The Marriage of Composition and Creative Writing

Janice A. McKay

The College at Brockport

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The Marriage of Composition and Creative Writing

by

Janice A. McKay

A thesis submitted to the Department of English of the State University of New York
College at Brockport, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

April 1, 2002
Abstract

The Marriage of Composition and Creative Writing

In this thesis, modeled after the *Composition Studies* Published Course Design Example, the author redefines creative writing in order to design a curriculum that will help students become more interested in and more engaged with their writing, and will, in turn, get students to resist writing less, to write more, and eventually, to write better.

Like the Course Design Example, this curriculum includes a statement of locale that specifically ties the course to the State University of New York College at Brockport; a critical statement that provides a theoretical foundation for the course; a syllabus that provides detailed information on reading and writing assignments and class activities and explains how the theory informs the pedagogy announced in the syllabus; and a critical reflection section that assesses how the curriculum worked in the classroom: what worked and did not work when the author combined theory and practice.

What distinguishes this thesis from the *Composition Studies* Course Design and from other theses is the amount of attention paid to praxis. In addition to an expanded syllabus, this curriculum also includes two appendices containing examples of lesson plans, activities, and assignments, as well as examples of students’ writing and the author’s own writing.
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Advisor

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Statement of Locale</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Critical Statement</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Syllabus</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: Reflection</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six: Conclusion</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In seventh grade I was assigned to read Rawls' *Where the Red Fern Grows*. This, of course, is nothing spectacular in itself since this particular novel is part of the junior-high school canon. What I did find spectacular was completing the assignment that followed the reading. When it came time to write a book report on the novel, I was given a choice of traditional and non-traditional forms to use to complete the assignment. For example, I could choose to produce a traditional book report, make a poster, pen a poem, create a crossword puzzle, or invent a story. After experimenting with a few forms, I chose to compose my two-page book report on *Where the Red Fern Grows* in rhyming couplets. Here's where the spectacular part comes in: completing that assignment changed my attitude toward writing, not because of the praise I received from my teacher and my parents, but because of the challenge in writing the poem and the realization that my words actually meant something, that they communicated something more than the fact that I was literate. I understood for the first time in my life that I could write creatively.

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1 The epigraphs for each of the following chapters are also from Blake.
The point of including this little anecdote is not to offer up my own personal epiphany as yet another example of a novice being initiated into the cult of becoming a writer. The purpose of mentioning the assignment I was given in junior high is to focus on two things: first, the discovery in junior high that one could write creatively about any subject helped to change my attitude about writing, and second, the discovery in college that one may not be allowed write creatively about any subject helped to change my attitude about teaching writing.

In seventh grade there were no divisions between creative writing, literature, and composition: there was just English class. Writing creatively was not restricted to creative writing class. More than two decades later, my daughter is also enjoying limited opportunities to complete writing assignments in both traditional and non-traditional forms in her high school English classes and other classes as well. But she will soon discover that in college there is no more English class; in college there is The Essay, and experimenting with form typically only occurs in creative writing classes. Even in creative writing classes, students are usually limited to writing poetry, short fiction, and drama.

In *Resisting Writings (and the Boundaries of Composition)*, Derek Owens discusses the restrictive constraints college instructors place on criteria for written responses, pointing out that:

Most of us, after all, don’t ask our students to write short stories, prose poetry, or dramatic monologues on their midterm exams, but require them to write about these genres in an expository form with some
degree of proficiency. At semester’s end we collect final research papers on Shakespeare’s sonnets, not final sonnets on Shakespeare’s ideas; in seminars on nineteenth-century literature it’s expected that students write essays about poetry and novels, but never poems and novels about nineteenth-century lit. (18)

In other words, most college instructors are either not prepared to assess or are not interested in assessing my rhyming couplets on Where the Red Fern Grows. My thesis director was right: when he introduced me to The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, he told me that he believed it could teach much about composition. But he also believed that many writing teachers were just not prepared to learn from a text like this, and that they certainly would not be prepared to assess a text like this if a student were to turn it in for grade.

I am fortunate, however, to have had the opportunity to learn from a few extraordinary teachers who have encouraged and supported my exploration, and who have been willing and able to assess my writing in whatever form I shaped it. In fact, as part of my teacher training I was not only encouraged, but also required to experiment with form. This helped me not only to improve my own writing, but also to better understand the relationship between composition and the creation of meaning. Instead of perfecting the five-paragraph theme and preparing to pass along the process for composing a compare-contrast essay, I practiced developing my own forms, which has included writing a twenty-page term paper in the form of a college newsletter, presenting a researched argument on the relationship between language and humanity
in the form of a footnoted short fiction piece, devising and documenting a “thought-experiment” on the difference between non-human animal and human communication, and creating this curriculum for my thesis. It has been my privilege to work with these extraordinary teachers who are themselves writers and who appear to recognize, as Knoblauch and Brannon do, that:

Painting-by-the-numbers, though it guarantees a tidy product, has never yet served to make a painter. The chance to experiment with colors and combinations of colors, with brushstrokes and free shapes on canvas, is messy and chaotic, but it allows for the gradual accommodating of creative energy to form that can make a painter. (32)

What I will be experimenting with in this thesis is creativity and composition. I am working towards composing a curriculum that may be messy and chaotic at times, but one that allows for that gradual accommodation of creative energy that can make a writer. I agree with Moxley that

All writing carries the seeds of creativity: when our images and concepts develop, combine, and connect and take shape in the form of words, writers discover and construct their meaning. [...] Meaning finds form in language when writers have a dialogue with their texts, when they ask questions about genre, character, purpose, tone, and audience. (26)

This is what I started to become conscious of in junior high when I wrote the rhyming couplets: the accommodation of creative energy that Knoblauch and Brannon
speak of, and the dialogue with texts in order to discover, construct, and question meaning that Moxley mentions. The tension between form and content, between creativity and analysis, between conscious and unconscious processing of information and ideas helped me to view writing in a new and exciting way.

An important concept underlying my definition of creativity is the marriage of contraries that Blake introduces in the first epigraph that prefaces this thesis. Here I have attempted to marry the seeming contraries of composition and creative writing because I believe the tension of opposites is necessary for teaching and learning writing. According to Jung, "there is no energy unless there is a tension of opposites; hence it is necessary to discover the opposite of the conscious mind" (159). In the following chapters I will address the tension between conscious and unconscious, acquisition and learning, competence and skills, form and content, expressivist and designative functions of writing, practice and theory, safety and risk, academic and non-academic discourse, creativity and analysis. I believe it is the tension of these contraries that will help students view writing in an exciting new way, that will allow them to be messy and chaotic, and also enable them to accommodate their creative energy into writing.
Introduction

And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country, placing it under its mental deity;

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of, & enslav’d the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects; thus began priesthood;

Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And at length they pronounc’d that the Gods had order’d such things.

Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

On my first day of teaching composition, one of my students, before even glancing at the syllabus, asked if we could do creative writing instead. He came to class with the same preconceived idea many students (and teachers) have that nothing creative, original, or exciting happens in composition, the idea that writing creatively occurs only in creative writing classes.

It comes as no surprise to most writing instructors that creative writing classes are more attractive to students than composition classes. Students voluntarily sign up for creative writing but resist composition. Is this really because students prefer to write poems, short stories, and drama instead of essays? Do students flock to creative writing courses simply for the opportunity to write in these three genres?
My research for this thesis began with these questions and others: What skills are taught in both composition and creative writing? How are they similar or different? Which activities and kinds of writing in each course do the students seem to be the most interested in? How could some of these activities and kinds of writing be combined and used in composition? My exploration soon led me another set of questions: How do I define creativity? What is the purpose of a composition course? What do students need to know about writing and how do they learn how to write? What do I need to do and learn to create a pedagogically sound, cohesive curriculum? What is my philosophy of teaching and of teaching writing?

Wrestling with these questions led me to design a curriculum that incorporates elements of creative writing into the composition classroom. I begin this thesis with the hypothesis that adding elements from creative writing classrooms will make writing more interesting to students, which in turn will get them to resist writing less, to write more, and eventually, to write better.

In order to develop and support this hypothesis, to develop and support this curriculum, I have chosen to use the *Composition Studies* Published Course Design Example as a model. Like the Course Design Example, this curriculum includes a statement of locale that specifically ties the course to the State University of New York College at Brockport; a critical statement that provides a theoretical foundation for the course; a syllabus that provides detailed information on reading and writing assignments and class activities and also explains how the theory informs the pedagogy announced in the syllabus; and a critical reflection section that assesses
how the curriculum worked in the classroom: what worked and did not work when the author combined theory and practice.

What distinguishes this thesis from the *Composition Studies* Course Design and from other theses is the amount of attention paid to praxis. Composition and creative writing textbooks are clearly heavy on the practical end of curriculum development, and some of the professional journals devote a few pages of each issue to sharing assignment and activity ideas (for example, “What Works for Me” in *Teaching in the Two Year College*); however, most of the writing that has been published on the integration of creative writing and composition is predominantly theory.

The *Composition Studies* Course Design combines theory and practice more than most by including a syllabus and a reflection section that discusses significant moments and insights during the implementation of the course. This course design does this as well, but the syllabus section has been expanded to provide a fuller explanation of why I have chosen and ordered the particular assignments and activities the way that I have. Also, parenthetical notations in the syllabus direct the reader to corresponding examples. Appendix A includes examples of lesson plans, activities, and assignments, as well as students’ writing and my own writing that I use as examples. I offer these as illustrations of how I put theory into practice and as evidence to support the claims that I make about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of this practice. I include the examples of my own writing because I distribute them to students and because I believe it is important not only for writing teachers to write,
but for them to at least occasionally attempt to complete the work they assign. If the assignment is meaningless to the teacher, it will certainly be meaningless to students.

Appendix B contains the researched argument on the relationship between language and humanity in the form of a footnoted short fiction piece that I mentioned in the preface. I include it here because it is distributed for reading in week 14 as an example of unconventional forms. I include it also as a possible alternative to the traditional Rogerian persuasive-argumentative essay form, and as a possible answer to a question Owens proposes: “In a piece of writing where separations between fiction and expository prose are intentionally confused, what illuminating side effects might we find that are unattainable in a more straightforward work of nonfiction?” (51). This experimental fiction piece is my graduate-school equivalent of the rhyming couplets piece from junior high.

It is critical to make it clear at the outset that I am not simply combining activities from each course as if I were making a salad. I do not want to limit my definition of creative writing, or my thesis, by simply extracting activities from creative writing courses and inserting them into a composition curriculum. I believe it is necessary not only to give examples of these activities, but also to explain why I think these activities will work. I would also like to clarify that I am not trying to create a literature class or replace a traditional creative writing or composition course. This curriculum is not designed as a separate course from the typical freshman composition course already required at colleges, but as one method of teaching it.
I would also like to clarify that by writing “better” I mean that, yes, I would like to see students to use commas effectively and spell words correctly, but I understand that as far as improving aspects of writing such as standard grammar and punctuation skills and organization, I can only expect to see a limited amount of progress in one fifteen-week semester; therefore, writing better means, to me, improving the relationship students have with writing. It also means helping students become more conscious of the choices they make when they are writing, why they are making those choices, and what the consequences of those choices are. It is impossible to revise mistakes one cannot see; it is impossible to create without options. Without options nothing can be created, it can only be reproduced.

This thesis is meant to be very self conscious and very practical. It will be theoretically based, but I wanted to create something that I could use. And while I have devoted much time tailoring this curriculum for myself in response to the needs of the composition program at SUNY Brockport, I believe most of the elements in it are transferable to other colleges and other instructors, just as I believe that most of the competencies and skills developed or acquired in composition and creative writing are transferable to writing done in other courses.

I specify competencies and skills, developed or acquired, because I agree with C.H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon that

The essential ability to organize experience by means of language is also, like grammar, a human competence, not a skill. The thinking that enables writers to discover relationships and convey them as
sequences of assertions is not a technology and is not profitably taught
as though it were [...]. (93)

In other words, according to modern rhetoric, there is a difference between
composing and writing: composing is an innate competence, and writing is both an
acquired and learned skill.

This distinction between competence and skills is important. When we say
that we are teaching composition, we are doing two things: we are teaching writing
skills, such as standardized grammar and punctuation, and we are also teaching
students how to become more conscious of their composing process, helping them
become more aware of a competence they already possess that needs to be developed.
I do not believe that we are teaching them how to compose: how to discover
relationships and convey them as sequences of assertions, in the sense that they come
to college with no knowledge, a tabula rasa. We know that being illiterate does not
prevent a person from telling a story, describing a place, arguing a position. A
preschooler is capable of this. And another classic, albeit controversial, example of
the difference between competence and skill is the case of Milton's daughters, who
could read and transcribe in several languages for him, but could understand none of
what they read or wrote (Nardo).

Of course, this is an exaggerated example, but I do not want my, or anyone
else's, students to be like Milton's daughters. Nor do I want them to arrive in upper-
division courses still consistently violating every punctuation rule. Students—
following the lead of many teachers, administrators, and employers—tend to focus
heavily on grammar and punctuation. There seems to be the presumption that if students just knew how to use a semicolon properly, the quality of the ideas in their papers would improve significantly as well. I am certainly in favor of teaching standard semicolon usage; correct use of standard punctuation and grammar is necessary to help convey meaning in a written text. But I believe the emphasis should be on the creation of meaning and the use of punctuation for that purpose. Kutz et al, discuss this as well, pointing out that:

Despite the knowledge that comes to us from current research in education and language learning, it is still common for college faculty to view entering students more in terms of what they need to learn than of what they know and bring to their education. Typically, faculty complain that students are unable to write complete sentences or coherent paragraphs, or to spell or punctuate correctly. We have tried, instead, to focus on the underlying competence in learning and in using language that our students bring to their work as writers, to find ways to see and understand that competence, to help our students build on it, systematically, in the writing classroom, and to create a pedagogy through which students may discover their own competence. (x)

On the one hand, I believe that students should feel safe while discovering and developing their own competence. But on the other hand, I also know they must take risks. I will illustrate with an analogy: imagine students as tightrope walkers. If the
tightrope is hung only four inches off the floor, the students are safe to practice and do not need a net, but they do not experience or learn very much either. I want students to know that they have a net so they will be confident enough to string their rope one hundred feet off of the ground. And I want them to understand that they will need to fall many, many times before they make it to the other side.

Making it to the other side requires that students write frequently and make mistakes. This will help them become more aware of the choices they have to make when they write. It will also help them become more aware of the consequences of those choices. Choice occurs on all levels: word, sentence, paragraph, audience, purpose, through genre and into academic discourse communities. I think one of the differences between the composition classroom and the creative writing classroom is that students in composition do not have as many choices. They associate composition only with strict rules and formulas. However, students should have options. Again, if there are no options, then nothing can be created, it can only be reproduced.

With choice comes both freedom and responsibility. I see incorporating creative writing into the composition classroom as an opportunity for raising consciousness. For students to be creative, for them to make choices and understand the consequences of those choices, requires that they reflect on them. “To be literate is not simply to know something; it also means knowing how to participate reflectively in the very act of producing knowledge” (Freire and Giroux xi).
If we truly want students to be more creative and to develop their writing, then we must realize that composing is a competence that resides in the breast. “According to Chomsky, no language can develop in the human being without some prior innate system that would predispose such production” (Horning 79). Conventions do not create writers; conventions in writing are created for ease of communication, for ease in grading. They do not demand creativity, originality, or excitement. We cannot simply ask students to extract and insert elements, piece together parts of a persuasive-argumentative essay as if they were working a jigsaw puzzle. Providing choices must include more than merely having students select from a list of artificial modes of writing. We must give students the opportunity to become more conscious of how they process information, how they take it apart and put it together in new ways using written language.

My experience so far has shown me that developing consciousness helps students view writing in a new and exciting way: they tend to fear it less and enjoy it more; they recognize and take pride in and responsibility for more of their choices.
A major goal in combining elements of creative writing and composition is to keep students interested and challenged. While theory and practice have certainly had an influence on the development of this curriculum, context has obviously also played a role. Two major issues at SUNY Brockport that this course addresses are the anticipated introduction of a new General Education Requirement, CMC-111: Oral Communication and Information Literacy, and the introduction of a new writing competency exam. I have to ensure this course adheres to the current guidelines for ENL 112: College Composition, but I am also trying to anticipate changes in the General Education Requirements that are expected in the near future and how those changes will affect ENL 112.

The following are the current student learning outcomes according to the General Education Program Options at SUNY Brockport for Composition:

Students will:

C1 produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms

C2 demonstrate the ability to revise and improve texts

3 incorporate and organize material appropriately from personal experience and from a variety of external sources
4 document material from primary and secondary sources using appropriate formats
5 perform basic text-editing functions of word processing

The following are the projected student learning outcomes for the new Oral Communication and Information Literacy requirement:

Students will:

C4 show proficiency in oral discourse in a variety of contexts
C5 evaluate oral presentations according to established criteria
IL2 demonstrate understanding of and use basic research techniques
IL3 locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources
IL4 identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own and others’ work
6 research, organize and develop information and arguments for, at a minimum, two informative speeches, two persuasive speeches, and a paper based on extensive research, all of which will demonstrate information literacy

The reason I am looking at CMC 111 is because I am trying to determine what needs to be taught in composition, or rather, what does not need to be taught in composition because it is going to be taught in CMC 111. Students may take either course first, many semesters away from each other, so what is taught in either course
cannot depend on what is taught first in the other. When developing this curriculum, I looked at whether or not there is going to be any overlap and whether or not it matters if there is.

