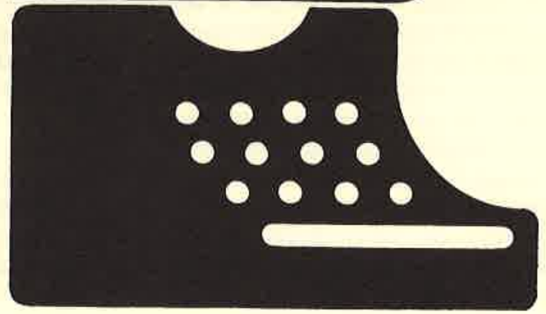
Teachers & Writers



Bi-Monthly • March-April 1988 Vol. 19, No. 4

WRITING & THINKING

In the late summer of 1981, Bard College held its first **Freshman Workshop in Language and Thinking** *(L&T), an intensive three-week writing course for all entering freshmen, designed by a group of writing teachers headed up by Peter Elbow. A year later, in order to transfer the techniques developed in L&T, Bard created the* **Institute for Writing and Thinking**, *providing workshops, consulting, and conferences for high school and college teachers of all subjects who want to improve their students' reading, thinking, and writing.*

by Paul Connolly

THE REPORTS OF VARIOUS TASK FORCES TO reform education make teaching seem such a rational business. Add this to the curriculum. Test that. Train teachers to know more and the tide of mediocrity will return to the sea. But when good teachers talk to themselves and for themselves, as they do in this issue of *Teachers & Writers*, teaching is a passion.

"My anxiety has been determining too much," Peter Elbow writes to his faculty in 1981, a week into the first Language and Thinking Workshop for Bard College's entering freshmen. He is worried that his administrative regard for good work will interfere with the teaching-learning process. It is hard to think of anxiety determining even Peter Elbow; he is a centered person whose presence invites others to experiment, take risks, nurture their "sense of plenty."

But this Language and Thinking workshop is "a bold adventure," he says: three ninety-minute workshops a day, five-and-a-half days a week, for three weeks in August, taught by a faculty that has been recruited nationally for its experience in writing instruction, but has not worked together. Earlier in 1981 *Writing with Power* was published, and in his "Note to the Reader" Peter wrote that writing with power means writing clearly and correctly, but also "getting power over yourself and over the writing process: knowing what you are doing as you write; being in charge; having control; not feeling stuck or helpless or intimidated."

IN THIS ISSUE

1 **Introduction**
by Paul Connolly
3 **To the Troops in the Trenches**
3 **Skeleton-Making Feedback**
4 **A Note about Collaboration**
all by Peter Elbow
5 **Two Moments**
by L&T Faculty
5 **Four Journal Entries**
by Marcia Silver
6 **In L&T**
by Elaine Avidon
6 **A Moment from the Meeting**
by Peter Elbow
6 **A Retrospective Moment**
by Jonathan Adler
7 **Trust**
8 **A Moment—L&T, 1984**
both by Sharon Flitterman-King
8 **Letter Writing & Note Writing**
by Marcia Silver
9 **A Gift of Ash**
by Vicki Jacobs
11 **December 1986**
by Lynn Hammond
12 **Questions**
13 **Musings on Workshop**
both by Louise Todd Taylor
14 **Workshop as Writing Community**
by Alan Devenish

Leon Botstein, Bard's President, did not start the Language and Thinking program because he thought students were too relaxed or undisciplined. He thought the best and the brightest were too rigid, at least when it came to writing academic papers. Articulate students, accomplished in high school, perform perfunctory exercises when asked to write about texts they are studying. "Something radical has to happen," Botstein told the *New Yorker* in 1981, when "I have very bright students and yet have to grapple with their terrifyingly locked-up capacities, with the awkward kind of written analysis they produce, which is almost insulting to themselves." Something has to be done, he said, about the student's "utter lack of confidence that he or she has something really serious to say. . . ."

This is exactly what the Language and Thinking experiment and the Institute that evolved from it in 1982 are about: unlocking capacities, building confidence, helping writers gain power to take themselves seriously. Such work creates anxiety in teachers. Preachers of pedagogy rarely speak of the anxiety caused by unleashing their students. Or about the "intellectual courage" Sharon Flitterman-King mentions. When good teachers talk honestly about their classes, however, anxiety is axiomatic.

If education is the transmission of facts, and teachers are simply adults who know more than their students, there need be no anxiety in the classroom. Frustration, maybe, when the students act out, disappointment when they fail, but no anxiety. Writing workshops, however, are an alternative to data-based frontal lecturing. Their task-oriented collaborative learning rearranges the etiquette of instruction and creates opportunities for students to muck about in their own education. Classrooms become laboratories where students transmute facts into concepts by the force of their own language. There is space here and time for students to experience—sometimes for the first time—successful learning in school.

Progressive experiments have tried rearranging the classroom furniture. The present "writing movement," however, is not simply a matter of pushing the teacher's desk to the edge of the classroom and watching what happens. It is a deliberate, controlled effort to affect a complete ecological system in such a way that learning, and not just the rapacious testing which often passes for schooling, can nurture everyone. Task-centered—as opposed to data-based—teaching demands at least as much care as preparing lectures and requires a lot more attention to, and patience with, the ecology of the classroom. "I wonder whether I would continue to enjoy teaching using this approach," Louise Todd Taylor asks honestly. "I got into this business because I'm a failed actor looking for a stage. In this new approach, the teacher is more midwife than prima donna."

"We need to hear that you trust us," Patsy Cumming told Peter Elbow, making him realize that anxiety was determining too much. This is what students, teachers, and presumably a whole lot of other people need: enough trust to play at learning, enough support to take themselves seriously in their work. "We send you to school to make mistakes," I tell my own children. We know how "getting the right answer" blocks attention to learning. If the highest priority is to know whether an idea is true, apply logic's test. "But if your highest priority is to *produce* the best idea or insight, you'll almost certainly do better to work in some other mode," advises Peter Elbow.

The mode of poetry, for example. We do well, Alan Devenish has written elsewhere, "to practice our ability to welcome chance, the many surprises of our everydays, since poetry often resides in the given of things, in intuition and the keenness to see what is only suggested." We do well to give ourselves permission to learn, to trust others. The rest is indoctrination, distrust.

According to those who study such things, human groups divide into two types: "primary task" and "basic assumption." Primary task groups form around a job. Getting work done builds community and comraderie. The group chooses a leader, for efficiency's sake, but it recognizes and respects diverse talents. When the work is done, there is regret. The group looks for another task, another way to work together.

Failing this, a Basic Assumptions Group may form: a BAG. When we lack real tasks and challenges, we codify old ways of working together. We focus on refining the doctrine that True Believers in our particular group believe. Lacking work, we are united by metacogitation on our own navel dynamics. We work on the social conventions of our community, grooming nits from one another's fur, preening our feathers.

This happens to faculties and in classrooms, as well as to other groups. Where work is an exercise, as it often is in school; where textbook or teacher knows all the answers; where Prufrocks "prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet," there is a dying BAG ecology. But where teachers and students can ask unanswered questions and are bold enough to imagine problems more pressing than parliamentary procedure, the environment is alive; the work builds community. Being willing to live with the uncertainties and ambiguities of making knowledge, unlike being willing to die for the preservation of the best of all that has been thought and said, is not always reasonable work. It is often anxious. But its anxieties are healthy and its unreason is invigorating. ●

Contributors: PAUL CONNOLLY is the Director of Bard's Institute for Writing & Thinking. PETER ELBOW is the author of *Writing without Teachers, Writing with Power,* and *Embracing Contraries.* MARCIA SILVER is doing doctoral work in English/Linguistics at NYU. ELAINE AVIDON is Associate Director of the NYC Writing Project. JONATHAN ADLER is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Brooklyn College. SHARON FLITTERMAN-KING is a consultant in writing instruction. VICKI JACOBS is Assistant Director of Teacher Training, Harvard Graduate School of Education. LYNN HAMMOND is Assistant Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. LOUISE TODD TAYLOR is a professor of English at Meredith College. ALAN DEVENISH is a poet and instructor in the International English Language Institute, Hunter College. TERESA VILLARDI, whose running commentary links the sections in this issue, is Associate Director of Bard's Institute for Writing & Thinking.

Beginnings

The three selections below come from memos written by Peter Elbow to the faculty of the first Freshman Workshop in Language and Thinking. They suggest the philosophical and pedagogical assumptions that continue to inform the Institute for Writing and Thinking: the assumption that good teaching involves giving up some authority in the classroom; the importance of collaborative learning among students in the classroom and among teachers in the workshop; the value of receiving and giving response to writing.

To the Troops in the Trenches from P.E. in the Safety of the Bunkered H.Q. on his Borrowed IBM Selectric II. Monday Night First-Draft Jottings, 8/17/81

by Peter Elbow

THINGS ONE CAN DO WITH A CLASS IF IT FEELS stuck or dead.

—Stop and have everyone do freewriting about what's going on. Hear some or all and discuss. Or just hear them and trust that that's enough.

—Break into small groups and discuss what's going on or how people experience it.

—Go around the class, *in strict order*, having everyone say how they are feeling or how they see things. Make everyone say something, even if just a token amount. You too, of course.

—Say you are going to take some time at the end of the session to discuss the something-or-other that seems to be in the air at the moment, but right now our business is more important and we must forge on with it. And then do deal with it somehow in the last 5-15 minutes.

