers for two American literature classes and one College Prep Writing class in the spring of 1991. Given the best of all possible worlds, I had hoped for assistance with the two College Prep Writing classes I taught in the fall, but because of the inevitable bureaucratic delays, we were not able to implement the program until the spring semester. I requested that one day be allocated for the PR and me to brainstorm and write the grant proposal, and we agreed that the district's curriculum writing salary would be used to pay for this "writing time" ($71 per day x 2 people=$142). The remainder of the $500 would be paid to the retired teacher at the rate of $11 an hour. I submitted the proposal to the high school principal for approval, and implementation took place between February 28 and May 9, 1991.

During the brainstorming and writing session, the following goals were established for the PR:

1. Provide time to conference with the classroom teacher before the assignments are given. Observe in the classroom in order to get to know the students and to understand more clearly the nature of each writing task. Arrange time to conference with students if possible. Note: it was our intention that the PR should not just take papers home and read them; rather, he/she must be involved in all phases of the writing project whenever possible.
2. Establish evaluative criteria for each set of papers, making sure that students are aware of them as well.
3. Teach a writing lesson if called on to do so by the a classroom teacher.
4. Read selected sets of papers, evaluating them according to the guildlines established by the classroom teacher and the PR.
5. Record hours worked—include time spent on planning, conferencing with the students and the classroom teacher, reading papers, and correcting them.
6. Assume additional responsibilities as the program develops.

After establishing these six goals, we generated a list of possible tasks that the PR might perform to accomplish the goals. You will observe in the next section of the article that we made a number of additions and changes as we implemented the project.

1. Observe the lesson(s) in which the classroom teacher presents the written assignment(s).
2. Establish evaluative criteria for each set of papers read, perhaps using a half-sheet or tab to attach to the papers.
3. Task analyze an assignment (after reading a random sample of author research papers from the American literature classes) and assist the classroom teacher in redesigning the assignment.

4. Select some of the best author research papers to be used as models the next time the assignment is given.
5. Create a new assignment for the College Prep Writing class, teach it, and correct the papers.
6. Read a set of essay exam papers composed by the College Prep Writing students.
7. Correct additional sets of papers, providing written feedback to students and general observations to the classroom teacher regarding the problems and strengths of the papers.
8. Offer only proofreading service on some sets of papers, thus allowing the classroom teacher to focus his/her evaluative comments on the content of the papers.
9. Create a model for evaluating papers that can be used by future PRs or any classroom teacher.
10. Determine the amount of time needed to complete the reading of each set of papers.

Description of the Assignments

To illustrate the diversity and scope of the Professional Reader Program, I include here a description of the assignments evaluated by the PR. First, the PR evaluated 15 randomly selected author research reports assigned to my two American literature classes. Students were required to select a favorite American author and to write a report which included the following sections: (1) a biographical sketch, (2) a summary of one novel, four short stories, or six poems written by the author, (3) a summary of critical essays about the author's work, (4) a discussion of autobiographical aspects in the author's work, and (5) a conclusion. For this assignment the PR was instructed to make brief comments about the strengths and weaknesses of each paper—paying less attention to mechanics—and to provide a critique of the assignment, concentrating particularly on common problems observed.

The second assignment was a poetry analysis paper written in the College Prep Writing class. Students selected a favorite poem, summarized it in their own words, and wrote an interpretation of the poem (focusing mainly on the meaning but also paying attention to the poet's tone of voice and use of figurative language such as metaphor and symbol). In order to assist the PR in his reading of the papers, students attached a copy of the poem with the final draft of their paper. The PR read for both mechanics and content, provided letter grades for each paper, and again furnished me with some general observations about the assignment. Since it may be instructive for readers, I have included some of these observations below:

-Most show that they understand what it means to be personally involved and to let their voices be apparent.

-Most dealt with the poems at their own levels and gave an honest account of themselves.

-Nearly all appear to be capable of using direct quotes and blending them into their own sentences.

-Common mistakes—the "usual" punctuation errors were related to mistaking a semi-colon for a colon. A drill on that might not be amiss. Also, a few need to know that commas and periods go inside quote marks. Do they know how to use block quotes?

-Many papers lacked titles. College instructors will insist.

-Most insist that the "author" is the speaker or persona of the poem. It might be useful to repeat that the poem has a voice, and it is not necessarily that of the poet.

-I would like to emphasize the importance of taking a risk as one writes. And that is true whether one is interpreting a poem or writing a letter to the editor. Go for it!

Next, the PR corrected a set of American literature papers in which the students, after reading *In Our Time* and excerpts from Hemingway's novels, were expected to comment about his writing style, a common theme in his works, or the portrayal of his male or female characters. This time the PR established specific evaluative criteria and assigned points to each paper. Note below the sample evaluative criteria used for this paper. Students were given copies of this half sheet and asked to staple it to the final copy of their paper when they turned it in.