According to the General Education Requirements, argument and persuasion are required only to be taught in CMC 111. But according to the *SUNY College at Brockport ENL 102 / 112 Instructor's Guide 2001 - 2002*, at least one of the essays required for the College Composition Assessment Portfolio must support or oppose a position and would therefore not eliminate the need to teach argumentation and persuasion in ENL 112.

This curriculum addresses this requirement by including activities that develop these particular competencies. In formal and informal written assignments, and in small and large group discussions, students will be asked to analyze texts and to assert and support a position based on the analysis of those texts. Students do not usually associate argumentative essays with creative writing, but by incorporating assignments that emphasize choice, reflective thinking, and looking from another point of view, I believe the students will resist the assignments less and perform better on them.

As for the other General Education requirements, this curriculum incorporates assignments and activities that address them as well. The "common college-level written form" in the General Education Requirements refers to the expository essay, and for the most part, I adhere to that form. However, I do not limit my students to that form. They will experiment within that form and also work with other forms.
Revision activities, such as writing from a different point of view, adding 200 words, deleting 200 words, or changing tense, will help students become more conscious of the choices they make as they compose and as they write, and the relationship between the two. Incorporating research and documenting sources will be another excellent way to illustrate the relationship between competence and skill: research involves processing information, seeing relationships, and making choices; documentation is more of a skill, a fill-in-the-blanks activity.

Composition instructors at Brockport are also encouraged to use the computer lab to teach "basic text-editing functions." It has been my experience that most students already know how to perform these basic functions. They do, however, desperately need to learn more about how to use both traditional and on-line library resources. It appears that this will be taught in CMC 111, but since we do not know which semester students will take that course, it is beneficial to teach some skills in ENL 112 also.

In addition to being taught skills for using the computer, I think it would be propitious for students to analyze the role of this technology as a whole in their lives. Most of the incoming freshmen take using a computer and word processor for granted because they are too young to have experienced a world without them. Therefore, for one of the assignments in this curriculum, I will require students to read an excerpt from Neil Postman's "The Word Weavers / The World Makers" and then respond to some questions and assertions Postman poses, both in large group discussion and in
written form. Their responses will eventually lead to a formal researched written assignment.

Computer competency requirements have already been put in place at Brockport, and math and writing competency requirements will soon follow. At the Competency Examinations and Advisory Board meeting I attended, the focus was on form. The purpose of the meeting I attended was to discuss what kinds of texts students will be composing and what writing skills they will need when they leave college from the point of view of someone interested in hiring college graduates. At this inaugural meeting, P. Michael Fox, Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education, presented background information about the new competency requirements. He also distributed a position statement from the National Council of Teachers of English, which recognizes that the use of one-time extemporaneous essays is ineffective as an assessment tool (NCTE).

At the time of the meeting, SUNY Brockport was planning the use of a writing portfolio assessment. Since then, however, the college has decided that it will in fact administer some form of extemporaneous essay exam during junior year as an exit assessment. The exact format of this exam has not yet been determined, but it the college is considering purchasing a commercial examination such as The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) examination from American College Testing (ACT). Students will likely be charged a fee to take this exam (Flanagan).

For the record I will state that I strongly disagree with this form of assessment, though this thesis is not about arguing the merits or dangers of such an
exam. Since these requirements will be put in place regardless of my opinion, I must be aware of them and how they will affect my teaching of composition.

The hypocrisy of teaching writing as a process and then assessing it as an on-demand product has not gone unnoticed among those making decisions about the format for meeting the requirement. The justification for implementing such a test is a concern for raising standards. Some educators, such as Heather MacDonald, are concerned that “Elevating process has driven out standards.” MacDonald argues that while many process-oriented teachers ignore grammatical and mechanical errors in favor of a more “holistic” approach to teaching writing, employers are more concerned about their employees using standard grammar and punctuation. As much as many teachers emphasize the value of education for the sake of learning, the reality is that for students, the emphasis is more often on economics. In each of my classes I have posed the question: Do most students come to college for the education or for the degree? The overwhelming answer I receive from students is that they come for the degree.

My answer to this situation is not to focus so much on writing as a process in itself so much as to focus on writing as a process of creating meaning. Students are capable of creating meaning on-demand as well as when they have ample time to revise. Teaching writing as a process of creating meaning helps prepare students to write in any context. Also, I do not expect students to memorize every grammar and punctuation rule; instead, I teach them how to use a writing handbook. The
importance of using standard grammar and punctuation is taught in the context of being necessary to create and convey meaning.

On the one hand, I understand employers' concern that graduates be able to write correctly. But on the other hand, I am concerned that we may be making a Faustian bargain. Improvement makes "strait" roads and tidy writing, but it can also restrict creativity. Imagine writing an essay like taking a road trip. The government spends millions and millions of dollars on building and maintaining Interstates because these are the roads that are the most dependable, the most predictable, and fastest way to get from one point to another. The same is true of a standard college essay. We can point out thesis statements at the end of every introductory paragraph just as we can identify the same species of fast-food restaraunts along the side of the road on every Interstate.

The point is, if we truly want students to write creatively, to develop original ideas, then we have to let them explore the side roads and not just travel on the Interstate. They are going to get lost on occasion, and they are going to stop and see the sights along the way. But this is what will help them make connections and develop new ideas. When they are given a deadline for completing their journey they will learn how to budget their time so they can arrive on time.

And just think how much more exciting the stories they tell will be. Rather than the re-hashing the hash browns from Burger King, or re-hashing the same old argument on abortion or teenage drinking, wouldn’t it be great to travel a road you’ve never been on, experience a place you’ve never been to?
Critical Statement

"Thus one portion of being is the Prolific, the other the Devouring: to the devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains; but it is not so, he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole.

But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer, as a sea, received the excess of his delights.

Some will say: 'Is not God alone the Prolific?' I answer: 'God only Acts & Is, in existing beings or Men.'

These two classes of men are always upon earth, & they should be enemies; whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence.

It is important, as Knoblauch and Brannon point out, for teachers to become philosophical, "to become conscious of the philosophical dimensions of their work because nothing short of that consciousness will make instruction sensible and deliberate, the result of knowledge, not folklore, and of design, not just custom or accident" (2). To be effective teachers, we must not just create "a smorgasbord theory of instruction," (15); rather, we must understand why we teach what we teach.

In order to explain why I teach what I teach, I will impart a theory of discourse. Though it was understood in the Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition course I took my first semester as a graduate student that the term "discourse theory" had many meanings, the scope of the course and restraints on time required that the
definition be narrowed to a theory of discourse types: narration, description, persuasion, information. We spent a considerable amount of time on Kinneavy’s theory of discourse, which focuses on the aims, or functions, of discourse, and how these aims relate to the traditional modes of organization. However, because the purpose of this thesis is to develop a curriculum, and because I will be explaining how discourse is an essential concept in my definition of creativity, it is essential that I go beyond a theory of discourse types and discuss a fuller theory of discourse that includes:

a theory of the composing process (how discourse is created), a theory of pedagogy (how discourse should be taught), a theory of how children develop the ability to discourse, and, most recently, a theory of the political and social assumptions underlying discourse.

(McCleary 91)

While it is necessary to give a fuller theory, the theory will obviously be incomplete because of the limited scope of this thesis. It will be full enough to explain why I teach what I teach, but it is by no means being offered as a complete theory of discourse. I have restricted and adjusted the information covered within each of the subordinate theories comprising this fuller theory of discourse to only that which directly relates to the development this curriculum and the development of my philosophy of teaching writing. Specifically, this theory of discourse has been adjusted to include:
1) A theory of the composing process (how discourse is created) which centers not on stage-model theories of the writing process, but on the relationship between discourse and knowledge: how discourse creates and how discourse is not created.

2) A theory of how students develop the ability to discourse. Here it is more pertinent to discuss how students develop this ability rather than discussing how children develop it. Implications for how this theory affects actual teaching practices will be further discussed in the syllabus and reflective sections.

3) A theory of pedagogy (how discourse should be taught) that considers historical and modern concepts of the function of composition and creative writing and how these conceptions have affected the teaching of writing.

4) A theory of the political and social assumptions underlying discourse that introduces contemporary concerns about the function of language and ideology and the writing classroom.

I am not employing a theory of discourse to expand only the definition of composition; rather, I am also using it to expand the definition of creativity and creative writing. In restricting creative writing to creative writing classes we perpetuate the myth that creativity is a gift from the gods that only a select few possess. “More recent theories of creativity, however, define it in ways that suggest possibilities for creativity in all writers and all forms of writing” (Liggett 165). Most students are not going to become the next Shakespeare, the next Emily Dickinson, the next Stephen King, or the next Toni Morrison. But this is a good thing: we need some
of them to become the next Einstein, the next bell hooks, the next Margaret Mead, the next Thomas Kuhn. And we also need some who can write an effective inter-office memo, develop a marketing proposal, draw up a contract, or compose a letter to a friend.

A Theory of the Composing Process

Much has been written documenting the displacement of the current-traditional model by the process model as a result of a paradigm shift in the teaching of writing. My intention here is not to retrace the development of this revolution. Nor is it to diagram and describe a stage-model theory of the composing process. Instead, I would like to discuss what is a sore subject for many, but is what is also at the heart of my concept of creativity and creative writing: the relationship between discourse, rhetoric, and epistemology.

"The history of rhetoric is the story of a long struggle to understand the relationship between discourse and knowledge, communication and effects, language and experience" (Bizzell and Herzberg 15). Our perceptions of epistemology and truth directly affect our theories of discourse and how we teach writing. I am painfully aware that one of my rhetoric and composition professors will be disappointed with this emphasis on epistemology in my thesis because he believes that using rhetoric for the study of knowledge is where the field went astray. And yet I feel I cannot ignore this relationship because it is the basis for the paradigm shift that has occurred.
Modern rhetoric is not the first to conceive an epistemological foundation for the teaching of rhetoric. Ancient rhetoric posits the belief that meaning precedes thought, that there are fixed truths that can be discovered through language. The focus on ideal forms and on discovering fixed truths led to an emphasis on form. And despite the revolution in our views of epistemology and truth, “Many writing teachers still believe, or at least appear from their practice to believe, that ideas exist prior to language, that the content of a discourse is wholly independent of its form, that knowledge is fixed and stable, the possession of a master who passes it on to students, and that writing is largely a ceremonial activity” (Knoblauch and Brannon 24).

Another reason it has been crucial for me to expand my understanding of discourse theory is the contradiction in what I have been taught about rhetoric. My introduction to rhetoric and composition was an introduction to classical rhetoric. I agree that it is important for writing teachers to understand the history of the profession, and I value this education. What was contradictory about it was the way contemporary rhetoric was presented principally in the same forms as classical rhetoric. We learned about the paradigm shift and current emphasis on revision and the writing process, yet at the same time we were also taught discourse theories based on taxonomies, features of classical rhetoric which tend to be restrictive and prescriptive.

We discussed process and the tendency of process to neglect whole pieces of writing; however, the emphasis remained on form: if students could just follow the recipe they would be guaranteed at least minimal success. And, just as importantly, if
teachers could just follow these recipes, they would be guaranteed to be able to
accurately and confidently assess student writing. These taxonomies, however, reflect
classical views of rhetoric, not modern views. The emphasis on form distorts both
teachers’ and students’ conceptions of the writing process:

Too many teachers, like ancient predecessors, view genres as rigid
structures that must be learned precisely and then never violated if
writing is to be coherent, organized, and effective. Too many believe
that learning to write is learning these structures, that teaching writing
means insisting on formal correctness, that tidying up the surface of
discourse causes the maturation of writers. One consequence has been
to promote a ceremonial view of discourse among students, a belief
that writing is mainly a process of honoring the conventions that
matter to English teachers rather than a process of discovering
personal meanings, thinking well in language, or achieving serious
intellectual purposes. (Knoblauch and Brannon 31)

I have witnessed many examples of this. One of my students assured me on
the second day of class that she could not possibly write a paper that did not take one
side or the other on any particular issue. She could not consider more than one
possible point of view on any topic because she was taught a certain form in high
school and did not know any other way to construct an essay. More than one of my
students has stated an expectation of getting an A if he or she standardized all of the
punctuation and grammar and addressed all of the questions I had about his or her draft.

Modern rhetoric takes a different approach because it is based on modern views of epistemology: “Knowledge and beliefs are products of persuasion, which seeks to make the arguable seem to be natural, to turn positions into premises – and it is rhetoric’s responsibility to reveal these ideological operations” (Bizzell and Herzberg 14-15). If discourse is the creation of meaning, then rhetoric becomes the deconstruction of meaning. This is what my first professor of rhetoric objected to, the influence of poststructuralism on rhetoric, but it is what I base my philosophy of teaching on. “The tension which results between authorized and alternative readings of texts, or pedagogies, or cultures, or anything else, is necessarily deconstructive” (Crowley 394). Discourse is what is at the core of marrying composition and creative writing because discourse is the very means of creativity and analysis, the very means of creating knowledge.

In Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing, Knoblauch and Brannon make a critical observation:

“Creative rewriting” is an essential concept [. . .] The natural tendency of discourse is to explore, to progress from what is known to what is not yet known. The process of stating and interrelating assertions eventually takes the writer into new intellectual territory because it forces experiments in the making of connections that have not been made before. The assertion “knowledge is discourse” is an instance of
powerful imaginative insight. It derives from an extended line of reasoning evolved not just within a single text by a single writer, but within a succession of texts by many writers and over a period of centuries. Previous discourses had to be “rewritten”—in the sense that previous connections representing an earlier state of understanding had to be questioned and abandoned—in the struggle to articulate the insight. (72)

In composition we introduce students to new ways of creating, communicating, and evaluating knowledge. However, when we talk about introducing students to academic discourse we often concentrate on the conventions of particular discourse communities, such as MLA, APA, Chicago style, and so on. The modern research paper is one example of how classical rhetoric is still pervasive and restricts creativity: “Begun w/egalitarian ideal of the making of knowledge, modern research writing has become the fallen ‘research paper,’ an apprentice work piecing together what is known, and presenting this piecing in a form that is also known, at least by the teacher” (Davis 425).

We talk about revision in the process of writing but there have been two major problems with the way that we integrate it: first, the concept of a composing process has become dogmatic. Many textbooks and instructors explicitly teach students a fixed linear sequence of stages they must move through when composing. However, “Recognizing that writing is a process that moves through various stages is little help when the realization comes that the stages of the composing process are not purely
linear and vary from writer to writer” (Voss). More recent models, such as Flower and Hayes’s cognitive model of composing, reflect an understanding that the writing process is a recursive, problem-solving process and that it operates differently in each individual (Connors and Glenn 138-43). Unfortunately, even though researchers like Flower and Hayes offer these models to inform writing practices and not become the subject of them, many textbooks and teachers continue to place process as the focal point of instruction.

This emphasis on following stages, whether they be linear or recursive, has led to another problem: there is typically little instruction on or little opportunity for the sort of creative rewriting Knoblauch and Brannon describe. We don’t emphasize that the process of composing and revising involves making new connections, progressing from what is known to what is not yet known. Instead we emphasize audience analysis and “correct” form: we assign artificial audiences and police drafts to ensure that the thesis statement comprises the last sentence of the first paragraph and that there are no sentence fragments. We tell students we want original writing, but we demand writing that is convenient for us to grade.

My experience as both a teacher and a writing tutor indicates that most students concentrate more on form than on content and do not associate revision with re-creation of meaning. They resist making more than surface changes and see revision simply as an opportunity to perfect grammar and punctuation. The majority of students coming in for the first time to get help with their writing tell me that they just want me to proofread their paper. They are usually very surprised when I begin
asking questions that challenge or demand clarification or revision of the meaning they are trying to construct.

Appropriately named, constructivist perspectives built upon the research of Piaget and Vygotsky are beginning to influence how we think about teaching and teaching writing: “In contrast to traditional views, constructivism entails looking at knowledge as something produced by individuals on the basis of their past experiences and past learning. Knowledge cannot be transmitted to learners; learners actively construct knowledge” (Asselin). Learners actively construct knowledge through the process of taking it apart and creating something new. Rather than focusing on the process of writing, then, we should focus on the process of creating knowledge, which is the process of creation and destruction.

I conceive the marriage of composition and creative writing as the marriage of creativity and analysis, the marriage of the prolific and the devourer. The process of creating knowledge entails revision that emphasizes re-creation and reflection. According to Emig, teachers can successfully initiate and sustain their students’ writing if they also foster the students’ awareness of their own composing process, writing reflectively to be reflexive” (Connors and Glenn 129-30).

This leads us back to the Freire and Giroux quotation in the introduction: “To be literate is not simply to know something; it also means knowing how to participate reflectively in the very act of producing knowledge.” Helping students become conscious of their writing process, of choices and consequences, in order to participate reflectively and creatively does not entail providing them artificial choices
between composing compare-contrast essays and cause-and-effect essays. It does not entail checklists that document points off for faulty parallelism or weak topic sentences. “What, after all, could motivate students to prize literacy when it is defined as avoiding comma splices and mixed metaphors?” (Knoblauch and Brannon 43).

