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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to our second issue featuring student writing. As our editorial board worked through the difficult process of selection and solicitation to bring you this remarkable collection, we were continually amazed by the quality of writing, original imaginings, and creative insights of the students' writing. While many of these students come to their classrooms with enormous talent, that talent would go undeveloped and unrecognized without the efforts of English teachers like you. We are in awe of the work that you do keeping the balance between instructing students in writing skills and nurturing their creativity. Since many teachers have used the 6-Traits model to help keep this balance between skill and art, we have used this model as the organizing principle for this issue. We hope it will aid you in using some of the writing as models with your own students.

The writing in the *Ideas* section illustrates how reading the writing of other writers leads to more writing. The student writers connected literary pieces to their own lives, wrote alternate endings, and transformed understandings from classroom readings into other genres. The selections by Allison Retka and Devin Markell demonstrate through clever imitation their deep understanding of a writer. And Thai Lao, Ben Miller, Christine Simmons, and Stephen Smarjesse illustrate the importance of their writing in making a personal response to our most devastating and incomprehensible current event.

The writers in the *Voice* section assume other personas: from immigrant ancestors to a flapper, Leigh Shadko's darkly allegorical short story seeks to understand the horrific evil of the Holocaust and the inaction of the Catholic Church. Oksana Goldman's piece illustrates the interrelationship between the traits; with its inspiration taken from a work by Twain, it could also have been placed with the other *Ideas* pieces.

Of all the standard writing assignments of the English class, perhaps the one most dependent on *Organization* is the literary analysis. The analyses in this section develop complex reasoning and creative insight, presenting ideas logically and with skillful elaboration and support.

Word Choice is a difficult skill for many students. How can they write colorfully and with maturity without sounding like a thesaurus? Betsy Lasch offers a lesson on an effective descriptive technique: the use of similes. Other students find their words in the lyrics of their music heroes or create verbal snapshots of special people and places. Megan Eagen and Mercedes Burns are especially skillful in their poetic use of language.

Sentence Fluency is important in the pace, tone, and style of narratives, in particular. Charles Worthington's *Shoes Like That* makes very effective use of extremely short sentences, deliberate sentence fragments, conversation, and repetition. Other pieces use the conversational tags to imbed description of characters and actions or use trailing ellipses to emphasize a mysterious situation, as in the dark tale *Charon*.

This issue again features examples from the impromptu writing of last year's NCTE writing contests. JeanMarie Burtness also revisits her feature in last year's student writing journal on writing inspired by art work. Last year she highlighted some of the poems her students had written that were inspired by sculptures and paintings studied on a trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. In this issue, Brianna Chies and Robyn Starr analyze their chosen artworks.

We'd like to see the work of *your* students featured next year. Please note that our publication schedule has changed. Starting with the 2002-03 membership year, the student writing issue of *Minnesota English Journal* will be distributed in the fall. So start collecting your students' outstanding work. Fill out the submission form on page 4 for each piece submitted. Our deadline will remain the same: June 15, but we encourage you to submit student writing now. This journal would be impossible without you. This is a member supported publication.

Happy spring! May the little rewards of your teaching be without number!

Sandy

P.S. Just in case you are looking for some resources on the 6-Trait model:
www.nwrel.org/assessment (the definitive 6-Trait site)
Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessments and Instruction by Vicki Spandel
Write Traits material from Great Source (www.greatsource.com)
Micheal Thompson, CFL Language Arts Specialist -- micheal.thompson@state.mn.us
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org> -- look under Research and Writing for a rubric generator

CONVENTIONS

Since published writing should display correct conventions, we'd like to highlight other conventions of interest to Minnesota English teachers:

April 26 & 27, 2002
MCTE Spring Conference
Kelly Inn, St. Cloud

November 11/12, 2002
MCTE Fall Workshops
Stephanie Harvey:
Reading Strategies
Royal Cliff, Eagan

April 25 & 26, 2003
MCTE Spring Conference
St. Cloud Civic Center

Minnesota English Journal: Student Writing Issue

Submission Form

Deadline: June 15, 2002

Teacher _____

School Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City & Zipcode _____

Summer email address _____

Summer phone number _____

Was this student's writing the product of a directed writing assignment?

☐ No

☐ Yes If this assignment was not one of our own creation, please give the source for the lesson idea:

Student Name _____ Grade _____

School Name _____

Student's Mailing Address _____

City & Zipcode _____

The student's mailing address is needed to contact the students selected and to send a complimentary copy of the Journal if their work is selected.

Certification and Permission

I hereby certify that this is original work completed by me.

Student's signature: _____

I give permission for the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English to publish this work. If this work is selected, I understand that it will be published in book form and identified with the student's name, grade, and school name.

Parent or guardian's signature: _____

(Optional) I give permission for the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English to publish this work on their website (www.mcte.org). If this work is selected to be published on the website, I understand that it will be identified by the student's first name, grade, and school name.

Parent or guardian's signature: _____

Mail the student work and completed submission form to:
Sandy Hayes, 19019 180th Avenue, Big Lake, MN 55309