Hemingway Paper—Evaluative Criteria

1. Opening is properly developed with a thesis statement clearly stated 1 2 3 4

2. The essay is well-organized around the chosen topic with an attempt to interest the reader 1 2 3 4 5

3. The writer has used specific references from the story/stories, given proper credit as needed, and supported his/her assertions sensibly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

4. Writer's VOICE is present to give a good "personal connection" 1 2 3 4 5

TOTAL POINTS (25 POSSIBLE) _____

COMMENTS:

In the next assignment I requested that the PR proofread papers "written for publication" as part of an essay contest (the topic was *family life*) sponsored by WCAL radio station in Northfield. When the papers were returned to the students, they were asked to rewrite their essays before sending them in to WCAL. To complete the work on this mini-grant project, the PR evaluated two other assignments: an analysis of a poem written by an African-American author (in the American literature classes) *and* a research paper written by my College Prep Writing students. The PR evaluated the poem papers for content, organization, and mechanics and assigned letter grades. And since we were on a tight time schedule in the College Prep Writing class, he simply proofread the research papers for surface errors and inserted marginal comments where necessary. When all the ink had dried on the pages, the PR had worked about 30 hours and provided some much needed help for this beleaguered English teacher.

Tentative Conclusions

Aside from the obvious lift such professional help can give to the classroom teacher—I'm not sure how much time the PR's efforts saved me, but it was considerable—there are a number of other potential benefits one can derive from a program such as this:

1. It can "resurrect" the careers of recently-retired English teachers, giving them another opportunity (albeit on a much smaller scale) to employ their skills in serving young people. And of course the PR is spared the tasks associated with teaching five classes a day.

2. It can be a spirit booster for the PR. On at least two occasions the PR wrote, after correcting a set of papers, "I enjoyed the exercise and do look forward to my next assignment."

3. Students receive valuable feedback from another professional, someone who may be able to provide a different perspective or give fresh advice about their writing. Students do receive peer feedback in my classes, but most of the time I have been their primary evaluator; so this new voice is welcome as a restoring rain after a long dry spell. The PR gives students another audience to write for.

4. If the PR has observed the initial classroom instruction for the writing assignments, he or she can share observations about the lesson with the English teacher. Given the right conditions and the right chemistry, this situation could develop into a collegial relationship as well, with the retired teacher (the PR) serving as an advisor or perhaps even as a "teaching of writing" mentor for the classroom teacher. Such an arrangement might especially benefit a first or second-year teacher.

5. The PR can give the classroom teacher constructive advice regarding the written directions for particular assignments and cite obvious problems students experienced in their writing.

6. The PR can assist the teacher in creating evaluative criteria for specific assignments.

Some Recommendations

Although I was not able to provide the PR with an opportunity to teach a writing lesson or to create a new assignment for the College Prep Writing class, this program was a great benefit to all parties involved (the students, the PR, and the classroom teacher). I encourage overburdened teachers of writing at any grade level to tap into this valuable local resource—the retired English teacher. If you are considering a program such as this, you may want to take note of these final recommendations derived from our experience at Northfield.

1. If your district does not have LEF's or grant money available, set aside some department funds—meager as they may be—to initiate a PRP. Once you get it started, your principal may be persuaded to budget funds for it on a regular basis.

2. Apply for the grant in the spring so you can use summer writing time to complete the proposal and gear up for the fall semester.

3. Share the wealth. While it works well if the teacher and one PR work together as a team, this does not mean that other teachers should not be so favored. Encourage your colleagues in other departments (particularly those who require their students to write a great deal) to apply for grants as well and/or to work with you in planning and implementing the program. You might be able to secure more money if your grant proposal is interdisciplinary in nature.

4. Only as a last resort should you implore retired English teachers to "volunteer" their services for a program like this. Paying people for an important job gives it status, and it will of course make the PR grateful.

5. Make sure the PR understands the nature of and the guidelines for each writing assignment; this may mean having him/her observe your initial classroom explanations of the assignment, but it certainly means giving the PR copies of the assignment and any books or readings used as background for the paper. The best scenario is to have the PR observe your class and then sit down and discuss the assignment with you.

6. There should be an agreement between the classroom teacher and the PR that all critical comments will be of a constructive nature designed to encourage and compliment the student writer.

7. If the partnership consists of an inexperienced classroom teacher and the PR, the PR may want to teach some of the first semester writing assignments in order to provide teaching models for the inexperienced teacher.

8. When time permits, ask the PR to be present when papers are returned so students can get proper explanations and so the PR can set up conferences as necessary.

9. Make sure your principal knows what's going on. Keep him/her informed.

10. Write an article for the school or district newsletter, informing parents about your program.

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GETTING TEXTS TO TALK TO EACH OTHER: THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT IN A WORLD LITERATURE COURSE

by

William Dyer

For the past few years, MCTE has afforded me the opportunity to report my progress in revamping my three course World Literature sequence at Mankato State University. Largely as a result of an NEH Summer Institute in 1987, I actually brought the "world" into these previously Western "Great Books" classes. As a result, I've burned my Norton, scrapping the anthology, particularly in the first course in the sequence, for *complete* texts.

In the case of English 4/521: World Literature from Ancient through Medieval, the initial course in the sequence, the most drastic changes have occurred, with the most pleasing results. For three years now, I've operated 4/521 as a course in the development of the epic. My central premise is that epic carries culture; encoded within a national or racial epic is that culture's mythology and beliefs, and to begin to know who and what a culture is requires a careful reading of its epic literature. While some of the texts for this course are predictable (i.e., Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Inferno)*, the others are not: *The Gilgamesh, The Ramayana, The Bhagavad-Gita, The Sundiata,* selections from Native American oral literature. And, in order to approach these texts respectfully, we must re-learn how to *read*, contextually, by juxtaposing against the primary epic texts other texts that will enable the identity of that epic's culture to emerge. By means of a series of oral presentations by which participating students stage that process of intertextuality and annotated bibliographies that broaden students' awareness of the *what*, the *why*, and the *how* of a given epic, the course effects an initial encounter between self and other.

