

# The Newsletter

## Conference on Basic Writing Skills

A special interest group of CCCC



Number 5

Fall 1984

## "Critical Thinking" at 4 C's Session

The Conference on Basic Writing Skills is pleased to announce that Professor Mary Kay Harrington, of California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, California, will act as Program Chair for this year's annual CBWS Meeting to be held at the CCCC convention in Minneapolis. Professor Harrington coordinates the basic writing program at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, including directing the Writing Lab and teaching related courses in the English Department.

This year's program will feature a panel discussion on the theme "Critical Thinking and the Basic Writer: Theory and Practice." We are seeking participants for this panel. If you are interested, please see the accompanying "Call for Panelists." We seek a panel of wide representation: Colleagues from community colleges, state universities, private universities, and research-oriented universities, as well as from various geographic areas of the country. We are looking for innovative solutions to difficult problems.

CBWS, a special interest group of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), meets annually during the CCCC convention. This year's CCCC convention will be held March 21-23, 1985, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The CBWS meeting will be held during the time assigned to special interest groups, Thursday, March 21, 1985, 5:30-6:30.

After the meeting, we will continue our tradition of going out to dinner together. This is a fine opportunity to pursue the discussion informally, to get to know other basic writing professionals, to talk about any aspect of basic writing teaching or research, or to discuss possible directions for CBWS. Plan now to meet with the CBWS group for dinner after our meeting.

### CALL FOR PANELISTS:

#### CBWS Annual Meeting

Persons interested in serving as participants in a panel discussion on Critical Thinking and the Basic Writer: Theory and Practice, please prepare the following materials:

1. Brief outline of your experience and interests;
2. Short statement addressing problems you sense are crucial in the development of critical thinking in basic writers.

Send to:

Professor Mary Kay Harrington  
English Department  
California Polytechnic State Univ.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 1985

(Panel discussion to be held 3/21/85  
at special interest group meeting of  
CBWS, Minneapolis, CCCC Convention)



# CONFERENCES and INSTITUTES

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON REMEDIAL/DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION will be held April 14, 15, 16, 1985, at the Niagara Hilton Hotel near Niagara Falls sponsored by the New York College Learning Skills Association. Focus will be on instruction and technology and in responses to multiculturalism and institutional change. Contact: Wendy Duignan, Niagara University, NY 14109, 716-285-1212, ex. 580 or 581. Proposals solicited.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION (NADE) will hold its ninth annual conference March 7-9, 1985, in St. Louis. The conference features over 100 individual presentations, pre-conference institutes, exchange facilities etc. Contact: Elizabeth Farpey, Office of Academic Services, Box 53A, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Edwardsville, IL 62026.

TEACHING WRITING FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW, an NCTE cosponsored meeting, will be held March 9, 1985, at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, IL. Contact: Barbara Quinn Schmidt, Department of English Language and Literature, Box 43, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Edwardsville, IL 62026.

THE 1985 CCCC ANNUAL CONVENTION will be held March 21-23, 1985, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Program Chair Lee Odell's theme is "Making Connections." Plan now to attend this convention, always a high point of the year for writing teachers. Don't forget the CBWS Special Interest Group meeting which will take place during the CCCC Convention. (See p. 1.) Contact: NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

TEXAS JOINT COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH will meet January 31-February 2, 1985, at the Hyatt Regency in Houston. Contact: Betty Gray/4011 Monteith Drive, Spring, TX 77373/713-449-1011.

PACIFIC COAST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION MEETING will be held Saturday, February 9, 1985, at the University of Southern Calif., Los Angeles, CA. Interested participants should send 150 word abstracts on writing center topics. Contact: Irene Lurkis Clark, Director of the Writing Center, Freshman Writing Program, University of Southern California, University Park, MC-1291, Los Angeles, CA 90089-1291, or Thom Hawkins, Coordinator, Tutor Services in Writing, Student Learning Center, Building T8, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

An Institute for Learning Center Directors and Practitioners will be held June 25-28, 1985, sponsored by the Learning Assistance System at California State University, Long Beach. Limited to 70 participants, the institute has two themes:

- 1) Learning Assistance Management Strategies, and
- 2) Practitioner Strategies, Skills, Programs, and Materials, including computer technology.

Contact: Frank L. Christ or Elaine Burns Reed/Learning Assistance Center, CSU, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA 90840.

WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS will hold a special session, "The Changing Role of the WPA," at the 1985 CCCC.

