

Edited by
Geraldine DeLuca
Len Fox
Mark-Ameen Johnson
Myra Kogen

Dialogue on *Writing*

*Rethinking ESL,
Basic Writing,
and
First-Year
Composition*

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To my children, Katharine and Jeffrey, for my mother, Rose, and for Don
—Geri

To some of my best communication teachers: my wife Ginny, my friends
Elaine and Geri, and my students
—Len

To Mona Gebara Johnson and Andrew Johnson, precious cornerstones.
To my beautiful sister, Lisa Emily Johnson, my foundation's second tier.
To George Versakos, friend when I had none, Dawn, who shines forth,
and their son, Christopher, from "Uncle Mark." And, finally, to Thomas
DeGeorges, of course, lighthouse in every storm.
—Mark

To David
—Myra

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Preface

This anthology grew out a series of discussions by four colleagues who teach composition at Brooklyn College, a branch of the City University of New York. Though we were all working hard to help our students improve their writing, we realized that we were doing the same job from somewhat different perspectives. Geri DeLuca was director of freshman writing and is now coordinator of writing across the curriculum; Len Fox is Professor of English and past director of the ESL program; Myra Kogen directs the college Learning Center, a large-scale peer-tutoring operation; and Mark-Ameen Johnson teaches in ESL and immersion programs and supervises English as a second language (ESL) tutoring. As our conversations continued month after month, we realized that we each had received different training, attended different professional conferences, and made use of certain theories and practices unknown to the others.

We believe *Dialogue on Writing: Rethinking ESL, Basic Writing, and First-Year Composition* to be the first work that treats these various approaches under one cover. Also, although all four of us teach at Brooklyn College and roughly a quarter of the articles we selected highlight CUNY concerns, readers will find that most of the issues CUNY faculty raise mirror those in academia at large. In addition, our anthology showcases not only the voices of instructors in large universities, but the voices of academics in rural, small-campus colleges and teachers in nonacademic settings as well.

The basis for our selection of articles lies in our collective experience in training writing teachers and tutors. Brooklyn has long required that its part-time instructors take a graduate course in the teaching of freshman composition and that peer tutors attend ongoing workshops that prepare them to help students with writing assignments from across the curriculum. In addition, there are meetings in which writing faculty discuss issues of concern and yearly training sessions on scoring the CUNY writing assessment tests. Another strength of the selections in this anthology is that they reflect the editors' different positions within the academy—DeLuca and Fox are full professors in the Department of English, Kogen is an administrator in the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and Johnson is an adjunct in the English Department.

Reflecting these different perspectives, the final selection of articles in the book is the result of a careful, not always harmonious, process of give and take. Fox proposed a table of contents and produced a stack of photocopies much larger than those that eventually became *Dialogue on Writing*. Kogen, DeLuca, and Johnson made changes, omissions, additions, and clarifications to produce new aims and new lines of thought. Fox contributed a respect for concrete ideas and straightforwardness, Kogen for theoretical writing and complexity. DeLuca championed voices that were alternative, occasionally New Age, and sometimes silenced. Johnson argued for the inclusion of adjuncts' perspectives and concerns, which are often dismissed by tenured faculty. In short, we were eager to grow and be mutually supportive but were equally stubborn in arguing our individual points.

Thus our four-way dialogue played out. Our own diversity and academic peccadilloes proved to be our team's strength. After 3 years, 300 plus articles, and more letters and e-mail than any of us could keep track of, we selected 28 articles organized into 4 basic sections. We decided that readers would appreciate overviews and DeLuca wrote four separate introductory essays explaining the relationship among the articles in each section. The articles we selected and the questions that follow them are suggestions for pedagogy and invitations for exploration. We hope that both the articles and the questions will spark both animated group dialogue and private inner dialogue. We strongly encourage readers to be Socratic and challenge everything they read—but also to remember that the experienced teacher-theorists represented here have learned a thing or two in the trenches.

Although we did our best to present both key ideas and alternative views, our biases may manifest themselves from time to time. In a perfect anthology, that might not happen. But as DeLuca has often reminded the rest of us: "There is no perfect anthology. This is the good enough anthology." We, your *good enough* editors, have selected the articles we thought "best,"

but we do not claim that either we or our selected writers have a monopoly on **truth**. We invite you to look for instances where truths are hidden, disguised, distorted, half-baked, or fully cooked and burned. But remember also the point that James Berlin makes in *Rhetoric and Reality*, that rhetoric for most English instructors has often meant one theory and one theory only, whereas many useful alternative models have gone largely unnoticed.

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About the Editors

Geraldine DeLuca is Professor of English at Brooklyn College, CUNY. She directed the Freshman Writing program at Brooklyn College for 12 years and is now coordinator of the program in Writing Across the Curriculum. With Roni Natov, she founded and for 15 years coedited *The Lion and the Unicorn: A Critical Journal of Children's Literature*, now published by The Johns Hopkins University Press. She has published many articles on children's literature, some stories, poems, and personal essays and is now working on a memoir about growing up Italian-American.

Len Fox, Professor of English and ESL at Brooklyn College, CUNY, has been teaching ESL at the college since 1977. He has trained ESL teachers and has made many presentations at city, state, and national conferences. He has written five textbooks for teaching ESL: *Perspectives*, *Passages*, and *Gateway*, all of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; *Focus on Editing*, Longman; and *Making Peace*, coedited with Elaine Brooks, St. Martin's.

Mark-Ameen Johnson has directed Brooklyn College's Starr ESL Learning Center and taught CUNY students since 1994. He has also served as the Pace University Liberty and Stay-in-School Partnerships Program Manager, a Brooklyn Public Library literacy consultant and tutor trainer, and a New York City Board of Education teacher. He first began teaching when he was in grammar school; his younger sister was his first student. While enrolled in junior high school, he carried out volunteer work with mentally retarded children. These first experiences hooked him, and he has been

teaching in one form or another ever since. He is also a freelance writer specializing in travel and popular culture.

Myra Kogen is Director of the Brooklyn College Learning Center, which provides peer tutoring for students in courses across the curriculum. She has taught composition, technical writing, and literature and has edited a collection of articles, *Writing in the Business Professions*, published by NCTE. Her articles have appeared in the *Journal of Basic Writing*, *Technical Writing*, and *American Literary Realism*. Kogen has done extensive faculty training on the use of collaborative learning and writing in courses across the disciplines. In the past few years, she has devoted considerable time to writing proposals for projects funded by NEH, NSF, FIPSE, and the U.S. Department of Education Title III program.

Teaching Writing

Who are our students? When they enter our classrooms, what do they need from us? When we read the newspapers on the state of education in the United States today, we often get a sense of disaster. The gap between the rich and poor is widening. The college students of the affluent come from private schools or well-funded suburban public systems, and they are receiving ever more elaborately enriched educations. At the same time, the poor and working class barely get by, often holding jobs for many hours per week and trying to squeeze their classes and their studies into the few precious hours left. Conservative commentators say these students are not ready to be in the university. But if the public schools and their communities have failed them, or if they are members of a different culture, speakers of a different language, and we bar the doors, then what happens? Our politicians declare that every young person should have the chance to go to college. If this is something we really believe, then how do we go about making it happen? And once they are there, what do we teach them?

As Mike Rose demonstrates in his introduction to *Lives on the Boundary*, our sense of disaster may rest on flawed memories of a better age—an age that never dreamed of educating so many people on such a large scale.

In 1890, 6.7 percent of America's fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds were attending high school; by 1978, that number had risen to 94.1 percent. . . . In the 1930s "functional illiteracy" was defined by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a state of having three or more years of schooling; . . . by 1960 the Office of Education was setting the eighth grade as a benchmark. . . . In the United States [in 1989] just over 75 percent of our young people complete high school; in Sweden 45 to 50 percent complete the gymnasium (grades 11 to 12); in the [former] Federal Republic of Germany about 15 percent are enrolled in the *Oberprima* (grade 13). In 1900 about 4 percent of American eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds attended college; by the late 1960s, 50 percent of eighteen- to nineteen-year-olds were entering some form of postsecondary education. Is

this an educational system on the decline, or is it a system attempting to honor—through wrenching change—the many demands of a pluralistic democracy?

It would be an act of hollow and evil optimism to downplay the problems of American schools. . . . But what a curious thing it is that when we do criticize our schools, we tend to frame our indictments in terms of decline.¹

Even when higher education was restricted to the sons of the elite, their teachers complained about their inadequacies. How do we meet our new students where they are and help them grow intellectually? What assumptions do we make when we assess their competence? What do we make of what we see on the page? What are our goals?

Part I of this book offers perspectives and models for courses that have worked for other teachers—researchers. The commonsense approach of moving from the simplest to the most complex forms of writing—from parts of speech to sentence structure to paragraphs to full essays—may seem like an obvious, sensible strategy to a well-meaning teacher assessing students' writing problems. And in fact it holds great sway in the university. Entering students are tested for their ability to write fluent standard English. The low scorers are then separated into remedial classes based on their tests scores, and there they are taught the "simple logic" of grammar, sentence structure, and paragraphing. Then they are tested again.

