



# WLA Newsletter

. . .writing as a liberating activity. . .

The fourth issue  
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Co-Editors:  
Richard C. Gebhardt  
Barbara Genelle Smith

## "WLA PAMPHLET SERIES" PREMIERES WITH SELF-AWARENESS THROUGH WRITING

This month, WLA Newsletter begins publication of the WLA Pamphlet Series. Pamphlets in the series will provide more extended discussions and suggestions than are possible in brief newsletter articles. WLA Pamphlets will be written by writing teachers for writing teachers. And, generally, they will show how the writing as a liberating activity philosophy can work in a sustained fashion in college or high school writing classes.

The first offering in the WLA Pamphlet Series is Self-Awareness through Writing, by Richard C. Gebhardt (Associate Professor of English and Chairperson of the Humanities Division at Findlay College) and Barbara Genelle Smith (formerly Assistant Professor of English at Findlay College, and now a doctoral candidate in the University of Kentucky's Department of Higher Education). This pamphlet begins with a brief discussion of the nature and premises of the self-awareness through writing approach to composition instruction. Subsequent chapters provide a detailed description of objectives, structure, and teaching techniques in one successful freshman writing course; a specific discussion, with student examples, of twelve self-awareness through writing topics; and a bibliography of textbooks and theoretical materials useful to teachers interested in investigating this approach to teaching writing.

WLA Pamphlet #1, Self-Awareness through Writing is available for \$1.50 per copy, \$1.00 for readers of the WLA Newsletter and for orders of five or more copies. Use the order form in this newsletter to obtain the WLA Newsletter reader's rate.

Obviously, starting the WLA Pamphlet Series is a very speculative sort of thing to do. The first pamphlet exists and represents an honest effort by two teachers to explain a way of teaching composition that they find effective. But whether the costs of producing the pamphlet will be covered by sales and whether there will be other pamphlets to make a series is up to you--readers of the newsletter and teachers of writing. So if you think the grassroots publication of innovative and pragmatic approaches to teaching is a good idea, would you consider supporting the WLA Pamphlet Series? Here are some ways you could help:

-Use institutional funds to order copies of Pamphlet #1 for your college library, your department's resource center, etc.

-Order a copy for yourself.

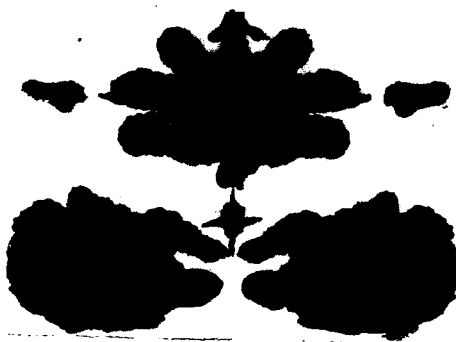
-Mention the pamphlet to others who might be interested--a freshman writing director, a teacher you know is looking around for a different slant on writing instruction, a curriculum committee that is starting to plan a course, a teacher of an English methods course, etc.

-Think about whether you might have an idea for a pamphlet, and if you do sketch out your idea and send it in.

## EXPANDING OPTIONS

Since it began publication, the WLA Newsletter has had two chief editorial thrusts: freeing student imagination and creativity, and expanding student outlook and opinion. The second editorial concern is the special focus of this first-anniversary issue, which includes articles on women's studies and Black literature in writing classes, and a teaching plan for comparison/contrast writing.

But this issue also initiates a third editorial focus of the WLA Newsletter--expanding the options open to teachers of writing. So the fourth issue contains an article on the combining of traditional and innovative texts by composition teachers at a major university, and a report by a teacher who used such a combination in an advanced writing class. And the newsletter, which began in a 1973 NCTE College Section workshop intended to "liberate" writing teachers, includes a report on a conference which tried to expand the options of high school writing teachers.