REASONING AND HIGHER EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENTIAL CONFERENCE will be held in Boise, Idaho February 28 & March 1, 1985. Co-sponsored by the Boise State University Center for the Study of Thinking and the Northern Rockies Consortium of Higher Education (NORCHE), the conference will provide workshops and presentations designed to help higher education faculty promote the development of reasoning in college students. A call for contributed session proposal forms and further information are available from Dewey Dykstra, Center for the Study of Thinking, Boise, ID 83725, (208)385-1934. Proposals for sessions must be received by December 7, 1984.



WINTER WORKSHOP IN TEACHING COMPOSITION TO UNDERGRADUATES will be held January 10-12, 1985, at the Sheraton Sand Key in Clearwater Beach, FL, sponsored by the CCCC and NCTE. Designed to provide professional development for teachers in two- and four-year colleges, the three-strand program offers intensive workshops in computer applications to the teaching of composition, the composing process, and technical writing. Consultants include Lillian Bridwell on computer applications, Sondra Perl on the composing process, and Leslie A. Olsen on technical writing. Registration fee of \$180, which includes some meals, is due by November 29, 1984. Contact: 1985 CCCC Winter Workshop, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION HAS A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR COLLEGE READING IMPROVEMENT. Persons interested in reading-writing connections might wish to make contact with this group. Contact: Jane KOLLAR-ITSCH, Treasurer, SIG for College Reading Improvement, Learning Resources Center, Ohio State University, 1070 Carmack Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION will hold its annual meeting December 27-30, 1984, in Washington D.C. CCCC will sponsor a session organized by Richard E. Larson, Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY. The session, "History of the Teaching of Rhetoric and Composition: Three Current Studies," will feature Donald Stewart, William Woods, and Robert Conners.

THE COLLEGE LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION will hold its annual meeting April 17-20, 1985, at the New York Penta Hotel in New York City. CCCC will sponsor a session at this conference. Rosentene Purnell and Erika Lindemann will provide a workshop on "Current Issues Facing the Teacher of English: Suggested Responses."

THE NORTHWEST REGIONAL MEETING OF NCTE, sponsored by the Washington State Council of Teachers of English, will be held April 25-27, 1985, in Seattle, WA. Contact: Eugene Smith, Department of English, GN-30, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195/(206) 543-7993.

COUNTDOWN TO EXCELLENCE is the theme of the 1985 Spring Conference of NCTE, scheduled for March 28-30 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, Texas. Registration materials will be mailed in December. Contact: Convention Information/NCTE/1111 Kenyon Road/Urbana, IL 61801.

International Writing Convention will be held March 31 - April 4, 1985 at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England. Organized by the new School of Education at University of East Anglia, the convention will stress research and teaching in all aspects of writing. There will be representatives from Britain, Canada, Austria, New Zealand, the U.S., and first-language specialists from European and African countries. Contact: Eileen Chapman, International Writing Convention, Secretary, School of Education, University of East Anglia, The Plain, Norwich, Norfolk, U.K. NR4 7TJ. This meeting precedes the 1985 Convention of Britain's National Association of Teachers of English, April 9-12, 1985, in Nottinghamshire.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (NATE), counterpart of NCTE in England, has issued a special invitation to NCTE members to attend its convention, April 9-12, 1985, in Nottinghamshire. Special tours can be arranged, and NATE is receptive to program proposals from North Americans. Contact: Colin Harrison, School of Education, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD.

LEARNING IN MANY TONGUES: EDUCATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT will be held January 25-26, 1985 at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Designed for teachers and advisers of international students from the elementary to the post-secondary level, the conference will feature Ann Raimos of Hunter College, editor of a 1984 TESOL Newsletter Supplement on Composition, and James Stalker of Michigan State University, Director of NCTE Commission on Language. Contact: Stan Patten, Program Chair/English Department/University of North Carolina at Charlotte/Charlotte, NC 28223.

## CBWS's New Members

Welcome to the following new CBWS members:

Jennifer Andrews, Melbourne DeYoung, Kim Flachmann, Donna B. Haisty, Hong Kong Baptist College Library, B. Ihlenfeldt, Karen Miller, Sonia Paslawsky, Rosalie Riegk Troester.