A typical student’s writing process often reflects a desire to please the teacher, not a desire to create meaning.

[Students] know that their “business letters” are fake, even if the real world produces them. They know their “research papers” are frequently rote recapitulations of reading and lecture notes, possibly never found in the real world. They know that their school writing is, on the whole, a ritual performance, like the ancient declamatory exercises, provided chiefly to be evaluated for technical error and then discarded. As a result, their motivation to write often, earnestly, and well is adversely affected, so that the emphasis on superficial form which had been supposed to accelerate growth actually serves to impede it. (31)

This is another reason why students flock to creative writing and resist composition. In “Problematizing Formalism: A Double-Cross of Genre Boundaries,” Mary Ann Cain aptly characterizes the relationship between need and desire in composition and creative writing: “If creative writing tends to separate the desire to write from need, then composition tends to do the mirror opposite—separate the need to write from desire” (92).
In this curriculum I am attempting to marry need and desire. Writing apprehension is often the result of a lack of desire, which itself is often the result of restrictive, prescriptive conventions that emphasize only the need to write “correctly.” Like Lea Masiello, I have found that “Many basic writers feel bound by writing conventions—they know too many rules that begin with ‘don’t’: don’t begin a sentence with and, don’t use I, don’t write more than eight sentences in a paragraph. Such rules bind writers; creative invention activities release them” (210).

After reading the title of this thesis I am certain the first thought that comes to many minds is that I am attempting to marry the genres that are typically taught in composition and creative writing: attempting to marry the essay and the research paper to poetry, short fiction, and drama. It should be apparent by now that I am not arguing to incorporate the use of any particular form, nor I am arguing to abolish the use of any particular form. I would like to take the emphasis off prescribing form because it is one way that we restrain creativity in writing.

Instead of seeing my role as a teacher like that of a doctor, examining the incapacitated and recommending a cure, I view my role as a teacher as more facilitative. Like Donald Murray, I believe “My teacherly task is to make my students uncomfortable, to lead them into unknowing, but not to abandon them there, but to be an effective Maine guide, paddling them toward the salmon, but allowing them to make their own catch” (107-08).

I am not just trying to get students to look at writing in a new way, I am trying to get them to use writing to help them look at everything in a new way. Teachers
often create assignments that ask students to write about something they know, thinking they will write a better paper if they know something about the subject. But aren’t we really trying to get students to travel beyond what they know? The only way for them to do this is to abandon previous discourse, abandon the Interstate. Rather than relying on the comfort of a McDonald’s every five miles, students need to rely on their own capacity for creating new meaning and explore the side roads once in while.

A Theory of How Students Develop the Ability to Discourse

Students have the ability to rely on their own capacity because some things the body does unconsciously, like breathing and composing. Others involve unconscious and conscious processes, like learning to ride a bike. Peddling, steering, using hand-signals, and paying attention to the road require a conscious effort; however, balance is developed unconsciously through experience. According to Alice S. Horning, writing works in a similar way.

The central hypothesis of Horning’s theory is that “basic writers develop writing skills and achieve proficiency in the same way that other adults develop second language skills, principally because, for basic writers, academic, formal, written English is a new and distinct linguistic system” (2). There are six corollaries to this hypothesis that affect a pedagogy of teaching writing:

1) The written form of language constitutes a second language and differences between spoken and written forms play an important role in how writing skills are developed.
2) Writing skill develops through a process of acquisition and learning.

3) Acquisition occurs in an orderly fashion; errors are essential and reveal this ordering.

4) What students learn acts as a monitor of what is acquired.

5) Comprehensible input is essential if language acquisition is going to take place; comprehensible input must contain material somewhat beyond the acquirer’s present level, must be presented in enormous quantities, must reduce the acquirer’s affective filter, and must occur in the context of natural language use.

6) The student’s affective filter must be not operating. In other words, students’ emotions often prevent them from being able to analyze information and creatively rewrite it, keep them from acquiring the knowledge and skill needed to develop writing. (2-5)

Horning’s theory provides much insight into the relationship between competence and skill, particularly in the fourth corollary, which is based on Krashen’s monitor theory: “The monitor theory’s central hypothesis is that language ability is developed through acquisition (unconscious, internal, and systematic processes) and learning (conscious, explicit mastery of rules). Learned information functions as a monitor on production from the acquired system” (65).

While the composing process, the process of discovering relationships and conveying them as sequences of assertions (Knoblauch and Brannon 93), is innate and acquired unconsciously, writing skills can be explicitly and consciously taught. We can
explicitly teach standardized grammar and punctuation and teach students how to become more reflective, more conscious of their unconscious composing process. This does not mean drilling students in punctuation and grammar for the sake of learning every grammatical rule. According to Kutz et al in *The Discovery of Competence: Teaching and Learning with Diverse Student Writers*, "An acquisition-rich writing environment reorients priorities so that meaning becomes the end of instruction and written attempts are simply a means to that end" (31). Learning standardized grammar and punctuation, then, should be directly linked to their function in the creation of meaning.

Kutz et al also expand the hypothesis that learning to write is analogous to learning a second language so that it includes all freshman composition writers and not just basic writers. They point out that this way of understanding the teaching and learning of writing also changes the concept of curriculum:

We have endeavored to integrate this learning with the acquisition of writing so that the learning of new modes of language and new modes of thought can influence one another. When we conceive of curriculum in this way, writing becomes a means through which students keep track of their perceptions, questions, proposals, explanations, trials, discoveries, frustrations, and conclusions—a means, not an end in itself. The end remains the ideas, the questions, the interpretations, and the understanding toward which students move.
through the curriculum, and language is the primary medium for constructing, developing, and exchanging thoughts. (83)

This leads us back to the concept of discourse as knowledge and of discourse as a progression from what is known to what is not yet known. The emphasis in this type of curriculum is not on stages in a process, but on the process of creating, and re-creating, meaning. Also, in this type of curriculum the emphasis is not on form or correctness. Error is understood to be an essential part of the process, evidence of experimentation with the creation of meaning:

Writers in an acquisition-oriented classroom become active learners. Rather than learning a list of *dos* and *don’ts* or practicing received formats, they formulate hypotheses about the expectations and norms of written discourse. In testing out these hypotheses, they discover when to revise them and test out new ones. This trial-and-error constructive process applies not only to global discourse features, but also to issues of lesser concern, such as surface features of language.

(Kutz et al 31)

The monitor can help students become more conscious of the choices they have and make as writers and the consequences of those choices. However, sometimes students are faced with so many choices that they become overwhelmed. In *Wild Mind: Living the Writer’s Life*, Natalie Goldberg provides an example of how the monitor can restrict writers’ creativity. The example also demonstrates how the affective filter restricts creativity:
Most of the time when we write, we mix up the editor and creator. Imagine your writing hand as the creator and the other hand as the editor. Now bring your two hands together and lock your fingers. This is what happens when we write. The writing hand wants to write about what she did Saturday night: “I drank whiskey straight all night and stared at a man’s back across the bar [. . .] I imagined him to have the face of Harry Belafonte. At three A.M., he finally turned my way and I spit into the ashtray when I saw him. He had the face of a wet mongrel who had lost his teeth.” The writing hand is three words into writing this first sentence— "I drank whiskey . . .”—when the other hand clenches her fingers tighter and the writing hand can’t budge. The editor says to the creator, “Now, that’s not nice, the whiskey and stuff. Don’t let people know that. I have a better idea: ‘Last night, I had a nice cup of warmed milk and then went to bed at nine o’clock.’ Write that. Go ahead. I’ll loosen my grip so you can.” (2)

In creative writing we often focus too much on the creator, and in composition we often focus too much on the editor. Goldberg’s solution for writers is to “Keep your hand moving” (2). Flower and Hayes suggest that students must learn to “reduce their cognitive loads,” learn to turn the monitor off and ignore elements when writing so they can attend to others (Connors and Glenn 141). Whatever the chosen method is, the important point is that there needs to be a balance between editor and creator, conscious and unconscious, prolific and devourer.
A Theory of Pedagogy

In many ways teachers too often embrace only their role as editor and not their role as creator. Wendy Bishop, in “Crossing the Lines: On Creative Composition and Composing Creative Writing,” remarks that few teachers she knows are able to grade single works of “art” writing and reveals that while she has never attempted to grade a student’s first poem, she has always been capable of grading a student’s first essay. Bishop attributes this disparity to her own experience as a student: she learned to value fiction over nonfiction, and, because she had been waived from taking composition herself, she was never required to produce the kinds of writing she assigns in composition (188-89).

Other theories have also been offered to explain the difficulty writing instructors have in grading creative pieces versus their comparative ease in grading composition essays. The most frequent among these relates to assumptions about the functions of composition and creative writing. According to Welch, there is a twentieth-century assumption that “a text, if it’s to be considered truly creative, does nothing at all” (117). Many writing instructors may have learned to prize fiction more than nonfiction, but ironically they find creative writing more difficult to grade because it appears to have no real purpose. Or rather, its purpose is solely self-expression.
In “Interrogating the Boundaries of Discourse in a Creative Writing Class: Politicizing the Parameters of the Permissible,” George Kalamaras identifies the resistance to the integration of composition and creative writing as coming from “assumptions about what constitutes ‘function’ and ‘creativity.’” Specifically, many administrators, faculty [. . .], and students cast composition in largely functionalist terms, and they see “creative writing” as just that—some special “creative” activity quite different from the business of the academy” (78).

This special creative activity is also quite often viewed as easier and more enjoyable than the writing typically done in composition. This is why my student asked, before even reading the syllabus, if we could do creative writing instead. Many of the students who show a preference for creative writing over composition truly are interested in writing poetry, drama, or fiction, but many of them show a preference for creative writing only because they assume it will be easy (or at least easier) and fun. They figure they can score an easy A or B because students know teachers have a difficult time grading self-expressive papers. Giving a student a D on a personal narrative is the equivalent, for many, of evaluating the student’s feelings and experiences as irrelevant or somehow inferior. Again this semester I have encountered students who directly associate their grades with how much they think their teachers like them.

Granted, this is a clearly a way that many students displace blame for their lack of success, but in some ways many of them have been set up for this kind of association by teachers who encourage and praise students for expressing intimate,
honest details in their writing but then, without warning, grade their assignments based not on the quality or quantity of their intimate details or their honesty but on how well they have crafted these expressions. Worse, some teachers feel so inept at assessing these expressions that they don't grade on how well the writing was crafted and assign inflated grades that cause students to develop a false sense of confidence and competence in their writing.

The reasons for the differences in the perceived functions of composition and creative writing are rooted in history and have been well documented, so there is no need, and indeed not enough space, to attempt a full retelling here. An important aspect of that history that does merit discussion is the history of the tension between the expressive function of creative writing and the designative function of composition.

W. Ross Winterowd traces the history of these differences and unabashedly places the blame for the split between composition and creative writing on Emerson and Romanticism:

My thesis is straightforward: Emerson is the essentialized Romantic Idealist whose solipsism does away with pathos, the result being a rhetoric (or anti-rhetoric) that is self-expressive rather than communicative. Paradoxically, of course, this self-expressive rhetoric has communicated itself powerfully within English-department humanities (i.e. literary studies and composition), creating the scene in which imaginative literature is highly valued and non-imaginative
literature (e.g., autobiography, biography, essays, history) is devalued and in which *creative* writing is sacred while composition is profane.

In adopting and then etherealizing rationalist views of the mind, Emerson, like the British Romantics, internalized invention, transforming it from discovery to imagination or creativity; in viewing the imagination as a dual faculty, Emerson, following Coleridge, created the basis for splitting the canon and for degrading composition.

Winterowd’s impassioned argument provides an interesting account of how creative writing and composition have earned the respective labels as expressivist and designative and how they have come to be at odds within the academy. Winterowd defines the “death of pathos,” which he suggests began with Emerson’s radical individualism, as the death of invention as a form of discovery and death of pathos as concern for audience, and he notes the effects of this on teaching writing: if the sole purpose of writing is to express some inward truth, then “the teacher’s role is changed, for his or her only function is to respond sympathetically.”

While the rhetoric Winterowd assembles using bits and pieces of Emerson’s essays is plausible, he himself admits that it is certainly not the only plausible interpretation that can be derived from the essays. I find his argument compelling (and entertaining at times); however, I also find it suspect because in attacking Emerson in defense of invention, he is defending classical methods of invention that I previously argued have been displaced. And though I do not share Winterowd’s harsh view of the “New Romantics,” as he labels influential contributors to the field such as
William Coles, Peter Elbow, and Donald Murray, I do share his concern for not only the problems the focus on the writing process has caused, but for the problems the alternatives to the writing process have caused:

The death of pathos and the birth of creativity and voice eliminate what I like to call “semantic intention,” and this is one of the most vexing problems in composition. The traditional step-by-step model of the composing process is so inadequate, even nonsensical, that one wonders how it gained such widespread power. [...] The reaction against this patently false model is, however, equally flawed: the common notion that a writer doesn’t know what he or she wants to say until it is said. Certainly in even the most mundane writing, one can very seldom predict the exact form that the saying will take, which, however does not mean that a writer cannot know what he or she wants the writing to accomplish; that is, most writers start with a semantic intention, something they want the writing to do, and after they have written can judge whether or not they have accomplished their purposes, i.e., have fulfilled their semantic intentions.

Winterowd’s argument here is important because it calls into question the theory I previously offered about the epistemological nature of discourse. If I believe that discourse creates knowledge, then what happens to semantic intention?

In “(Re)Writing Craft,” Tim Mayers provides an excellent answer to this question, one that is also opposed to Romantic notions of composition, but one that
more appropriately accounts for modern views of the relationship between language and meaning. In discussing the relationship between language and semantic intention, Mayers cites a recent essay written by Sherod Santos in which

Santos sets his theory of poetic composition almost in direct opposition to the Romantic notion that the poet possesses a storehouse of knowledge which s/he dispenses to others in the form of verse. [...] So many of our creative writing students begin with this notion. They want very desperately to be good writers, and hey feel they know exactly what they want to say, but their trouble is that the words, the language, so often won’t cooperate with their intentions. They want to learn the “craft,” then, of making language behave, making it fall into line. A pedagogy based on Santos’ notion of craft would seek to dispel this way of thinking; it would seek to allow students to think along with the writing itself, rather than thinking rigidly along with their original intentions. (85)

I find this to accurately depict my own relationship with writing: sometimes I know what I want to say but the language won’t cooperate. I discover new things as I write what I know, what I intend, so that I have to make adjustments because I am led down a new path. Sometimes the path is a more scenic route to the same place, and sometimes the path leads me someplace I’ve never been before. The point is, I associate sticking rigidly to a fixed semantic intention with the type of traditional five-part themes I have been criticizing for being predictable and lacking creativity.
This is not to say they are never appropriate. I admit that sometimes for the sake of
time or convenience I take the Interstate for all or part of the journey. This is about
keeping options open.

I must also admit that sometimes I truly do not know what I want to say until I
say it. My semantic intention is not always clear and discourse, whether it be verbal
or written, is a way to make it more perspicuous. But is this truly a Romantic notion?
Classical rhetoricians are the ones who taught that rhetoric is a means of ornamenting
fixed truths that need to be discovered. The difference is that the Romantics see the
fixed truths as being inside of the individual and classical rhetoricians see them as
being outside of the individual. Modern rhetoric, on the other hand, focuses on
language itself and sees discourse as generative of truth. In this way, writing as a
means of discovery and semantic intention are not mutually exclusive. I can have an
idea of what I want to accomplish based on what is known, but this intention is
necessarily affected by my journey to what is not yet known. If I stay on the path
where everything is known I learn nothing.

I have argued that the emphasis on process has been misguided because it
does not promote truly creative writing. In addition to Winterowd, other instructors
and researchers have argued that the emphasis on process has been misguided
because it has promoted the kind of overindulgent self-expressive writing associated
with creative writing. Versluis makes a fair complaint when he criticizes composition
classes that incorporate quantities of self-expressive writing:
Undoubtedly, there are certain benefits to be derived from writing about one's personal experience, for every kind of writing should connect with one's interests. When all is said and done however, a student comes to the university not to be drawn further into a self-centered sphere of petty passions and furies, but to gain knowledge and learn how to analyze. As I. Hashimoto has pointed out, subjective, self-centered writing—and writing instruction—tends to valorize "voice" or "juice" or "flow," and thereby ignore analysis.

This brings us back again to the concept of the prolific and the devourer. Despite the fact that creative writing and composition tend to live in separate parts of the English department and fancy themselves the whole, creative writing and analysis do not each exist in a vacuum. In marrying creative writing and composition I am arguing for the need for both creativity and analysis. They are symbiotic.

Peter Smagorinsky explains the relationship between the expressive and designative functions in this way:

The designative and the expressive traditions do not mutually exclude each other, but are complementary parts of a semiotic idea of writing. The two traditions have traditionally been at odds, with the designative one focusing on how the artifacts of speech mediate people's thinking, and the expressive one focusing on how inner speech becomes public speech, this showing how speaking and writing bring about changes in consciousness.
The goal, then, is to develop a pedagogy of writing that incorporates both the expressive and the designative functions, both the creative and the analytic, both need and desire.

