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Information for Authors

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

inside english has more than a 30-year tradition of publishing articles that are practical and classroom-centered. Our journal addresses professional concerns among the 119 two-year colleges throughout California.

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Articles should be submitted electronically and must be sent as an e-mail attachment (preferably as an MS Word file), not as email text, to darrencs@fullcoll.edu. Regular mail can be sent to Darren Chiang-Schultheiss, Editor, inside english, English Department, Fullerton College, 321 E. Chapman Ave., Fullerton, CA 92832-2095. Phone: 714.992.7442; FAX: 866.486.9170.

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

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

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

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Editor’s Note
Darren Chiang-Schultheiss

A plentiful and robust collection of readings in the inside english table of contents constructs what I am dubbing “the problem issue;” i.e., all the i.e. authors meditate on the myriad challenges facing the English teaching profession. Tom Hurley’s President’s Message sets the tone for the work ahead of us by challenging us to build reading pedagogy’s best practices into our writing curriculum. Examining some deep social and technological causes for the reading trouble students have, David Clemens, in “An Unavoidable Pity,” writes passionately about the lack of literature in our course offerings and echoes loudly Susan Westphal’s broader educational concerns in her Point of View essay, “Transcending Complacency.” In “Talking Back to Richard Bailey,” Erika Szostak takes a proactive approach to these problems by appropriating her students’ knowledge of popular culture to initiate them into the academic literacy they’ll need to negotiate their college culture. You will find her essay and Rachel Jennings’ book review to be obvious companion readings.

Whether you are a senior faculty member on the job market or are new to the teaching profession and gathering experience for the seemingly coveted full-time job in our discipline, then digest, absorb, and employ the wisdom that the team of authors from Modesto Junior College offers because it is some of the most thorough, detailed, and practical advice you could seek to groom yourself for the next hiring committee.

Though few manuscripts were submitted, this issue offers a special feature section on plagiarism beginning with Mary Margaret McGuire’s essay, “The ‘P’ Word,” that defines plagiarism and reminds readers that the purloined prose is an issue extending beyond the academy’s walls, hence our necessary role in teaching our students a sustained sense of academic integrity. Santi Tafarella’s article draws inspiration from Seneca for explaining not just the pitfalls of plagiarism, but also how well-purposed passages establish a writer’s ethos and authority when students think beyond the obligatory citation and write themselves into it. And Charles Hood offers his tips—some gently sardonic—about how best to prevent plagiarism from seeping out of the classroom and into the cathedral.

Also in this issue you will find a couple of book reviews really worth reading. Rachel Jennings’ review of Everything Bad Is Good for You is a bit unconventional in that she explains ways to incorporate this book’s notions of what’s good about popular culture into our classes. And don’t overlook Candace Andrews’ tersely engaging critique of Nobody Roots for Goliath, a novel whose protagonist many English teachers are likely to identify with.

Lastly it is after this fifth i.e. issue that I pass the editor’s pen (literally—see page 45) to someone who will begin working on the Fall 2007 issue. The last three years were pure pleasure to work with the authors and poets whose words and thoughts have appeared among these pages. Having been involved in journalism some twenty-four years ago, it has been great to professionally come full circle, and I am thrilled to have been trusted to work in a medium I love so much. inside english will, no doubt, continue to evolve as it serves its statewide audience of California community college English teachers.

—DCS
Call for Papers

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

Occasional Columns

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

Some Possible Topics

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

2007-2008 Deadlines

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College writing instruction has come a long way in the past half century. Where once English instructors applied a hit or miss approach to writing instruction, we now have a growing body of knowledge about the applications of rhetorical theory to writing, writing as a process, the social uses of writing, the writing habits and needs of different kinds of students. Where once faculty trained as literary scholars found themselves assigned, often to their dismay, to teach comp, we now have instructors trained in writing theory and practice who are willing and eager to teach writing at all levels, from developmental to advanced.

Can we say the same about the teaching of reading to traditional college age and older students? Most of our community colleges, to be sure, offer courses in developmental reading. Certainly, we ask our students to read a range of texts in all course levels: essays as well as non-fiction prose like Fast Food Nation; poems as well as news articles about current events; King Lear and The Kite Runner. Students at all levels must learn to comprehend literal meaning, think critically about texts, develop their vocabulary and synthesize what they read with the rest of their knowledge. And it’s a professional shibboleth that reading and writing are interactive. But while we acknowledge that reading and writing are two forms of the same fundamental act of meaning making, the attention we pay to writing eclipses what we do with reading. Compared to the amount of training and scholarship now available for writing, college-level reading is an undeveloped field of study. It’s curious that an activity so central to our mission should be so ignored.

One response, of course, is that reading instruction belongs in the schools; after all, graduate education programs offer courses in reading for future K-12 teachers. Following this premise, if reading is taught in college, it should be taught by faculty with education degrees; English instructors aren’t trained to teach reading, so reading really doesn’t belong in English. It’s ironic, however, that faculty who are themselves trained as readers, faculty who love books, should see the teaching of reading as a task beyond (or perhaps beneath) their ability.

Our formal training largely ignores the reality of our students’ reading needs. Few graduate programs in English, it seems, offer courses in college reading; I know of only two departments that do. The English Department of San Francisco State University offers a Certificate in the Teaching of Post-secondary Reading, which provides training in the theory and psychology of reading, the needs of adult learners, the reading-writing connection, and best practices appropriate for traditional age and older college learners. A newer program at California State University, Fullerton offers an online certificate in Postsecondary Reading and Learning. We need more such programs.
But the problem is not only in our graduate education. Our profession in general seems to privilege writing over reading. At last March’s Conference on College Composition and Communication, for example, I counted only two sessions that addressed reading. This pattern doesn’t seem to be unusual. One could argue that composition is composition and reading is reading, but I would respond that the twain have been meeting, surreptitiously perhaps, for as long as written texts have existed.

I want to argue that we community college English instructors should be trained to teach reading, that our professional organizations should encourage scholarly reflection on the teaching of reading, and that we should use the rich resources in our classrooms to develop a body of scholarship on college-level reading. Our students are traditional-age and older learners whose reading abilities range far more broadly than those of any four-year college or university population. We offer many different kinds of reading experiences in our courses and make different reading demands on our students at different stages of their education. We have a unique ability to offer the English profession critical reflections on the teaching of college-level reading; we are in a position to develop best practices for reading that all college English instructors might use.

Although it mentions reading only briefly, the Two-Year College English Association position paper called *Guidelines for the Preparation of English Faculty at Two-Year College* recognizes that community college English teachers need to be training in “reading and literacy.” TYCA’s other position paper, *Research and Scholarship in the Two-Year College*, encourages us to become teacher-scholars—“faculty member[s] for whom teaching is informed both by reflective practice and the application of the best theoretical approaches.” We should take both these papers as invitations to explore how we teach reading and to determine what training in reading the community college English instructor needs. College-level reading is a subject waiting for our reflection, analysis, and recommendations.

Perhaps the findings of the TYCA Research Initiative, soon to be released, will give us a clearer picture of how we address reading in two-year colleges. In the meantime, our own professional organization, the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges, provides opportunities to discuss the state of reading instruction in our departments. I invite you to offer sessions at the October 2007 ECCTYC Conference on how you conceptualize reading in your classrooms at all levels. I encourage you to submit papers on the teaching of reading to *inside english*. And I urge you to exchange blogs on the ECCTYC website <www.ecctyc.org> about problems in the teaching of reading. Here are some questions to start this discussion:
1) How and where is reading taught in your college? Who teaches it and why?

2) What are the reading needs of your students—at all levels?

3) What reading skills do our students at all levels bring to college?

4) How do different levels of reading—for example, developmental, freshman, literature class—relate to one another?

5) How do interpretation and critical reading play out at these different levels?

6) What do we know about reading across the curriculum? About the literacy demands of public and professional life? How do we make use of this knowledge in our own classes?

7) What are the similarities and differences between reading imaginative works and reading expository and argumentative texts?

8) How do we present the reading-writing connection in our classes?

9) What kind of training in reading do community college English instructors need?

Comings and Goings: Last fall the ECCTYC Board bid farewell to Carmen Jay (San Diego Miramar College) who served for several years as a Regional Director for Region X (San Diego); we remember her good work on our San Diego conference in 2003. We also said goodbye to Roger Marheine (Pasadena City College), long-time Region VII co-director. Roger’s passion and energy as a faculty leader and teacher continues to inspire us all. This spring Judie Hinman (College of the Redwoods), who represented Region I (Northern California) and for the last year has been ECCTYC’s First Vice President, steps down. Judie has been an invaluable spokeswoman for a range of professional issues, and she also served ably on two Conference committees as co-program chair. And we also say farewell and many thanks to Darren Chiang-Schultheiss (Fullerton College). Darren was a Regional Director for Region VIII (Southern Los Angeles) before becoming editor of inside english three years ago. He has done a splendid job of making inside english an attractive and professional-looking periodical, one that ECCTYC can truly be proud of. To Carmen, Roger, Judie, and Darren, we offer our deep thanks for their contributions to ECCTYC and best wishes for the future!

I would also like to introduce our newest ECCTYC Board members. Last fall Kara Lybarger-Monson (Moorpark College) became a regional director for Region VI (Central Coast), and Christopher McCabe (Pasadena City College) became a regional director for Region VII (Northern Los Angeles). Welcome to Kara and Chris!
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Unlike most other organizations, ECCTYC is funded through institutional memberships paid by various college English departments rather than by individuals. However, all instructors who teach English in any of the California community colleges are automatically members of ECCTYC. The English Council’s journal, inside english, is mailed to English departments at all of the California community colleges. The number of copies each department receives is based on the total copies it requests for its full- and part-time faculty. So, all instructors should be receiving a copy of inside english through their college’s English department.

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

Billing Information: The English Council would like to thank all of the institutions that paid their memberships for the 2006-07 fiscal year. Invoices for 2007-08 should be received by the end of September 2007 and will reflect a 20% increase in membership dues. Please have your college pay your department’s invoice promptly to ensure that you continue receiving the Fall and Spring issues of inside english. Past Due notices will be sent out after a 30-day billing cycle. Any remittance not received by this printing means that your institution does not have an active membership and will receive only 1 departmental copy of inside english until its membership is paid in full. A pdf version is also online at the ECCTYC website: <www.ecctyc.org>.

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An Unavoidable Pity: The Future of Literature in the Two-Year Colleges

By David Clemens

Does literature have a future in two year colleges or is it a withering branch on the academic tree of knowledge? This is not a new question. In 1990, Professor Alvin Kernan unhappily announced The Death of Literature. He saw the indefinable nature of literature as being at odds with the increasingly pragmatic and socio-political impulses driving liberal arts education. This was after Post-Structuralism, Cultural Studies, and Deconstruction but before the newer plague of “measurable learning outcomes,” “deliverables,” and “rubrics.” Hence, since Kernan, the situation for literature has only become more dire.

Last year I opened my school’s schedule of classes to find that my department was offering 30 sections of developmental English, 13 sections of Freshman Composition, and only two sections of Introduction to Literature. Further investigation found that many of our literature offerings had dried up as well: The Novel, The Short Story, Masterpieces of Literature, American Humor, Russian Literature, Poetry, American Literature before 1865, all were gone with the wind. None had been offered for years because when they had been, not enough students enrolled. At one time, we offered as many sections of Intro to Lit as we did Freshman Comp. Now Intro to Lit is a plum to be wrangled over by literature teachers starving for what had once nourished them.

Reading at Risk

How could such a cultural extinction have happened? There are several reasons. One is the decline in literary reading among the general population. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) study Reading at Risk documents the decline of literary reading among the general public. Released in 2004, that study prompted over 600 news stories when it revealed that the percentage of adults reading literature had declined from 56.9 percent in 1982 to 46.7 percent in 2002. In the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics (ALSC) monograph of responses to the study, Reading at Risk: A Forum, Mark Bauerlein of the NEA explains that a “10-point drop represents a loss of 20 million potential

At Monterey Peninsula College, David Clemens teaches two online courses: Literature By and About Men and More, or Less, than Human? (robot literature and film). Recent publications have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle and The Association of Literary Scholars and Critics monograph on Reading at Risk. He received the Allen Griffin Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2006 and appears in the forthcoming documentary film Indoctrinate U. David reads email at dclemens@mpc.edu.
readers. When one considers how easily a respondent qualified as a ‘literary reader’,” (4) the decline appears even more troubling: the survey accepted any work of literature, of any length, any quality, in any language, and in any print medium. Reading a single 17 syllable haiku in the previous year qualified one as a “literary reader.” It is therefore probably safe to say that today, over half our adult population has no meaningful engagement with literature at all; the retreat from literature is a brute fact.

