TEACHING WRITING:

Methods, Materials, & Measurement

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Breaking Away from Henry Ford: Two Models of Writing and Teaching and Their Implications

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In 1959 James B. Conant advised English teachers to devote half their time to English composition, to require students "to write an average of one theme a week," and to be sure they corrected each student theme. He also recommended that English teachers be assigned no more than 100 pupils (The American High School Today, pp. 50-51). We can easily list the reasons that squelched the realization of the last recommendation: Tight budgets, increased enrollments, lack of space, lack of public support and a host of other lacks, real or imaginary. However, many teachers tried valiantly, despite the lack of administrative and public support, to follow Conant's advice about theme evaluation. But it was not long before even the most committed found themselves buried by the sheer numbers and haunted by the sense that perhaps students learned little, despite all the work.

It doesn't take much of a mathematician to figure out that even with Conant's ideal one hundred students, each English teacher who spent ten minutes on each paper would devote 17 hours per weekend to correcting papers. Add another five minutes to each paper read and corrected (some of us work slowly) and teachers would be working more than twelve hours each day each weekend. Add the extra 25 or 50 students that make up the regular teaching assignment today and . . . . No wonder, given Conant's model, that many teachers gave up on teaching writing. If that was what was needed to teach students to write, then it just couldn't be done.

But we can look at the problem another way: It's not that writing can't be taught but that the models we have for teaching writing may be misconceived and misleading. Conant's model, for example, assumes that the mere act of producing a "finished paper" each week and its subsequent correction by a teacher guarantees improved student performance. Conant focussed on the product--the student's text--and the reaction to that product as the keys to successful teaching and learning. His recommendations give no attention to HOW a student produces a paper. Instead of focussing on the various writing activities or tasks that precede--or follow--effective writing, Conant concentrates on the product at the end of the line. We know how teachers following his model often conceive of teaching composition: First, the teacher dreams up a good assignment; second, the student goes off and writes (often waiting until just before the deadline); third, the papers are handed in and corrected by the teacher; and finally the papers are returned and students look at their grades before filing--or throwing--the carefully corrected papers away. Then, teachers and students repeat the "process." The problem, of course, is that there is no process, only an assembly-line sequence, within which teachers serve to initiate or terminate each step from the outside, primarily as assignment makers and as paper correctors. In this role they can give little attention to what students do prior to handing in papers, except offer advice about steps to follow (Find a topic: narrow it; choose a method of development, etc.)

In fairness to Conant (a chemist by education) we can't blame him for following the tradition he had grown up in (Harvard Ph.D., 1916; Harvard Professor of Chemistry, 1919-1933; Harvard's President, 1933-53). He did not specify how the half-time devoted to composition should be spent; he

left that up to experts, the English teachers. Working out of Harvard's tradition of composition instruction, he simply assumed correcting papers was the best way to teach writing.

None of this should strike us as odd given the good foundation that Adam Sherman Hill and L. B. R. Broggs laid at Harvard in the late nineteenth century. As Albert Kitzhaber has detailed, their focus on the "Ideal of Correctness" (along with the Harvard English entrance examination they helped nurture) probably did more to promote the product-correction, assembly-line syndrome of writing and teaching than anything else ("Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1859-1900," pp. 312-319). Conant could not help being influenced by that "ideal." Few English teachers in 1959 (let alone a former chemistry Professor) could conceive of a non-linear model of the writing process, one that makes visible the complex act of writing, and especially the recursive activities of prewriting and revision. Even fewer could have seen the value of devoting class time to writing process activities. Conant saw that writing was being neglected, and he tried his best to improve things in the way administrators often respond to such teaching problems: he asked for more. He accepted the assembly-line instruction he saw in the schools, but his solution of asking for more--more writing, more correction--was more than students and teachers on the production crew could bear.

