Illinois English Bulletin

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IATE is a professional organization for teachers of English/Language Arts. IATE publishes the *Illinois English Bulletin* and the *IATE Newsletter* and hosts an annual Fall Conference. IATE is organized by districts throughout the state, each district having a district leader and providing local activities to members throughout the year.

IATE also maintains standing committees that address a number of professional interests and works with other professional organizations to further the interests of teachers. Composed of nearly 1,500 teachers throughout the state, IATE provides a working network for the exchange of teaching tips, current research, and professional development as well as enduring friendships.

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INTRODUCTION TO
THE *ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN*
93.2 (SPRING 2006)

BOB BROAD

As in past years, this spring issue of the *Illinois English Bulletin* provides you with a glimpse—and, if you were there last fall, a reminder—of the energy and knowledge that buzzed through the annual IATE conference, held this year at the Decatur Holiday Inn Select on October 14 and 15, 2005.

As editor of the *Bulletin*, I am pleased to say that we had more submissions from conference presenters than last year, and I'm hopeful that this trend will continue. With dozens of fine presentations offered at every conference, we can certainly offer more than a handful of these pieces in the conference issue of the journal. So please join the effort in future years, and submit a piece for consideration.

Dave Eggers showed the poor planning to be in the midst of having his first baby on the day we wanted him to

come to Decatur to be lauded and feted as IATE's Author of the Year. I'm delighted to be able to present him to you in the pages of this issue of the *Bulletin*, and his comments on the influences of his past English teachers (especially "The Hawkman") and his ongoing advocacy for writing and education should lift your spirits.

At the conference, featured speaker Hilve Firek encouraged us to look for opportunities to press emerging technologies into service on behalf of our students' developing literacies. Luckily, many students find these technologies inherently exciting and enjoyable. Students, therefore, can channel their high motivation for the technology into their study of composition, literature, speech, and other areas in which they might be less engaged. Ms. Firek provides specific strategies and lots of support as we navigate the meeting place of language arts and new technologies.

Also on the topic of technologies supporting rhetorical development, Dorothy Mikuska presents a review of software programs that are helpful in different ways to students undertaking research projects. Ms. Mikuska looks at software of four types: data collection, bibliographic and citation management, plagiarism detection, and one program that she herself helped develop and helps market. Teachers whose students conduct research will find Ms. Mikuska's analysis very helpful as they consider how to integrate computer technology into the research process.

Tim Pappageorge encourages us to look critically at the kinds of questions we ask during class discussions and to ensure that our questions will lead to "authentic discussion." Mr. Pappageorge's advice on getting students to write their own questions for discussion—and tips on how to teach them the art of composing genuinely engaging questions—carries his essay beyond a well-researched discussion of classroom

questions and into the realm of innovative, learner-driven education.

"Civil Strife" offers Stephen Heller's reflections on the benefits and difficulties of interdisciplinary co-teaching. He provides a detailed account of one of his experiences in this kind of teaching, and draws some helpful suggestions from the pool of memory.

On behalf of all of us who attended last fall's conference, I'd like to thank Larry Johannessen for putting together a memorable and professionally rewarding fall gathering. Here's to sharing many future October days together, starting with the 2006 conference in Peoria on October 13 and 14 (please mark the dates now!).

Past IATE presidents (from left to right) Teri Knight, Jean Wallace, and Barbara Fuson

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO
THE *ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN*

As the written forum in which Illinois English teachers share their ideas, the *Illinois English Bulletin* welcomes all kinds of materials related to the teaching of English.

We seek articles dealing with literature, writing, language, media, speech, drama, film, culture, technology, standards, assessment, professional development, and other aspects of our profession. Any combination of research, theory, and practice is appropriate. Some articles take a formal and conclusive approach, while others are informal and exploratory.

Book reviews, poetry, black-and-white photographs, and line drawings are also welcome.

When you are ready to share your work with your colleagues across the state, please consult the submission guidelines on page 12. We look forward to hearing from you. If you have questions or suggestions for the editor, please don't hesitate to get in touch (contact information on page 14).

Thank you for reading, supporting, and contributing to the *Illinois English Bulletin*.

Submission Guidelines

(See page 14 for the editor's contact information.)

- Via U.S. mail, send one clean, paper copy of the manuscript to the editor. See below for manuscript formatting guidelines and information to include in your cover letter.