—Find ways—in all this—to say how *you* are experiencing it. I often feel lonely or alienated or out-of-it until I've made sure somehow to make myself say how I'm experiencing things. Then I feel a member again. But this may be my peculiarity and I admit I can't always do it if my feelings are difficult. I guess it's a matter of trust: can I get myself to trust them enough to do so (get myself to take that risk)? When I feel trust going back and forth in both directions, then I feel better and can be more effective.

A good thing to do in general: take the last five minutes or so of the session or the day for some kind of reflection on the group process:

—Everyone go round and just say a sentence or two about how they see it.

—A freewrite about it. Perhaps handed in to you (if they are willing).

—A specific request to the students to write freely *to you* about how they see your teaching. What do they need? What helps them?

All of these things—especially the earlier list—are ways to convey something very important to students: a) that what's going on is OK. Not that it's ideal, necessarily, but that it's not the end of the world. No need for panic. b) that *you* are not panicked, you have ways of maintaining control and helping *them* to deal with what is going on. They can trust your ability to be in charge, however open or frank you are, however different you seem to be from teachers they've had in the past.

One final thing this suggests about our teaching. You are spending a frightening number of hours in class. Perhaps too many. But you don't have to "teach" for many of those hours if you don't want to. It will be perfectly appropriate to do something that the students could very easily describe as "conducting study hall": get them working in small groups. (And you don't have to be there all the time for that; you can take off and get a cup of coffee and come back.) Or get them started working on a draft or revising something—and set yourself up in the hall so people can come out and talk to you about what they are stuck with. You could even just ask them to come out one at a time so you can chat with them about how it's going. I actually think this kind of thing is preferable, not merely something to do when exhausted. But I don't want to push you to do this if it doesn't fit your style. It takes an enormous amount of time away from things you might want to "teach."

Skeleton-Making Feedback & the Teaching of Thinking

by Peter Elbow

BY SKELETON-MAKING FEEDBACK, I MEAN THE procedure whereby readers or listeners individually tell the writer what they see as the principal assertion in the piece of writing and then what they see as the main supporting assertions. They should put these assertions in the form of complete sentences with a verb—i.e., sentences that say something rather than just phrases that point in a direction. They should also try to reduce these sentences as much as possible into simple kernels so that you end up with a string of root assertions (as in "All men are mortal, Socrates is mortal," etc.). (I've been persuaded to call this "skeleton-making feedback" rather than just "skeleton feedback" to emphasize what in fact I have always assumed in all feedback: that it is moot as to whether what a reader sees in a piece is really there or not. But my anatomical metaphor sums up my main emphasis: it's a procedure for practice in seeing bones beneath flesh.) This feedback can be given in written or spoken form. If the piece is hard, readers probably need a copy in their hands.

Laying bare a skeleton of root assertions in this way is obviously good practice in thinking. But I don't mean to say that this is the only or even the major way we'll be teaching thinking. We'll be teaching it in almost everything we do:

most especially when we ask people to write about the same topic in different ways and to different audiences; when we teach people various ways to generate lots of first draft material—and thus never to be "at a loss for ideas"; when we explore texts from our anthology; and when we help people give and get good feedback on their writing.

But the fact remains that the second term in the title of our program ("Language and Thinking") tends to connote "critical thinking," and that in turn tends to connote questions like "Are we teaching them to be logical, to be sharp, to reason validly, to construct good arguments and find holes in those of others?"

I am of two minds about this assignment we have taken on (since "language and thinking" is what Bard decided it wanted before any of us came on the scene). On the one hand, I want to ignore it and say, "For goodness' sake, let's get them writing a lot, let's teach them not to be at a loss for ideas, let's teach them to enjoy writing, and to develop their 'feel' for what is strong and weak writing in general. Critical thinking is something they'll get their belly full of when they start their regular college courses: the use of the knife. We can help them most to *benefit* from that emphasis on critical thinking if we emphasize writing copiously, with creativity and confidence."

But then sometimes I get worried about that response. Perhaps it's just plain wrong. Or even if it's not, we'll *look* bad if we give in to it because it will look as though we've been anti-intellectual and uninterested in critical thinking (even though in truth we handed students over to their Bard teachers in the best possible condition to benefit from their critical teaching).

Skeleton-making feedback excites me because it answers this dilemma so exactly. It is lovely strong practice in critical thinking yet nevertheless is fun, generative, and confidence-building. And of course it is out of the question in our short program to go in for trying to *teach* logic: the various canonical forms of valid and invalid argument; inference and induction, etc., etc. That would be as unproductive as trying to teach grammar: we would use up all our time and not succeed—and it still wouldn't pay off in much improvement in language and thinking.

The most obvious way to use skeleton-making feedback is the way I think it should be used last: as a way of giving feedback to a *late* draft of an essay that is consciously trying to be logical. In this use, each reader tells the writer what skeleton of assertions he or she sees in the piece. On the basis of this feedback, all parties can try to figure out together: a) what sequence of assertions actually exists in the piece, and b) whether that sequence is a good one.

This procedure is obviously good practice in critical thinking. But the reason why I don't like to start with it is because it puts so much emphasis on right and wrong: is the reader's perception of the piece *right*? And is the writer's logic *right*? It's damn hard to be right on either score, so both parties will often be wrong. I want students to build up lots of confidence before I subject them to a process that puts so much emphasis on where they might be wrong.

I much prefer to start by using skeleton-making feedback on early drafts or unformed pieces that aren't yet trying to be good arguments; or even on pieces of writing that aren't in the conceptual mode at all, that is, on narratives, descriptions, unfocused dialogues, or bursts of feelings. As we saw in June, it turns out to be fun and interesting and productive to start with a piece of writing that contains no argument at all and then ask listeners, "What do you hear as the main assertion here and what do you hear as the main supporting ones—explicitly stated or merely implied?" In this activity the listener obviously constructs or infers assertions that for the most part are not stated. Thus the listener is getting practice not only in trying to hear between the lines but also in constructing mini-arguments on the spot. (Don't worry at this point whether these arguments are in the form of valid argument or not. The practice comes from generating them and slowly developing a feel for skeletons of different sorts.) The writer, on the other hand, gets invaluable help by seeing different ways he could conceptually order his material if he wanted to begin to turn it into an argument.

A Note about Collaboration

by Peter Elbow

I'M PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN FOSTERING the ability of students to work together cooperatively. It's fun and empowering. It combats the competitive and isolationist qualities of much college work. It is one of the major skills needed in "real life"—despite heavy breathing rhetoric to the contrary ("It's dog-eat-dog out there!"). If we help them use collaboration to make their own papers better than they could make them without help—especially in the hard areas of reasoning, organization, and grammar—they will have the feel for a good paper. They will have the taste of it in their mouth. That feel or taste may be the biggest aid of all in the ensuing year when it comes to learning to do it alone. You don't learn much about how to do a task from trying and failing to do it. (Character if you're lucky, self-doubt more likely.) You learn plenty from succeeding with help.

Instead of the normal college set-up of a few class hours a week and most work done alone, we will have the students do most of their writing together in a group. The simple act of writing in the same room with others is somehow enspiriting. Reading out loud for fun and cross-fertilization heightens that effect. The feedback processes we'll use are all ways for helping students get the feel and habit of helping themselves by helping others.

What It's Like Teaching in the Language & Thinking Workshop

A distinguishing characteristic of the Language and Thinking faculty—and of the Institute faculty—is the practice of writing with their students in class and together at faculty meetings. At the end of each week in August—and then again at the end of the three weeks—faculty take time to reflect on significant moments in the classroom. The excerpts here make especially clear the anxiety engendered by giving up authority for the sake of fostering in students an active engagement with their own learning.

Teachers in all Institute programs are encouraged to learn from their failures as well as their successes, to be observers in their own classrooms, and to share with each other the lessons learned from failures.

Two Moments

by L&T Staff

AT LAST IT'S QUIET. EXCEPT FOR THE SOUND OF writing. It's the first morning and after lots of discussion at last we are writing. I'd been so worried. Talk, talk, talk. At last we're writing. I hear others, I see them around me out of the edge of my vision. I forget now what I was writing about—oh yes, me—but suddenly I felt better and I stopped and wrote up in the upper margin of my paper, "I'm so happy now." Now I know why we're here, we are together now, everything is going to be OK.

The moment that spoke to me about what happened—what *exactly* this process meant—was later, when one of us "forgot to remember" that we would be leaving here at the end of the weekend. We had, it seemed, become so involved with what we had to offer one another and what we would share with our students that we had formed a whole—one of those rare occasions when space, time, and identity become one. Sharing, vitality, commitment, language, thinking, writing.

Four Journal Entries

by Marcia Silver

Freewriting in Class Mon. 8/17 First Day Week #1

I'm still trying to "come down" from the Progoff journal session. I went to it feeling so confident and calm and came out shaken. What I learned about a time when my mother came to visit me (it just occurred to me that it may have been the *last* time she visited me—oh, God, that's worse yet!) was important for me to know. A real insight. But I lost my calm, my assured manner, my feeling of being in control, full of confidence for the 10:15 class. The first class, always a hard one for me. It induces nervousness; I talk more than I want to. Must make the rules and requirements clear. Whatever I might have done this morning was "blown away" by the journal workshop, so I came to class flustered and stammering and bumping into the furniture. And I didn't use the adjective "hopeful" that I had chosen early this morning for the name game. Instead I described myself as "nervous" because I really was.