In some ways Conant rightly asked for more writing in the schools. Obviously students do not become effective, self-directed writers without writing. In 1959, much like 1979, students wrote little. But what students then--and now--needed is not necessarily more papers to write--not a theme a week--but more careful and conscious attention and help in intuiting, exploring and defining their ideas; in gathering necessary evidence; in getting ideas and evidence marshalled on paper in informal outlines, freewrites, impromptus, and notes; in working out a draft; in reworking, revising, and editing it in consultation with others; and then in doing a final piece for submission to a real audience, whether a teacher, a panel or classmates, or a class or school-sponsored publication.

In other words, as English teachers we have always needed to enlarge our role. Instead of functioning as assignment makers and paper correctors--as those who begin the production sequence and then check to see how far the final product meets standard specifications--we could more profitably act as monitors, as guides who lead students stage by stage through the activities described by a general process model and who then ask students to evaluate the effectiveness of their products--and our process model--against their experiences as writers. We assume students learn to write more effectively once they learn to work from an idea to a finished piece in a conscious, systematic way. That of course does not limit the intuition and imagination. As students work through stages in the writing process, they engage in writing tasks or activities each class day (the half-time called for by Conant, less, if necessary). And we insure that students see writing as something that takes thought and time, not the night-before effusions that limit the writer's chance of producing her best work. Of course, this is only part of what is involved in effective writing. Their vocabulary repertoires, their experiences, their natural creative bent--these affect what and how students write. Unfortunately we can do little about these. But we can order some of the behaviorial manifestations of the process, to encourage students to understand and control how they and others work as writers. We can make sure that we keep in mind a good idea of a process model, one that we explicitly articulate as we

will explore one description of the writing process and then suggest its implications for structuring teaching and learning activities.

One composing process model we use is that of Wallace W. Douglas at Northwestern University, who based his work on that of Porter Perrin. Douglas' model divides writing into the three large stages now commonly known to English teachers: prewriting, writing and postwriting. Although Douglas developed the model over a decade ago, he went beyond the general descriptions of these stages we know today to suggest the activities they consist of. The prewriting stage encompasses the five activities of analyzing the writing assignment, searching for a paper idea, examining what one knows and needs to know about a topic, gathering information and organizing the paper. These steps, of course, vary or occur simultaneously to a greater or lesser degree depending on the writer, the task and the situation. (Note the fuller description at the end of this article: Appendix A). The next stage is that of writing, when the writer puts something down on paper. The last stage consists of revising, proofreading and conferring with an editor or teacher. Embedded across these various stages are such recursive activities as journal writing, freewriting, note-taking, impromptu writing, observing, spontaneous revision while writing, interviewing, etc.

Obviously this model is hypothetical, a generalized description of a complex series of acts. It is straightforward, contains no surprises, and in reality probably doesn't describe anyone's real scribal activities. We know we write differently depending on what we are writing, to whom we are writing, the reasons for writing, how much we know about our subject and the structure which we are trying to develop for writing. Despite its lack of individual peculiarity, the model usefully provides a vocabulary and a hypothetical structure to match against what happens when we and our students engage in and examine invention, revision, and other writing processes. As part of their development as writers, we want students to examine how they write--not just what they write--and to determine the effectiveness of their processes as well as their products. The model above gives order to the novice writer's self-examination. At the same time it allows students to examine how other writers work.

Obviously the model describes what appears to be a linear sequence, lacking the recursiveness of writing in process. So it does not describe the writing process as well as it describes an instructional model, a useful guide and reference for leading students through writing processes.

For example, the term prewriting suggests actions writers take before they actually put pen to paper. But before any directed writing (as a rough draft usually is), we do write: we make journal entries (sometimes of considerable length); we do freewrites, make lists, jot down ideas and feelings, attempt rough outlines, etc. Often the opposite is true: In rewriting (or revision, or postwriting) we make notes, return to the card catalogue, read additional sources, find new directions for our writing, and in general repeat much of what we label as prewriting. Obviously, we are creating problems by using prewriting both to describe an early stage of the writing process and a part of an instructional model designed to teach writing. As part of an instructional model we can treat it linearly (and feel no conflict). We can identify all that comes before the rough draft stage as part of prewriting for our students, all the while recognizing that many scribal activities recur at all stages. To pretend the term describes a limited part of anyone's writing

process is to limit it (as D. Gordon Rohman does) or to live with the confusion that results when we arbitrarily call some writing prewriting, some writing writing and some writing postwriting. As researchers, however, we probably require--but don't yet have--better descriptors for the stages of the writing process. We might try to expand our constructs, identifying the exploratory speculative and preparatory stage, which is followed by the directional stage (writing done after thinking, playing with ideas, doing jottings, etc.) and which finally culminates in the reassessing, rethinking, reexamining, reordering stage. Yet all of these stages probably overlap: Some writers, we know, reassess even as they find initial direction.

