CALL FOR PROPOSALS (18 June 2005 Deadline)

ECCTYC 2005: The Teacher Scholar: Serving Our Students and the English Profession
October 13-15, 2005
Long Beach, CA
Hotel TBA

**All Presenters are required to register for the conference.

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<td>Please write a 50-word synopsis for the program book:</td>
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Check the appropriate presentation format:
- [ ] Presentation
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*N.B.: The ECCTYC Conference is not designed as a forum for reading papers.*

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- biographical statement (50 words or less) so the moderator can introduce you.
- 250-word abstract (including your name & presentation title) summarizing your proposal.

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inside english

i.e.

EDITOR:
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ADVERTISING AND MARKETING MANAGER:
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PUBLICATION DESIGN:
Visual Mix Graphic Design

A Publication of the
English Council of California Two-Year Colleges

TYCA Pacific Coast:
A Region of the Two-Year College Association of the
National Council of Teachers of English

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EDITORIAL POLICY
inside english welcomes articles, reviews, and other writing of interest to instructors of English in two-year colleges, as well as letters in response to articles or on issues of concern to English faculty. Poetry is also welcome, as are manuscripts for the occasional columns, “Point of View,” “Best Practices,” “Department Chairs,” “Part-Time Faculty Concerns,” and “One Good Idea” (describing a single classroom technique or approach). Articles should be ten to fifteen double-spaced typed pages; reviews, five pages; and letters, one to two pages.

inside english has a 30-year tradition of publishing articles that are practical and classroom-centered. Our journal addresses professional concerns among the 111 two-year colleges throughout California.

Readers include full- and part-time faculty who teach composition, literature, creative writing, business and technical writing, and ESL courses at two-year community colleges throughout but not limited to California. Readers also include graduate students and faculty who teach freshman and sophomore English courses at four-year colleges.

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In general, manuscripts should follow MLA Style. The NCTE Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language (www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/lang/), and the Columbia On-line Style for citing electronic resources. Articles, poems, and reviews should be titled and list the author’s name, e-mail address, and campus affiliation(s). All submissions should have each page numbered. When appropriate, endnotes, parenthetical citations, and a Work(s) Cited page in MLA style should be included. Please enclose a cover letter that includes the title of the submission, the author’s postal and e-mail addresses, telephone number, a separate but brief biographical statement in the third person, and a self-addressed stamped legal-sized envelope if the author wishes any manuscript returned.

The editor reserves the right to edit manuscripts to conform to the language and style established in inside english. Manuscripts not conforming to the format described above will be returned unread; manuscripts not accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes cannot be returned or acknowledged.

REVIEWS
inside english encourages reviews of recently published print and electronic texts, software, and other media that are useful in the two-year college classroom. Send texts or other media for review to Darren Chiang-Schultheiss, Editor, inside english, English Department, Fullerton College, 321 E. Chapman Ave., Fullerton, CA 92832-2095. Send questions about a writing a review to darrencs@fullcoll.edu.

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inside english is published three times each academic year in the Fall, Winter, and Spring by the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges.

Subscription rates for departments vary depending on the number of copies required. Single copies are $5 each. Individual annual subscriptions cost $15. Remittance should be mailed to Tina Ramsey, ECCTYC Treasurer, Yuba College, 2088 N. Beale Road, Marysville, CA 95901. E-mail: treasurer@ecctyc.org. If you teach at a two-year college in California and are not currently receiving inside english through your department, please contact Tina Ramsey.
Welcome back from what I hope was a restful, rejuvenating summer of travel, reading, or finishing those postponed home projects.

Evolution is a natural and inevitable behavior of an organism that seeks to extend its longevity through adaptation. *inside english* is no different. The most obvious change readers will notice in this Fall issue of *i.e.* is that it has grown a different shell; its more compact design risks disappointing some readers, but most will welcome its metamorphosis. On a more subtle, indeed invisible level, however, *i.e.*’s new incarnation is accompanied by a change in editors. So, the journal metaphorically nods and thanks outgoing editor, Bruce Henderson, for his last two years of generous service while *i.e.* was in his charge. Thank you for steering *i.e.* through a smooth transition.

*inside english* brings to you in this issue three articles that take film as their inspiration for conceptualizing writing, for teaching argumentative essays in developmental composition, and for explaining the research paper. Lee Ann Diffendal’s essay, “Peers Respond to Peer Revision,” takes readers through the challenges of negotiating the peer review process in freshman composition classes, but it also makes a case for how revision ought to be done. Whether you are a veteran teacher or are beginning your career in the classroom, you will find something in this issue that promises to be of pedagogical value either in an immediately pragmatic form or in an abstract way that challenges or provokes your thinking. The Adjunct Faculty column offers some practical advice for dealing with the EDD and unemployment insurance claims while the TYCA and Academic Senate reports share some important news about what is happening in our profession at the national and state levels respectively.

As *i.e.* makes a commitment to being more visible this year, you can expect to see two more issues in the Winter and Spring. At the same time, I also need your help. Because individuals are not charged to receive *inside english*, your English department is billed for an institutional membership which pays for your copy. So, I ask that your department renew its institutional membership early this year. I also encourage you to make a pitch for *i.e.*: remind the person who pays the membership invoice of how important it is that your colleagues continue receiving *inside english*. Give your department chairperson a note; tap your dean on the shoulder while holding a copy of *i.e.* With your help, *inside english* can continue to be in your mailbox three times a year.

I hope you enjoy reading *i.e.*, and if you do, let us know. I.e., write about it.

—DCS
Call for Papers

Because California community college teachers are not required to write for publication for career advancement, many of us miss the opportunity to exchange our ideas or debate issues that matter to our profession. However, inside english invites you to submit your articles, a letter to the editor, a short piece for our “One Good Idea” column, or a review of a textbook or software tool your colleagues should know about. If you are stuck for an idea, consider one of the topics below for inspiration. The journal prefers that you submit your manuscript electronically. Please follow the guidelines in the previous Information for Authors section and send your file attachment to darrencs@fullcoll.edu.

Occasional Columns

- "Point of View"
- "News and Notes"
- "Talking Back"
- "One Good Idea"
- "Part-Time Faculty Concerns"
- "Reviews"
- "Best Practices"
- "Department Chairs"

Some Possible Topics

- the 16-week calendar
- assembly bills that affect our teaching profession
- the teacher-scholar
- classroom research
- working conditions
- multiple measures and placement tests
- differential units
- tenure review
- hiring
- learning outcomes
- curriculum development
- IMPAC
- Part-time teaching issues
- teaching basic skills
- basic writing
- first year composition
- business & technical writing
- creative writing and its pedagogy
- literature
- writing center
- classroom management
- new teachers
- writing a syllabus
- communication & competency
- technology in the classroom
- teaching in CAI ("smart") classrooms
- cyber-cheating/plagiarism
- guides to avoid plagiarism
- blogging

2004-2005 Deadlines

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In the natural order of things, change seems to be one constant, reliable outcome of situations and leadership positions. Last January, when I wrote what I considered to be my last President’s Message for inside english and Sally Anne Fitzgerald concluded her second term as TYCA/ECCTYC representative for ECCTYC, we both looked forward to the emerging leaders who would continue to energize our organization. However, because of several retirements and with the Board’s approval, Fitzgerald and I agreed to continue serving as interim officers until ECCTYC’s Spring 2005 elections.

In June 2004, following the completion of their terms, several officers, including Sara Blake (Treasurer), Amy Olson (Secretary), and Bruce Henderson (inside english editor) retired from the Board. And Peter Raleigh (Second Vice President) deservedly took the “golden handshake” and will retire to Australia. Once again, we thank them for their outstanding contributions.

Although we’ll miss these consummate professionals, ECCTYC is fortunate to have equally proficient people to replace them: Tina Ramsey, Yuba College, will step in as Treasurer, and Tom Hurley, Diablo Valley College, takes over as Secretary. Also during ECCTYC’s 2004/2005 transitional year, Darren Chiang-Schultheiss graciously assumes new responsibilities as interim editor for inside english. Since these changes create English Council vacancies, please consider how you might serve ECCTYC or your region now and in the future.


This fall, the California State Academic Senate will vote on increasing the minimum English graduation requirements for a community college AA/AS degree. ECCTYC overwhelmingly endorsed this proposal and wrote
a resolution to that effect over a year ago. (See www.ecctyc.org for the complete text.) Basically, the proposal would

- Allow students seeking only high school level workplace skills to realize their ambitions, acknowledging them with certificates rather than college degrees for their accomplishments.

- Direct students to complete GE studies for a degree, leading to greater employability and life-long learning.

- Develop vocational/academic post-high school language skills needed to meet the competitive workforce/university demands.

- Enable increasing numbers of AA/AS graduates acculturated to higher education to pursue BA/BS degrees—something they once thought impossible.

- Prepare historically underrepresented/underprepared students to break through the glass ceiling of workforce advancement.

- Keep AA/AS degrees meaningful, accurate, credible measurements of lower division “college work,” offering students a genuine sense of higher education achievement.

ECCTYC plans to expand its research, position papers, and resolutions in the future, including pieces on loading/class size and outsourcing composition classes from the CSU to community colleges. Also, the Academic Senate and ECCTYC would like to continue to work collaboratively on matters like writing/communicating across the curriculum and the IMPAC (Intersegmental Major Preparation Articulated Curriculum) program. Meanwhile organizations that represent multiple disciplines like FACCC express interest in partnerships. We have a lot to do and welcome your contributions!
As Bill Murray’s character wanders bemusedly through the world of Tokyo nightlife in his recent, popular movie, there is much in his cultural exchange that is *Lost in Translation*. But this metaphor of overwhelming difference in language, values, and ways of thinking aptly applies to most college freshmen, as well, who are making the significant transition from the “culture” of high school (or, in the case of our many “returning” students, the transition from the environments of the workplace or home) to college. The titles of some of the leading texts for English 1A highlight this image of students “in transit”—*Between Worlds*, by Susan Bachman and Melinda Barth, and *Across Cultures*, by Sheena Gillespie and Robert Singleton, come immediately to mind. We know that many of our students are literally straddling a culture different from their own or developing fluency in a language that is not native to them, but all of our students are figuratively “traveling” from cultures with their own “social” conventions and ways of communicating to the culture of “scholarly enterprise,” represented by the expectations of their college instructors and administrators. Keith Hjortshoj describes this concept well in his handbook, *The Transition to College Writing*: “Even the best high schools cannot fully prepare [a graduate] to be a college student, because in some very fundamental ways a college or a university is a different kind of learning environment in which [one] must become a different kind of student” (3, italics in original). In aiding our students’ success in their new college environments, we, as language instructors, play the role of “translators,” that is, interpreters and teachers of the new languages and cultural expectations that students will encounter in the land of “Academia.” Our classroom practices can best benefit students by equipping them with a vocabulary *about* the language issues they will face along their academic journeys and beyond, a “meta-language,” as it were, that will help to map the new terrain of academic discourse.