Bauerlein notes that “one particular group of special interest to humanities teachers in higher education showed the steepest declines of all: young adults” (4). Young people from 18-24 who “read literature” had declined from 59.8 percent in 1982 to 42.8 percent in 2002. He says “the 17-point slide signifies a vast shift in youth culture. Young persons have gone from one of the most active reading groups to one of the least active. And teachers shouldn’t expect the withdrawal of literature from young people’s lives to cease any time soon” (4). According to Stanley Rothman, the ACT of 2005 found that of those taking the test, only half were “ready for college reading” while the SATs of 2006 showed the largest decline in 30 years in terms of readiness for college reading (Rothman). And a study by the children’s publisher Scholastic, released in June 2006, finds that reading for fun declines steadily after age . . . eight. Scholastic’s study suggests that one reason for children’s aversion to reading is that only 21 percent of parents are daily readers, suggesting that if parents don’t model reading behavior, children don’t develop it. Reading at Risk, however, found another culprit in the seductions of electronic media. My response to the NEA study warns:

The Reading at Risk study mentions TVs, game consoles, and computers, but it is silent on DVD players, digital video recorders, iPods, blogs, and MP3-playing sunglasses. We are only at the beginning of electronic distraction, and the nature of that distraction is often disquieting. For example, millions of players spend a significant number of hours each day engaged in massive multiplayer online role-playing games, or MMORPGs. Ten million people play The Sims <www.thesims.ea.com/index_flash.php>, one of the so-called “reality games” which allow players to manipulate characters and avatars (online representations of themselves). An even more advanced reality game is ominously called Second Life <www.secondlife.com>. (Clemens 19)

Because they distract the eye by producing a state of constant neurological stimulation and arousal, electronic media, specifically TV and video games, are often designated the bad object, but they do more than distract. The significance of electronic media for reading is that they turn a reader into a viewer, altering crucial epistemological assumptions, even neurologically rewiring the cognitive apparatus itself. For example:

In written works, the medium is language in a delicate interplay of suggestiveness and precision. Writing is linear and, like logic, what comes before serves as ground for what comes after. Writing assumes causation, a key ingredient of both morality and historical consciousness. The reader moves at the pace he chooses. Image-based productions employ montage, successions of visuals with connections between them supplied by the
viewer. One image replaces, rather than follows, another. Instead of causation, there is analogy, association, and implication. The viewer moves at the pace of the image cascade. A reader finds haven in the forms of writing which produce, in [Robert] Pinsky's words . . . , the “ritual of expectation,” the comfort and trust of being carried along in a larger design, flowing with the rhythm of sentences, the arc of plot, and the echo of an internal voice. A viewer becomes first stimulated, then numb from the overload of processing continuous incoming electronic data streams. Will Wright, creator of The Sims, says he avoids the “procedural” aspects of game worlds [actually playing the game]. He just likes to hang out in the Grand Theft Auto San Andreas ‘hood with his crew, riding a virtual mountain bike, shooting virtual hoops, and drinking virtual beer.

Worst of all, visual media reify what each reader once created within. Image-based media are literal—they concretize what might be tantalizing, suggestive, metaphorical, or symbolic. When my students read Kafka’s “In the Penal Colony,” each reader internally builds the infernal torture machine, a collaboration distinctively Kafka and distinctively personal. But if they encounter Robert Crumb’s graphic version of the same story, their image of the machine is complete, handed to them, and forever Crumb’s. (Clemens 20)

Today, many students don’t read because they are accustomed to receiving images and are unable to make images in their heads when prompted by words. Although Robert Logan of the University of Toronto is generally optimistic about the persistence of reading, he does note: “Reading is a left-brain activity, whereas viewing video is a right-brain one. The mosaic pattern of light pulses must be reassembled by the right brain to create an image” (Logan). A brain preoccupied by and predisposed to reassembling light pulses may no longer be activated to form its own images in response to the vocabulary and syntax of Thomas Hardy. Language and communication professor Elizabeth Charters goes further, pointing out that “[a]ccording to information processing, psycholinguistic and brain theories, [the] treatment of complex syntactic structures as meaningless image patterns may inhibit brain development and lead to a sub-class that, while technically competent, cannot cope with the vast amounts of information generated by the electronic media.” (Charters)

Midnight in the Garden of Edu-babble

But even if students survive the neurological catastrophe of The Simpsons and American Idol, they must negotiate the schools of corrosive literary criticism which seem to offer little more than a rehearsal of grievances and victims, where “hegemony” and “oppression” have replaced “ineffable” and “sublime.” Consider this part of the course description for Human Communication 225: Literature, Film, and Culture offered by California State University, Monterey Bay:

Literature/Popular Culture Learning Requirement

This learning experience fulfills Literature/Popular Culture ULR defined in the catalog as the ability to “analyze, interpret, and appreciate literature and/or diverse forms of popular culture as artistic and cultural representation.”

Note: Popular culture includes film, popular music, television, folk forms, folklore, crafts, mass media, youth culture, and other forms of popular communication.
through forms of art and media. Specifically, students should be able to:

- interpret and analyze the significance of time, place, class and culture in which the works of literature and/or popular culture were created;
- describe and analyze the capacity of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, disability, age, generation, and/or nationality to inspire, inform, and influence writers, artists and audiences;
- describe connections between works of literature and/or popular culture, their authors/artists/creators, and the society from which they emerge, and analyze their interactions from multiple perspectives;
- discuss how the identities of diverse individuals and communities are developed and portrayed, and how critical representations of self and others occur in works of literature and popular culture. (Wang)

Here we can see the complete disappearance of literature and literary values into a kaleidoscope of sociological and anthropological jargon. How did this coup d’etat by the social sciences happen? Rosanna Warren, in her 2005 Presidential address to the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics, says:

...we have just seen a generation in the schools—I use the term broadly to cover kindergarten through postdoctoral study—that has fallen out of love with literature. This is not entirely true, as we all know. But many of you would probably not be here tonight if you had not in some way experienced what I have just described, if you had not met teachers and students of literature who seemed to want to prosecute it rather than to read it, and who would rather be practicing sociology, political science, psychotherapy, and economics than pondering etymologies and plot structures. So we have students who have never read Homer or Cervantes or Milton or Hardy, and by now, teachers who will never teach them. (Warren)

Why would they? We are now well along in the second and third generations of teachers marinated in an educational culture that sees literature primarily as a vehicle for ideology, where every text is just an expression of exploitive power at best or nothing at all except the play of signifiers at worst. Consider Dr. Kernan’s explication of Deconstruction:

Super-close readings of the language of literary texts revealed that all concepts and the words representing them rested ultimately on nothing.... Discourse is thus an endless deferral of reality, an infinite regress, leading ultimately to the abyss of nothing and nowhere. All words and texts are indeterminate, carrying opposing, contradictory significations, which can be teased out of language to reveal its uncontrollable multiplicity of meanings, so numerous that they in the end cancel out, leaving writer and reader facing the void where presence gives way to infinite absence. (Death 79)

Critical schools such as Deconstruction drained off the authority of quality leaving a void to be filled with aprioristic Multicultural, New Historicist, and Post-colonial resentments. In a lecture the following year, Kernan observed that

considered in the social context of the literacy crisis, post-structuralist criticism has provided a very complex apologetics for illiteracy. Still from a social point of view, the triumph of theory in literature was an attempt to keep literature possible in a time of sharply diminishing reading skills. But will it work? (“Crisis” 8)
That was in 1991, and we now have the answer to his question: “No.”

“Hey, Sailor!”

Devoting years of study to contemplate how nothing means anything or how all cultural products incriminate Western civilization may have once held some perverse appeal, but even those frail amusements are now erased by the prevailing business model in more and more schools. We are all familiar with course minimums, that number of students necessary for a course to be anointed as profitable and therefore permitted to be taught. My own argument is that no school can call itself a college if it doesn’t offer Shakespeare, whether the enrollment is 30 or six. Yet consider what Thomas Reeves of The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute recently reported:

Post University in Waterbury, Connecticut, was launched in 1890 as a private university. A century later it affiliated with a Japanese corporation, and in 2004 private investors turned it into a for-profit institution. Post now has 1,400 students and recently raised eyebrows in academia by calling a halt to liberal arts degrees. Majors in English and history and upper-level courses in the liberal arts generally are all to be axed. Henceforth, says the institution’s president, the emphasis will be on majors that “lead to a job.” (Reeves)

Today, Post University majors include Biology, Environmental Science, Psychology, and Sociology while Art, Music, Philosophy, and Literature have disappeared, replaced by “Equine Management” as a major more likely to lead to a “financially secure career” <www.post.edu>. In 1906, William Graham Sumner spoke about a kind of growth, intellectual growth, when he said:

The critical faculty is a product of education and training. It is a mental habit and power. It is a prime condition of human welfare that men and women should be trained in it. It is our only guarantee against delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension of ourselves and our earthly circumstances. Education is good just so far as it produces well-developed critical faculty. (632)

In 2006, what colleges mean by “growth” is growth in revenue, the growth that follows from the twin evils of grade inflation and dumbing down.

A Significant Encounter

Jobs and revenue are good but what happens when you subtract literature from the curriculum? Two casualties may be individualism and democracy itself. Robert Pinsky writes about his own initiation into literature:

...in the poetry I was reading at the same time as I was encouraged to attend that inward theater of the imagination, the figure of the teacher does have dignity, the idea of learning bound up with the idea of art. In this poetry, rehearsing it in my actual voice for my actual ears, or in my vocal and auditory imagination, I heard a voice that was mine yet not mine. Sometimes instruction, or the process of being educed from an accustomed realm to a different, transforming realm, was the poetry’s explicit action, as in a poem that struck me so forcibly I typed it up and put it on the wall above my toaster, when I was eighteen…. (“Voice” 8)
The poem was Yeats’ “Sailing to Byzantium” which to this day Pinsky can recite on demand. Few students today tape poems up over appliances, and Pinsky goes on to explain what has been lost:

My later teacher, Yvor Winters, has a touchingly naïve, though admirable, vision of literary study in relation to the political realm. In *The Function of Criticism* he suggests that poets who make a living teaching in American universities contribute to democracy by inculcating the careful, precise understanding of language. That appealing, oversimplified, perhaps impossible vision was plausible in the years when nearly everyone who attended college in the United States had a significant encounter with a teacher of literature, through certain required courses in literature or composition [my emphasis].

Pinsky follows this observation with an indictment:

We teachers of literature retreated from that period, I suppose because the work was too burdensome and discouraging. If it inched democracy up the hill, the sweat and blood for every fraction of an inch seemed too great, the progress far too hard to measure. As far as I can see, we lost our stomach for it. As a professor, I quite willingly use the first person plural about this. As a student, recalling my Freshman Composition class with Paul Fussell—a class that produced several writers and many books—I am grateful to have come through college in that era…[but] I do feel some regret that we have not formulated better the relation between the art of letters and our understanding of democratic education. (“Voice” 13-14)

Given the retreat from reading, the social agendas of critical schools, and the prevailing business model, the likelihood of that relationship taking root in our two year schools seems remote. Nor can I imagine having a conversation about letters and democracy with an administrator who would understand what I was talking about.

Let me quote our three-time Poet Laureate one more time. Writing about the democratizing effect of poetry, Pinsky says, “Though poetry’s history may link it to hierarchical, pre-democratic societies, the bodily nature of poetry links it to the democratic idea of individual dignity” (“Voice” 17) In so doing, poetry and other works of the imagination act to resist an engulfing world of mass culture. He says:

Poetry’s voice—its literal, actual voice—takes on a heightened poignancy, and a heightened value, in a culture rich in dazzling performative art that is produced, duplicated, and marketed on a mass scale…In the setting of mass culture, the voice of poetry, in ways that entertainment media cannot, embodies something critically different from spectacle: an intense concentration on individual consciousness. (*Democracy* 62)

Others have spoken of the centrality of literature to individual consciousness. Joan Didion famously wrote that “We tell ourselves stories in order to live” (11), and President Warren extends Didion’s idea:

Stories, songs and plays are one central way we come to know ourselves in action, and translate that knowledge into meaning in patterned language. In considering literature, it’s more useful to think of “meaning” as a participle rather than as a noun: it’s a process, an ongoing action, not a package. Stories, songs and plays are dynamic and willful shapes of our search for meanings…. (Warren)
Literature’s meaning is redemptive, consoling, exhilarating, and liberates us from the brute facts of daily existence. The electronic search, on the other hand, is for links and ironies: The Daily Show, The Onion, YouTube mashups, the endless mockery of taking anyone or anything seriously. Today, we tell ourselves jokes in order to live.

**Look for the Main Idea**

So what are the prospects for literature courses surviving in the iPod, cell phone, MySpace, edu-biz circus that community colleges have become? Not good, I think. The past I have just described may very well have reached the tipping point and commenced a death spiral. David Gelernter, reviewing E.D. Hirsch’s new book The Knowledge Deficit, explains why so many students struggle with reading comprehension. He says, “Competent readers depend on a store of shared knowledge that our children must learn—but are not being taught.” Pundits comment with puzzlement on the a-literate student who CAN read but chooses not to. Hirsch offers an explanation of the a-literate student: why read if you don’t know what the books are talking about? Gelernter finds that

> Our schools are trapped…in a nightmare of vacuous bullet-points and double-talk; teachers present “comprehension strategies” (“predicting, summarizing, questioning, clarifying”) in place of plain, nourishing information. Students are shown again and again how to “classify, draw conclusions, make inferences, predict outcomes.” But they still can’t read intelligently. No author can possibly spell out the implied context of every sentence he writes. Children must learn to fill in those blanks—but our schools refuse to teach them.

> Imagine trying to read War and Peace armed with good “classification skills” instead of basic knowledge. Who was Napoleon? What do czars do for a living? Where is Russia? But those are mere facts and are secondary, according to education-school professionals, to such “metacognitive skills” as “making judgments,” “questioning the author” and “looking for the main idea.” (Gelernter)

Thus, lack of reading produces more lack of reading. We are all familiar with students who lack concrete knowledge of history or geography but are filled with half-formed impressions, sound bites, SportsCenter highlights, song lyrics, and celebrity gossip supplied by their electronic media.