But as the selections by Mike Rose, David Bartholomae, and Ira Shor demonstrate, these assumptions and divisions create problems of their own. First, as Rose says in "Reclaiming the Classroom," teachers sometimes work on the assumption that because students speak a dialect other than standard English, or because they are inexperienced writers, they are therefore incapable of complex thought. By thus "scaling down our expectations—as so many remedial programs do," teachers restrict students and make writing a joyless and mechanical chore—one that is mostly about rules and developing strategies for not breaking them.

Rose and Bartholomae each describe a course of study for basic writers that demands serious thinking and that creates a structure in which it may occur. Rose's course grew out of his own experience as a student who was almost forsaken by an educational system with many damning labels for its children. In *Lives on the Boundary*, he chronicles his boyhood in East Los Angeles. Though his parents were loving and concerned, they were troubled by economic and physical problems and by an overriding sense of hopelessness that prevented them from questioning the way the schools were evaluating their son. About midway through high school, where he had, through a clerical error, been placed in a vocational program, Rose

¹Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared* (New York: Penguin, 1989) 6–7.

found a teacher who recognized his intelligence and began the process of teaching him how to think, opening to him a world of intellect and spirit beyond his bleak neighborhood.

In “Reclaiming the Classroom,” an excerpt from Rose’s book, he draws on that experience to give a group of veterans the kind of training in thinking that helped him. His curriculum runs right down the center of the academic world. He teaches his students to summarize, classify, compare, and analyze, helping them to form the habits of mind that are the hallmark of academic writing. In a practical sense he is training them to play by the rules of the university. But he also knows that by laboring through difficult material, they will discover the world of the mind. They will deepen, as he deepened, and grow as he grew.

David Bartholomae’s two courses are based on similar convictions: that students have lived in complex, if unexamined, situations their whole lives, and that they need to engage complexity in the writing classroom as well. His course helps students to see themselves differently by helping them understand that their writing is not just “what they said,” that is, what happens to roll onto the page when they pick up a pen, but “deliberate, strategic, and systematic behavior” that is capable of being reflected on, changed, contracted, or expanded. To be writers, students need to imagine themselves as writers. They need to be aware that writing is a process they engage in, that a sense of chaos often accompanies first drafts, that one can gain control over successive drafts, that sometimes it feels easy and sometimes it feels hard. Bartholomae is particularly concerned with preparing students for their college courses by giving them an idea of how the academy uses language, helping them “to imagine the kind of relation between themselves and their world that allows them to turn their experience into ‘subject matter’ and to define a relationship with that subject that makes creative thinking possible.” Students write and share autobiographical essays to discover common themes, to discover differences, and to become attuned to the ambiguity and contradiction often built into complicated material.

The second course Bartholomae describes here includes reading. As in his writing course, his goal is to heighten students’ sense of themselves as people functioning in a university, whose job it is not only to summarize and analyze a text, but also to “take a stance in relation to it.” This course led to the curriculum outlined in Bartholomae’s and Anthony Petrosky’s *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts*² as well as to their widely used and challenging anthology, *Ways of Reading*.³

²David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, *Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts: Theory and Method for a Reading and Writing Course* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1986).

³David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, eds., *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 5th Ed. (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s, 1998).

"The First Day of Class: Passing the Test" is Ira Shor's introduction to his book, *Empowering Education*, which is based on the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Freire was a radical Brazilian educator who spent his early years teaching peasants to read, write, and "think critically" about the condition of their lives. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,⁴ Freire argues that the traditional "banking concept of education," in which the teacher/authority deposits knowledge in the minds of passive students, must be replaced by a "problem-posing" method of education that allows the teacher and the students to learn from one another. Together they create a curriculum in which students work outward from the language of their daily lives to develop a "critical consciousness" and to work from that consciousness toward change—so that ultimately education becomes the "practice of freedom."

Shor's essay describes a basic writing class in which his students are angry at the test that has placed them there and that they perceive to be unfair. He describes in some detail how he moved the students toward a conception of what a fairer test would be and then to a reading and writing curriculum that evolved out of their needs and interests and that enabled most of them to pass the test at the end of the term. This was not, of course, the solution to all their problems, but Shor's essay demonstrates how one can begin with students' resistance and with the conditions of their lives to help them become critical thinkers in the university.

Kenneth Bruffee's "Collaboration, Conversation, and Reacculturation" is a story of how he responded to the beginning of an open admissions policy at the City University of New York. In this opening essay to his book *Collaborative Learning: Higher Education, Interdependence, and the Authority of Knowledge*, he recounts his own experience as a new director of freshman English who found himself in a "contact zone"—Mary Louise Pratt's often-quoted phrase for a place "where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power."⁵ In 1970, when Open Admissions began at CUNY, thousands of underprepared students suddenly entered the university. Bewildered about how to work with these students, Bruffee turned to the writing directors at the other CUNY colleges, and together they came to recognize that what they were dealing with was not just "error" but culture. The students "arrived in our classes already deeply acculturated, already full-fledged, competent members (as we were, too) of some community or other. In fact, they were already members of several interrelated communities (as we were too)."

⁴Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1969).

⁵"Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91, 1991. Reprinted in Vivian Zamel and Ruth Spack, eds., *Negotiating Academic Literacies: Teaching and Learning Across Languages and Cultures* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998) 173.

Now they were all meeting in the university, and if Bruffee and his colleagues were going to help these students become members of the academic community, they had to work together to find out who their students (and they themselves) were, how the students learned, what would help them, what stood in their way. And they had to try to imagine what new community would evolve out of that contact. They read Freire, they studied group dynamics, they took cues from newly forming feminist consciousness-raising groups. To help his students enter the culture of the university, Bruffee realized, he had to help his class “constitute itself as a community with its own particular mores, goals, linguistic history, and language.” Students together, with the teacher as a Freirian problem poser, had to grapple with knowledge—how it is constituted, on whose authority, and how together they could create it in the classroom.

Bruffee has been a pioneering researcher into the value and structures of peer tutoring and collaborative learning, and his work has radically changed the way many teachers run their classes. His argument that students learn best by working together has forced many of us to acknowledge that the lecture format, even at its most eloquent, is a “banking” strategy, that the teacher in the act of composing the lecture is the one doing all the learning, and learning perhaps of a particularly safe kind, in order to make the presentation. But for at least part of the time, students need to take on the authority of working through difficult material themselves, in the context of their own lives, their own past education, and the experiences of others in the classroom.

The next selection is by Keith Gilyard, the director of freshman writing at Syracuse University and a person who speaks from painful personal experience about the clashing of cultures in the classroom. Having grown up in New York City, he describes in his autobiography, *Voices of the Self*,⁶ the high price that African-American children pay for being taught that the dialect of their community is “broken English.” As a child, Gilyard constructed two identities—Keith for home and Raymond for school. He was bright and successful to a point, but the contradictions and mixed allegiances and anger of his young life pushed him toward drugs and theft. When he came back, he did so with a vivid sense of what young people like the boy he was need in order to overcome the odds against them.

The two chapters reprinted here are from *Let's Flip the Script: An African-American Discourse on Language, Literature and Learning*. The first piece is a clear summary of the features of Atlantic Creole, a dialect of English (minus some regional variations) spoken by many African-American and

⁶Keith Gilyard, *Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).

Caribbean students at least some of the time. Gilyard notes that, like other dialects, “these language varieties are rule-governed systems that have developed as a result of conflict, conquest, and cultural mixing. They are equal in a linguistic sense to any other varieties of English and are not a major obstacle to literacy.”

The controversy over the place of students’ dialects in the classroom gave rise in the 1970s to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) statement of “Students’ Right to their Own Language.” It again received national attention in the 1990s as the Ebonics debate that took place in California. Both the NCTE and the California teachers supported a pluralist position advocated here by Gilyard, in the hope that “language variation [would not] play out so negatively in the classroom.” Pluralists do not ignore the importance of learning standard English, but they accord respect and space in the classroom for students to express themselves in dialect, not to be condescended to and not to be ridiculed. Standard English should be taught in the context of a conversation that acknowledges the child’s own dialect, that makes language use the center of discussion, that respects it in all its various forms. We cannot ignore the “social relations and student perceptions” that underlie writing instruction in the schools, Gilyard says. If we do, we continue to lose “many of those of African descent, who feel reasons not to melt on into the program.”

In his second essay, Gilyard explains that his work is based on the goal of achieving “true democracy,” and he begins by defining that phrase in terms of ideals articulated by Thomas Jefferson, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire. He moves in his teaching from “covering the material” to “uncovering” the material, from narration to dialogue. This essay was first delivered as a speech to teachers of adult education, and he begins with the recognition that returning students are often those who were lost to the system, who refused to participate, who found it irrelevant, or who simply could not locate themselves there. Such students often return with a readiness to learn standard grammar and write formulaic essays. They are often suffering from what Freire calls “narration sickness,” engendered by the teacher’s and their own belief that the teacher knows what they need and their job is to write it down. Such students, Gilyard says, are often intimidated by literature. They have not experienced it as being about them, and they are afraid of their own reactions to it. Gilyard argues that, in his own experience, “Literature has always been a powerful way of reminding me that I am not just in the world but of it.” Thus, he argues, students should be required to read literature—literature that is of necessity multicultural—that they should be encouraged to honor their own responses, and that in such an environment, they will grow as critical thinkers, expressive writers, debaters, and finally, people who can be heard in a true democracy.