These problems, while real, effect us less in the classroom. As so often in teaching, arbitrariness seems initially necessary, at least until research catches up with the needs of teachers. We acknowledge and discuss the models' arbitrariness with our students, but we all benefit from it, even if it only generally describes the questions writers ask and the activities they resort to in response, as they construct writing.

For the teacher the value of this model is its description of tasks writers engage in to complete the writing cycle. It does not, as Conant's model did, focus only on the finished product waiting to be corrected by a teacher. It articulates the myriad of activities that should occur--perhaps in sequence, perhaps not--before a student and her teacher consider a piece as finished, ready for final evaluation.

Using the 9-Stage Model in Class

As we teach, we use the model to undergird class work: for our students, the model explicitly provides backdrop to illuminate their own writing behavior. As we detail the classroom activities that constitute one writing unit--the creation of one paper--we'll also try to suggest in broad outline other possibilities. No matter what the writing assignment, our procedures depend upon the general process model itself.

During an early course assignment, students examine writing processes as necessary first-stage activities. We begin by posing a hypothetical but realistic writing task. We pair students, asking them to pretend that during their vacation the school had burned, probably due to arson. They must write an article about the fire for the local community. We ask them to list the steps they'd find necessary to write such an assignment, and offer a tentative order for the investigation and writing. No one, of course, really writes the article. But after students complete their lists, the class shares their descriptions. With one list up on the blackboard, or on transparency, other students add or define their additional steps, comparing them to the original. Usually, these hypothetical student lists include most of the steps listed on the 9-stage model above, sometimes even similarly ordered.

Next, we ask students about the reality of their writing methods. They recall the stages of development of a paper each recently wrote, noting in their journals the writing--and anti-writing--activities and stage they pursued. Finally, our class discussion compares their class model for writing (discovered through our discussions about the school fire paper)--what they think should be done--with their real behavior as writers. A majority of students usually admit what teachers suspect: they write only

under the duress of deadlines, the night-before effusion syndrome. We examine the relationship of behavior and its results; we look at the successfulness of papers, their and their teachers' satisfaction with them, usually discovering a correlation between extensive prewriting and revision and students' satisfaction with their writing and its evaluation. From this, students learn that if they followed the sequences they're aware of, their writing would probably be more effective, assuming they have learned the skills they require to write and rewrite effectively. From this discussion, we also learn something about the scope and differentiation of our students' personal models of the writing process, a necessary aid to planning effective instruction for them.

Usually, we use this juncture to introduce the 9-stage model outlined above by asking students to compare it to their class and personal models. We then explain that the model will serve as a mutual guide to what we do, a map of the territory we'll cover during the next few weeks as we write essays and examine our ways of writing them.

To avoid boredom, we vary the ways we achieve these goals. Teachers can simulate a problem similar to the one above and then ask students to assume roles (the school principal, the fire chief, eye witnesses, etc.), of participants who supply information (sometimes with the contradictions real journalists discover) for a news story the class actually writes. Students can also write a paper or journal entry on how they wrote a paper. In either case, students analyze their sequences, identifying steps and stages they pursued and comparing them with the 9-stage model. In advanced writing classes, teachers can supplement these lists with others, similar models, like Donald Murray's 11-step model (A Writer Teaches Writing, Houghton-Mifflin, 1968).