**Extinction or Migration?**

What then of the future? Kernan saw university English and Literature departments losing their centrality in liberal education, as at Post, and being converted to massive writing labs. Those of us in the two-year colleges have seen the fulfillment of that dismal prediction, as usual serving as the canary in the coal mine for the universities. One of the most optimistic prophecies about literature I’ve heard comes from the ALSC’s Warren who thinks literature may simply seek refuge outside the ivory tower. She says, “Personally, I am more interested in art than in school, so if art migrates to coffeehouses and basement apartments and libraries, so be it: it won’t be the first time. Still, it seems an avoidable pity that students should not meet literature in school” (Warren).
I do not want to close this essay sounding as hopeless and curmudgeonly as John Updike at 2006’s BookExpo when he said, “Book readers and writers are approaching the condition of holdouts, surly hermits refusing to come out and play in the electronic sunshine of the post-Gutenberg village” (Updike). Some steps can be taken to reinvigorate literature in the two-year colleges.

1. **Offer designer classes.** Invent new courses compatible with the current zeitgeist. Monterey Peninsula College offers two online literature classes I have designed: More, or Less, Than Human? (classic and modern literature and films which depict the convergence of human intelligence and artificial intelligence) and Literature By and About Men (a boutique class if there ever was one). Both have been fully accepted for transfer credit by the University of California and the California State University systems.

2. **If they think we’re a business, give them branding.** Literature teachers must aggressively market courses with flyers, posters, ads, and public appearances. Moreover, they must market themselves. Over the last several years I have created a semi-fictional character, a brand called “Professor David Clemens” who stresses academic rigor, attends conferences, publishes papers, and appears on panels. This doppelganger is quite a different fellow from my shy, inward self, but he has become a recognizable figure on my campus, an award-winning teacher, a symbol, and he attracts students to my literature courses. He makes a public display of himself to publicize that our college is more than a remediation ghetto, and that our teachers are also in The Great Conversation. The only problem is that, as Borges famously says in “Borges and I,” I no longer know “which of us has written this page” (247).

3. **Get back to where you once belonged.** Return to teaching literature as literature. Students are bored senseless when teachers use literature as a pretext for advancing “equity,” “virtue,” “social justice,” “traditional values,” or any other ideas which animate them apart from literature. The days of condemning Moby Dick because it depicts cruelty to animals and because the burning of whale oil contributes to global warming must end or literature teachers doom themselves to irrelevance. Let’s make a great leap backward to architectonics, negative capability, aesthetic distance, and Faulkner’s “old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed - love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice” (Faulkner).
4. **And the award goes to...** Design programs and certificates. Departments can create Great Books programs (as Bruce Gans has done at Wright College and Celeste Barber at Santa Barbara Community College), Honors programs, and offer certificates in literary study. An English majors club, creative writing magazine, and website can coalesce nascent but isolated readers and writers. And invest in awards. Our Humanities Division teachers donate a dozen $50 book awards at a jam-packed ceremony each year. I give memorial book awards to remember three of my late teachers and colleagues, and I find that students are moved by being initiated into a long-standing tradition.

5. **If you don’t build it, they won’t come.** Finally, key to everything is to battle furiously with penny-pinching administrators for as many Introduction to Literature sections as possible. If the Intro course can be made mandatory of degrees and certificates, so much the better. The Intro course is the feeder class for all the rest.

Will such steps reverse the dwindling numbers of literature courses and literature students? Of course not. They are theatrical, “teacher shtick,” showmanship rather than cultural or educative change, effective only locally, partially, and temporarily. Worse, they are based on the hope that if we can just seduce students to enroll and then expose them to “text as art,” they will catch the same fever that burns in us. This hope seems naive when students have been vaccinated by modern entertainment media against such necessities for reading as time for concentration, an independent imagination, and moral/historical consciousness and knowledge. Only a return to Pinsky’s “required courses in literature,” demanded by a culture that values them, could possibly succeed at turning the tide. However, such a cultural sea change seems unlikely among young people (and parents) bombarded by electronic stimuli, learning outcomes, ideology, reading “skills,” and a moral and historical vacuum that constitutes a hermeneutic illiteracy. At conference after conference, all the talk is about composition strategies, promoting collaborative skills, increasing information literacy, and developing visual literacy. I have no problem with acquiring visual literacy (learning to understand *Maus* or *Watchmen* is a legitimate, if short-lived, application of literary analysis), it’s just not the same experience as reading *Light in August*.

Literature will live on, I imagine, as a niche market, in Warren’s coffee houses, in the religious and private schools, and in elite universities and nearby community colleges, but for the rest, all the future holds is the implacable logic of extinction.
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English instructors in most if not all community colleges teach writing courses. That is what we do. A small number teach one or two sections of anything from British Literature to Contemporary Film, but most English instructors teach two or more sections (often five) of writing—the subject matter running the gamut from Basic Writing to Critical Thinking and Composition. As such, our mantra is: We are dedicated to providing skills where they seem non-existent, often; inspiring individuals who are ill-prepared, uncommitted and/or academically challenged; offering insights which we intend will help our students change their bad habits and gain effective ones; challenging the advanced or gifted individuals while at the same time motivating those many who struggle; and maintaining a healthy environment for all to learn and develop even though there are uniquely diverse behaviors, personalities and backgrounds of experience among the adults within each class, regardless of the course.

Consequently, I’m compelled to comment, briefly, on what challenges most English and other college educators—even though we know it will be an element of expectation—as we begin each new semester with each new class of students: preparedness, or lack thereof essentially. And who is responsible for that? The student? Apathetic if not absent parents? The K-12 academic process? A student’s prior learning environment? The testing process for college entrance and placement? Counseling mistakes? All of the above plus myriad other factors including learning and language issues? Really, there is no succinct, ready answer that applies to the masses; instead, English and other college instructors must discern what is occurring for each student in an effort to help that individual work to overcome specific deficits or enhance the individual’s natural as well as learned abilities.

Since I have taught Freshman Composition as well as Critical Thinking and Composition courses the majority of my career prior to retirement, I am

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well aware that students’ lack of preparedness—anything from their inability to punctuate correctly to their inability to relish substantive thought—may stem from all or many of the above mentioned concerns. The real challenge, therefore, is to focus on how to create productive opportunities for as many individuals as possible rather than lament all that has not taken place for our young people prior to their entrance into college life. As a stimulus, I like to remember some thoughts of Anne Lamott’s in her book *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. For in an early chapter of her work, wherein Lamott mentions her oldest brother’s struggle years before to start an essay because he is overwhelmed by a writing assignment, the writer recalls that her father, a successful professional writer, advises his son to take each assignment “Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird” (19). Lamott explains that she uses her life reflection to “make a dent in the tremendous sense of being overwhelmed that my students experience” (19) when they face a new writing project.

Sometimes it gives them hope, and hope, as Chesterton said, is the power of being cheerful in circumstances that we know to be desperate. Writing can be a pretty desperate endeavor, because it is about our deepest needs: our need to be visible, to be heard, our need to make sense of our lives, to wake up and grow and belong. (19)

In essence, Lamott suggests that students often avoid a writing assignment because they perceive the immenseness of the objective rather than the satisfaction of the journey.

One very real concern that many students who enter a college level writing course possess is how to punctuate proficiently. Many are not even aware of the semi-colon or colon and consequently use commas in lieu of the former. Additionally, they use commas instead of periods and periods instead of whatever other form of punctuation is effective. Because their thoughts are often run-on or fragmented, many student writers behave as though substance of thought is unnecessary. They like to believe that either fragments of notions should offer the right “impressions” of the idea, or lengthy, vague and run-on messages should fool the reader into thinking that the writer is offering well-supported concepts. In other words, if student writers convince themselves that they have formulated a notion that makes sense to them as they present the idea in writing—whether fragmented or run-on—then the reader, too, should grasp the thought. Anyone who has taught a writing course knows the defensive student response “It made sense to me when I wrote it. I never did get how to use commas, so I just stick them where I think they should go. Does it really matter?!”

As Kanei Tucker of *Criterion* Online Writing Evaluation Services articulates in her March 2006 letter to writing instructors, “Nearly fifty percent of all incoming freshmen need writing remediation. Students today just don’t seem to have the foundation of skills required to do well in college.” Additionally, her
message indicates that “Faculty in every classroom work tirelessly to address the gaps in…writing fundamentals, and good writing skills at every student level continue to be a primary challenge” for teachers. And while Tucker’s principal impetus may be to introduce a support-oriented web product, her messages regarding missing student skills are both clear and valid. College students and teachers alike are frustrated by missing elements of productive student functioning and self-confidence.

So, is it that there are tutorial programs, both on-line and otherwise, which are the answer to our students’ writing deficits once they enter college? What a tempting concept! Yes, student services and learning programs are an asset for many students. However, students at the college level are grappling with far more than mechanical, grammatical, and organizational issues. They need more than tutoring related to mechanics and the paragraphing of their ideas, for example. What they need, aside from how to structure thought, is thought itself. Countless times, for instance, I have heard the easy rationalizations, especially from Freshman Composition students: “I don’t know what kind of subject is interesting to others;” “I don’t know what I should write about because I haven’t done anything meaningful;” “What do you think I should pick as a topic?;” “How can I possibly find enough to say if I can’t even think of a topic for this assignment;,” and so on. It is as though these individuals have been programmed by parents and former school systems not to think beyond the most obvious, simplistic formulas for addressing an assignment and life. It is not just about how they function in a writing course. It is about how they fail to function in a host of life arenas.

Because of the aforementioned, one of the first areas I have discussed with my former students of Reasoning and Writing as well as Freshman Comp., whether they were young adults or middle-aged, is what valuable thinking and problem solving encompass (e.g., appreciating the principles of as well as differences between inductive and deductive reasoning or traditional versus Rogerian argumentation and logic—how, when, and why individuals use each one). In effect, I let them know from day one that they would not only learn to be responsible, satisfied thinkers, but also grow to take responsibility for many other areas of functioning throughout their academic programs and beyond the college environment. Many took the challenge and thrived. Some remained in denial.

Indeed, college educators know that students must analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information in order to employ higher levels of thinking—in order to explore the fruitful avenues to reason and insight. However, if only our AP, International Baccalaureate, or College Prep. students engage in the above, regardless of the course, the majority of our students who graduate or leave the high school setting will not have experienced the forms of problem solving and critical thinking that may best prepare individuals for their higher educational endeavors let alone countless life challenges, especially in the workplace. If in K-12 our students are preparing for more than a satisfactory score on state
exams and our so called “mainstream” and challenged students are not just getting by so they may graduate, then there is hope for our children’s success in life beyond knowing how to program a cell phone, game player, or other instantly gratifying device.

I continue to wonder why so many students entering their college years have not been progressively reading, analyzing, and evaluating literary and other genres. Why is it that they have not heard the phrase cause and effect relationships—in history, the political and social sciences among other fields. How can they not be aware of current events and a host of cultural traditions. Why are so many unprepared to apply useful economic principles to their own financial lives and well-being let alone the nation’s. Can they not appreciate semi-fluency in at least one foreign language. Is the make-up of the human anatomy or the earth’s layers and forms not of importance—the complexities of the universe. Is hypothesizing now a superfluous endeavor. Are debate and philosophical contemplation only for the very few. I could go on, but…..

Indeed, knowledge is power, and power leads to self-confidence—in academia, the workplace, relationships and so forth. If our student writers verbalize that they have nothing worthwhile to write about, then likely they are expressing their own sad reality. Their seeming apathy very well may stem from a so-called “preparedness” that avoids real learning and individual self-esteem by school systems asking a nation of children and teens frequently to memorize facts and accomplish tasks rather than engage in knowledge and experiences that lead to fulfilling life accomplishments. Until the latter occurs, society truly may strain “to be cheerful in circumstances we know to be desperate” (Chesterton qtd. in Bird 19).

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Talking Back to Richard Bailey: Cultural Literacy Doesn’t Have to Be Covert

By Erika Szostak

In the Fall 2006 issue of inside english, Richard Bailey’s article, “Error and Opportunity” addresses the discrepancy between the language of textbooks and the language of our community college students, especially the language of our fundamental skills learners. He takes the textbooks to task for not remembering their audience in terms of point of view (students write in the first-person, textbook authors in the third), subject matter (seventeenth-century German knights and Japanese conductors versus cosmetology classes and movies), and in the sanitation of their language, exercises which present sentences much less complex than the kinds that our students write. He’s right about the disconnection between the way our students speak and the way the textbooks speak. Despite well-intentioned efforts—most of the textbooks I’ve come across have included diverse voices, real student writing, and many readings which do attempt to speak to students’ experiences—the language of many of the writing samples and exercises are often tinged with a sort of paternalism, functioning, as Bailey calls it, in terms of a “covert cultural literacy project” (40).

Here are some examples of the kind of textbook language that Bailey (and I) would fault for losing the attention of our students almost immediately:

• “In the early days of the Roman republic, both men and women wore togas. Women eventually wore dresslike [sic] garments, called stolas, with separate shawls. For men, however, the toga remained in fashion with very little change.” (Brandon 17)

• “The Minoan civilization on Crete was destroyed by tidal waves; a similar fate may have befallen Atlantis. Some people speculate about a volcanic explosion on Atlantis; in fact, a volcanic eruption did destroy part of the island Thera in the Eastern Mediterranean in 1500 B.C.E.” (Brandon 68)

• “Barrie originally wrote the story of Peter Pan as a series of skits so that the sons of Llewelyn Davies could perform in them.” (Choy and Clark 97)\(^1\)

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Let’s be honest. I don’t want to read about Roman togas either. Learning and teaching grammar, for most students and instructors, can be so boring, and it’s even more boring if we can’t make students see that we know how to speak their language as we’re teaching them how to speak ours—if, per Peter Elbow, we can’t show them how what they learn in our classes connects to lives they lead outside of our classrooms. But the language of learning basic English doesn’t have to be boring, and it doesn’t have to serve the ends of a covert cultural literacy project. We can still serve the ends of a cultural literacy project with our materials, but it doesn’t have to be covert. That cultural literacy project can be student-directed. Often it is we, the teachers, who need schooling in the literacy of our students’ cultures. I say that cultural literacy project can flow in the opposite direction from whence it now flows, from student to teacher, rather than from teacher to student.