I was relieved that some other people in the class described themselves as "nervous," "off the wall," "jittery," and "anxious." Having begun the game, I sure as hell wouldn't want to be the only nervous person here. How would that look? What would they think of me? Five minutes to go. This part is finished. I don't want to go back to the Progoff journal stuff; too dangerous for me right now. I wonder how other teachers are doing. We were all nervous though some pretended or managed to convince themselves that they weren't. I've decided that it really was a good thing that Peter's session this morning in the journal workshop destroyed my composure. I had talked myself into being calm and confident. I had surely put on my "teacher-face" for this most important first class meeting.

Instead, I like the beginning we made here in class. I like the fact that I could admit I was nervous. We got off to a good start because I fumbled and stumbled and was honest. I can't believe how much I'm learning through raw writing. I was really prepared to believe that it didn't work, wasn't efficient. That I have to get on to the important stuff, that I *know* what I want to say.

Moment Overheard in Obreshkove Hall. Student Sitting Cross-legged on the Floor Talking on the Hall Telephone to Her Mother.

"We're really writing *a lot*—all day. We even started at 7:15 this morning!"

"Yeah, it's OK, but the *strangest* thing happened today. I had an hour off for lunch and (voice rising, incredulous) I found myself *writing*. I had this letter that was assigned. . .I couldn't help it! It was like my pen was attached to my hand and arm on one end and to the paper on the other and it just *kept writing*."

Response to Celebratory Readings with Anne's Class Sat. 8/22

Peter, you were right if you're the one who picked that word. It was a celebration in every sense. I heard "voices" come out of the uneasy silence, my class and Anne's, in her classroom. One after another students read their work, and although no one knew what should come next because no one knew what was going to be read, there was shape and unity in the performances. This seems to me a perfect follow-up to the text performances and a real celebration of the week's work, particularly the short creative pieces. We used the silences in between the readings to appreciate what we had heard and to prepare for the next piece. Something in the silence chose the next reader and told him when to begin. I stopped worrying that all my students weren't reading, while some of Anne's read twice: the effect of being guests in their room. Anne and I plan to have the next reading in a neutral space.

My Response to Hearing Essays Read Mon. 8/24

Some reluctance on the part of some to reading their essays to the group, but I feel all understand the importance and value of reading their work aloud. We have prepared for this with the text performances and the celebratory readings. This is an important event: the publication of the better part of a week's work. You are responsible for what you write. They begin to get a sense of their own voice or the lack of it. Leona, Jessie, and Lisa read their essays. Rob reads his. We have agreed: no feedback this time. There is a puzzled silence following Rob's essay. He looks unhappy, so I take a chance and ask him to comment on his essay in the context of the other three. He says, "I felt like I was outside this room far away when I heard my essay after Leona's and Jessie's." I asked him if he could figure out why his essay had that effect. He replied, "Well, I used *one* and they used *I*." I asked Rob who he thought his audience for this essay was. "Philosophers," he said.

In L&T

by Elaine Avidon

HERE'S WHAT IT'S LIKE: LET'S SAY YOU'VE JUST spent the past three days at faculty meetings and the past three nights at the Starr Bar and Alan introduces you at the first faculty/student gathering as a "phenomenon" that doesn't fade and on the way to class the next morning not having slept at all the night before you realize even though you've taught in this program twice before
you're scared to death

and it gets worse   your classroom is the small one on the third floor and when you get there you find in the center an enormous boardroom table reaching almost to the edges of the room so you whisper under your breath damnit we'll have to move this and before you know it the nine students seated around the table begin to drag it into a corner and because you don't want to appear any more different than you already are you drag too and when the table is out of the way you realize that now there are no desks to write on so you have to go into another room to get some but in all the other rooms people are already writing but you go into one of the rooms anyway and get the desks and screw up that class's freewriting   then you go back

into your own classroom and you and your students freewrite together for the first time and you know that everyone on the floor and in your room thinks you are strange and now your students think you are crazy but you freewrite anyway catching your breath slowing down your heart then you spend that morning writing and reading what you've written to each other and sometimes you remember how it was in this room last summer and you long for Geoff and Steve and Paola and Tobin and Will and Erin and then you remember that on the first day last summer you longed for Kim and Tom and Heidi and Holly and Molly and Vinnie and Martha and that helps you to remember that first days are always safer and slower and more painful than you expect or want

that's what it's like teaching in language and thinking

A Moment from the Meeting, Friday Afternoon, Second Week

by Peter Elbow

WE ARE ALL TIRED. IT'S THE END OF THE SECOND week, the hard week. Tension increasing in some of the previous meetings. This one called reluctantly. Who wants a meeting Friday afternoon after such a solid week of teaching?

After lots of struggle about the fact that meetings have been making people feel bad, we mush around on that topic and seem (in my view) to be done with it. There's a feeling of "Now let's get on with it." I try to get us started and someone resists again and plunges us back in. They think I'm doing something bad in trying to get us going—trying to put too good a face on things.

Finally Patsy says, "Peter, we don't need to hear your parent, your super-ego. All this stuff about the importance of writing essays. It just hooks into all that stuff in me. What I need to hear..."—pause—and I've known from the beginning of her words that she was making an important moment and I am scared but I know it's important and I am listening and I have the sense to ask, "Yes, I need to know what you need to hear." And she has the answer. "We need to hear that you trust us." Plop. "We've been hearing in all this stuff about essays that you don't completely trust us."

It hurts to hear that, but I have to accept it as accurate. My anxiety has been determining too much. Too worried that we wouldn't prepare the students for the Bard faculty, that the Bard faculty will be able to say that this program was only fun and games.

It makes me think, now, that I need to open the next meeting with a frank picture of my anxiety or needs:

—As above, that it will be too easy for the Bard faculty to dismiss us.

—Also that the teachers are being so adversarial toward Bard, so prickly, about letters and folders—that I'm afraid they are unable to treat the Bard faculty as *allies*, instead of adversaries. It will make *them* treat us as adversaries and noncolleagues—and thus too easily dismiss what we have done. And that will do the greatest harm to students.

For the rest of the evening, after the meeting, I feel a bit tender and ginger. A bit of raw skin. Grateful that we could have it out like that in the meeting. Grateful that Patsy could put her finger on the issue so squarely. Grateful that she can say it to me, that I can hear it; and that I can acknowledge finally that I do trust people but my anxiety has been getting in the way. But it hurts.

Is this collaborative leadership?

A Retrospective Moment

by Jonathan Adler

TEN-THIRTY PM, THE ELEVENTH HOUR FOR THE final essay. I meet Helene to have a last look at her essay

against the parole system. She chose the topic because she thought the parole system unjust, and that a better system would be less arbitrary and more lenient. It was an issue she cared about. I found her in something near panic. She had a good amount written, but now she found her main thesis undermined. She was doubtful of the whole project. "I should have chosen the death penalty," she said.

Previously, when I found other students in a similar anxious-despondent state, I tried to build their confidence in their theses, or in some way reassure them, so that paralysis might not be the result.

What I realized then about Helene was that just such doubt and loss of confidence was one of the best signs of serious essay writing. One starts out with confidence in a thesis and, by subjecting it to serious thought and analysis, comes up with reasons that undermine that thesis. Plato says that confusion is the first step on the path to knowledge.

My advice to Helene turned into a maxim: not every problem worthy of a college essay can be solved within a college essay. A conclusion such as "This problem bears further study" is itself a conclusion. In fact it should be the conclusion of more essays.

This encouraging realization came clear to me at that moment because I had been worrying about another student whose work had a (superficial) sophistication to it. She had been given a method for writing essays: outline, thesis-subtheses-supporting reasons. A method she had mastered. Consequently, upon first reading her essays, I was very impressed. Then I looked more closely. Everything was perfectly orderly, but there was no emotion or guts to it. She didn't care how implausible her reasons were, or how blatantly false, just so long as she had reasons supporting a thesis and it moved step by step. I would raise some objections, only to find in later revisions that she simply crossed out the point that led to my objection, and came up with a new one. For example, if she needed some empirical generalization, she simply added it without evidence. Her method had become a straitjacket. She could not seriously question or care about her topics. She could not feel doubt.

Trust

by Sharon Flitterman-King

STEVE CONRAD SAID TO ME THE OTHER DAY that education shouldn't be preparation for the known, but for the unknown. I think of what I'm doing here, teaching in this program, of what I value, cherish, want to teach. I think of David's polio, the way he lives with it, the way we live. Something about tolerating uncertainty, about taking risks, embracing the unknown, living with it, not shrinking from it, but meeting the challenge head on. I think about the root of "courage," the Latin *cor*, or heart. My dictionary tells me that courage is "the state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger with self-possession, confidence, and resolution." Good words, these. "Quality of mind or spirit"—I like that. What, I wonder, is the relation between this kind of courage-in-the-world and that other virtue Sheridan Blau calls "intellectual courage"? How are they related? This question lives with me. I think and breathe it.

•

I remember that first Monday of the program, when class was over and everyone else had raced downstairs to get out into the sunshine, and Julia stayed behind to tell me how much she loved to freewrite, and how great the day had been for her. There she was, standing in the doorway in her black-and-gold print miniskirt, jangle of silver bracelets on her arms. I noticed how she tossed her head to keep her hair from falling in her eyes, and saw her cheerful and engaging smile. Why did I get the feeling then that Julia was covering up something? It was as if she were saying to me in her greeting, "I'm really afraid of this whole business, but I'll show myself that I can do it. I'll march right up and confront this thing head-on." In the few minutes that we chatted I learned that Bard was Julia's way of coming back to school. I mean mentally return.