Having discussed and presented a percept--a hypothetical model--we proceed to test it by practice, following the classical triad of percept, example and practice. We ask students to frame two or three questions about an unknown question or subject, one they would like to discover more about. Many students--or their teachers--narrow this to: What in our community would I like to know more about? Students respond with questions such as: How do cities get professional sports teams? Does the local jail serve a useful function? What's the symbolism of the figures on the sculpture at Fountain Square in Cincinnati? What students in local schools get special treatment, special financial consideration? This assignment usually develops the engagement with the topic necessary for effective writing; for most students, if they--not we--raise the question, they manage to become (and stay) interested in it. Local issues produce easy access to varied information sources (news accounts, interviews and letters, on-the-spot observations, local archives, etc.), a desirable diversity and plentitude from a teacher's point of view.

While this assignment requires some information gathering, it becomes less a vehicle for teaching research skills, though some accure along the way, than an occasion for students to proceed stage by stage through the writing process. Teachers accomplish similar goals through a personal experience assignment. Actually, almost any assignment satisfies: it's the classroom approach that accomplishes the goals, though of necessity students must engage with topics they care about. We've become partial to community-oriented investigations, however, since they cause students to face diverse information-gathering problems, encouraging full participation

in stage four of the model. Whatever the topic, commitment is essential: commitment to an idea, feeling or topic sustains writers in the long, tedious, and often lonely hours of giving form and substance to the whirl inside.

By the time students reenter the classroom with their questions, they have already begun the writing process. We discuss the acts and decisions that led them to make choices, then ask them to share their questions to assess the range of interests and to spur additional contemplation. Finally, students rank their questions and write answers to the following probes:

1. Why do you care about X?
2. What do you already know about X?
3. Is there anything written on X?
4. Who would know about X?
5. What is significant about X?
6. Does the answer to #5 point to problems, needs, ideas that are larger than our local community? What?
7. Who else would care about X?
8. What conflicting points of view seem inherent in X?

Afterwards, one or two students disclose their ideas and responses. In time remaining, the rest of the class volunteers their knowledge about the topic or sources, an event which amazes students, who underestimate the extent of their community's own resources. The class usually dwells on the question of significance, a question all writers necessarily reassess at all stages of the writing process since the writer's sense of the topic's significance controls his accumulation and assessment of details, evidence, arguments, and format. After modeling the kind of discussion we hope students will engage in, we use small group discussion to air everyone's questions. This "sea of talk," as James Britton calls it, grounds real thought, imagining and creative connection making. It also establishes students' in-class relationships as resources, not competitors, for other writers, and begins the necessary process of making students independent of teachers.

Having begun to tackle stages 1-3 of the 9-stage model, students begin stage 4. They find and read three sources related to their topic and locate several human resources. They take notes and make queries about their readings and discoveries.* Interviewing, a novel technique for most young writers, sometimes poses problems, but never a lack of interest in the task. Some instruction in conducting an interview may be in order. We have made and used a videotaped presentation, A Professional Talks About Interviewing (available from the Indiana University Audio Visual Center) which explores the rudiments of interviewing in twenty-five minutes. Instruction in how to get the sometimes incoherent but always novel and personally engaging information from an interviewee can, of course, be as brief as a page of do-s and don'ts.

Before moving on to the next stage of the writing task, students reflect upon the usefulness of the initial probe questions. We discuss which questions helped and which created problems, trying in the process to push students

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*If necessary, we briefly instruct students in notetaking procedures, or ask them to refresh their memories by reading from our class handbook. If the student develops a paper that needs much documentation, we teach these as the paper takes shape. Otherwise, informal, within-the-text documentation (such as that used by this journal) will suffice, as our aim is not to teach formal research skills.

to analyze the nature of probes, the usefulness of a simple heuristic. Students don't always agree that probes are helpful. They initially assert that intuition produces more creative thought, a subject for open discussion. Eventually (and perhaps not even by the end of the course) we hope that students learn how and when different sets of questions can be useful. Initially, probes often backfire, reminiscent as they are of the display questions put to students from their initial encounter with school, and even before. Students usually know little or nothing about how questions function, in cognition, nor do they recognize the necessity of asking different questions for different purposes. Eventually, they learn useful question sets differ, changing to respond to the writer's problem, the sources she investigates. (See Richard Larson's article, "Discovery Through Questioning: A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," College English, Nov. 1968, for teacher-invented set of questions appropriate for diverse writing problems.) While we initially provide questions, our final goal is to teach them to ask their own questions, one reason we stress interviewing as an information-gathering technique.