### WLA READER'S ORDER FORM

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of WLA Pamphlet #1, Self-Awareness through Writing, at the WLA Reader's rate of \$1.00 per copy. Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

I am also enclosing \$1.00 for a Registered Subscription to the WLA Newsletter. (I understand that this guarantees me all issues published in the 1974-1975 academic year.)

Subscription: \_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to WLA Publications, or to Richard C. Gebhardt. Address orders to Richard C. Gebhardt, Division of Humanities, Findlay College, Findlay, OH 45840.

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## SOUTH PLAINS CONFERENCE LIBERATES TEACHERS

Vivian I. Davis  
Department of English  
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Traditional curricula and methods, to a large extent, enjoy the confidence of students, parents, administrators, text writers, and the general public. Though most people will admit that they never learned to write well in school, they will at the same time tell you that in their day, when teachers were harder, when grammar was taught, when spelling and mechanics were scrupulously red-pencilled, we had better writers. The idea that writing should be a liberating act does not yet enjoy widespread support. Nonetheless, there are teachers who believe that the best way to help students mature as writers is to change the conditions under which they are expected to write. They want to try new strategies, to redesign their courses, and to involve students in their writing. But it is difficult to change in a system which continues to be committed to "the way we've always done it." I believe it is the job of us teacher trainers who try to motivate teachers to change to give them support even when their efforts are timid. And I tried to do just that in a three-week workshop, "Teaching Writing in the Secondary School," offered by the English Department of Texas Tech University.

I assumed that the workshop would support change if it: 1) allowed teachers to commit themselves to change at the level of feeling; 2) allowed them to decide what should be changed in their own classrooms; 3) helped teachers relate theory to their own practice by helping them devise new teaching strategies; and 4) gave teachers the opportunity to practice some of the new strategies they devised in a non-threatening atmosphere from which they could receive immediate feedback. Of course, even if the workshop helped teachers gain the confidence to try something new, it could not guarantee that their classroom practices would change once they returned to their own schools, but I felt that there would be much greater probability that more teachers could teach differently given the experience of the workshop.

Though all the teachers had taught at least three years, none of them had taken a composition course since they were college freshmen; a few said that they wrote for their own pleasure, but none of them thought of themselves as disciplined writers. They were no longer in touch with the way it feels to have to write, especially under conditions imposed by the composition class. It was necessary to let the teachers feel through that experience so that they would become once again consciously aware of it. We began the workshop with a consideration of theme evaluating and grading. The purpose was to allow the teachers to talk with each other about a frustrating task they all have. Our discussions grew out of three articles in Hipple's Readings for Teaching English in Secondary Schools.

After some teachers volunteered their personal grading procedures for their colleagues to analyze, I asked that we consider the way students must feel about having their writing graded. Before attempting to answer, we role-played a "typical" in-class high school writing assignment in which the teachers were expected to write, "correct," and hand in a theme by the end of a forty-five minute period. After the papers were returned to the teachers, I asked them to resume the discussion of student attitudes about grading. Of course it was impossible for them to talk about attitudes of some hypothetical students somewhere. They responded entirely in terms of their attitudes toward the way their papers had been evaluated and the way the assignment had been given from the start. Though they knew it was role-play, many teachers explained that their feelings were very real, that they had not felt that way since the last time such a thing had happened in an honest-to-goodness composition class. Soon teachers were discussing things they did, but hoped never to do again. In order

to get them to commit themselves beyond mere statements, I asked the teachers to consider what they could do to be sure that they would change those practices they wanted to change. This led to the next phase of the workshop.

Though teachers have good ideas about what they want to change, they want to be relatively sure that they can expect the new way to be defensible and workable. To answer this need, we explored theories of teaching writing and attempted to find out why some of the old practices had become so ingrained in our teaching of writing. We used Jersild's When Teachers Face Themselves and Parker and Daly's Teaching English in the Secondary School. Here teachers found some ideas they had had before validated by "experts."