- Attached to an e-mail message addressed to the editor, send an additional copy of the manuscript in an MS Word or PDF attachment. See below for manuscript formatting guidelines and information you should include in your e-mail message.

- In your cover letter (mailed with hard copy) and in your e-mail message (with electronic copy attached), include the following information: your manuscript title, name, mailing address, institutional affiliation, and phone number. Also indicate whether you are currently a member of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE). State that the manuscript has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

- Manuscript formatting guidelines: follow the current *MLA Handbook* guidelines for parenthetical, in-text citations, the works cited section, and other technical elements; follow NCTE's "Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language"; place page numbers at the top right corner of every page; type and double-space throughout (including quotations, endnotes, and works cited), with one-inch margins all around.

- With both your paper and electronic manuscript submissions, please also include a biographical blurb of fifty words or fewer. (Blurbs for manuscripts with

multiple authors should total fifty words or fewer.)
Blurbs usually mention institutional and professional
affiliations as well as teaching and research interests.

• The *Bulletin* editor will acknowledge receipt of your
manuscript via e-mail.

Submission Deadlines

You are welcome to submit your materials at any time
to the editor of the *Illinois English Bulletin*. Traditionally,
the *Bulletin*'s spring issue features shorter articles based on
presentations made at the previous autumn's IATE annual
conference. Summer issues may be themed or all-inclusive.
The fall issue presents the "Best Illinois Student Poetry and
Prose." The winter issue is the program for our annual IATE
fall conference.

To be considered for inclusion in the spring issue,
materials must be received by the editor by the previous
November 1.

To be considered for inclusion in the summer issue,
materials must be received by the editor by the previous
January 15.

To be considered for inclusion in the fall issue ("Best Il-
linois Student Poetry and Prose"), materials must be mailed
to the special editor for that issue and postmarked by the
previous January 31. Please see the most recent fall issue of
the *Bulletin* for special submission guidelines and contact
information for fall issues. Please note that as of 2005, the
poet laureate of Illinois will designate several of the poems
selected for publication in the *Bulletin* as "Poems of Excep-
tional Merit." These poems will be identified in a message
written by the poet laureate and published in this issue of
the *Bulletin*. The poets will receive a certificate from the poet
laureate in the U.S. mail.

Editor Contact Information

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2005 IATE Conference keynote speaker Robert Probst

CORRECTION

The editor of the *Illinois English Bulletin* regrets inadvertently omitting from the list of "Teachers with Students Placing in Any Contest Category" the name of Debby Hudson, teacher at Sunset Ridge School, whose student Emily Reich wrote the poem "Through the Window" published in the fall 2005 "Best Illinois Student Poetry and Prose of 2004" issue of the *Bulletin*.

Using visual arts to enhance students' writing experiences

IN ABSENTIA AUTHOR OF THE YEAR ADDRESS

DAVE EGGERS

First of all, I want to apologize profusely for not being in Decatur that fateful day. While the attendees of the conference were enjoying themselves, my wife and I were packing our bags and going to the hospital to await the birth of our daughter, who burst into our lives, loudly, that weekend.

I didn't have superformal remarks prepared, but I planned to talk primarily about the almost unbelievable series of exceptional English teachers I had growing up, and how they first drove me to go into writing and publishing, and also, sometime later, inspired me and a few friends to start 826 Valencia, a network of tutoring centers that creates a bridge between volunteers and teachers in order to give students as much one-on-one attention with their writing as possible. It's weird writing this note today—December 7—because just yesterday, we had our Christmas lunch at 826 Valencia, and at the table, we were talking about our favorite teachers. I began

bragging about the aforementioned nonstop stream of unfor-
gettable teachers, and inevitably the conversation turned to
teacher salaries. Teacher compensation is an issue that became
close to my heart many years ago, when my sister and one
of my best friends quit teaching in the same summer, each
because they couldn't afford to live in the Bay Area on their
salaries. The issue led to a book I coedited with Nínive Cale-
gari and Daniel Moulthrop—both former teachers—called
*"Teachers Have It Easy": The Big Sacrifices and Small Salaries of
America's Teachers.* Since that book came out, I've heard from
some of my former teachers, who, while sympathizing with
many of the problems discussed by teachers in the book,
counted themselves lucky to have worked in a school district
that paid its educators well, and fostered an environment that
allowed them to be as creative as they needed to be.

The rewards of this environment were reaped, of course,
by the students. I even took five years of English in high
school—three courses my senior year—because there were
so many classes I didn't want to miss. I had Mrs. Silber for
freshman English, and she started me journaling, a practice
I continue to this day. Ms. Pese taught us the Bible as Litera-
ture, and was wicked in her wit and expected college-level
work from everyone. The endlessly erudite Mr. Ferry was my
Speech-Comm teacher, and encouraged my strangest writing
at a time when I needed, through writing and other arts, to be
pulled out of the self-pitying quicksand of adolescence. Mrs.
Lowey was my senior-year creative writing teacher, and the
one who, with Mr. Benton (the computer-lab guru), taught
me everything I needed to know about magazine editing,
desktop publishing, and the sundry rewards of encouraging
other writers. Mr. Criche, the venerable head of the depart-
ment, I wanted to please so badly that I used to bring a copy
of *As I Lay Dying* to class each day, hoping he'd notice (the

book was not on the syllabus). If he did notice, he never said so. But what he did do was write, on a paper I wrote about *Macbeth*, "Sure hope you become a writer." I still have the paper somewhere, but from memory I can still picture the way he wrote—shaky in his letters, and yet, amazingly, his baselines were always razor straight. Those six words gave me strength throughout college—where I came up against some people who didn't share Mr. Criche's enthusiasm—and onward to this day. Sometimes that's all it takes—one teacher who knows the weight of his words and who drops that kind of challenge onto your lap.

And there was Mr. Hawkins, who attended the Decatur conference and spoke in my stead. When I realized I couldn't be there, and knew Mr. Hawkins would, I wrote the following as an introduction that might be read to introduce him. I don't think it was read that day, so the text follows:

> Dave Hawkins was my AP Lit teacher in high school. I took his class my senior year as an elective, if I remember correctly. Everyone wanted to be in Hawkman's class. That's what we called Mr. Hawkins—the Hawkman. He was a fantastic teacher, knew everything cold, taught us *Catch-22*, *Huck Finn*, and more, but he was also a cool cat. He was and is a poet, and always said this: "Poetry is the most sublime form of writing." We would quote him constantly, on that line and others, and I credit him with the fact that everyone in his class now says the word "sublime" much too often, and in the exact way he did, with a very long "i." He was and is a singer-songwriter, and sang every year at the student assembly. Honest to god, the man had groupies! When he sang Van Morrison, the kids went nuts. And because he was cool without trying to be cool, morally dependable without being pious, he was also a hero to

a lot of us. He stayed in touch with me after high school, and actually played a huge part in turning around my approach to writing. After college, I worked for four years—with other students from our high school—on a satirical magazine called *Might*. Hawkman kept up with it, and he e-mailed me one day, asking, in essence, what the hell I was doing with my life. "Don't you get sick of all that sarcasm?" he asked. And he was right. We were wasting our youth being bitter, angry—snarky, if you will—, and largely unhelpful to anyone. He reminded me that we had been educated for better things. He expected more from us, and I've always kept his many letters in mind when I make decisions about what to do with a year, a month, a day. Is it really helping? Is it the best use of one's time? Hawkman always had his priorities straight. Hawkman always knew what was best. Hawkman was our lighthouse, our foghorn, our hero. Please welcome the Hawkman.

That's the end of the intro. I want to thank Hawkman for accepting the award on my behalf, and for bringing the plaque back to Lake Forest High School, where it hangs somewhere (he hasn't told me where, but I hope it's not the bathroom off the basement cafeteria). I feel really incredibly lucky to have attended the high school I did, and to have met and known (and to still know) almost all of those teachers. Anything I've ever done or will do is because they were there for me—steady in their knowledge, bold in their methods, always honest, and always expecting extraordinary things.

Dave Eggers is best known for his book A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, *published in 2000. More recently he has published* You Shall Know Our Velocity! *(McSweeney's, 2002) and* Created in Darkness by Troubled Americans: The Best

of *McSweeney's,* Humor Category *(Knopf, 2004). Eggers has published numerous short stories and essays in magazines and edited collections and also seems to be involved in difficult-to-determine ways with* Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern *("A journal created by nervous people in relative obscurity and published four times a year") and* Timothy McSweeney's Internet Tendency *(www.mcsweeneys.net).*

IATE featured speaker Hilve Firek
discussing students' use of technology

USING TECHNOLOGY TO WIN THE HEARTS
AND MINDS OF OUR STUDENTS

HILVE FIREK

Gadgets. Our students love gadgets. They want the latest and greatest *things*, and they want them right this minute. A cell phone that lets you chat with your friends from the comfort of a public movie theater? *Puh-leeze.* That is so *yesterday*. If you can't access NORAD on your cell, you're just not with it.

And music? Before long, CDs will go the way of the vinyl album. After all, why should you pay for all those songs on a CD you never listen to? Download what you want onto your MP3 player! Carry an entire customized music library in your pocket!

The Internet? For many of our students, the net isn't just a library of good and bad information, it's the primary means by which they connect with their friends. E-mail? It's okay, but online chat is the thing. Teens can engage in instant-message (IM) conversations with five or six people at one time. Of

course, this is only possible because they've created a new form of abbreviated shorthand: IM-speak. You've seen it. IM-speak is a conglomeration of characters that "spell" words and phrases. If Shakespeare lived today, Hamlet might well soliloquize "2B or not 2B. That's the ?"

And then there are the games. You can fight alongside your virtual friends to save the world from aliens, defeat evil empires, and leave major cities in burnt-out ruin.

From this high-tech world, students plod into our cinderblock classrooms, slide into their uncomfortable desks, and stare at us with disbelief when we extol the wonders of a good book. Sit and read? Why should they?

Technology in the English Classroom: Why Bother?

Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking: These are the essential components of any English classroom. Most of us chose to become English teachers because—somewhere along the line—we discovered the awesome magic of language in its written and spoken forms. At some point in our lives, a book moved us—actually changed who we are as people. For some of us, it was *Catcher in the Rye*. For others, it was *Siddhartha.* For others still, it was *Beloved*.

Some of us chose to become English teachers because we enjoyed the power of writing. We discovered the joy that comes from committing words to paper, to seeing how form and content combine to create something unique, something inspiring.

For most of us, gadgets didn't come into play. We used the microfiche at the college library because we didn't have any choice. (We had been perfectly happy with the card catalogs, thank you very much.) And computers? Those were the boxes that housed the word-processing programs. Our friends who majored in engineering tried to convince us that these

machines would change the world, but what did they know? They were majoring in *engineering*, for heaven's sake.

So…why should we now bother to integrate technology into our English classrooms? Simple. The world we once lived in doesn't exist today. Just as our parents had to learn to pump their own gas, we have to learn to connect the richness of our text-based classrooms to the richness of today's gadget-driven society. We must build a bridge between the culture of the student's home and the culture of school. If we fail to build this bridge, we risk graduating students who are unable to navigate effectively in either environment. If we are successful, however, we help young people *connect* the skills of literacy and oracy to the everyday world in which they live. In other words, we can use the bells and whistles of today's technology to help engage students in the content of our classrooms. We can use technology to win our students' hearts and minds.

The Internet: A Virtual Community

Let's talk a bit about the Internet. The Internet is, at its core, a community. It's a virtual gathering space where people young and old, from all walks of life, congregate. The Internet welcomes all opinions, no matter how progressive or repulsive. In order to participate fully in this community, students must master integral skills, skills that should look familiar to English teachers: reading, writing, critical thinking, discernment, and problem solving.

Asking your students to create a class Web site can help them sharpen the skills necessary in today's point-and-click world. Because the net is still primarily text-based, a student needs to be able to communicate effectively in writing. But teaching composition has always been one of the most difficult of an English teacher's countless tasks. Publishing student

writing on the Internet may help. We all know that students write better when they compose for authentic purposes and real audiences. A class Web site offers the opportunity to do just that.

Further, publishing on the Internet allows students to integrate the multimedia tools of their everyday lives. They can add sound files, pictures, animation, and even video clips. To create a class Web site, students must make evaluative decisions, organize their work effectively, and select media that enhances—rather than detracts from—their overall message.

One of the easiest ways to get your students on the net is to point them to a template program such as Project Poster, a site sponsored by the High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium (http://poster.4teachers.org/). Students share their work with the world by selecting a design and inserting text and photos from their projects or reports. Student pages remain live—or active—for one month.

Constructing Knowledge with Video Projects

One of the advantages of much of today's technology is that it helps students to construct their own knowledge, to learn by doing. A camcorder—that staple of family vacations—is an easy-to-use tool that can help students respond to what they read in a fun and engaging way.

But video projects are more than just fun and games. Let's take a look at some of the learning that takes place when students produce a video in response to a piece of literature. First, students must work together, and there is something for everyone to do. For example, you shouldn't have any problem finding volunteers to be actors. And those students who aren't thrilled about being in front of the camera can operate it, write the script, or block the stage. They can help

their peers learn lines, or they can draw posters that serve as scenery. Everyone is responsible for something, and the success of the project depends on each student doing his or her part. Learning to collaborate is one of those "soft skills" teachers are expected to encourage in the classroom, and video projects lend themselves to teamwork.

Next, students are working for a real purpose; they are creating something for an audience other than the teacher. They are building their own understandings of the literature being studied—be it a novel, poem, or short story. In producing a video response, they *process* the main ideas of the literature by putting those ideas into their own words. In other words, they struggle to internalize what the story or poem is about.

We all know that the best learning occurs when students devise their own knowledge by integrating something new with something that is already understood. By creating a video project, students use a tool that has already engaged their hearts—a camcorder—to create new understandings, thus engaging their minds.

No question: Teaching is one of the most challenging professions there is. It ranks right up there with being an experimental test pilot. Just when we think we've mastered our craft, something in the world changes, and we have to adapt. If we want to help our students connect with language, with the written word, we must use the technological tools of today to help engage our students, to win their hearts and minds. Perhaps then, they too will discover that one special book that speaks to them, that changes who they are as human beings.

Hilve Firek teaches in the secondary education department at Roosevelt University in Schaumburg. A former high school English and

journalism teacher, she is the author of Ten Easy Ways to Use Technology in the English Classroom *(Heinemann, 2003). Her email address is hfirek@roosevelt.edu.*
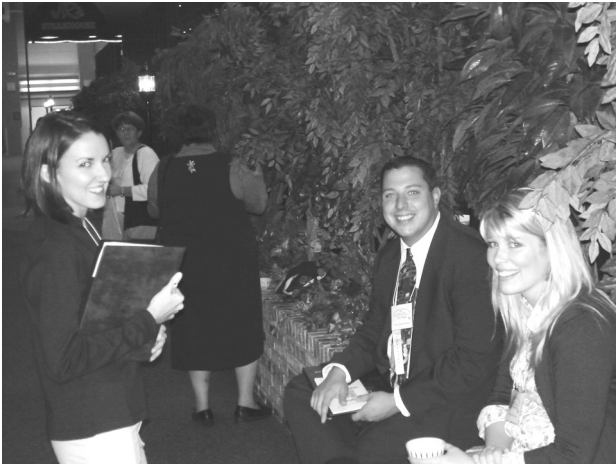
Young conference-goers relaxing between sessions

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
INTO RESEARCH PAPER WRITING

DOROTHY MIKUSKA

E-mail, cell phones, text messages, chat rooms, video games, computers—today's students have grown up with high-tech media and digital communications and have used technology with ease as a learning tool. Indeed, for the research paper assignment, word processing has facilitated students' writing and revision; and the Internet has provided a world of information at their fingertips. However, this technology has also made it easier for intentional and unintentional plagiarism to infiltrate student work.

Because of the complex process of researching, documenting, and organizing information into a coherent product, whether a paper or a presentation, students may feel inadequate even if they are well-prepared and have an array of services to help them. Some students may not understand how or why to put the information in their own words; others

may not realize that copying and pasting from the Internet into their paper without quotation marks is unacceptable; still others may even choose to purchase a paper online in frantic desperation to hand in acceptable work. Nevertheless, the research paper assignment—which requires the reading, writing, and information literacy necessary to ask questions, search and find answers, and explain the results to someone else—provides an opportunity for students to practice these life skills.

Unfortunately, when teachers assign the research paper and give students 3″ x 5″ note cards, they wonder why students become uninterested until the night before the paper is due. Educators need to harness the technology within the comfort zone of digital-age students into a tool that will help them learn with rigor and integrity and write research papers successfully.

Some Reasons Students Struggle with Research Paper Assignments

1. **Writing research papers is not perceived to be fun**. "I do only things that are fun" is not a rare statement from students. Technology can make the job engaging for today's students, who are often more comfortable with a keyboard than with a pen.