By this time, most students solidly grapple with the problems inherent in stages 3, 4 and 5. While they are still gathering information, most begin to anticipate (or at least worry about) an organizational structure for the final paper; stages 4 and 5 often meld as students find that the additional information forecloses some organizational possibilities while it opens up others. After most have gathered substantial notes from reading and interviewing, students work in small advisory groups, responding to classmates' tentative plans and directions for writing. Then, they do a forced-writing or impromptu based on their current knowledge of sources and directions. Students who have problems starting refer back to their early statement of significance, attempting to match it with what they have gathered.

As students make decisions in writing, the impromptu truncates excess talk and forces commitment, if only momentarily. The impromptu pushes into prominence, too, what they know and don't know, and urges the discovery of what is still unknown. It urges organization and suggests the consequences of their present directions.

After we analyze the impromptu's problems, students continue gathering information, concluding that initial stage by constructing a rough scheme, diagram or outline of their ideas and supporting material. With the outline, they bring to class a preliminary version of their opening paragraph(s), all in triplicate. In groups of three, students describe and analyze papers in process, guided by questions such as the following which they answer in writing for each individual paper:

a. What does the paragraph suggest the paper will be about? Underline the sentence or phrase you feel suggests this. Then paraphrase it. What seems to be the writer's purpose in selecting this topic and the organization?

b. How does the opening paragraph function? What service does it perform for the writer, for the audience? What devices are used to get the reader's attention? Does it succeed? (Remember the devices we discussed in class: definitions, questions, narratives, statistics, startling facts, etc.)

c. How do you think the writer wants his or her readers to see him or her?
Briefly describe the characteristics of this person, listing below the words or phrases that lead you to this analysis.

d. In your own words, write a short summary of the paper's major points, based on the writer's outline.

e. What terms or concepts are absolutely essential to the paper? Which will the writer need to define or clarify for the audience? What is the writer's point of view about the subject?

f. Does the organization and information suggest you will be persuaded to share the writer's point of view? Why or why not?

Questions that guide initial peer editing sessions depend both upon the students' sophistication and what the teacher has emphasized in class. This procedure profitably follows class work on sample student and professional opening paragraphs, showing writers' varied attempts to capture their readers' interest and define directions for discourse.

Students separately answer the questions about each paper, (both for theirs and for their classmates) and then compare and discuss their analyses. Their discussions--students' first written attempts to communicate to an audience--help writers' clarify direction, point to potential organizational or audience problems, and enable each writer to articulate her purposes.

To conclude the day, students discuss (or write in their journals) the ways they completed the assignment and its value. We ask questions such as: Did they find that making an outline helped them envision a direction for the paper, or did it appear to be busy work? How did they go about preparing the scheme or outline? Can they project times when outlines would be necessary? When might outlines be mere exercises? Did writing the first paragraph precede or follow making the outline? When did students find a center for their paper? How did the sequence of writing activities compare with their usual process of creation?

The discussion or journal exploration prompts the discovery that there is no one way to assemble a paper, despite students' widespread belief that the process is always the same, that of "marching through Georgia" as Janet Emig describes (The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders, NCTE, 1971). We explore the old-fashioned notion of craftsmanship with them, comparing it to the assembly-line models they usually hold; and in the process we discuss the unreality of easily available and mechanical forms, showing them that form is more than a mechanical contraption for conveying meaning.

At this point we can read and discuss other professional writers' reports about their craftsmanship at work, such as those found in the Paris Writers at Work. Students discover that some writers do an impromptu that serves as their outline; others construct formal, elaborate outlines for extended pieces; still others make lists and embellish them as new points disclose themselves. Students usually conclude that some kind of planning and organizing stage is a necessary preliminary to good writing, and probably enhances the students' potential for a successful paper, if done in a relatively systematic way. As students identify their patterns and strategies of production--and any anti-writing strategies or resistance, we discuss the recursive nature of writing, how writers return to embellish, augment and change their writing as they discover and clarify direction and purpose. In other words, what appears

to be the end of the line is not necessarily where we begin or where we conclude.