But L&T was hard for her. One morning when she didn't come to class I went out at the break to look for her. I found her lying on the grass outside the bookstore. I asked her what was wrong. She said she thought she could learn as much by "feeling the earth" as she could by reading Alice Walker, and that being with her own thoughts, inside her own head, felt very important to her right now. I thought of what she'd written in her letter to me at the end of the first week—"My natural ability to cop out is my strongest problem." I could see the struggle she was having with herself. She wanted to come to college, to see if she could do it; she didn't want to give up on herself. But she was also scared. Could she measure up? Did she know enough to engage in college work? I felt her conflict keenly. I decided not to press. We agreed that for today Julia would stay there on the earth for as long as she needed to. I trusted her to do what she thought best. At 1:30 she came back to class.

A moment. Julia and I are sitting up in Aspinwall, talking about her essay on authority, trying to figure out why it's so vague and disengaged. "Do you know what it might be," she says to me in the midst of things, "is that I'm trying to talk about something that I'm not sure about, something I feel I should know but try to cover up in my language."

This startled me because it was so true. With her usual perceptiveness, Julia had gotten to the heart of the trouble. It's not that she didn't know anything about authority, but that she was trying to cover up her uncertainty about what she did know, afraid it wasn't appropriate. So we began to talk about the authorities in her life, and I saw her glow as she told me of her father, a generous and gifted man who acted on his principles. As she talked about her father, her eyes filled with tears; I could tell that it was hard for her. It kind of scared me, and I didn't want to push, so I gently pointed out that it seemed to me she knew plenty about authority; I heard her saying there were times when authority was a virtue, when people could use their authority to do good in the world, as her father did by acting for the homeless. We decided that the problem with Julia's essay wasn't so much that she needed to "cover up in her language" because she didn't know anything, but rather that she needed the courage to look at what she *did* know, to trust that she could find something to say about authority from her own experience. And we talked about the courage that it sometimes takes to look at painful places, and how by doing that you often glean unexpected insights.

Julia didn't write about her father when she revised her essay, but there was a new tone of confidence in what she

did write, an honesty, no pretense. "Truth-telling," Ken Macrorie calls it, the saying of what you know and feel, in language that is yours.

A Moment—L&T, 1984

by Sharon Flitterman-King

WEDNESDAY MORNING—A HOT, AUGUST DAY. This is midweek, middle of the program, middle of my life. The class is restless, bored. Eve is looking sour sitting on the floor, disappearing into the carpet, hiding behind other people's knees. Audrey is scribbling with yellow marker all over the Lippmann text we're supposed to be reading ("I *am* responding to his stupid argument about majority. Can't you see I'm underlining?"). And Alison, head bent, black hair framing a scowl, is writing feverishly in her own private journal.

I give up. It's not working. I know that the second week is deadly—the excitement of the first week is over, week three stretches interminably off into the distance. And my little group of ten, fresh out of high school and now entering the grown-up world of college, still riding high from the excitement of June's graduation, is sullen, resistant, and unwilling to give me the last summer weeks of the best year of their lives.

There's nothing for it but to go outside, down the three flights of stairs, out of stuffy Aspinwall and onto the grass in front of the quad. Marcia tells me that this kind of group behavior is called "assassinate the leader." The group has taken over—its will prevails.

But have I really given up anything by allowing the class to break apart this way? Have I lost, or have I won? To my students it looks as if I've given in. Rachel feels sorry for me ("I hate to see what the class is doing, that it's all fallen apart and they're blaming you"). But for some reason I don't feel sorry for myself. I'm not afraid of this new turn. I trust my students—in their desperation, in their boredom—to come to some resolution, to make the disaster of this morning's class into an experience we can all learn from.

Patience takes courage. It takes courage to let students rebel, to let them assassinate the leader, courage to be unthreatened by the chaos. The kind of courage I didn't have the first year of the program. But now, three years stronger, I feel more able to take those risks that begin with patient strength.

Letters

Teachers in the Language and Thinking Workshop ask students to write letters of evaluation at the end of each week and at the end of the program. In return, teachers write letters to the students, individually or to the group as a whole. The form of the letters varies from teacher to teacher and from year to year. But they usually involve self-assessment as well as observations and reflections on group dynamics within the class, goals for the week, and what students and teachers took away from the workshop.

Letter Writing & Note Writing

by Marcia Silver

DURING THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS I'VE exchanged letters with a friend on a regular basis, which surprised me since most of my life I've been an infrequent letter writer. The pleasure of writing and receiving these letters has led me to see correspondence with a trusted person as a way—much like journal writing—of discovering oneself. But until recently I had not been fully aware of the possibilities for letter writing in my teaching.

A high school teacher in an inservice course I was conducting described a moment in which she was explaining a principle of business or economics to her class and noticed that one of her students, instead of listening, was writing a letter to her boyfriend. Note writing and passing, according to the teachers present, was an endemic problem in classes of adolescents. This set us thinking about encouraging the writing of notes and letters instead of trying to abolish it. I suggested beginning class with 10 minutes of note writing, with the restriction that the note had to be addressed to someone present and could not be delivered until the end of class. Students could, of course, choose to write to their teacher. Their teacher could write to them, addressing an individual or the entire class. Note writing, once we began to consider the possibilities of exploiting it for teaching, offered more than just a way to deal with the adolescent need to socialize. Suppose we stopped a discussion and asked students to write for 5-10 minutes to another person in class about the issue being discussed or in response to a previous comment. Suppose at the end of class we asked students to write to us about what they had learned or questions they still had. In a subsequent meeting of our inservice course, one teacher reported she had successfully used an exchange of letters to deal with the misbehavior of one of her students. She had written to the student detailing his behavior and her response to it and invited him to write back. He did very thoroughly and thoughtfully, and the problem was on its way to being resolved.

I tell you these stories as in illustration of the notion that such strategies are often happy accidents conceived in the heat of teaching—the discovery of something that was possible all the time if we had noticed it and seen its potential. Letter writing assignments capitalize on two important aspects of composition: specific audience and purpose. Research has shown that improvement in writing can be attributed to the concreteness of these two factors. I also suspect that students see letters as less formal writing, and as a result use less self-conscious and inflated language than they do in essays and reports.

I'm referring now to the written communication between teachers and students and among students rather than to the literary genre of letters—the private or semi-public correspondence of famous people—though these could certainly be incorporated as professional samples.

Even English teachers can resist the temptation to correct correspondence, and simply read for the pleasure of discovery, of dialogue with their students. Nancy Atwell corresponds with her students about the books they've been reading. Elaine Avidon has her students work in pairs, agreeing

to read the same book and write during the semester a series of eight letters to each other discussing their responses to this book. And students, of course, might choose to write to the authors of books or essays they have read.

Letters work wonderfully as introductions. Before the first faculty meeting of Writing and Thinking, few of us knew each other, so Peter Elbow asked us to write letters of introduction and circulate them to the other nineteen faculty. Each day for several weeks I met one of my new colleagues in the mail. I now ask my students to write such a letter to me at the end of the first class. I ask them to describe themselves as writers, to tell significant events connected to writing, to assess their strengths, identify areas of their writing they want to improve—in other words to tell me what I need to know to teach them better. And on the first or second day of class, in a letter describing the course, I give them its requirements, my purpose and special interests.

Letters can tell us what we need to know about our teaching and its effect. In our summer Writing Workshop at Bard we ask students to write to us at the end of each week telling us what has been significant for them, where they have learned something about themselves as writers, readers, students, human beings; how we have helped them, how we might. The letter at the end of the third week serves as a form of self-assessment. On the first two occasions, I generally write a letter to the class commenting on what I see as the progress of the whole group. On the final day, I write to individual students about their development over the three weeks, read and give these to students at our final conference. Some years I have written these ahead of time; other years at the conference itself.

A Gift of Ash

This is an account of an exciting lesson during the August 1986 L&T program that illustrates the value of collaborative work among faculty. It also serves as an example of a classroom in which the teacher encourages students to ask their own questions and make their own discoveries.

by Vicki Jacobs

ONE OF THE INSTITUTE FACULTY, SUSAN Kirschner, arrived in the summer of 1986 with an envelope of volcanic ash from Mount Saint Helen. The ash was a gift for Leon Botstein, the President of Bard College. But the Institute faculty is generous, and somehow the ash found its way to Elaine Avidon, whose classroom was adjacent to mine. During a break, I found Elaine's students huddled around small tables, staking guesses, arguing hypotheses, some arrogantly sure of the identity of the small packets of "unknown" substance before them. I was enthralled that the students would surrender their break to continue what seemed to be a sophisticated guessing game. "This has been a good class," Elaine beamed. "God, are they good."

My class had been good too, I assured myself. But no one had ever voluntarily skipped break. That night, I begged a packet of the ash off Elaine. I spirited it back to my dorm room with visions of using it to foster such excitement in my classroom that students would absent-mindedly forego their cigarettes, friends, and the mail room because of an inspired "learning experience."

It is always tempting to try to duplicate the remarkable successes of others: the lessons that soared, strategies that incited riotous debate over an abjectly difficult text, methods that had struck inspiration. I caught myself succumbing.

Then it came to me: why couldn't we treat the ash as if it were a text, a difficult text? A secret meaning to be discovered? I could prepare the students for "reading" this mysterious "text" and then guide them through it; and, at the same time, they could keep a reaction journal of the process they underwent while reading this enigmatic text: What did they do while reading the text? How did they use writing while reading the text? Why do they think certain things happened in their minds? What did it all say about themselves as readers and writers?

The students were already familiar with process-reflective journals. I had had them make nightly entries in such journals. Each day they had recorded what they had done in class, and then annotated that entry with their reactions to what they had done. Finally, they had summarized their reactions in a paragraph about what those reactions meant about them as learners. At each week's end, the students synthesized these reactions into a letter to me, which served as a basis for our weekly conferences. The journal had worked in getting the students to reflect about themselves as learners. I could use the same format to have them think about themselves as readers. "It could work," I thought. It would have to. I had five minutes before class would begin.