Gilyard's course includes the history of the English language; it includes literature of many cultures; it includes debate; it includes the sharing of writing and the development of "conventional usage." He reminds us that it has never been the practice in America to educate everyone equally. "Numerous scholars have argued convincingly that American education has generally focused on producing a highly literate elite and a minimally literate general populace." But at this point in history, minimal literacy no longer suffices. We have to do a better job of educating all our students if we want a democracy where all have voices, and all vote "if our society is genuinely to become more inclusive and approach its full potential for humanism."

Jane Tompkins was one of those "highly literate elite" that Gilyard mentions. And in *A Life in School*, she chronicles the hazards of privilege.⁷ In "Pedagogy of the Distressed," Tompkins too steps off from Freire by describing the pressures of the "narrator," the one who is supposed to know what everybody else needs to hear. We may have gone beyond the "banking concept" in its pure form, she says, but we are still living with the "performance model" of teaching, whereby the teacher shows in class how smart, knowledgeable, and well prepared she is, so that whether students learn or not, they will leave the class with a good opinion of the teacher, and if and when their turn at the front of the room comes, they will adopt that model for themselves. We perform out of fear, she says, fear of being exposed as inadequate, as not having the right knowledge, the right delivery, maybe a kind of urbane cleverness that covers up whatever doubts may be rising to the surface inside us. The fear is usually developed early, as we learn from parents and teachers that to please them we must be smart and perform well. And we are fearful of talking about what we do in class because of what we may reveal about ourselves. Even an interest in pedagogy is suspect. In the hierarchy of values that define the university, what is most celebrated and rewarded is not teaching but publication.

Tompkins's recent work has been to shake off that unsatisfying model and, along with her students, to find a better one. Teaching is not about impressing students but about paying attention to what they need on a given day. The classroom is a place where we "practice whatever ideals we may cherish," where we allow students to work together not just to learn a body of material, but to construct that material and to be with each other as it shapes itself in the room. The purpose of the classroom is not to suffer, not to overwork, not to prove ourselves the smartest, not to be sleep deprived and worried, but to be whole people, teacher and student both, thought and emotion connected.

⁷Jane Tompkins, *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996).

The final essay in this section shifts to a postmodern perspective. In “Pomo Blues: Stories from First-Year Composition,” Lee Ann Carroll struggles with the question of what students are doing when they write. Do we see their writings as “authentic reflections of autonomous individuals” or as “verbal artifacts heavily structured by the cultural and institutional contexts in which they are produced”? Her essay sets forth the basic assumptions of postmodernist thought—all of which challenge the notion of a unified “truth,” a unified “self.” Like David Bartholomae, she challenges the “master narratives” of students’ lives, asking them to see their arguments another way, to understand the cultural contexts that underpin not just their initial assumptions of reality but their second takes as well. The article raises many questions: Is there a way out of a condition where all ideas are “written” before we write them, where we see what we are taught to see? Do the unarticulated personal narratives that support our beliefs need to be articulated? If we articulate them, do they limit our perception of the “larger” reality? Is all knowledge partial, local, and provisional? In such an atmosphere, how do we ever find the courage to write anything at all? How do we find positions that seem to us ethically and aesthetically convincing, that allow us to act in the world? Do we allow ourselves to be paralyzed or do we take the relativity of all our positions as a way to free ourselves from someone else’s judgment?

Carroll’s course in Freshman Writing presents students with a series of assignments that ask them to keep shifting perspectives, to keep interrogating and complicating their last assumption, to write from different genres: to argue, narrate, dramatize, to find aesthetic forms that allow a complicated and perhaps submerged position to express itself. She considers also the needs of students to perform for us in order to complete the semester and get good grades. Is part of their truth finding out what the teacher wants and figuring out how to write it?

Carroll’s essay offers no answers—as its point is that such answers are all provisional. Instead there are several possible ways out. If her students work hard, if they become aware of other voices, other cultures, other genres, if they develop a postmodern consciousness and then tweak that too, then she considers the job well-enough done. “IT’S ALL TRUE”, says one student, “and therefore I deserve an A.” Carroll does not presume to change students’ lives—an outmoded thought in such a context. She is only “improvising a postmodern tune,” giving them a point of view with which they may think about points of view, in the hope that somehow, as they continue to improvise, they will do so with a consciousness of other notes they might have played.

Geraldine DeLuca

Reclaiming the Classroom

Mike Rose

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There was not much space in Room 316, the third-floor office of the Veteran's Program, but the staff managed to fit a desk and two chairs into a storeroom, just inside the door. That was where I tutored. There were stacks of mimeograph paper and old files and textbooks behind me. A portable blackboard rocked noisily on wobbly casters. The Veteran's Program had been fashioned by an educational psychologist named Chip Anderson and was, in effect, a masterful crash course in the three Rs of higher education. It was housed in the old UCLA Extension Building in downtown Los Angeles. Students were enrolled right out of the service—the Marine Corps particularly—or through veteran's centers in Southern California. Virtually all who signed up were men. They took classes in English, speech, and mathematics, and participated in workshops to improve their reading and study skills. They were also enrolled in The Psychology of Human Relations. This introduced them to the mysteries of the college lecture course and had the additional benefit of dealing with communication and social interaction for a group returning to a culture that must have seemed pretty strange. All students received tutoring and academic and personal counseling. The curriculum was comprehensive and sensible; it provided an opportunity to develop the speaking, reading, writing, and mathematical abilities needed for college. The men I worked with called it academic boot camp.

I tutored three afternoons a week, and saw about five or six students a day. Our discussions ranged from subject-verb agreement to the taking of timed essay exams, and, fairly often, ranged outward to the NFL draft, music, wives, lovers, anger about the past, and confusion about the future. On the average the men were in their mid-twenties, some were younger, a few were lifers: gunnery sergeants or petty officers who, in their forties, were trying to change radically the direction of their next twenty years. Most of the students had been in the military from four to six years and had been, to use their term, the grunts—the privates and corporals who, in the years just after the prom, found themselves in marshland and firestorms. Some of these men started the program during their last few months of service, and others had been out for anywhere from weeks to years. Hair length became the dating gauge. If a student hadn't been to Vietnam, he came to the program with a legacy of boredom and a handful of firm resolves; some of those who were in Vietnam brought other things. They came directly from hospitals or drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers and, in a few cases, from prison. And some of them were continuing treatment as outpatients for particularly destructive physical injuries or for flitting horrors that could not be stitched or trussed.

I got to talk pretty intimately with men who saw the world very differently from the way I did and who had been through things I could barely imagine. The politics of the group ranged from reactionary to radical, white supremacist to black nationalist, with most mixing hawkish foreign policy with fairly liberal social mores. Some had dropped out of high school, were functionally literate, and were coming to the Veteran's Program to gain their high school equivalency; others were readers and theory builders and street poets. From what they told me, it was clear that most of them had academic histories like the kids in El Monte and the guys in Voc. Ed. Their school memories were dreary; I was seeing people at the other end of a frustrated educational journey. They were mustering their resources, though, for one last go at it. About a third of our students were wild boys with few responsibilities, while others were somber men with families and debts. Some had been shot while others spent their time in a sleepy town. I started noticing the scars. David had lost most of his right thumb—he held his pen in place with a nub—and had a scar that ran up beyond his wrist. Richard was missing the tops of two fingers, and the nails on Clayton's hands were replaced by fungus. The underside of Bill's arm, the place where the radial muscles flex to a rounded fullness, was gouged—a layer of slick, brownish skin stretched into place like wet and wrinkled paper.

The ethnic and geographic mix was rich: whites, Chicanos, blacks, a few Asians, fewer American Indians; New Yorkers and Oregonians, men from the Motor City and men from Southern farms. They drove in from El Toro or Camp Pendleton seventy miles to the south, from apartments scattered

from Orange County to the far end of the San Fernando Valley, or from homes in East L.A., Lynwood, or Compton. A few lived in awful places close to the program, like the Morrison, a musty hotel that gained a flicker of notoriety when it was photographed for the cover of a mediocre Doors album. And some bused in from the Veteran's Hospital in West Los Angeles. Their needs were profound and, at times, overwhelming to someone as young as I was. They came for education, for counseling, for friendship, for decompression. They came to get themselves back into the stream of things.

The Extension Building is on South Grand Avenue, five or six blocks this side of the rich hub of downtown Los Angeles: CitiCorp, the Bonaventure, the Arco Towers. It is one block east of Hope. It is a dirty beige stone building, four stories high. A fire escape crisscrosses all but the first floor of the south side. The windows are opaque, and the curtains you can see on the second floor are light gray. One is torn from its rung and tied back. Next door is a sandstone-colored hotel with bars on the ground-floor windows and 1120 crudely painted on a stucco post by the front stairs. It has no name. In the immediate vicinity are two parking lots and some small, depressed industries: sewing machines, garment hangers, baby furniture, Boston Shoe, ADM Button and Belt. Jo's Liquor and the Morris Cafe are a few blocks to the south. Beer and wine and pool.

Every quarter, fifteen or so teachers and tutors and a couple of hundred students moved in and out of the hallways of the Extension Building, moving through the elevators, the lobby, the lunchroom in the basement. And during breaks between classes, Grand Avenue would intermittently feel the tingling scrape of peripatetic chatter and the heat of a quick smoke. The main meeting place was the lunchroom, presided over by Al Petrillo, a vendor of sandwiches, a player of ponies, and an indefatigable dispenser of jokes with punchlines like "Jeez, Doc, I hope they don't amputate around here, 'cause I'm only in for prickly heat!" Al was a short man with sleepy eyes who would cradle his forehead in his left hand and slowly look up at you as he made change and insulted your choice of sandwiches or your looks. And behind him, a hundred people lamented and laughed and made bets and dreamed.