What, then, to do about this? I’m writing today to share some examples of the ways I personalize lessons for my students and keep them awake long enough to get through their grammar lessons. Every day, when I take attendance, I ask students, rather than having them answer me with “here” or “present,” that they respond to me with the answer to a particular question about their personal tastes. The questions ask for favorites and least favorites (musicians, movies, actors, places to visit, historical periods, foods, comedians, etc.) or things like, “If you could meet one person in the world, alive or dead, who would it be?” “Name at least one goal you have for yourself.” These questions are my overt cultural literacy project. I pay attention to their answers, and as I get to know my students’ interests, these show up in their exercises, quizzes, and tests. For example, when I have students who like the band Social Distortion, then we will find the subjects, verbs, and independent clauses to Social Distortion lyrics. Besides musical lyrics, I also use quotes from their favorite films, for which the Internet Movie Database <www.IMDB.com> is a wonderful source. If a student mentions comedian Dane Cook, then we will work on filling in the correct prepositions in a Dane Cook transcript (albeit curse words cleaned up). Depending on whichever celebrities are currently on their radars, we’ll summarize or find main ideas in articles on those celebrities. I use articles from websites like <www.tmz.com> or magazines like InTouch and US Weekly. Celebrity magazines are, in turn, doubly useful because they also allow me to segue into a lesson on logical fallacies and evaluating the reliability of sources.

Another way I learn about students’ interests is through an open reading assignment in which my developmental students are assigned to read one article per week on any subject from any nonfiction source. They must bring in a copy of the article and a summary in their own words. They don’t always get the main ideas of the article right, but beyond the main subject of the article itself, the things they do take to be the main ideas are even more telling of their interests.

For instance, one student read a lengthy article on Vlad the Impaler, an
article which covered a range of historical, geographical, and cultural facts. The only aspect of the article on which the student reported, however, was the detailing of the Impaler’s particularly violent acts. This is not to say that we should pandering to a student’s interest in a subject possibly chosen simply for its shock value. Knowing this student’s particular interest in punk and psychobilly music, however, I could respond by choosing sentences or topics for subsequent assignments that addressed violence in terms of that music, thereby capitalizing on the students’ interest in a positive manner. When the student subsequently starts reading grammar exercises with sentences about famously violent musicians such as GG Allin, Jason Sears, or The Massacres, the shock value shifts in the other direction (“What, my teacher actually knows about Jason Sears and R.K.L.?”) and suddenly, his interest is piqued.

In another case, in a biographical article on pop star Beyonce Knowles, a student focused on a description of some of Beyonce’s costumes, minor details in terms of the original bio. Nevertheless, this indicated her interest beyond Beyonce in fashion and theatrical costumes, which meant for the next assignment I found sentences about fashion design for the stage and about Celestine Beyonce, the pop star’s mother and costume designer.

Finally, I make a habit of utilizing spoken word poetry in the classroom. Spoken word is widely popular in Los Angeles, where some of the talent from HBO’s *Def Poetry Jam* host a weekly event called “Da’ Poetry Lounge” that attracts three to four hundred audience members weekly. One way for students to see a connection between their basic English exercises and the real world is for us to capitalize on that popularity. I like to show a spoken word performance from a source such as HBO’s *Def Poetry Jam* or AOL’s Black Voices project, then do our grammar exercises using a transcript of that performance. My students are always excited about this. Bailey says “Exercise language...misses the messiness of real student writing. [It] isolates the variable and sanitizes the sentence so that it has only one problem” (41). Utilizing spoken word, while challenging, solves this problem. In terms of grammar, the language of urban poetry is often messy; sentences often break many rules of grammar and have several complex problems. But this is the way our students speak—this language is in first person, it is funny, it is passionate, it is socially relevant now—and these are teachable moments. We can ask our students to identify the grammatical problems in the poetry and to rewrite the sentences so that they’re grammatically correct. We can also, to make our lives easier of course, choose spoken word artists whose work is more generally narrative than that of others, e.g. Taylor Mali, Sydnee Stewart, Jerry Quickley, Poetri, Shihan, Rives.

Analyzing transcripts from *Def Poetry Jam* or articles about Celestine Beyonce may do nothing to improve our students’ knowledge of canonical literature, art history, or geography, but at the level of basic English and pre-composition, that’s not why they’re in our class. It’s not important that the students are subconsciously “improved” by what Bailey calls “Trivial Pursuit/
cultural literacy” sentences (41). While the general English teacher rule may be “read the sentence, ignore what you don’t understand… analyze the grammar, apply the rule to correct the error, and then don’t make those mistakes in your writing anymore” (41), the problem is that when we read a sentence, we can’t help but look at content first, and when students are put off or put to sleep by that content, it’s that much more difficult for them to analyze the grammar and apply the rule. It’s also less motivating. We must remember that many developmental students, because it is difficult for them, report that they do not like to read in the first place. Making them read about subjects for which they have no frame of reference will do nothing to remedy this situation. When they read sentences that are personally relevant to their interests, the lights start to go on.

We’re not getting our students’ attention by making them work through sentences on Roman togas, dead Minoan civilizations, Japanese orchestra conductors, and seventeenth century German knights. While I’m not advocating edu-tainment in place of education, I am saying that when we invite students to learn—if we don’t speak their language and make sure that we’re as literate in their culture as we want them to be in ours—they’re not going to accept our invitation. Bailey asks, “Will students learn better if they do exercises written in their own language rather than textbook language?” (49). I say the answer is yes. If we don’t learn the culture of our students, we can hardly expect them to learn ours. At the very least, they’ll know we’re paying attention, and they’ll respond in kind.

Endnotes

1 Who’s Llewelyn Davies? What’s even worse about this example is that it fails even in the terms of a covert cultural literacy project. It throws out an obscure name but then never goes on to explain the significance of that name in context. Without specifically looking it up, students would have no idea who Llewelyn Davies is, or why J.M. Barrie might have wanted to write Peter Pan for his sons.

2 R.K.L. stands for “Rich Kids on LSD.” It’s the name of a punk band from Santa Barbara, CA, of which Jason Sears was the famous lead singer until he passed away while trying to kick his drug addiction in 2006.

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From Part-Time to Tenure Track: How to Get Hired for a Full-Time Gig

By Deborah Gilbert, Emily Malsam, Optimism One, Adrienne Peek, and Jason Wohlstadter

In 2005, we were asked to join the English department at Modesto Junior College. While the five of us who were selected share a few essential characteristics, our unique personalities, teaching methods, and backgrounds provided for a well-rounded hire. Of course, we certainly cannot claim to have the expertise and insight of a hiring committee; however, our experiences have taught us a lot about what it takes to get a full-time job at a community college in California. Because the job-seeking process can be long and complex, we have concentrated on five main areas in which candidates will need to focus: innovative education and curriculum development, CV building, job research, the application packet, and the interview.

Creating a Scene: Innovative Teaching and Curriculum Development

Emily Malsam

Prior to filling out paperwork, collecting letters of recommendation, and buying a new suit, applicants should be aware of their job goals. One integral component to being prepared for today’s college campus is the knowledge of and practice with innovative education. This knowledge and practice cannot be attained overnight and, therefore, should be on the minds of graduate students prior to the application process. Incorporating these innovative teaching techniques will give candidates further opportunity to become involved in curriculum development, first in their own classroom and later in their respective departments, another component that could provide candidates with the right experience for the sought after position. Innovative education is a broad term that includes practicing alternative teaching pedagogies and employing the latest technology. Applicants should be aware, however, that while innovative pedagogies and current technology have many benefits to both teachers and students, not every college prioritizes these innovations when making hiring decisions. Showing familiarity with current theory on alternative instruction and scholarship may not be necessary, but it can, at an interview, open up a

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discussion about pedagogy in general and provide an opportunity to exhibit informed reflection upon your own teaching practices.

Administrators and fellow instructors will look to new hires for creative and fresh ideas. Knowing how to do simple tasks such as sending e-mail, creating documents, and navigating the web are essential skills in any workplace; however, adding a few more programs, such as Dreamweaver, StorySpace, and existing or emerging web log programs (commonly called blogs) and/or webfolio programs, such as Vfolio, to this short list can improve your likelihood of getting hired. Take opportunities to introduce your students to these programs; students from basic skills to advanced classes appreciate the chance to experiment with technology with the help and guidance of an instructor. While these programs may require some class time to implement, their overall benefit to the classroom can be energizing and substantive. By the end of one semester of Basic Skills writing, many students were questioning the need for print books, the relationship between the time of composition and the time of “consumption,” and the differences between print and electronic text—questions that made me believe they had invested themselves in their assignments.

Virtual representations of your past experiences, education, and teaching pedagogy add another dimension to your application packet and offer a hiring committee a more complete picture of yourself, your accomplishments, and your abilities. Portfolio programs, or webfolios, which are designed to organize, unify, and showcase students’ work, typically offer pre-fabricated templates, whereas websites often must be created using programs such as Dreamweaver, FrontPage, or Microsoft Word. If you are currently teaching as an adjunct, contact your school’s technical department to ascertain whether the school has pre-licensed software or web space. If this option is unavailable to you, individual subscriptions for web space are inexpensive and widely available.

Webfolio programs, weblogs, and computer software in general are updated regularly and new technology is continually emerging, so it’s important to consult texts on alternative discourses and innovative pedagogies routinely. Knowing the basics about these aspects of education and your stance on their place in the sequence of classes offered at your college or university is important; providing examples that suggest that you can successfully implement these discourses is an added bonus.

In addition to these emerging programs and new technologies, consider researching and employing innovations in instruction. In the field of composition, teachers and writers are experimenting with new genres, creating woven texts, and introducing multi-vocal and multi-language assignments. For example, online journals (blogs) provide a virtual medium for students to reflect on class discussions, share ideas about assignments, conveniently peer review other students’ work, and much more. (In fact, in the creation of this article, having a blog to brainstorm provided one way to continue conversations after our meetings were over.) Furthermore, the construction of websites and/
or portfolios allows students to envision and produce virtual re-creations of their print compositions, transforming their written words into art. Multi-vocal assignments, combined with virtual environments, allow students to analyze differences in voice, style, and format.

Curriculum development, in combination with innovative education or on its own, is another important experience that applicants should seek to be involved in prior to applying for jobs. Educational institutions are constantly developing new classes and carefully evaluating their past offerings. Any experience you can bring to the table—including creating new courses, attending curriculum meetings, designing learning communities, or overhauling past courses—will help to provide evidence that you understand the intricate processes that drive educational institutions.

Curriculum development takes place in multiple forums: within your own classroom, within the division, and within the institution. To develop this skill further, volunteer to teach new courses and invite peer feedback from colleagues and students. Challenge yourself to create new assignments with new textbooks to provide a breadth of knowledge about what you like/dislike about assignments, textbooks, and semester schedules. In my own experiences, changing textbooks has helped me to determine what information is essential for and relevant to my students. Further, propose new courses or alternative formats for existing courses to your division dean, and be prepared to discuss their purpose, objectives, and intended audience. Finally, be aware of the opportunities for adjuncts and part-time employees in terms of committee involvement. When the opportunity presents itself, volunteer to attend curriculum meetings, and bring fresh ideas, including any ideas you may have about textbooks, student learning objectives/outcomes, and goals for courses.

Long before you begin the application process, you need to be fully aware of your goals and aspirations. There are many opportunities to grow as an instructor, and these two arenas, innovative education and curriculum development, should be well under way before applications are signed. Remain cognizant of the foundations of your classes by involving yourself in curriculum development but also stay current on alternative and innovative pedagogies being practiced in your field.

**CV Building: Making the Scene and Making a Scene**

*Optimism One*

The *curriculum vitae* (CV) is a vital element in getting hired. It is the visual display of what you’ve done and where you’ve done it, indicating your continued participation in the community of educators, as well as your willingness to be continually educated.

Conferences are a great place to learn what’s going on in the discipline, contribute to that scholarship and dialogue, meet distant colleagues and future
employers, and simply be inspired by the intellectual energy that is focused on a collective love of composition and literature. They are also a great place to feel like you are part of a bigger community than you regularly experience. My first conference was the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges Conference (ECCTYC) in 2003, and it was big enough to include a wide variety of sessions but small enough not to feel overwhelming. I also had the benefit of going with a long-time friend, and he was gracious enough to introduce me to a number of people from different colleges. This was a good “getting your name out there” opportunity. Also, after discussing with one division dean what I was planning for my thesis, she asked me to send her my CV, which put some major wind in my sails. The next week, I presented my first paper. It was at a graduate conference at my school, a less threatening way to contribute to the field. Of course, there are tons of other conferences, but of particular note are the Young Rhetoricians’ Conference (YRC), held in Monterey, CA, every summer; the Conference on College Composition and Communication (4C’s), which, like the National Council of Teachers of English Conference (NCTE), takes place in different major cities around the states; and the California Association of Teachers of English Conference (CATE), which, like the ECCTYC conference, moves around the state. Also, there are many other conferences that are very interest-specific, like those that focus on technology, so keep your eyes and ears open for what is up your alley.