# PUBLICATIONS of Interest

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION presents fully-developed, well researched articles on writing. Cross-disciplinary in approach, the journal is edited by Stephen Witte and John Daly of the University of Texas at Austin, with the advice of a distinguished editorial board. Thus far the journal has published articles by Lunsford and Ede, Flower and Hayes, Scardemalia, Matsushashi, and Kroll, among others. It seems to fill a void in scholarly publications which offer authors the space to explore an idea in depth. One-year individual subscriptions are currently \$21.60. Contact: SAGE Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 5024, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF INNOVATIVE FRESHMAN WRITING PROGRAMS will be published by the Institute for Writing and Thinking at Bard College. Essays of 2500 words written by program representatives will describe the design, assumptions, and innovative or experimental features of programs from which other schools may learn. Potential contributors, send one-paragraph summary. Contact: Paul Connolly, Director, Institute for Writing and Thinking, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504.

THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION is soliciting proposals for research papers in the field of developmental education, for presentation at its spring 1985 annual conference in Chicago, Illinois. Contact: Curtis Miles, Division J Vice-Chairperson for Developmental Education, Piedmont Technical College, P.O. Drawer 1467, Greenwood, SC 29648/803-223-8357.

Teaching English in the Two-Year College has become an NCTE publication as of October 1984. The ten-year-old periodical, edited by Bertie E. Fearing of East Carolina University and John E. Hutchens of Pitt Community College, Greenville, NC, will become a quarterly, with the present editors continuing for a three-year term. Editorial offices: c/o English Department, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27834. Subscriptions: \$15/yr; contact: NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

THE NORTHWEST ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NWAEEA) serves educators of adults (continuing education, adult education, developmental education) in Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. For the NWAEEA NEWSLETTER, contact: Dorothy L. Clode, Editor, NWAEEA NEWSLETTER, P.O. Box 283, Lake Cowichan, B.C., VOR 2G0.

RADICAL TEACHER recently devoted an issue to the Back-to-Basics movement and basic skills in general. This issue was edited by Robert Rosen, a member of CBWS, who teaches at William Peterson College in Wayne, NJ. The issue is available for \$3 from RADICAL TEACHER, P.O. Box 102, Kendall Square Post Office, Cambridge, Mass. 01242. Subscriptions are \$8/year for three issues.

THREE NEW NCTE BOOKS LOOK ESPECIALLY USEFUL TO BASIC WRITING TEACHERS. Writing Centers: Theory and Administration, edited by Gary A. Olson, is a collection of nineteen essays which examine the connections between writing center pedagogy, especially the tutorial, and various aspects of composition and learning theory; as well as practical matters such as finance, record keeping and tutor training. Training Tutors for Writing Conferences, by Thomas J. Reigstad and Donald A. McAndrew, a 52-page booklet, offers four principles of tutor training and describes three tutoring styles: student-centered, collaborative, and teacher-centered. The Computer and Composition Instruction, William Wresch, editor, is a collection of articles on prewriting approaches, editing and grammar programs, word processing research and applications, and programs for the writing process. Order from: NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

LITERACY AS A HUMAN PROBLEM, an NCTE Publication dedicated to the memory of Mina P. Shaughnessy, "extraordinary teacher, writer, and scholar," contains nine essays first read in a symposium at the University of Alabama. Edited by James C. Raymond, authors of essays include Richard Lloyd-Jones, Edward P. J. Corbett, Frank D'Angelo, Walter Ong, and others; the collection reflects a wide range of issues on literacy. Price: \$6.95 for NCTE members; \$7.50 for nonmembers; + \$1.50 shipping and handling. NCTE No. 29579A. Order from: National Council of Teachers of English/ 1111 Kenyon Road/ Urbana, IL 61801.



THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER is intended as an informal means of exchanging information among those who work in writing labs and language skills centers. Brief articles describing labs, their instructional methods and materials, goals, programs, budgets, staffing, services, etc. are invited. For those who wish to join the newsletter group, a donation of \$5 to help defray duplicating and mailing costs (with checks made payable to Purdue University, but sent to me) would be appreciated. Please send material for the newsletter and requests to join to:

Professor Muriel Harris, Editor  
WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER  
Department of English  
Purdue University  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE ARTS SOFTWARE, a new four-page publication from the NCTE Committee on Instructional Technology, is available. For a free sample copy, send SASE with your request to: Information Services, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION (NADE) Research Reports are available: Report #1, Developmental Learning: Evaluation and Assessment, \$6 prepaid; Report #2 Is Developmental Education Working? \$6 prepaid; Report #3, A Compendium of Research on Topics from Software to Program Evaluation, \$3 prepaid; all three reports, \$10 prepaid. Make check payable to NADE. Contact: Harold N. Hild, General Editor for NADE Reports, Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625.