By now we've spent several weeks helping students develop their papers. They are now ready in earnest for stage 6. They complete a rough draft--not an impromptu, but a serious, well-considered, comprehensive attempt. Students xerox or carbon copy two extra copies for use by their editors, usually the two group members used as editors before. To introduce the editing guide, together we analyze a sample student paper with the class, enumerating the shorthand we will use to note strengths and problems and finally teaching students how to use the conclusions to improve the paper. Again, students answer in writing:

Revision Guide

Editor _____

Writer _____

Answer the questions below for <u>each</u> <u>paragraph</u> of your own and your two editors' papers.

1. What is the paragraph about? Write out in a sentence the subject of the paragraph, or underline a phrase or sentence which indicates its focus. Number this sentence or clause with a "1".
2. Does the paragraph make use of supporting material? What kind? Details? Description? Examples? Quotations? Statistics? Startling or unusual facts? Narrative or anecdotal account?
3. Is there <u>enough</u> supporting material given to substantiate the point the paragraph is trying to make? Is the supporting material <u>appropriate</u> to prove the point the paragraph is trying to make? Answer these questions after you have shown how the supporting material relates to the focus by using numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) to indicate which sentences contain material that is subordinate to the focus sentence, labeled as "1." Put an X in the margin next to any paragraph that lacks sufficient development. Put a + next to paragraphs that add too much bulk, that develop the point in too much length.
4. What is the relationship of this paragraph to the one which precedes it? To the one which follows it? Write a sentence or two indicating how you think it connects.
   - Does it begin a new idea?
   - Does it develop an idea presented earlier?
   - Draw conclusions about a subject presented earlier?
   - Both begin a new idea and conclude it?
   - Determine and comment upon whether the function you have indicated is appropriate in the line of development.
5. Are there transitions from the earlier paragraph? Circle any. Are they adequate?
6. What rough spots do you notice in the paragraph? What words would you suggest that the writer change, add, or eliminate.

The revision guide above focusses on just a few points appropriate to an early expository paper. It's limited because students must complete it in a class period. More thorough editing results when students complete guides at home. (A longer guide--for a narrative assignment follows this article, Appendix B).

While teachers can also collect and examine drafts at this stage, students must do editing, too, to learn the skills writers develop by reading and analyzing prose. Editing guides teach students our skills, skills they'll make mistakes learning as a natural part of the process. To encourage good editing, we look at our class editors' analyses, praising good editors and encouraging haphazard ones to improve.

Following such editing sessions--and any necessary conferences--students rewrite their papers and produce a final, clean, proof-read copy. Sometimes we prepare proofreading guides, such as the one attached at the end of this article (Appendix C) to call attention to problems of usage or mechanics many students need to work on. We read, respond to, and evaluate the papers using the editing questions as the basis for our responses, often offered as audiotaped commentary. This reinforces the classroom work and provides a familiar structure and terminology for students, common understandings that increase the chance that our comments will help them improve as writers.

Teaching according to a process approach is neither foolproof nor easy. It is time-consuming and requires the willingness to risk and to profit from trial and error by both students and teachers. However, it directly illustrates the principles we want students to learn: that writing requires by its very nature a process, not a set sequence. We repeat a similar process for each subsequent assignment, introducing new editing questions and truncating or expanding the time devoted to various stages, according to the demands of the assignment and the proficiency of the class at each stage. If students write personal or childhood narratives, they begin by listing in their journals the incidents they remember, those that were striking or which taught them something significant. Because the source for such a paper is the self, class activity focusses on stimulating detailed recall and elaborating on the sometimes minimal initial memories. We use a series of questions from class members, quick freewrites using free association, observations of similar actions and environments to stimulate detailed recollection and analysis. Students then repeat activities done earlier: they do a forced impromptu, tell their story to an audience orally and invite responses, examine professional and student-written pieces for the use of detail, discuss how writers provide a focus, a center of gravity and significance, how they decide which material to highlight, which to emphasize. Finally, they write a rough draft, complete at least one editing and revision session, and finally rewrite and proofread, followed perhaps by a meeting with the teacher or by a class member. The pattern or process seems a natural one for almost every school-sponsored writing assignment; what teachers vary are the techniques for illuminating various sources and the methods used to develop initial ideas.