Community service is another way to show your participation in and willingness to contribute to a larger, albeit somewhat different, community, and it is also a way for you to get more practice in teaching. For me, I learned a great deal about teaching to diverse students by volunteering to teach writing in my county’s jail system. I did this by contacting my local literacy center, where reading is the primary focus. But it just so happens that they have a program in place to help inmates earn their GEDs. And since writing is a component of that test, they needed a willing and able person to teach everything from the rudiments of essay writing to basic grammar. In my case, the classes were very small, allowing for a great deal of individual instruction.

Publication also helps in building your CV and perhaps even getting your name out there before you meet potential employers. I’ll never forget the time when I walked into my first adjunct interview and one of the interviewers said, “Hey, I liked your article in inside english.” It occurred to me that publishing might be my ticket into a full-time gig. The next year I published my writing in four different places, both large and small, all but one of them to an audience of my academic peers. It is also worth noting that one of these pieces was something I wrote as a graduate student, and that ended up getting published in Teaching English in a Two-Year College after a small bit of revision. Therefore, I would say that the publications you should look into include those just mentioned, as well as College Composition and Communication, College English, English Journal, and the publications on the campuses where you
teach, not to mention more specialized journals.

An easier way to build your CV and show that you are a part of your campus community is to attend and participate in the many professional development offerings that are offered on your campus. It’s wise to keep an eye out for emails regarding technology workshops, special events, and various professional development activities. The latter will allow you to speak authoritatively about what you have listed on your CV. Also, keep in mind that many campuses organize a great number of professional development sessions around the week before classes begin, so try to keep that period open.

You’ll also want to join as many committees as you possibly can. This is an invaluable opportunity to show that you are willing to participate in shared governance and decision-making. These are also great places to discover how departments, divisions, and colleges are actually run. In many cases, you will not be able to join because positions are reserved for full-timers, but nonetheless, I volunteered every time there was a request. A small handful of governing bodies, like Academic Senate, Curriculum Committee, and College Council, allow adjuncts to attend as non-voting observers. Also, there are usually a couple of positions reserved for adjuncts in the Academic Senate.

Closely related to committee involvement is what I call the invisible CV, which is particularly relevant if you want, as Adrienne and I did, to get hired at a place where you do most of your part-time work. Whatever I could do to be seen as much as possible, I did. Whether it was at social gatherings, readings, ceremonies, conference rooms, faculty lounges, or hallways, I was there. I made myself “a part of.” I saw these events not only as a chance to get to know the community I coveted, but also as a chance for them to get to know me so that I would stand out from the hundreds of faceless, equally-qualified candidates applying for the same job. And guess what? When application time rolled around and interviews were granted, a day didn’t go by without a full-timer offering a word of encouragement or an interview tip. The bottom line is that the personnel committee and the division knew what they were getting: an active, committed, and, I dare say, engaging individual.

**Behind the Scenes: Preparing the Application Packet**

*Adrienne Peek*

While most applicants are aware that there will be quite a bit of work involved in landing a full-time teaching position, many are not aware that a significant amount of that work should go into preparing the application materials. Since it is not uncommon for community colleges to receive between 100 and 200 applications for a single position—and since hiring committees do not have the time to interview every applicant—the application package is the single criterion upon which decisions about whom to interview are based. But it’s even more important than that. Most hiring committees use a numerical scoring
system to rank applicants, and the application package is where points start accruing. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that your application package is as strong as possible.

You will, of course, want to know where the jobs are. The best way to stay informed of job openings in California is to register on The California Community Colleges Registry <www.cccregistry.org>, which is a website containing a list of current job openings in California community colleges. Since The Registry is utilized by the human resource offices that represent all 109 California community colleges, registering there means that you will receive e-mail notification of every community college job opening in the state. Openings outside of California can be found by regularly checking the MLA job listings and watching the advertisements in The Chronicle of Higher Education. Also, it’s a good idea to attend one or both of the annual job fairs in California—they’re free, and no registration is required. Job fairs are usually held in January—one in Northern California, and the other in Southern California—and are announced on The Registry. Dress professionally, and take copies of your CV to share.

Most institutions will ask you to supply a Diversity Statement and a Teaching Philosophy Statement (or Pedagogical Rationale) with your application. Since both of these statements require a good bit of thought and reflection, you should begin developing them as early as possible. Both of these statements should be completed before you start preparing application packages so that you can spend your time writing cover letters that are tailored to the individual campuses to which you are applying. The purpose of the Diversity Statement is to show how your unique interests, background, awareness, and creativity contribute to a dynamic campus community. Your Diversity Statement should be a one-page, single-spaced document that goes well beyond the simple statement that you value diversity and believe it enriches the learning experience. Diversity is not just about the obvious categories of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, age, disability, or international upbringing. Though those are vital, a discussion of how unique activities, work experiences, or hobbies have shaped your growth and development is also effective in a Diversity Statement. Whatever aspects of your unique history you choose to highlight, though, it’s important that you go beyond simply mentioning them. Instead, focus on discussing how these aspects have shaped the perspective you bring to the classroom and benefit students.

Your Teaching Philosophy Statement (or Pedagogical Rationale) should be a single-spaced, one- to two- page document that makes clear what, how, and why you teach. Begin with what you teach—what are your objectives as a teacher? While you will obviously want your students to learn the content of the courses you teach, are there objectives you strive for beyond that? Do you, for example, hope to foster critical thinking, facilitate the acquisition of life-long learning skills, prepare students to function effectively in a democracy, or
develop problem-solving strategies? Once you’ve presented your objectives, discuss the methods you use to achieve them. Explain specific strategies, techniques, and exercises. Include both what you have used in the past and are planning for future courses. Tie these directly to specific teaching objectives and explain how each method is designed for that purpose. Finally, explain why. You might explain what the rewards of teaching are to you, or why teaching is important, or maybe there are some ideals that you return to again and again in order to rejuvenate yourself and inspire your students. However you go about composing your Teaching Philosophy Statement, keep in mind that it should provide the hiring committee a clear idea of who you are as a teacher and what you believe about teaching and learning.

While you are developing your Diversity and Teaching Philosophy Statements, you should also be collecting letters of recommendation from people who know you well and can talk about your teaching in detail. Invite your mentors, your thesis chair, old advisors, and friends who work in the profession into your classroom to observe your teaching so they can write strong, detailed letters. Additionally, you’ll need to keep your letters current because most colleges require the letters of recommendation to be dated within the previous year. Furthermore, it’s a good idea to collect more letters than you need; that way, you can select a “package” of the most outstanding letters that, in combination, address as many of your strengths as possible. Finally, you should include at least one letter from the person who most recently evaluated you—even if it’s a somewhat perfunctory letter, it will be okay as long as it is balanced with at least two very detailed, glowing letters that say why students will be well served by spending some time with you.

In the ideal situation, you will have already put together a strong CV, gathered numerous letters of recommendation, and completed your Diversity and Teaching Philosophy Statements before you start putting application packets together; that way, you’ll have plenty of time to develop the cover letters. The cover letter is your first chance to make a strong impression as a promising candidate, so don’t skimp here. The typical cover letter is usually one and a half to two single-spaced pages (but not more than two), and it should highlight your accomplishments and experience in some detail. Since the purpose of the cover letter is to persuade the hiring committee to include you on a list of candidates for further review, it should begin with an initial claim as to why you are a strong candidate for the position. Members of hiring committees like to see cover letters that indicate that the writer knows something about the institution and is writing to apply for their specific job, not for any and every job; therefore, you should, as much as possible, tailor your cover letters to the individual campuses to which you are applying. Keep in mind that while you have one letter per position to write, members of hiring committees have hundreds of letters (as well as vitae and other accompanying materials) to read. Your letter needs to stand out, and it needs to show how your
education, experience, and interests fit with what the institution is seeking. A letter written for a particular job at a particular institution is much easier to read than one that is written to cover a variety of jobs at a variety of institutions. If the job announcement lists six desired qualifications, and your letter explicitly addresses all six, even someone who is skimming the letter can quickly flag your application for further review. It’s a good idea to do some research here by reading the institution’s website. That way, you can use the information you glean, as well as the desired qualifications listed in the job announcement, to help you decide what to emphasize in your letter.

Before you sign the letter and send off your application, it is crucial that you read over all of your application documents. This might sound obvious, but it is surprising how often I’ve heard from faculty members on hiring committees that they received documents with typographical errors, misspellings and—believe it or not—cover letters addressed to or referring to the wrong institution. So, when you’ve finished the application packet, sit down and read it with great care. And one last thing: I have heard over and over again that promising applicants weren’t asked to interview because they forgot to sign the application, so make sure you don’t overlook even the most obvious of steps.

Surveying the Scene: Job Research
Deborah Gilbert

I would recommend conducting job research at two crucial junctures—when completing the application packet and after advancing to the short list; however, in practice, I had time for only the latter.

While I didn’t have time to do research as I drafted my cover letter and short essays for the applications, I did pay close attention to and derive information from the announcement and short essay topics; clearly, one must read and respond to them carefully. Though they may start to look the same, they aren’t; announcements say a lot about the specific place and position, and the short essay prompts ask questions that are meaningful to the hiring committee you hope to meet, as well as the campus community at large.

Making the short list might mean that you receive a request for more materials, that you are asked to schedule an interview, or, as in my case, that you are asked to make a ten-minute video in which you answer a series of preliminary interview questions and perform a brief teaching demonstration. However it happens, this is the moment to spring into action and begin collecting information in earnest.

Talk to anyone who is in any way connected to the school or the place: an instructor, a student or former student, anyone who lives or has lived in the community. I called and emailed friends and parents of friends who knew about the places and campuses where I interviewed. To get a feel for the culture, ask questions about parks, restaurants, cultural events and venues; ask about
the people and politics. To round out the picture, look at the city web page for demographics, and peruse the city newspaper online. Such fact-collecting serves two purposes: one, it helps you determine if this location and job are a good match for you, and two, it provides information that will help you connect with your prospective colleagues when the time comes.

If possible, talk to someone who has recently been through the hiring process at a community college. I got my best advice from two such friends (one crucial tip was not to break character during the teaching demo). If you have an academic mentor, a former or current instructor perhaps, then he or she will be important to you at this stage. And if you don’t have a mentor, you might take this opportunity to reconnect with people in the profession whom you have admired. I contacted my first graduate school professor, and while she did not have specific experience with California community colleges, she did have very good advice about how to prepare for and present myself in the interview.

Study the college website to learn how the disciplines are organized, how the college presents and promotes itself, and who the students are. Pay special attention to the division and department websites: peruse the faculty listing (study their CV’s and course websites, and look at their pictures), look for event announcements, and learn about student groups. Request a course catalog to find out about degree requirements, a schedule to find out about course offerings, and even course outlines (they are the college-approved course requirements and guidelines). Again, this research will help you gauge your own interest in the job, and it will provide the information you need to present yourself as informed, confident and invested in the interview.

And finally, if you have the time, visit the campus. Snoop around: walk through the building in which your interview will take place, read the flyers on the walls, pick up a school newspaper, and visit the bookstore to see what books your potential colleagues use. If you don’t have a chance to visit the bookstore, you may be able to search the campus bookstore online. Ideally, this research process will serve two purposes: to get you excited about the job and prepared for the interview. The more I became informed about the place, the college, and the people, the more enthusiastic I became. Based on that enthusiasm, I developed a positive connection to my interviewers before ever meeting them.

**Shooting the Scene: Interview Day**

*Jason Wohlstätter*

In the spring of 2005, I was excited to have a number of job interviews lined up. Prior to that time, however, I hadn’t had any, so I felt uncertain going into my first one. It wasn’t that I lacked confidence about my ability as a teacher but that I lacked the kind of foreknowledge that having done an interview can bring. That’s not to say I didn’t do my homework. I prepared, and I knew in general
what to expect at each interview, but it was the experience of learning from interviews that made each one that followed so much more predictable and so much less intimidating. Learning what to expect at interviews helped me clarify my game plan going into them. I discovered that, while it was important to “be myself” at an interview, time limitations made it difficult to let people know what I wanted them to know about me when I hadn’t determined that for myself in advance. In other words, to be myself at an interview, I had to know not only myself, but also how to present myself in an instant. Fortunately, the more I learned to anticipate the specific demands of interviews, including the demands of the grading and teaching demonstrations that usually accompanied them, the more skilled and confident I became at being myself in front of a hiring committee. What follows, then, is a concise account of what I came to expect from interviews and what I kept in mind as I went through them.

The Grading Demonstration
When I was asked to grade student writing at the interview, I was given anywhere from thirty to sixty minutes. The grading demonstration usually came before being interviewed, but it occasionally came afterward. Sometimes my grading would serve as a point of conversation during the interview. In most cases, I was instructed to comment on and grade an essay, but one time I was told to comment on a draft and then have a conference about it with a student in front of the hiring committee. At one interview, I was asked to offer advice to a colleague about how I would respond to a perplexing essay. Another time, I was told to create a teaching demonstration based on what needed the most revision in the draft of an essay I had just read. In all of these grading situations, I found the following guidelines helpful:

- Consider what the student achieves and respond to it in a supportive way.
- Avoid the temptation to correct everything to demonstrate your knowledge.
- Rather than correcting a variety of errors, comment on notable patterns of error.
- Keep the big picture in mind and prioritize. Point out two or three key strengths and offer two or three suggestions for how to improve future work.
- Depersonalize negative comments by minimizing the use of “you” and “I.”
- Remember that the committee may be more interested in your response to an essay than in the grade it receives.