I had been tutoring for about two months when Dr. Anderson called me into his office and offered me a full-time job. He said he had been talking to the men and decided he wanted me to teach English and reading and maybe do a little counseling. I would be taking my master's orals at UCLA in December, so I'd be set to go by January, the start of a new quarter. How about it? I liked working with the veterans very much, felt at ease, for so many of them had grown up in neighborhoods like mine. I accepted on the spot. It was after I left Anderson's office that I started having second thoughts.

In the Teacher Corps I worked informally with small groups of children and had ongoing connection with a team. And tutoring in the Veteran's

Program seemed a lot safer than teaching. Someone else created the curriculum, set the assignments, and gave the grades. I was a coach, a compatriot, helping the men as they struggled with their test taking and their writing. If they thought an assignment was stupid or a grade unfair, I could just nod sympathetically and get on with the paper before us. Now I would have to fashion my own curriculum, give the grades, and take the heat for it.

I worried most about the curriculum. One of the English teachers in the Veteran's Program had fashioned a wildly inventive set of assignments that had the students comparing two apples one week and writing a poem the next. It was a maverick curriculum, and I admired its ambition, but a lot of the men I tutored were simply perplexed by it. The other teachers relied on more traditional curricula: a handbook of rules of grammar, lectures on subordination and parallelism, papers requiring students to narrate and describe. I went to the UCLA bookstore and browsed through the various texts in use on the campus: more grammar handbooks. This all seemed cheerless. And the old standby, the writing of essays on unforgettable grandparents and *My First Job*, seemed as appropriate for the veterans as a hymn at a crapshoot. I had a month, so I started looking around for a base on which to build my course.

The first possibility that offered itself was, of course, Vietnam. It would seem natural to draw on the veterans' experience, present and vibrant as it was. Such a curriculum would be relevant at a time when relevance was dearly sought. But when I imagined teaching a course on the war, it didn't feel right—felt presumptuous, intrusive. After spending two months with the veterans, I could see that each man was on his own psychic timetable: Some were fairly comfortable talking about Vietnam; others couldn't bear to do it, at least not publicly. And in either case, they were looking forward to an education that would create a future, not one that would force them back through a past of shrapnel and deadly surprise.

It was when I started thinking about why the men had come to the program that I found an answer, one that lay at the intersection of the veterans' lives and mine. The men wanted to change their lives, and for all their earlier failures, they still held onto an American dream: Education held the power to equalize things. After Vietnam, they had little doubt about what their next step had to be: up and out of the pool of men society could call on so easily to shoot and be shot at. From what they told me, it was clear that a number of the veterans were a high school teacher's bad dream: detached or lippy or assaultive. They were my Voc. Ed. comrades reincarnated. But here they were now: "I'm givin' it a hundred percent this time." There's probably little any teacher can do with some kids in some high schools: the poverty and violence of the neighborhoods, the dynamics of particular families, the ways children develop identities in the midst of economic blight. You rely on goodwill and an occasional silent prayer to keep

your class from exploding, hope that some wild boy doesn't slug another, pray that your authority isn't embarrassed. But here those students were, five or ten years down the line: different life experiences, different perspectives on learning. It makes you think about those sullen high schoolers in a different light, see their lives along a time line. Maybe no one could have gotten to some of the veterans when they were sixteen, but they were ready now. They were bringing with them an almost magical vision of what learning could do for them, and regardless of what I had come to know about the realities of higher education, I could sure understand the desire to be transfigured by books.

The veterans' encounter with college led me to reflect on my education in a way I hadn't done before. More than I realized, I had learned a lot in El Monte about developing a curriculum: I approached learning carefully, step by step, systematically. I found that I knew what questions to ask. What had I really learned from studying history and psychology and literature? I thought a lot about my best teachers, about Jack MacFarland at Mercy High, about Dr. Carothers and Ted Erlandson and the others at Loyola. I browsed through the books that had mattered and thought about those courses that had opened up ways of considering the world. What intellectual orientations persisted? I went back to UCLA and sat in on a few lectures in the humanities and the social sciences, listening, this time, with a different ear. I talked with other teachers. And this is how I started to think about the curriculum I would fashion.

Given the nature of these men's needs and given the limited time I would have with them, could I perhaps orient them to some of the kinds of reading and writing and ways of thinking that seem essential to a liberal course of study, some of the habits of mind that Jack MacFarland and the many that followed him had helped me develop? If I could do this in some systematic and manageable way, then I would be enhancing the veterans' chances of participating in the institutions they would soon be entering. And while I wanted to be pragmatic—college preparation was the name of this game—I also wanted to go beyond utility. I was looking for a methodical way to get my students to think about thinking. Thinking. Not a fuss-budget course, but a course about thought. I finally decided to build a writing curriculum on four of the intellectual strategies my education had helped me develop—some of which, I would later discover, were as old as Aristotle—strategies that kept emerging as I reflected on the life of the undergraduate: summarizing, classifying, comparing, and analyzing.

Liberal studies had really sharpened my ability to find the central notion in an argument or the core of a piece of fiction. Thinking back on it, I couldn't imagine a more crucial skill than summarizing; we can't manage information, make crisp connections, or rebut arguments without it. The great syntheses and refutations are built on it. The veterans would have to

have practice summarizing various kinds of academic materials. It would give them a nice sense of mastery if they could determine and express the gist of readings that might, at first glance, seem opaque as medieval texts.

Classifying. You could almost define the undergraduate's life as the acquisition of the ways Western scholars have classified their knowledge. The very departments in which I took my classes represented one way to classify inquiry, and I encountered classification schemes in every course I took: taxonomies in biology, genres and periods in literature and the arts, the catalogs of motive and behavior in psychology and sociology. I wanted the veterans to become familiar with academic classification schemes, to sharpen their own abilities to systematize what they study, and to develop a critical awareness of the limitations of the classification schemes that will surround them. I thought up some simple exercises: Bring to class twenty copies of paintings of the human body. Have the paintings represent a wide range of styles, from Florentine humanism to cubist geometrics, but have all information on artist and period removed. It would be the students' job to classify this collection of paintings by any system they could develop. They would probably begin with a simple binary scheme: some of the paintings look like people and some don't. But through my questions as well as through the observations rising from their interaction, they would be encouraged to elaborate and revise until they'd agreed that they could go no further. I would then ask them to discuss what they felt was gained and what was lost as they classified paintings and moved from one scheme to another.

Another thing that became clear to me was how much knowledge in the arts and sciences is gained by methodically examining one object or event or theory in relation to another. What comes into focus when a student places *A Farewell to Arms* alongside a piece of journalism? What understanding is gained by listing the features of French schooling next to a description of American education? Entire disciplines—comparative politics to comparative anatomy—are built on this intellectual strategy. Simply by virtue of their humanity, the men in the Veteran's Program continually made comparisons, but I wanted to give them the chance to develop confidence and facility in comparing points of view and explanations and works of art.

The further along I got in college, the more I was asked to "analyze" an artistic product, a physical phenomenon, a social event, *to analyze* meaning to break something down to its constituent elements so as to better understand its nature. But that wasn't the whole story. There was a kind of implied directive to the request to analyze, and it took me quite a while before I realized it. Students are not usually told that such analytic investigation is always carried out with a set of assumptions, and these assumptions are crucial determinants of how you proceed in your examination,

what you find, and how you explain your discovery to others. I figured that developing the ability to probe the assumptions beneath an analysis or explanation would be exciting and empowering for the veterans, a little insight into how to pick the academic lock. They would be able to read with a critical eye and thus speak and write with more authority. While I could probably develop this critical awareness by modeling it for the class and by questioning them on their reading, I thought they might also benefit by engaging in a kind of intellectual roleplaying that would highlight the assumptive base of analysis. I could, for example, present them with a newspaper story about a man who commits an apparently senseless murder. Next would come an account of how Freud would explain violent behavior. It would be the students' job to slip into that perspective and discuss the story as though they were psychoanalysts. This passage would be followed by one written by a more existentially oriented social critic. The class would then discuss the crime with that perspective, discussing as well what happens to their analysis as they shift assumptions about human nature. How did the frameworks they used affect what they saw?

Most of the veterans were considered to be "remedial level" students. Even those who came to the program as pretty capable writers were hesitant and wrote prose that displayed the signs of an inadequate education: misspellings, verbs that didn't agree with subjects, sentences that strangled in their own convolutions. As for the less capable students—the kinds of writers I saw struggling as children in El Monte—composing was a source of embarrassment, a halting, self-conscious duty that resulted in stunted, error-ridden prose. It has been customary for remedial writing programs to focus attention on the kinds of grammatical problems that were found in the pages these men wrote. The programs instruct students in principles of grammar and usage ("Use a comma between coordinate adjectives not joined by 'and' "), distribute workbook exercises that require students to select correct forms ("Write in 'who' or 'whom' in the following sentences"), and assign short, undemanding bits of writing. The assumption is that error can be eradicated by zeroing in on the particulars of language. And that assumption seems to rest on a further assumption that grammatical error signals some fundamental mental barrier to engaging in higher-level cognitive pursuits: until error is isolated and cleaned up, it will not be possible for students to read and write critically, study literature, or toy with style.