Realizing that it is often easier to do things as usual even when you know that there may be a different way, I asked the teachers to decide on one thing they wanted to do differently in the classroom, and to structure it into a segment of work they would teach. They were asked to make detailed plans explaining exactly what activities they would try and why, what responses they would expect from students, and to cite alternative approaches in the event one approach did not work. They were also asked to prepare to teach one lesson from plans they were making to a demonstration class, so that they could feel through their new techniques before they had to put them into effect in their own classrooms.

Taken as a group, the teachers tried to make two basic changes in the way they teach composition. They allowed students more time so that they could go through the entire writing process before they were asked to turn in their work. They tried to focus on the most neglected phases of the writing process--pre-writing, particularly directed but unstructured student-to-student talk, and editing and revising.

At the conclusion, teachers were asked to answer several questions in evaluation of the workshop. More than ninety percent of the teachers said that the most useful feature of the workshop was working with the demonstration class. Most of the comments also included some allusion to the discovery that students are not given time enough to write. Commenting on additional features that could be helpful in another workshop, several teachers asked for ways to be in continuous touch with each other throughout the year, and others asked for more opportunities to write themselves.

I believe that my assumptions for the workshop were, if not verified, at least supported. Each teacher was committed to attempting some changes in the classroom. Of course, since the workshop was voluntary, those teachers who attended it were probably highly motivated to change. The real test is what they will do when they are back in their own classrooms. I believe two things will keep them encouraged: communication with colleagues who are also trying to change, and immediate and honest feedback from their students.

I hope our workshop provided them with the kind of liberation they need to be able to accept students as the most important resource in the teaching of writing. Newsletters, such as this one and others similar to it, will help them to be in touch with their colleagues across the country, but I understand what they mean when they express the need to communicate with someone they know who feels what they feel as they grope their way to better composition teaching. We need to revive the art of letter writing.

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EDITORS' NOTE: SOUTHWEST MULTI-ETHNIC NEWSLETTER Welcomes Readers and Materials

Vivian I. Davis is the editor of the SOUTHWEST MULTI-ETHNIC NEWSLETTER. When she wrote us recently to submit the preceding article, she said that she would like to receive materials from readers of the WLA Newsletter. In a spirit of support for other grass-roots newsletters, we pass the information along. Address: Department of English, Texas Tech University, P.O. Box 4530, Lubbock, TX 79409.

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## KEN MACRORIE AND HIS LOYAL OPPOSITION

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Probably the single most popular freshman English textbook at Indiana University is Ken Macrorie's Telling Writing. If you visit the college bookstore you will see stacks of these green and yellow books ranged along the walls, attesting to the instructors' belief in free writing, fabulous realities, and telling facts. Yet these teachers vary in their personalities and in their classroom technique, and we began to wonder how this one book could fit so many teaching patterns. So we did a survey. What we found out was that, really, these teachers were of two minds. They liked to begin the semester with Macrorie, but finally they didn't trust him as an introduction to "college writing" which would soon be required of their students. What was it that they distrusted?

A typical response to our questionnaire went like this: "Last year I used Telling Writing, hoping that it would lead to a more natural style of writing. While I agree with many of Macrorie's theories, it seems to me that the text itself is inadequate to develop them." Another teacher was more explicit: "Macrorie is consistently useful at the beginning of the course, but is of little use once the class has moved to 'academic writing.' Macrorie does need to be supplemented by some handbook." A third person wrote at length, giving us a good sense of why she chose the book, and how she used it: "I chose Macrorie mostly because I like his attitude toward the student, whom he treats as a human being who has problems with writing, as we all do, but whom he assumes can write and will be able to learn to write better. With Macrorie's help, it is easier to convince students that writing can be a personal form of expression and communication, that it has a function, and that it is a tool that they can learn to use to their advantage and personal satisfaction. Basically, the approach loosens up the students and can help to give them confidence."