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"One of our chief concerns will be to make certain that people understand English is more than skills--that it represents the central learning in the humanities.... Not since the 1960's has there been a concerted effort by so many different societies in English to cooperate on mutual concerns."  
--Richard Lloyd-Jones of University of Iowa, speaking as a member of the recently-formed coalition of NCTE, MLA, ADE, CEA, CLA and CCCC.

A NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF EXEMPLARY DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS is scheduled to be published in the summer of 1985 by the Center for Developmental Education at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. You may have been approached by your state's information coordinator to provide documentation about your program. An "exemplary" program is defined as one that meets the following criteria:

1. A written statement of program philosophy or rationale.
2. A written statement of the program goals and component objectives.
3. A written description of all program components.
4. An on-going evaluation program accompanied by an annual report demonstrating significant impact on student learning and development.
5. A statement of commitment from the chief academic and/or student personnel officer.
6. The ability and willingness to respond to requests for information contained in items 1-5 above.

In addition to recognizing exemplary programs, the directory will also include a summary of state legislation affecting those programs.

This directory should make a significant contribution to the field of developmental education. It will provide a national network of resources and information on our profession. The project has the following goals:

- \* To demonstrate the maturity of Developmental Education as a widespread and viable unit of academic status within the structure of Higher Education in the United States.
- \* To identify published references to the active commitments of states and governing boards to the philosophy of equal opportunity, so Developmental Educators can encourage less enlightened governing authorities to adopt similar levels of commitment and accountability.
- \* To provide a showcase acknowledging the expertise, dedication and professionalism of Developmental Educators.

If you have not yet been contacted by your state's information coordinator, please contact the Center directly: Cynthia G. Thompson, Project Coordinator, Center for Developmental Education, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608/(704) 262-3057.



# Notes and Announcements

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: RESEARCH ON GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION.** We are eager to hear from those who can acquaint us with unpublished reports or findings about the effect of grammar instruction at the basic writing level, or who can refer us to published work in this subject that may have escaped our attention. Contact: Carolyn Kerkpatrick or Mary Epes, Department of English, York College/CUNY, Jamaica, NY 11451.

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE BEDFORD PRIZES IN STUDENT WRITING IS JANUARY 25, 1985.** Designed to recognize outstanding essays written by freshman, contest coordinators are Nancy Sommers and Donald McQuade. The first competition (held in 1982) resulted in the recently released, process-oriented text Student Writers at Work: The Bedford Prizes. Contact: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, P.O. Box 869, Boston, MA 02117.

## PENN STATE CONFERENCE

on

## RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Richard Lanham and Andrea Lunsford will be the Major Consultants at the fourth Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition to be held July 9-12, 1985, at State College, Pennsylvania. Featured Speakers will include Linda Flower, Lee Odell, James Raymond, and Stephen Toulmin.

Those interested in participating are invited to present papers, demonstrations, or workshops on topics related to rhetoric or the teaching of writing--on composition, rhetorical theory and history, basic writing, technical and business communication, advanced composition, writing across the curriculum, and so forth. One-page proposals will be accepted through April 15.

If you wish to submit a proposal or volunteer to chair a session, or if you are interested in more information about attending or participating in the conference, write to Professor Jack Selzer, Department of English, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Writing Program at Temple University solicits previously unpublished manuscripts for inclusion in Temple University Working Papers in Composition. Our emphasis is on work in progress, new ideas that are thought-provoking, critical, even speculative. Papers may be theoretical or applied and may treat from any perspective writing at the college level. Upon acceptance, titles will be included among a list distributed periodically to the academic community. Details, including submission format, may be obtained from F. J. Sullivan, Writing Program, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122.

## CALL FOR PROGRAM PROPOSALS

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION will hold its third annual conference at Boise State University on June 15, 1985. The conference schedule will allow for both 20-minute and one-hour presentations. Informal talks and demonstrations are preferred, but proposals for papers are also welcome. Send proposals and inquiries to Richard Leahy, RMWCA Conference Chair, English Department, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho 83725. Deadline for proposals is April 1, 1985.

IF YOU HAVE NEWS ITEMS (upcoming conferences, journals of note, etc.), send them along to us: CBWS, English Department, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho 83725.