It would not be until later in my career that I could methodically challenge these assumptions; at this early stage in my development as a writing teacher I had to rely more on the feel of things. It just didn't make sense that not knowing the delicacies of usage or misplacing commas or blundering pronouns and verb forms or composing a twisted sentence indicated arrest at some cognitive linguistic stage of development, a stage that had to

be traversed before you could engage in critical reading and writing. Such thinking smacked of the reductionism I had seen while studying psychology at UCLA. Besides, I had never gotten some of this stuff straight, and I turned out okay. It seemed that, if anything, concentrating on the particulars of language—schoolbook grammar, mechanics, usage—would tremendously restrict the scope of what language use was all about. Such approaches would rob writing of its joy, and would, to boot, drag the veterans back through their dismal history of red-pencilled failure. Furthermore, we would be aiming low, would be scaling down our expectations—as so many remedial programs do—training to do the minimum, the minimum here being a simple workbook sentence free of error. The men had bigger dreams, and I wanted to tap them.

My students needed to be immersed in talking, reading, and writing, they needed to further develop their ability to think critically, and they needed to gain confidence in themselves as systematic inquirers. They had to be let into the academic club. The fact that they misspelled words or wrote fragments or dropped verb endings would not erect insurmountable barriers to the benefits they would gain from such immersion. A traveler in a foreign land best learns names of people and places, how to express ideas, ways to carry on a conversation by moving around in the culture, participating as fully as he can, making mistakes, saying things half right, blushing, then being encouraged by a friendly native speaker to try again. He'll pick up the details of grammar and usage as he goes along. What he must *not* do is hold back from the teeming flow of life, must not sit in his hotel room and drill himself on all possible gaffes before entering the streets. He'd never leave the room.

My students, too, were strangers in a strange land, and I wanted to create a safe section of the city and give them an opportunity to acquire the language. We would cover some common errors together during the first few days of class, but, for the most part, I and the tutors I now had would work with students individually through the quarter as particular problems came up on particular papers. This would be a more sensible way to deal with grammatical error and would, as well, give students the sense that grammatical correctness is only one of the concerns of a writer, not the only one, and certainly not the force that brings pen to paper.

Aiming high, however, brought with it a real risk: the possibility that I would overwhelm the men, defeat them once again by asking them to do things that were beyond their reach, mystify them with impenetrable language. The only article of faith I had came from a little book by Jerome Bruner called *The Process of Education*. Bruner begins one of his chapters with this remarkable dictum: "Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development." I transposed the promise and challenge of that sentence to adults. It

seemed that I could honor the challenge if I used accessible materials and if I had the students work with them in ways that built from the simple to the complex.

I paged through newspapers, magazines, and political pamphlets. I copied out song lyrics. I rifled the books I had been collecting since my days with Jack MacFarland. I excerpted, deleted, Xeroxed, cut, pasted, and rewrote. To give students a sense of how social criticism reads, I used an Erich Fromm essay from *McCall's* rather than assign a section out of *Escape from Freedom* or *Socialist Humanism*. To provide illustrations of psychological states for our analysis assignments, I relied on song lyrics like John Prine's "Donald and Lydia." To raise liberal studies themes like Appearance and Reality, I lifted a few pages from *Invisible Man*. And so on.

Each quarter, I began by having the students summarize short, simple readings, and then moved them slowly through classifying and comparing to analyzing, which became the capstone of the curriculum. I didn't do enough of this careful sequencing in El Monte, and my curriculum there suffered for it. I explained and modeled, used accessible readings, tried to incorporate what the veterans learned from one assignment into the next, slowly increased difficulty, and provided a lot of time for the men to talk and write. So, for example, I introduced them to the strategy of comparing with this pair of sentences:

In the whole world no poor devil is lynched, no wretch is tortured, in whom I too am not degraded and murdered.

—AIMÉ CÉSAIRE

There exists among men, because they are men, a solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world.

—KARL JASPERS

I asked them to talk about the message each sentence contains and to talk, as well, about the way each is written: the academic sound of one, the emotional quality of the other. Did the sound affect the message? I would tell them a little about Césaire, the African poet and statesman, and about Jaspers, the German philosopher. Did that information about time and place affect their reading? They would go through many such pairs—finger exercises, as a friend of mine would later call them—doing them orally, writing on them in class as a tutor and I provided advice on wording and direction, and then, finally, going it alone at home. Within three or four weeks, they were working with more difficult passages, like these two cosmogonies—one an Australian aboriginal myth, the other from an astronomy textbook:

I

In the very beginning everything was resting in perpetual darkness: night oppressed all the earth like an impenetrable thicket.

(And) Karora was lying asleep, in everlasting night, at the very bottom of the soak of Ilbalintja: as yet there was not water in it, but all was dry ground.

Over him the soil was red with flower & overgrown with many grasses & a great pole was swaying above him.

. . . And Karora's head lay at the root of the great pole; he had rested thus ever from the beginning.

And Karora was thinking, & wishes & desires flashed through his mind. Bandicoots began to come out from his navel & from his arm-pits. They burst through the sod above & sprang into life.

And now dawn was beginning to break.

From all quarters men saw a new light appearing: the sun itself began to rise at Ilbalintja, & flooded everything with its light.

Then the gurra ancestor was minded to rise, now that the sun was mounting higher.

He burst through the crust that had covered him: & the gaping hole that he had left behind became the Ilbalintja Soak, filled with the sweet dark juice of honeysuckle buds.

II

Theoreticians have calculated a "standard" model of what the big bang may have been like. In the beginning we imagine a great primeval fireball of matter and radiation. We do not have to imagine any particular mass, or even a finite mass, for the fireball. Its density was very high and it was at a temperature of perhaps 10^{10}K .

At first the matter consisted only of protons, neutrons, electrons, positrons, and neutrinos, all independent particles. After about 100 seconds, however, the temperature had dropped to 10^9K , and the particles began to combine to form some heavier nuclei. This nucleogenesis continued, according to the model, for a few hours until the temperature dropped to about 10^8K . During this time, about 20 percent of the mass of the material formed into helium. Some deuterium also formed (deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen with a nucleus containing one proton and one neutron) but only a small amount—probably less than one part in a thousand. The actual amount of deuterium formed depends critically on the density of the fireball; if it was fairly high, most of the deuterium would have been built up into helium. Scarcely any nuclei heavier than those of helium are expected to have survived. So the composition of the fireball when nuclear building ceased is thought to have been mostly hydrogen, about 20 percent helium, and a trace of deuterium.

For the next million years the fireball was like a stellar interior—hot and opaque, with radiation passing from atom to atom. During the time, the temperature gradually dropped to about 3000K , and the density to about 1000 atoms/cm^3 . At this point the fireball became transparent. The radiation was

no longer absorbed and was able to pass freely throughout the universe. After about 1000 million years, the model predicts that the matter should have condensed into galaxies and stars.

We emphasize again that the fireball must not be thought of as a localized explosion—like an exploding superstar. There were no boundaries and no site of the explosion. It was everywhere. The fireball is still existing in a sense. It has expanded greatly, but the original matter and radiation are still present and accounted for. The atoms of our bodies came from material in the fireball. We were and are still in the midst of it, it is all around us,

I knew from my own early struggles that students who have not had a privileged education often freeze up when they see readings like these, particularly the big bang discussion with its superscripted numbers, the vocabulary of its first two paragraphs, and the heady notions in the last. And they don't have the background knowledge or the conceptual grab bag of received phrases to make connections between scientific theorizing and mythic explanation. But give them time. Provide some context, break them into groups or work with the whole class, involving everyone. Let them see what, collectively, they do know, and students will, together, begin to generate meaning and make connections. One person once read something else about big bang, and his knowledge helps a second person understand the nuclear processes in paragraph two, and that second person then asks a question that remained ill-formed in the mind of a third. And the teacher darts in and out of the conversation, clarifying, questioning, repeating, looping back to link one student's observation to another's. And so it is that the students, labeled "remedial," read and talk and write their way toward understanding.

* * * * *

The Teacher Corps introduced me to the risk and reward of education, but it was the Veteran's Program that really enabled me to come into my own as a teacher, to publicly define myself as someone engaged with the language of others. It was a good place to grow up. The work, successful or failed, had unusual power. The students possessed long and complex life histories, and they were trying to reclaim a place in the classroom they once lost or never really had. Here are a few of those students and a few of the pieces of their history.

It was the third or fourth day of my second quarter in the Veteran's Program, and I was, by now, very much aware of a bald man staring at me from a rear seat along the west wall of the room. His skin was dark, dark brown, his head perfectly slick, his ear pierced by a tiny gold ring. He wore a leather pilot's jacket and kept his arms folded tightly across his chest. I noticed the arms. Pilot's jackets are big, loose things, and this man's upper arms filled out the sleeves, the leather stretching firmly over his shoulders

and biceps. As I moved around day after day talking about writing, and memorizing names, and tapping people on shoulders, and getting one man to address another, this man, Willie Oates, sat back and said nothing. He seemed all forearms and pectorals and husky silence.