We've come to agree that what Conant asked for can be done, but not by the methods he proposed. Students will become more effective writers if they work on <u>their</u> writing as often as possible. The 9-stage instructional approach allows them to do so without limiting the teacher's function to that

of a foreman, a product analyst and evaluator. Teachers who turn their classrooms over to the process-centered approach follow Conant's pleas to take writing seriously and spend time on it. Perhaps most important, the process model forces us not to assume that students already know how to write, that all they need is a good assignment and some thorough corrections to correct forever the defects in their productions. The 9-stage model instead assumes that all writers--and especially developing ones--need to engage fully in the writing process, which includes wrestling with and questioning what teachers offer as stages in that process. We listen to the Conants of the world, but we adapt their advice to make it fit models of writing and writing instruction that reflect what real writers--and real teachers--can do.

APPENDIX A

A NINE STAGE WRITING MODEL

The Pre-Writing Stage:*

1. Analyzing the writing assignment: Before the writer can plan his paper, he must know for whom he is writing, what the length limitation is (such as in publication), what the conventions (based on the situation) of subject matter, style, and organization are.
2. Searching for a paper-idea: Starting from what he knows, the writer casts about until he feels he has something that will work in terms of the writing situation of the moment. Sometimes what he comes upon is no more than a feeling and at that one too indefinite, too uncertain to be called a purpose; really it will be something like a sense of direction, a feeling that if he starts writing along a certain line, something right will come into being. At other times he may get a sense of shape or form; he may have the beginning of his piece, or the end, or both; and the whole will grow from the part or parts. Sometimes the writer will have a notion or an idea--something that he wants to say, that he thinks other should hear or will want to. Generally speaking, what the writer doesn't have is material. And a writer writes by finding material that will somehow give reality to his feelings, his notions, his ideas.
3. Examining his knowledge of the selected topic for areas which may need investigation: The writer must now determine what information he will need to find before he can begin writing the paper; this is the stage where he may choose to use an informal outline or a series of running notes on the subject to determine the gaps in his knowledge of the topic.
4. Gathering information: The writer may gather all of the information for the paper from memory, but more often he will need to

*The first five stages, the pre-writing stages, are simultaneous to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the writer and the situation. Generally the longer the paper is, the more clearly independent these stages will become.

consult books or other people (interviews) to find the information he needs. Occasionally he may perform his own experiments as a source of information about a subject.

5. Organizing the paper: The writer may do this formally or informally; he may write out his notes in a more or less formal outline of the paper, he may organize them in his head, or he may simply sort note cards into separate piles which he then arranges according to a predetermined plan. This plan may be taking shape simultaneously with the preceding two stages, particularly in the case of the short paper.

The Writing Stage:

6. Writing the paper: Some writers prefer to rush through this stage, writing the rough draft as quickly as they can, to "get everything down on paper" while their flow of thought is uninterrupted. Others write the first draft more slowly, thus eliminating the need for as much re-writing as the first group has. Occasionally, one finds a writer who writes and rewrites as he goes, so that when he writes the last sentence of the first draft, his paper is finished. The last writer is rare, however, and is usually found only among the highly experienced writers: still, it may be the method that comes naturally to one or more students in a class.

The Post-Writing Stage:

7. Revising the rough draft: Some writers revise as many as six or seven times before they are satisfied with the style, grammar, spelling, punctuation and minor details of organization. Revision is a time-consuming process; it is necessary to allow the paper to lie fallow after the first draft has been written and perhaps even after each of the revisions themselves. The writer needs time for reconsideration of the topic if he is going to be able to approach the revision with freshness.
8. Copying and proof-reading the MS for typographical errors.
9. Conferring with an editor: At this point professional writers usually submit their pieces to an editor or a group of editors and the finishing of the article becomes a collaborative effort. In the classroom the teacher may serve as editor. (Indeed this may be the teacher's only proper function.)