The Teaching Demonstration
I was given about ten to twenty minutes for this part of the interview. Sometimes I was informed of the prompt weeks in advance, but at one interview I had just minutes to prepare a lesson in response to one of a few specific prompts given to me on the spot. On one occasion, I was asked for a videotaped demonstration of my teaching. Another time, I was told to teach any lesson that I thought was suitable for a freshman composition course. I was usually instructed to teach the committee as if they were students, though I was once asked to pitch
a lesson plan to them as colleagues. The topics for teaching demonstrations were always familiar to me, and they ranged from narrow (“teach how to quote effectively”) to broad (“introduce students to a novel they’ll be reading and get them excited about it”). Key strategies that helped me during teaching demonstrations were these:

- Embrace the role of the teacher. Teach the committee just as you would your students.
- Announce the goal and value of the lesson; end it with a reminder of what was learned.
- Get the committee involved if you value a student-centered classroom. Ask questions, brainstorm together, encourage dialogue among the group, etc.
- Use the blackboard or some other visual presentation to enhance your teaching.
- Don’t be surprised if someone decides to act like a difficult student. Be prepared for it.
- Remember time is short, so show good time management. If you run out of time, let the committee know what you would have done with a few more minutes.

The Interview
Each of the interview committees that I met with consisted of about seven faculty members. The committees as a whole were generally quite friendly, but since they were in the midst of a series of interviews, it was common for people to be taking notes or to appear a bit tired while I spoke. I was usually asked about eight to ten questions for about thirty to forty minutes, and I learned that I could expect these kinds of questions:

- Why do you want to teach at a community college?
- What teaching methods and strategies do you find most useful in the classroom?
- What sequence of readings and assignments would you teach in a particular course?
- What experience enables you to teach a range of courses in our department?
- How do your teaching methods meet the educational needs of diverse students?
- How do you use technology or innovative teaching tactics in your classroom?
- How do you deal with late, excessively absent, talkative, disruptive, or upset students?
- What experiences demonstrate your professional growth and currency in the field?
- What would you contribute to our program?
- Do you have any questions for us?

Of course, everyone has individual responses to such questions, so I simply offer some general interview tips that I found worth keeping in mind. You have about three to four minutes for each question, so be clear and direct. Support your claims with brief but effective examples or anecdotes. Do not hesitate to repeat information stated in your application. Consider bringing sample syllabi with you. Have questions prepared that you plan to ask at the end of the interview. These questions should reflect your interest in the school’s students and should indicate that you already have done some initial research in what the school offers. Remember your audience; it may not entirely be made up of English teachers, so avoid jargon. Direct your responses to everyone in the group and speak as though you are having a conversation, not taking a quiz. Think of committee members as potential colleagues. Smile, make eye contact, and enjoy your time in the spotlight.
At our presentation on this very subject at the 2005 ECCTYC conference, one attendee, after hearing our thoughts on what it takes to get hired, asked in an overwhelmed and exasperated voice, “How in the world did you do all this?” One of us replied, “You just do it. You can worry about sleep later.” But, while that approach may be true to a large extent, it is important to recognize that all of us didn’t necessarily do all of the above. Or if we did, we did them in varying degrees of intensity. Also, as one of our colleagues suggested earlier, getting hired may be “mostly a matter of serendipity.” As troubling as that notion might be, some reassurance may be found in Thomas Jefferson’s idea that the harder you work, the more luck you have. The point is that you push yourself to stand out from the crowd. Anyone who has a chance of getting the job almost certainly has an MA at least, just like you. So making yourself a student of the hiring process will make you much more prepared for the numerous challenges you will face along the way. Every tangible and intangible job-related act you engage in could be the one that helps you rise above the rest. Reading this article is probably a pretty good start.
A *Los Angeles Times* article (May 5, 2006) reported that a Pasadena newspaper “...is reviewing a guest column written by the superintendent of public schools because the text contains phrases similar to a widely distributed sermon delivered years ago” (Rivera B5). The article poses the question “Is Clark [Percy Clark, Jr., Pasadena Unified School Superintendent] guilty of plagiarism, or did he merely use material that he did not properly attribute.” This “rationale” for the event is, in fact, the essence of the definition of plagiarism: presenting another’s work as one’s own and “neglecting” to “properly attribute” credit to the source. When this occurs, one has plagiarized.

Were I to receive Clark’s piece in one of my Freshman Composition classes and have access to Patrick O’Neill’s piece, the “sermon delivered years ago” (B5) by the Unitarian Minister from which Clark is accused of “borrowing” without attribution, Clark would certainly be taken aside and told that his work was plagiarized and instructed in ways to remedy his text and the consequences of not doing so. His defense, “I paraphrased from the documents I saw. This is not plagiarism” (B5) would be explained as, indeed, being plagiarism, as it is not so much actual words that constitute plagiarism, as the taking, as in paraphrasing, of ideas—the true gist of any matter.

Paraphrasing from documents seen is plagiarism as “ideas” are what matter and must be credited to their sources. Unfortunately, today, many labor under the mistaken notion that only those passages copied verbatim and not set in quotation marks with an author’s name constitute plagiarism. Not so. The paraphrasing of text or ideas that comes from another source, the mimicking of sentence structure or style, or even having another proofread and “correct” one’s paper (friend or family member—as often occurs in a college English class), all constitute varying degrees of plagiarism.

It seems the ready availability of so much information via the anonymous and ubiquitous Internet has brought its users, in academia and society at large, to a point where we believe that everything is out there, available at the click of a mouse, and belongs to us all, free of charge, since we access it at home or in our private offices on our own computers. It’s as if doing the work of merely “finding” the information constitutes a proprietary relationship to it.

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That plagiarism is becoming so widespread in academic, administrative, and professional circles these days, not just in the expected arena of the college classroom, is especially disturbing. There are several things to remember here: 1) it is intellectually and linguistically impossible for two individuals to separately come up with verbatim written comments on any given topic; 2) information on the Internet is not just “there” for the free picking; it belongs to someone, and the researcher, whose duty it is to cite his or her sources, needs to make every effort to identify the author; 3) if all such attempts fail, to avoid the situation Mr. Clark finds himself in, or, more bluntly to CYA, the “borrower” need at minimum include a phrase such as, “…as many Internet sources suggest” or “…as claimed in numerous Internet accounts” thereby acknowledging that the information is someone else’s idea but that the user can’t track down whose originally, which seems to be Clark’s case regarding the O’Neill sermon, circulating on the Internet without authorship.

The irony of a superintendent of schools being charged with plagiarism is that the academic arena is where the concept of plagiarism is, or should be, taught and upheld to the highest degree. I have had many students question my definition of plagiarism as they have been taught that only verbatim passages of more than five words are plagiarism. By that standard, use of such phrases as “I have a dream” or “One giant leap for mankind” without quotes would not qualify as having been plagiarized. Academics and students must, in their research, acknowledge the source of their ideas—the one who thought it first and expressed it with such eloquence that we are moved to repeat it.

Intellectual property is an invaluable commodity. Though copyrights and royalties try to compensate the artists and thinkers among us, what price can we put on art and ideas? They are by their very nature meant to be shared and are put forth with pride and enthusiasm by those who create them. It is our duty, at the very least, when using another’s ideas, to credit that person with the thought.

Intellectual honesty regarding intellectual property, another’s ideas or art, is a trait and practice that we must all take to heart, cherish, and safeguard. It is based on personal integrity, which is essential in civilized society. The truthfulness with which we represent our work, our ideas, and ourselves is a measure of our personal integrity. When that is in short supply, it diminishes the level of trust we have in each other and increases the level of cynicism with which we view society as a whole.

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How Not to Be a Ditto-Head: Seneca and Plagiarism

By Santi Tafarella

Seneca, the Roman Stoic, wrote letters that are curiously similar to the kinds of three to five page essays that college teachers tend to assign to first-year writing students. That is, Seneca’s letters are short, focused meditations, in an informal voice, directed to an intelligent audience. Indeed, one translator of Seneca, in an introduction to his writings, declares that Seneca’s “one hundred and twenty-four letters to Lucilius comprise something entirely new in literature. For in these, which were his most conspicuous and immediate literary success, Seneca if anyone is the founder of the Essay” (Campbell 20).

This raises an interesting question. Might the “founder of the Essay” have a short letter that writing teachers can use in the classroom to provoke students to think about issues surrounding plagiarism?

As it turns out, while reading Seneca last year I stumbled upon such a letter—Seneca’s thirty-third letter to Lucilius—and I found it works well with students both as a model essay and as a provocative reflection on why we should avoid plagiarism in our writing. Seneca begins the letter addressing the dangers of over-reliance on the writings and thoughts of others. And midway through his letter’s cautioning admonitions he writes:

“Zeno said this.” And what have you said? “Cleanthes said that.” What have you said? How much longer are you going to serve under others’ orders? Assume authority for yourself and utter something that may be handed down to posterity. Produce something from your own resources. (80)

These sentences of Seneca’s tend to arrest my students’ attention. And it gives me an opportunity to reflect with them on plagiarism. In contrast with some teachers’ Mosaic admonitions against plagiarism in class syllabi—“Thou shalt in no wise eat from the tree of plagiarism, for in the day you eat thereof…”—stands Seneca’s more humane provocation to originality. Plagiarism is bad not for the reasons that our students might superficially suppose (because teachers don’t want you to do it and it might get you expelled). Plagiarism is bad for a deeper and more profound reason: because it robs a person of his or her chance at self-expression and self-development. To rely on the thoughts and words of others, with or without attribution, is to leave your own thinking to atrophy—or

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never to develop at all. “This is why,” says Seneca, “I look on people like this as a spiritless lot—the people who are forever acting as interpreters and never as creators, always lurking in someone else’s shadow” (80).

Seneca admonishes his pupil to come out from the shadows and cease being a mere imitator of other people’s voices, memorizing their words and reciting them uncritically to others. An adult’s education entails not just the recitation of others’ thoughts, but the development an individual’s own critical faculties and creativity. Plagiarism and its near cousin, mere summary writing, are thus especially pernicious activities for the adult student, for they subvert the very purpose of a higher education. Seneca writes on imitation with caustic brilliance: “a man who follows someone else not only does not find anything, he is not even looking” (81). In Seneca’s estimate, an education not focused on the development of critical and creative faculties is of value only for the indoctrination of children, and is not befitting adults: “It is for this reason that we give children proverbs…to learn by heart, a child’s mind being able to take these in at a stage when anything more would be beyond its capacity” (80).

How then should an adult determined not to plagiarize or merely recite others’ ideas use sources properly? Seneca answers by replying to an anticipated objection, and it constitutes the conclusion of his essay:

“But surely you are going to walk in your predecessors’ footsteps?” Yes, indeed, I shall use the old road, but if I find a shorter and easier one I shall open it up. The men who pioneered the old routes are leaders, not our masters. Truth lies open to everyone. There has yet to be a monopoly of truth. And there is plenty of it left for the future generations too. (81)

For Seneca, sources are the “old routes” which we trace always with an eye to new directions for setting out. And anticipating contemporary democratic pedagogy, Seneca asserts that truth is accessible to all—implying that the average person’s reasoning faculties are adequate to the task of critical thinking. One need not be a member of the intellectual elite to partake in analytic and creative processes, or arrive at good conclusions, or share them with others.

I suggest to my students that this notion of Seneca’s to trace the “old routes” to new launching points is really the only good reason to quote from others within our own essays. By quoting others we map out the territory from which we can then critically respond and push our college dialogues further, either by disagreeing with the quote or expanding on the ideas that the quote conveys. Our quotes, in other words, should never be used as the final word on which we pronounce, like a Rush Limbaugh fan, a mere “ditto” at the end. And if we succumb to the temptation of taking our ideas from others without attribution, we have subverted two important purposes of college—which is to think critically and dialogue with others in the college community. Plagiarism undermines both of these gestures. Thus I suggest to my students that I want to
hear their own voices open up over the course of the semester—not the echoes of others’ voices. I want to hear from a budding Seneca, not a ditto-head.

**Works Cited**


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**EDITOR WANTED**

*inside english*, an academic and literary journal published by the **English Council** of California Two-Year Colleges and serving English Departments at two-year colleges within California, seeks an Editor with editorial experience on a college or university journal.

Duties include copyediting, graphic design and layout, and management of advertising sales. Applicant should be familiar with design software (*Illustrator, Photoshop* and *InDesign*) and demonstrate a working knowledge of desktop publishing. Editor should have an M.A. in English or MFA, be affiliated with a community college within California, and work smoothly with an editorial board. The position carries a small stipend.

Submit CV and letter of application to Dr. Chella Courington, English Department, Santa Barbara City College, 721 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA, 93109, or email materials in a *Word* document to couring@sbcc.edu. Applications should be received by September 1, and applicants will be notified by early October of interviews at the ECCTYC Conference in Burlingame, October 12 and 13.
Some of my colleagues are wizards at using plagiarism detection search programs such as Turnitin.com. Neo-Luddite that I am, I couldn’t do something with this noble service if you paid me a hundred bucks—hell, I can barely check my email without screwing it up. Luckily there is a “pre-” rather than “post-” plagiarism option. Directions follow.

(1) Always create your own take-home writing topics, foregoing anything already in use from the textbook authors or the teacher down the hall.