However, the course, as I have defined it, is meant to be more than this. Due to the impetus of new teacher licensure requirements a few years ago that mandated all prospective teachers to log at least three credits in a "multicultural" literature course, the enrollments in my 4/521 course have swelled to thirty, with a majority of these students pursuing teaching degrees. This audience shift has caused me to place an even greater emphasis on practical pedagogical questions: what pieces of World Literature would work in a junior or senior level high school class? what criteria would determine the selection of such pieces? how much time will be needed to mount these pieces for such an audience? and what *about* that audience who are they, what are they carrying with them into the classroom, how can

a teacher draw upon students' experience to draw them into the texts in question, and what do students *need* to know to begin to read and respond to these texts?

But something has been missing in English 4/521. Consistently, while my *heart* has told me to extend a greater share of the teaching task to my students — to deemphasize my role as "cruise director" of *truth* in the classroom–my *mind* has been reluctant to surrender the power and privilege of that directorial function. As I am doing here, I have insisted on talking too much. I had to learn to model the kind of interactive teaching I wanted them to practice and then get out of the way so that they could perform it.

What I would like to share here is a means for teaching and "complicating" a traditional World Literature course that actively engages students in the teaching process. I have designed a collaborative group project that invites students to participate in the process of teaching themselves and, ultimately, the rest of the class how to *know* a literary text by discovering and opening up a matrix of other texts (maps, histories, folk tales, the arts, religious, anthropological, and philosophical tracts, films, creative classroom activities and assignments, interviews of natives of the culture under discussion) that help us *see* that literary text more respectfully and accurately.

I plan first to discuss the intertextual and collaborative learning theory that underpins this group assignment. Then I will describe the machinery of the assignment, indicating how the groups are configured and evaluated as they address the problem of how to *teach* a specific culturally significant text to a *specific student audience* that each group must select and carefully define. After I have unfolded the stages of the collaborative assignment and my role as facilitator and resource for each group, I will share some of the results of the collaborative process from my Fall 1990, 4/521 course. I will conclude with some observations on the utility and success of the group project, particularly as it helps to enact an inductive process of self-teaching.

I

Although I have been slow in committing to something as ambitious as a fullscale collaborative project in my classes, I have been enacting a collaborative learning model with several of my peers at Mankato State University since 1987. As a member of the Valley Writing Project, I have helped to prepare a series of weeklong workshops to encourage writing across the curriculum. Part of our job was clearly salesmanshipto promote the value of writing in *all* disciplines. But, more importantly, we designed workshops that would stage a variety of writing options for our workshop participants to actually *do* so that they could relate the process and product of these assignments to their own courses, students, and goals. That meant dividing the labor among us; we formed subgroups to organize presentation units on the writing process, journals, essay exams, case studies, summaries, critiques, and collaborative writing assignments. But, even before designing

the *content* of the workshop, we had to agree on the types of writing and responding to represent, how to sequence these activities, how to encourage our audience to respond to and evaluate those writing tasks, and how much time to allot to each segment. From start to finish, in the finest tradition of collaborative learning, our VWP staff located a goal; identified and recruited an incredibly diverse audience; chose the coordinators of our efforts; divided our labors; determined a means for actually composing separate portions of our workshop "script"; negotiated and reached consensus about our goals, instructional methods and strategies; synthesized the many small parts of the workshop into a coherent and intentional and Socratic whole; and then, with both fear and joy, presented our workshop to our audience. By the end of each workshop, we sought to reach a higher level of critical awareness with our audience—i.e., since writing is another form of thinking, *all* teachers teach writing and share responsibility for fostering it.

As I prepared to import my VWP workshop collaborative model into 4/521, I needed to know how those groups would be configured and what I wanted from them. My questions about group management have been anticipated by Harvey S. Wiener in a 1986 article in *College English* entitled "Collaborative Learning in the Classroom: A Guide to Evaluation." Wiener notes that "the success of the collaborative model depends primarily upon the quality of the initial task students must perform in groups" (54). Not only must there be a meaningful and substantial task for groups to work toward, but, as John Trimbur notes in a letter to Wiener, groups must proceed with a sense of "intellectual negotiation that underwrites the consensus," liberating them from the prospect of reading the instructor's mind for the "right answer" and "agree[ing] to disagree to recognize and tolerate differences and at best to see the value systems, set of beliefs, etc. that underlie these differences" (93). Besides indicating that each group should elect a leader or "chair" to direct and record their movement through the project, Wiener suggests a way to ensure quality control over each project: a culminating public "performance," "a formal presentation to the class, participation in a debate with recorders from other groups, or some other responsible social activity that may be subjected to group judgment" (56). Further, responsibility for presenting their findings receives direction not only from a few specific questions from the instructor that shapes the task, but also from the development of a clear statement of purpose that will "lead to an answer or solution that can represent as nearly as possible the collective judgment and labor of the group as a whole (Bruffee, *Short Course* 45). This intentional map, says Wiener, "gives the class an opportunity to buy into the collaborative process as shapers of their own learning" (56).