However, this same teacher also provided us with the most detailed reasons why Macrorie was not to be trusted as a guide to writing college papers: "There comes a point in the semester when students start asking how the kind of writing Macrorie tells them they can do will relate to the writing they will be asked to do for other college courses, and I have not yet found a book that makes an adequate transition from writing about personal experience to writing logically and/or argumentatively about an objective issue, without reverting to English. I don't think Macrorie's chapters on criticism or writing objectively deal effectively with the problem of how to express a personal opinion, style, or voice in a paper that deals with something totally outside of the student's immediate self or experience." Many teachers are concerned about this transition from personal experiences to essays, from narrative to argument. Despite their respect for what is fresh and idiomatic in their students' writing, they feel that the art of developing a crisp argument is best learned with reference to paradigms for essay form, paragraph development, sentence structure.

Of course, this is to see the writing process from the point of view of the editor (or of the writer, rewriting), who purposely holds his work at arm's length, outside his "immediate experience," so that he can get some perspective on it. But do we want our students to be editors before they put pen to paper? Sometimes we think of writing as the expression of carefully thought-out, or "edited" ideas, but it's doubtful if this is true when we begin a piece of writing. A writer needs the freedom of his rough draft. Before he can come up with anything good, he needs to take a few risks--and this is the largely unexplored territory where Macrorie's guidance is helpful. Once the rough draft, or drafts are written, then the editor in us takes over: we remember the Aristotelian beginning-middle-end, and resurrect Sheridan Baker's Practical Stylist.

(continued on page 11)

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COURSE REPORT: An Evening Advanced Composition Class for Diverse Students

CONTRIBUTOR: Betty Hodgden, English Department, Ohio University at Portsmouth

BACKGROUND: Advanced composition at Ohio University, Portsmouth draws an unusual mixture of students. Some are English majors for whom the course is a requirement; some are psychology majors who take this course as their only English requirement; and there are a few education majors who merely need more hours in English. In the Winter Quarter of 1974, I encountered this mix of students. My first objective was to make the class cohesive so that all could write well and benefit from the writings of others. The class met twice weekly for two-hour sessions. Our texts were Telling Writing by Macrorie and Prose Models by Levin.

REPORT: Monday nights were in-class writing nights. We wrote and read aloud two selections suggested by Macrorie in his Writing Freely exercises. We completed one writing and reading session; then we took a short break and returned for a second session. On Mondays, the only critical comment was given by the students when they were asked to mention the writings that they thought were the most original because they had a different approach to the topic. Students would mention several writings at the close of each reading session.

On Wednesday nights the students came to class with manuscripts that were prepared so that they could be read aloud. The topics for these writings were taken from Prose Models. We employed a diversity of ways of dividing the twenty-two in the class into two groups so that each Wednesday the groups were composed of different students. One group went to an adjoining room and one group stayed in the regular class room. Each student was given a packet of ten small pieces of paper upon which he was to write a critical comment about each paper that was read in the group. Students were asked to listen for and comment on the good qualities of the work. Negative criticism was discouraged as was overall laconic comment such as "fine." The comments were given to the writers after they had finished reading their work; in this way the criticism was fresh and immediate. The instructor never saw the students' comments, but acted as a member of the group and wrote critical comments.

No manuscripts were to be submitted for grading until mid-quarter. At that time, each student submitted a paper that he had not previously read in a group. At the end of the quarter, each student handed in the three papers that he considered his best, and one long paper which could have been developed from a shorter paper read in class.

RESULTS: Students quickly learned each other's names since they were writing notes to each other weekly. The atmosphere in the class was pleasant and friendly. Many students were surprised to learn that other students admired their work.

The average course grade for the class was B+. There were concomitant success experiences during the quarter. Six members of the class entered a contest sponsored by the Speech Department for interpretative reading of original prose; all six were in the semi-finals, and three members of the class won the first, second, and third place trophies. A housewife who is planning to teach elementary school discovered that she had a genuine talent for writing. She was given the opportunity to write the review for the local newspaper of the first night of the Little Theatre performance. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience, meeting actors, making the deadline, and getting a by-line for her review.