**Jeffrey Brandt** presently teaches as an adjunct instructor at Glendale Community College, East Los Angeles College, and Mount San Antonio College. He enjoys teaching all levels of English, but especially English 1A, Introduction to Literature, and Critical Thinking. He can be reached at jpb529@aol.com.
In fact, as Hjortshoj notes, “... the goals of a freshman writing course are [close] to those of language instruction in primary school, where ‘language arts’ were [sic] essential to all subjects” (28). His point is that elementary school students must learn to read and write before they can begin learning about history or science or acquiring the content of any other subject. College freshmen, in many ways, are no different: they must master new academic “languages” and ways of reading before succeeding in the work of their academic disciplines. We know that students must often “write to learn” or use writing as the means to thinking about a subject. We acknowledge that writing is essential in allowing students to “connect the dots” of their learning.

One exercise that Hjortshoj assigns his freshmen students is actually to draw a map of the campus from memory (30). The resulting maps, as might be expected, vary significantly, showing not only the divergent “routes” that students take through the physical geography of campus buildings, but also, more significantly, the students’ differing priorities on what they will gain from their college education. If travel is a fitting figure for education, then language proficiency becomes a kind of map, or “tool,” that will move students forward from one point to another on the way to their college goals.

“A class session is a sociolinguistic event, a cultural organism in action,” writes Francis Russell Hart in his meditation on teaching, Beyond the Books: Reflections on Learning and Teaching (20). And within the “organism” of the classroom, the “culture” is primarily dictated by how language is used and acquired. As Hart continues, “For the student, every class is a process of learning the teacher’s language, and every teacher willy-nilly is a language instructor. Many teachers are unaware of the languages they use: the relative degree of technicality and formality, the key syntactic forms, the terms and tones” (21). We, obviously, must have this type of “language awareness” (another title, by the way, of an excellent English 1A textbook by Eschholz, Rosa, and Clark) to guide our students’ development, and I wish to suggest three “new” languages that we can help our students acquire, namely, technical, figurative, and, ultimately, a “metalanguage.”

When we teach grammar concepts in English 1A, we are not teaching our students how to speak or write English, something they have already internalized, but we are providing them with a technical jargon, an “owner’s manual,” as it were, to better understand their vehicle of language, and to repair it when something goes wrong (Faigley 369). Bachman and Barth are writing to the students with this point in mind when they introduce sentence basics in the grammar “handbook” portion of their text: “Understanding how sentences work will give you the vocabulary you need to discuss your writing and to correct errors that have been noted in your papers” (566, emphasis added). Here the ordering of these two concepts seems exactly right: for students, being able to discuss and conceptualize the rules of grammar as analytical and descriptive of what happens in good
writing should have priority over simply using grammar rules to “correct errors.” Robert Scholes develops this concept even further in his *The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English as a Discipline*. In this work he suggests instituting a core of courses for college freshmen along the lines of the medieval “trivium” of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric (120). The goal of such courses is “to help students situate themselves in their own culture, and, in particular, …to make the basic processes of language itself intelligible and fully available for use” (119). So, the idea of “grammar” in this scheme is transformed from “traditionally the driest and narrowest of academic subjects…” (121), according to Scholes, that is, dealing with rules to correct writing errors, to an open philosophical study of what he calls “Language and Human Subjectivity.” When students understand the difference between “subject” and “object” pronouns, for example, Scholes believes that they literally have a new way of talking about human relationships. In my own experience, I notice how readily students perceive the difference between an active sentence pattern of “Who did what to whom” and the passive pattern of “Someone had something done to them by who knows who?” By understanding the “case” form of pronouns, students have a tool to trace the real actor in a sentence.

If travel is a fitting figure for education, then language proficiency becomes a kind of map, or “tool,” that will move students forward from one point to another on the way to their college goals.

In thinking more about the transforming power of new language, a second type of “speech” that freshman writers may acquire is figurative language. This imaginative “yoking together of unlike objects” (Samuel Johnson’s phrase) through simile, personification, or metaphor becomes an important tool of thinking and speaking in a student’s new academic “culture”—despite Dr. Johnson’s skepticism of the Metaphysical poets’ pursuing this practice to the extreme in their elaborate conceits. In metaphor, one word carries and transforms the meaning of another, as in the phrase, “the evening of life,” an example given with the dictionary definition that I found (*American Heritage Dictionary*). The tenor of this metaphor is old age, the nearing of the end of one’s life; the vehicle is the stages of a day: dawn, morning, noontime, afternoon, here, evening, and eventually night. Reading this phrase, we grasp in an instant the connection between human life and the physical day. Our understanding of one concept is changed, transformed into a deeper understanding of the cycles of the natural world.

The etymology of “metaphor” is from the Greek roots *meta*, or change, and *pherein*, meaning to carry. In a very real sense, a metaphor’s “vehicle” carries us somewhere new in our understanding and transforms the mean-

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*Lost in Translation: Helping Students Learn a New “Language” in Freshman English*
ing of a word or familiar concept. One recalls here the meaningful distinction that Louise Rosenblatt makes in her Literature as Exploration between “efferent” and “aesthetic” reading. As Rosenblatt explains, these two terms define a continuum of the “kinds of attention” a reader may pay to a text (xviii). In efferent reading (here the Greek root appears to have influenced the Latin verb effere, or “to carry away”), a reader seeks primarily to extract information from a text, without attending to personal associations, as a doctor may read a medical report or an investor read a summary of his company’s last quarter earnings simply for the information she can take from it. In aesthetic reading, however, Rosenblatt suggests that one’s attention to the text “broaden[s]…to include the personal, affective aura and associations surrounding the words” of the text; this type of reading becomes a “lived-through experience” in which the reader’s focus includes “the moods, scenes, [and] situations being created during the transaction [of reading]” (xvii). By introducing students to this more associative way of reading, one in which they become conscious of interpreting figures and making personal, felt connections to what they read, we broaden their experience with this most fundamental skill of reading.

Let me shift from theory to practice for a moment to give an example of how using a literary text in English 1A, in this case, Jane Smiley’s novel, A Thousand Acres, can help students perform different kinds of reading, including the “aesthetic” kind.¹ First, the novel provides a basis to teach reading with reference to a larger structure that informs the work, here, namely, the parallels to Shakespeare’s King Lear, and to the Lear myth that lies behind Shakespeare. I provide copies of the opening act of Lear and ask students to enact the drama of the mighty king’s “doubtful purpose” of dividing his kingdom among his daughters according to their professions of love for him. When the students reach a similar scene early in the novel, although now involving the aging farmer “Larry” proposing to incorporate his 1000-acre farm and to give his daughters shares, the parallels with Shakespeare’s play stand out. Is Smiley stealing Shakespeare’s story? Doesn’t a novel have to be original? Is Jane Smiley a plagiarist? And where did Shakespeare get the story in the first place? Is he simply borrowing from a folk tale, or recalling a fairy tale motif, or reusing a tale from Holinshed? Could the mighty Shakespeare himself be a plagiarist? These critical issues of originality and borrowing of a structure are compelling for students at this stage, and they also lead well into discussing a strategy of reading that goes beyond the words and paragraphs to the logical framework of the text on which they are created.
Secondly, the novel works to provide imaginative rendering of situations that lie behind contemporary issues, that is, the world from which “non-fiction” writing comes, and in this case the issues of family dynamics, child abuse, and aging were prominent. Smiley has said that a novel reflects the contemporary issues of its time as they affect individuals, a point that leading writers such as Barbara Kingsolver strongly share. The novel can thus lead into topics for the research project in English 1A and shed light on issues for critical debate.2

But in its literary and aesthetic terms, the novel works well to introduce the “special attention” that, in Rosenblatt’s terms, one must pay in reading texts for certain purposes. One central metaphor in the novel is that jealousy is a poison. This metaphor is first introduced through imagery of pesticides that are poisoning the land and the water system of the farm and by references to poisonous snakes and plants on the edges of the farms. Ultimately, the image returns when Ginny attempts to poison her sister Rose with homemade sausage and sauerkraut she has laced with poison from a local plant. Having students attend to this imagery and encouraging their reflection on it yields the beneficial, and at times astonishing, results of translating the novelist’s language of “signs,” her symbolism, to the students’ active understanding and vocabulary.

Let me quote from the essays of two students I’ll call Bianca and Ernest, writing on the symbolism in *A Thousand Acres*, that help to show the levels at which students may grasp these new meanings. Bianca’s essay shows the beginning of an awareness of the power and significance of the novel’s symbols:

> When an author uses elements of symbolism or imagery in a novel, it creates a better understanding of the plot and characters. It makes the story more interesting and fun to read. The novel comes to life when the author tries to emphasize different elements of symbolism and imagery in the novel. The monopoly game [played by the younger generation families after receiving their shares of the farm] and its pieces help expose each character’s personality. The poison helps create the sense of jealousy and hatred....

Ernest takes this awareness a little further by relating the symbolic blinding of the neighbor Harold with chemical fertilizer to the ironic “power” lurking in other household “chemicals.”

> Being able to see the magnificent in the mundane is a wonderful craft that Jane Smiley has mastered. The anhydrous ammonia acted as a catalyst in cementing the “children’s” resolve. The poison afforded Ginny the ability to lash out against her sister. And the aspirin gave Ginny the relief in her physical body that she so desperately yearned for in her psychological state. Jane Smiley’s wonderfully crafted novel shows that chemicals are more than covalent bonds and acrid smells, but also symbols that can paint a wonderful, yet bleak, portrait of the human experience.
Both of these students, although at different interpretive levels, have moved beyond the condition of many college writers of lacking a language to embody their new understandings of a text. Gerald Graff describes this poverty of language very effectively in his “Disliking Books at an Early Age,” based on his own college reading experiences: “Even when I had done the assigned reading, I was often tongue-tied and embarrassed when called on. What was unclear to me was what I was supposed to say about literary works, and why” (42, italics in original). Teaching the “language” of figures of speech and symbolism is one way to “untie” the students’ tongues and enable them to talk intelligibly about their new experiences of reading.

And this brings us to the significance of nearly all language use in the classroom, and that is to empower students with a “meta-language,” a vocabulary in which they can think and communicate meaningfully about their own processes of using language. Just as students learn “meta-cognition” in psychology, that is, simply thinking about the process of thinking, so students in English 1A learn and practice a new language about language. This meta-language includes newly-defined terms for writers, such as “thesis,” “voice,” or “rhetorical mode.” When we work with these terms semester after semester, we seldom stop to think how truly foreign they must sound to students encountering them for the first time. But it is precisely the students’ need to acquire this new “metalinguistics,” this new terminology of how language works in the writing process, that carries with it the possibility of new consciousness and new control by the students over their writing.

...when these concepts are reinforced...
then we have given our students not only a glossary of new terms, but also a new model and its vocabulary to become more “conscious” writers, and eventually to become their own language teachers.