II

In Fall of 1990, I incorporated the collaborative project into 4/521 with intentionality. As I explained the task on my syllabus, the project was to be the central activity of the course. Although I was employing a form of contract grading including several performance options, the collaborative project was not a negotiable item everyone had to participate in it. It was to

be done in cooperation with four other members of the class, with each group responsible for (1) selecting a national or cultural epic to work on; (2) developing an interdisciplinary way of presenting (teaching) that epic; (3) determining a specific audience to package it for; (4) dividing the task of "teaching" that epic; (5) submitting a group proposal to me no later than four weeks into the course; and (6) composing the project in collaborative form for presentation on the last class meeting during Finals Week.

As I previewed the task on the first day of class, I encouraged members of each group to be creative and eclectic. Either through their own expertise or my help, they could mount slides, script and film video, integrate interview subjects, use segments of music, art, and dramatic presentation and roleplay, etc. However, all of their materials had to be directed to the "teaching" task. That meant that they could invent games, group activities, brief in and out-of-class writing prompts, and tests to help their audience contact the cultural "other" in the epic they were responsible for.

The selection of an epic text was left to the members of each group. They were free to choose from the epics included on our syllabus, or from the list of possibilities beyond the syllabus that I circulated on that first day. I stipulated that each group would have a MAXIMUM of thirty-five minutes to present their materials. Before the Fall Quarter began, I reserved a room in the Student Union for a block of time coinciding with my course's final exam period, and I arranged for the appropriate lecterns, tables, VCR's and monitors, slide machines and screens, and record players.

Although my plan for the project was well-articulated, my method for aligning students into groups was casual at best and slipshod at worst. I remain unsure of how to manage this portion of the process, and I am not convinced that the success of the project pivots upon it. Basically, group selection occurred over the first two weeks. On the first day, I introduced the epic possibilities and asked each class member to draw up a brief prioritized list of epics that attracted them. On the next class day, I asked students to call out their choices while I wrote them on the board. Although I could have gotten into serious trouble here–imagine the soggy-bog of fifteen separate epic preferences — only seven or eight were mentioned. Of these, it became an easy task to narrow the list to six and to recruit students into those groups. When I taught the course in Fall 1991, I used the same mechanism for selecting groups; however, I provided considerably more time (a week) for students to investigate the menu of epics and then to assemble their own lists.

My concerns to this point were these: to convene the groups, to enable the members to exchange greetings and phone numbers, to select a group leader responsible for coordinating future out-of-class meetings, and to arrange an initial out-of-class meeting to determine the audience they wished to adjust their subject to. The 4/500 course listing ensured me both a substantial undergraduate and graduate population, and, in all cases except one, groups chose a graduate student to direct them. Given the difficulty of the

task, I was both pleased and relieved that groups invested that responsibility in graduate students, and I was only disappointed once by such a choice. I gave each group a week to "stabilize." Students experiencing incompatibility either with the epic or members of the group they had originally chosen could move to another group. Fortunately, only one student sought a change; again, except for one instance (and for reasons I will explain later), group dynamics were positive from the start.

Once the groups were established and the task tentatively identified, the most important outcome of group interaction was scheduled to occur approximately four weeks into the course. After reading and discussing their respective epics, each group was required to formalize their commitment by submitting an "abstract." The abstract entailed a brief description somewhere between one hundred and two hundred words — of *what* they intended to do, *why* they intended to do it, *how* they hoped to do it, and *who* they planned to do it for. I expected the abstract to be rough, subject to adjustment. However, it represented a "promise" to themselves and a preview of coming attractions — of where they expected to be when it was completed.

The submission of the abstract assumed that a division of labor had occurred in each group. That is, in the *The Ramayana* group, a high school senior elective literature audience had been chosen, and some considerable thought had been invested into who they were, what they did and did not know, their attention span, the issues of peer pressure, family dynamics, faith, friendship, and sexuality they were experiencing, and the need to focus on some of these issues within the group's "teaching unit." This group also settled on the length of time their "teaching unit" would cover (three-weeks) and specific areas they wanted to represent. Once this abstracted statement of purpose had been committed to paper, each group member could really begin to gather information independently and flesh out his/her own role in the project. Concomitantly, the abstracts provided me and my graduate intern with a preliminary map for each task and a point at which to begin our discussions with each group in conference.

At approximately mid-quarter (a little over five weeks in), my intern and I began to schedule the first of two sets of group conferences. The first conference (about thirty-five minutes) enabled us to do three things: (1) check on the progress of each group to discover each member's contribution to the whole; (2) offer suggestions about how to "package" their information pedagogically; and (3) make absolutely certain that everyone understood how they were meant to present their material. I discovered that the last issue was the most important. Many had to be reminded that their job was not to present all of their material; it was not even to teach their whole unit the way they had intended to teach it—both approaches would have consumed huge amounts of time. Instead, with only about seven or so minutes available to each group member, they needed to focus efficiently upon three concerns: (1) when the rest of the class had not read what they were presenting, a clear outline of the epic; (2) an explanation of what they

would try to do over the course of their teaching unit and how they would do it, with handouts to provide specific snap-shots of how they would establish contact between audience and epic; and (3) an indication of some outcomes that might result from approaching the work their way. Thus, they would be *talking about* how they would teach the work, with examples that would demonstrate the implementation of their method.