A COALITION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION, THE ASSOCIATION OF DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH, COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION, COLLEGE LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION, AND CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION met twice in the last year to respond jointly to recommendations of reform groups concerning secondary education. Particularly, the coalition responded to A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform and Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools. The coalition released a statement to the media called "Some Plain Truths About Teaching English," which is reproduced here:

#### SOME PLAIN TRUTHS ABOUT TEACHING ENGLISH

Prompted by recent reports on American education, many communities are now trying to strengthen their schools' English programs as a part of general educational reform. A number of government agencies are considering proposals which will affect the teaching of English. But without a clear understanding of the field, the reformers may fail to achieve this goal. The reports offer little specific guidance to those who must implement the changes. Some of the reports simply assert the value of English; others offer suggestions based on limited understanding of the subject. To provide a foundation for successful reform, we offer the public, as a preliminary response, a few plain truths:

1. English studies include the study of both literature and writing.

Although most of the reports assert the value of learning to write, they fail to recognize the importance of studying literature.

The ability to write effectively is obviously crucial. Writing helps people conduct the business of living. It helps them solve problems and express themselves. It forces them to create meaning in words, to explore who they are and what they think. Writing provides an invaluable means of understanding all fields and of sharing knowledge.

The study of literature is equally important. Literature enriches and broadens the experience of life. It plays a significant role in learning to use language well. By studying literature people learn how ideas, emotions, and moral commitments have been fused in language. By learning to analyze and interpret the language of literature they learn to deal with ambiguity and to remain wary of answers that close off the possibility

of discussion. Learning how to interpret complex, emotionally intense literary works enables them to improve their own writing and helps them interpret the various forms of communication they encounter in their daily lives.

Learning to interpret literature is a key link between functional literacy and the highest intellectual purposes of learning.

2. So much excellent literature exists that different schools may reasonably make different selections of literature for their students.

Many reports raise the question of what students should read. A number suggest the importance of establishing a common body of literature.

Students should read works that help them define and understand their own values and experiences and those of others. All students should read widely in the literatures from their own cultures and regions, from the pluralistic American experience, and from the world at large.

3. Small classes are necessary for effective language learning.

While some reports call for better teaching, few acknowledge the need for small English classes.

Students learn effective writing and critical reading best through practice. When they write, they need frequent opportunities to go over their work with classmates and teachers. When they read, they must have enough time to discuss literature with the teacher individually or in small groups. To promote learning, teachers must respond to individual variations in their students' development. Effective language learning requires coaching by mature, well-educated teachers. Such coaching requires small classes.

4. Achievement in English cannot be evaluated adequately by mass testing.

Many of the reports accept data from mass testing programs as justification for their recommendations.

Some achievements may be partially measured by mass testing. But the use of language is a complex activity; it can be evaluated only by frequent observation of real performances of reading and writing.

Teaching and learning are also complex activities that cannot be evaluated simplistically. Even test publishers explicitly

*Continued on page 8*



SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE JOURNAL OF BASIC WRITING will no longer be available through CBWS. As of May 1, 1985, subscriptions to JBW will be available only through the City University of New York's Instructional Resource Center. This from Professor Marie Jean Lederman, University Dean of Academic Affairs and Director, Instructional Resource Center of City University.

The JBW is undergoing editorial changes. Beginning in 1986, JBW will have a new editor, Professor Lynn Quitman Troyka. (No new articles will be considered until March 1985.) Professor Sarah D'Eloia Fortune, current editor, will step down in 1986. CBWS wishes to express its congratulations to Professor Fortune for the fine and thoughtful job she has done as JBW editor. We also appreciate her continuing, positive support for CBWS. Finally, best of luck to Professor Troyka in her future work as editor.

We hope you received and enjoyed the most recent edition of JBW as much as we did. Vol. 3, No. 4, the Spring/Summer 1984 issue, was entitled "Training Teachers of Basic Writing, Part II." While Part I of this series addressed doctoral programs for basic writing teachers and in-service training for college and high school English instructors, Part II deals with programs for teaching assistants in English or for faculty or part-time instructors from other fields. Contributors to Part II include Sara Garnes, Christopher Burnham, Lil Brannon and Gordon Pradl, Lou Kelly, Irvin Y. Hashimoto, Betsy E. Brown and John T. Harwood, and Patrick Hartwell.

Issues planned for 1985 are "Basic Writing and Social Science Research I" (Vol. 4, No. 1) and "Basic Writing and Social Science Research II" (Vol. 4, No. 2).

Current rates for subscriptions to JBW: One year subscription, consisting of two issues: \$8 for individuals and \$12 for institutions; two year subscription, consisting of four issues: \$15 for individuals and \$23 for institutions. (Foreign postage: \$2.50 additional.) Send subscription requests to: JOURNAL OF BASIC WRITING, Instructional Resource Center, 535 East 80 Street, New York, NY 10021/212-794-5424.