That morning the students dribbled into the room, their posture a definition of mid-Institute slump.

I set about placing four newly divided portions of the precious import about the table. "This," I said, no less proudly than the English professor distributing well-worn copies of *Paradise Lost*, "is the text that we will be working on this morning." A few students leaned forward to get a better look—some at the ash, some at me.

"What is it?" Someone bit.

"A particularly difficult text. Think of it as Herodotus. *The Communist Manifesto*. A Donne poem. An aphorism. It is our assignment for today."

I detected mild stirrings. I went on to explain that I wanted them to read this text to accomplish two goals: to crack the meaning of the text (that is, to comprehend it) and to reflect upon their behavior as readers of the text. "So far," I confessed, "I've been telling you what to do. Pretend this is an assigned text you might get in Freshman Seminar. What would *you* do with it? How would *you* go about 'cracking' it for meaning? How would you create interest for yourself in the text? Today you are your own teacher." Tomorrow, I thought, you are going to have to be.

"First thoughts," the quietest one offered. "We always start with first thoughts." The same student had once told me that first thoughts made her feel like Pooh or Milo Minderbinder. "What," she continued, "do we think of when we look at, uh—what *is* this?"

"That's the problem: to find out. Discover this text's meaning. How would you go about writing first thoughts?"

"I would have to have a question to answer. Like what-do-I-think-this-is-and-what-do-I-think-of-having-to-figure-this-out?"

I used the lead. I again explained the two purposes of

the session: to crack a particularly difficult text and to record how we each arrive at a conclusion about the text.

"OK? Let's begin with first thoughts. While you are writing, also keep a mental eye on yourself. Be aware of how you feel about having to do first thoughts and how you feel about the text. After we do first thoughts, we'll write process reflections that summarize your observations about yourself."

The students approached the task with varied degrees of investment and enthusiasm. No one really seemed to exhibit the curiosity I'd hoped to inspire simply by "opening" the text before them, but I knew it was unrealistic to hope for that kind of attachment from them on first glance. After all, I had already spent much more time than they on this text. My investment already had a history. Theirs didn't. I would have to remember this, and I allowed myself to relax a bit.

"I know what this is." This was from the one who had announced on the first day of the Institute that he resented having to forego three weeks at the beach to participate in a writing workshop—something he considered equal to purgatory. "It's dirt. Plain old dirt."

"How do you know?"

"I just know."

"Would that be a sufficient justification for a hypothesis about the meaning of a text you might be given to interpret on an essay test?"

"It would work sometime," he answered.

"Well," I agreed, "it might. But rarely does such thinking teach us anything new." I insisted that he take another step to explore the text's meaning. I argued that, during the "regular term," no one would be standing over him, insisting that he, in fact, must take that extra step. No one would even suggest what the next step should be. "What could you do to move yourself along a line of inquiry?"

"Maybe a need-to-know writing," he shrugged. "But it's so much work."

His shrug initiated a group discussion in which students tried to figure out activities they could pursue that would both engage them and also help ensure discovery. The students suggested a take-off on the dialectic notebook. This one would have four columns: one column for observations about the text (e.g., What I Know through Observation); another column for hypotheses about the text, based on those observations; another column for a partner's response about the hypotheses (where a partner could offer evidence from the text that supported or contradicted the guess); and, finally, a column for revision of the hypotheses.

The students seemed to wake a bit when asked to plan their activity themselves.

Students also seemed to be progressively more involved as the dialectic notebook exercise progressed. I was reminded of one student who had talked about the dialectic notebook during a conference. "At first," she'd said, "the activity seemed to be just like 'first thoughts.' I was basically writing to myself. But when I had to annotate my reactions, I realized that someone else would be reading what I was writing. It made me want to take time to think about what I had to say. When you know someone will give your thoughts an interested reading, you have a reason to think and write. I don't want to waste my partner's time. I get more interested in the text. I focus."

Almost immediately after students exchanged their notebooks for their partners' responses about the validity of their hypotheses, they wanted to abandon writing to talk about their ideas. I insisted that they stick to writing their responses. "Stay in touch with what is frustrating about not sharing orally at this point. Also stay in touch with any discoveries you make about the text through your writing. Did the writing make a difference?"

One student summarized her experience later in a conference. I recall her saying, "I had some questions for my partner. Having to write them made me think harder about them. The questions I wound up asking may have been more sophisticated than those I would have wound up asking if we had just talked." She noted that she wound up answering the "simple" questions herself, saving the "harder" questions for later discussion with her partner. She found that writing helped her "stick" to the text.

The students' writing varied. Some wrote about why they thought a hypothesis was true or untrue. Others simply offered questions about the text. "I wonder if it would burn?" "I wonder if it has taste?" "I wonder if it has always been gray?" Whatever their reactions, all of the students' responses focused on the text. Even the one who had so smugly insisted the text was dirt was busy justifying his hypothesis given the nature of the text before him. When finally it was time to talk, conversations exploded. I was stunned and delighted.

Finally, when discussion began to dwindle, I returned the students' attention to the final column in their notebooks. "How has your thinking about the text changed as a result of this process? Think about where you have arrived in your thinking, what questions remain, and how others might collaborate with you to pursue the answers to those questions so that you can revise your original assertions about the text."

In essence, I was hoping to move the students toward small-group discussion about the text. The move was a calculated risk. Granted, there was more enthusiasm in the room than there had been initially, but not everyone had developed a genuine interest, and passivity could still set in. I took the cue of the student who had intimated that writing for oneself wasn't always as motivating as writing for someone else. Maybe it would be more motivating if students wrote for more than one other.

I divided the class into four groups of three or four students. Then I explained my reasons for doing so, for they were reasons that the students would have to deal with on their own during the term. "You have twenty minutes to come to a consensus about what the packets before you contain. Consensus means agreement. Use the writing that you have done in your notebooks thus far as a basis for your speculation. Question the text together. Listen to each other carefully. Debate the text on its merits and not on your own whims. Now is the time to test. Think of testing unknown substances in chemistry."

In retrospect, I think I flicked the right switch. The room came alive with the animated conversation of students who were actually talking *with* one another about a common text. And the text remained the focus of their attention. Students tried to light the ash. Some went to see if it would dissolve. "For God's sake," I heard someone tell the upstart, "if you're so sure it's dirt, give me some good reasons."

"Yeah, OK," he'd grumbled, and then left the room. He returned a few minutes later with a handful of Bard dirt. The two substances only faintly resembled each other. Still unconvinced, he wanted to know if the "text" had come

from a different part of the country. Dirt, he knew, sometimes looks different depending on where you find it.

Pacing, I began shouting above the chatter. "What if—just what if this text were a poem, and you had to guess its author? Would you test it the same way? Would you look up other poets' works to see whose poems have similar textures and images, the same type of verse? How could you be sure Browning wrote this, and not Hardy? How would you tell Donne from Milton? Plain old dirt from this?" A student politely whispered that it might be a good idea if I were to excuse myself and go get a cup of coffee. They understood the point I was trying to make quite well and really needed the time to work. After all, I had given them a twenty-minute deadline.

At the end of those twenty minutes, and with a half-hour of class remaining, we reassembled. My goal for the remaining time was to have students hear each other's ideas (and the proof that substantiated those ideas). I wanted them to listen, analyze, and synthesize, with a firm enough motion of their minds to produce a hypothesis with well-integrated justifications. Each group had five minutes to present its hypothesis about the "meaning" of this text and to present the supporting evidence for that hypothesis. In addition, each group could offer alternative hypotheses in light of other evidence that might contradict the primary hypothesis. "The point," I said, "isn't simply to argue that you are right. The point is to prove why you feel your hypothesis is right using the text as ultimate authority and evidence."

One group felt strongly that the ash was coal dust, except for one member, who insisted that the text was exactly what it was: volcanic ash. However, no one in her group or in the others listened to her or her evidence. The other three groups proceeded with their guesses. One group said that the substance was powdered track cinders. Another insisted that the ash was black sand. All gave evidence that was necessary but not sufficient. The substance wouldn't burn; it didn't seem to dissolve. Its place of origin might be different from the Hudson Valley.

Five minutes before the end of class, I quashed discussion. "The point," I said, "is two-fold. First: what process did you undergo to become engaged with this difficult text? When did you get to be hooked into the text—interested enough to pursue answers? What inspired your interest? And second: in what ways did you use the text as your authority? Did you insist on returning to it to test your hypotheses, folding it in with the evidence you brought from previous experience? Your homework tonight is to answer these questions. Write an annotation of your reading behavior during this exercise."

One minute to go, and the question came. "So what is it?" What they seemed to mean was, "Tell us the answer. You know it. We want it. And time's up." I felt a letdown. All this inquiry. All this excitement. And they still looked to the teacher for the answer. Yet I had set myself up as the one who, in fact, did have *the* answer.

So I told them about Susan and Oregon and Leon and Elaine. Then they stunned me one more time. Instead of saying "I thought so" and gathering up their notebooks to make the mail room on time, they leaned forward and reexamined the ash once more. It was ten past the hour, and only two or three really seemed to want to leave. The others, even knowing the "truth," wanted to return to the text and bring to it this new knowledge. To retest. Resynthesize.