The second set of conferences served as a rehearsal of the presentation of each group's entire project. During this phase (approximately forty-five minutes per conference), individual members fine-tuned their hand-outs, determined a logical and organic order of presentation, refined role-plays if applicable, dealt with the mechanics of phasing in slides and overlaying music—an overall polishing of presentation values. Because these presentations were occurring at the end of Finals Week, my intern and I established a schedule of group presentations that successfully overcame overlaps and conflicts.

All that remained were the presentations themselves, and the results were extremely satisfying and creative. I will not describe all of the presentations, but I will refer to a couple which really involved our class and enabled us to experience epic from a perspective we never would have developed in a formal lecture-discussion format.

One such presentation focused on *The Song of Roland.* The group was strengthened considerably by two extremely capable and energetic graduate students whose enthusiasm pushed the other members beyond their abilities. MiSoo Kang—a very shy Korean woman with very little confidence in her English language skills—introduced the entire presentation, provided some plot summary, and clarified the audience and teaching situation: a one-hour assembly at a large urban high school for all students of French at all levels of instruction, the purpose being to provide some important cultural insights in how the legend of Roland grew into epic proportions from an initial cover-up. MiSoo did a very creditable job, and it was just the kind of task that made her a fully-functioning member of the group and helped to develop her non-native language confidence. Chris Walchuk then followed with a marvelous oral re-telling of the military aspects of the Roland story, complete with inaccuracies, unfortunate strategies, breaches of loyalty, a rout of the French forces largely caused by their decision to intrude where they did not belong, and a coverup of huge proportions to hide the defeat. Chris' many years of experience as an Army officer made his rendition of these events even more compelling. Valarie Field then factored in some crucial information on contemporary relations between Catholics and the "Infidel," with a clarification of religious "self" versus "other" that would explain the transformation of massive incompetence into heroism of national epic scope. With a wonderful set of slides, Karin Bute used her art history background and her research in the development of protective military armor to show that medieval artistic versions of the Roland story include weaponry and equipment that could not have existed until at least three hundred years after the fact—probably the result of a "creative" oral

tradition that caused the poem to deviate substantially from actual events. Finally, Martine Breillac, a native French-speaker and M.A. candidate, provided a flavor of the Old French by reading and translating a section of *The Song of Roland*, a task that required many hours and substantial research.

A second group presentation that was as successful but even more creative involved the story of *Job.* Although this group contained only four members, they expended tremendous energy in developing a novel teaching approach. Their target audience was an elementary school-age Sunday school group, squirrelly and inattentive by nature, who need to be reached quickly and visually in a once-a-week thirty-five minute segment. Thus, our class would be treated to their entire pedagogical treatment of *Job.* It was Ron Gardner's concept to write a shortened, contemporary, and colloquial version of *Job*, down-playing some of the terrible tragedies and plagues that Job experiences to focus upon the small tragedies that make the world difficult to understand for a fourth to sixthgrader. Then Craig Hanson, an M.A.—Creative Writing candidate, wrote an initial script, Russ Groebner and Scott Stankey helped him soften and revise it for a better sense of audience, and they all agreed to assemble their production into the format of a puppet show. Ron, Russ, and Scott constructed the puppets, stage, and set; they taped some effectively unearthly background music at the Fairmont radio station at which Ron works, Russ provided an explanatory frame for the performance and served as narrator, and Ron, Craig, and Scott operated and provided the voices for the puppets.

The results were sensational. After a smooth and entertaining performance, consistent with their purpose of using the puppet show as a platform for discussing with children the problem of maintaining faith without doubt in an "unfair" world, they spent fifteen minutes posing those questions to us. As a result, the entire class became productively enmeshed in the teaching problem: *was* the message of a revised *Job* too "heavy" for the intended audience? *would* they run screaming from the church, never to be seen again? *were* there ways to modify the production to achieve the purpose? *Everyone* had a reaction to this presentation, and an instructor cannot ask for more than that.

Before I conclude, I want to avoid sounding like a used car salesman. The experience left some logistical problems that needed to be attended to if the experience was to operate more smoothly in the Fall of 1991. I had to figure more carefully how to steal time from the established syllabus in order to stage the *presentations* of the collaborative projects at the end of the course. In the 1990 experience, I risked full-scale mutiny by scheduling an extra two and one-half hour period during Finals Week (a period that mushroomed to four hours) for the presentations. This nifty piece of bad planning (I should have cut something from the syllabus) could have poisoned the attitudes of class members and absolutely chilled class participation. This did not happen, due to the ingenuity of the groups' presentation skills.

This time glitch, however, reminded me that my monomania for sheer *coverage* of material needed to be reassessed. What is at stake here is *who's doing the teaching* and whether the object of the course is to equip them with some tools with which to teach *themselves* how to read. I sense that things work best when students actively contribute to the learning and "reading" process, and that is particularly appropriate in a class in which future teachers are required to enroll. Of course, placing the emphasis on collaborative learning invites the very real prospect of giving one's class away to one's students. And, such de-centralization could send an instructor possessing a strong personality and a compulsion for organization into an identity-crisis.

When my intern and I met after the quarter to discuss the results of what we had done, my first reaction was that I had not "said" or "done" enough to warrant calling it "my" class. I told him how frequently I felt myself part of the audience rather than the director of it. But my intern provided a different perspective, and I am grateful he was there to do so. He noted that students were frequently talking to each other; they were meeting outside of class, willingly. They were also learning something new that was not included in the syllabus, and, in the process, they were clearly taking and dividing responsibility among them. By extension, he said they were engaging themselves in the kind of problem-solving activity that occurs normally in the work place, and that they were modelling the kind of collaborative division of labor that is the rule rather than the exception. I understand more clearly now that a function of the proper application of collaborative learning is to make *me* disappear.

