

*Process into product:  
Teacher awareness of the writing process  
affects students' written products*

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In the summer of 1977, a group of English teachers were trained in writing as a process and in the teaching of that process. These participants were members of the New Jersey Writing Project (NJWP)—a consortium of Rutgers University, the Educational Testing Service, and New Jersey school districts. Also, by extension, they were part of NJWP's sponsor: the Bay Area Project (BAWP), which is now known as the National Writing Project.]

NJWP officially began as a summer institute conducted by Janet Emig, director, and Joyce Carroll, co-director. Volunteering teachers from project schools had been interviewed before the institute began, after district administrators had recommended them as being committed to writing and to NJWP's goal of improving student writing by improving the teaching of writing. This goal was predicated on the following assumptions:

1. Teachers of writing should write.
2. Writing is a mode of learning.
3. Teachers teaching teachers accomplish efficient curricular change.
4. Theories about and assessment of writing enhance classroom practices.

NJWP participants, therefore, engaged in prewriting, writing, and re-writing activities. They wrote, shared, and discussed what they had written, and studied writing theory, pedagogy, and research findings. Returning to their classrooms, they generally modeled these experiences, taught their students writing as a process, initiated multiple drafting, and encouraged collaboration.

### Problem Definition

Writing samples from these students and from control students were taken in October 1977 and May 1978. The major purpose of the research was to answer the question: Would the writing of students taught by teachers who had been trained in writing as a process improve more than the writing of students taught by teachers who had not received such training?

### Related Literature

There is little previous research in the area of teacher training in composition and the effects of that training on students' writing. Bragle's (1969) review of the College Entrance Examination Board Summer Institutes, and Hook, Jacobs, and Crisp's (1969) report on the Illinois Statewide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of English Teachers (ISCPET), were pioneer attempts to ascertain the extent and kind of preparation teachers were receiving in composition (as well as in language and literature) in order to help bridge the gap between practice and preparation. Recommendations included a call for more research in the area of teacher training in composition. However, ten years of research reveals little heeding of that recommendation.

Studies such as those by Tovatt (1965) and by Tovatt and Miller (1967) describe the results of the oral-aural-visual (OAV) stimuli approach when applied to the teaching of general skills in English to ninth-graders. While these studies deal with a specific kind of process, they reveal nothing about the teachers' experience prior to teaching OAV. Others, such as Moslemi (1975) and Denman (1978), stress evidence supporting a particular aspect of writing—the former focusing on teacher evaluation of creative writing, the latter taking a humanistic, noncognitive approach to the teaching of writing. Neither researcher deals in any way with teacher training. Nor does Bamberg (1978). In her thorough study she concludes that composition instruction does make a difference, but she investigates how the quality and quantity of instruction affect students (regular and remedial), not how the quality and quantity of instruction affect teachers.

Blake (1976) reports the results of attitude changes (using an attitude scale of his own construction) after a five-week summer course on the teaching of writing. While the attitude changes are generally positive, there is no account in the report of any transference of the summer course training or of ways in which the changed attitudes about writing influenced subsequent student writing. Also dealing with teacher attitudes, Schuessler, Gere, and Abbott conclude that the

development of their four scales represents a "first step in investigating the relationship between teacher attitudes and student achievement in written composition" (1981, p. 62): They recommend further research into how teachers attitudes are related to amount and types of course-work assigned and to personal work in composition.

One other recent study, by Donlan (1980), probes two staff development models—developmental and deficit. The attitudes of twenty-four composition teachers toward an in-service education program were assessed. Once again, however, possible transference of the training to the writing of these teachers' students was not studied.

This somewhat neglected area of teacher training and transference may account in part for Witkin's contention that teachers, whether habitually or intentionally, remain on the periphery of students' writing and note only externals. In discussing the process of creative expression, he suggests that this traditional concern with product may be due to the incomprehensibility of process to the praxis of teachers. Witkins insists that involvement is so essential to the setting, making, holding, and resolving of expressive acts that teachers must "enter the creative process at the outset" (1974, p. 69).

Britton and the members of the University of London Writing Research Unit agree:

Teachers have many reasons for being interested in writing processes. Their involvement with all the learning processes of their pupils requires that they understand how something came to be written, not just what is written. They can bring to their reading of a pupil's work all their knowledge of his context, realizing, perhaps intuitively, that what they already know about a child and his thinking when they read his work enables them to understand and appreciate something that may be incomprehensible to another. In this respect, many teachers are far in advance of anything educational research has been able to offer them. (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975, p. 21)

Bullock concurs: "If a teacher is to succeed in this he will need to learn all he can about the process involved in writing and above all the satisfactions to be derived from it" (1975, p. 165).

Yet when O'Donnell (1979) systematically surveyed ten volumes of the journal *Research in the Teaching of English*, he recorded that 51 of the 176 articles focused on composition but less than half a dozen dealt specifically with the preparation of English teachers. His data support the significance of the present study, which addresses a question heretofore unposed about teacher training in the writing process while probing the impact of that preparation on students' writing.

O'Donnell's (1979) observations and questions, raised to spur further research in the teaching of English, juxtaposed with the Fagan and Laine (1980) study, which shows that only 34 percent of the English

teachers surveyed in Pennsylvania believed their undergraduate preparation could be improved, underscore the fact that composition, evaluation of student writing, study of dialects, and usage remain areas where teachers feel inadequately prepared. Quisenberry, in an article entitled "English Teacher Preparation: What's Happening?," justifies both encouragement and impatience for "major stirrings which are resulting from genuine attempts to meet perceived needs in the profession" (1981, p. 77).

### Procedures for Training Teachers: Overview of the Institute

#### Writing

The institute, which consisted of a morning and an afternoon session five days a week for three weeks, held to the basic premise that teachers should learn the composing process by composing themselves. Thus, the twenty-five participating teachers wrote for at least one hour every morning; the free, self-sponsored writing activated the process and kept it going. Many of the teachers kept journals, recording their individual responses to the dimensions of the composing process: context, stimuli, prewriting, planning, starting, stopping, contemplating, and reformulating. As the institute progressed, other stimuli activated writing: peer suggestions, conferences, presentations, and the assignment of two polished pieces of writing due at the institute's end. \*

#### Sharing

After writing, the participants formed small groups and each person freely read his or her piece of writing aloud twice. No one was coerced to read; no one was pressured. Other group members responded by using the pointing, telling, summarizing, and showing techniques gleaned from Elbow (1973) and by using and thereby testing criteria sheets of their own design. If a piece of writing would not work, the informal workshop nature and the constructive responses of peers encouraged the writer to invite specific criticism. Gradually, group evaluation deductively moved from general comments to specific analyses of grammar, style, tone, purpose, syntax, sentence structure, and so forth; thus, collaboration spurred meaning. \*

While sharing with peers provided one important and immediate type of audience and evaluation, conferences with the institute's in-

structor provided another. Such meetings allowed participants to have one-on-one discussions of working papers with the instructor.

### Reformulating

Next reformulation occurred. This process was individual, not prescriptive: while peer advice was taken into consideration, personal purpose and style arbitrated final decisions. The task of correcting, revising, and rewriting, which are often theorized as separate functions in the composing process, naturally grew out of continual writing practice, not out of some remote mechanical rules.

In her article "Writing as a Mode of Learning," Emig builds on the work of Vygotsky, Luria, Bruner, and Revesz when stressing her thesis that writing is unique because it enables immediate "feedback, as well as reinforcement . . . because information from the *process* is immediately and visibly available as that portion of the *product* already written" (Emig, 1977, p. 125). In addition, Stallard (1976) points out that cognitive processes seem to be inherent in the composing process. During the NJWP institute, this immediacy and cognition fulfilled two purposes: it enabled self-evaluation, and it heightened awareness of the composing process. So writing became a mode of learning about writing as well as a mode of learning about the teaching of writing.

### Presentations and Theory

Activities during the institute—which included listening to visiting speakers, viewing and discussing videotapes, attending brief lectures, and presentations, engaging in interactive dialogues, and participating in large and small group discussions—revolved around theory, research, and practical experiences. Question and answers depended upon group needs. Three examples: teachers studied Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of a paragraph, applied this theory to their writing of a paragraph, and evaluated the results; teachers replicated the stylistic and syntactical characteristics of a classic literary excerpt, shared their writing with the class, and discussed the implications and extensions of this type of assignment; teachers' lessons, in which a proven writing technique was used with the group simulating grade level, were followed by an analysis of the theoretical basis of what they had done. Because of this procedure, many discovered firm foundations for methods they intuitively had been using, while some discovered that their methods were nothing more than baseless gimmicks.

### Resources

The participants used Emig's *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders* (1971), which provided theory; Elbow's *Writing without Teachers* (1973), which furnished practical suggestions for composing, sharing, and evaluating; Winterowd's *Contemporary Rhetoric* (1975), which added the breadth of recent rhetorical research; and Smith, Goodman, and Meredith's *Language and Thinking in School* (1976), which presented both theory and suggested classroom applications. Reprints and photocopies of selected articles and a bibliography were distributed for further reference.

### Procedures for Implementation of the Institute Training

#### Classroom Implementation

##### WRITING

Returning to their classrooms, the institute-trained teachers generally followed the institute's design, though there were many individual variations. The same ratio of time that had been spent writing during the institute was now spent writing in the classroom. For example, in some classes each student wrote for 15 to 30 minutes two or three times a week; in others, students wrote for 5 to 10 minutes daily, usually in journals. Also, these teachers became models for their students by writing when their students wrote. Finally, these trained teachers ingeniously integrated writing into all phases of their curricula. In every case there was more writing activity going on in the classrooms of the trained teachers than in other classrooms.

##### SHARING

In their classrooms, trained teachers allocated more time for group sharing and various kinds of peer evaluation. In many cases, students heard and systematically responded to one another's writing for the first time.

That the teacher is usually the only audience for the student writer is a point of common knowledge. Noise levels, fear that students will "talk about something other than the writing," lack of training in group processes, and teacher-centered curricula all foster this tendency not to see others as an audience. Yet the trained teachers, because they had experienced group processes themselves, returned to their classrooms equipped to shift from the teacher as the only audience to a situation providing a range of audiences. They were also able to use the criteria

sheets they had developed and tested during their own group sessions in meaningful ways with their students.

Another component of the institute that found its way into the classroom was the conference. As students became involved in the group processes, and as the interactions progressed, teachers situated themselves in the room so that students needing assistance or encouragement could visit about their writing. Some conferences were brief (a nod, a smile, a quick diction check); others required more time (an in-depth reading of an excerpt, help in unblocking). Some students conferred often, some rarely, some never.

#### REFORMULATING

"The question is as always, what does one wish to achieve? At present in the teaching of English, it is not a matter of returning to grammar as much as it is a matter of returning to composition" (Mellon, 1976, p. 74). Assumptions harkening back to inadequate or inappropriate theories and pedagogies have led to ideas about grammar as composition. To the uninformed, writing means what is done to words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in isolation. This atomistic approach emphasizes exercises, and often these exercises do not transfer into student's writing. Sometimes because of this emphasis, the product never comes to be; if it does, it is stilted, lacking style, often syntactically immature.

The institute teachers returned to composition teaching not by way of product but by way of process. They realized that fragmented drill work in isolation or atomistic approaches must be replaced by integrated instruction about grammar, style, tone, syntax, and so forth during the writing process itself. They worked with their students on multiple drafting, using Emig's reformulating categories: correcting (elimination of mechanical errors and stylistic infelicities), revising (shifting larger segments of material), and rewriting (completely redoing a piece). Going through this process with their own work, and seeing their peers go through it, had provided the teachers with at least one explicit, teachable method that was transferable to their students.

#### District Implementation

Fitting development programs to the needs of district curricula, these teachers conducted mini-institutes, in-service programs, and workshops for their English departments or, in some cases, for the entire faculty. They often visited other project schools. NJWP administrators also participated. In short, there was a consistent inter- and intrasupport

system operating among all levels of the consortium. Control schools, while part of the consortium, were not part of the 1977 institute, in-service training, or any phase of the staff development in 1977-1978.

### Assessment of the Implementation

The third component of NJWP involved the development and use of assessment instruments and procedures. Evans Alloway, Director of Programs for the Assessment of Writing at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, worked closely with members of the consortium. This stage encompassed (1) students' writing samples, (2) teacher and student writing attitude surveys, (3) classroom observation sessions, and (4) the Written English Expression Placement Test. This chapter deals only with the results of the students' writing samples.

### Students' Writing Samples

#### PROCEDURES OF ANALYSIS

For the purpose of analysis, 15 students from each district were chosen at random from all participating students. This sampling was conducted in order to weight each district's contribution equally. Additionally, since the argument can be made that the district should be the unit of observation, the resultant  $n$  of 225 strikes a middle ground between the highly conservative  $n$  of 15 (using the district as the unit) and the liberal  $n$  of 1400 (using all students). Fifteen students were chosen as the base number because this number ( $n = 15$ ) represents the largest number of students with complete scores in a given district. Students from the other school districts were then randomly selected. Consideration was given to a balance according to sex (S). There were approximately 7 or 8 males and 7 or 8 females from each district, resulting in a total of 112 females and 113 males. At the time of the investigation, these students were enrolled in grades 7 through 12 in the English classrooms of 8 project and 7 control school districts. There were 120 subjects from project TG-1, 105 from control TG-0. Subjects were coded to indicate district identification and to protect their anonymity.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is so closely aligned with New Jersey's District Factor Grouping (DFG) that often these two labels are used interchangeably. DFG is determined by factor analysis. The eight variables in the composition of the factor are educational background, occupational background, per capita income, percentage poverty level, unemployment rate, population density, degree of urbanization, and population mobility. In New Jersey, the letter A signifies the lowest

level of socioeconomic status; the letter J signifies the highest. School districts designated A, D, E, F, G, H, and J were represented in this study.

The prewriting sample (PREWRIT) was obtained in October 1977 from all the subjects in this study who responded to Writing Topic I:

Write on this topic for twenty minutes.

Use the bluebook(s) provided.

Write about an object that is really important to you, something that has become a part of your life. You might want to write about how you discovered it or what it has come to mean to you. You may write a journal entry, a letter, a story, a brief autobiography, an essay, or a poem.

The nature of this stimulus, field and mode of discourse, involved nonlimiting options. The nature of the conditions for testing—a timed, impromptu piece of writing—provided the limitations (Hogan, 1977).

The postwriting sample (POSTWRIT) was obtained in May 1978 from all the subjects in the study. This writing sample also was a response to Writing Topic I. Between October and May, subjects in the project group were taught writing by the teachers previously trained. No attempt was made to alter the control school district teachers' usual manner of approaching the teaching of writing.

The method of assessing the writing samples was holistic scoring. This type of writing evaluation enables trained readers, in this case trained by Alloway, to rank writing samples quickly, as a whole, according to a predetermined four-point scoring range: 1 (low quality) to 4 (high quality). A scale of this type works because:

... readers are forced away from a middle, or uncommitted, score. Readers must first decide whether the paper is above average (in the 3-4 category) or below average (in the 1-2 category). After making this first decision, readers must then judge whether the paper is enough above average to rate the highest score (4) or enough below average to rate the lowest score (1). (Conlan, 1976, pp. 3-4)

Mellon writes that reliable and valid "holistic scoring techniques have been extensively researched over the past twenty years, particularly by personnel of ETS in connection with essay exercises used in various College Board examinations" (1975, p. 23). As such, holistic techniques help establish comparisons of large numbers of papers written at different times.

All the writing samples were coded and mixed, and the information pages were taped back. From these, random samples were chosen, read, and rated by Alloway and a group of four experienced readers in order to establish an accurate representation of the total set of papers for baseline data. The ratings were made in accordance with this dictum: "Raters must judge individual essays relative only to the other essays in

the group being rated rather than to outside norms" (Mellon, 1975, p. 23). Next, these representative samples were reproduced for use in the training session of the other readers. After the training, readers, identified only by number, progressed through all the writing samples with occasional breaks for consistency checks and rest periods until each writing sample had been read and rated once. Then each writing sample was read and rated a second time by a different reader. Discrepant papers (those with a difference of two points) were given a third reading by another reader. The scores were checked, then summed to provide a scale ranging from 2 to 8. Inter-rater reliability was .72.

Multiple regression allowed for investigation of the experimental factor of teacher training in writing and its effect on students' written products. The following formula provided the procedure for the statistical multiple regression computations.

$$\text{POSTWRIT} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{TG} + \beta_2\text{SES} + \beta_3\text{S} + \beta_4\text{PREWRIT}$$

n = 225

Postwriting sample score (POSTWRIT) was the dependent variable, and type of group (TG), socioeconomic status (SES), sex (S), and pre-writing sample score (PREWRIT) were the independent variables.

#### RESULTS

The simplest way to look at the data is to examine post-test differences for control and for project (experimental) students. Control students dropped  $-.20$  between the pre-test and post-test, whereas the project students increased  $+.60$ . These are presented in Table 16-1.

This, however, is an oversimplification and slightly overestimates the effect of the intervention. A more sophisticated and justifiable approach is the multiple regression analysis described above. The results of this analysis are given in Table 16-2.

Table 16-1. Pre-test and Post-test Sample Scores

|                   | Pre-test | Post-test | Difference |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Control (n = 105) |          |           |            |
| $\bar{X}$         | 4.89     | 4.69      | -.20       |
| SD                | 1.45     | 1.29      |            |
| Project (n = 120) |          |           |            |
| $\bar{X}$         | 4.64     | 5.24      | +.60       |
| SD                | 1.05     | 1.49      |            |

Table 16-2. Regression Analysis of Writing Scores

| Source            | Analysis of variance |        |       |       |              | $R^2$ |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|
|                   | df                   | SS     | MS    | F     | p            |       |
| Regression        | 5                    | 202.34 | 40.47 | 35.08 | $\leq .0001$ | .44   |
| Residual          | 219                  | 252.6  | 1.15  |       |              |       |
| Total (corrected) | 224                  | 454.96 |       |       |              |       |

  

| Parameter | Coefficients           |       |              |                               |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|           | Regression coefficient | t     | p            | Standard error of coefficient |
| PREWRIT   | + .396                 | 6.67  | $\leq .0001$ | .059                          |
| Sex       | -0.068                 | -0.47 | .6401        | .145                          |
| SES       | -0.059                 | -1.57 | .1182        | .038                          |
| TG        | +0.674                 | 4.66  | $\leq .0001$ | .145                          |
| INTERCEPT | +1.499                 | 4.55  | $\leq .0001$ | .329                          |

The project variable regression coefficient was significant at  $p < .0001$ . Thus the statistical significance of the project is clear. Since the project was coded 1 and control was coded 0, the coefficient may be interpreted as the direct additional contribution of being a project student as opposed to a control student. This effect was .67 points of the holistic scoring scale of 2 to 8. Since the standard deviation of the postwriting sample was 1.43, this represents an effect of 45.5 percent of the sample's standard deviation.

An alternative method of assessing the educational impact of the experimental factor is to compare two students who were average on all independent variables except the project/control dichotomy. The average control student would score 4.633 on the postwriting sample, while the average project student would score 5.306, an increase of 14.5 percent.

Prewriting was entered in the multiple regression in order to control, in part, for differences that may have existed between the two groups. The purpose of this inclusion was to reduce bias. Sex is not significantly related to the postwriting test. SES is marginal ( $p = .12$ ) and in an anticipated direction (Loban, 1976; Tucker & Smithers, 1977).

Additionally, the means and standard deviations for SES and grade level broken down by project/control type group and sex, as presented in Table 16-3, show that the project students were slightly younger and from slightly lower socioeconomic conditions than the control students.

It is reasonable to conclude that these results are not only statistically significant but educationally important. The training in process was a potent influence on the development of writing ability. Students of teachers so trained showed statistically significant and educationally important increases in their writing performance.

Table 16-3. Mean SES and Grade by Sex and Group Type

| Type of group | Sex    | Mean grade level<br>(SD) | Mean SES<br>(SD) | <i>n</i> |
|---------------|--------|--------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Control       | Male   | 10.80<br>(1.31)          | 4.54<br>(2.44)   | 52       |
|               | Female | 10.71<br>(1.32)          | 2.44<br>(2.39)   | 53       |
| Project       | Male   | 10.54<br>(1.39)          | 4.28<br>(1.57)   | 60       |
|               | Female | 10.43<br>(1.51)          | 4.00<br>(1.52)   | 60       |
| Total         |        | 10.61<br>(1.39)          | 4.33<br>(1.99)   |          |

### Implications of this Study

#### Writing

In presenting suggestions that will help teachers develop necessary strengths as teachers of writing, Larson is explicit:

. . . *writing* (writing in varied forms: journals, narratives of personal experience, editorials, news stories, poetry, pieces of dialogue; using their own voices and assumed voices; addressing different audiences) . . . *doing*, themselves, the activities they expect students to perform . . . and analyzing at some point the processes they pass through in doing these things. (1978, p. 79).

The present study reinforces Larson's suggestions by indicating that when teachers experience process, when they write and experiment in different forms, they broaden their praxes. This enables them to interact meaningfully with their students, especially in certain crucial phases of the writing process. Conversely, perhaps, they do not interfere at other crucial times. In his survey of the 1977 NCTE achievement award winners in writing, Applebee observes that their "teachers found ways to get involved during the writing process" (1978, p. 341). He suggests that class size affects a teacher's opportunity to sponsor this type of interaction. The present study suggests training in process as another important factor. Further investigation of these two suggestions would prove enlightening.

If writing more and experiencing various forms help improve teachers' writing and their understanding of the process, then it follows that students should also write more often. Since research indicates that writing frequency and writing aptitude have been declining, the implications—that increased student writing is needed—seems clear.

Increased frequency encourages practice in all facets of the composing process. This practice, in turn, often leads to improvement of the written product (Stallard, 1974). While the results of the present study cannot be attributed solely to increased frequency, the data suggest that (1) writing may be a mode of learning about writing; and (2) writing may be a sharper shaper of experience than speech, since the former is more deliberate, more demanding, and more permanent.

The fact that writing frequency does not entirely account for the results of this study suggests that thinking about the act of writing fixes the experience by adding the dimension of cognitive reflection. Therefore, as Mandel (1978) posits, it is important for teachers to investigate their own composing processes and those of their students in order to lead their students into realizations about writing as a complex of processes and into analysis of their own writing in that context.

Finally, as Graves noted in his report to the Ford Foundation, students rarely see adults writing. Hence, students have few adult writing models. Often they wonder aloud, "Why all this fuss about writing?" Graves calls for more research on "how adult models affect children's writing" (1978, p. 16). Since the trained teachers often wrote when their students wrote, the positive results of this study echo his call.

### Sharing

After training in myriad sharing techniques, the teachers shifted more easily from the traditional teacher-centered audience to situations providing what Britton *et al* (1975) termed "a wide range of audiences." The implications of that shift support training that involves the experiencing of classroom groups, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, and conferences. Also, the institute, rich with theory and practice on self or peer as audience, provided teachers with the security to reduce the amount of time they were spending writing comments on students' papers and to increase the amount of time students were spending writing comments on one another's papers. Clarke's study (1969) of 141 eleventh-grade students found that the number of teachers' comments written on themes produced little effect. Further, purely negative comments produced lower scores in reinforcement, satisfaction, and confidence than completely positive ones. These findings made sense to the trained teachers, who knew from their peer group experience the importance of positive remarks. This realization carried over into the classroom.

By reducing written comments and by expanding peer evaluation, the teachers discovered that time was available for conferences. But

conferences are not new. At the Yale Conference in 1968, for example, James Squire requested more class time for individual conferences. More recently, Graves stated that the "process-conference approach is a proven workable way to reverse the decline of writing in our schools" (1978, p. 19). The implication seems clear. Despite urgings, even those based on research, teachers seem to adopt a technique more readily if they themselves have experienced the technique and have internalized it.

Whether through self-evaluation, peer group evaluation, or conferences, the teachers recognized the need for immediate feedback on writing and honest, positive teacher comments (see also Beach, 1979; Stoen, 1976). The teachers also continued to seek theoretically sound and interesting exercises to heighten students' self-awareness of weak areas in their writing, and they continued perfecting their criteria sheets, fitting them appropriately to the reflexive and extensive modes of discourse.

### Reformulating

Although no one aspect of the teacher training can be isolated to account for the statistical significance of the findings, the results seem to support Bullock's assertion:

It has not been established by research that systematic attention to skill and technique has no beneficial effect on the handling of language. What has been shown is that the teaching of traditional analytic grammar does not appear to improve performance in writing. This is not to suggest that there is no place for any kind of exercises at any time and in any form. It may well be that a teacher will find this a valuable means of helping an individual child reinforce something he has learned. What is questionable is the practice of setting exercises for the whole class, irrespective of need, and assuming that this will improve every pupil's ability to handle English. What is open to question is the *nature* of some of these exercises. . . . Most give the child no useful insight into language and many actually mislead him. (1975, p. 171)

Teachers trained in the institute reevaluated their approach to reformulating—considered by most, before the institute, as recopying. Fragmented drill work was replaced in a variety of ways. Grammatical problems were dealt with in conference, or through small groups. Self-evaluation techniques enabled some students to catch some of their own errors. Reading aloud to peers helped some students "hear" their mistakes, "hear" different styles and tones. Usage and syntax problems were extracted from papers and shared with the class as a large group, through use of an overhead projector or the chalkboard. Sentence combining was often done as a class. Students soon realized that many

of their problems were shared ones, and that helping one another was mutually beneficial.

All was not perfect during this stage, however. Students unaccustomed to sharing and taking responsibility for their own writing demanded drills. These seemed safer, perhaps. Teachers often expressed frustration, reverting back to traditional approaches and short-circuiting groups. Trying to deal with instruction when the students were in the middle of the writing process often led them to doubts, especially if all did not work as it had during the institute. Again the implications are clear. More research is needed on the relationship of grammar and usage to composition (Fraser & Hodson, 1978; Kolin, 1981; Newkirk, 1978). Theoretically the teachers understood that instruction had to be integrated with the writing, but few explicit strategies exist.

The teachers did create ways of preserving multiple drafts. Some kept a folder for each student, which was accessible at times of collaboration or for self-evaluation. Others preferred notebooks, portfolios, or, for prewriting, journals. A packet of teacher writing visible on a desk or in a file enabled students to see that their model also had to correct, revise, and rewrite.

### Training

If training teachers through a process orientation results in more teacher and better student writing, more college and universities should offer courses, experiences, and programs to complement the process approach to writing. The surprising lack of training in the teaching of writing compounds existing problems.

For instructors teaching composition, cooperative college and school district training such as NJWP seems necessary. The London Schools Council's development project, proposed as early as 1966 and approved in 1971, was a corroborative experience (Britton *et al.*, 1975). That project, as well as the one upon which this study is based, proves that a multi-leveled participative venture is feasible. Robert Bush, Director of the Center for Educational Research at Stanford University, supports such collaboration. "Beginners, experienced school teachers, researchers and developers, all working together in a problem-solving mode in a school setting proved an exciting environment for training" (1977, p. 7).

Another neglected area is on-site in-service training, with teachers having a greater amount of content control. Administrators and school boards need to consider general professional development training and retraining of existing teachers. Teachers' centers might be established within school districts, especially since extra space is often available because of declining enrollments.

## Theory

The word "theory," second only to the word "writing," seems to strike fear into the hearts of most teachers. Because of their predominantly literary backgrounds, English teachers "need to examine the training and socialization which shape our responses. Although we may define ourselves as composition teachers, our origins lie in literature study" (Gere, 1978, p. 258). Therefore, teaching writing without explicit theory and thorough training is a flabby affair, often resulting in either a stubborn attachment to outmoded methods or a continual vacillation between the latest method and the newest "in" gimmick. Yet in most reactions there is some sublimated truth. Perhaps the negative reaction to theory is not caused by ignorance, fear, stubbornness, or weakness, but by abstractness—that is, by the general lack of never having the theoretical merged with the experiential.

Through NJWP, and by actively engaging in composition's complex of processes, the institute teachers began structuring their own theories of composing upon theories engendered during the readings, research, lectures, presentations, discussions, and writing itself—in general, all the experiences of three weeks. In short, the teachers learned theory by experiencing theory; they learned its validity by applying it to their own writing; they learned its value by employing it in their classrooms.

The major implication of this study is the necessity of merging theory and practice when training teachers in composition (Applegate & Newman, 1978; Donlan, 1974). As Graves puts it, "Teachers do not teach a subject in which they feel unprepared, even when the subject is mandated by the school curriculum. Writing is such a subject" (1978, p. 15).

Clearly, most teachers were product-oriented before the institute. Their approach to composing had been one generated by the teacher and foisted upon the student. Most admitted that they taught writing "as I was taught." The major movement from this *what* of composing (product) to the *how* (process) affected their perceptions of themselves, of their students, and of composition in general. This new perceptivity, which had been influenced by their process orientation, nudged them to ask new questions, which in turn gave rise to another, perhaps much more subtle implication of this study—the idea that teachers of composition become also researchers of composition (Berthoff, 1979; Goswami & Odell, in press). Processes ebb and flow to different rhythms during different stages and at different levels of development. More research into each of these dimensions is needed, and who is better equipped to conduct some of this research than trained composition teachers themselves?

In conclusion, this study presents new challenges. Since training in the writing process produces positive results, teachers are provided with new direction and support. What is necessary for writing to improve, a necessity apparently recognized, in view of the popularity of writing projects, is for a deep change to occur within the writing classroom—a deep change within its teachers—a deep change training can bring about. Writing is a complex process; it is a dynamic, unique, highly individual yet participatory venture. Students profit most when teachers engage in this complex process with them. When that happens, all levels of the academic structure are served best.<sup>1</sup>

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1. After the year of testing (1977-1978) and the year of analyzing the data (1978-1979), the director, co-director, statistician, and two district representatives met with the Dept. Commissioner of Education and members of the Joint Dissemination Review Panel Washington, D.C., for a full review of the project and the data presented in this study. May 23, 1979. NJWP was endorsed by this body and was subsequently validated through the National Diffusion Network (NDN) as Developer/Demonstrator Project. The NJWP was, as of January 1983, the only national project within the National Writing Project complex to receive this distinction.