A Theory of the Social and Political Assumptions Underlying Discourse

What has been largely ignored in most of the discussions I have read about the functions of discourse is the rhetorical function of writing, which “characterizes good writing as that which persuades, engages, or interests its audience” (Lardner 76). As a result of the paradigm shift, all forms of writing can said to be persuasive in intent because rhetoric is now viewed as “synonymous with meaning, for meaning is in use and context, not in words themselves. Knowledge and belief are products of persuasion, which seeks to make the arguable seem to be natural, to turn positions into premises—and it is rhetoric’s responsibility to reveal these ideological operations” (Bizzell and Herzberg 14-15).

Many, in trying to integrate composition and creative writing have argued for the incorporation of a social-epistemic model of writing. This model of writing attempts “to blur the boundaries of discourses in order to bring ‘social responsibility’ into a discussion from which it would otherwise be omitted” (Kalamaras 80). In order to bring social responsibility into the discussion, one must first unpack the ideological operations inherent in all forms of discourse.

In this way, in analyzing and revealing the way language is used to persuade, the social-epistemic function is similar to the rhetorical function of discourse which has been largely absent in much of the discussion of the integration of composition
and creative writing. The social-epistemic model goes further, though, in not only identifying ideological operations, but also assuming some sort of social responsibility for them.

Before discussing how the social-epistemic function might be incorporated into the writing classroom, it may be prudent to first discuss the theories about the social nature of language that underlie my understanding of this function and that have greatly influenced my own philosophy of teaching writing. "Language, as Richard Weaver puts it, is sermonic. It is not first a mental system but a social one, founded on dialogue, not linguistics. Rhetoric is synonymous with meaning, for meaning is in use and context, not words themselves" (Bizzell and Herzberg 14).

In "The Hermeneutic Medium," Jeffery L. Bineham argues that language is a medium which

*can be defined as an encompassing and pervasive amalgam of language and tradition that is ontologically significant and socially shared.* Each major term in this definition has important connotations. The medium is "encompassing and pervasive" because nothing exists outside of its domain. All experience, all human reality, is constituted in terms of a particular "amalgam of language and tradition." The medium is thus "ontologically significant": it provides the only realities humans ever experience. And finally, this medium is "socially shared." The medium is prior to subjectivity, for all individuals are born into its preexistent and ongoing social flow; and the medium is
prior to objectivity, for all conceptualization occurs within its structures. No one can step from its boundaries to posit conformity with an independent reality. (11)

Bineham’s definition of language reflects Knoblauch and Brannon’s theory of creativity as the creative rewriting of previous discourse. This is the view that is overlooked by creative writers and teachers of creative writing who understand fiction to be, as Clark describes, “the most inherently individualistic of written acts.” (qtd. in Welch 130). According to Bineham’s definition of language as the hermeneutic medium, complete individualism cannot be a characteristic of any written or spoken act or of any use of language because the medium embodies history. To live within a medium means to live within a particular historical tradition and to be guided by the mores and assumptions of that tradition. One’s experiences, one’s notions of right and wrong, true and false, reasonable and unreasonable, are all measured by the standards of a tradition (or a history) that in contained in the medium of one’s existence. (Bineham 2)

Language is inherited and inherently biased; therefore, no uses of language can exclude history or society and all uses of language bias the user in some way. Thus, not even the fiction writer can be completely individualistic and escape society or tradition because the language he or she uses embodies it, defining his or her reality and shaping any reality he or she tries to create, or re-create, through language.

It is important to mention that this view of language does not exclude
originality or the possibility of change. While true subjectivity may not be possible, one is not a slave to language:

[T]hough people live within a medium, they are not totally captive to one particular manner of interpretation, understanding, and experience. [. . .]. Because different but overlapping social groups contribute to the medium's structure, it contains various possibilities for existence. People live within a medium that does exhibit preferred understandings and interpretations, but other often unnoticed possibilities do exist within the medium that can be embraced and cultivated” (13).

We see this in the way people participate in several discourse communities at one time and over the duration of a lifetime. Our innate ability to compose, to “discover relationships and convey them as sequences of assertions” provides unlimited opportunities to creatively rewrite discourse. As Sharon Crowley observes, “The advantage of deconstruction is that it permits us to oppose tradition to its suppressed alternatives, and from this opposition to generate yet other alternatives” (394). Sometimes entire discourses need to be deconstructed and rewritten; when this happens, as it has in rhetoric, we call it a paradigm shift.

What I have just done here, in unpacking the ideological assumptions underlying my understanding of language, may be considered an example of the rhetorical function of writing, but since I haven’t gone into the realm of social responsibility, it is not representative of the social-epistemic function.
I must admit that I am still struggling with what social responsibility in freshman composition actually entails. In “Pedagogy of the Pissed: Punk Pedagogy in the First-Year Writing Classroom,” Seth Kahn-Egan advocates a classroom where [students] learn to be critical of themselves, their cultures, and their government—that is, of institutions in general; and, most importantly where they learn to go beyond finding out what’s wrong with the world and begin making it better. The punk classroom helps them move from being passive consumers of ideology to active participants in their cultures. Along the way, they may have to deconstruct the realities they’ve brought with them, but the focus of the pedagogy is on constructing realities of their own design. (100)

So far Kahn-Egan’s description excites me. His description of deconstructing realities and constructing new ones reflects the concept of creative rewriting I have been continuously referring to. However, I am uncomfortable with is the part of his pedagogy that talks about beginning to make things better. My concept of beginning to make things better does not coincide with his, which includes promoting an active role and criticizing what he considers passivity: “We encourage [students] to assume authority as writers, to find voice, or to ‘claim an interpretive project of their own,’ but we don’t give them any real encouragement to speak. Or more precisely, we may not make it clear that they must use writing to address problems with the culture” (101). Unlike Kahn-Egan, in my classroom I do not directly challenge students to take action (103).
I see my own philosophy reflected more in Geoffrey Sirc’s ideas. In “Never Mind the Sex Pistols, Where’s 2Pac?” Sirc specifically addresses Kahn-Egan’s concerns, arguing for a different view of composition: “[... ] composition not meant to take a stand or fix a problem, but simply to reflect on possibility, to chronicle changes, just changing and having the chance to change” (108). Becoming conscious of possibilities and of underlying ideologies entails a lot of change over the course of one semester. We are helping students plant their own seeds, giving them cultivation tips, believing they are competent to thrive and develop so they can go on to propagate original ideas.

In freshman composition we should focus on discovery, not mastery; there is danger in trying to do too little or too much. I think not helping students understand that they can change the world after one semester is too little, but I think expecting students to change the world after one semester is too much. Owens makes an excellent observation:

To expect students to exit their one or two writing classes more fully aware of what “writing” is all about is disconcertingly naive. And if they do leave such limited course offerings confident that they somehow possess all the insight necessary to understand, interpret, respect, and interact with the complex, cross-cultural audiences surrounding them, then we’ve taught them to be equally naive as well. (193)
Fifteen weeks is barely enough time to introduce students to the basics of this second language, to get them look at writing in a new way. I certainly don’t expect that after fifteen weeks I can also expect them to know how to use it as a weapon. That requires more target practice.
Syllabus

I answer’d: we impose on one another, & it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics.

The reflection section that follows the syllabus will give an account of what happened when I combined theory and practice; however, I felt it was necessary to expand the syllabus section in order to directly link elements of it to the theory announced in the critical statement and to clarify some things that were either omitted from the syllabus or that required further explanation.

Though I have provided a detailed calendar to illustrate the type and amount of work assigned, the calendar is meant to be very flexible. I prefer not to assign a rhetoric or a reader and to assign only a writing handbook. I find that textbooks are more often written for teachers, not for students. Knowing they are reading a textbook makes many students resistive, and, honestly, my experience is that students just don’t read them, even the student-friendly ones like M. Garret Bauman’s Ideas and Details. So instead I generate my own readings and my own examples for class. I find this less restrictive because it allows me to change readings for a given topic and to change entire topics, based on the needs and interests of individual classes and on what new things I’m learning about teaching and writing. What is important is not whether or not a textbook is used; what is important is that there is an enormous quantity of writing done in and out of class and that the reading material (comprehensible input) is slightly above the students’ present level.
Writing outside of class does not include journal writing, even though this creative writing course staple has become popular in composition classes. While the sheer quantity of writing that typically goes into journals is helpful, I believe the type of writing required for journals generally does not demand the kind of creative rewriting and analysis I find necessary for students to develop in their writing. Like Natalie Goldberg observes, “journal writing has a fascination with the self, with emotion and situation. It stops there” (39).

As Horning points out in her theory of writing as a second language, we must help students turn off their affective filters. Journals tend to turn them on High. Instead of assigning journals, I give specific individual writing prompts to be completed for homework. For example, I often assign students to write for ten minutes, non-stop, on a question such as “Are you here for the education or for the degree?” or “Why do people go to war?” or “Is it OK for men to paint their fingernails?” Other times I have students first do some writing in class and then, after discussing their writing in small groups or with the entire class, ask them to prepare a one to three page composition readdressing the topic, analyzing it and creatively rewriting it based on new insights they have gained through the process of discussing it and writing about it.

In addition to two or three formal papers that are assigned during each half of the semester, students choose two or three of these brief compositions that they have generated in or out of class to revise and turn in with their portfolio. I have not
included exact deadlines for drafts in the syllabus, although I do collect them periodically and offer constructive feedback.

Some class time is devoted to peer editing, but I must admit that while peer workshops are another staple of the creative writing classroom, I find that they are often a waste of time in freshman composition. Students need more time to be trained to be effective for this kind of activity than I think is worth dedicating to it. Students do not engage in this kind of criticism outside of the classroom. I learned much about the value of asking questions from my experience as a writing tutor, and I find that teaching students how to ask questions about texts, their own and others, is a more practical and effective method to deal with peer revision than workshopping.

Lastly, I would like to mention that in my classes the students and I explicitly discuss the concept of academic discourse. We discuss the differences between writing and speech and the learning of academic discourse as a kind of second language. I emphasize the concept of appropriateness in governing all forms of language use. The students know that in adapting to this new use of language I expect them to make errors, but they also know that I expect them to learn from them. This is not to suggest that we spend most of our time talking about writing rather than actually writing. The purpose for expanding this syllabus and providing the appendices is to demonstrate that while there is a place for it, we do not spend all of our time on Analytics.
Course Syllabus

English 112 -- College Composition

Required Materials

One 2-pocket folder


Recommended Materials

A dictionary

*College Composition Course Guidelines*

Introduction

As you know, this is a writing course, so be prepared to do *a lot of writing*. You will write during every class as well as outside of class. You will also do a lot of reading and participate in both large and small group discussions. Why will you be doing this? You will be doing this because College Composition is more than just a writing course. Yes, this semester you will improve your writing skills. You will also learn how to improve your reading skills and what it means to become an active member of an academic discourse community. Don’t worry, we’ll talk about what that means as the semester progresses. It does *not* mean that I want to teach you to write like a robot. I am very interested in the unique experiences and ideas that you bring to the classroom. What this course is about is helping you learn how to process all the new information that’s coming in, seeing how it affects and is affected by what you already know, and finding the most effective means of sharing your knowledge with others through writing. Whether you love it or hate it, writing is a powerful way to
communicate. To succeed in college, it is also an essential way to communicate. In this class I want you to feel safe and take risks; I want you to ask a lot of questions, even if I can't answer all of them; I want you to write; and finally, I want you to not only work hard this semester, but also to have some fun.

Course Requirements

The only way to improve your writing is to write. Anything you want to be good at (or at least not fail at) requires practice. While I will certainly be looking for signs of effort and improvement in your writing over the course of the semester, it is also my responsibility to provide instruction that will help you meet the college's standards for writing. Therefore, I will be assigning various types of assignments, including formal essays, in-class writing, and homework. I will also be asking you to keep a portfolio that I will collect before midterm and again at the end of the semester. I will distribute more specific information about your portfolios in the coming weeks so you fully understand what I expect to see in them.

Grading

I will not be putting a traditional letter grade on all of your assignments. If I do evaluate your individual assignments, I will give constructive feedback and/or mark them with an E (excellent), S (satisfactory), or U (unsatisfactory). Your midterm and final grades will be based largely on your portfolios, which I will collect and assign a letter grade. I will also consider your participation in class, your attendance, tardiness, and whether or not any of your assignments were unsatisfactory or turned in late.

Remember: you must earn a grade of C or better to pass this course. I am grading this
way because I want you to concentrate on your writing and not just on your grade. I
want you to get a good grade, but I also want you to explore and learn. We will
discuss your progress at your individual conferences; you are also welcome to make
an appointment with me at any time to discuss how you are doing.

Conferences

I will formally meet with you individually twice during the semester to discuss your
writing. During that time we will identify one or two specific things you would like to
improve this semester and strategies you can try to accomplish this. When you turn in
your portfolio, I will be looking for evidence that you are trying out these new
strategies. You are, of course, welcome to schedule a conference with me other times
during the semester if you have questions, concerns, etc.
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<th>Week</th>
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<td>Week #1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>IC (In Class) – Diagnostic essay; Introduction</td>
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<td>HW (Homework) – Individual Writing Process Letter (see Appendix A, ex.1A-1B); Quotations homework activity (see ex. 2A)</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>IC – Topic: Why are you here? In-class quotations activity #1 (see ex.2B)</td>
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<td>HW – Read Lurie, “The Language of Clothes,” and selections from Ackerman, <em>A Natural History of the Senses</em></td>
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<td>Week #2</td>
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<td>IC – Topic: What can you tell about a person by their clothing?; Description activity; In-class quotations activity #2 (see ex. 2C)</td>
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<td>HW – Read Associated Press, “Two Reports of an Airplane Crash”; Description exercises</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>IC – Topic: Working with different points of view; Introduce Monologue (see ex. 3A-3F)</td>
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<td>Week #3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>IC – Topic: Superstitions &amp; rituals: what purposes do they serve?; Self-List activity (see ex. 4A-4C)</td>
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<td>HW – Read Angier, “Men, Women, Sex, and Darwin”</td>
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Week #4  
**T**  IC – Topic: Marriage continued;  
Topic 2: Understanding Audience; Creating Lists Activity and Assignment (see ex. 4D-4F)  
HW – Analyze McGruder’s “The Boondocks” cartoon

Week #5  
**R**  IC – Topic: What is really dangerous?;  
Topic 2: Editing issues; Individual and small group grammar and punctuation exercises (see ex. 5);  
Topic 3: Summary  
HW – (due Tues. of week 6) Summary (100-200 words each) of two articles, essays, or stories about two people who are depicted as heroes; Write approx. 200 words on each person, explaining whether or not you consider them a hero and WHY

Week #6  
**T**  IC – Conferences

**R**  IC – Conferences

**Week #6**  
**T**  IC – Topic: Who is a hero?; Discuss Cooney’s “Seven Characteristics of a Folklore Hero” (see ex. 6)  
HW – Read Goldberg, “Style”; Work on revisions for portfolio

**R**  IC – Style; Individual and small group activities  
HW – Work on revisions for portfolio
Week #7  T  Portfolio due

IC – Topic 1: Introduction to traditional college argumentation-persuasion essay

Topic 2: Strategies for taking in-class essay exams

HW – Prepare for essay exam (see ex. 7A-7B)

R  IC – In-class essay exam (first 60 minutes); Summary vs. analysis

HW – Summary (100-200 words) and analysis (400-500 words) of Meyer, “If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably”

Week #8  No Class: Mid-semester break

Week #9  T  IC – Topic: Authority and obedience; Read and discuss Baumrind, “Review of Stanley Milligram’s Experiments on Obedience”

HW – Read Zimbardo, “The Pathology of Imprisonment”

R  IC – Topic: Crime and punishment

HW – Read Introduction to Metzger, Blood and Volts: Edison, Tesla, and the Electric Chair, and except from Conklin, Criminology, Chapter 5: “Biological and Psychological Explanations of Crime”

Week 10  T  IC – Topic: Crime and punishment continued: What it means to be human

R IC – Topic 1: The uses of technology; Small group activity
(see ex. 8A); Assignment (see ex. 8B)

HW – Begin research; Work on paper draft

Week 11  T IC – Topic 1: The uses of technology continued;
Topic 2: Documentation; Hands-on documentation practice
(see ex. 8C)

HW – Conference preparation activity

R Conferences

Week 12  T Conferences

R IC – Topic: Research and documentation revisited; discuss
technology papers

HW – Summary (200 words) and analysis (400-500 words) of
one of the feature articles from current week’s City Newspaper

Week 13  T In-class essay exam

R No Class: Thanksgiving break

Week 14  T IC – Topic: Editing conventions revisited; Individual and small
group grammar and punctuation exercises

HW – Read Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and
McKay, “Petals for Eveline” (see Appendix B)
IC – Topic: Unconventional forms

HW – Read Kerwin, “The Anatomy of Ignorance”

Week 15  T  IC – Topic: What do you want to learn next?