At the end of the quarter, the student evaluation forms contained such comments as, "This was a writing class where we really wrote"; "I felt I knew every member of the class, and I enjoyed their helpful comments"; and "This was a class that I was sorry to see end. I had dreaded taking it, but I found it was a great experience."

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## AFFECTIVE WRITING IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

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The formalism which has dominated undergraduate literature teaching for the past thirty years taught us to be "objective." We learned never to say, "I feel," or "I believe," in our papers. And this was more than a stylistic no-no: it implied that there was something wrong with us if we attributed enough importance to our poor little feelings to express them in class or incorporate them into a critical paper. This stress on objectivity has gone hand in hand with dehumanization in the college classroom. Students and teachers alike have learned to divvy-up their academic and personal lives, to dissociate thought from feeling.

It is in reacting against the myth of objectivity that feminist teachers have deliberately incorporated the subjective--or perhaps better, the affective--into their classrooms and their work. "I" is no longer a dirty word. Students are asked to keep journals, and allowed to write papers which record their emotional as well as their intellectual reactions to the readings and class discussions. They are encouraged, in short, to integrate the academic with the course of their lives.

But won't such a method result in a sloppy subjectivism, the substitution of emotion for intellect, the abandonment of all aesthetic standards in exchange for the ease of "It was good because I liked it"? Carried to extremes, it might. But the better feminist discussions of literature do not stop with the personal, though unlike traditional classes and traditional criticism, they have stopped for it. If they look inward to self, they also look outward to world.

Many student papers and journals, like many published essays by feminist critics, combine autobiography, literary interpretation, and social analysis. The approach is open, fluid, making connections between the literary text, the lives of those interpreting it, and the larger world of ideas and institutions. Frequently, drawing from personal experience substantiated by the reading, it argues the need for social change. This approach combines the immediacy of personal confrontation between reader and work, with an attention to the cultural and socioeconomic contexts that have shaped the lives and works of women.

In gathering material from across the country for a collection of student work in women's studies, I have seen careful research papers, excellent annotated bibliographies, and creative work surprising in its freshness and power. In one class at California State College at Sonoma, students produced collectively a group autobiography. In a course on Black Women Writers, students did original research into their own family backgrounds and wrote what amounts to a social history of the Black family going back three generations.

Personal involvement means caring, and if students care, they will do better work--especially if it is real work, for a genuine audience, and not just another academic exercise. Thus much of this work is unusually well-written, with the force that comes only from conviction. But more, it is important work. All across the country, students and teachers in these classes have a sense of involvement in a collective endeavor: to discover our heritage, to understand our condition in the present, to play an active role in shaping the future.



## BLACK LITERATURE AND EXPANDED AWARENESS IN FRESHMAN WRITING

Cynthia Price Vecchio  
Naranja Lakes, Florida

In the 1960's most colleges began to offer courses in cultural awareness. So much was happening in the form of revolution all over the nation that a whole new area of concern opened for investigation into ethnic cultures in America. The emphasis today is not so much on Afro-American culture, civil rights literature, Chicano and Indian cultural expressions in themselves, as it is on total "people" awareness. But the importance of the written expressions of these cultures has been well established. No more is it a matter of teachers purposely remembering to include a work by Eldridge Cleaver or Victor Hernandez Cruz. It is a matter of utilizing available materials which so adequately express struggles for personal survival.

When we read Malcolm X or Soul on Ice, the works mean more than exposés by black artists. They are examples of writings which come out of frustrations and tears, which talk loudly of personal injustice, which scream deafeningly at their audiences to listen and learn from them. These are products of individuals' attempts to come to terms with their lives in this particular country, under particular conditions which have compelled them to become writers in order to survive.