"I learned a lot about myself as a reader that day," the champion of the dirt theory told me in a later conference. He talked about being an impatient student. He liked to make easy guesses and then look for easy answers. He spoke of losing interest in looking for answers to questions that weren't his to begin with. "Once I have a hypothesis of my own," I recall his saying, "I listen better to others. I could still use some practice though, because I missed it when Susan gave the 'right' answer. I was too wrapped up in my own ideas to hear hers."

He went on to insist that, to understand a reading, he had to be "involved." He said that writing helped him focus. It made him ask questions and answer them, even though initially he didn't want to do the writing at all. Once he put something in writing, however, he was more interested in what others thought. "I had a reason to listen then," he said to me. "I had something at stake. It's the same when I write a paper. I don't really care what the teacher thinks about my writing if I don't care myself." Learning, he realized, takes initiative. "I'm not saying I'll take it, but at least I know I'll have to try."

Transference

Teachers become students in the Writing and Thinking workshops and, as such, rediscover what it is like to struggle with a piece of writing. Teachers' responses to Institute workshops have, in turn, enriched the Freshman Language and Thinking Workshop, which functions as a model classroom or laboratory in which to explore alternative approaches to teaching writing.

December 1986

by Lynn Hammond

IT WAS THE THIRD DAY OF A BARD WORKSHOP for teachers. Several people in the group had been teaching freewriting for a while or had been through Writing Project trainings, and there was some sense of ennui; that this "Bard stuff" wasn't so new.

We were reading a poem by Kate Barnes, "My Mother, That Feast of Light." I asked people to read the poem in a variety of voices, which began to show them, among other things, that the point of view of the poem was not necessarily what their prewriting about the title of the poem had led them to expect. Having chosen some of the poem's images from memory, they then freewrote on an image that struck them, describing what they saw and what it meant to them. English teachers all, they wrote responses that were facile but not engaged.

I was working on a phrase about Chinese painters: "Catching the lift of a rabbit in mid-hop." I asked many questions: In a static picture, how could you know that it was "mid-hop"? How did you catch the "lift"? How would you show that what had been going up was now coming down? I then started speculating about why the Chinese would even *want* to catch "the lift" instead of "the rabbit" and talked about the peculiar syntax, "the lift" being the direct object, "of the rabbit" being a mere prepositional phrase modifying "lift." Was this lift a more essential truth to the Chinese than the rabbits themselves?

When I shared my freewriting, the energy in the room shifted dramatically. "The teacher" didn't know the answers; instead, she was asking a multitude of questions which she couldn't answer, and she didn't seem to be embarrassed or flustered. In fact, she seemed to be excited about the hunt.

After that, there was a significant change in the group's writing and thinking. People started asking real questions instead of merely finding easy answers. They plunged into the complexity of the poem, using writing to ask questions, explore possibilities, and test hypotheses. Writing stopped being merely a way of communicating pre-formulated opinions.

Questions

by Louise Todd Taylor

October 6, 1986

Dear Paul Connolly:

Even letter-writing—presumably a variety of "soft" writing—can present hard choices, such as how to address the Director of the Institute for Writing and Thinking. "Dear Paul" suggests an intimacy that doesn't exist. "Dear Dr. Connolly" creates a distance that's hard to talk across. And I would like to ask you some questions about "Soft Writing, and Hard!" Ordinarily at this point I would announce what, in general, those questions were. But since I'm writing for an audience interested in the process of thought, I shall tell you instead how these questions came to bother me.

In September, I attended the Bard workshop on Writing and Thinking, and found the experience both exhilarating and threatening. I could not deny how stimulating it was to do the focused freewritings and then share them with a group of peers. I thought the techniques of looping and text rendering [Editor's note: described in Elbow's *Writing with Power.*] did just what they were advertised to do: they established "the rich sense of intellectual plenty that is the basis of thinking for oneself." On the other hand, I felt threatened—really threatened—because this approach to learning calls into question my approach to teaching. And I've been teaching long enough to have accumulated a *guiltum tremendum* if I'm doing it wrong.

To reduce my own tensions over the workshop, I tried a number of things. Before I left Bard, I accosted you with "probing" questions, hoping to find the soft spot in the approach. It turns out you already know the soft spot and are steadfastly willing to be vulnerable there. Once home, I turned the techniques of the workshop onto my problem. Using my notes, I recorded in a triple-entry notebook what we had done, what I perceived as the goal of each activity, and how I had reacted to it. From this log, I extracted the variety of reactions I had experienced ranging from enthusiasm to doubt. (See attached "Musings on Workshop.") Today I have read through your stack of handouts, attempting "charitably" to believe before doubting. And I have just finished your essay "Soft Writing, and Hard!"

Some questions (and comments):

I *loved* the Montaigne remark "If my mind could gain a firm footing, I would not make essays, I would make decisions."

Is soft writing really more "poetic"? Are you using *poetic* as synonymous with *nonrational*? My notion of "soft" outpourings is the very antithesis of the carefully crafted writing of the poet.

I am struck by your statement that "reason operates not by vision but by revision." But is it true? Do we never make rational decisions in new situations? Do we always go through the slow process of soft thinking (Is there soft thinking as well as soft writing?) before making hard decisions? If so, why are we not more conscious of it?

I assume you bring in Vygotsky as theoretical underpinning for your method. Although I can accept Vygotsky's distinction between "learned" concepts like *slavery* and "spontaneous" ones like *brother*, that paragraph on page 5 about everyday concepts on their way up the hierarchy of abstraction "clearing a path" for scientific concepts on their way down strikes me as errant nonsense. Do you believe that? I mean do you really believe it, not just could you practice believing it in a believing-doubting routine? And do you really need that to support your method?

I am skeptical about your claim that an education consisting only of lectures and readings "leaves students unable to think for themselves." Surely that is exactly the kind of education that you and I had, and yet we disagree—one indication that we think for ourselves, however poorly. And we are only two examples among a host of thinkers who have emerged from an education where students were subjected to a heavy barrage of frontal lectures—John Milton, Isaac Newton, Samuel Johnson, Henry David Thoreau, and Robert Pirsig. Is it not patronizing to assume that though we emerged from such an education able to think, our students cannot? I agree with you that a student who fails to connect new ideas to past experience has less command over those ideas than a student who makes such connections. I agree that a student who writes an essay about ideas she has not integrated into her system of thought is likely to "lie about what is genuinely known." I'm less willing to concede that assigning the essay is "inviting the lie." Isn't it possible that the writer learns something, even in writing an essay that misses the mark? If a writer can discover what she thinks through soft writing, why not through hard? Your answer is that in hard writing "a writer attends more to the form of words than to the forming of ideas." Yet even in this rambling letter I attend to the form of words. And no amount of freedom in the form of words is going to make the forming of meaning easy.

On page 7, paragraph 1, you assert that "writing is an instrument of thinking." Is that an assumption or something that has been proved? If writing is an instrument of thinking, is it qualitatively different from talking? Clyde Frazier, my colleague from Meredith who also attended the workshop at Bard, was taken with many of the techniques but wondered if they could be adapted as focused "discussion" to use in the classroom. He thought the writing took too much time. My hunch, based on introspection, is that focused freewriting is qualitatively different from talking. For one thing, the speaker is aware of audience reaction while she talks; the writer is not. For another, the constraints of memory make difficult in speech the long chain of ideas possible in writing. Do you think that as an "instrument of thinking" writing is different from talking?

In valuing "the process as well as the product," you remind me of Robert Pirsig, who in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* walks us through the process by which he arrived at his insight about the relationship between

rational thought and intuition. I'm a little surprised you didn't quote him since his distinction between classical and romantic modes of thought, between Apollo and Dionysus, between logic and intuition seems close to your own distinction between hard and soft writing. He would agree with you that "reason operates not by vision but by revision." The conclusion of your essay—that the success of this approach is "the invitation it extends to explore disorder so as ultimately to form new order for oneself"—is reminiscent of Pirsig's frequently quoted line "the real cycle you're working on is a cycle called 'yourself.' "

The softest point in your argument is paragraph 3, on page 8. Why talk about "what *needs* to be said"? Why call writing "basic genius"? That kind of squishiness makes me uncomfortable. I hate it when Thoreau says, "No man ever followed his genius till it misled him." What about Charles Manson? What about Hitler? I don't want teaching writing to turn out to be putting people in touch with their genii, whatever that means. I'd rather be an old-timey, frustrated, confused teacher of hard writing than a guru.

In your appealing paragraph with the unforgettable image of a pop-n-fresh brain, you confess to sins of omission in your approach. From that paragraph and others, I conclude that you see your greatest vulnerability as the failure to attend to grammatical correctness and logical structure. Somehow these two don't seem at all equal to me. Mechanical correctness is very like toilet training; I never met kids who couldn't master either—if they wanted to. But the business of going from the discovery of soft writing to the logical clarity of hard writing seems both more important and more difficult. And it seems something that students need as much help with as they do with getting in touch with their own thoughts on a subject. Whereas soft writing requires total involvement and an absence of censorship, hard writing requires detachment. It requires the writer to criticize his or her own ideas—to see what arguments can be raised against them, to evaluate these ideas and to order them in terms of importance. Hard writing requires the writer to put himself in the place of the reader—to estimate what the reader knows, to decide how the reader can best be taken from where he is now to where the writer would like him to go—tasks that demand some distance from what is being said.