HW – Work on revisions and evaluations (see ex. 9)

R  Portfolios and Evaluations due
Reflection

*I was in a Printing House in Hell and saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.*

At the inception of this thesis one of my colleagues remarked that he could not imagine my undertaking such a project so soon in my teaching career (I began this thesis during my first semester of teaching). I, on the other hand, couldn’t imagine not undertaking such a project so soon in my teaching career. I believe experience is an indispensable method for gaining knowledge; however, reading and writing about the teaching of writing have also been vital in preparing to teach, in understanding why I teach what I teach.

If we accept Knoblauch and Brannon’s assertion that “The ‘composing process,’ as modern rhetoric conceives it, is the process of organizing experience through symbolic action—in this case, specifically through writing as a mode of symbolic action” (84), then reading and writing become an important means of transmitting experience, of transmitting knowledge, from generation to generation. Having my own experience in the classroom is essential, but the writings of other teachers provide opportunities to learn from their experience as well, provide more opportunities than I would otherwise have the time or ability to benefit from.

Having reflected on what I have learned from the experience of others in the critical statement, it is now time to reflect on my own experiences in the classroom: time to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the course designs and propose
modifications based on what did, or did not, happen when I combined theory with practice.

I began the semester by asking students to write a letter to me, describing their individual writing process and their past and current relationship with writing (see ex. 1A). I also distributed a letter to the students, describing my own individual writing process and my relationship with writing (see ex. 1B). My letter was intended to help students get to know me and to help them feel comfortable enough to approach me with questions and concerns more than to serve as a model, but for many students the letter was very useful as a model. Several of the students struggled to write in an epistolary form, their letters sometimes sounding more like formal essays, complete with thesis statements. This, in itself, taught me a lot, and I also learned that while a few of the students already enjoyed writing, most of them said that they did not or that they enjoyed the writing they did out of class, but disliked academic writing.

As I had anticipated, much of the students' dislike for writing stemmed from a fear of red ink and a lack of interest and confidence in writing. This is why I spent the first week introducing the students to the term "discourse." We discussed the many discourse communities they belong to and the different conventions each requires of its participants. Because most of the discourse communities the students belong to are orally-based, this led naturally to discussion of the differences between spoken and written language. The first activities and assignments, specifically the quotations activities (see ex. 2) and the monologue (see ex. 3), were designed to help students analyze these differences and think about the ways they turn speech into writing. The
students were very receptive to these first assignments, and the assignments were successful for several reasons:

1) Asking students to choose which quotations to share, having them base their monologues on speech, and allowing them to use non-standard grammar (so long as it aided meaning rather than hinder it) validated the language the students came to class with. It also showed the students that I respected them and was willing to first meet them where they were before I asked them to go to strange new places.

2) Both the quotations exercises and the monologue were self-expressive, but they also required analysis. The students found the assignments were both creative and challenging.

3) The monologues were more interesting to me than many of the other personal narratives I have read. There were many athletes in my class, and instead of the typical “My Coach is the Best” essay, there was quite a range.

4) The monologue built up the students’ confidence in what I considered an authentic way. They enjoyed being creative and many of the students who had said they struggled with writing used the monologue as an opportunity to share stories of being successful in other areas. We talked openly about how they would likely do well on this essay because it is based on language that they are already comfortable with and use well. This assignment also facilitated explicit discussions about how the language was different from the language I would be requiring them to use in subsequent essays.
Although I expected the students to be very self-expressive with the monologue assignment, only one of the monologues was of the confessional variety. Many of the students creatively expressed themselves from the point of view of inanimate objects. I received monologues of cigarettes, sneakers, stereos, and a letter (see ex. 3E). The monologues were often very descriptive, but I found that I need to help students be more analytical with this assignment, to convey more of a sense of significance. Having to write the monologue from another point of view did help them to be a bit more analytical, more aware of other viewpoints, and more conscious of choices they make when writing, but like with most personal narratives, many students still struggled to incorporate a deeper sense of significance.

Believing that writing is both acquired and learned, I assigned a lot of writing, in class and out of class. I also taught some aspects of writing, particularly grammar, punctuation, and research and documentation methods, explicitly. Rather than teaching a hundred different rules, I had students complete exercises and quizzes that required them to use their writing handbooks. I also chose approximately ten misuses of grammar and punctuation that were common among the class and incorporated exercises that focused on those same ten issues over the course of the semester. Individual writing problems were also addressed during conferences and in comments on drafts.

More than half of the students failed the first quiz. This pleased me, not because I wanted the students to do poorly, but because I view error as an indicator of what needs to be learned. I explained to the students that I was not giving the quizzes
to punish them; I was giving them to help them learn. Having half of the class fail let me know that the items I chose were items that the class really needed to continue working on. When I explained to the students that I would not be averaging in their grades on the quizzes, and that their overall grade would suffer only if they failed to show improvement over the course of the semester, I was concerned that many of the students would not try very hard to improve. This turned out not to be the case. The students viewed the quizzes and activities as inviting more than threatening. All of them showed some improvement by the end of the semester. Many made new mistakes because they were trying out new ways of writing. They were not afraid to explore new ways to write because they knew if they encountered difficulties I would help rather than punish them.

In addition to writing, discussions were an integral part of each class. (For an example of a class discussion and activities surrounding it, see ex. 6.) I expected that the students would have their affective filters on when we began a discussion or begin writing about any topic. I asked questions, and helped students learn how to ask their own questions, to help them turn the affective filter off. For example, the Self-List Activity (See ex. 4A-4F) was designed to help students progress from what they know about something to what they don’t know about it yet. The students created a list of all of the things that they care about, that they thought they knew about, and the activities that followed asked them to examine these things in new ways. The students couldn’t get away with simply telling me they were interested in something, that they
liked, loved, hated, desired, obsessed over, or were proud of something: they had to explain why this is so.

Having students explain why was one of the most challenging aspects of developing this curriculum. The students had no trouble expressing themselves, and they responded well during class discussions, but when it came time to incorporate analysis, they often resisted taking trips into the unknown alone. As the second language acquisition theory suggests, I incorporated enormous amounts of comprehensible input. I consider reading, writing, and discussion to be forms of comprehensible input and to be natural uses of language. I was unable, however, to incorporate readings in as much quantity as I had planned, in large part because many of the readings were challenging and the students were not as engaged with the texts when they read them on their own as I would have liked. Therefore, we spent some part of most class periods reading material out loud. The students were often able to discuss the topic and texts better this way, especially the more difficult texts like Postman’s “The Word Weavers/The World Makers.”

I have since worked on developing writing activities to help engage students with the readings I give them for homework and have found that this helps. For example, I ask students to write a letter to someone real or imaginary, incorporating information from the text they have read, or I ask them to pick two genres from the list of forms I distributed (see ex. 3B) and write 100-200 words, somehow incorporating key information from the text they have read.
Developing ways to improve response to the Uses of Technology assignment (see ex. 8) has been more difficult. Almost all of the students rated this assignment as their least favorite. Again, class discussions on the topic went well, but when it came time to write the paper, most of the students said they found it too challenging. They had a hard time getting past how individuals use the technology to examine how the technology affects society as a whole. I think this is an important topic, and because the class discussions were promising, I don’t want to simply give up on the assignment. Instead, I would like to take more time with it, perhaps work on ways to break it down into a series of smaller assignments.

Comparing responses to the technology assignment with the traditional argumentation-persuasive essay (see ex 7) has taught me that while the latter is valuable because it helps students look at things from other viewpoints, it is not enough. There is a difference between asking students to represent another point of view and asking them to analyze the reasons these other viewpoints exist. This is why the students found the technology piece so difficult. It was one thing to ask them how technology has affected economics, education, emotions, politics, religion; but it is quite another to ask them to analyze why technology has affected these.

Asking why is essential for analysis and for raising consciousness. Asking why functions as a monitor, a way of making consequences of choices visible, a method of the rendering parts of the unconscious conscious. For this reason, when it came time to edit papers, I found that guided reflection often worked better than peer editing. When I did incorporate peer editing, I had students work on explaining why
something was confusing in a text or why they would like to know more. For their own papers, students were asked to explain why they made some of the choices they made and predict how the text would be different had they made different choices. I found that this worked best when students worked individually or as a class. I have yet to find a way to facilitate small group workshops where the students are able to successfully give each other the kind of feedback that would be useful to them. I have not given up on trying to incorporate this method, but admit that I have not been successful at it so far.

Another aspect of the curriculum that I was unable to incorporate as well as I would have liked was the unit on unconventional forms. This was, in part, due to time constraints. I was fortunate to be able to implement this curriculum after developing it. However, I was not assigned the class I had to implement it in until two weeks into the semester. This meant making choices about what to leave out. I reluctantly chose to omit the unit on unconventional forms. This was a difficult decision. I try to convince myself that I logically chose to cover more traditional material out of a sense of responsibility. But I think fear and ease also played a role. We didn’t exactly take the Interstate, but we didn’t take the opportunity to get lost either. We didn’t get to explore as freely as I hope to in the future.

In all, I actually only had thirteen weeks with the students. I knew from the outset that I could not expect to see tremendous changes in the students’ writing. Learning a new language takes much longer than a semester. So while one of the goals in creating this curriculum was to design it in such a way that each individual
assignment and activity helps students to develop specific composing and writing skills, the main goal was to design the curriculum so that the cumulative effect of these assignments and activities was to help students to view writing in a new way. I am excited to report that the students’ end of semester evaluations indicate that I have been successful at meeting both goals. In order to support this claim I will conclude this section with excerpts from several of the students’ end of semester evaluations. In order to document the changes that have occurred, I will be juxtaposing most of their responses to the evaluations with their responses from the Individual Writing Process Letter they completed at the beginning of the semester.

From Mark’s Letter:

You probably want to hear me say that I write many drafts and I take my time when I write a paper. That would be me lying to you. [...] My relationship to writing is that I don’t like to do it. I guess I kind of fear it a little because I’m not really good at writing the way a teacher wants me to.

From Mark’s Evaluation:

The course far exceeded my expectations because I entered the class disliking writing papers and essays very much. Mrs. McKay changed my opinion about writing and now I don’t mind doing papers. [...] I learned that I still have a lot to learn about writing.

From Kevin’s Letter:

2 The students’ names have been changed.
I have grown to hate writing. Its not that I am horrible at it, I just don't find it interesting at all. [. . .] My strength as a writer is my imagination. I love to daydream and just imagine crazy things. This is the reason that I can write fiction and short stories. If writing these pieces of work are included in the class I will hopefully excel in this area of the course.

From Kevin's Evaluation:

Although I don't enjoy writing I didn't mind doing the assignments that you gave to us. [. . .] I think you expected a valiant effort from us this semester. I know and you know that writing is not everyone's "cup of tea." But you made everyone feel comfortable about their writings and gave us confidence in ourselves.

From Katie's Letter:

When it comes to writing, creativity is not my forte.

From Katie's Evaluation:

I believe I learned a lot in this course. I wouldn't consider everything I learned to be "text-book-knowledge," but I found things out about myself as well. I found a new interest in creative writing. I realized that if I look at the positive aspects of an assignment I won't dread writing it as much.
Not all students were pessimistic or fearful about writing at the beginning of the semester:

From Laurie's Letter:

*I hope you are expecting a lot from me. I want you to be critical with my writing because that is the whole point of the class.*

From Laurie's Evaluation:

*My favorite activity was the free writing. During this activity I learned to write on the spot, even if it is something I do not know about. I had ten minutes to think of every possible thing that comes into my head about the topic, and write it down. This assignment was fun because you got to share things you thought of.*

Many of the students arrived having at least a semi-conscious understanding of the difference between the expressive and designative functions of writing:

From John's Letter:

*I'm not here to get my punctuation corrected on every paper, I want to learn to become a better writer.*

From John's Evaluation:

*In my mind a good course teaches students not only facts from books, but creativity, maturity, and how to think different [. . .]. There are two different types of writing to me, one being the expression, the other being the kind that your professor expects to see. [. . .] This class definitely meets my expectations. I learned how to write the “correct
way," improving the small things in my papers that make big differences. I learned a lot of different types of writing also, though I don't love writing poems, at times it can be a little fun . . . maybe.

This next evaluation is one of my favorites. The student composed it in the form of an imaginary interview. I like to think it illustrates the difference between competence and skill:

Mrs. McKay: What did you learn in this class?

Peter: I can't say I learned too much in this class but I believe that this class helped the way I write which may be more important.

And I will close with the following evaluation because in it the writer reflects so much of what the course was all about:

I feel I evaluate myself by creativity. [...] As I write, I “create myself again and again.” (a quote from the book Poemcrazy). You expect me to learn to write better. I feel I am still learning, but I have also improved.
Conclusion

*If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.*

The previous section reflected on my experiences in the classroom. This section will reflect on my experience in developing this thesis. On more than one occasion I feared I would not be able to complete this thesis. There is so much left unknown, so much left to learn that at times it seemed as though it would be impossible to commit anything to paper. There are always more texts to be read, more classes to teach, more papers to write. Therefore, my conclusion will be brief, lest it become an introduction.

Those unfamiliar with *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* might connote the term "marriage" with convention and role definitions rather than inversion and unity. I have been successful in persuading my students to view writing in a new way; it is my hope that I have been successful in persuading my readers to view creative writing and composition in a new way. Blake argues that the Body is not distinct from the Soul; I argue that analysis is not distinct from creativity, composition is not distinct from creative writing.

My journey in marrying these contraries has been messy and chaotic at times. In order to complete it and move on to discover new ways to pursue my folly I have had to continuously remind myself that:

[M]eanings are made to move beyond, and writing traces this movement. Research becomes seeking as a mode of being. As
academic seekers, we journey toward a state of understanding that subsumes both ignorance and knowledge, a state in which we "know" more deeply our own incapacity for certainty and find that it is uncertainty that keeps us alive and thinking. (Davis and Schadle 422)

I have had to continuously remind myself that this thesis represents only a portion of my journey; it does not complete it. At the same time, the thesis does not simply document the journey, it is the journey.
Appendix A

You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough.

Ex. 1A-1B. Individual Writing Process Letter
Ex. 2A-2C. Quotation Activities
Ex. 3A-3F. Monologue/Spoken Essay
Ex. 4A-4F. Creating Lists
Ex. 5. Grammar Activity
Ex. 6. Who is a Hero?
Ex. 7A-7B. Introduction to Traditional Argumentation-Persuasion
Ex. 8A-8C. The Uses of Technology
Ex. 9. End of Semester Evaluations
Ex. 1A. Individual Writing Process Letter

Directions:
The letter should be typed and be addressed to me. In the letter, briefly discuss the following:

1. Give a brief description of your writing process:
   Do you usually write your papers in one sitting or write multiple drafts?
   Do you wait until the night before an assignment is due to write or start early?
   Do you usually have anyone read your papers?
   Do you have any rituals or routines you follow when you write?

2. What is your relationship to writing?
   Do you love/hate/fear/etc. writing? Why?
   What kind of writing do you do? What kind would you like to do? What kind do you think you will have to do in the future?
   What kind of writing do you like to do? What kind do you avoid? Why?
   What kind of comments have you gotten about your writing in the past?
   Would you like your relationship to writing to change at all? How? Why?
   What would you need to do to change it?

3. What are your strengths as a writer?

4. What writing skills would you like to work on or try for the first time?

5. What have you read lately that was not required for a class? (Include books, magazines, newspapers, cereal boxes, or even "nothing.") Be specific, but limit to five items.
6. After reading the syllabus:

What questions do you have?
What expectations do you have of yourself for this course?
What expectations do you think I have of you?
What expectations do you have of me?

7. Is there anything else you would like me to know about you or your writing?

Remember: there are no right or wrong answers; there are only honest answers. In order for you to get the most out of this class you should be honest with yourself and with me. Yes, eventually I do have to grade you, but I am not here to judge you or to bleed all over your papers with red pen. If that is what you expect of me, however, please tell me. Your honesty will help you become a better writer, and it will help me become a better teacher.
Ex. 1B. My Individual Writing Process Letter to Students

Dear ____________________________.

Would it surprise you to know that occasionally even I stay up until three a.m. to finish a paper? Would it surprise you to hear me admit that writing is very challenging for me? It takes me *at least* five to ten hours to write a five-page paper, and that’s usually just for the first draft. It doesn’t include the hours I spend thinking about what I’m going to write or the time I spend revising numerous drafts, outlines, and lists. One of my writing rituals is to make numerous lists (in pencil) to try to help me discover, organize, and clarify my thoughts. I do this during all stages of writing. I love making lists. Another ritual I have is drinking a lot Coca-Cola (with ice and a straw) while I’m composing.

Why am I telling you this? No, not to encourage you to do exactly what I do. You have your own writing process, and, like me, you may want to make adjustments to your writing process to make it work better for you. One of the reasons it takes me so long to write a draft is because I tend to constantly edit and revise as I write. One thing I have been practicing lately (in addition to drinking less Coke) is to force myself occasionally to write non-stop, just get it all out, and then go back to revise. I have also been trying out different genres of writing lately. For example, I recently wrote an experimental short fiction piece and a newsletter. Those pieces were very challenging to write, but also very rewarding and a lot of fun.