And, finally, there continues to be the problem of evaluation of the collaborative project. What does one *do* here? How does one settle the issue of rewards and punishments? I tend to get hung up on matters of "performance," "quality control," "pride in workmanship." Besides, how could I *possibly* give everyone an "A" (that would make an obscene levelling of Q-U-A-L-I-T-Y, and what would Q7 say?).

However, I found in practice that the pressure for the control of quality in each group is *very* high, particularly if they know that the group's total performance will hinge on the weakest link on the team. They were also motivated positively by the spectre and imminence of the oral presentation of their work, and that kind of pressure can be sobering. The one group that *did* have problems synthesizing and presenting their material coherently had some very unfortunate problems with a graduate student who chose an interesting but difficult work (the Irish epic *The Cattle Raid of Culaigne*) for the group but, because of a variety of reasons, was gone for half the quarter. But, due to the group's resourcefulness in accessing materials at the University of Minnesota, the presentation was *still* interesting and valuable.

In short, the collaborative project was considerably more effective than traditional methods in staging the crucial activity of "reading" texts in my 4/521 class. This teaching strategy succeeded because it features the

audience problem, locates the text in relation to audience, and invites groups of students to identify and invent *other* texts that will enable that audience to read the primary text. And that, I believe, is the key to good pedagogy.

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Classroom Excercise: Hispanic/Latino/Chicano Literature

by

Pat Carlson

An overview and introduction to Hispanic-American Literary Periods

"The different periods of Mexican American literature primarily correspond to changes in the political order of the Southwest and California. The literature before 1821 (the date of Mexico's independence from Spain) is called "Spanish" because of its strong ties to Hispanic culture. The literature between 1821 and 1848 falls in the "Mexican Period" because during this time the northern territories were politically a part of Mexico. The treaty of Gudalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, ceded much of northern Mexico to the United States, and the many Mexican citizens who lived in that region and who chose to remain there became American citizens. Therefore, the term "Mexican American" both accurately and appropriately identifies the literature dating from 1848 until the 1960s. The "Contemporary Period" begins in the 1960s and coincides not with a change in the national affiliation of the Southwest and California but with a rising tide of cultural and political consciousness expressed through acceptance of the word 'Chicano.'" (Tatum)

From the sixteenth century up through the present, the oral tradition genre has had a strong presence in the Hispanic culture. Folk tales, poetry, songs have passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, histories, historical narratives, chronicles, diaries, poetry, and plays were written by Spanish explorers. During the Mexican American Period, Spanish-language newspapers circulated along the United States-Mexico border from Brownsville, Texas to San Diego, California contained examples of short fiction, novels, poetry and plays by popular and by anonymous local authors; after the 1930s, more works were produced in English. Also, traveling theaters toured the Southwest performing Spanish and Latin American works, resident theaters in larger cities performed plays for a Spanish-speaking audience, and local amateur groups performed traditional folk and religious plays that had origins in the Spanish Period. The literature of the contemporary period, written after 1965, reflects a break with the works that preceded them. The chief source of this break lay in the Chicano movement's rejection of the efforts toward assimilation made by the Mexican Americans after World War II through the early 1960s. (Tatum)

Mexican Americans are bilingual peoples and often the literature, while primarily written in English, is sprinkled with many Spanish words and phrases. Often a poem or short fiction piece will be presented in both English and Spanish, usually on facing pages. A collection of pieces of literature may also present individual pieces written in English and individual pieces written in Spanish.

Adapted from Charles Tatum ed. *Mexican American Literature* HBJ, 1982)

Literature studies using *Braided Lives*

Introduction and Background to Hispanic/Latino/Chicano Literature

—A brief history of American Hispanic literature is necessary to explain the close relationship of Mexican literature and Mexican American literature
—A part of the unit should focus on the bilingual factors in Hispanic (Latino/Chicano) literature
—The essays incorporated in this unit are intended to foster an understanding and appreciation of the Hispanic-American perspective; one that will be exotic to most of the students in Minnesota high school English classes
—Selections of myth are an important introduction to the literary traditions of a culture (and can helpful in analyzing the effects of stereotyping); independent reading suggested
—Note that Hispanic is a broad cultural term for peoples who have origins in Mexico and Puerto Rico, Latin America. The terms Mexican American and Chicano, Chicana, Latino, Latina are preferred terms to denote those American peoples with common cultural origins of Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and California).

The following are suggestions for getting discussions and journals started

The journal should be kept in a tabbed section of a 3 ring loose-leaf note book. The journal entries should include:

*Personal response (how the piece connects with me),
*Descriptive or Literal meaning response to literature,
*Interpretive Response (meanings 'beneath the surface'),
*Evaluative Response (how the work 'stacks up' with others in the same genre),
*Creative Response (how the work stimulates me to write, draw, sing, speak, dance)

In other tabbed sections, file class Handouts, reproduced essays and poetry selections, and materials assimilated in other sections of *Braided Lives*.

1. Discuss issues central to this section of *Braided Lives*. Students and teacher will elicit what their prior knowledge of these issues are. Students and instructors can also orally review the use the '1650' map to enhance discussion; an overhead transparency made from the 1650 map could be helpful. Each student will 'have the map for the Class Notebook. (Note that this study could be associated with the units on native American Literature)
Comment in Journal

2. Discuss the factors of bilingual literature and bilingual writers, including the difficulties non-Spanish-speaking readers may have. Use the poem and the 'Guide to Spanish Pronunciation' assigned in this section in the discussion. Students who are literate in Spanish or with experience in Spanish language classes can help. If numbers permit, knowledgeable students teamed with those who lack experience will help with the language elements. Discover other possible solutions with the class if language-knowledgeable students are not in the class. The language issues of bilingualism will be apparent here.
Comment in Journal

3. Read the essays by Gloria Anzaldua and Juanita Garciagodoy.

After the essays have been read, discuss them. Ask a class member to comment to the group at large how these essays can help in understanding, analyzing, and interpreting the literature. Groups could also discuss and consider how the essays help explain the "otherness" inherent in being Hispanic and American. Race and class struggle as well as gender differentiation can be discussed also.
Comment in Journal.

4. Investigate the importance of the example myths as a way to understanding cultures different from one's own. Discuss what myths are, what functions they play in our lives, what traditions in a culture myths represent. Volunteer oral reading of some Hispanic example myths. Discuss the way women are portrayed in myths (Good? Evil? Powerful? Passive?). Discuss how society continues these images in the media: movies, tv, soap operas, magazines, and how this becomes a stereotype. Compare the portrayal of women and men in the myths just read. Discuss the positive and negative implications of Power and Limitations; discuss how and why women may want to revise a myth to include females as powerful and active instead of as passive figures. Later, make references and comparisons to the traditions established in these myths.
Comment in Journal. Add some examples of the media portrayal of women: ads, etc. Look especially for Hispanic women.

5. Compose a short opinion paper based on discussions and journal comments. Each student will develop a unique thesis based on new and awakening awareness of Mexican American culture and the role of the Chicana (female Mexican American) as revealed thus far. As students process the writing assignment, the instructor will skim the journals for a holistic grade. The class will set a reasonable due date for the short paper (2-3 pages).

6. To connect the study of this section the instructor could read aloud to the student some poems from *Braided Lives* or other such as "Don't Give in Chicanita"-Gloria Anzaldua. Check the "Further Readings" section of *Braided Lives* for suggestions.

Students comment as they wish in journals after the reading.
Reminder:

A good grade scheme for group work and discussion is collaborative group discussion technique: appoint a recorder, a timer, a leader, a reporter.

For Oral work or group work, a grade of 1/3 teacher, 1/3 students, 1/3 individual self is workable

Contextual Approach Create a project that will enhance our study of this literature.

[Choose and, some, or even all]

1. In small groups of 4 or 5: Create a class bulletin board-display wall and FYI shelf for any pictures, brochures, photocopies, of materials that will connect with the stories. Look for travel articles, "in the news" events, travel brochures, fashions, advertising, history sociology, anthropology, religion...music covers, song lyrics

2. Singly, in pairs, or in small groups—Give an oral presentation of any of the following:

-A history of the region in an era important to writer's essay, story, poem
-A history of Puerto Rico, Mexico, Latin America, American Southwest
-Biographies of any writer
-Summaries and commentaries on essays by critics, reviewers of writers
-Art and Music that connects with the stories
-Religious stories or Myths or Legends that connect with the stories

3. Create an original art piece or music piece in response to either of the stories using phrases or images from either story

4. Create a dialogue between you, a friend, and any author or character. Read it to the class as reader's theater.

5. Create a pastiche from pictures in current magazines of images from news, arts, entertainment, advertising in American society that denote Hispanic-American women, men, children, families Use all Hispanic-American cultures: Latino, Chicano, Puerto-Rican, American Southwest, Mexican-American, hispanic immigrants,

6. One third of population by year 2000 will be persons of color. Investigate, explore, research what this will do to the bastions of white culture. How will this affect education? bilingualism? economics? migration patterns?

7. How would you film a story or poem from this section of *Braided Lives*? Create a scenario. Demonstrate with chalktalk, overheads, commentary, script board.

8. Work with a partner of the opposite sex. Discuss your perceptions of the role of men and women in your story or poem. Write up your observations and conclusions. Note what you never observed before because of your own gender.

9. What are the types of oppression in the story? Physical? Social? Emotional? Psychological External? Internal? Race/Class/Gender?

10. The role played by the society within the culture. Restrictions of the protagonist to the social expectations, institutions. Restrictions by the White society to the social expectations, institutions: For both cultures: resulting in rebellion? defiance? acceptance? accommodation?

11. How has the awareness of the oppression affected the growth, development and change in the protagonist/speaker?

12. Dehumanization: to what extent is each character dehumanized?

13. The irony of the oppression to the oppressor (this could be very difficult). How the oppressors are dehumanized

14. The nature of the protagonist: unheroic? fallible? in what way and why?

15. "Freedom". How would each of the protagonists define freedom? What use would each make of freedom?

16. To what extent is each of these stories/poems/essays a social criticism? of the law, the state, the church, the school, the family?

17. Relevance and topicality: how relevant is the work to you here and now? To what extent is each work didactic or lyrical in purpose?