At the end of the fourth class, he walked slowly up to the podium, waiting his turn behind the three or four men who were asking about their assignment. I kept talking, half hoping they wouldn't leave. But they did. Then Willie took a step forward and began speaking, pounding his fist on the podium in slow pace with each deliberate word: "You," he said. "You—are—" and here he looked up from his fist and into my eyes. "You—are—teaching—the—fuck—outta—me!"

Willie had just spent two years in federal penitentiary. His muscles were the muscles you get from lifting weights two and three hours a day to cleanse your respect in spasms of rushing blood. During this time, Willie started reading. He read all the literature in the prison library, and while some of that was Hemingway, some of it was also Jane Austen. As he read, he wrote in a journal, and he began to develop a style that was ornate as a drawing room.

Willie Oates and I spent a lot of time in the lunchroom. Al Petrillo would be holding court at the cash register, and we'd be in a far corner, Willie's papers and Cokes and open bags of potato chips spread before us. Willie had all sorts of stylistic moves; it was my job to get him to weigh their merits. I would go over an essay sentence by sentence, showing him where he'd kill an effect with excess, or get himself into a hopeless tangle with his eighteenth-century syntax, or use a word that sounded pretentious to the twentieth-century ear. The assessing gaze that Willie had fixed on me was gone. Now there was a gentler look, one full of need—an unprotected intensity of mind. He slid into schooling like an athlete lowering himself into a whirlpool, feeling the heat deep in his tissue. He read Chinese poetry and stories by Pirandello. He wrote a paper using the British social historian J. H. Plumb to analyze American counterculture. He talked about Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver, two other black men who had transformed themselves in a prison library.

When Willie was released from the service years before, he returned to a neighborhood that was poor and burned out. He was an aching, dreamy man who couldn't dull himself and who, eventually, stole some money and a car to try to rip away from the projects and pool halls and indolent streets. He was caught within a week. And now, two or three years later, he saw his chance again. He wanted to know everything, was as hungry as anyone I'd seen. One day he showed me the journal he kept in prison—it was a thick National copybook with a cardboard cover pressed to look like leather. As I paged through it, I saw black, working-class experience fused with the language of teapots and Victorian gardens: whole pages of *Sense and Sensibility*

and *The Mill on the Floss* copied down, strained and awkward imitations, beginnings of short stories, reflections on prison that seemed forced but that contained elegant moments. It was a remarkable book, the record of a clash of cultures and a testament to the power of Willie's desire.

He kept a journal now, one filled with assignments from Speech and Psychology and Math and various rough drafts for me. He continued to write down quotations that caught his ear, these from the lectures and books that presently surrounded him. One from my class that I remember seeing there came from Niels Bohr: "Your theory is crazy—but not crazy enough to be true."

Willie was finding a way to direct his yearning. I would pass on to him books I was just discovering—*The Other America*; *Black Skin, White Masks*—and we would talk about the anger that used to knot him up, the hopelessness that landed him in prison. We talked about education and the use of it to direct the anger outward—dissent rather than involuted despair. Willie developed into a truly individual writer and, as well, learned to handle the academy. He received A's in psychology, English, speech, and mathematics. He went on to major in English at a local state university. He continued to write in his journal. Writing, now, in the university, writing to try out new ideas, writing to redefine himself. Writing and writing and writing.

Sergeant Gonzalez was a twenty-year man, a Marine who, at forty, was near retirement. He was tall and square-shouldered as a recruiting poster. He spoke his mind and he rarely smiled, and he was getting, at best, a C from me. He tried and tried but his writing remained too stunted, too abbreviated and superficial. He tended toward literal interpretations and preferred unambiguous answers. He had worked hard all his life, and hard work always gave him tangible results. So here he was, dropping his head and going over tackle again, and yet again, but with the same step, no little juke, no variation. I knew that he would never give up but that he was close to despair.

I set aside an hour after class and dug up something that I thought might help, a poem from Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*:

BUTCH WELDY

After I got religion and steadied down
They gave me a job in the canning works,
And every morning I had to fill
The tank in the yard with gasoline,
That fed the blow-fires in the sheds
To heat the soldering irons.
And I mounted a rickety ladder to do it,
Carrying buckets full of the stuff.
One morning, as I stood there pouring,

The air grew still and seemed to heave,
 And I shot up as the tank exploded,
 And down I came with both legs broken,
 And my eyes burned crisp as a couple of eggs.
 For someone left a blow-fire going,
 And something sucked the flame in the tank.
 The Circuit Judge said whoever did it
 Was a fellow-servant of mine, and so
 Old Rhodes' son didn't have to pay me.
 And I sat on the witness stand as blind
 As Jack the Fiddler, saying over and over
 "I didn't know him at all."

David could follow Butch Weldy's story. The poem depicted a real-life situation and did so along a straight narrative line. It nicely fit David's own interpretive predilections.

"So why," I asked him, "does Masters have Butch say 'someone' left a fire going, and 'something' caused an explosion? 'Someone' and 'something' sound pretty vague to me. Is Butch a little slow?"

"No, he's not slow. He just don't know who did it."

"David, who is Old Rhodes' son?"

"I'm not sure."

"If he's someone who has the ability to pay money to Butch, what position would he hold?"

"The boss? No. The owner. He owns the place."

"The judge said that whoever caused the accident to happen was a worker like Butch, and so, therefore, the owner wouldn't have to pay Butch. Pay for what?"

"The accident."

"What would we call it now if someone paid for the accident?"

"Workman's comp."

"Okay, David, now here's an interesting question for you. You're the head of a motor pool, right?"

"Right."

"If one of your soldiers stumbled and released the trip on a jack, and a car fell on a mechanic and injured him, whose fault would it be? The Marine Corps'?"

"Well, no."

"Could you think of any situation where it might be the Marine Corps' fault?"

We went on like this for a little while longer, and then I asked David to list all the information we had gleaned about Butch and his situation: He was seriously injured at work, is now blind, won't receive compensation, is

being shuttled through the legal system, and so on. After making our list, I picked up the questioning again, this time about Butch Weldy's past ("What does the first line—'*After* I got religion and steadied down'—tell us about Butch before he got this job?") and about the degree of control he seems to have over his life. This last issue was an interesting one to pose to David, for he was clearly a man who prided himself on being at the center of his actions.

"David, could you picture yourself in Butch's situation?"

"Well, yes and no. I mean I could imagine getting hurt, but—"

"But? But you would have been more careful?"

"Yeh. Yeh, I'd have been more careful."

"How does Masters describe the ladder Butch was climbing?"

"Rickety."

"Yep."

And so it went. Within a half hour, we had a long, rich list of detail about Butch Weldy. It was then that I started turning the key.

"Okay, David, look at the wealth of information we got from this little poem. Could we really understand the mess Butch Weldy is in without all this detail?"

"Um, no, no we couldn't, not really."

"That's right. The detail makes the whole thing come alive to us."

This continued for a few minutes, then: "Now, look, you are a powerful guy, and you take charge of things, and you like to have answers, and you can answer for yourself short and sweet . . . but, man, not everyone is like that. Butch is in a hell of a mess, and to tell somebody about it, we'd have to give a little history, and spell out what we know about the accident, and explain what kind of person Butch seems to be and how he feels. . . . Now, what sorts of things are we sure of; what can we say straight out?"

"Well, we could say what happened in the accident, I mean the ladder . . . the gasoline . . . the explosion . . . all that stuff. And we could say he's blind now and he's going to get screwed by the law."

"Right. Good. Now, what will we have to hedge our bets on? What will we have to say we're unsure about?"

"Hm. Well, we don't know who left the fires going, and we don't know exactly how the explosion happened."

"Okay. And, again, what are the words Masters uses?"

"Um . . . 'someone' and 'something.'"

"Now, what about Butch's character? What kind of guy is he?"

"It's hard to say, but he don't seem to have a grip on things, and maybe he never did. He sure as hell is lost."

"Good. And remember, you started what you just said with 'It's hard to say,' and that's a perfectly acceptable way to talk about some of the things going on in this little snapshot of a man's life."

I won't tell you that this session made David a dramatically better writer; only in Hollywood pedagogy does such change happen overnight. But the paper he wrote on "Butch Weldy" was richer in detail than was his previous work, and it displayed attempts to deal with the uncertain. David's writing started getting a little more ambitious and a little more specific. He was learning some new moves, a few ways to take chances in his writing. That created another set of problems, of course. Saying complex things forces you away from the protected syntax of simple sentences. But error that crops up because a student is trying new things is a valuable kind of error, a sign of growth.

Jerry Williams was thin and walked with a slight sideways bend at the waist; he wore wire-rim glasses that were deeply tinted. Jerry was quiet and solitary and tended to be irritable and rude with the other veterans. No one was close to him. He was a poor writer ("I think that the state of blacks in the U.S. is a easily debated subject. I think this becaus their is evidance if you want to look at it . . ."), and he'd miss class often. The tutors and I kept trying to catch him up, but then he'd miss school again, and we'd try again, and he'd slip further and further behind. He was a Seconal junkie, "reds," and the other men called him "Redhead." He was loaded most of the time I worked with him. I would guide him as he wrote a slow paragraph or talk ineffectually with him about an essay he'd forgotten to read. He'd look at me, eyes half-closed behind amber lenses, and respond to my suggestions with hip monosyllables: "dig it" and "right on" and like that. I hoped something was sinking in, though I didn't think much was. He stopped showing up at all during the last two weeks of school.