My relationship to writing continues to change as I continue to write. It still takes me a long time to write, but I don’t get as frustrated or stare at blank pages
much anymore. I used to think I had to be inspired to write something, that I had to wait until the perfect idea just came to me. Needless to say, I frequently stayed up late waiting for inspiration, which turned into desperation, and I was often left feeling discouraged because I thought I would never be a good writer. It seemed like everyone else had an easier time with writing than I did. Now I realize that I can write anytime, anywhere; I don’t have to wait for inspiration because, as a wise teacher taught me, a writer is someone who writes. It’s that simple.

That’s what I expect you to do: write. It’s that simple. OK, maybe not quite that simple. I do expect you to come to every class, prepared and on time. I also expect you to participate in group discussions. Why? Because I expect you to want to learn, to want to help the rest of the class, including me, learn. This will include giving me honest, thoughtful feedback on my teaching.

What do I expect from myself? I expect to come to class prepared and on time. I expect to facilitate and participate in group discussions. I expect to be open to your ideas and opinions, and I expect to provide useful strategies, activities, and feedback that will help you become a better writer. I also expect to be available to meet with you in and out of class if you have any questions or concerns.

I look forward to working with you this semester.

Sincerely,

Janice McKay
Ex. 2A-2C. Quotation Activities

Ex. 2A. Homework Activity

*Part 1*

Bring in two brief quotations. Suggestions for possible sources include:

- Magazines
- Movies
- Advertisements
- Newspapers
- Songs
- Instruction manuals
- Professional journals
- Speeches
- Cartoons
- Poems
- People you know
- Stories
- Books
- Encyclopedias
- Graffiti

Each of the quotes must be from a different kind of source. For example, you may only use a quote from a song lyric once, an encyclopedia once, etc.

*Part 2*

Briefly discuss each of the quotations. You must include a paraphrase of the quotation and consider the following questions: Why did you choose the quotation? Does it have personal meaning for you? Is it inspirational? Controversial? Does it infuriate or perplex you? Where and when did you come across this writing? Did you choose to read (or write) it, or was it in some way imposed on you? What do you think the author’s purpose is? Whom do you think is the intended audience? Do you think your classmates will all interpret and respond to this material similarly? Why or why not?
Ex. 2B. In-class Activity #1

Quotations:

Love not what you are, but what you may become. - Anonymous

Whatever tomorrow brings, I’ll be there with open arms and open eyes. – Incubus

The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And wither then? I cannot say.
– J.R.R. Tolkien

Many great relationships start or end in a bar. Some of the best do both in the course of an evening. – Killarney’s Red Lager Ad

Directions: Choose one quotation and discuss the following:

What do you think the message is? How do you interpret the quote?

Why did you pick this quote and not one of the others?

Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why?

Now look at all of the quotations. Do you see a common theme among all of the quotes? How do the quotations speak to each other? Do they support each other? Contradict each other?
Ex. 2C. In-class Quotations Activity #2

Quotations:

Work like you don’t need money, love like you’ve never been hurt, and dance like no one’s watching. – Anonymous

Show me a good loser, and I’ll show you a loser. – Red Auerbach

Not everyone can always run the race, some times you need to just stand on the side lines and clap as they go by. – Will Rodgers

I don’t really like to talk about my flare. – Office Space

If you keep thinking about what you want to do or what you hope will happen, you don’t do it, and it won’t happen. – Joe DiMaggio

All it takes to win is to give it all you’ve got. – Phil Benson

Directions: Work in small groups and complete one of the following activities:

A) Select TWO quotations and select a form from your List of Forms handout (ex. 3B) or create your own form. Write something in the style of the form you have selected, incorporating the two quotes.

B) Imagine that you are overhearing a conversation. Write out a dialogue that incorporates three of the quotations.

C) Imagine that you are overhearing an argument. Write a dramatic scene that incorporates three of the quotations.
Ex. 3A-3F Monologue

Ex. 3A. Assignment³

*Point of View (POV) of:*

Past self (rebel, do-gooder, victim, bully, addict, angel, party animal, perfectionist, tomboy, loner, kleptomaniac)

Fictional character (including animals, imaginary creatures, ghosts)

Inanimate object (cigarette, shoe, saxophone, pool ball, clock, lamp, stuffed animal)

Real person (friend, family member, celebrity, cashier, telemarketer, waitress)

Someone knowledgeable about something (a collector, dealer, taxidermist, chef, teacher, tin-knocker, author, doctor, detective, DJ, retiree)

Archetype (clown, hero, criminal, martyr, mad scientist, devil, nomad, princess, warrior, wild person)

A composite of any of the above

*Part 1 Directions:*

Choose one POV (see list above) and compose a monologue, in an appropriate voice, in which you introduce and describe yourself. You may stick to actual facts, embellish them, or invent them as you wish. Use present tense throughout the piece and include specific details as they occur - physical characteristics, likes, dislikes, habits, situations, hopes, beliefs. While you are composing, keep in mind that this monologue will be read out loud. I suggest reading it to yourself and/or someone else during the writing process as well as after you have completed the piece.

³ Part one of this assignment is a modified version of a writing activity in Burke and Tinsley, p. 146.
Part 2 Directions:

Choose one of the following options and write another essay:

1. Use the same POV, but a different form (see handout), to compose another piece. For example, for part 2, I could compose an interview between me and Migraine, or create a recipe, resume, or obituary for Migraine. Notice how changing the form changes the content.

2. Use a different POV to compose a monologue, or a dialogue, that “responds” to this piece or deals with the same topic/issue/theme of this piece. For example, I could compose a monologue from the POV of my husband, of one of my children, or even of Migraine. I could also compose a dialogue between Migraine and my husband or a dialogue between both of my children about Migraine.

Requirements:

Due: The final draft is due mm-dd-yy. You are required to bring in a rough draft on mm-dd-yy so you can participate in a peer workshop where you will read this piece aloud to at least one other student.

Length: I’m expecting each part will be approximately 1½ - 2½ pages, double-spaced, using a 12-point font and standard margins.

Special Dispensation:

Due to the nature of this assignment, you may use sentence fragments and non-standard grammar and punctuation for effect without it negatively affecting your grade. Unintentional misuses, however, will be noted, not to punish you, but to help you recognize them and work on them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex. 3B. List of Forms Handout</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>Letter to editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td>Letter to Mom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cartoon</td>
<td>List</td>
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<td>Catalog</td>
<td>Love letter</td>
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<td>Confession</td>
<td>Miss Manners</td>
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<td>Dear Diary</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>Nothing but questions</td>
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<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Obituary</td>
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<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Proposal</td>
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<td>Encyclopedia</td>
<td>Rant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eulogy</td>
<td>Recipe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gathered fragments</td>
<td>Resignation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphs and charts</td>
<td>Resume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greeting card</td>
<td>Sermon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infomercial</td>
<td>Sportscast</td>
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<td>Instructions</td>
<td>Top secret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interoffice memo</td>
<td>Two (2) haiku</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Web page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>Combination of forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson plan</td>
<td>Create your own form</td>
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</tbody>
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Ex. 3C. Monologue Example: Part 1, written by Janice McKay

Monologue of a Past and Recurring Self

I think she’s coming back. I’ve got that familiar pressure in my head, that familiar warning. Maybe if I take a Zomig it’ll stop her in her tracks, or at least postpone her visit. I don’t know why I call it a visit. It’s more like possession. Like I have a split personality or a demon or something. Something bad. Something painful. There, I took the Zomig. It’ll work this time. It will. It has to. I’ve got a class this morning.

Oh no. She’s here. Twenty minutes into class and Migraine is definitely here. The Zomig didn’t work this time. I keep trying to concentrate, to ignore her, but Migraine is determined to move right in and take over. Why do you have to come now? Go away.

I have to get through class. I have to go home and finish grading . . . finish making dinner . . . finish the laundry . . . play Monopoly with the kids . . . You can’t do those things as well as I can. Why now? Please, go away.

Her visit is getting worse. My head is throbbing and I feel like I’m going to get sick. Why won’t you leave me alone? I ate breakfast this morning. I slept seven hours, same as usual. I didn’t smell any strong perfumes or flowers. I know you hate when I do those things. I know they’re an invitation for you to come and punish me. But I was good today. And I didn’t invite you. I know: you don’t need an invitation. You come whenever you want. But, just like you, I hate not having control. And I can’t give in. I have to keep going.

How long are you going to stay this time? My head hurts so much. Please don’t do this to me again. You still have time to turn around. Take the Zomig. Come back
another time. Just not tonight. I promised my daughter I would help her with her algebra tonight. I promised. Please don’t make me break another promise.

I hope my students can’t tell that Migraine is starting to take over. I’m trying to be me, to be well, but she’s so strong. I wonder if they can see Migraine carefully stabbing the stiletto into the top of my skull and out through my eyeball, like a magician doing an optical illusion in a magic show? No, they can’t see it. Migraine would like them to appreciate the art of it, but they can’t. They can only see how bloodshot and watery my eye is. But it’s there. The stiletto is there. I can feel it, hot and piercing. It’s my left eye today. Sometimes it’s my right. Migraine gets bored so she switches her trick to the other side. I hope the students don’t notice. But if it gets bad, I’ll have to tell them. I’ll have to, so they’ll know why I’m getting so quiet. Why I’m so slow. Why I look like I’m going to cry. Or throw up. Or both.

My husband can tell from twenty feet away that I’m turning into Migraine.

“Janice just needed a rest,” he’ll say. But this is not rest. It’s surrender. I surrender. Again. Again I surrender. I hate to surrender.

Dear God, please just let the light turn green so I can make it home and throw up in the bathroom instead of my car. Please. Oh, God, my head. Let me get home so I can die. But I won’t die. And I don’t really want to die; I just want the pain to stop. Green. Go. Two more lights. Is there a bag anywhere? I can make it. Green. Go.

just lie here. And hurt. Wish my husband could get me a hot cloth. Hate feeling helpless. Hate asking for help. Hate Migraine. But my husband is kind to her. Maybe that’s why she comes back. Oh, God. Too many words. Breathing. In and out.


Example 3D: Monologue: Part 1, written by a student

Getting Accepted to Brockport

Why does the elevator move so slow? I’m about to check one of the most important letters of my life and the elevator that leads to the mailbox is taking forever. I think this elevator is choosing today to run slowly cause it knows that I’m waiting for something. Something that I’ve been waiting for since I sent out the college applications. I think I’m going to burst before the elevator even comes to a stop. What if when I get there I am disappointed? What if I never go to college? What if I never become what I want to be? I’ll go crazy. I’m never going to college. Let me think that, so I won’t have high expectations, but I do have high expectations. Just keep telling yourself that. Keep telling yourself that you’re not going to college, maybe the anxiety will go away. But I can’t wait. This elevator is so slow. Why don’t I just climb up top of it and cut the wire? Maybe it’ll go faster, but then I’ll end up dead before I reach the mailbox.

Finally, it stopped. There it is. That one box is holding my future. Maybe it’s just an ordinary day and there’s nothing important in that box, but I have this feeling. Something important has to be in that box. I never thought a box could hold so much power. O.k. here goes. Just open it. Just stick the key in and open the box. Today isn’t any different. The door of the mailbox is open. That long tunnel that’s full of darkness except for that one piece of white letter. That’s all I see is that piece of paper that could be nothing, but it could also be everything. O.k., just stick your hand in that cool, dark tunnel and pull out the letter. Now, open your eyes and see what the letterhead says. After days of waiting, it’s here. My letter that carries my future is here. I’m holding it in my hands, but I think I’m going to wait to open it. I have to open it in my room. A place
where I can react properly and I feel comfortable. I’ll run up the stairs this time. That
elevator can’t hold me back now. Man, how many steps are there? I think this stairwell
will go on forever like an endless spiral. There, I’m in my room after running a marathon
of steps. There it is. I’m holding my future in my hand and lying comfortably on my bed
made of clouds with my legs still feeling like weights from my marathon. O.k., relax.
You’re in your nice comfortable room now and you can do anything. It has that familiar
smell like sweet pea that makes you feel right at home. Just take a deep breathe and brace
yourself for a possible rejection. I don’t know what I’ll do if I get rejected. Then I’ll
never be happy. I’ll never be what I want to be. O.k. forget about it. Just open the letter
and prepare for the worst. Don’t worry about what will happen. Just open the letter.

How can one piece of paper hold so much power? I’ve never opened a letter so
slowly before. I can’t go any more. I’m suddenly feeling numb from head to toe. I can’t
move! I’m moments away from opening one of the most important letters of my life and
my body decided to surprise me with a panic attack. All right, I know what to do. Just
keep breathing in and out and it’ll go away... There, I’m fine. Careful, you don’t want to
ruin this paper. Open it slowly. Here it goes. I’m sliding out this crisp piece of paper that
feels as if it was just ironed. The first word on the first line, what does it say?

Congratulations!

I don’t care what else this letter has to say. I did it. I don’t care about the rest of
the letter. That first word is all I need to see. That first word I’ve been waiting years to
see. Wow, I really did it. All that work finally paid off.
Ex. 3E. Monologue: Part 2, written by the same student

The Letter

Man, this is a very dark mailbox. How will I ever be able to entertain myself if I can’t even see? I wonder if the person that’s going to read me knows that I am a very important letter she will be happy to see when she reads me? Man, it seems like I’ve been here forever. It’s really scary in here. O.k., let me just be patient. Wait, what’s that noise? Finally I see a dim light. Hey, be gentle. I am one important piece of merchandise. Hey, slow down, I’m not going anywhere. I’m just a letter. Yeah, a letter that’s going to change your entire life.

Wow. This is more like it. O.k. I’m growing impatient. I’ve had a really bad wrinkle since they tossed me in that mailbox, so I would really appreciate it if she would just open this envelope that’s covering me like a shroud and just stretch me out. O.k. this is taking forever. Why am I just sitting here? Just open the envelope and let me breathe. I promise I won’t let you read anything disappointing. I don’t know why I bother trying. It’s not like this person could understand what I’m trying to say.

Is that a burst of light I see? Finally, you’re opening me up. You think you could hurry up a little? This wrinkle is really hurting and I need some fresh air. O.k. stop staring at me like that. Just stretch me out. You know you want to. You’ve been waiting for me for months now, when your minutes away from finding out your future, you decide to stall. Your lucky I can’t move myself. I went through a long journey and have been though many tosses just so you can read me, now your going to read me.

Thank you! You opened me. Wow, that feels good. Wait! You barely read me and you decide to leave me on this unbelievably soft bed here and go. Hey! Finish reading
me! I don’t believe this. She went through all that time to open me up and when she does, she takes one glimpse at me and decides to run off. I feel so used. Oh well, at least I got the job done without dying on the way over here. I’m just glad she got this wrinkle out of the way. I wonder what I’m going to be the next time I’m recycled? I hope I’m a letter of complaint to the post office.
Example 3F: Monologue: Part 1, written by another student

The Finals

It is the New York State qualifying wrestling championship finals for section five at 125 lbs. I am a young, but determined sophomore wrestler ready to win. Bill Merle is a senior from Spencerport high that thinks nothing of me.

The ref blows the whistle and we go at it like two wild bulls on steroids with the spotlight on us. I circle, fake, and juke towards him, clubbing heavily on his head, hoping he will come up to open me a free shot. But he fights back with the same intensity. The stench from the sweat on Merle’s body is eye watering, probably the same as my own, but it only makes me want to beat him even worse. Snap... snap... club... club... fake... fake... Still no openings. The buzzer sounds. End of the first period with no score.

I am breathing a little heavy and the scent from the oranges on the sidelines is so strong I can taste it. The referee flips the green and red colored coin. It lands on green. It’s my opponent’s choice in the second period and he chooses neutral. No one knows about it but I have this ball on my kneecap and it feels like an overfilled water balloon. I have no idea how the fluid got there, but it’s making it difficult for me to take shots for a takedown. Right away Bill fakes at me and catches me off guard as he shoots a high C on me and lifts me to the mat. “Two green!!” says the ref. I know now that I am trailing but with the power of a bear I escape for one point. Immediately I attack my opponent to score more points. Tap... tap... push... push... level change... circle... club... fake... Still there is no shot for me to take him down. The second period ends and we go into the third.
I see that my opponent is tired. This is a chance for me to take it to him and win this match. I am going to the States, this kid is not going to stop me. I am going to keep plugging away and not stop until I get the lead. He won’t be able to hang with me. I choose down, and off the whistle I fight with all my might to get away. Bill’s grip is very strong and holds me down. Stand up... stand up... switch... inside switch. I still can’t get out, he’s just holding on not doing anything. The ref gives him a warning for stalling. Still no effort from Merle and all the effort in the world from me. “One red!” I hear the ref award me a point for my opponent’s stalling with 29 seconds left in the match. The score is tied! Adrenaline flows through my body, and I know that I am going to win. I have escaped from him once already and I know I can do it again. I have a good strong grip on his hand now, and I’ve isolated it to my side pocket. I face in a try to advance to my feet. With four seconds remaining on the clock I face my opponent and the ref awards me one point. I take two under hooks and jack Merle into the air so he can’t do anything as I look up into the crowd. They know I have won and they are going crazy. Reach... reach... grunt... grunt... Merle is frustrated and tries to grab my leg but it just won’t work. The buzzer goes off. Victory!!!