While the term “meta-language” may have a vague, post-modern ring to it, the prefix “meta-” here simply means “beyond, above, or of a higher logical type” (Harmon and Holman 306), and when added to a noun, it “designates a new but related discipline...that deals logically and critically with the nature, structure, logic, or behavior of the original discipline” (Harmon and Holman 307). Those post-modern writers, such as John Fowles in his French Lieutenant’s Woman, who practice “meta-fiction” are self-consciously reflecting on the techniques, conventions, and assumptions of writing fiction. Some “new language” that students must learn to become
more self-conscious about their writing includes the terminology of "process," such as "pre-writing" and "revision." We become frustrated when students underestimate the significance and breadth of revision required in their essays or when they make only superficial attempts at "brainstorming" or "free-writing" in the pre-writing stage of their process. Thus, teaching the "language" of writing process alone is not enough. However, when these concepts are reinforced by classroom practices such as peer review editing and revision workshops, or group brainstorming sessions, then we have given our students not only a glossary of new terms, but also a new model and its vocabulary to become more "conscious" writers, and eventually to become their own language teachers.

For a primary goal of all teaching, according to Francis Russell Hart, is "to teach students how to learn" (x, italics in original). In developing this idea in his chapter entitled "The Strangeness of Learning to Learn," Hart uses travel as a metaphor for learning. A traveler, for her very survival, must learn to read the signs of her new environment, and ask the critical questions of what might help her? what poses a danger? Students must similarly learn their way through the hostile new terrain of college requirements, new cultural expectations, and a jumble of new languages that make up the culture of college and reflect the "babel" of the larger society. In Robert Scholes’ formulation, the discipline of English studies empowers the student to “find the voice one needs to express oneself and be heard in the midst of the hubbub” of a culture (131). And while the “din” of the conflicting voices one hears on a college campus may not approach the noise of a busy intersection in downtown Tokyo, in both cases, for the one traveling in a new environment, having a translator and “local” guide—the language teacher—will be a most welcome service.

Endnotes

1 I write this knowing that there is still some “push and pull” on the appropriateness of using literature in English 1A, but also experiencing that many community college English departments require the reading of an outside novel as part of the course, and some course outlines suggest that at least one graded assignment deal with literary analysis while the bulk of the course be taught using “primarily non-fiction texts.”

2 Our “reader” for this particular course, for example, had a section on the pros and cons of spanking children that we used as the basis for a “position” essay. But some of the strongest examples of the use and effects of physical discipline came from our reading of the novel—a scene in which the narrator, Ginny, is struck by her father with a belt for losing a shoe at a Halloween party; and one in which the youngest daughter, Caroline, is roundly spanked as a toddler for marking the walls with lipstick that the mother had left out on the bathroom sink.
Works Cited


The fall semester was creaking to a close. As I walked across campus to my classroom, my sense of relief at the sight of falling leaves, and the caress of crispy air on my cheeks after a brutal desert summer was slowly diluted by a growing feeling of dread: it was time to teach my 101 class how to write a research paper.

The plan this time was to instruct students to select a controversial or classic movie with a view to discussing “What makes a movie powerful?” I intended to model the writing process for my class by showing a movie, brainstorming a few ideas, and finding some relevant articles to demonstrate the use of secondary sources in developing fledgling thoughts. I chose *Frankenstein* (1931), directed by James Whale, as my sample for two main reasons: it is short (only 71 minutes), so it fits nicely into a class period; also, as we were approaching Halloween, I thought it would be fun.

So, once in my classroom, and after fiddling with the projector and the sound system, I settled at an empty desk to enjoy the film. As I sat there in the dim light with eyes fixed on Boris Karloff (marginally distracted by a nearby student rhythmically clicking the end of his ballpoint), I realized there was a third, very good reason that this movie was an apt choice: it struck me that a poorly constructed research paper is analogous to Frankenstein’s monster.

I’m not talking here about Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The monster in her novel is thoughtful and articulate and could, no doubt, write an excellent essay. For the purposes of this discussion, my focus is the monster that pops into our minds first when we hear the word “Frankenstein”: the one with the flat-topped mega-head, sludge green complexion, conspicuous neck bolts, and clunky feet; the one you might find in diminutive form on your doorstep on All Hallows’ Eve asking for a trick or treat. This monster, immortalized by Karloff, is both humorous and heartbreaking as he makes...

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his doomed attempts to fit into society. As my students tittered at the sight of the monster (Franky for short) inadvertently drowning a little peasant girl with whom he wanted to make friends, it struck me that Franky might provide a means to inject some fun into teaching those less than a-thrill-a-minute topics such as how to use quotations, and how to use MLA style.

Franky tries to be his own person and interact with polite society. He fails because he is a mishmash of other people’s body parts, clumsily codged together, lacking his own soul. He may be a man of parts, but certainly not in the Elizabethan sense. Students’ research papers display the Frankenstein-factor when they rely too heavily on sources without making a contribution to knowledge, and when they lack the professional polish of academic discourse. Their papers clump about in academia, creating havoc and failing to communicate.

**Soul Searching**

My 101 students’ drafts frequently suggest that their writers believe a research paper is a summary of a smattering of articles and book bits. (They wouldn’t use the word “summary” at this stage because they haven’t yet grasped the difference between this and analysis.) One of the major problems students have in tackling essays is, therefore, that they fail to distinguish between a research paper and a research report. An effective way to teach this distinction is to liken the research report to Franky.

Dr. Frankenstein aspires to make a new person by sewing together bits of other people. He is on the right track, but there is a missing ingredient. When I study my daughter, I see that she has her aunt’s actress eyebrows, her dad’s pointy chin, her grandad’s turned-down mouth, and her mom’s glockenspiel-hammer toes. Considered separately, these body parts don’t seem as if they belong together. However, nature has waved her magic wand and wonderfully wrought an individual being from these familial fragments. Dr. Frankenstein wasn’t as successful. He stole a head here, an arm there, sewed them together, added lightening and…voilà…came up with something that, quite frankly (pun intended), wasn’t pretty. Why didn’t it work? Although my daughter is made from relics of various relatives, she’s still an individual. She’s still mostly herself. Franky, unfortunately, remains just a bunch of pilfered parts.

So how do you give a research paper a soul? I tell my students that, while they need to make substantial use of sources, those sources should not be the backbone of their papers, but the ribs. The aim of a research paper is to make a contribution to knowledge. Poor Franky is a conglomeration of, rather than a contribution to, humanity. The soul of a research paper is the student’s own thoughts. Secondary sources should be used to gain knowledge of a field, to help the student generate questions, to back up a student’s ideas, and to provide an opportunity for the student to allow for refutation. They should not smother the student’s own voice.
One way to avoid being subsumed by sources is for students to make notes on why they find their chosen movies powerful, before consulting articles and books on the topic. This way, students have direction when they begin to read and are able to remain in the driving seat, even when those sources challenge students to adapt their ideas. In modeling this process I explain that my own response to *Frankenstein* (despite the fact that it has some corny acting, a dated musical score, unimpressive special effects, and so forth), is that it remains powerful today because it explores topics of contemporary interest, such as the quest for an identity, or the cloning debate. I also find the settings effective in that they reinforce the movie’s exploration of the ways in which the creative genius and his creation are social rebels/outcasts. This is illustrated by the location of Frankenstein’s laboratory in a lonely watchtower and the final pursuit of the monster through the Alps.

For the next step, I select one of those areas for discussion and go in search of books and articles for my sample Works Cited list. I seek out two sample sources: one dodgy, and one scholarly. The first may be something from a website that shows signs of inadequacy (for example, it hasn’t been updated in years, it is poorly edited, or it is published by a twelve-year-old lacking academic credentials). At this point, I compare the use of a dubious Internet source to Dr. Frankenstein’s use (albeit unwitting) of a criminal’s brain for his creature. The would-be creator didn’t stand a chance of success with faulty components. I contrast the use of such sources with the wiser method of using something more reliable, such as a journal article from *Critical Inquiry* available through our library’s subscription to EBSCO.

Of course, it’s not enough to pick good body parts/sources—you have to be able to use them effectively. Some students feel that you don’t even need to read sources in their entirety—just trawl them for some good quotations (the longer the better). I know the latter to be true because it is what I used to do in my misspent youth. However, assuming you’ve read and understood your sources, the first thing you need to do is to keep direct quotations to a minimum. If your essay is not mostly your own words, it appears that either you are a lazy thinker, or you are a timid writer cowering behind others’ words and ideas. One way to avoid these results is to use more summary than paraphrase, and more of both of those than quotations (Rawlins 325). I direct students to their handbooks here for more specific guidance.

Once armed (or legged) with a small chunk of source material, the second step is to add your own analysis to provide a context. A colleague of mine explains to his students that it’s important to include a dialog with the source. He advises students that to make the purpose of a quotation clear
to a reader, they should first put it in their own words (“What Joe Bloggs is saying here is…”) and then add a response (e.g., “I agree because…” or “He is valid up to a point; however,…”) or “Bloggs’ point raises several questions, such as…” (Tafarella). The challenge of a research paper is that you have your own ideas, possible material from a primary source, and the ideas of eight or so other writers to sew together to make your essay. It’s got to look as though you had a quilt pattern in mind, a master-plan behind the particulars, and haven’t just thrown a bunch of bits together willy-nilly. If I may mix metaphors, this method of sewing the body parts together is one stage of adding professional polish.

Professional Polish

As mentioned earlier, the settings used in Frankenstein reinforce some of this movie’s themes. These settings play on both the classic and romantic views of the wilderness versus civilization, described by critics such as John Rennie Short and Maxine Feifer. In the classic view, gentle, flat, contained landscapes are beautiful and divine; while rough, mountainous, open vistas are the ugly result of mankind’s fall (Short 15; Feifer 17-20). The wild is a barbarous habitation of outlaws, witches, and weirdoes—it is a metaphor for the dark side of the psyche, as exemplified by the word “bewildered;” whereas the city is a civil and safe haven (Short 7-9). On the other hand, in the romantic view, the wild/mountains are sublime symbols of the unconscious. The wild is where you find yourself (especially if you happen to be a mystic, hermit, or romantic traveler), where there is potentiality, where you are inspired and your creativity is sparked away from the stultifying city (Short 27; Feifer 140-42). If we apply this notion to the context of writing, it means you need to escape confinement and take risks in the drafting stage, but re-enter the civilized world of academic discourse in the editing stage.

There is a polarization in the movie between the town Dr. Frankenstein comes from and the wild mountains where he has his ghoulish watchtower laboratory. Although we may criticize the doctor for the crudity of his creation, we have to hand it to him for his creativity. He certainly goes out on a limb (pun intended) to make a contribution to knowledge. However, his failing is that he does not prepare his monster to function in polite society. Poor Franky is at home in the mountains, but a throbbing sore thumb in the city. When he crashes his creator’s engagement party, he enters the family home through the window instead of ringing the doorbell and presenting a card. On encountering the screaming heroine whose bedchamber he has
penetrated, Franky is at a loss when it comes to the ritual of phatic communion. Had he been able to say, “Good evening, I am enchanted to make your acquaintance,” instead of grunting, perhaps Elizabeth wouldn’t have had hystericis and a swooning fit. OK, so I don’t scream when I read an unpolished research paper (not often, anyway), but I think it’s reasonable to compare Franky to the brainstorming phase of the writing process—he’s a piece of freewriting who requires shaping and editing before he can become an essay.