On the last day of that quarter, while the men were writing their final in-class papers, the door to my room slammed open and Jerry stumbled through. I had never seen him anywhere near that stoned. He made his way down the right aisle, steadying himself against the wall, and walked slowly to my desk. The class had stopped writing and was watching us. "I want to take the exam," he said. I told him I didn't think that was a good idea, that he was way too loaded to write anything. "Motherfucker," he yelled, "don't tell me that!" He slammed his hand on the desk and, in a quick tipsy glide, slid behind me. I wheeled around and grabbed his arms. Two or three guys in the front were out of their seats. But it was a burst of rage, and it faded quickly. Jerry put his hands back on the chalk tray and slumped into the blackboard. "Just let me take the exam," he slurred. Beneath the fuzz of the Seconal was some quavering desire to be schooled. He looked back up, not at me, but at the men in the first few rows: "I got a right to take the exam."

The veterans and I spent a lot of time talking about language. Sometimes a major part of a class would be taken up with a poem or song lyric, other

times I would sneak a quick opportunity for word play into a lesson: “Try writing a sentence like this one from *Native Son*,” or “Give me a phrase someone said or a song you heard that caught your ear today.” That would go on the board and spark discussion. A lot of the men took to language. For some, linguistic play was part of their culture; for others, it seemed okay to fool around with words if the teacher was getting all worked up about them, was—for God’s sake—walking backward into the podium because of a turned phrase.

Jack Cheney was a special kind of student. Every quarter we would get two or three men who had read a lot and were skilled writers. These were the guys who were bored to tears by high school—didn’t fit in, were out of step, quit going. But unlike some gifted dropouts, they weren’t from families who could afford to send them to special schools, so they were scooped up by the military with all the other uncovered eighteen-year-olds.

Jack could do the program’s work easily and started asking for books to read on his own. I had a copy of *The Great Gatsby* in my desk, so I gave it to him. A week or so later, he stopped by the office to tell me about a line of Fitzgerald’s: He describes the sound of a phonebook hitting the floor as a *splash*. The metaphor stirred Jack’s curiosity. “So I picked up our phonebook,” he said, all enthused, “and dropped it. It hit on the spine and went thud. Then I tried it again, and the pages hit, and—check it out, Mike—it splashed! How about that?”

Jon Davis wasn’t as well-read as Jack, and, in fact, never saw himself as an intellectual, didn’t care much for school. He entered the Veteran’s Program just to gain a few months reprieve from a Marine Corps life that had become intolerable to him. But during his twelve weeks with us, his deep need to be free of military codes and restrictions fused powerfully with his growing facility with written language. Halfway through the program, he made me promise not to laugh and then told me that he thought he might want to be a writer.

Jon still wasn’t sure about college. The military had seeped so thoroughly into his being that his response to any institution—church, school, state—was harsh and physical, an existential gag reflex. So when he finished the program, he headed north, away from L.A.’s industrial terrain, toward that magical, rootless garden so many young Americans were seeking. And the era met him, of course, with its Zen farmers and hippie craftsmen, with Kesey and Brautigan and Gary Snyder. Several months after he left, I received a long letter telling me he’d settled, finally, in a small town in Alaska. The stores weren’t crowded, he said, and he worked in the forests, and he lived in a fine old house:

I was sitting here smoking cigarettes . . . half-listening to some A.M. disc-jockey . . . letting thoughts come and pass and thinking maybe one will take

hold. . . . Alaska affords a fellow a good atmosphere in which to think and write: there's a lot of air and ground, trees and tundra; wide open meadows where you can spy moose if you're quiet and in a pious mood at early dawn. . . .

No one could doubt the veterans' motivation; some were nearly feverish. But over my time with them, I had come to see how desire was only part of the equation. A number of the men—like me during my early schooling—had skated along the surface of true education, had read too little, were propelling themselves forward on the jet streams of fleeting dreams. So they did all the things that learners, working class to upper crust, do when they lose focus or get scared or give up: They withdrew or faked it or cheated or got stoned or stayed home or blew up.

I and the other English teachers had three tutors to assist us—Tony, Patrick, and Kevin—and once we began to understand the fear of failure at the origin of the veterans' troubling behavior, we refused to give in to it. The more we worked together, the more we pepped each other into trying almost anything to reach the men we taught. We would flatter and plead and use the phone and yell and breathe deep and, more than once, walk down to the Morrison Hotel to pound on a door. Sometimes we pushed too far and found ourselves in situations we were too inexperienced to handle—like the time I sat in a shabby apartment with a blue-eyed addict and looked at the needles and saw open up before me a hopelessness and screaming rejection that I could not begin to address. But we also succeeded, and our successes fueled us. Kevin once said about one of our students: "If I have to, I'll kiss his ass to make him learn." If any of us could have translated that into Latin, it would have become our motto.

Morgan was a Marine scout who had been sent back to the states with two Purple Hearts and bits of shrapnel alongside his knee. He was a quiet man and his childhood couldn't have been more different from mine. He boxed, wrestled, and played up on the line and graduated to racing motorcycles and hunting wild boar with a handgun. At first glance, Morgan did not look all that imposing—five feet nine maybe—sloping shoulders, a slightly large rump. But then you think about it, about the guys you've seen with that certain angle to their trapezius muscles and with that wide beam and those thick thighs, and then you know: This man carries a tremendous centered power.

Morgan had meant grief for teachers since the day he got off his kindergarten mat. He had shined on innumerable lessons, sneered at too many ideas, turned thumbs-down on the mind. He had driven his parents nuts, wildly, almost suicidally trying to forge an identity. But he had something, and though his tolerance for diversity rivaled the Emperor Nero's, you wanted the guy to like you. I used to require students to see me after I'd returned

their essays. One of the first times I was scheduled to meet with Morgan, he appeared in my doorway with his essay crumpled and proceeded, in a remarkable act of frustration, to bite off the corner of the paper. His grade wasn't so hot, and, to make matters worse, he found out that another student he couldn't stand had received a higher mark. He walked around the room and ranted and waved the paper and, finally, sat down begrudgingly and smoothed it out so we could work on it. We went at the essay point by point, and I remember how happy I was, thinking, "I got him now. I've really got him."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, JOURNAL WRITING, AND DISCUSSION

1. Rose decided not to base his curriculum for the veterans on Vietnam because it would have seemed to him "presumptuous" and "intrusive." What do you think of his decision?
2. Mike Rose's students were novice writers with powerful life experiences. In teaching them, he decided to have them write about complex material. Would his students have been better off starting with more basic tasks?
3. How much attention did your teachers pay to "schoolbook grammar, mechanics, and usage"? Did it help you?
4. Rose found much in his personal and intellectual background that helped him form a common ground with his students. What might you draw on in your background in teaching disempowered students?

Teaching Basic Writing: An Alternative to Basic Skills

David Bartholomae

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At the University of Pittsburgh, we teach Basic Writing to around 1,200 students each year. The instruction is offered through two different courses—Basic Writing (3 hours, 3 credits) and Basic Reading and Writing (6 hours, 6 credits). We also have a Writing Workshop, and basic writers frequently attend, but their attendance is voluntary, and the workshop is not specifically for writers with basic problems.

The courses are not conventional remedial courses: they carry full graduation credit and there is little in the activity the courses prescribe to distinguish them from any general or advanced composition course. In fact, because of the nature of the assignments, the courses would be appropriate for students at any level. This is certainly not to say that there is no difference between a basic writer and any other student writer. There are significant points of difference. But it is a way of saying that writing should be offered as writing—not as sentence practice or paragraph practice—if the goal of a program is to produce writers. The assignments, about 20 in a 15-week term, typically ask students to consider and, from various perspectives, reconsider a single issue, like “Identity and Change” or “Work and Play.”¹ In the most general terms, the sequence of assignments presents writing as a

¹For an example of such a sequence of assignments, and for discussion of sequence as a concept, see: William E. Coles, Jr., *Teaching Composing* (Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1974) and William E. Coles, Jr., *The Plural I* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978). My debt to Bill Coles will be evident everywhere in the paper.

process of systematic inquiry, where the movement from week to week defines stages of understanding as, week by week, students gather new information, attempt new perspectives, re-formulate, re-see, and, in general, develop a command of a subject.

The instruction in writing, which is basically achieved through discussion of mimeographed copies of student papers, directs students in a systematic investigation of how they as individuals write, and of what they and their fellow students have written. The assumption behind such a pedagogy is that growth in writing ability is individual; that is, it will follow its own developmental logic, one that derives from a syllabus "built into" the learner, and such growth takes place not through the acquisition of general rules but through the writer's learning to see his language in relation to the languages around him, and through such perception, to test and experiment with that language. Such a process begins not with the study of Writing in the abstract, but only when a student develops a way of seeing his own writing, and a way of seeing that his writing has meaning beyond its paraphrasable context, that it is evidence of a language and a style.

We set out, then, to construct a pedagogy to develop that analytical reflex that would enable students to see their writing as not only "what they said," but as real and symbolic action: real, as deliberate, strategic, and systematic behavior, not random or outside the realm of choice and decision; and symbolic, as dramatically represented through such terms as "voice" or "writer," "audience," "approach," and "world view."² For the basic writer, this might mean the recognition that the errors in his writing fall into patterns, that those patterns have meaning in the context of his own individual struggle with composing, and that they are not, therefore, evidence of confusion or a general lack of competence.³ This perspective might mean the recognition that one's writing defines a stance in relation to an imagined audience or an imagined subject and that any general improvement would include improved control over that kind of imagining. Or this perspective might bring about the recognition that writing is deliberate and strategic, not random, not something that just happens to a writer. When students are able to see that they have been making decisions and exercising options, other decisions and other options become possible.

²I am making a distinction here very similar to that in Richard Ohmann, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric," *College English*, 26 (October, 1964), 17-22.

³I am, of course, summarizing one of the key findings of Mina Shaughnessy, *Errors and Expectations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). This paper draws heavily on Shaughnessy's work.

The nominal subject of the course, then, is defined by an issue like “Work and Play,” but the real subject is writing, as writing is defined by students in their own terms through a systematic inquiry into their behavior as writers. Behind this pedagogy is the assumption that students must be actively writing and simultaneously engaged in a study of their own writing as evidence of a language and a style, as evidence of real and symbolic action.

Most basic writing programs I observe, and most basic writing texts, are developed as though this were not possible. They begin with the assumption that the writing of basic writers is a “simpler” version of a universal writing process, or that it is evidence of unformed or partially developed language behavior, that the performance of basic writers is random, incoherent, as if basic writers were not deliberately composing utterances but responding, as the dominant metaphor would have it, mechanically and doing so with unreliable machinery. The end product of this reasoning is that basic writers need, finally, to learn basic or constituent skills, skills that somehow come prior to writing itself. Before students can be let loose to write, the argument goes, they need a semester to “work on” sentences or paragraphs, as if writing a sentence in a workbook or paragraph in isolation were somehow equivalent to producing those units in the midst of some extended act of writing, or as if the difficulties of writing sentences or paragraphs are concepts rather than intrinsic to the writer and his struggle to juggle the demands of a language, a rhetoric, and a task. These basic skills are defined in terms of sequences—“words, sentences, paragraphs, essays” or “description, narration, exposition, persuasion”—that, in turn, stand for a pedagogy.

Such a pedagogy meets the immediate needs of teachers who are frustrated by an almost complete inability to understand what could be happening in the heads of students whose writing seems to be so radically different from their own, or from the writing they’ve learned to read. And it is the convenience of this pedagogy, which frees all parties, teachers and students, from ever having to talk about writing, that leads teachers to hang on to it in the face of evidence that it produces limited returns. The skills curriculum is not founded on any investigation of the language that students produce, nor any systematic investigation into how writing skills are acquired. If there is a syllabus common to such skills courses, it derives its logic and its sequence from the traditional study of the sentence and the paragraph, units the learner is seen as incompetent to produce, rather than from any attempt to imagine a sequence of instruction drawing on the syllabus built into the learner, corresponding to his particular competence and the stage of his development in the acquisition of the formal, written dialect.

The distinction that needs to be made, I think, is the distinction between competence and fluency.⁴ Mina Shaughnessy's brilliant study of the writing of basic writers in *Errors and Expectations* shows the fallacy behind the thinking that equates signs with causes, that necessarily assumes a student misspells because he can't spell, leaves endings off verbs because he doesn't know how tenses are formed, or writes a sentence fragment because he doesn't understand the concept of a sentence. Her work defines both the theory and the method of analysis that can enable us to see student error as other than an accident of composing or a failure to learn. In fact, she argues that the predictable patterns of error are, themselves, evidence of students' basic competence, since they show evidence that these writers are generating rules and forming hypotheses in order to make language predictable and manageable.⁵ Errors, then, can often be seen as evidence of competence, since they are evidence of deliberate, coherent action. Error can best be understood as marking a stage of growth or as evidence of a lack of fluency with the immensely complicated process of writing, where fluency can be as much a matter of manipulating a pen as it can be of manipulating constituents of syntax.

A pedagogy built upon the concept of fluency allows distinctions analogous to those Frank Smith makes in his analysis of the reading process. A fluent reader, according to Smith, is one who can immediately process large chunks of information, as compared to the reader for whom the process is mediated by mental operations that are inefficient, inappropriate or a stage in some necessary developmental sequence.⁶ Basic skills, then, are basic to the individual's ability to process information and can be developed only through practice. The natural process of development can be assisted by pedagogies that complement an individual developmental sequence, and by those that remove barriers, false assumptions, like the assumption that readers read each word, or read sounds, or understand everything at every moment.

BASIC WRITING

Our program begins, then, with the recognition that students, with the exception of a few who are learning disabled or who have literally never been taught to form words, possess the skills that are truly basic to writing.

⁴For a discussion of this distinction between fluency and competence, see David Bartholomae, "The Study of Error," *Linguistics, Stylistics and the Teaching of Composition*, Donald McQuade, ed. (Akron, Ohio: Akron University Press, scheduled for publication in November, 1978).

⁵Shaughnessy, *Errors and Expectations*, 104–5, 117–18.

⁶Frank Smith, *Understanding Reading* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971).

They have the ability to transcribe speech into writing, and the writing they produce is evidence of the ability to act deliberately in the production of units of discourse to some degree beyond the single sentence. We separate out, as secondary, what can justifiably be called mechanical skills, skills that can be taught as opposed to those that can only be developed.⁷ D'Angelo has defined these skills as handwriting, capitalization, punctuation and spelling.⁸ Since a knowledge about these is of a different order than linguistic or rhetorical knowledge, they are not the immediate subject of a course in composition. Since, however, errors of capitalization, punctuation, or spelling are not necessarily due to a simple lack of information about capitalization, punctuation, or spelling but must be seen in the context of an individual's confrontation with the process of composing through written language, this is not to say that a concern for those errors is secondary.

A responsible pedagogy, I've been arguing, begins by making the soundest possible speculation about the syllabus built into the learner, rather than imposing upon a learner a sequence serving the convenience of teachers or administrators. We have decided that the key to such a sequence lies in what we might call a characteristic failure of rhetorical imagining, a failure, on the part of basic writers, to imagine themselves as writers writing. Or, to phrase it another way, the key to an effective pedagogy is a sequence of instruction that allows students to experience the possibilities for contextualizing a given writing situation in their own terms, terms that would allow them to initiate and participate in the process by which they and their subject are transformed. This, I take it, is the goal of Friere's pedagogy for non-literate Brazilians, a "problem-posing" education that enables the individual to turn his experience into subject matter and himself into the one who names and, thereby, possesses that subject."⁹

The goal of instruction in basic writing at the University of Pittsburgh is to enable students to locate ways of perceiving and describing themselves as writers. We've chosen to do this by involving them, through class discussion of student papers, in the regular, systematic analysis of what they have written and how they went about writing it. The only text for the course, then, is the students' own writing and if there is a theory of instruction, it is embodied in the kinds of conversations we have in class about that writing.

⁷John Warnock, "New Rhetoric and the Grammar of Pedagogy," *Freshman English News*, 5 (Fall, 1976), 12.

⁸Frank J. D'Angelo, "The Search for Intelligible Structure in the Teaching of Composition," *College Composition and Communication*, 27 (May, 1976), 142-147.

⁹Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968). See chapter two.

The classes are designed to enable students to develop, for themselves and in their own terms, a vocabulary that will allow them to name and manipulate their own idiosyncratic behavior as writers. The conversations in class, as the class evolves over the term, approach writing in four ways. The approaches, of course, overlap and at times seem identical rather than different, but for convenience's sake let me describe four perspectives we want students to develop on their performance as writers.

The first of these "approaches" asks students to consider writing as an experience by asking them to analyze and describe their experience with our assignments over the course of the semester. If they do nothing else, discussions about how an assignment was done, what it was like and how it felt can enable students to see the ways in which writing is a human activity, one that can be defined in personal terms. For students who see writing as a mystery, or as a privilege of caste, it is liberating to hear others, including instructors, talk about how sloppy the process is, or about ways others have dealt with the anxiety and chaos that so often accompany writing. It's liberating to hear of the habits and rituals of other writers. It's liberating to find out that ideas often start out as intuitions, as a sense of a connection it would be nice to make, and that the ideas only become reasoned and reasonable after repeated acts of writing. It's helpful to discover that other writers get stuck or have trouble starting at all, just as it is helpful to hear about ways others have found of getting past such blocks. And finally, it is always liberating for students to hear that successful and experienced writers produce good sentences and paragraphs only after writing and throwing away a number of lousy sentences and paragraphs. This is not how writing is described in our textbooks, and students, even if they know how to talk about "topic sentences," "development," or "transitions," don't know how to talk about writing in ways that make sense given their own felt experience with the process.

Writing is a solitary activity and writers are limited by the assumptions they carry with them to the act of writing. They are limited, that is, by the limits of their ability to imagine what writing is and how writers behave. The basic writers we see characteristically begin with the assumption that good writers sit down, decide what they want to say and then write straight through from an Introduction to a Conclusion without making any mistakes along the way. So if it is liberating to hear about the struggles and rituals of other writers, the power of such liberation extends beyond the comfort that one is not alone, since the process of identifying a style of composing, and seeing that style in relation to other styles, is the necessary prelude to any testing and experimenting with the process of writing.

In addition, the activity of collecting information from the reports of other students, generalizing from that information, and defining a position in relation to that general statement recapitulates the basic intellectual