My hand is raised by the ref and I run to my opponent’s coach to shake his hand. I stand in the center of the mat and give a salute to my hometown that is sitting in the stands cheering. Then I run to my side of the mat and leap into the arms of my head coach. The crowd screams even louder and the rest of my coaches are jumping up and down around us. I have won the match and I’m going to Syracuse of the New York State Championships.
Ex. 4A-4F. Creating Lists Lesson Plan, Assignments, and Writing Examples

Ex. 4A. Self-List Activity

This activity needs to be completed before beginning the lesson.

Directions: Using a pencil or pen, create a list of words and/or phrases (using nouns only) that you feel reflects who you are. Feel free to explore. No one will see this list; it is your first draft. After you have completed your list, please type it. The only requirements are that it must fit on one side of a sheet of paper, and it must include your name and the date. You may edit and arrange the list however you like, using whichever type(s) of fonts and spacing that you prefer. This typed draft will be shared with the class. Keep this in mind.
Ex. 4B. Handout for Self-List Activity

Suggestions and examples for items to include on your self-list:

*interests*

absolutely anything!

*goals*

rock star, teacher, professional photographer, learn how to _____, etc.

*people, objects, and/or events that have had an influence on who you are*

relatives, friends, love interests, stars, animals, concerts, photographs, teachers, coaches, characters, first car, bike, etc.

*places*

homes, vacation spots, parks, schools, places of employment, etc.

*accomplishments*

awards, trophies, diplomas, breaking a habit, finishing a project, etc.

*possessions*

heirlooms, letters from a friend, old baby teeth, clothing, instruments, sports equipment, tools, autographs, etc.

*hobbies, sports, collections, and/or crafts*

or games, like Monopoly, or puzzles, etc.

*favorites*

quotations, songs, books, ads, foods, holidays, clothes, numbers, etc.

anything else you can think of. . .
Ex. 4C. Self-List Example

Janice Ann McKay 12 January 2002

“The second principle of magic . . . things which have once been in contact
with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact
has been severed.”

Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*

Arizona Trelser Carello Serenity Prayer

Doug (sheet metal & Band-Aids)

Ashley Lynn (writing & hand-tinting) Brad Richard (reading & alto sax)

SUNY Brockport SLC Morgan Memorial Award MCC

Photiou (Ελληνικά) “Pantoun for Chinese Women” paper pencils

Tryon Park water canoeing *The Lady of Shalot*

“The Sestina for Sixteen” singing

Stevie Nicks - I’ll follow you down till the sound of my voice will haunt you . . .”

“Son of a Preacher man” *Soft Maniacs* “It’s not what she sees in him, it’s
what she sees of herself in him” Truth, Language, and Desire

teaching “The Core” “War” *The Beast in the Jungle* *Bleak House*
turntable “10,000 Miles” Migraines

cosmetics consciousness Keb’ Mo’ questions ’90 Corsica
cooking “Adultery by Proxy” *Wholesalers*

handwriting analysis Kenneth Wilson I still can’t define love
Ex. 4D. Lesson Plan

Objective:
To help students become more aware of some of the choices writers make and why they make them. To help students understand not only how considering audience influences a text, but also how context (e.g. ideology, values, economics) and form shape what is, and what is not, included in a text.

Materials:
Chalkboard, chalk, copies of assignments and examples

Process:
Part 1: Describing Yourself

You will need to complete the Self-List Activity (Example 4A-4C) before beginning the rest of the lesson. The lesson itself will take the form of an interactive lecture, similar to the following:

Imagine that you’re going to stop at the grocery store after class and you’re going to make a short list of the items you need. Name five or six things that might be on your list. (Write these on the board.)

Now imagine that for some reason you couldn’t make it to the store, but your friend Chris is going and has offered to pick up your groceries for you. So you give her list. What does she bring you from the store? What kind of (something on the board)? What brand of (something on the board)? What size (something on the board)? (Discuss briefly how Chris will probably not bring you exactly what you had in mind unless she knows you very well.)

4 Parts of this lesson have been modified and adapted from Barkley.
What will the list look like if you want Chris to get the specific items you had in mind? (Discuss and write new list on board.)

Now, let’s imagine that your friend Bob, from out of town, is coming in for a visit and he has never been to Brockport before. You have exams all day, and he has volunteered to go to the store and pick up a few things for dinner so you two will have more time to visit. How will the list look now? Will Bob need directions to the store? Or aisle numbers so he can find things? Will the list include things that Bob likes, like coffee, even though you don’t drink it?

(Explain how this is an example of how more details are required as the distance between subject and audience becomes greater.)

And we can also make other kinds of lists about our lists: lists of questions related to context and form. All lists (like all texts) exist in contexts. When we write, we make choices about what to include or not include depending on context.

For example:

What if I had found this list? Would I still go and buy this stuff?

What/who is persuading me to go buy these items and not others?

Why do I shop at Wegmans, or Tops, or Aldi’s?

Why do I have to use my Shopper’s Club or Bonus Card to get a discount? Why should I have to give personal information about myself to get a discount?

Why don’t I produce my own food?

What would I be buying if I had more money to spend? Or less money?

The list is also a specific form. Consider the following questions:
Why didn’t I use paragraphs or pictures or instead?
When can the list be a poem or a joke or a recipe? How does form affect content?
What impact does technology have on the list?
Is the list handwritten or typed or word-processed?
Could it be broadcast over the radio or television?
How about e-mail?
Keeping in mind what we’ve talked about as far as audience, context, and form, we can also ask what has been left out and why?
Why don’t I have tampons or beer or HoHos on the list even if I really want or need them?
Who gets to edit my list? Censor it? Who might not be able to create a list, or give it to someone else? For what reasons?
How do texts silence us?
Yes, texts. We can apply these kinds of questions to all kinds of texts, when we write them and also when we read them. Audience analysis is not just about increasing details, making them effective and appropriate. It is also about being conscious of why the writer is making the choices he or she is making: why these choices are (in)effective and/or (in)appropriate.
Ex. 4E. Creating Lists Handout

List #1 - for you
apples
bread
milk
cereal
hot dogs

List #3 - for your out of town friend, Bob
aisle numbers
directions to the store
whole milk or coffee for Bob
store discount card

List #2 - for your friend Chris
3 lb. bag of Macintosh apples
1 loaf of whole wheat (any brand)
1 gallon skim milk
20 oz. box plain Cheerios
1 pkg. BallPark Lite

List #4 - Purpose & Context

What if I had found this list? Would I still go and buy this stuff?
What/Who is persuading me to go buy these particular items and not others?
Why do I have to use my Shopper’s Club or Bonus Card to get a discount?
Why don’t I produce my own food?
What would I be buying if I had more money to spend? Or less money?

List #5 - Form & Content

When can the list be a poem or a joke or a recipe? Why don’t I use paragraphs or pictures or instead? How does form affect content?
How do technology and media affect the list? Is the list handwritten or word-processed? Could it be broadcast over the radio or television? Put on a billboard?

How about e-mail?

[List #6 - Silences]

What has been left out? Why?

Why don’t I have tampons or beer or HoHos on the list even if I really want or need them?

Who gets to edit my list? Censor it?

Who might not be able to create a list, or give it to someone else? For what reasons?

Part 2: Asking Questions

Take a look at your self-list. Think about our discussion on audience and the choices writers make when creating texts.

How does this discussion apply to the self-list you created?

Did the list you typed (that you knew the class was going to see) look different than the handwritten draft you made just for yourself? How?

What did you add? Leave out? Why?

Look at some of the items on your list. What values do you associate with these items?

What values does society associate and/or want you to associate with these items?
Ex. 4F. Paper Assignment (to be completed in three steps):

1) This step will be done in class. Directions: Pick three items from your self-list and then create a list of questions for each of those three items. Ask at least three questions about each of the three items, including both specific and general questions. (Do the math: this means you will have three separate lists and a total of at least nine questions.) Try to ask questions that don’t lead to obvious answers, and try to ask questions from different points of view. Then pick one question from your lists and freewrite about it for ten minutes.

2) This step will be done outside of class. Directions: Write an essay. You can use your freewrite to develop a topic, use one of your questions, use another item from your list, or develop a new topic without using an item on your list. You can also use one of the following options that are discussed in your textbook (pp. 57-64): profiling a person or a place, or explaining an insight. Remember, I do not want you to write a story. I want you to look below the surface, find a focus, include sensory detail.

Examples:

I might select cosmetics, migraines, and my maiden name, Carello.

For cosmetics I could ask: Why do I really wear them every single day? Why won’t I go out of the house without them? Other women aren’t like that. Is it because I was a teenager in the ‘80s and that had an effect on me? Is it because of the way our culture portrays women as sex objects? Is the pressure from the outside or inside or both? Why do I let someone else make me feel like I need to be ‘made up?’ Made up sounds like fiction. Am I fiction when I’m made up?
This could lead to an essay about whether or not cosmetics make me more myself or less myself. Or it could lead to an essay on the role of cosmetics in society.

For migraines I could ask: How could I explain this excruciating pain to someone who has never experienced it? How do I respond to people who tell me, “Well I get headaches, but I just take a couple aspirin and I’m fine. It doesn’t keep me from doing anything.” How much of my life have I lost to migraines? What would my life be like without them? What have they taken from me? What have they taught me?

This could lead to an essay explaining what the pain of migraines has ‘stolen’ from me. Or I could write an essay explaining what the pain has taught me. Or I could do research and/or talk to others and explain the different types of headaches people experience, what the symptoms are, how they are treated.

Or I could pick my maiden name. Why did I change it when I got married? Why didn’t my husband change his? It’s legal. What would his family have said if he had? What would his co-workers think? What effect would it have on our kids? Why are names so important to us anyway? Why do so many people change their names, especially famous people? Why did my parents name my brother and me after ourselves? What effect has this had on me, and on them?

This could lead to an essay explaining why I changed my name when I got married, or an essay explaining why my husband did not change his. Or I could write an essay explaining why names are so important to people, why people name their pets, or why people change their names, or name other people or pets after others they care about.

3) This step can be completed in class or out of class after the essay is completed.

Directions: On a separate page, address the following:
What is the subject? What is the thesis? What is the purpose?

Who is the intended audience? What is my relationship to them? What do they already know?

Imagine a different audience for the piece. Give specific examples of how you would have to change the piece for a different audience. Would you add anything? Leave out anything? Use different vocabulary? Would it be more formal? Less formal?
Ex. 5. Grammar Activity: Fill-in-the-Blanks Parts of Speech Exercise

Directions: As a group, create a story (or poem, letter, recipe, memo, etc.). Next, remove words, leaving a blank space labeled with the part of speech that was removed (noun, adjective, adverb, past tense verb, and so on). Each group will then swap texts with another group and recreate the text by generating words that belong to the specific word classes and using them to fill-in-the-blanks, replacing words of the same class.

---

A Recipe for ____________

Ingredients:

_________ cups of ____________
a number noun

2 sticks of room-temp. ____________
noun

2 ____________ ____________ sugar
unit of measure adjective
to taste noun

Directions:

Preheat ____________ to ____________ degrees. ____________ and flour pan.
noun number present tense verb

In ____________ bowl, ____________ first 3 ingredients until adjective present tense verb

________________ add last ingredient. ____________ for 30 minutes.
adjective adverb present tense verb

________________ is done when ____________ inserted in ____________
same noun from recipe title noun

comes out clean.

---

Fig. 1. Example of Fill-in-the-Blanks Parts of Speech Activity
Ex. 6. Who is a hero? Activities and Assignments

Part 1: In class, have students write non-stop for ten minutes, responding to the question, "Who is a hero?"

Part 2: Introduce students to Cooney's Seven Characteristics of a Folklore Hero:

Seven Characteristics of a Folklore Hero

1. Something unusual about birth and/or conception
2. Particular powers separate from humans
3. Demonstrates powers in boyhood (youth)
4. Uses powers in series of quests
5. Ability to visit other places
6. Has some flaw or weak point
7. Usually does not die

Introduce folklore hero themes of "someone to take care of us" and "truth."

Discuss the following: Do these themes and characteristics apply to modern heroes?

What are the characteristics of a modern hero?

Part 3: Have students write non-stop for another ten minutes on "Who is a hero?"

Now that they have discussed it a little, they may have more to add.

Part 4: Divide students into six groups. Have each of the six groups discuss one of the following questions:

Does a hero have to perform acts for others, or can he/she perform for money?

Is a person a hero if the heroic activity is done by chance?

Is being a hero a state of being or an action? (person vs. deed)

Once a hero, always a hero?
Can a bad person be a hero?

Are suicide bombers heroes?

Part 5: Have each of the groups share their responses with the class.

Part 6: Assignment

For the next class, students are to write a two to three page paper on “Who is a hero?”

They may approach the paper from whatever angle they wish and may also incorporate the article and summary material they were assigned during week four if they so desire.
Ex. 7A-7B. Introduction to Traditional Persuasive-Argumentative Essay

7A. Assignment

You will write the rough draft of this essay in class. You may leave when you are finished writing; however, I need to see your paper before you leave to make sure that you have completed it and did not spend the time doodling, doing homework for another class, or writing love notes. I will be looking for the following:

1. **Introduction** with a clear thesis stating your position on the issue. Briefly summarize what the issue/argument is, then state your position on it. Remember: for a persuasive essay the thesis should not be a statement of fact or a question. It should be an assertion that is debatable.

2. **Support** for the thesis. Use facts, appeals to values (such as health, money, freedom, beauty, education, family, fairness, love, religion, hard work, happy endings), and/or logic to support your thesis. This may come in the form of statistics, examples, anecdotes, and/or appeals to emotions. Be careful to avoid logical fallacies (such as over-generalizing, faulty cause and effect, or name calling). Remember to use specific examples/details. You should make at least two points to support your thesis in the rough draft. In the final draft you are required to make at least three.

3. **Refutation.** In this section you need to acknowledge at least one objection that someone might have to your position. Concede that there is some truth to the objection, but also show how the objection may be flawed, how a compromise could be made, or how your argument is still better.

4. **Conclusion**
You are not required to use outside sources for this essay. However, if you would like to use them in your final copy, you may. Also, take your rough draft home and type a copy to bring to class on Tuesday for peer editing.

Now the fun part: Select one of the following and write a persuasive-argumentative essay or letter.

A. Write a letter to yourself, someone you know, or someone you’ve made up, persuading them to change a bad habit.

B. Write a letter to a government official or the head of a corporation, persuading them to change a specific policy or law.

C. Write an advertisement that tries to convince people to buy a product you like or have invented.

D. “Physical education should not be required in school.” Agree or disagree.

E. “All college students should be required to do 15 hours of community service each semester.” Agree or disagree.

F. Is committing suicide a brave act or a cowardly one?

G. “Much of the reality that television projects is a negative one.” Agree or disagree.

H. “People don’t go to college to get an education; they go to college to get a degree.” Agree or disagree.

I. Write a letter to Santa, persuading him that you have been a good girl or boy and deserve to get ______ for Christmas.

J. Write a letter to Santa, persuading him that someone, or something, you know has not been a good boy or girl and does not deserve to get ______ for Christmas.
Ex. 7B. Student’s Persuasive Essay

Dear Santa,

I know you have a lot of kids that you have to watch but I just wanted to make sure you don’t happen to overlook my brother. Jason Carter has not been good this year and therefore does not deserve X-Box. If anything he deserves coal this year. He has done countless bad things that you should have recorded if the song tells it right. Even worse than just doing bad things he wasn’t punished for them. This in itself is completely unfair because I was good and was treated the same way. I just thought I would send you this in case you don’t check your list twice so you have a chance to make things fair. Jason has done a number of things just to me that I’m sure would count in your book as bad.

This is just one story of what he has done this year. It was a beautiful midsummer day, the sun was shining and there wasn’t a cloud in the sky. The birds were chirping and butterflies were flying around. My mother was outside hanging our laundry on the line. I knew it was mine because of the footy pajamas with the feet cut out. I never liked the footies. My brother and I were standing on the toilet with our hands on the windowsill. The three of us were carrying on a conversation about how nice it was outside. All of the sudden out of know where my brother gets down. As he gets down he continues to bring the window down right on my little fingers. I began to cry. My mother rushed to my side as I was literally hanging from the window by my fingers, and raised it. My little fingers were red and swollen; they looked like little cocktail wiener. My mom quickly took me to the hospital for x-rays. Luckily my fingers were not broken, they were just badly bruised. Of course nothing happened to Jason because he was too young. If you
ask me, he knew what he was doing. We are the same age and I knew what he was doing.

Jason seemed to like closing things on my fingers because it didn’t just happen that one time. He had the audacity to do it again, just when I was beginning to trust him and my fingers stopped looking like little party wieners. Only this time it wasn’t with a window. You see we own one of those large stereo cabinets made out of solid oak. You know, the one with the speakers built into it, the record player on the top, and that big heavy cover to protect the record player. I still don’t know why it needed to be that heavy, but back to my story.

I was eagerly watching my favorite record, the Dumbo sing-a-long, go round and round when Jay for some reason had a change in heart and just decided he was done watching. For some reason he didn’t feel like sharing his plans so of course he just continued to shut the case with my little fingers in it. I began to cry my eyes out. This had already been a rough year you know with the window and all but this was worse. My mom who was upstairs at the time seemed to take forever to rescue me. She finally got there and took the cover off my fingers. You would think that my fingers would be broken but I guess you could say I have pretty resilient bones. As I was sitting there looking at my little hotdog fingers he began to cry, not because he felt bad but just to get out of punishment, and you know what, it worked. He once again escaped with no punishment.