The following back issues are available at \$4.50 each:

Vol. 1, No. 1 ERROR  
Vol. 1, No. 2 COURSES  
Vol. 1, No. 4 EVALUATION

Vol. 2, No. 1 APPLICATIONS  
Vol. 2, No. 2 PROGRAMS  
Vol. 2, No. 4 REINFORCEMENT

Vol. 3, No. 1 TOWARD A LITERATE DEMOCRACY  
Vol. 3, No. 2 TRAINING TEACHERS OF BASIC WRITING, PART I  
Vol. 3, No. 3 REVISION  
Vol. 3, No. 4 TRAINING TEACHERS OF BASIC WRITING, PART II

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*"Some Plain Truths about Teaching English," continued from page 7*

warn against misusing test scores as measures of effective programs, courses, or teachers. Relying on mass testing inevitably leads to programs oriented toward test scores rather than educational goals.

5. Teachers must have support to continue their growth as professionals.

Some reports point out that communication among English teachers across grade levels and institutions remains inadequate, but few reports suggest remedies.

Overcoming the isolation of teachers requires that they have more time and additional opportunities to discuss their work with colleagues and to continue their studies. Although professional organizations strive to provide adequate forums, teachers need more encouragement and support from their administrators and communities to participate in such forums in their pursuit of excellence in teaching.

As representatives of national associations of those who study and teach English, we welcome the dialogue now taking place among parents, educators, and community leaders. We invite responses to this statement and intend to prepare more extensive explanations of these principles and others of concern to the public and the profession. We see these exchanges as opportunities to work together and to enhance the quality of instruction we offer our students.

A major follow-up conference of the groups who authored the above statement (the NCTE, MLA, ADE, CEA, CLA, CCCC) on "The Unity of English Studies" is tentatively planned for 1986 along with the implementation of certain interim procedures to aid the profession as new policies and regulations are set into motion by decision-makers.



# Editorial Policy

The CONFERENCE ON BASIC WRITING SKILLS NEWSLETTER is the official publication of the Conference on Basic Writing Skills, a special interest group of the CCCC. The editors encourage material on all topics of current interest to humanists professionally interested in basic writing and literacy at the post-secondary level. Material with a range of approaches--from teaching strategies to accessible discussions of theory and research to book reviews--will be considered.

Possible topics include the following: composing processes of basic writing students; instructional sequencing within the basic writing course; relationships between attitudes and skills in the basic writing course; connections among writing, reading, speaking, and listening in the basic writing course; evaluation of basic writing programs, courses, materials, and tutors; and the impact of technology on the teaching and learning of basic writing.

Possible types of material include:

- Short articles
- Reports of work in progress
- Interviews
- Reviews of textbooks
- Reviews of books on composition, rhetoric literacy, pedagogy, etc.
- Teaching ideas and classroom exercises
- Surveys or questionnaires with follow-up of results
- Calls for papers
- Announcements of conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops
- Announcements of new or especially helpful journals, newsletters, or other publications
- Guest editorials
- Information on current political events in your local area that affect basic writing

This brief list of topics and types of submissions serves only to suggest the broad range of material appropriate for the CBWS NEWSLETTER.

## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editors suggest that articles not exceed 1,000 words. Avoid formal documentations when possible; however, when needed, notes should follow the current MLA STYLE SHEET. Material should not be previously published and should comply with NCTE GUIDELINES FOR NON-SEXIST USE OF LANGUAGE. Send two copies of an article. Contributions will not be returned unless accompanied by SASE. Deadline for the next issue is June 30, 1984. Send to:

The Editors  
CONFERENCE ON BASIC WRITING SKILLS NEWSLETTER  
English Department  
Boise State University  
Boise, ID. 83725

I'd like to become a member of the CONFERENCE ON BASIC WRITING SKILLS and join the CBWS NEWSLETTER group. I am sending a donation, as indicated below, to help defray duplicating and mailing costs.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$7.00 CONFERENCE ON BASIC WRITING SKILLS only (four issues of THE NEWSLETTER)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$2.00 additional postage outside the U. S.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Send to:

CBWS  
Department of English  
Boise State University  
Boise, ID 83725

Thanks to those of you who have sent in renewal checks, but please be sure you have received your four promised issues of THE NEWSLETTER before you send a renewal. CBWS does not have the resources to bill members for renewals. When you have received all four issues of THE NEWSLETTER promised, please mail in your renewal.