Why should students care if Franky wreaks havoc at the party? I explain to them that a paper represents its writer. At a discussion of the movie presented at Antelope Valley College a while back, the point was raised that nowadays most people label the monster “Frankenstein,” erroneously equating the monster with his creator. The presenters pointed out that this is because the monster represents the doctor and is a part of him (Vaughn, Lubick, and Covell). I explain to students that, similarly, their papers are their ambassadors. The stakes are high.

So how do you dress up Franky so he can go to the party? First, you have to have a sense of audience. Franky has no problem communicating with the eponymous star of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. The monsters find each other’s ugliness appealing and understand each other’s savage grunts. But the academic community expects more. It expects eloquence, a smooth skin with no bolts or stitches, and a mortarboard and gown.

What constitutes bolts and stitches in a research paper? I compare these to the ill use of MLA format. I inform students that their papers will fail to be seamless if they don’t introduce quotations, or they don’t alter quotations to fit the grammar of their sentences, or they put commas and colons in the wrong places, or they put a period in front of an in-text citation, and so on. But, so what if you have some mistakes and inconsistencies in format? It’s not that big of a deal, is it? I argue that although it may seem persnickety to insist on following all these little rules, format is important, because poor format turns the attention of the reader away from the substance of a paper and onto the bolts and the stitches. Sloppiness communicates that the writer is a sloppy thinker or doesn’t care. Students need to learn how to play the game of academic discourse so that instructors will take their writing seriously and will be able to focus on what they say instead of being distracted by their errors.

I find teaching the research paper a major challenge. It is especially difficult to teach MLA style while keeping students awake and making it relevant, so any fun that can be introduced into that process is welcome. The Frankenstein’s monster analogy may be a little silly, but that’s what I like about it. Silly is accessible and memorable. Of course, there are those rare occasions, now and then, when I’ll read a paper that breaks all the [format] rules, but still dazzles me with its creativity. It may clump about on monster feet, but its heart is sound, so I’ll give it an A anyway…but I don’t tell my students that.
Notes

1 I adapted this assignment from one designed by my colleague, Charles Hood.

2 I’m not the first to come up with this analogy. Jack Rawlins, in his excellent textbook, *The Writer’s Way*, argues that papers lacking a sense of audience are “like Dr. Frankenstein’s early experiments: However meticulously you sew the pieces together, it’s never going to get up off the operating table and walk” (24).

Works Cited


**Quiz Show: Teaching Basic Argument in Developmental Composition**

by John Thomas

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**Introduction**

“Beauty is truth, truth is beauty—that’s all ye need to know.”

—John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”

This quote from John Keats' “Ode on a Grecian Urn” plays an important role in Robert Redford’s 1994 film, *Quiz Show*, which examines the downfall of 1950s television game shows and one of its primary players, Charles Van Doren. The Washington D. C. investigator quotes Keats for Van Doren, and Van Doren admits that truth can set one free. Truth, the beauty of it, and its part in American culture of the 1950s and the American Dream, is central to *Quiz Show* and the basic argument assignment I created utilizing it. Who wouldn’t want to have considerable influence and power over the American public, I ask my students? I ask them if they would want to win lots of “easy money” on a game show, become popular, influential, and well respected? Most of my students did and certainly a number of my colleagues would, too—whether we would readily admit it or not. Charles Van Doren wanted fame and took “easy money” from appearances on a quiz show. Indeed, his actions brought him and his family considerable grief. By using the film *Quiz Show* in a developmental composition course two levels below freshman composition, underprepared students learn the basic elements of an argumentative essay.

*Quiz Show: The Plot and Background Information*

*Quiz Show* chronicles the true story of the 1950s television quiz show scandals when a congressional investigation unveiled rigged games,
scheming producers, and unscrupulous contestants duping an unwitting American public. *Quiz Show* focuses on Charles Van Doren, literature lecturer at Columbia and son of two famous authors. A handsome, highly educated, man, he decides to compete on the latest national craze in 1950s America—a television game show. While auditioning and answering questions about the Civil War, two producers recognize Van Doren and offer him an opportunity to unseat the long-time champ, Herbert Stempel, of television’s most popular game show, *21*. However, as this film clip indicates, their offer is slightly unorthodox.

Despite initially rejecting this offer, Van Doren finally agrees to appear on *21*, setting in motion events he finds increasingly difficult from which to extricate himself. Once on *21*, Van Doren unexpectedly receives the same Civil War questions from his audition and, after answering them, unseats long-time champion, Herbert Stempel, proceeds to appear on *21* for several weeks, receives quiz questions and answers in advance, and makes publicity appearances for the network. The sponsors are thrilled, the network in ratings heaven, the producers complacent, and Van Doren happily out of his father’s shadow having acquired fame of his own. However, Herbert Stempel seeks revenge and talks to an investigator as Congress begins to scrutinize television quiz shows, *21* in particular. Eventually Van Doren admits he received questions in advance, his career is destroyed, and the producers are indicted.

**The Assignment: Before the Film—Setting the Stage**

When I saw *Quiz Show* in 1994, I recognized its potential as a developmental composition course writing assignment. While I primarily utilize the following assignment to introduce beginning writers to the concept of persuasive writing, the high quality of the film’s content is such that this assignment can be effectively modified to serve a variety of instructional needs. It can be used in developmental composition one or two levels below freshman composition, in transfer level literature, critical thinking, or film and humanities courses. Indeed, it is possible to use *Quiz Show* in a Cold War-era literature course. However, my *Quiz Show* assignment is particularly effective with developmental writers because it provides them with the structure needed to develop their critical thinking skills and learn how to organize an argumentative essay centered on a basic thesis.

Before introducing the assignment or showing the film, I review and reteach some points to give students a solid foundation and assure them success with the assignment. First, I introduce thesis statements and teach the class the boundaries and power of a thesis. While students have already learned that an essay must have one central, unifying idea or point, this is the first time they have actually used a formal thesis statement in an essay. To reinforce what a thesis is, I have students work in pairs on identifying various thesis statements (strong and weak) from real student essays. Once this activity has been completed, I give them a handout showing a pattern
for how I want the thesis statement to look in their essay.

Secondly, I have students complete a brief survey about fame, money, and power in groups and then share their responses. Generally, comments range from “Cool! Who wouldn’t want to be rich and famous?” to “I’d like to be rich, but not famous,” to “I dunno—It depends on how much money I get.” However, they’d like to know more before they commit themselves. I ask students what they would be willing to do to have fame and fortune—at what cost to themselves and their families.

Thirdly, after our brief discussion on the pros and cons of fame and fortune, I give students background information about the television quiz show scandals of the 1950s. Almost always my entire class says they never knew about them. They are usually quite surprised and intrigued when they learn the shows were rigged and subsequently investigated. I ask my class if they can think of any contemporary scandals from television (or elsewhere) of a similar nature. Some students mention the easy questions on the Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? program. “The questions on that show are way too easy—it must be rigged” is one response I recently received. A couple of students mentioned the fairly recent Survivor flap where one contestant sued, claiming the program was scripted and not the “reality show,” the network claimed. This brief discussion provides a naturally smooth transition to viewing the film.

**Viewing the Film and the Writing Process**

Just before viewing the film I pass out a viewing guide with questions. Since it is a long film (slightly over two hours) depending upon the duration of the class period, I break the film into two parts, stopping at specific points for them to review their worksheet answers and ask questions about the film. While watching the film, students jot down notes to questions on their sheet, and these serve as the basis for class discussion and their essays. Group discussion about their answers serves as a brainstorming session for beginning their essay drafts. By doing so, a number of my students change their minds and re-think their initial opinions, but even those who stick to their initial opinion are now most capable of providing specific evidence from the film to support their argument.

The assignment requires a thesis statement, specific examples from the film to support it, at least one or two quotations from their assigned readings, and one paragraph where they refute the opposition’s views. The
refutation and integration of quotations is particularly challenging for beginning writers. I ask students to anticipate what they think somebody might say who disagreed with their thesis. After the film is over, but before they begin drafting, students brainstorm in groups to see why somebody else might think their stand was wrong and then refute the opposition’s view. Students are set up in camps of pro or con, and this debate helps students clarify their ideas for their argument, thesis, and refutation. To further illustrate a successful refutation, I use the example of parents not letting their teenagers use the car to go cruising. In order to persuade their parents they are wrong, what would they say to refute their parent’s initial argument? This sometimes helps students understand what a refutation is, how it works in an argumentative essay, and why it is important.

My assignment asks students to determine whether they think Charles Van Doren acted of his own free will by answering the questions on the quiz show or was coerced by the game show producers into cheating. Students need to take a stand and state whether he is guilty or innocent, why or why not, and provide specific examples from the film and quotations from the readings to support their thesis. Should Charles Van Doren have refused to answer the questions suddenly put before him on national television and saved himself considerable pain and humiliation? Or, as a few students invariably insist, was he trapped and tricked by the producers into answering the questions? Now, to us this may not seem to be a particularly difficult argument, but it frequently is for developmental writers and sometimes they have difficulty reaching a decision, or coming up with valid reasons and examples that explain why their argument is sound. For students at this level, Quiz Show is an essential assignment because it requires them to think carefully about their reasoning and to use evidence to support their assertions.

After showing the film, I give students a worksheet showing an outline for a persuasive essay and a worksheet that helps them complete their draft in class, the writing lab, or at home. These two worksheets are organized so their answers can be easily transferred to a specific section of the argument essay to support their thesis, providing the scaffolding underprepared students need, helping them organize their ideas more effectively. In short, the worksheets essentially walk students through a rough draft in outline form, with the first question being, “What is your thesis statement?” I make students follow this pattern as they complete their thesis for this essay, require that they use the word “because” in their thesis, and have them fill in the blanks with their reasons that they think Van Doren is innocent or guilty. Also, their worksheet answers serve as their paragraph’s topic sentences. As a result, upon completing the worksheet, students effectively are able to sit down at the computer, begin a rough draft, and be ready for peer editing the following week.

Here are three sample introductory paragraphs from student essays
that illustrate the success of this structured approach and use of film for an argument essay:

Charles Van Doren’s reputation was destroyed the moment he decided to take the producers lure to cheat on the game show Twenty-One. He chose not to stand up for his morals or the reputation of his family name but was seduced by the money and the fame the game show brought him. Charles was not brought into the situation blindly. In fact, he willingly participated in the deceit of the game. **Charles Van Doren should be held accountable because he agreed to play the game dishonestly, he went against the ethics of being a teacher, and he accepted the money and fame.**

“How would you like to make a thousand dollars in one week?” Charles Van Doren is asked in the movie, Quiz Show. When faced with a question like that, I think its hard for anyone to say no, even if there are undesirable consequences. **Charles Van Doren didn’t break the law when he lied on the television game show Twenty-One, because he was just playing a part in an entertaining television show.**

Beauty is truth and truth is beauty. That’s all Charles Van Doren had to know. The main character of the movie Quiz Show Charles came from the well-known academic family with nice traditions and excellent education. He was raised by parents with high moral standards, and by default should have rejected the participation in any sort of lie or fraud. But he did not, at the time when the life gave him the opportunity to exercise his very high-moral upbringing. **Charles should be held accountable for being a part of the Twenty-One show, because he participated in a major TV scam, fully understood the wrongness of it, but kept showing up on the show, week after week—for nine weeks in a row.**

Students work in groups of three for peer editing, and as I walk around to stamp off their drafts, I check their thesis statements, organization, and refutation. After the peer editing activity, I have students read their thesis statements to the class and write them on the whiteboard so the class can make suggestions for improvement, a process that helps students clarify their argument. This also allows them to review and reinforce not only the thesis statement but also their refutation. A week later their essays are submitted, I make comments and suggestions, and upon returning them I conference with students about various mechanical and structural issues in their arguments. Sometimes I have my student writers revise the essay a third time.