When we read these documents we can, in small ways, draw parallels to our own personal searches for inner identity. So I decided to use a selection of works by Black authors to parallel the objectives of a freshman writing course centering its attention on self-awareness through writing. Since identity is more than recording a name, a high school, a football team, and a home town, I asked students to write meaningfully about themselves, their values, activities, and experiences in an attempt to put on paper the personal meaning of identity. And I approached the course hoping to open the students in the predominantly white class to a new area of awareness.

Some students were reluctant to discuss the literature at first, fearful that a black student in the class might take offense at what was said. But through some initial dialogue the possible problem of a racial focus to the course was somewhat eliminated. Most of the students, black and white, were not well read in Afro-American literature. On the whole, the literature was a new experience for everyone. Some students wanted to write about black-white relations and feelings they had-- which was not the intention of the course on self-awareness. So this problem had to be dealt with by constant reiteration that the focus must remain on personal experiences which were meaningful for some particular reason. It took a great deal of time and effort to change students' approaches to their writings when a new field of consideration became open to them. Instead of reflecting, their first reaction was to write how they felt about being exposed to something new.

Some students quickly caught on to what the parallel between cultural awareness and self-awareness was all about. For instance, one of the objectives of the course asked students to write papers in which they analyzed influences on their views. I asked students to consider one of the selections of prison literature--Malcolm X, Soul on Ice, If They Come in the Morning, Soledad Brother, or Voices from Prison-- works in which the authors were completely stripped of their personal freedom and were forced to confront themselves and re-establish their identities through writing. Some students took this opportunity to write about a time in their lives that forced them to make a decision, or somehow forced them to change their views. These experiences ranged from adjusting to not being chosen for the basketball team to being caught shoplifting. The one thing I hoped they would always keep in their minds as they wrote was the compelling factor that caused them to recall these experiences.



Another area of commonality between the Black cultural experience and the personal experiences of students existed in the form of music. I used the expression of the blues to illustrate creative expression of identity. The blues concern themselves with the base emotions--love, hate, sexuality, death, unhappiness, and poverty. The blues are not sophisticated expressions, but felt realities that become even more "felt" in their execution. Students did not realize the relationship between blues music coming out of the 1920's and the blues music inherent in all rock and roll, Janis Joplin, Roberta Flack--and the list goes on. I asked students to try their hand at creating a blues song as part of their objective on creativity, once again turning the focus to themselves and their experiences for material. Essentially, I asked them to react at gut level to their experiences.

Harold Lyons wrote a book called Learning to Feel and Feeling to Learn in which he emphasized the importance of utilizing the personal, inward focus that most people, and especially college freshmen have. If all students were open to "feeling learning," educators would have an easy job. Unfortunately, there are too many new experiences coming at them at one time. They become wound up in themselves and have difficulty keeping an unbiased view of academic concerns. During the course, I asked students to role play some examples of revolutionary street theater, or guerrilla theater as it was known in the 1960's. The language was tough, but the subjects were tougher. Students were asked to become someone or some type they knew very little about. What came out of this exercise was not the language or the color so much as the communication of absolute feeling. All else was a vehicle to getting at the feelings and frustrations of trying to establish identity.

What came out of this course was a slight opening for a number of students into another area of human concern--maybe even an understanding, if that is not too much to hope for. For some, the course seemed biased with concerns which they felt did not concern them. My feeling was that all of the students had been exposed to areas of expression--drama, poetry, music, novels, stories, games--and could not help taking away some kind of new understanding.

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## announcements



Submissions welcome, especially in these categories:

Teaching Plans--One or two page outlines of how a teacher handled a teaching problem or a part of a course.

Course Reports--Reports, under 600 words, of activities or distinctive approaches in writing courses or programs.

Reading Lists--Short, annotated bibliographies. A teacher's suggestion of interesting, informative reading.