(2) Incorporate a “local” element into the assignment. For example, when we do Romeo and Juliet in a mid-level developmental class, the assignment is not just to critique film versions, but to make a case for which version should be shown at our local multiplex during a hypothetical weekend-long Shakespeare Festival. Student papers thus have to address the needs of our local audiences, which means nothing ready-made is available on the Internet. Another example would be to require that a general analysis essay incorporate at least two quotations from a moderately obscure journal article which you distribute in class or put on reserve, which has the added advantage of tying in with citation lessons and an introduction to library work. (Extra points if it is one of your own articles.) You could also use material from a field trip or a guest speaker.

(3) Rotate assignment prompts every single semester. Each of your students has a friend, a sibling, a distant relation who will be enrolled in your school next term and the term after and the term after that. You don’t want your own previous topic responses to recirculate through your life like the water in a mall fountain, not least of which because it would be really embarrassing to give the same paper different grades two terms apart. Change topics often and you can’t get the same work back.

(4) Conference with students either in draft stage or to return papers. If a student has been receiving an illicit amount of help, it almost certainly comes out in a personal meeting. (Just pick the hardest word in the paper and ask your student what it means.)

(5) Repeat as necessary, using your freed-up Internet time not for detective work but for looking through the Chronicle for conferences in Key West or Kauai.

Charles Hood’s most recent books are Under the African Air (Fountain Mountain Books) and Rio de Dios: Thirteen Histories of the Los Angeles River (Red Hen Press), both 2007. He has several other books pending as well. He teaches writing and journalism at Antelope Valley College and can be contacted at chood@avc.edu.
How often have students told you they had never read a book before your composition class? The answer may well be “Too often.” As an English instructor, you can feel your mission to teach reading and writing is an uphill struggle against the proliferation of popular culture. However, while you may wish your students would open a literary novel for relaxation, instead of watching television or playing video games, should you assume (as conventional wisdom has it) that the latter activities are mind-rotting wastes of time? Steven Johnson would say no. *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today’s Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter* is thought-provoking reading for instructors who want to understand better what their students are doing instead of reading, and how these pastimes affect their preparedness for college.

Johnson aims to convince us that, rather than degenerating into junk food for the brain, popular culture “has, on average, grown more complex and intellectually challenging over the past thirty years” (xvi). He derives the label for his theory, The Sleeper Curve (xvi), from Woody Allen’s spoof futuristic movie *Sleeper* in which Allen’s character, Miles Monroe, is revived in 2173 after being cryogenically frozen for 200 years. In the scene referred to by Johnson, Monroe finds himself in a strange society where scientists proclaim that “steak…cream pies…[and] hot fudge” are health food (xiv). Johnson urges us to place ourselves in Monroe’s position with regards to today’s popular culture and reverse our assumptions. However, unlike Allen’s movie, Johnson is not joking.

Just as Monroe is bewildered, readers are initially likely to be skeptical of, or at least surprised by, Johnson’s theory. We are accustomed to the standard

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criticism that the substance of popular culture is at best inane, or at worst immoral. Johnson, however, argues that its subject matter, if not entirely arbitrary, is not as important as the ways in which we interact with the underlying systems and structures. His basic distinction between yesterday’s and today’s popular culture is that the former requires a passive audience, whereas the latter makes more demands. He suggests that we should see “media as a kind of cognitive workout, not as a series of life lessons” (12-14).

An example of the type of cognitive workout Johnson refers to is provided by the television show 24, “the social network of [which] mirrors the social network you frequently encounter in the small-town or estate novels of Jane Austen or George Eliot” (113). He shows that 24 not only has many more characters than a predecessor such as Dallas, but these characters’ relationships are also more intertwined (110-14). More complex social networks lead to more complex plots. For example, all episodes of Starsky and Hutch contain only two plot lines: one is a minor comedy plot framing each show; the other is a main plot concerning a small number of characters, which is always tied up neatly, making each episode self-contained (66-67). In contrast, The Sopranos “routinely follows a dozen distinct threads over the course of an episode, with more than twenty recurring characters” which are linked to prior and later episodes in soap opera format (69-70).

While today’s TV series are comparable to nineteenth-century novels, many of today’s successful comedies, following a trend pioneered by Seinfeld and The Simpsons in the nineties, are comparable to the avant-garde literature of the sixties (89). Johnson cites a 1997 episode of Seinfeld titled “The Betrayal,” modeled on Harold Pinter’s play of the same name, as a landmark. As it is presented in reverse chronological order, it requires audiences to make sense of punch lines before their set-ups (89). The Simpsons is similarly sophisticated in that each episode typically alludes to eight movies (86). Structural descendants of Seinfeld and The Simpsons include shows such as “Scrubs, The Office, South Park, Will & Grace, [and] Curb Your Enthusiasm” which use “intricate plot lines and obscure references” that require audiences with extensive cultural capital to appreciate all the jokes (90). In contrast to “intelligent,” yet undemanding classic shows such as Mary Tyler Moore or Frasier, these new shows “force [the audience] to be intelligent” (64).

Also useful to English instructors is Johnson’s analysis of today’s video games. He argues that they involve much more than obliterating bug-eyed monsters with a machine gun and develop such indispensable college skills as inductive reasoning and patience. Johnson points out that in traditional board games, players know the rules at the outset; in today’s video games, however, players must figure out the rules themselves through a grueling, forty-hour process of trial and error that reflects the scientific method (42-47). Even cheating is arduous because “walk-throughs” written by gaming enthusiasts can run to two hundred pages (173). Those who think today’s video games are easy are misguided. Similarly, those who criticize their violent or unrealistic
narrative content are missing the point: it’s the process of decision-making rather than the details that is important (47-60).

Can even the dregs of popular culture develop any college-friendly skills? Johnson would say yes, even reality TV is not all mindless dross. He rejects the standard criticism that the entertainment factor in reality game shows comes from watching people being humiliated. He argues that what audiences enjoy is watching people adapt to “a complex, high-stakes environment where no established strategies exist” (94). This view is borne out by the extensive fan sites devoted to commentary on such shows (169). Perhaps some of our students have practiced textual analysis by contributing to one of these sites. Johnson argues that reality shows suffer in our estimation when we compare them to their roots in documentary. They should rather be seen as descendants of game shows such as *The Price is Right*. In comparison to the latter, shows such as *The Apprentice* are more sophisticated because, despite their artificial set-ups, they challenge participants and viewers to adapt to abruptly changing rules and to learn social skills (91-93).

In Johnson’s words, “This is the ultimate test of the Sleeper Curve theory: even the crap has improved” (91). But why has it improved? One of “the forces driving The Sleeper Curve” pinpointed by Johnson is the fact that money is made in TV today from syndication and DVDs, necessitating shows that are sufficiently layered to withstand multiple viewings (157-58). A second is that, contrary to what the widely-held Slacker theory would have us believe, human brains actually seek challenges and problem-solving activities (180-81). As a result, complex popular culture is...well...popular. The implication of this for me as an English instructor is that the gap between literature and popular culture is apparently narrowing. Johnson’s book has caused my gauge of my uphill struggle against popular culture to move a little away from the “mountain” and a little towards the “molehill” pole. If one of my students has never read a novel, maybe he or she has figured out the nuances of a complex television show, or read a video game walk through, or written one, or read a fan-site, or written a blog.

Not only has *Everything Bad* made me consider that my students may be better prepared than I had realized, but it has also enabled me to be better prepared for the classroom by giving me ideas for assignments (especially as several of the textbooks I use have sections on popular culture). For example, I sometimes assign an in-class essay in which students compare an episode of *Ozzie and Harriet* with an episode of *The Osbournes* and argue which is better TV. While students’ responses to this prompt are largely enthusiastic and thoughtful, they generally fall into the two categories that Johnson discerns amongst mainstream responses to such shows: some applaud the moral values of the older show, while others celebrate the realism of the contemporary show (14). Since reading Johnson’s book, I follow this in-class essay with a class discussion in which we take a different approach: we analyze *Ozzie and Harriet* as a simple show, and *The Osbournes* as a complex show. For example,
we discuss how the former is scripted, follows a basic plot with a small number of characters, and is easy to follow; in contrast the latter is more spontaneous (though still edited and no doubt performed to an extent), fragmented, has a larger scope, and makes more demands on its viewers to interpret it. Following this, I assign a typed essay in which students compare the content and structure of two shows or films of their own choice.

By assigning such essays, my intention is not to encourage students to abandon their own initial responses to texts and to take Johnson’s theory on board without question. (After all, when I hear the word “Sopranos,” my first thought is still of Tony butchering a blood-spattered body in a bathtub, instead of the complex plot structure of the series.) Rather, my goal is to do what Ken Bain argues the best college teachers do for their students: challenge the preconceived notions, or interpretive frameworks that students bring into the classroom, thus nurturing critical thinking skills that are applicable across the curriculum (10). In short, not to fill minds up, but to open them to new possibilities.

Johnson’s book has done the same for me. I still lament the fact that students do not read enough. But I understand that they are not as under-prepared for English classes as I used to presume and that I can adjust my lectures and assignments to build on the skills they do have. Perhaps I am also missing out on a crucial part of my own education. Tonight I may leave *Middlemarch* on my nightstand and reach for a video game…considering I haven’t played one since *PacMan*.

**Works Cited**


Rooting for Goliath

By Candace E. Andrews

BOOK REVIEW:

Nobody Roots for Goliath


What does every all-American male have in common? Many of us with the double X chromosome would likely agree: his love of games played with a ball, his fear of feeling (or flying to quote Erica Jong), and his obsession with sex. Every ten seconds experts say that last thing flashes through his mind. Or is it every seven seconds?

Punctuated with literary allusions that any teacher, especially any who has been relegated mainly or exclusively to the trenches of bonehead English, can savor, Nobody Roots for Goliath (Willowgate, 2006), Phil Hutcheon’s first novel, explores the disparate playing fields of the basic English composition classroom and the sports arena. Sex, several packages of condom’s worth, is sprinkled in-between.

Protagonist and adjunct Professor Malcolm Wade, aka Wade, is the California State University English teacher whose miserable life is characterized by his relentless, if witty, sarcasm; his battles with brain-dead academic bureaucrats; his copious and irritating use of four-letter words; his penchant for petite women many years his junior; his love (almost) for his brilliant and beautiful colleague Angela; and his distaste for overweight women, among them his coked-up, ex-English teacher wife Brenda. (If Brenda is meant to appear pathetic, Wade at first seems equally so: these two, this reader can’t help but think, deserve each other.) Through most of the novel, Wade is struggling to finish his dissertation on…once you know Wade, you can guess…a writer with a love of sports, women, and bullfights. And there are plenty of bullfights (metaphorically speaking) packed into this novel.

Like Jong’s Isadora Wing, part of what Wade seeks is the “zipless fuck”; that is, sex without commitment, sex without complications, just-for-fun sex,

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sex with the spouse conveniently out of sight. But sex is simply a band-aid or a temporary detour here. Our hero’s “wade” into the depths of Mindy and Pam is simply a precursor to his wade into the waters of his own life, and—like Isadora’s fearful flight into the stratosphere—shows us that there’s something deeper at work and that I.Q. points count for naught when the interior landscape is concerned.

Wade’s life becomes more complicated and interesting when a seven foot six inch tall basketball player named Marvin Walker signs up for his class. Wade soon finds himself enmeshed in trying to teach basic English to this hugely underprepared African American athlete and in the politics of those who want to further Marvin’s career in order to buttress their own. Inside the classroom, Wade battles with things like plagiarism and punctuation, or rather, where Marvin is concerned, no punctuation. Outside the classroom, the stakes are higher. Wade is concerned with keeping his job and his own life from utter disaster while at the same time keeping his student, seemingly bound for the NBA, from those who would devour him. The always politically incorrect Wade stands his ground: no free grades or guarantees in his class.

A character I initially find unsympathetic in almost every way (perhaps it was that crack about Hawthorne, my favorite writer), Wade earns points with me when the narrator gives me a few glimpses into what makes this very common mortal tick, even if most of what makes Mr. Wade tick has to do with athletes and his love of the game:

…The absolute, final loss of all religious feeling he could trace to a single, searing moment of terrible truth at the end of his youth: the radio bulletin inaugurating 1973 with the New Year’s news that the plane carrying Roberto Clemente on his mission of mercy to the victims of the Christmas earthquake in Managua had plunged into the sea. A faint vestige of faith or hope to find it had somehow survived childhood in the age of assassination, Kennedy and King and Kennedy again, but for Wade the death of the Great One had finished God for good. What kind of a just God, after all, would let Roberto Clemente die and George Steinbrenner live? (136)

This famous Puerto Rican right fielder isn’t my personal hero, but I understand Wade more and dislike him a little less when I read this. The rare excursions into Wade’s inner life isolate the narrative voice from Wade’s own, though more often their voices exist in tandem. Later, more of Wade is revealed when he has a serious conversation with Angela about why he married Brenda, a conversation that will pull at any woman’s heartstrings.

Wade’s wife leaves him, much to his jubilation, and he reacts like an adolescent whose parents are out of the house, at the same time striving to finish his dissertation with his crazy advisor and to teach his classes. Sweet Marvin, a character sometimes reminiscent of the noble savage, gets in trouble beyond the classroom: in one incident a gun is involved; then some woman cries rape. Wade’s life, too, is falling apart. They make an unlikely pair,
this eighteen-year-old nearly illiterate African-American basketball star and this fifty-something balding white English professor. Despite their differences, Marvin’s and Wade’s lives are parallel disasters. Young or old, big or small, for both of them and for us as well, there are only so many innings left to play.

Good things are supposed to come in small packages, but for Malcolm Wade, giant Marvin Walker proves to be the best thing that ever happened to him. The ending is surprising. Like a curve ball ending in a homerun.