**Red Flags and Rewards**

Effective and structured as this assignment is at guiding underprepared students through the steps of their first argument essay, some red flags pop up during pre-writing or their actual drafts. Many beginning writers experience considerable difficulty taking a stand because they want to have it both ways—Charles Van Doren is a nice guy who just made a mistake, so he is not really guilty. As a result they drift from their thesis.
Another red flag that pops up is faulty reasoning and logic. This is much trickier when teaching developing writers, because I find I gently have to guide them through the proper steps of reasoning to help them reach a decision that is not mine, but completely theirs. Some of the faulty reasoning that crops up includes such justifications for Charles Van Doren’s actions, such as he was tricked, he was a victim of circumstance by being in the wrong place at the wrong time, the big network executives were the real crooks, it is just a game show—nobody thought it was for real, the sponsors and corporations were even more to blame than Van Doren.

The refutation also proves difficult for underprepared students because they find it hard to determine what the opposition might say about their argument, sometimes unintentionally contradicting their own thesis; as a result, I provide a model of a solid refutation paragraph. In addition to substantiating their claims with specific evidence from the film, students sometimes include too much first person in their essays, “I feel,” or “I believe that.” Some students find it hard to recall specific examples from the movie after only one viewing. To help students determine what examples work in their essay, I provide them with an example as a model—but I don’t allow them to use it in their essay.

Below are two examples of refutation paragraphs from second draft and final student essays:

Understanding the deception and still participating in the scam didn’t really make him a better person. However, there are a few excuses that can be fetched down by his defenders, and there are probably quite a few of them, eager to explain what had happened to this nice-looking and soft-spoken guy. Some might say Charles was dragged into the show almost against his will. That he was a part of a nasty experiment and legally did not break any law. That he was just a human, and only saints could abandon the money and the fame voluntarily…

In his defense, he did not have a lot of time to make his decision. The last question caught him off guard at the last minute. The game host also pressured him to answer before the time ran out. That does not justify his decision to make the wrong choice however. He was not trying to figure out whether it was a trick question that was given to him to win the game, or just a coincidence that he had been given the question previously which he answer correctly on his test before the game show. He was thinking about whether he should play along and win the game for the money or do the right thing and lose with dignity. He knew very well before he answered the question that it was a setup and he still gave them the right answer.

Developmental composition students also have a hard time locating a suitable quote from the film or their readings to support their argument. Sometimes I will suggest a particular paragraph where a suitable quotation may be located, and even provide them with a list of the readings they may take quotes from. Occasionally students submit drafts with insufficient examples from the film or no quote from their reading, but these issues can
be remedied during the revision process. One example of an unsuccessful attempt from a first draft follows:

What is not easy is to try and look at the situation throw the eyes of Charles van Doren. In closing like to reinstate that Charles van Doren is innocent and to leave you with a quote from *To Kill A Mocking Bird*, “Don’t judge a man until you walked a mile in his shoes.”

At first glance this assignment may seem too hard or complex for a developmental composition course with underprepared students. What may be initially perceived as a complex writing assignment for a developmental composition course can in fact prove stimulating, challenging, and beneficial; for while the students in my English 98 class might be considered underprepared, this does not mean they should be deprived of content-rich material. It is important to utilize material that is of a high level so they may rise to the occasion and challenges presented, but also have something relevant and worthwhile to discuss and write about.

I am often asked why I teach argument in a basic writing class, a class that traditionally centers almost exclusively on sentences and/or paragraphs. I have many reasons, but will address four major points. First, beginning writers need to be writing a lot and revising a lot. Simply writing sentences and paragraphs or the traditional personal narrative is not enough. While I have students work with sentences and paragraphs, topic sentences, supporting sentences, transitions, as well as lots of vocabulary and grammar, many of my beginning writers usually have never written an essay, or not in many years, and they need in depth instruction on how to formulate an in-depth essay. Second, teaching primarily grammar, vocabulary, and sentences is doing my students a disservice for academic and professional survival. Years ago when I began teaching developmental composition, I focused strictly on sentences and lots of grammar. Frankly, I found they learned very little and nothing stayed with them. I discovered that teaching only sentences and paragraphs alone did not always sufficiently prepare them for writing longer works; doing only vocabulary and grammar worksheets proved futile as well as nothing of what they did transferred to their writing. Many developmental composition students do not move beyond the community college level, and I feel it is my duty to give them skills they can use to survive in life and the work place. Third, if my developmental composition students do eventually progress to freshman composition, they should be prepared to write and develop a solid argumentative essay utilizing a thesis statement—at the minimum. When I teach freshman composition, I instruct my students on how to use MLA, library skills, argument, thesis statement, and a host of other topics, but I am continually dismayed when students who have worked their way up the composition ladder enter my freshman composition class having only written paragraphs and sentences, knowing nothing about thesis or essay basics. Finally, just because I am teaching developmental composition students the basics of
writing an argument essay does not mean that I am giving composition basics, such as sentences, paragraphs, transitions, and vocabulary, short shrift. I have students write five solid two to three page essays in my class, and they are required to do a lot of revising both at home and during class. With each draft, I focus on the basics (fragments, comma splices, run-ons, common spelling and grammar errors, sentence variety, developing paragraphs) and show them how these basics work within the context of a larger piece of writing.

**Additional Benefits**

Using film in a developmental composition course to teach expository writing is extremely important. Many of my students are very visual or kinesthetic learners, and varying the learning strategies is essential to engage them, keep them involved and in the class. Underprepared students benefit from using film to create a basic argument because many of them struggle to express complex, abstract ideas on paper. The film is concrete for them, and by viewing *Quiz Show* they are able to take those events they have just seen and then transfer them to paper in a more organized and focused manner. Because of the film, my students actually were able to visualize what the argument might look like as they wrote their essay. Assignments for underprepared students in developmental composition courses need to be very specific, focused, and organized, and the *Quiz Show* assignment is.

There are other benefits to using *Quiz Show* in a developmental composition course. In addition to the previously mentioned virtues of learning how to write a solid expository essay, students also get a taste of ethics, literature, US and Cold War history, American culture, the failure (or success) of the American Dream, the legal process, religion and culture conflicts in America (Jews vs. Gentiles), and even America’s entertainment of the 1950s. ESL students also benefit by learning something about our government’s legal process and some US history. And on a purely basic entertainment level, they enjoyed it immensely.

**Works Cited**


“What does peer revision mean to me? Well, frankly, not much. While I am able to understand its purpose, peer revision has never made my papers much better. When I think of peer revision, I almost associate the concept with a waste of time.”

—Melissa

My student Melissa’s comment sounds very much like my own thoughts one year ago. Like many students and teachers, I was skeptical of peer revision. My cynicism stemmed from previous composition teachers who didn’t know how to use peer revision workshops fruitfully and peers who couldn’t care less if they did. When I was told by West Virginia University that collaborative work is an integral component of the teaching outcomes for English 101, I was puzzled as to how I, the peer revision non-believer, could pull off a successful approach to conducting peer revision workshops.

There’s an old joke in education that goes, “How do you get a class to be quiet?” and the answer is, “Put them into groups” (Roskelley, “Breaking (into) the Circle” vii). This was the case with my students during our first in-class peer revision; there was no talking, no laughing, not even grimaces or complaints, just absolute silence. Many of the students left class early, and few exchanged words with one another before doing so. While it was clear the first peer revision workshop was unsuccessful, I could not pinpoint exactly why or how I could make future group work meaningful and engaging for the students. I decided to implement a variety of tactics that I thought would help students appreciate peer revision and, in doing so, implicated myself into a maelstrom of ineffective techniques and excuses many students and teachers wrongfully cling to. Fortunately, my failed experiences helped me realize what my students and I were doing wrong, and this helped us do things right.
“People are more worried about finishing the revision and leaving class early. Part of the problem might be that no one really knows what they are looking for.”

— Sarah

As Sarah’s comment suggests, my students reacted silently to peer revision because I merely put them into groups and assumed they would figure it out. When I realized the students were not responding well to this method (via their resistant silence), for the subsequent peer revision workshop I gave the students specific questions to address. I also became much more firm with the students’ dialogical paths by requiring them to discuss only my prompts during the workshop. (They were told that engaging in colloquial chit-chat would compromise their participation grades).

The students seemed to respond well to this; group members became especially talkative, the students made productive use of class time, and they exchanged thorough assessments of their peers’ papers. I therefore reasoned that the more I emphasized the importance of focusing on my prompts during group discussions, the more successful our peer revision workshops would be. Unfortunately, by requiring students to remain “on task,” I was squelching their opportunity to socialize because I was too fixated on maintaining control over the classroom. In doing so, I failed to address the students’ needs to engage in natural, unscripted dialogue. I was ultimately not prepared for what Hephzibah Roskelly calls the “risky business” of group work that happens when students are asked to work collaboratively. According to Roskelly, teachers like myself tend to debilitate students’ natural dialogical encounters in the classroom because “[T]eachers fear that students might digress from topics at hand, or, worse, lose control…if their talk isn’t dictated by a clear agenda” (Roskelly, “Breaking (into) the Circle” 84). While these agendas are ostensibly guides that help students along the blurry and somewhat daunting plains of peer revision, they can also work to ensure the passé role of the teacher as classroom gatekeeper. Admittedly, I allowed my insecurities as a first-year composition teacher to materialize into rigid peer revision workshops. Instead of embracing the communal nature that peer revision often yields, I dictated the students’ tasks. Consequently, their discussions during the workshops were merely artificial question-and-answer sessions, and the students began to view composition as formulaic and banal, which was a stark contrast to the lively community of writers I hoped to cultivate.

Thereafter, I encouraged the students to create their own agendas during peer revision by asking them to generate a few general prompts into...
small group discussions. Without a hegemonic, explicit academic agenda, the students began to engage in what John Trimbur calls “abnormal discourse,” meaning they discussed academic subjects (such as rhetoric and composition) in a personal discourse they could understand (qtd. in Roskelly, “Breaking (into) the Circle” 84). The possibility of students straying from prompts became tangential to the possibilities that proliferated when my students began communicating with one another, asking their own questions, and developing their own directions during the revision workshops.

A scenario involving three of my students illustrates the crucial role abnormal discourse plays in peer revision workshops. Early in the semester, these three students complained about one another to me during conferences: Mike said John is too much of a “math guy” to recognize good writing and Meghan makes his introductions too flowerily; Meghan thinks Mike tries to clutter her papers with “too many big words” and flashy adjectives; and John does not feel he has much to offer because he is an engineering major. The problem with this situation is that I did not create an environment for the students to explain themselves to one another; Mike and Meghan do not know John is an engineering major and cannot appreciate his technical-oriented writing background, and Meghan does not value Mike’s illustrative qualities as a creative writing major because I required them to “stay on task,” thus limiting their conversations to my explicit and impersonal revision prompts.