Why should the writer go directly from loop-writing to the assignment "write an essay," without any guidance or planning? Will planning have such a stultifying effect on the writer that it's better to plan after the first draft? Are the strategies we use to plan so idiosyncratic that we are afraid of inhibiting our students by suggesting them? Are the strategies we say we use really fictions created after the fact because we don't understand ourselves how we organize? In my gut, I feel that students need as much help with organization as they do with invention. I think your approach to invention is good (in the absolute sense of the word). I think your collaborative approach to revision could help students in matters of style. But in the middle—the matter of arrangement or organization or developing an argument—what about that? The suggestion of cutting and pasting together loops offends me. What kind of synthesis is that? In the paragraph I alluded to before, you say, "After three weeks, we went home." What would you have done if you'd stayed for a fourth or fifth week or even a whole semester?

To paraphrase Montaigne, if I had a firmer footing, I'd write suggestions instead of questions. But even with a firmer footing, I would write to thank you for showing me one thing that students need to do in order to write. I'm sorry that you cannot come to Meredith in January. I should have liked to see how you would incorporate soft writing in a course like literature or biology. Garry Walton and Clyde Frazier were much impressed by the session you led at the conference in Chicago, and if you were to repeat that, I'd like to be there. When I rehearsed to my husband (a 5-star listener) the questions I'd asked you about the success of Bard's Institute and the qualified answers you had given, his comment was "He sounds like an honest fellow." He's right; you do. And I appreciate your honesty. I agree with you (and Orwell) that being honest in writing (or speech) is difficult, not because we are naturally devious, but because honesty requires hard (soft?) thinking.

Missing you in person, I shall look for you in print. Thanks again.

A reluctant disciple,
Louise Todd Taylor

Musings on Workshop

by Louise Todd Taylor

1. THE EXPERIENCE OF DOING THAT MUCH writing and then sharing it with others was exhilarating. Of course, I get a kind of high out of writing anyway. Writing keeps me awake whereas reading puts me to sleep. But a good atmosphere was established by the repeated cycle of writing and sharing. And the loop-writing and text-rendering activities were impressive in the way they promoted discovery—both in the self and in the text.

2. It is hard to argue with the logic of the process. I know that I have learned most of what I know since I started teaching. When I teach, I am my most successful learner. Therefore, I am forced to agree that learning is "being heard" and teaching is "listening."

3. I think this approach forces students to integrate what they are writing or reading with their previous experience. Not only are they learning what this text says or how to revise a paper, they are also learning how to take charge of their own education.

4. I believe that this approach would reduce the number of vacuous essays in which students have invested nothing of themselves. I'm less sure that essays written using this approach would have a particularly clear structure or be mechanically correct. Although the last two goals are less important than the first, they are not unimportant. Another way of asking this is: "Will this approach, which emphasizes the needs of the writer, produce writers who know how to structure their prose to meet the needs of the reader?"

5. I think that this collaborative approach to writing and thinking would appeal more to students and teachers who enjoy cooperative ventures and would appeal less to competitive types. The competitors (including me) would probably stand to benefit most.

6. I think this approach would appeal to 20th-century relativists who agree with Cash in *As I Lay Dying* that whether or not a person is crazy "ain't so much what a

fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it.'' To folks who are dead sure, who believe that there is an objective reality out there that never changes, who believe that they know the facts that describe that reality—to these absolutists, this approach, which places emphasis on the learner rather than on what is to be learned, may seem soft, permissive, and insufficiently rigorous.

7. I wonder whether I would continue to enjoy teaching using this approach. I got into this business because I'm a failed actor looking for a stage. In this new approach, the teacher is more midwife than prima donna. To parody the girl in *Gone with the Wind*, ''I don't know nothin' about birthin' no writers.'' Actually, I do know more about that than I did before I attended the workshop, but I think I would get tired of mirroring their ideas back to them, ''I heard you say. . . .''

8. My greatest reservation is the amount of time this approach takes. In face of the information explosion, can we afford to adopt an educational strategy that is seemingly slower than the ones we've been using? Or is the development of a writer something that can't be rushed? Is thinking something that can't be rushed? Are we actually making the process take longer by trying to forcefeed them into fatted thinkers? Is there no such thing as a fatted thinker, only lean and hungry ones? How long does it take before the students make these processes of looping and immersion their own, freeing the class to do something else during class time? Is there anything more profitable to do in class? I'm thinking particularly of my literature classes. I value the gun-slinging discussions that occasionally erupt. Even conceding that such discussions usually solidify the combatants in their own points of view, is there no place for such discussions? If not, I'm sorry because I love them. Is there no place for the instructor to give the dazzling lecture that in the words of my colleague ''knocks you on your ass''? I would miss attempting the occasional tour de force.

9. I went to Bard to pick up a few tricks, some techniques to add to my repertoire and to use to improve my teaching (medicine show?). What I lugged home feels more like a conversion experience. It doesn't extend or improve or add a new dimension to the way I used to teach. It challenges me to abandon the old way entirely, to repudiate teaching in favor of nurturing learning. I don't want to. And yet there is no way I can deny the exhilaration of the experience I had learning this weekend. And having seen that that is possible, I can't deny it to my students. Caught in this crunch between what makes teaching exciting and what makes learning exhilarating, I feel like the little engine that couldn't.

Workshop as Writing Community

by Alan Devenish

SOME DAYS AGO I RETURNED FROM BARD College where I led a five-day workshop in the writing, reading, and teaching of poetry for elementary, high school, and college teachers. Yesterday I promised myself I would write about the workshop. Instead I unpacked, did the laundry (which allowed me to hide in the basement), and cleaned the apartment. Today, I sit in a clean apartment, asking myself why suddenly the thought of writing daunts me, whereas during the workshop I wrote often and freely, even on cue (my own). Others did too, and I wonder if they too are sitting before a blank page of a notebook, a humming typewriter, or a computer screen, waiting for the word that will break the silence.

My question leads me to consider a quality of the poetry workshop, without which, I am beginning to believe, all else —the writing exercises, listening and responding to one another's work, discussions—would be greatly diminished. Call it community, otherness, audience. What this quality or experience allows is the trust (of one's self and of others), mutual support, and alliance so enlivening to the very act of writing. Writing may be a deeply solitary activity, initially. But it doesn't remain so. (I wonder if the most private of diarists does not harbor the image of the perfect reader). Certainly poetry, with its undeniable ''voice,'' its rhythms and far-reaching verbal-visual possibilities and linguistic ambiguities, implies a reader, a listener, an audience, an other. And so, increasingly I have come to think that the richness and satisfaction I and others have felt at such poetry workshops derives from the experience of community. Likewise, the failures can most often be traced to a failure of community. In making this assertion I do not want to suggest that everything else in a workshop is of no consequence. In fact, when a sense of otherness occurs it is usually because the activities of the workshop have fostered it. Still, I have seen the best schedules, exercises, strategies go awry when done outside the spirit of common trust. Likewise, I have seen some ostensibly lame ideas succeed brilliantly simply because the workshop participants felt a solidarity, individually and collectively, that allowed them to take risks, learn from short-term failure, and bring their creativity into play.

How then, does a poetry workshop—involving, as this one did, a variety of experience, ambitions, doubt, and talent among its participants—come to be a community in which support displaces competition and individuals feel confident in taking risks?

It began with our stories. On the first day of the workshop, after we had learned each others' names by saying them in a circle until we could address each other by first name, I asked that we all think of a line of poetry we knew and remembered. When everyone had a line, I then asked that we write the ''story'' of this line—why we remembered it, where and when we learned it, etc. We wrote for ten minutes at most. Then I asked for volunteers to read. There were stories of fathers and mothers reading to children, of teachers reciting whole chunks of verse, of teachers ''forcing'' pupils to memorize, of just the recalled wonder and savor of language: a peek into what draws us to poetry, its language and evocativeness. Already a common ground was apparent, as well as our very different personalities, experiences, and sensibilities.

After our stories, we read from a selection of poems, that is, read aloud or rather read in such a way that each person or group reading the poem would interpret it or ''render'' it in such a way that we others listening might glimpse the particular ''reading'' intended. For this purpose, I asked that we divide into three or four smaller groups and in those groups discuss and practice the reading (the actual act and the interpretive act) that each group or member would try. Already I sensed that this exercise (a popular one in many of our workshops at Bard) was breaking down inhibitions and forming collaborative workshops within the

workshop. Also, it allowed me to be just part of a group and not "sit at the head of the circle," as can so easily happen early in a workshop.

The next day I wanted to do a series of sketches, or starters, to get a few drafts going. To do this I used some "given" language to see if it would generate some "ungiven," associative, but original language. Instead of using whole poems as models for writing our own poems—a valid technique—I prefer to make small borrowings from existing poems: a title, a first line, or a phrase, and then ask participants to use it to start their own poems. I withhold the rest of the original poem until well after the exercise. I prefer this "minimal model" because it allows much more authorship from the outset, is more suggestive, and while derivative, does not lead to abject imitation. So, I gave a sampling of such starters: to begin with the words "Ask me" (from a William Stafford poem by that title) and see what questions, images, memories come to mind; begin a poem that has as its title an address where you have lived, visited, or gone to school, and sketch out whatever images surface (prompted by Galway Kinnell's poem "52 Oswald Street"); write a poem in which you picture yourself as landscape (an adaptation from "Self-Portrait as Still-Life" by Donald Justice); and others. We seldom wrote for more than fifteen minutes on any one sketch. After each exercise we read our results. This sounds easy enough, of course, but in fact it takes a small leap of trust for people to read something so fresh and often so personal, as these drafts surely were. But in doing so, some fears were put to rest. For one thing, since participants could legitimately consider what they had written as very rough drafts, there was no expectation of a finished product, much less a dramatic performance. We were letting each other in on our beginnings, allowing a look over the shoulder. Besides, becoming a writing community does not mean conforming to a style or procedure. On the contrary, when there is a genuine communal sense, writers are uninhibited in their expression: they are writing according to their own intuitions and criteria, and know their particular processes are supported, even treasured. This was beginning to happen as participants realized that no one was imposing standards. Also, of course, there was the pleasure of the creative process itself.