## TEACHING COMPOSITION: A POSITION STATEMENT

The NCTE Commission on Composition has prepared this position paper to state essential principles in the teaching of writing. We hope that this statement will guide teachers, parents, and administrators in understanding the power of writing and in teaching it effectively.

### The Act of Writing

Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world.

The act of writing is accomplished through a process in which the writer imagines the audience, sets goals, develops ideas, produces notes, drafts, and a revised text, and edits to meet the audience's expectations. As the process unfolds, the writer may turn to any one of these activities at any time. We can teach students to write more effectively by encouraging them to make full use of the many activities that comprise the act of writing, not by focusing only on the final written product and its strengths and weaknesses.

### The Purposes for Writing

In composing, the writer uses language to help an audience understand something the writer knows about the world. The specific purposes for writing vary widely, from discovering the writer's own feelings, to persuading others to a course of action, recreating experience imaginatively, reporting the results of observation, and more.

Writing assignments should reflect this range of purposes. Student writers should have the opportunity to define and pursue writing aims that are important to them. Student writers should also have the opportunity to use writing as an instrument of thought and learning across the curriculum and in the world beyond school.

### The Scenes for Writing

In the classroom where writing is especially valued, students should be guided through the writing process; encouraged to write for themselves and for other students, as well as for the teacher; and urged to make use of

writing as a mode of learning, as well as a means of reporting on what has been learned. The classroom where writing is especially valued should be a place where students will develop the full range of their composing powers. This classroom can also be the scene for learning in many academic areas, not only English.

Because frequent writing assignments and frequent individual attention from the teacher are essential to the writing classroom, writing classes should not be larger than twenty students.

Teachers in all academic areas who have not been trained to teach writing may need help in transforming their classrooms into scenes for writing. The writing teacher should provide leadership in explaining the importance of this transformation and in supplying resources to help bring it about.

### The Teachers of Writing

Writing teachers should themselves be writers. Through experiencing the struggles and joys of writing, teachers learn that their students will need guidance and support throughout the writing process, not merely comments on the written product. Furthermore, writing teachers who write know that effective comments do not focus on pointing out errors, but go on to the more productive task of encouraging revision, which will help student writers to develop their ideas and to achieve greater clarity and honesty.

Writing teachers should be familiar with the current state of our knowledge about composition. They should know about the nature of the composing process; the relationship between reading and writing; the functions of writing in the world of work; the value of the classical rhetorical tradition; and more. Writing teachers should use this knowledge in their teaching, contribute to it in their scholarly activities, and participate in the professional organizations that are important sources of this knowledge.

The knowledgeable writing teacher can more persuasively lead colleagues in other academic areas to increased attention to writing in their classes. The knowledgeable teacher can also work more effectively with parents and administrators to promote good writing instruction.

### The Means of Writing Instruction

Students learn to write by writing. Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students' own work should be the central



means of writing instruction. Students should be encouraged to comment on each other's writing, as well as receiving frequent, prompt, individualized attention from the teacher. Reading what others have written, speaking about one's responses to their writing, and listening to the responses of others are important activities in the writing classroom. Textbooks and other instructional resources should be of secondary importance.

The evaluation of students' progress in writing should begin with the students' own written work. Writing ability cannot be adequately assessed by tests and other formal evaluation alone. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their writing ability in work aimed at various purposes. Students should also be encouraged to develop the critical ability to evaluate their own work, so they can become effective, independent writers in the world beyond school.

(Adopted 1984. For further information contact Paul T. Bryant, Director, NCTE Commission on Composition, c/o The Graduate School, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523.)

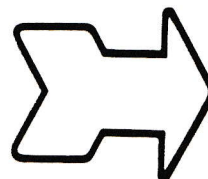
CONGRATULATIONS to the following developmental programs. They were named as exemplary programs featuring comprehensive models by the Research in Developmental Educational Newsletter (editor, Hunter R. Boylan of Appalachian State University, Boone, NC.)

Note: This list is NOT inclusive, but instead provides a regional sampling of exemplary programs. BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM of La Guardia Community College in Long Island City, NY; LEARNING SKILLS CENTER of University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA; CENTER FOR ACADEMIC REINFORCEMENT of Howard University in Washington, D.C.; RESOURCES FOR STUDENT LEARNING of Southeastern Community College in Whiteville, NC; EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM of Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI; DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM of University of New Orleans in New Orleans, LA; READING AND STUDY SKILLS LAB of University of Texas-Austin; BASIC SKILLS DIVISION of Tarrant County Junior College in Fort Worth, TX; STUDENT LEARNING CENTER of University of California-Berkeley; DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER of Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, OR.