When I loosened my grip on the students’ dialogue via encouraging informal discussions and using more heuristic revision prompts that offered epistemological breathing room, this small group began to reap the benefits of peer revision. By relying on one another’s experiences, perspectives, opinions and talents, the students recognized their potentials and worked effectively as a group. As a result of their abnormal discourse, they respected that while Mike is good at developing illustrative detail and Meghan has a knack for writing catchy introductions, John can contribute his technical background and point to garbled syntax or passive phrasing. When the students began talking with one another as socialites and not just responders, they started to understand each other’s writing idiosyncrasies and began to value peer revision.

To my surprise, allotting my students more conversational freedom in their peer workshops did not require renouncing, but extrapolating my authority to the students. This precarious balance of authority and autonomy among my students during the revision workshops culminated into what Jenny Denyer and Debra LaFleur refer to as “a relationship among writers working in community with one another” (11).

“Since I don’t trust class peer revision, I have my friends revise my papers. Once I’ve completed a draft, I have my friends who are English and Journalism majors revise them.”

— Natalie
Rhetorically, peer revision is also largely about establishing ethos among group members; any suggestions made during peer revisions are essentially arguments and are most convincing when the rhetorician establishes credibility. Developing trust among students in their roles as readers and responders as they negotiate critical feedback is crucial to successful peer revision. Denyer and LaFleur emphasize the importance of establishing “[a] climate of mutual respect” in peer revision by stating that establishing credibility among students “both depend[s] upon and work[s] to create a climate of mutual trust and respect within which these community of writers work” (35).

As Natalie’s comment illustrates, students often malign peer revision because they do not trust their peers’ abilities to revise their papers. In a study conducted by Cooper et al to measure students’ attitudes toward peer revision, for instance, students ranked a lack of credibility among their peers as the most formidable obstacle to effective peer revision. The authors state that despite conducting workshops on peer assessment and performing peer revision anonymously (that is, revising a paper without the author present), they found that their students were nonetheless constantly “skeptical of how meaningful other students’ marks could be” and expressed “feeling unqualified to mark [a] peer’s work” (73).

One source of this uncertainty is the common misconception that peer revision means proofreading papers for grammatical mistakes instead of addressing more global aspects of the paper (i.e. cohesion, clarity and argument construction). Although my students were familiar with peer revision as a component of the writing process, many admitted that they were not taught how to conduct peer workshops productively. When asked to define peer revision, one of my students exemplified this by stating, “Peer revision, in reality, is using a set of universal rules and punctuation marks to extract the useless information or grammar to improve one’s writing.” Another student echoed this in her limiting definition of peer revision by stating, “To me, peer revisions are just a new type of proofreading in the writing process.” As I recognized the reverberating link between peer revision and grammar revision in my students’ definitions of peer revision, I began to empathize with their exposure to this misconception because I was also taught that peer revision meant proofreading a paper to the best of my grammatical abilities.

Unfortunately, when students are taught to associate peer revision with only proofreading, they assume that if they do not find grammatical errors (errors they may not be qualified to locate) in their peers’ papers, then the paper must be “good,” and they do not see any purpose in looking outside
the paper’s grammatical box. Students who experience such superficial exposure to peer revision even grow to despise it and become uncomfortable when asked to revisit this seemingly patronizing act in a college composition course.

Meanwhile, students like Natalie rely on seemingly more qualified individuals to edit their papers, and consider this peer revision. Although we should encourage interdisciplinary discussion among our students, students like Natalie should also trust their group members to provide useful feedback regarding the more essential aspects of their use of composition and rhetoric to convey ideas.

It is critical to explain to students that peer revision is not proofreading or editing, but a recursive process designed to examine the fundamental stuff of writing like organization, clarity, use of evidence, and so forth. Eradicating the proofreading myth from peer revision helps students develop a sense of confidence in their ability to revise, which strengthens ethos among group members. When one of my students approached me during a peer revision workshop and said, “I can’t do this. I don’t know how to revise someone else’s paper,” I assured him that he could because he had the ability to recognize clear, cohesive writing from muddy, confusing prose. Later in the semester he told me, “Before English 101 at WVU, I hated peer revision because I felt that only the teacher was qualified to correct work. I felt that what others had to say about work didn’t matter.” He continued to explain how reexamining the objectives of peer revision enabled him to trust his peers’ capabilities and taught him that he could adeptly contribute to the peer revision workshops.

Eradicating the proofreading myth from peer revision helps students develop a sense of confidence in their ability to revise, which strengthens ethos among group members.

“Sometimes they just write ‘good job’ because a lot of people don’t feel like criticizing someone else’s work out of respect for that person. Especially in a small classroom environment where you see and get to know the same people day after day. This is exactly how it was in high school. All the cool kids gave everybody good grades or comments.”

— Dave

Perhaps the most common impediment to effective peer revision is students’ ambivalence about criticizing their peers. Many students worry about hurting each others’ feelings in revision and are thus hesitant to deliver honest criticism. Dave’s pessimistic attitude toward peer revision, for example, is largely informed by his acknowledgement of the multiple and frequently antagonistic roles students possess. According to Dave, the student who offers only positive criticism is perceived as likeable, whereas the student who offers any negative criticism may be regarded as socially unacceptable or even disrespectful.
Simultaneously assuming the role of a student and a responder often causes students to have problems negotiating their own private worlds as peers within the more public small groups of students, causing adverse reactions (i.e. students may become competitive, shy, anxious, dishonest, or uncomfortable). Sociologist Herbert Thelen agrees that the collision of multiple selves can be disconcerting, stating, “The different selves we have in those other groups come into conflict. The interaction among the selves decides how we shall behave—with confidence, hostility, ease, creativity” (237).

One of my students demonstrates how the pressure of becoming what Thelen calls “several people at the same time” (236) can produce a hostile reaction by stating, “Peer revision means ‘waste of time’ to me…. Most of the time, the student is insincere about their suggestions. In their mind, they are just completing the assignment, all the while trying to be polite”. Ironically, when students are placed in a situation that asks them to critique each other’s work, some students feel that honest feedback should not supersede common courtesy. In response to my students’ uneasiness, I decided to temporarily erase their conflicting roles by conducting anonymous peer revisions in which students removed their names from their papers, and I then distributed the “nameless” papers among groups.

“The most helpful revisions were the anonymous peer revisions...not knowing whose piece that you have, it is much easier to comment on. You do not have to worry about hurting someone’s feelings when writing your comments. I think that for now on, when doing all peer revisions, they should be anonymous.”

— Jenn

Many students reacted similarly to “anonymous” peer revision as Jenn; students told me the anonymous revisions were helpful because they could deliver more honest and constructive criticism if they did not have to “face” the author. While anonymous revisions seemed to be the answer to our peer revision woes, I realized that eliminating or hiding students’ identities during peer revision is hardly a viable solution.

In conducting anonymous peer revisions, I was merely ignoring students’ identities and devaluing their papers; asking students to engage anonymously in peer review removes the writer’s and responder’s identities from their work, thus stripping the revision process of its humanity. The bonds formed among students as peers and writers through Trimbur’s abnormal discourse were also diminished in these groups. Although the anonymity of the responses yielded what the students perceived to be more honest commentary, their absent interaction actually weakened the credibility and worth of the “faceless” respondent’s commentary. Paradoxically, the anonymous revisions quieted many students’ misgivings toward criticizing their peers as responders, but the responses they gave were not any more trustworthy or beneficial to the students as writers. It becomes criti-
Acclimating students to effective revision means familiarizing them with the social nature of the writing process.

Jenn’s earlier statement is not all wrong, though; when Jenn says she enjoyed anonymous peer revision because she did not have to worry about hurting anyone’s feelings, it shows that students make a personal investment in their writing. She also reveals that she has developed a friendly, almost intimate relationship with her group members. What Jenn must not do, however, is allow her social role (friend/peer) override her academic role (reader/responder) during peer revision. Instead, we should help students like Jenn achieve a balance between the two by creating a communal, interactive environment for peer revision to happen.

“*I like peer revision because it gives me a chance to hear lots of feedback on my paper, which really helped. Hearing others’ opinions makes me think about different and more creative writing I could do.*”

— Lynsey

Lynsey’s comment underscores the reason I am determined to make peer revision work in my classroom; I firmly believe students can learn a great deal from one another. To enable this, teachers need to take risks and students need to trust and respect one another. As one of my students once said, “Peer revisions are a roll of the dice.” Indeed, the process involves trust, risk and faith. Teachers can help students build trust by allowing them to bring and share their whole selves during peer revision and by assuring students that they do not have to be grammar wizards to engage in effective, worthwhile peer revision. Most importantly, skeptical teachers like my former self must have faith that they can turn themselves and their students into believers.
Works Cited


On My Son’s First Birthday

If wisdom I could impart to you today
Were written within this fleeting hour’s breath
What would that wisdom be? What would I say?
To recommend a life that swings true north?

Should I speak of history’s errors learned?
To steer you round the shoals of past mistakes
Past pride or lust or greed which souls do harm
And leave corrupted there within their wake?

I’m more inclined to set the standard higher
To raise for you the bar that you alone do set
And know within yourself what need requires
So when time’s awful hands do close and let

You pass into God’s great house, you’ll know
That everything done was done just so

— David Holper

David Holper is the father of three children, and in addition to writing fiction and poetry, he also is often called upon to do the much more difficult work of making up dragon stories on the spot. He teaches English at College of the Redwoods in Northern California and reads e-mail at david-holper@redwoods.edu.
Chaser of Pigeons

you were a chaser of pigeons across the park—
flaring at air & new to the world of illusion:

Of all the possibilities
of all the potential arrangements
you didn’t get wings.

One step, two, quicker then three
and all and everything seemed within reach
before the magic of flight took off
flashing feathered holes into sky-blue.
but you laughed while leaded to earth.
soon set off the chase again.

Into the slowly walking pack
of feathered black
you dashed
head bowed forward leading
“The Charge”
fingers spread in joy
of anticipation.

But of all the possibilities
of all those potential arrangements
you got feet
in a world of illusive air.

— David Shepard
A Poem, For Emily

Because I could not stop for Divorce—
She kindly stopped for me.
The carnage held but just Ourselves
And our Children three.

We slowly dove—we knew no haste—
As the fathoms fell,
Pressure caving in the Hull,
Deep water muffling the Bell.

Our lawyers passed by the School—
Its Children mesmerized by The Ring—
The judges passed the Rescue Squad
Watching reruns of The Sting.

We passed a glowing orb—it was the Son
of Sam—we divided the indivisible,
The sun and moon and stars—
And Green Eggs and Ham.

We paused beside a House that seemed
A Swelling on my head—
I took some pills with Brandy
And sold my Marriage Bed.

Since then—‘tis Centuries—and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I woke up sleeping with the Horse’s head
and not with Doris Day.