With a basketball court and player on its cover written by a male author, Nobody Roots for Goliath is, I confess, a book I usually would not have picked up, despite the fact that Phil Hutcheon is both my colleague and my friend. But I’m glad I did. The epigraphs that preface each chapter are worth, by themselves, the cost of the book. However, my favorite quotation is found inside its chapters, a line about English teachers, found on page 139, one of those that came right out of Wade’s mouth and made me laugh out loud. I still can’t say I like Mr. Wade, but I’m glad that he met Marvin Walker. All of us English teacher types have known students who have touched our lives.

I tell my students that we read literature to experience, vicariously, the lives of those who are different from ourselves. Reading Nobody Roots for Goliath, I experience that very thing. Yes, Malcolm Wade is, like myself, an English teacher. We both have a lot of experience with underprepared students, and we both are fond of literature. But there our similarities end. Like Wade’s wife Brenda, or almost like Wade’s wife Brenda, I would be hard-pressed to tell the difference between a famous baseball player (well maybe a not-so-famous baseball player) and a country-western star. I am long past the age of finding fascination in a literary character’s sexual misadventures that in no way mirror my own, and I usually don’t relate (make that never) to a male character going through a mid-life crisis. But the brilliance of this novel lies in its prose more than its characters or its plot, even though its characters are entertaining and its plot engaging. For me this novel is successful most of all because when I read this book, I am taken into another world—a very well-written other world—rooting for Goliath, just like Wade.
This past November 16-21, 2006, the NCTE Convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee. The theme was “The Compleat Teacher: Bringing Together Knowledge, Experience, and Research.” The focus of such a synergy among teacher-scholars from around the country is of particular interest to us in California. While we constantly strive to bring the best educational opportunities to our students in the community college, we are sometimes presented with various challenges. Part of our obligation is to overcome those challenges, whatever they may be. To illustrate this, the opening banquet featured Elie Wiesel. His works, including *Night*, have been read in countless classrooms teaching students about the human spirit. Other featured speakers included Jimmy Santiago Baca, author of *The Importance of a Piece of Paper*, who spoke at the CCCC’s luncheon. His talk touched those in attendance about the value of education and how it can be a catalyst to overcome challenges.

While the sessions are diverse, many are focused on primary education and the four-year university. The community colleges are represented, but with the talented professionals in California, I would like to encourage you to consider not only attending the NCTE conventions, but also writing a proposal for presentation. The community colleges often serve as a bridge for many students transitioning from high school or adult life into college and university life. More sessions that specifically address community college concerns and successes would be beneficial for all attendees. For more information, visit <www.ncte.org>. If the deadline has not passed, consider writing a proposal for the CCCC’s 2008 Convention, which will be held in New Orleans, April 2-5. The next NCTE Convention will be in New York, November 15-18, 2007.

This last TYCA meeting was the final one at which Sharon Mitchler presided as National TYCA Chair. Sharon has been an advocate and strong voice for the community colleges in America for the last two years as TYCA Chair. She will return to teaching full-time at Centralia College in Washington state while Eric Bateman was officially recognized as the National TYCA Chair for the next several years. Eric has been actively involved with TYCA for many years. He will be an excellent chair, and we look forward to his leadership as we thank Sharon for hers.

ECCTYC is looking forward to our upcoming conference “California Cultures: Changing Teaching, Teaching Change.” Our conference will be this coming October 11-13, 2007 at the
Doubletree Hotel in Burlingame. This is an ideal location for our conference as this urban setting is near San Francisco and represents us all within the state. Jody Millward, from Santa Barbara City College, is the keynote speaker and has long been involved in ECCTYC as a regional representative, then later as the National TYCA Chair. She is currently working on the Research Initiative which is a huge project surveying community colleges to uncover needs, successes, and processes. For more information about Jody’s work on the Research Initiative, visit <www.ncte.org/groups/tyca>. Lee Herrick, from Fresno City College, will be our featured poet. Lee has also been involved with ECCTYC for many years, most recently as the First Vice President, and is a celebrated California poet with poems published in The Haight Ashbury Literary Journal, Berkeley Poetry Review, Hawaii Pacific Review, The Bloomsbury Review, MiPOesias, and in anthologies such as Seeds from a Silent Tree: Writings by Korean Adoptees, Hurricane Blues: Poems About Katrina and Rita. For the most current information about our conference, please visit us at <www.ecctyc.org> where you can also download registration and proposal forms. You are the ones who make our conferences such successes, and we look forward to your proposals. This is an ideal opportunity for you to meet and network with colleagues from around the state and to share your accomplishments, research, and teaching stories. Finally, ECCTYC is an organization for and about the professionals involved in making the California Community Colleges great. Become involved in ECCTYC by presenting at our upcoming conference, submitting articles, poems, and research to inside english, and perhaps becoming involved with the board. If you are interested in any of these options, please feel free to contact me anytime at ecaruth@vcccd.edu.
News and Notes

Inside English welcomes notices of events of interest to the profession. Please send Calls for Proposals, Conference Announcements, and General Announcements to the editor at least one month prior to the issue date. Include all pertinent data, including a contact person for further information.

Upcoming Conferences/Meetings: 2007-2008

ALA: 2007 American Literature Association Conference
24-27 May 2007
The Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02116-57
www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2

C & W: 2007 Computers & Writing Conference:
Virtual Urbanism
17-20 May 2007
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
englishweb.clas.wayne.edu/~cw07/cw07/

YRC: 23rd Annual Young Rhetoricians' Conference:
Composition and Rhetoric 2007: Common Ground, Unique Practices
21-23 June 2007
Monterey Beach Resort
2600 Sand Dunes Dr.
Monterey, CA
www.csub.edu/yr

WPA: 2007 Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference:
Preparing Ourselves & Our Programs: Readiness, Relevance, Relationships
12-15 July 2007
Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, Tempe, AZ
www.wpacouncil.org/conferences

2007 American Literature Association Symposium on American Literary Naturalism
5-6 October 2007
Hyatt Regency
1107 Jamboree Road
Newport Beach, CA
Send proposals to Jeff Jaeckle: jaeckle@msu.edu by May 25th.

ECCTYC English Council Conference 2007:
California Cultures: Changing Teaching, Teaching Change
11-13 October 2007
Doubletree Hotel
Burlingame, CA
www.ecctyc.org
2007 Western Literature Association Conference:
*Edgewalking on the Western Rim*
17-21 October 2007
Tacoma Sheraton: www.sheratontacoma.com
Tacoma, WA
www.usu.edu/westlit

NCTE: 2007 Annual Convention of the National Council
of Teachers of English: *Mapping Diverse Literacies for the Twenty-First Century: Opportunities, Challenges, Promising New Directions*
15-18 November 2007
New York, NY
www.ncte.org/profdev/conv

CCHA: 2007 National Community College Humanities Association:
*Creating Communities*
Central Division
25-27 November 2007
St. Anthony Hotel—Riverwalk
San Antonio, TX
www.ccha-assoc.org

MLA: 2007 Annual Modern Language Association
Conference and Convention
27-30 December 2007
Chicago, IL
www.mla.org

2008 Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association
Regional Conference
13-16 February 2008
Hyatt Regency Albuquerque
Albuquerque, NM
www.h-net.org/~swpca/

CATE: 2008 Annual Convention of the California Association
of Teachers of English: *Reading the Water, Writing the Wind*
7-9 March 2008
Long Beach, CA
www.cateweb.org

2008 National Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference
19-22 March 2008
San Francisco Marriott
San Francisco, CA
www.h-net.org/~pcaaca/

CCCC: 2008 Annual Conference on College Composition
and Communication: *Writing Realities, Changing Realities*
2-5 April 2008
New Orleans, LA
www.ncte.org/cccc/conv/
TechEd 2008:
Dates: TBA
Location: TBA
www.techedevents.org/2008/

CSU/ECCtyC English Council Board Meeting
April 2008
Location: TBA
www.ecctyc.org

AAAS: Association for Asian American Studies 2008 Conference
April 2008
Location: TBA
www.aaastudies.org

ALA: 2008 American Literature Association Conference
Date: TBA
Location: TBA
www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2

9th Biennial Jack London Society Symposium
9-12 October 2008
Huntington Library
San Marino, California
http://london.sonoma.edu/Organizations/jl_society.html

Employment Opportunities

CCC Registry Plus: The California Community Colleges Registry is a large scale database containing the names, qualifications and desired position(s) of potential California Community College (CCC) faculty, support staff and management job applicants. The database is utilized by the 72 CCC Human Resources offices, representing the 109 California Community Colleges. This web site provides a number of services for individuals seeking employment as a faculty, support staff or, manager at a California Community College. Register yourself at <www.cccregistry.org>.

HERC: The Southern California Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) announces the launch of its employment website: <www.socalherc.org>. This employment Web site is the result of a collaborative effort among 18 Southern California colleges and universities dedicated to recruiting and retaining a highly qualified faculty and staff. The HERC Web site is the only comprehensive employment Web site in Southern California where job seekers can go to view both academic and staff job opportunities in higher education. The site represents a tremendous advance for people seeking careers in a college or university setting. Job seekers have free access to the HERC employment Web site and all of its features, including the “My Jobs” tool that automatically sends e-mails to potential applicants when jobs are posted that meet their search criteria. For more information, contact the HERC directors, Becky Skov, 858-534-2121, bskov@ucsd.edu; or Kristie Howard, 858-822-5862, khoward@ucsd.edu.
JODY MILLWARD

Jody Millward, a Professor of English at Santa Barbara Community College, has been a cornerstone of inspiration and guidance for two-year college English instructors. Her professional honors include the Nell Ann Pickett Service Award (2007); the William H. Meardy (Association of Community College Teachers) Award (2002); and the California Community College "Out of the Box Thinker" Award (1999). Millward also co-founded many award winning programs, including SBCC's Achievement Program and the college's Multicultural English Transfer Program.

A frequent CCCCs, League of Innovation, and ECCTYC/TYCA Pacific Coast presenter and panelist, Millward’s contributions to local, state, and national college organizations are legion: ECCTYC Representative (1998-2002); TYCA Chair (2002-2003); TYCA Officer, Executive Committee (2001-2004); CCC/TYCA Liaison (three terms). Beyond offering workshops and designing innovative programs, Millward’s vision, determination, and leadership assist her in chairing the TYCA Research Initiative Committee and the first national survey of two-year college writing programs—a benchmark for future two-year college English studies.

LEE HERRICK, POET

Lee Herrick was born in Seoul, South Korea and adopted at eleven months. His first book of poems, This Many Miles from Desire, is forthcoming from WordTech Communications in June 2007. His poems have been published in the Haight Ashbury Literary Journal, Berkeley Poetry Review, Hawaii Pacific Review, The Bloomsbury Review, Quercus Review, MiPOesias, and Many Mountains Moving, among others, and in anthologies such as Seeds from a Silent Tree: An Anthology of Korean Adoptees, Hurricane Blues: Poems About Katrina and Rita, and Highway 99: A Literary Journey through California’s Great Central Valley, 2nd edition (Fall 2007). He is the founding editor of the literary magazine In the Grove and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He is a Professor of English at Fresno City College and lives in Fresno, California.

REYNA GRANDE, NOVELIST

Born in Guerrero, Mexico, Reyna Grande came to the United States as an illegal immigrant to be reunited with her parents after a long separation. Her parents had left Grande and her siblings in Mexico while they worked in the U.S. Grande went on to become the first person in her family to graduate from college. In 1999 she obtained her B.A. in Creative Writing from UC, Santa Cruz. In 2006, her first novel, Across a Hundred Mountains, was published by Atria Books, a division of Simon and Schuster. In April 2007, Grande will be awarded El Premio Aztlan Literary Award given by renowned author Rudolfo Anaya to “reward and encourage” emerging Chicano authors. Grande is currently working on her M.F.A. in Creative Writing while finishing her second novel.

2007 ECCTYC CONFERENCE:  
California Cultures: Changing Teaching, Teaching Change  
October 11-13, 2007, Burlingame, CA  
The Doubletree Hotel, 835 Airport Boulevard, Burlingame, CA 94010

For more information, please visit us at www.ecctyc.org
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*July 11, 2007 Deadline*

**ECCTYC 2007**  
California Cultures: Changing Teaching, Teaching Change

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### PRESENTATION TITLE:

Please write a 50-word synopsis for the program book:

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### Contact

**Name:**

**College:**

### College Information

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### Other Presenters:

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### SOME TOPIC SUGGESTIONS:

- Conducting Classroom Research
- Academic Literacy
- Arts in The Composition Classroom
- Teaching Civic Responsibility
- Teaching Social Issues
- Pedagogical Trends
- How to Teach College-Level Reading Skills
- Teaching Creative Writing
- Peer Revision
- State of the Profession
- Writing Centers
- Diversity Among Students
- Using Literature/Film in The Composition Classroom
- Service Learning
- Online and Hybrid Instruction
- Teaching Electronic Research
- Developmental Writing
- Critical Thinking
- ESL and The Composition Classroom
- Puente
- Media Literacy
- Plagiarism
- How to Get Published
- Writing Across The Disciplines

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### Send proposal submissions to:

**SUSAN COOPER**, Program Co-chair  
2007 ECCTYC Conference  
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26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd.  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355  
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**JUDIE HINMAN**, Program Co-chair  
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7351 Tompkins Hill Rd  
Eureka, CA 95501  
(707) 476-4299 (Voice)  
(707) 476-4422 (Fax)  
judie-hinman@redwoods.edu

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