The next story is a little more gruesome. It was an early morning and Jason and I were playing G. I. Joes. My mother just finished vacuuming in the room and hadn’t put it away yet. I had my soldiers lined up and so did he. We began to “engage in battle.”
“Bang,” “boom.” Of course they were just sound effects but to us they were the sound of war. He knocked over my favorite G. I. Joes. His name was Duke. He had camouflage and boots on. I followed suit by knocking over one of his guys we then began to argue. It went back and forth until he became so mad he struck me with a vacuum attachment. Not the attachment with the soft brush but the one that was made out of hard plastic. Once again he was not punished for his action, well at least not to the extent he should have been. I don’t call ten minutes in timeout a fair punishment.

Now I know if you do have a list, it doesn’t just say bad things about my brother. He has on occasion been known to do one or two good things. He did do one nice thing this year that I know of and that was taking some of the blame for melting my mom’s credit cards in the microwave. It was early morning before my mom had gotten up. Jay and I decided we wanted to watch things go round and round in the microwave. We soon found my mom’s wallet with her credit cards in it. We put the card in and watched it go. My mom, knowing that we were too you to use the microwave, got up and was rudely awakened. Although he did take some of the blame, he deserved it; he himself helped me get up to the microwave. By the way, if you hadn’t noticed, I apologized and gave my mom flowers to show her I was sorry.

Santa, as you can see, Jason has done a lot more bad than good this year. He has hurt his sweet lovable brother, that’s me, three times and hasn’t really had punishment for any of them, which just isn’t fair. He doesn’t deserve coal this Christmas, let alone an X-Box.

Sincerely,

Paul Carter
Ex. 8A-8C. The Uses of Technology

Ex. 8A. In-class Group Activity

This activity is to be completed after reading and discussing Postman's "The Word Weavers/World Makers." Each group selects a technology to discuss and completes the following form. Afterwards, students share their ideas with the class.

Name of Technology: __________________________________________

Group Members: ______________________________________________

1. Who is able to use this technology? Why? What factors affect who gets to use this technology? What factors prevent some people from using this technology?

2. What technology does this technology compete with or replace? What is gained by using this new technology? What are the advantages? What does it help us do?

3. What is lost? What are the disadvantages? What does this technology prevent us from doing?

4. In what way(s) does this technology use us? How are we in control of this technology in our lives, and how is the technology in control of our lives?

5. Could you "live without" this technology? Why or why not?
Ex. 8B. Research Paper Assignment

What would the world be like if _______ had not been invented?

Directions: Choose one technology/invention and write an essay in which you discuss how this technology/invention has shaped our culture and why. Your essay should address the following:

1. Who would be affected by the loss of this technology? How would they be affected? Why would they be affected?

2. What technology does this technology compete with or replace?

3. What are the main advantages of using this technology? What would be lost if it no longer existed?

4. What are the main disadvantages of using this technology? What would be gained if it no longer existed?

5. How does this technology reflect our culture? How does it shape it?

When answering these questions I want you to think about how the technology has affected individuals, but I would also like you to think about how it has affected society as a whole. Also, I want you to answer these questions in terms of how the technology has shaped culture in the following ways:

- intellectual
- emotional
- economical
- political
- social
You do not have to address all five of these for each question. You should focus on the areas the technology has had the most affect on. Also, the questions do not have to be answered separately. They all relate to each other and are provided as guidelines to help you approach your essay.

Length: As long as it takes. I expect it will take 5-6 pages to address all of these questions.

Documentation: You are required to use at least two credible outside sources of information. We will discuss documentation in detail when we peer edit your drafts (see ex. 8C). In the meantime, refer to the research guide section of your writing handbook to help you incorporate quotes and paraphrases and document them appropriately. I would like all of you to use MLA style.
Ex. 8C. In-class Hands-on Documentation Practice

After a brief (ten to fifteen minutes) introduction/discussion of standard documentation conventions, divide students into small groups. Each group is given two sources and must create a sample works cited entry for each. After a short time, each group exchanges sources with another group. This continues until the groups have completed six or eight sample entries. Examples of sources include:

- A book with more than one author
- An article or poem in an anthology
- An on-line article
- A journal article from a journal paginated by volume
- A journal article from a journal paginated by issue
- A newspaper article
- A videocassette
- A chapter in a textbook

In order to do this, the students must identify what kinds of sources they have and use their writing handbook to help them format each entry accordingly.

When students have finished, have volunteers write sample entries on the board for the class to analyze and discuss.
Ex. 9. End of Semester Evaluations

Your evaluations may take any form you wish: letter, report card, advertisement, chart, story, essay, poem, drama, question and answer. You may also combine forms or invent them. Feel free to be creative, but make sure you address each of the questions.

Part 1: Course Evaluation

a. What criteria are you using to evaluate the course and my teaching? What do you think makes a good course and a good teacher? Did this course and my teaching meet your expectations?

b. What did you learn in this class?

c. What did you not learn that you would have liked to learn or would have liked to learn more about?

d. What was your favorite activity or assignment? WHY? What did you learn from it?

e. What was your least favorite activity or assignment? WHY?

Remember to be as specific as you can. Use examples and details, not a lot of vague adjectives (e.g. bad, good, hard, easy, etc.).

Part 2: Self-Evaluations

Again, feel free to be creative and use any form you wish, but make sure to address the following:

a. What criteria are you using to evaluate yourself? What do you think makes a good student? Have you met your own expectations?

b. What do you think I have expected from you this semester? Do you think you have met my expectations?
Appendix B

Enough! or Too much.

Petals for Eveline

A Short Story

The ant climbs up a trunk

carrying a petal on its back;

and if you look closely

that petal is as big as a house

especially compared to the ant that

carries it so olympically.

You ask me: Why couldn’t I carry

a petal twice as big as my body and my head?

Ah, but you can, little girl,

but not petals from a dahlia,

rather boxes full of thoughts

and loads of magic hours, and

a wagon of clear dreams, and

a big castle with its fairies:

all the petals that form the soul of

a little girl who speaks and speaks...!

- David Escobar Galindo
“It could still go either way,” Eve said, struggling to lift her heavy, droopy daughter, Eveline, out of her crib. Eveline felt heavy and droopy because she was two years old, no longer an infant, and also because she was still half-asleep. “They’ve only been deliberating for a week. If the deliberations had taken longer I would be strongly convinced that we’d won, if you can call it that. But after only a week . . .”

“You’re certain the decision will come today?” asked Lorena, Eveline’s nanny. “Shouldn’t you be at the courthouse then?” She handed Eve a pink barrette that had fallen from Eveline’s flattened brown curls.

“Only the lawyers have to be there. I’m just one of the witnesses. One of the flies caught in the political web. Robert said he would call and let me know what they’ve decided.” Eve fastened the barrette back in place and gently combed Eveline’s hair with her fingers.

“I know this has been hard on you, ma’am. You’ve published so many articles and books about this. People are finally listening, but now . . . well, since Eveline . . .” Lorena stepped back and began fussing with one of Eveline’s dolls, the one that talked when you pulled the string on her back. “I understand, ma’am, how hard it must be. I hope I’m not speaking out of place, ma’am. But at least it’ll all be over after today.” She let go of the doll and reached her arms out toward Eveline. “Would you like me to take Evy to the park so you can rest, ma’am?”

“No, thank you, Lorena. I’ll look after her myself this afternoon. In fact, you take the rest of the day off. You deserve it. You’ve been putting in so many extra hours since the trial began.” Eve ushered Lorena to the door. “Just ask Charles to take
the call from Robert for me when it comes in and bring me the message. Thank you, Lorena. Really, thank you.”

Lorena left and Eve sat with Eveline in the rocking chair. Eve wasn’t ready for the decision. As a philosopher, she had been preparing for it for the last twenty years, but as a mother, she wasn’t sure she would ever be prepared. “What would the consequences be in a world like this?” she thought. “What would happen to Eveline?” She couldn’t think. “Only a couple minutes longer, sleepyhead,” Eve said to her daughter, “then you have to wake up.”

“This had all been so much easier when it was just theory,” Eve thought, rocking slowly, rhythmically. “Philosophers and scientists have been defending, criticizing, and debating the implications of the Argument for Moral Consistency since the 1970s.”

She herself had been defending it since 2026, when Macphail’s theory, *The Evolution of Consciousness,* had finally been supported and widely accepted by philosophers, experimental psychologists, linguists, and neurologists.

“Wake up, Eveline!” Eve said, so abruptly and so loudly that she startled herself as well as her daughter. Eveline lifted her head, but was struggling to keep her eyes open. “Come on. It’s time to wake up.” Eve used a calmer tone, but rubbed Eveline’s back briskly, trying to rouse her. Eveline’s yellow cotton T-shirt crept up as she rubbed, and Eveline yanked it back down. “What’s the matter, Evy? Are Mommy’s hands cold? I’m sorry. But come on and wake up. Mommy will read you a story.” Eveline did not answer.
According to Macphail's theory, consciousness evolved in human animals, and in human animals only, because they have acquired language. The rest of the theory is a hypothetical syllogism: If an animal does not acquire language, then the animal is not conscious of itself. If the animal is not conscious of itself, then the animal is not conscious of its feelings. If the animal is not conscious of its feelings, then the animal is not conscious of pain. Therefore, if the animal does not acquire language, the animal is not conscious of pain. It does not suffer.

Eveline's eyes were finally open, and she appeared to be staring at the banana-yellow and plum-purple alphabet wallpaper. Eve stood up and walked over to the bookcase, still holding Eveline. There must have been a hundred books on the shelves, and Eve had read each one to Eveline at least twice. She knew how important it was to read to children, how it was supposed to help them develop language skills. So Eve had filled the room with books. And dolls. The room used to contain scores of stuffed, fuzzy, cute, mute animals that Eveline had been given, but Eve had replaced them all with dolls: little girls with pretty names, porcelain faces, pink cheeks, and glossy painted mouths.

Animals' rights are determined by whether or not they suffer. Since Macphail's theory links suffering to language, the implications of the theory go beyond non-human animals. In other words, some humans who lack language abilities, such as infants, comatose patients, the hopelessly senile, or the profoundly retarded, are also not conscious. They are considered "marginal cases of humanity" and are really no different than non-human animals. The whole argument basically
came down to this: that “To be consistent, and to that extent rational, we must either
treat the humans the same way we now treat the animals, or treat the animals the
same way we now treat the humans.” 4

“Ready for a story?” Eve asked Eveline as she pulled a book from the shelf.

“Here’s a nice book, Evy. See the sailboat? I know, how about a poem?” Eve sat with
Eveline on the windowseat. “Here, you hold it,” she said, handing Eveline the book.

While this theory had long been understood and accepted by experts, Eve had
used an example in court to help the jury understand: “How many of you have ever
been given a drug like diazepam as a sedative before a minor surgical procedure
instead of being given a pain killer?” Eve had asked. “A drug that doesn’t take away
pain, but rather takes away your consciousness, your memory of the pain? That’s
what life is like all the time for non-human animals and humans who lack language
abilities. They can feel pain, but they can’t remember it. They are not conscious of it.
Therefore, they do not suffer.” 5

Eve took the book from Eveline, who was trying to tear the pages out, and
selected a poem. “Here’s a nice one, Evy. Let’s read this one.” She pulled Eveline
closer to her and held the book in front of her so she could see the words. “Ready?
It’s called ‘A Short Story,’ and it was written by a man named David Escobar
Galindo. ‘The ant climbs up a trunk carrying a petal on its back . . . ’”

That’s what Robert had called her to testify to: that Brandon did not suffer.
That the head injury Brandon incurred when he was four left him severely brain
damaged and took away his ability for language. Therefore, according to the
syllogism, since Brandon no longer had language, he was no longer conscious of pain. Despite how difficult it was to accept, according to scientists, marginal humans like Brandon were no longer “persons.” They were no different than non-human animals. And if it was morally just for Brandon’s parents to euthanize their dog, it was morally just for them to euthanize Brandon.

Eve underlined the words with her finger as she read the next lines of the poem: ““and if you look closely/ that petal is as big as a house/ especially compared to the ant that carries it so olympically.””

In theory it all makes sense. If marginal humans are not really “human,” and they do not suffer, then why should a healthy chimpanzee or pig enjoy more or fewer rights than Brandon? Brandon’s parents were suffering, not Brandon. You don’t really put your pets or your children out of their misery, you put yourself out of your own misery. In other words, Brandon’s parents should be able to decide what’s best for themselves, and what’s best for Brandon.

“”You ask me: Why couldn’t I carry a petal twice as big as my body and head?”” Eveline had turned two a month ago, but had not spoken a word yet. The doctors were still doing tests. Eve tried not to worry, but the trial was making it difficult for her. It wasn’t just about euthanasia. It wasn’t just about Brandon. As much as Eve the philosopher felt that consistency was the only ethical solution, Eve the mother worried that consistency would mean she would lose her rights as Eveline’s mother. That even though Eve was the one suffering, she would not be
allowed to decide what was best for herself or for Eveline. If Eveline would just speak . . . “Ah, but you can, little girl . . .”

If no language equals no pain, then language equals pain. One hundred and fifty years ago, Moreau thought that pain was not necessary in humans because they are intelligent. 6 He understood that pain had evolved, but mistakenly thought it had evolved in both human and non-human animals and was convinced it would eventually evolve out of the human species. He had overlooked the vital importance of language.

“but not petals from a dahlia . . .”

Moreau had made no connection between language and consciousness, or between language and pain. He too saw pain and suffering as a dividing point for humanity, but he saw it backwards. He thought pain and suffering were what made animals non-human. Eve remembered a passage from one of his notebooks:

So long as visible or audible pain turns you sick, so long as your own pain drives you, so long as pain underlies your propositions about sin, so long, I tell you, you are an animal, thinking a little less obscurely what an animal feels. 7

“rather boxes full of thoughts . . .” Eve had desperately taken Eveline’s hand and was now forcing her to point to the words.

Strauss and Nemur never made the connection either. Which was a pity. Because Strauss and Nemur had documented performing operations on animals in 1960 similar to those Moreau had performed in 1896. 8 Unlike Moreau, however, in
addition to experimenting on non-human animals, Strauss and Nemur had experimented on a human animal named Charlie Gordon. In their experiment, which was well documented, they didn’t focus on pain, or even on language; they focused on intellect. And while the link was not explicitly made, as Charlie’s language abilities improved, he not only became more intelligent, he became another person. Or, rather, he became a person. He became conscious of himself and his feelings.

"and loads of magic hours, and . . ."

Unfortunately, as with Moreau’s experiments, the results of Charlie’s operation lasted only temporarily. Scientists had continued to experiment, but to date none had been any more successful. Of course, there hadn’t been much of a demand before now. After today, however . . .

"a wagon of clear dreams, . . ." Eve’s voice was growing loud, impatient.

The same rules should apply. But what would winning the argument mean now? That not only was it acceptable to euthanize infants and the severely retarded or brain injured, but that it would also be acceptable for them to be experimented on, used as domestic labor, or killed for food? That sounded like a big leap to those unfamiliar with the argument, but it was not. What Eve had wanted, what she believed was morally just, was to extend more rights to non-human animals. But starvation and economics and politics were also part of the argument, not just pain and language.

"and a big castle with its fairies . . ."
With the economy so poor, with resources so strained, not only in the United States, but also throughout the world, politicians might interpret the Argument for Moral Consistency as a license to deny rights to marginal humans and infants. Well, infants’ rights would likely be protected because they were potential humans. But what would the cutoff age be? Would children have to talk by the time they were eighteen months? Two years old? Three? Where would that leave Eveline? What if she didn’t start speaking soon? Even if Eveline didn’t suffer, Eve suffered. What if they took Eveline away from her? What if . . .?

"*all the petals that form the soul of / a little girl who speaks and speaks . . .!*

Eve turned Eveline around so she was facing her. Eveline was plucking at a daisy appliqué on her shirt. “That’s right: petals! Say ‘petals’ for mommy.” Eve was nearly shouting. “Look at me!” Eve said, seizing Eveline’s shoulders. Eveline shrank and looked up at her mother. “Speak!” she commanded her daughter, who, like Eve, had begun to cry. “Speak! You’re *not* an animal. Please. Little girls speak and speak . . .!” The shouting and crying were so loud that Eve did not hear the phone ring, nor did she hear Charles come into the room a minute later.

“Say ‘petals!’” Eve begged again. She was startled when Charles spoke instead:

“I’m terribly sorry to interrupt you, ma’am, but that was Roger on the phone. You won.”
Notes


2 Daniel A. Dombrowski, Babies and Beasts: The Argument From Marginal Cases, (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997) 24. The argument is known as both the “argument for moral consistency” and the “argument from marginal cases.”


4 Dombrowski, 2. This is part 5 of a statement of this argument cited by Dombrowski, but developed by Lawrence Becker. For the full version of the argument see pp. 1-2.

5 Macphail, 229. Macphail uses a similar hypothetical example. My example, however, is based on an actual experiences and names a specific drug that did, in fact, take away all, or almost all, memory and consciousness of pain.


7 Wells, 113.

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