18. Methods of revealing and developing character compare techniques among the stories.

19. Discuss the significant effects of POV in the story (third, first, dramatic); discuss the narrator.

20. Discuss the crisis situation in each—and how the protaginist responds (would you have responded differently or the same?)

21. The significance of settings: time and place.

22. The significance of beginnings and endings: discuss the opening and closing scenes or passages.

23. Examine three short exchanges between the protagonist and another character and comment on the significance.

24. Comment on strategies used by character to survive conflict, crisis: this reveals the philosophy and attitude of the author.

25. How much are your dreams, ambitions, challenges fashioned by your family and culture?

From Our Past

The Fifteenth Annual Spring Conference in Moorhead May 3-4, 1974, explored the theme, "I'm Not O.K., You're Not O.K.: The Ethics of Language." Professor Keith Gunderson, Department of Philosophy, University of Minnesota, was the banquet speaker. Censorship was addressed at the luncheon by Irwin Gaines, Director of the Minneapolis Public Library, and Seymour Yesner, Consultant in English and Humanities, Minneapolis Public Schools.

Resolutions revealed MCTE's continued readiness to handle controversial issues and lead the profession:

1. MCTE pledged continued support of the right of all teachers to consider materials on all sides of issues, beliefs, and ideas so that young citizens might develop the habit of critical thinking, reading, listening and viewing, thereby enabling them to develop intellectual integrity in forming judgments.

2. MCTE supported the principle that classroom teachers form the majority on any committee or team responsible for teacher certification.

3. MCTE supported legislation designed to ease the levy limitation imposed on school districts.

4. MCTE opposed the voucher plan in legislation.

5. MCTE invited student program participants to express their points of view.

6. MCTE supported scholarships for students entering four-year institutions from two-year colleges.

President Bernard Raphael set forth these goals for MCTE in 1974-1975:

1. To establish a liaison between MCTE and the State Assessment Program

2. To interest more elementary teachers in MCTE affairs by organizing the Elementary Section

3. To interest more minorities and women in MCTE work

4. To involve junior college teachers in MCTE

5. To expand MCTE publication issues to keep teachers better informed.

An Invitation

The College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, Minnesota, will again offer in 1993 *Growing Up American*, a summer institute in the humanities for elementary school teachers from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The institute is funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information write Leo Hertzel and John Schifsky, College of St. Scholastica, 1200 Kenwood Avenue, Duluth, Minnesota 55811.

Teacher-Researcher Grants Available from NCTE

Teacher-Researcher Grants are awarded to Pre-K-14 teachers for classroom-based research on the teaching of English/Language Arts. These grants, which have a limit of $1,500, are intended to support investigation of research questions that grow out of teachers' classroom experiences and concerns and that are directly relevant to the work of the applicant. They are not intended to support travel to professional meetings, purchase permanent equipment or commercial teaching materials, provide release time, or conduct research done as part of a graduate degree program. Examples of funded studies include the following:

* The Uses of Story Time in a First Grade Classroom
* Teacher-to-Student Writing Conferencing in the Secondary Classroom
* High School Students and the Nation's Literary Magazines: Is There a Meaningful Connection?
* Better than Basals: A Teacher-Developed Literature Program
* Children's Use of Punctuation: A Follow-up Study
* Finding the Writer in a Learning Disabled Student Communication and Socialization
* Teacher-Researchers: How Do They Grow?

Further information and application forms are available from Project Assistant, NCTE Research Foundation, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801, (217) 328-3870.

THE NCTE AFFILIATES OF REGION 4 AND IOWA
PRESENT
"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE: LIFE'S DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM"

WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
Concourse Hotel • Madison, Wisconsin
April 23, 24, 25, 1993

For further information, write to Greg Johnson, 204 S. 17th, Murphysboro, Illinois 62966. Telephone (618) 687-1148.

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Minnesota English Journal Award for Best Articles

Two cash prizes of $75.00 each will be awarded for the two best articles for 1992-1993. Winners names will be announced at the NCTE spring Region 4 Conference in Madison, WI. Authors should follow the standard *Minnesota English Journal* submission rules. All articles published in MEJ will be considered eligible, although the Publications Board reserves the right not to grant an award if, in its judgement, none of the published articles meets the Board's criteria or its standard of excellence.

EDITORIAL POLICY:
MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

The *Minnesota English Journal* is an official organ of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English. It ordinarily appears twice a year, Fall and Winter/ Spring. The *Minnesota English Journal* publishes articles and poetry of general interest to its membership, teachers K through college.

Manuscripts from Minnesota teachers are preferred. The *MEJ* is distributed free of charge to the membership. Individual issues can be ordered for $3.50 a copy. Manuscripts should be submitted to the editors. If possible, also send your text diskette in Word Perfect 4.2 or 5.1, or in MacWrite. Please use an approved style sheet, either APA or MLA. Internal documentation and a works cited list are preferred. Manuscripts should be 5-18 pages, typed double-spaced.

Please consult the call for papers that appears in each issue. At times, special issues will focus on specific themes announced in the *MEJ*.

The editors will make every effort to acknowledge receipt of a manuscript within two weeks and to inform the contributor of its acceptance or rejection within 60 days. Include with the manuscript a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The editors reserve the right to accept or reject a manuscript.

The editors may return a manuscript to request its revision, and the editors may make minor changes in the manuscript without consulting the contributor.