Professor Allison Wilson kindly requests your views on the teaching of basic writing to students whose written language is affected by nonstandard speech patterns. Would you take a moment to complete the questionnaire beginning on the reverse of this page and then drop it in the mail directly to her? Professor Wilson, of Jackson State University, in Jackson, MS, has taught hundreds of students whose native dialect is black English. Wilson, who received her doctorate from Columbia, has recent publications in the area of dialect interference including "The Study of Literature and the Development of Standard English Proficiency: An Approach to the Teaching of Writing to Speakers of Black Dialect" (The Writing Instructor, Spring, 1983) and "Black Dialect and the Freshman Writer" (Journal of Basic Writing) forthcoming). Professor Wilson promises to provide the results of her questionnaire in a future issue of THE NEWSLETTER.

Send questionnaire to: Allison Wilson, Dept. of English, Jackson State University, Jackson, MS 39217.





Survey of Approaches to and Attitudes toward  
the Teaching of Basic Writing to Students  
Whose Written Language Is Affected  
by Nonstandard Speech Patterns

1. A. Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

B. May I include your name/title in the final report of  
this survey?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes

\_\_\_\_\_ no

2. A. What type of institution is your school? (Check all  
that apply.)

\_\_\_\_\_ state-supported

\_\_\_\_\_ privately-supported

\_\_\_\_\_ two-year

\_\_\_\_\_ four-year

\_\_\_\_\_ four-year plus graduate

\_\_\_\_\_ other Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Does a basic writing program exist at your institution?

(Note: For purposes of this survey, "program" is  
defined as any course or series of courses, whether or  
not formally designated as an independent program.)

\_\_\_\_\_ yes If yes, please specify department(s)/  
division(s) responsible for administration  
of this program. \_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_no If no, please go directly to question 12.

C. Do you yourself teach basic writing courses?

\_\_\_\_\_yes If yes, please specify percentage of usual  
course load devoted to the teaching of  
basic writing. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_no

3. Does your basic writing program include (a) screening  
device(s) intended to identify students whose written  
language is affected by nonstandard speech patterns?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no If no, please go directly to question 5.

4. A. Is this device (Are these devices) intended to  
identify speakers of specific dialects, such as black  
English, Appalachian English, or forms of English  
directly influenced by other languages (Spanish,  
Chinese, etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_yes If yes, please specify target dialect(s).  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_no

B. Was this device (Were these devices) obtained from (a)  
publisher(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_yes If yes, please specify test(s) and  
publisher(s). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_no If no, please identify source(s) and  
briefly describe format and content.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you feel that your program has benefited/would  
benefit from the adoption of such screening devices?



\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no      If no, please specify reason(s).\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your basic writing program include special courses/sections intended for students whose written language is affected by nonstandard speech patterns?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no      If no, please go directly to question 8.

7. A. Are these courses/sections intended for speakers of specific dialects, such as black English, Appalachian English, or forms of English directly influenced by other languages (Spanish, Chinese, etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_yes      If yes, please specify target dialect(s).\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_no

- B. Do these courses/sections differ from courses/sections intended for standard speakers?

\_\_\_\_\_yes      If yes, please briefly describe difference(s).\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_no

8. Do you feel that your program has benefited/would benefit from the inclusion of such special courses/sections?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no      If no, please specify reason(s).\_\_\_\_\_

9. Does your basic writing program include instructional materials intended to improve the standard English



proficiency of students whose written language is affected by nonstandard speech patterns?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no      If no, please go directly to question 11.

10. A. Are these materials intended to improve the standard English proficiency of speakers of specific dialects, such as black English, Appalachian English, or forms of English directly influenced by other languages (Spanish, Chinese, etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_yes      If yes, please specify target dialect(s).

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\_\_\_\_\_no

- B. Were these instructional materials obtained from (a) publisher(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_yes      If yes, please specify title(s) and publisher(s).

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\_\_\_\_\_no      If no, please specify source(s) and briefly describe format and content. \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Do you feel that your program has benefited/would benefit from the adoption of such instructional materials?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no      If no, please specify reason(s). \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Please use this space to provide additional information concerning your situation and to express your opinions concerning the teaching of basic writing to students whose written language is affected by nonstandard speech patterns.



Thank you for your help. Please return this  
questionnaire to Allison Wilson, Department of English,  
Jackson State University, Jackson MS 39217.