Having worked up a number of rough drafts, we needed some time simply to go off and write for a while, to choose something fresh and work at it more deliberately, though I hoped not less freely. It is important to allow time within the regular schedule of a poetry workshop just for writing. Especially amidst a growing sense of collectivity, individuals need time to re-collect themselves in their own expression, to commune with themselves, as it were. The result is that both the individual and workshop-as-individuals-together benefit.

After we had spent an hour or so revising these first drafts, I asked if someone would read a draft so we could respond to it and at the same time practice some modes of responding that might give a better feel for "listening" to poems-in-process. One participant read and reread his poem, and first I, then we, responded in a number of ways. First we attempted to describe what effect the poem had on us, what mood, emotion, or tone we had experienced, what sensations had been evoked. Not everyone, of course, had the same experience, and this too is vital for the writer to hear. We mentioned certain phrases, images, and word combinations that struck us as especially strong, places that surprised and delighted us in the language. We tried to give the author a sense of what each of us felt was most central to the poem—whether an image, an idea, or a suggestion. This process is much quicker to describe than to do, and should be allowed plenty of time. We questioned the author, noting our own responses to his sense of the draft. He asked us questions about word choice, about the effect of a turn of phrase, about whether the poem "spoke" to us in the way he envisioned. Finally, we commented on any words, rhythms, or language that seemed inconsistent with the poem, or that held it back in some way, although we did this in the context of our full response to the work. It is essential that this response be a truly collaborative effort among listeners and writer alike. As listeners, giving our complete response to someone else's created world, we go out on a limb. Our "reading" may be far from someone else's (including the writer's), but we should risk it, since it is the only way each of us, as writers, can receive a true picture of our readers' minds.

From our circle of twelve we divided into three groups so that we would have the time and the natural intimacy of conversation. Smaller groups make the most demands and offer the most rewards. No one can hide, no one can retire into anonymous silence. More positively, they create the opportunity to sustain an intensive exchange between poet and respondent. They also break down the literal and psychological distance that even a circle of only twelve persons almost ensures.

From those several sessions in our smaller groups, I remember, from a few fragments jotted down, entire drafts of poems we heard and heard again in revised form. I read a scribbled quote from J.'s poem: "hot air and life everlasting" and I hear her reading this most evocative, bittersweet recollection and projection of childhood into adulthood. Or I see N.'s image of a catwalk over a ravine as a crystallization of a daring, independent youth. R. worked patiently on a poem she had difficulty reading due to the painful experience it recreated: food strewn on a curtain, a war, a protest march, a bus ride back home next to a garrulous woman who looked like Mama Cass. As for my own drafts, I am still surprised at the many changes I have taken them through and how the very thoughtful responses I received have made me see the resonant possibilities in the innocuous phrase "rain threatens," or in the image of the crow hunched over carrion in the middle of the parkway. When a response group "clicks," a relationship forms, person-to-person as well as reader-to-text and response-to-context. In such a group each listener/respondent/reader fully hears or sees the poem and brings to it a receptiveness that the distancing stance of the this-line-bothers-me school of critiquing precludes. This is not to say that it is easy to withhold the impulse to have the writer rewrite the poem so that it conforms to some image of how it *should* be, but rather to suggest that a close and receptive listening will more likely lead to a writing or rewriting of the poem as it *might* be. When listeners reflect their full experience of the draft, the writer's perspective may well be influenced, sharpened, and challenged, but authorship stays firmly centered. In such a community, each participant is encouraged to take greater risks, to read that really shaky draft, because one is faced not with a panel of critics but a circle of listeners.

Eventually we all go back home, and confront our best

impulses and worst fears as writers, poets, and teachers, in solitude. But the experience of last week's workshop is something that, if not essential, is for me a rare gift in my work. It is for me a question of breaking silence, of asserting my voice, and of confirming that my voice will be heard, received, respected in a community of like and unlike minds, in a commonality of individual voices.

SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS

Here, in no particular order, are some summer writing workshops for teachers. Most of them have no deadline for applications, but the sooner the better, especially for scholarship applications. **The Bread Loaf School of Writing**, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753. (802) 388-3711 Ext. 5418. Contact: Academic Assistant. Workshop dates: 6/23-8/13. Level: Hi. Specialty: teaching writing in rural schools • **Northwest Writing Institute**, Lewis & Clark College, Campus Box 100, Portland, OR 97219. (503) 293-2757. Contact: Mary Stone. Workshop dates: 6/20-24. Level: El-Hi. Deadline: 6/1. A collaborative program with Bard's Institute for Writing & Thinking • **Institute for Writing & Thinking**, Bard College Center, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504. (914) 758-6822. Contact: Teresa Villardi. Workshop dates: 7/11-16. Level: Hi-Coll. • **Northeast Whole Language Conference**, Dept. of Education, State Office Bldg., Montpelier, VT 05602. (802) 828-3111. Contact: Elaine Smith. Conference dates: 8/15-19. Level: El-Coll. • **Peninsula Writers**, East Kentwood High School, Kentwood, MI 49508. (616) 455-6536 evenings. Contact: Mike Bacon. Workshop dates: 6/27-7/15. Level: El-Coll. • **Travers Bay Writing Workshop**, American Thought & Language, Michigan State U., East Lansing, MI 48824. (517) 484-1785. Contact: Mike Steinberg. Workshop dates: 6/25-30. • **Reading & Writing about London**, English Dept., Michigan State U., East Lansing, MI 48824. (517) 353-6657. Contact: Stephen Tchudi. Workshop dates: 7/18-8/12. That's London, England. **NYC Writing Project Open Institute,** Summer seminar, Lehman College, Bronx, NY 10468. (212) 960-8758. Contact: Carla Asher. Workshop dates: 7/5-29. Level: K-Coll.

Teachers & Writers Collaborative Staff: Nancy Larson Shapiro, Director; Ron Padgett, Publications Director; Gary Lenhart and Pat Padgett, Associate Directors; Elizabeth Fox, Program Director; Chris Edgar and Katherine Koch, Associates; Adele Slaughter, Community Artists Project Director. **Writers & Artists in the Program:** Bill Allen; Michael Alpert; Mariah Britton; Gina Maria Caruso; Henry Chapin; Tony De Nonno; Holly Ewald; Larry Fagin; Harry Greenberg; Linda Gutstein; Pat Hough; Kurt Lamkin; Kathleen Rockwell Lawrence; Theresa Mack; Jane Mankiewicz; Maria Mar; Harold Marcus; Jim Markowich; Bernadette Mayer; Sheryl Ann Noethe; Abiodun Oyewole; Julie Patton; Richard Perry; Kathleen Pletcher; Wayne Providence; Linda Rappaport; Raphael Risenberg; Wendy Salinger; Sylvia Sandoval; Michael Schwartz; Elise Siegel; Bob Sievert; Daniel Sklar; Mark Statman; David Theis; Susana Tubert; David Unger; Marc Westhof; Meredith Sue Willis; Dale Worsley; Alan Ziegler, Writers Coordinator. **Advisory Board:** Jonathan Baumbach; Wesley Brown; Benjamin DeMott; Norman Fruchter; Mark W. Gordon; Colin Greer; Nat Hentoff; Florence Howe; Herb Kohl; Paul Lauter; Phillip Lopate; Walter Dean Myers; David Rogers; Steven Schrader, Chair; Robert Silvers; Carmen Valle.

Copyright © 1988 by Teachers & Writers Collaborative, Inc. *Teachers & Writers Magazine* is published five times per year by Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. Domestic subscription rates: one year, $15; two years, $26; three years, $37. Foreign subscriptions: add $2.50 per year.

The work of Teachers & Writers Collaborative is made possible in part by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Teachers & Writers Collaborative is particularly grateful for support from the following foundations and corporations: ABC, American Stock Exchange, Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity, Columbia Committee for Community Service, Consolidated Edison, Fund for Poetry, The General Electric Foundation, Herman Goldman Foundation, Long Island Community Foundation, Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, Mobil Foundation, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Morgan Stanley, New York Telephone, New York Times Company Foundation, Henry Nias Foundation, Primerica Foundation, Helena Rubinstein Foundation, The Scherman Foundation, Steele-Reese Foundation.

Our program also receives funding from Districts 2, 3, 5, and 6, Manhattan; Districts 7 and 8, Bronx; Districts 17, 20, and 32, Brooklyn; District 27, Queens; Hunter PA, PS 87M PA, PS 75M, PS 208M, High School for Writing, Manhattan; PS 107K PA, Brooklyn; United Nations International School, Queens; Plainedge School District; Freeport School District; Harborfield Middle School; Abbott School; Columbus School, New Rochelle; the ArtsConnection—Arts Exposure Program; the Arts Partners program of the NYC Youth Bureau, the NYC Board of Education, and the NYC Dept. of Cultural Affairs; the New York Foundation for the Arts' Artists-in-Residence Program, administered by the Foundation on behalf of the New York State Council on the Arts and in cooperation with the New York State Education Department with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Council.

Editor: Ron Padgett. Editorial Assistant: Chris Edgar. Our printer is Philmark Lithographics, New York, N.Y.

ISSN 0739-0084. This publication is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Teachers & Writers Collaborative
5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y 10003

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U S POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, N. Y.
Permit No 9369