

INTRODUCTION

Part I of *Training Teachers* focused on doctoral programs for training college teachers of basic writing and in-service training for college and high school English faculty. Part II presents programs for teaching assistants in English departments or faculty or part-time instructors from other disciplines.

The issue begins with Sara Garnes' identification of the three qualities she considers necessary for the ideal basic writing teacher--qualities she keeps in mind in screening and training the doctoral candidates and lecturers who teach in the Basic Writing Program at The Ohio State University. She describes the content of the basic writing practicum and weekly staff meetings, showing how certain kinds of knowledge about language and writing and such activities as staff "write-ins" and grading sessions, guest lectures, and the publication of student work develop and support these qualities.

At Stockton State College, volunteer faculty from outside the English department are recruited to teach the intermediate level basic writing courses on a rotating basis. In the highly desirable situation Christopher Burnham describes, this service in the basic skills program meets contractual obligations for teaching general education courses, is rewarded by modest training stipends, and considered in tenure and promotion decisions as evidence of commitment to the educational mission of the institution. Two one-day seminars positioned strategically at the beginning and end of the summer preceding the first teaching assignment are followed up by regular meetings, a one-to-one support system of mentors drawn from the core skills faculty, tutoring for students at the skills center, and pre/post scores of holistically graded writing samples to be used in an advisory capacity at the time of the final grade.

Training for the graduate students in New York University's Expository Writing Program focuses on immersing those students in their own writing. There, Lil Brannon and Gordon Pradl have students write personal histories of their evolution as writers and study their own composing processes. Their students form reading groups outside of class for sharing work in all their courses; analyze teacher comments for their usefulness or uselessness to the revising writer; and practice glossing their texts marginally for content, intended effect, and strategies. They complete their own writing assignments in order to turn up ambiguities, hidden assumptions, and other problems.

Student immersion in writing is the linchpin in Lou Kelly's program of instruction at Iowa State also. Over the semester, the writing tutors in her practicum help basic writers work gradually through subjective personal

narratives toward more objective expository modes based on personal experience. The tutors simultaneously keep extensive course journals of their own, in which they explore the issues raised in class and in readings and their problems and successes in teaching. Kelly believes those journals are crucial to the effectiveness of the course. They encourage the tutors to engage in an active dialogue with the experiences of their lives and help graduate students revive the personal voice they have often lost in their over-accommodation to an "academic" style.

While at Idaho State, Irvin Hashimoto used error analysis as a technique for training teachers of basic writing. Using the comma splice as an example of a method that can be transferred to other errors, he shows how to break the beginning teacher's dependency on the simple handbook rule which the basic writer will not know how to interpret or to apply. Students in his classes first learned to recognize instances of the error. They were led to speculate about various sources for the error and to identify the different teaching strategies which would be necessary to address different problems or perceptions on the part of basic writers. Then they tried to isolate what was central and what tangential about actual usage so that they could teach in ways that address the complexity of sentences basic writers use and encounter, without overwhelming them with exceptions and subtle distinctions.

At Penn State, the shallow pool of writing teachers necessitates using non-traditional, part-time teachers in many freshman writing courses. Betsy Brown and John Harwood describe a study evaluating the effectiveness of three groups of teachers new to the composition program there--those with several years experience teaching college-level writing, those with B.A.'s or M.A.'s in English but no teaching experience, and those lacking both graduate training in English and experience teaching writing. When inexperienced writing teachers are given a two-day orientation, a year-long weekly seminar in the teaching and evaluation of composition, and one-to-one supervision in a collegiate, supportive atmosphere, it would appear that the worst effects of inexperience and previous lack of training can be overcome: there were, in their study, no significant differences in the quality of student writing nor in the grades given. There were, however, significant differences in student attitudes. Experienced teachers of writing were more able to inspire confidence in their students as writers, in themselves as teachers, and in the existence of objective and "fair" criteria for evaluating writing.

There are, however, other issues to consider. It is important to remember that fruitful insights for the basic writing teacher do not reside exclusively in linguistics, cognitive psychology, error analysis, and speech act theory -- nor necessarily in well-articulated training programs. Just as often, the meaningful connections are those we forge for ourselves between the work we do as scholars and critics of literature at typewriters and in seminars and libraries and the work we do as teachers of skills in the basic writing classroom. As Burnham points out, the use of non-traditional faculty, properly trained and supported, can have many positive effects for an institution. Over time, any short term liabilities of

inexperience can be overcome, the curriculum and faculty collegiality strengthened. On the other hand, there are real problems with using large numbers of non-traditional and particularly part-time teachers. Not the least of these is, as Harwood and Brown point out, the unemployment of English Ph.D.'s. In addition, staff and student morale is certain to suffer in any situation where instructors do not sincerely prefer to teach part-time. While the challenge and pleasure of learning the job will buoy teachers through a semester or two, the inequities of status, pay, benefits, and workload will rankle increasingly. And, as Wayne Booth pointed out in his MLA address of December, 1982, whenever the writing courses are displaced onto junior faculty and lecturers, established scholars miss an opportunity--indeed, betray a responsibility--to communicate to the masses of students who pass through our institutions the humanistic values that brought them to teaching, language, literature, and scholarly inquiry in the first place.

The issue concludes with a short note of strategy excerpted from Patrick Hartwell's address to the Conference on Basic Writing Skills at 4 C's in Dallas, 1982. It gives practical advice to persons seeking doctoral training in teaching writing and is suitable for passing along to students.

Kindly note the request for information about research on grammar instruction.

The editors mourn the death of our colleague and friend, Doris Fassler, a co-founder of the *Journal*, on January 21, 1984. We will remember her for her forthright manner, her caring, her confidence in students' abilities, and her sympathy and connection with students who, like herself, want to learn and have to struggle with material circumstances.