— charles hood

Charles Hood teaches at Antelope Valley College and is a frequent contributor to i.e. His next book, Tiger Songs, will be published by Fountain Mountain Books. Charles receives e-mail at chood@avc.edu.
Adjunct Faculty Report:

Reasonable Assurance: Unemployment Insurance Denials for Part-Timers

By John Thomas
Diablo Valley College

It is summer, a time when most teachers, full-time teachers that is, are usually able to relax, decompress from the exhausting rigors of an entire year of teaching, and rejuvenate themselves for the upcoming academic year. Some of my colleagues are currently traveling abroad or throughout the country, reading, writing, renovating their homes, or planning outings with visiting house guests, not worrying where their next paycheck is coming from, knowing that come August or September they will be back at work. As a full-time public school teacher by day during the regular school year, I could be spending most of my summer relaxing, traveling, and visiting family, although I teach at least one class each summer at Diablo Valley College—EOPS/Summer Institute, partly for the extra money but also because I genuinely enjoy it. However, as I grudgingly admit, if no summer courses were offered, I could manage financially with the reasonable assurance I would be employed full time in the fall at my public school and, assuming all went as planned, have one or two night or weekend community college classes, too; I could continue saving for a house, building my career, and keeping my head above the rapidly rising cost of living in the bay area. I am lucky. Many of my adjunct friends, here in California or elsewhere, are less fortunate. While some have chosen to take summer off to spend time with their families or travel, some have no classes during summer session. And none of my part-time friends has the same reasonable assurance I have that they will be employed for the upcoming fall semester, even if they have signed an agreement to teach.

In addition to frequently flying up and down the freeway from one college to another, many part-timers are flying from the frying pan into the fire when dealing with the Employment Development Department (EDD) over their right to collect unemployment insurance benefits. Part-time faculty have few, if any, rights when it comes to employment, but one right they do have, thanks to a 1989 precedent-setting ruling by the California Court of Appeal, is to file for unemployment insurance benefits. The 1989 court ruling Cervisi et al v. Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, states: “part-time community college instructors do not have ‘reasonable assurance’ of being employed by the school employer in the succeeding school year, because of the contin-
gent nature of their employment.” This ruling allows part-time faculty at California community colleges the right to file for unemployment insurance benefits between both semesters and summer break.

Unfortunately, relatively few eligible part-time faculty actually apply for unemployment benefits. Some don’t bother due to the occasionally confusing nature of the application process; some just don’t want to hassle with the application procedure for what they view as minimal compensation. Some, particularly new adjuncts, don’t even realize they are eligible. Still other part-timers don’t apply, because as one former adjunct friend told me, they view it as a “hand out.” This same friend, now full-time at a community college, told me he never applied for unemployment insurance because he took on tutoring or editing jobs during the breaks, jobs that paid quite well.

EDD employees are not always familiar with the Cervisi ruling, or if they are, do not follow its guidelines. Cervisi automatically makes it legal for adjunct faculty to apply for EDD benefits, but the EDD has denied some part-timers their unemployment insurance claims because it feels they have “reasonable assurance” of a fall assignment; although, as all part-timers know, there is no such thing as “reasonable assurance,” particularly in times of severe budgetary cut backs. Part-timers all too frequently find themselves without classes, despite having signed an agreement to teach. If the course does not fill up, if it is cancelled, if there is insufficient funding, or if a full-time instructor bumps them, part-time instructors are out a class. The tenuous nature of part-time faculty employment results in the lack of “reasonable assurance,” allowing part-time faculty the right to file for unemployment. Nevertheless, some EDD caseworkers assume that if part-timers have signed an agreement to teach, they have a “reasonable assurance” of working the following semester, and thus deny the teacher’s unemployment insurance claim, despite the fact that having signed such an agreement to teach does not mean, at least according to Cervisi, “reasonable assurance” at all.

Two situations commonly occur that cause EDD caseworkers to deny part-time faculty their unemployment insurance claims. One situation that has created a major problem for part-timers who apply for unemployment insurance benefits is a conflict with the EDD about what specifically constitutes the final day of work. I learned about AB 2412 only after speaking with Jennifer Baker, Legislative Advocate for Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCCC) in Sacramento. According to Baker,

On occasion there has been confusion between the instructor, the district, and the EDD as to what constitutes the actual last day of work. When the information is incorrectly reported, the EDD will deny the unemployment claim. Sometimes the community college districts, whether unintentionally or intentionally, give the EDD office inaccurate information, and this has resulted in confusion and subsequent unemployment claim denials.

Frequently the confusion stems from the college assuming the last day of instruction is different from
what the part-timers believe is the last day they work. A second situation that sometimes occurs is when some districts send part-time faculty a letter at the end of the spring semester stating that they have “reasonable assurance” of working in the following academic year unless they are told otherwise, and this is one way districts try to discourage part-time faculty from filing a claim with the EDD, creating further confusion and potential claim denials. Districts sometimes attempt to discourage part-timers from applying for EDD benefits. However, a letter stating a part-timer has “reasonable assurance” of teaching in the fall does not absolve the EDD from granting part-time faculty their rightful unemployment insurance as it is viewed as a “token offer of employment” and not “a bona fide offer” (EDD Field Office Directive). Unfortunately, it depends upon which EDD office worker happens to be reading the claim, for it is that office worker who makes the decision if such a letter represents “reasonable assurance” or not.

Baker is working with the EDD to help part-timers resolve those denials and currently is lobbying for passage of AB 2412. The purpose of AB 2412, “Unemployment Insurance Denials, Part-time Community College Faculty,” is to make certain the community college districts “give the EDD accurate information regarding the employment status of part-time community college faculty when they apply for unemployment benefits” (AB 2412 Fact Sheet). The rationale behind AB 2412, according to Baker, is to help improve communication between the EDD and part-time faculty and to make claims processing more efficient. Although FACCC has been working with the EDD for some time to make the application process easier for part-timers as well as helping them reverse claim denials, AB 2412 is designed to go further. Presently, the EDD has the ability to fine any other kind of employer when incorrect unemployment claim information is submitted, but not community colleges. However, because the prospect of being heavily fined keeps these other employers from reporting faulty information, the EDD rarely needs to fine them. AB 2412 is designed to allow the EDD to fine community college districts when they submit inaccurate information, willfully or otherwise, regarding a faculty member’s unemployment claim. As it stands now, the EDD has the ability to fine part-time faculty claimants, for submitting faulty information, but not the community college districts. In some rare instances, part-timers have had to resort to their union or make an appearance in court to reverse the appeal. AB 2412 is intended to rectify this situation, allowing for smoother processing of EDD claims and subsequently fewer denials.

Part-time faculty who are denied their EDD claims must file an appeal, an easy process that is straightforward and that usually results in a reversal of the denial, as long as the following steps are taken:

1. If a part-timer’s claim is denied, the appeal must be filed within twenty days of receipt of the letter; although, it is best to file immediately.
2. To file an appeal, claimants must complete the appeal form that accompanies the denial, write a letter to the EDD stating why they wish to appeal, include their social security number, and make certain to cite or include a copy of the Cervisi ruling.

3. Finally, in order to be eligible for benefits in the event the appeal is won, the claimant must continue to submit employment cards from the EDD for each two-week period of unemployment until the denial is repealed.

Of course, certain part-time faculty are not eligible for EDD benefits, and I am one of them. Only non-tenured, hourly paid instructors at two- or four-year colleges are eligible for unemployment insurance claims under the provisions of the Cervisi ruling. As a full-time public school teacher by day, I have “reasonable assurance” that I will have employment come fall, if not at my community college, then at my regular day job. Even before I acquired reasonable assurance that I would be employed in the fall, I never filed an EDD claim—I never knew I could. When I was strictly a part-time community college instructor while working on my secondary credential, I had no knowledge of the Cervisi ruling or my right to file for EDD benefits. K-12 teachers are not eligible for unemployment compensation unless they are laid off and have no contract to teach for the following year. Part-time community college faculty may also be ineligible if they have additional income from another source during the period in question. One adjunct friend who hoped to make extra money during the summer break by stuffing pre-paid envelopes found herself ineligible for EDD benefits. Evidently, the maximum amount of weekly earnings that allows part-time faculty to be eligible for EDD fluctuates, so it is wise to check prior to filing a claim or accepting additional outside work over the winter and summer breaks that would hinder eligibility.

With the Cervisi ruling, and hopefully the passage of AB 2412, part-timers will have more than reasonable assurance that their right to collect unemployment benefits will be protected, enforced, and unencumbered. To file an unemployment insurance application, call the EDD Mondays through Fridays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.: 1-800-300-5616 (English), 1-800-326-8937 (Spanish), or 1-800-815-9387 (TTY). Applications also may be filed online at www.edd.ca.gov. Hard copies of the Cervisi Decision may be obtained by calling 1-800-662-1911 or by going to www.cpfa.org/bezemek.html#. For additional information on the Web about AB 2412 and other bills of interest to part-time community college instructors, go to www.facc.org/part_time/parttime.htm or contact Jennifer Baker, Legislative Advocate of Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) at 916-447-8555 or e-mail her at jbaker@facc.org.
Every California community college English teacher is a member of ECCTYC because every California community college belongs to our organization. ECCTYC is the Pacific Coast regional of the national Two-Year College Association (TYCA) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). As the ECCTYC representative to TYCA, I represent you at the TYCA board meetings. You can also be a member of TYCA and receive the two-year college journal, *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, and other membership benefits. If you wish to join, point your web browser to [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org) and complete the on-line enrollment form. You will find so many interesting articles in the journal and truly benefit from the national information.

At the TYCA board meetings, we discuss how two-year college faculty can have an impact on national issues in our profession. For example, we previously produced guidelines for training English teachers for community college teaching. That document will be available in a brief form at the November NCTE conference in Indiana. More recently, we formed a Teacher/Scholar Committee to produce a white paper on what it means to be a two-year teacher/scholar. In addition, we try to be sure that two-year faculty are represented on national committees, such as those related to teaching writing—an issue which is gaining interest with the federal government. A great way you can become involved in the profession is through service on these national committees. Also, TYCA recognizes positive and negative images of two-year colleges in the media through each Shame and Fame Award.

An opportunity to learn more about TYCA will come this academic year when the annual conference of the Conference of College Composition and Communication is in San Francisco. The program chair is a two-year college person, and I am the local chair. I am looking for volunteers to help on local committees for the conference on March 16-19, 2005. If you are interested in helping, please send me an e-mail at sfitzgerald@napavalley.edu.

The theme this year is “Open the Golden Gates: Access, Affirmative Action, and Student Success.” One of the best things about attending a CCCC’s conference is the opportunity you have to immerse yourself in scholarship and teaching, gaining ideas about the work we do every day, and meeting others from across the nation who share our goals and want to hear about new ways of helping our students learn. In partic-
ular, there are sessions specifically designed for two-year college people, a special breakfast, and even an evening discussion time called, TYCA Talks. You will leave both refreshed and excited about our profession. Also, if you sent a CCCC presentation proposal, the conference committee will be notifying you by e-mail for the first time this year. You will not get a notice by snail mail, so be sure to respond to the e-mail acknowledgement when it comes.