Reminder: The WLA Newsletter is sent to you by the co-editors who hope that you will find it interesting and that you will share your ideas in a future issue. We do not plan for this to be a profit-making publication, other than that we all profit from its exchange of ideas. But if you would like to help with the expenses of the newsletter, we would not resent the offer of a handful of stamps or similar assistance for future mailings.

New this year: You can obtain a Registered Subscription to the WLA Newsletter for \$1.00, guaranteeing receipt of all issues published in the 1974-75. See the order form on page 2.

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**TEACHING PLAN #3: Introducing Comparison/Contrast Writing**
**CONTRIBUTOR:** Richard C. Gebhardt, Findlay College, Findlay, OH 45840

**ORIENTATION:** When students write papers touching on opinions or controversial issues they often reflect one or another of two inaccurate ideas. Some students seem to think that no one has ever before reacted as they react. Others deprecate their own powers of response by projecting the sense that all of their ideas derive from other sources--from parents, social groups, teachers, television commentators, and the like. Neither of these extreme positions is true, of course. People's opinions tend to be both derivative and unique, and a useful result of comparison/contrast writing is to alter student perception on this point.

In order to help students begin writing comparison/contrast papers, and also to help them develop this double-headed perspective on their own views, I ask students to use the following "Comparison/Contrast Worksheet." They complete the first two parts during one class session in which we discuss comparison/contrast writing and examine the process called for in part 2. Students do part 3 out of class, coupled with a library introduction unit. Students begin to work on the final section of the worksheet in class and complete it out of class.

**"COMPARISON/CONTRAST WORKSHEET"\*:**

1. Statement: Write a brief, clear summary of the opinion, idea, feeling, or belief that [you developed in an earlier paper].

2. Key Points: Examine your statement in part 1, looking for its key points. Underline words and phrases that are most significant--without which your position would not be what it is. Write at least three of these points here in complete sentences.

Key Point One:

Key Point Two:

Key Point Three:

3. Sources for Comparison and Contrast: Locate a published source that modifies, contradicts, or supports each of the three (or more) key points. Find a different book, article, news story, etc. for each point. Record a bibliography entry for each source, and add a brief note summarizing what each source says about your key point.

4. Comparison/Contrast Narrative: Write three paragraphs, in each of which you discuss one of your key points and how a published source compares or contrasts with it. Point out differences directly. Emphasize areas where you and your source differ in emphasis or in some other minor way. Then in at least one additional paragraph indicate whether your view on the subject in part 1 has changed, or is in the process of changing, as a result of studying the published sources.

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\*This "Comparison/Contrast Worksheet" is an excerpt from Richard C. Gebhardt and Barbara Genelle Smith's Self-Awareness through Writing, soon to be released as the first publication in the WLA Pamphlet Series. (See the order form on page 2.)

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Greenfield and Woods, continued from page 5:

Every time we write, we go through these two essential stages, and certainly we wouldn't think of calling our rough draft "personal experience" and the edited product, "college writing." But that may be what a typical student does think when, halfway through the semester his instructor seems to lose interest in Macrorie and starts giving assignments from a freshman rhetoric. Probably about this time, the student learns that he will have to write a long paper or project, and he begins to worry. Considerably later, he takes a long, careful, editor's look at his blank pages, and tries to put down something that looks like "college writing." In doubt, he reverts to English.

Some teachers might object, and rightly, that King Lear or Wayne Booth's essays in the Norton Anthology are outside the students' immediate experience. Who can deny it? Furthermore, all the Macrories in the world can't make a Mark Van Doren out of a first-term freshman. But neither can we help a freshman to write about Lear by arming him with rhetorical paradigms. We think the teacher must squarely face the responsibility for helping the student make his subject a part of his immediate experience. Macrorie encourages the student to approach his writing in this direct way, and that is why the wide use of his text in freshman English courses would seem to be justified.

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*Memoranda,  
reactions,  
commentary,  
change of address?*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Barbara and Rick  
WLA Newsletter

FROM: