From the ECB

fforum, the Newsletter of the English Composition Board, is intended to give teachers of writing throughout Michigan a forum of fact and opinion about their art. In another article in this first number, Patti Stock, editor of the newsletter, speaks of what she envisions for its future. This brief piece is intended to supply a context for that vision:

The ECB has accepted a seven-part responsibility from the faculty of the College of Literature, Science, and Arts at Michigan. Six of those parts—Assessment of all incoming undergraduate students; Tutorial instruction where necessary; Introductory Composition; Writing Workshop support available to every student; Junior/Senior Writing courses; Research on the effects of the program—are encompassed within the College. The Board's seventh function is to articulate its writing program with those of secondary schools and community colleges throughout Michigan.

A part of that seventh function, fforum has been preceded in its intent by two conferences in Ann Arbor in May and December of 1978, a workshop also held in Ann Arbor for three days in June of 1979, and eighty-four seminars on the teaching of writing offered during 1978-79 on the campuses of Michigan high schools and colleges. During 1979-80 the ECB will continue to provide seminars to faculties of schools it has not visited before, and it will convene a second writing workshop on the Michigan campus next June. In addition, the Board has agreed to offer in this academic year at least twelve half-day seminars to teachers at Bloomfield Hills Andover High School in order to assist them with further development of their writing curriculum.

The idea of fforum is exciting to everyone here at the ECB. Please help us to make it useful for you as well.

Daniel Fader

EDITORIAL

The ancient Roman forum, like the Greek agora before it, was a marketplace forming the center of public business and open discussion in its society. It was with this model in mind that the English Composition Board's fforum was conceived as a meeting place for discussion of writing and mutual instruction by teachers of writing in Michigan. Mindful of the significance of the historical forum, we remembered the practice of another era. In the middle ages, some scribes used doubled letters to serve as capital letters; hence, our own distinctive, twentieth-century fforum. The name of the publication itself reminds us of a historical legacy of professionals who taught writing and leads us toward a promising future for a field of study coming to new understandings of itself.

We who teach writing base our work on a rich heritage of theory and practice; moreover, we have current research and developing theory to assimilate as we teach. The challenge is great. To serve you in meeting this challenge, we designed fforum to include articles by experts themselves, essays reviewing the work of those experts, critical analyses of their contribution, and a sampling of methods and materials developed by classroom teachers who have translated their theory into practice. Each issue will focus on the work of a specific expert or (continued on p. 22)
Editorial (cont. from p. 2)
school of thought; or it will treat a
topic important to the teacher of writing.

We are especially gratified that after we
decided to make the work of Ken Macrorie
and Peter Elbow the thematic center of
this first issue of fforum, each of them
agreed to write a brief piece especially
for fforum readers. We are delighted,
forthwith, by similar commitments from
several authors who will be featured in
future issues.

Balancing fforum's informational compo-
nent will be one for discussion. At this
exciting time of a first issue, we ask
you to react to content and format and to
tell us what you might wish were here.
It is our intention to serve your needs
and interests. Please address your
letters to:

Patti Stock
fforum
The English Composition Board
1025 Angell Hall
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109
(313) 764-0429, (313) 764-0433

At present, we are assembling materials
for issues dealing with schools of
thought represented by the following
writers: (1) Sheridan Baker, Edward
Corbett, and John Warriner; and (2) James
Britton and James Moffett. We hope you
will write for one of these issues. If
you are interested in contributing an
article, please let us know as soon as
possible.

Several other features of fforum specifi-
cally need your input. In each issue we
plan to place "In the Limelight" a
teacher, school, or school district doing
work in the state which is of interest to
all of us. We need you to share your
newsworthy projects with us if we are to
make others aware of them. In the
feature "Between Classes," we will
publish your poetry or prose or that of
your students if you will share these
with us. Finally, in their column "From
the Guidance Office," a team of resident
experts, Drs. Fidditch and Foilitch, are
ready to tackle, or grapple with, any and
all professional problems you call to
their attention. We plan to share with
you in "ECB Reports" as well as providing
an "ECB FreeB" in each issue. The
"FreeB" is a lesson plan (complete with
duplicatable materials) offered for your
consideration.

There is this to say about "copyright":
Everything that appears in fforum is
intended for your use. For that reason
there are no restrictions at all on any
use you wish to make of it.

And this, about receiving fforum: This
first issue is being sent to all sec-
dary schools, colleges, and universities
in Michigan. If you wish to continue to
receive fforum or to begin receiving it,
please notify us. There is no charge for
subscription.

And this, about thank you's: To those of
you who wrote for this first issue, who
agreed to meet an unrealistic deadline,
who encouraged the editor with your enthu-
siasm, thank you.

And this, for Bernard Van't Hul and Dan
Fader: THANK YOU.

Waterford Mott (cont. from p. 18)
packet of materials and suggestions for
increasing the amount of writing in non-
English courses which we will offer to
the entire staff.

Much of our effort is in staff develop-
ment. If we can help teachers feel
confident as teachers of writing, not
significantly increasing their paper
load, and let them see writing improve-
ment in their students, we will have
succeeded as staff development consul-
tants. If we can help students feel
confident as writers, significantly
increasing their paper load, and let them
see their own writing improvement, we
will have succeeded as teachers.

Norm Ballou is English department head at
Waterford Mott High School in Pontiac.