Finally, watch for your CCCC ballot in the mail sometime in late August or early September. It is very important that you vote especially for community college candidates, but also for the next program chair for CCCC. I recommend Freddie Thomas who has years of CCCC experience. He is from the east coast and is not a community college person, but he is by far the most experienced person for that position. Recent NCTE elections resulted in Stasia J. Callan, Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY, being elected to the College Section Nominating Committee. She has been on the TYCA board for a number of years as a regional representative, and she formerly chaired the TYCA Shame and Fame Award Committee.

Please consider getting involved at the national two-year college level beginning with the conference in San Francisco. ECC-TYC is the largest regional group in TYCA and can be a powerful force in CCCC as well as NCTE if you make your voice heard through your votes for national officers as well as your attendance at the annual conference. We have a unique system of two-year colleges in California, and I hope to see you offering your input in the future.
Our academic freedom continues to be under attack from the far right. At the Academic Senate’s mid-April spring session in San Francisco, delegates heard from American Association of University Professors (AAUP) representative Marcus Harvey about attacks on the academy by those who consider academic freedom a threat and who work to undermine the position of faculty. Harvey informed attendees about Senate Bill 1335, entitled (ironically) “The Academic Bill of Rights,” which would implement a number of intrusions into our classrooms and impose more administrative control over procedures for hiring new faculty, purportedly to bring greater fairness to those with less popular views (read the ultra-conservative). It would require all post-secondary instructors to allow the expression of diverse points of view in a classroom. On the surface this pitch for the airing of divergent views sounds like something we might support, but this bill, which has since quietly died, would have required that those with divergent views, such as the anti-evolution crowd, be provided class time to express their ideas. Furthermore, the bill would have mandated faculty to allow time in class for all expressions of any view anyone felt should be heard. Such a requirement would certainly compromise our control of class meetings and other campus activities. This bill was supported by a group that is working nationally at both the state and federal levels to pass such “academic freedom” legislation in the name of “balanced presentations.” The plenary session delegates adopted two strongly worded resolutions opposing SB 1335.

The Senate continues to allow for ample consideration and debate about raising Title 5 associate’s degree requirements for English and mathematics. After breakout sessions during the last two plenary sessions and the two statewide colloquia on this issue, the Senate provided yet another opportunity for faculty to weigh in on this matter. A paper summarizing positions is planned for the Senate’s fall session when we can expect resolutions for raising the standards in both disciplines to come to the floor for impassioned debate. Because changing requirements for an associate’s degree is clearly an academic matter, any Academic Senate recommendation on this issue would almost certainly be accepted by the Board of Governors. Last year ECCTYC adopted by resolution the position that a college-level English composition course be required for an associate’s degree.
The Academic Senate is very much concerned about a CSU proposal to move students through the postsecondary systems more quickly to their degrees and thereby ease the pressure of growing demand for access in the face of budget cuts (included in SB 1785, Scott). CSU has identified as a primary problem the number of units that students take that cannot be used towards completion of their majors and are therefore “wasted.” The system has thus proposed a plan that requires community college transfer students to commit early to a “degree-major core transfer pattern” of 45 units that will prepare them for transfer and upper-division course work. This 45-unit package will include 37 IGETC or 39 CSU GE breadth requirement units and completion of the statewide lower-division requirements in US History, the Constitution, and American Ideals. That will leave a minimum of six units that will count in the major. Another 15 units will be identified by region, presumably after collaboration with the community colleges in those regions. The CSU plan would give transfer priority to students who adhere to this pattern. In mid-April this plan had had no input from community college people, and there was quite a bit of emotion from all community college constituencies, who foresee numerous problems inherent in this plan for our students, especially those who have begun in basic skills courses (as have a great number of CSU students), those who are second language learners, or those who have returned as older students to pursue a different academic goal. These groups will most likely be penalized for having taken “too many units.” In addition, some of our community colleges may not have the courses that will fulfill the major preparation expected. The Senate would like to see more collaboration before such a plan is mandated through legislation (It is now embodied in SB 1785). Several resolutions were passed expressing the community college faculty’s unhappiness with CSU’s unilateral action and calling for collaboration on any proposed changes in admission policies and practices that affect community college transfer students. One expresses three important statements and will be used to negotiate an agreement that will treat our students fairly. It has three “resolved” statements:

That the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges strongly urge the 23 CSU campuses to accomplish the following prior to seeking legislation such as SB 1785 (as of April 17, 2004):

- articulate at least the 20 most popular majors with all 110 California community colleges;
- enter all articulation agreements on ASSIST;
- develop and implement major-specific Transfer Admission Agreements and Transfer Admission Guarantees (TAA/TAG) with all 110 California community colleges; and
- set their admission rules and requirements no less than one
year in advance and refrain from changing requirements or processes during the filing period of that year;

That the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges oppose any legislation, such as SB 1785, that does not accomplish the above four points; and

That the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges appoint a task force of faculty practitioners from the field to meet with their CSU partners to address the above resolved statements and to thereby assure the success of our California Community College transfer students.

Also adopted at spring session were resolutions relating to students who are being redirected from some UC campuses to community colleges. The Senate has asked that redirected UC students not displace those who are traditional community college students and that these UC students pay community colleges fees. (Part of the Governor’s plan was to allow them to have their fees waived, thus having the CCC system or individual colleges pick up the expense.) One resolution asks that both UC and CSU provide additional transfer slots to accommodate both the redirected students and the increased number of traditional community college transfer-ready students.

Finally, the Senate elected officers and area representatives to its executive board. Kate Clark, president; Ian Walton, vice president, Mark Snowhite, secretary; and Mark Lieu, treasurer, were all re-elected for one-year terms. Dan Crump, Jane Patton, Yula Flornoy, Leon Marzillier, and Shaaron Vogel were elected to two-year terms as area representatives.

The 42 resolutions and two papers adopted by the spring session are available at the Academic Senate website: www.academicsenate.cc.ca.us.
News and Notes

inside english welcomes notices of events of interest to the profession. Please send Calls for Proposals, Conference Announcements, and General Announcements to the editor at least one month prior to the issue date. Include all pertinent data, including a contact person for further information. Copy may be edited due to space limitations.

Upcoming Conferences/Meetings: 2004-2005

CCHA: Community College Humanities Association
The 2004 Pacific-Western Division:
The Humanities: Making Connections, Exploring Ecologies
www.ccha-assoc.org/conferences/pacific-western/pacific-western.html
4-6 November 2004
Hotel Monaco
Seattle, WA

9th Annual Conference for Learning Communities and Collaboration:
Active Voices: The Campus Community Learning Together
www.kcmetro.edu/learningcommunities.asp
11-13 November 2004
Kansas City, MO

CSU/ECCTYC English Council Board Meeting
www.ecctyc.org
21-22 October 2004
Bahia Hotel
San Diego, CA

NCTE: 2004 National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention & Exposition: Significance
www.ncte.org/profdev/conv/annual/
18–23 November 2004
Indianapolis, IN

MLA: 2004 Annual Modern Language Association Conference and Convention
27-30 December 2004
Philadelphia, PA
CATE: California Association of Teachers of English Conference 2004: The Power of One Teacher
www.cate.org
17-20 February 2005
Santa Clara, CA

CCCC: Conference on College Composition and Communication:
Opening the Golden Gates: Access, Affirmative Action, and Student Success
www.ncte.org/profdev/conv/cccc/
16-19 March 2005
San Francisco, CA

CSU/ECCTYC English Council Board Meeting
www.ecctyc.org
April 2005
Holiday Inn
Old Sacramento
Sacramento, CA

2005 American Literature Association Conference
www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2/
May 2005
Location TBA

21st Annual Young Rhetoricians' Conference:
Reexamining Pedagogy, Respecting Diversity, Questioning Outcomes
www.evc.edu/language_arts/YRC.htm
23-25 June 2005
Monterey Beach Resort
2600 Sand Dunes Dr.
Monterey, CA

2005 Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference
www.wpacouncil.org/conferences/
July 2005
Alaska

ECCTYC/English Council Conference 2005
www.ecctyc.org
13-15 October 2005
Long Beach, CA
The Southern California Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) announces the launch of its employment website: www.socalherc.org. This employment Web site is the result of a collaborative effort among 18 Southern California colleges and universities dedicated to recruiting and retaining a highly qualified faculty and staff in higher education. Job seekers have free access to the HERC employment website and all of its features, including the “My Jobs” tool that automatically sends e-mails to potential applicants when jobs are posted that meet their search criteria. For more information, contact the HERC directors, Becky Skov, 858.534.2121, bskov@ucsd.edu; or Kristie Howard, 858.822.5862, khoward@ucsd.edu.

1 March 2005 Deadline. The Young Rhetoricians’ Conference on college rhetoric and composition welcomes your ideas for encouraging and enabling students’ skills and passions relative to all aspects of discourse—cognitive, pragmatic, and artistic. We are accepting proposals for general and concurrent sessions that show interplay of theory and practice—not privileging the one to the other. You may submit a proposal for either a whole 90-minute session (two or more persons) or for a place in such a session. Please focus your proposal to read 250 words (one page). Additionally send a two-sentence synopsis. Be sure to include your various means of contact: address(es), affiliation(s), phone(s), and e-mail. Send one proposal copy to each chair’s address: Sterling Warner jsterlingw@aol.com; Sara Blake, sblake@elcamino.edu; Kathleen Hudson, khudson@schreiner.edu.

25 January 2005 Final deadline. Please join the Research Network Forum at CCCC in San Francisco to present a Work-in-Progress presentation, serve as a Discussion Leader (for those who are seasoned, established researchers), and/or participate in the Editors’ Roundtable if you are an editor. Founded in 1987 by Charles Bazerman and others as a pre-convention workshop at CCCC, the RNF is an opportunity for published researchers, new researchers, and graduate students to discuss their current research projects and receive responses from new and senior researchers. Participants also include editors of printed and electronic journals of composition/rhetoric, literature, textual/literary criticism, and pedagogies, as well as experts in Internet and cyberspace concerns. The forum is free to CCCC convention participants. Visit www.rfonline.com for electronic proposal forms. For more information, please contact Risa P. Gorelick, RNF Co-Chair, rgorelick@monmouth.edu.

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Unlike most other organizations, ECCTYC is funded through institutional memberships paid by various college English departments rather than by individuals. However, all instructors who teach English in any of the California community colleges are automatically members of ECCTYC. The English Council’s journal, inside english, is mailed to English departments at all of the California community colleges. The number of copies each department receives is based on the total copies it requests for its full- and part-time faculty. So, all instructors should be receiving a copy of inside english through their college’s English department.

Individuals not currently teaching English at a California community college who wish to receive inside english should contact the ECCTYC treasurer, Tina Ramsey at treasurer@ecctyc.org.

Billing Information: The English Council would like to thank all of the institutions that paid their memberships for the 2003-04 fiscal year. Invoices for 2004-05 should have been received by the end of September 2004 and should be paid promptly to ensure that you continue receiving the Winter and Spring issues of inside english. Past Due notices will be sent out after a 30-day billing cycle. Any remittance not received by November 30, 2004 means that your institution does not have an active membership and will receive only 1 departmental copy of inside english until its membership is paid in full.

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