APPENDIX B

REVISION GUIDE: NARRATIVE

1. First, read the opening paragraph(s) of the paper. STOP. Below, jot down several words or phrases which indicate what feelings and meanings or ideas you get from the paragraph. What feelings/meanings do you think the

writer wants you to get from the opening? What do you predict will be the "center" of the piece? Underline the 3 or 4 most significant words or phrases that you think led to your conclusions.

2. Now, begin again and read the entire paper through to the end. Jot down below your general impressions: What seems to be the tone, mood or general feeling you get from the piece? What is the "center" of the piece? In a sentence or two explain what you think is the significance of the story for you as a reader. What do you think the writer wanted to communicate to you? What does the incident mean to the writer?

3. Go back and look again at the opening paragraph(s). Put brackets around the two most important words or phrases of the paragraph, those you feel prepare us for what follows.

Did the paper's opening interest you?

If you predicted that the center of the piece or its mood were different after reading only the beginning than you later understood after reading the whole paper, comment upon whether that seems to be a good writing strategy for the reader to use. Did the change in tone effect you positively? Negatively? Below, make at least one suggestion that would help the writer make the opening more effective. (Remember our class discussions about providing a context, omitting words and phrases, changing or elaborating, adding more details.) BE SPECIFIC.

4. Briefly describe the image of the narrator or main character, referring to at least 3 specific words/phrases. Point to any words/phrases in the story where the voice, age or tone of the writer seems inconsistent with the overall image. Note any questions you still have about the narrative.

5. List below a brief chronology of important events. Then, determine whether the writer adequately specifies time relationships for the reader. Put squares around time transition words and use these to focus your evaluation.

6. In your own words, write a brief description of the high point of the paper. Then, look back at the paper. Put a star next to five details that the writer has used to help you see what is happening at this point in the piece. Briefly jot down these details below, and comment upon how each affects you while reading. Then, evaluate whether they fulfill the writer's intention as effectively as possible. Make suggestions, if necessary, as to how they might become more effective.

7. Slowly reread the paper, paragraph by paragraph. As you do so:

UNDERLINE any word or phrase that doesn't seem to fit the direction the paper is going, that is unnecessary, or that conveys a different mood than the overall paper.

CIRCLE any words or phrases you think need to be elaborated upon, places where a reader wants the writer to add more detail or be more specific to increase the reader's understanding.

BRACKET words, phrases, sentences that you think are especially well-done or important.

Use the space below to indicate your general comments about each paragraph. Number the paragraphs to make your discussion easier.

Paragraph _____

etc.

APPENDIX C*

PROOFREADING SHEET: GRAMMAR & SPELLING

After you have rewritten your paper, do the following:

1. Read your paper over; as you do so, underline the subject of each sentence, and circle each verb.
   Check to see that each verb form is correct according to the form we discussed as Edited American English (unless you are intentionally using a spoken form, as in conversation.).
   (Remember, most verbs form the simple past by adding -ed.)
   Check your list, and put a star by verbs that are irregular; look those up in your dictionary as we did yesterday in class.
   Check to see that each verb form agrees with its subject.
   Check to see that you have used appropriate punctuation to separate base sentences.
2. Look at the subjects you have underlined. Find any subjects that use personal pronouns. Use the following guide as a reminder about present tense subject-verb agreement, and change any s-v disagreements:

he, she, it	is
he, she, it	was
he, she, it	has
he, she, it	does

3. Look at the list of spelling problems you noted from earlier papers. Using that, and the list of possible problems you made for your rough draft, go through your paper and put brackets around every word you feel may be potentially misspelled. After you have completed your list: check your potential problems against your personal spelling guide. Then, check the dictionary.
4. Finally, read your paper BACKWARDS, from the last to the first word, checking for misspellings and miswritings.

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