2. **Writing note cards is tedious**. Even with developed fine motor skills, students find writing 3″ x 5″ note cards by hand tiring and unrewarding. Easily distracted when fatigued, they become disengaged from their reading, and note taking becomes cursory and mechanical. Thus, when students fall back on scanning text for only a main idea and copying words, they fail to benefit from processing the information through analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Technology should engage students

so they may practice these cognitive skills for research assignments. Rather than writing note cards by hand and eventually typing questionable information into a draft, students should be able to type their notes in their own words and efficiently transfer them into an outline or rough draft. Technology should effortlessly foster interaction with the information so students understand the information well enough to explain it in their own words to their audience.

3. **Writing research papers requires organizational skills students often lack or do not apply to research assignments.** Even if an assignment is broken down into the steps of the process though direct instruction and modeling in the classroom, students may not follow them when working independently. Technology provides this structure every time the cursor blinks at the student while engaged at any stage of this process.

4. **The value of documenting sources of information does not make sense to students.** Students often assume if information is free and accessible, it must be fair game to take as one's own. They can be taught otherwise, but their perceived reality may not always change this behavior. Technology should remind them to document the source and specific page just as the dinging sound in a car reminds drivers to put on their seat belt even when they don't want to be bothered.

5. **Students often think they put information in their own words, but they don't.** "In my own words" to students means deleting a word or swapping it with a synonym. Many students sincerely try to rephrase a passage, but do not succeed because they may not understand the material and need to think about it more, to use a variety of reading strategies they learned, or to relate it to

what they already know. Plagiarism is unethical and sometimes illegal, but educators especially see it as a lost opportunity to learn. Technology should provide the means to compare the original passage to the student's own words; if the similarity is too great, the blinking cursor should invite a better paraphrase and a more penetrating understanding.

6. **Beginning with a blank screen is intimidating**. Organizing from note cards is often like painting a forest, one leaf at a time, and never finding the trees. If students list main ideas while researching, interact with their material by connecting notes with keywords, and turn that list into an outline made up of sentences, then they will have organized their information and written topic sentences for many paragraphs before they even begin a draft. Outlines created from note cards rather than the main ideas often result in reporting information from each separate source rather than from an understanding of the topic. With this preliminary work on the computer screen, the difficult part of the draft is crafted before students even begin to write the draft.

7. **MLA, APA, Chicago Style…Students don't understand it is important to format documentation accurately**. To students, the content they find in their research is more important than the seemingly arbitrary format of citing the source. Students may be excited about the fact that they finished the paper or that they learned something interesting. The significance of putting the last name first or placing a comma or period in the right place in a citation is lost. In reality, students *should* focus on the content rather than the form. Technology should create the form for them—citations and bibliography entries in the correct format—so that they can concentrate on the content.

Available Software*

A variety of software products are now available to help prevent plagiarism and to foster integrity, rigor, and careful documentation with ease. As a result, students are able to overcome many of their physical, cognitive, and emotional impediments to complete an assignment that requires careful research.

Data Collecting Software: Electronic Scrapbook

These programs provide the means to gather information from electronic sources:

- NoteBook [$29.95–$99.95]
  (http://www.circusponies.com)
- NoteTaker [$39.95–$69.95]
  (http://www.aquaminds.com)
- AskSam [$149.95–$395.00]
  (http://www.asksam.com)
- Microsoft OneNote 2003 [$99.95]
  (http://office.microsoft.com)
- Power Researcher [$59.95]
  (http://www.powerresearcher.com)

Unfortunately, these programs do not allow users to take notes or document accurate information. However, they enable the user to easily copy, paste, drag, and drop passages, especially long ones, and files from the Internet without having to even read or consider the information, certainly without understanding, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating. The student may then confuse the author's exact words with summaries and acceptable paraphrases in the student's own words, resulting in plagiarism.

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* Prices effective February 28, 2006.

Citation Management Software

These programs create citations and bibliographies either through installed software or Web-based subscriptions. Additionally, some provide functions for taking quotations from and composing notes about sources:

- EndNote [$239.95–$299.95]
  (http://www.endnote.com)
- ProCite [$239.95–$299.95]
  (http://www.procite.com)
- Reference Manager [$239.95–$299.95]
  (http://www.refman.com)
- WriteNote [Subscription]
  (http://www.writenote.com)
- RefWorks [Subscription]
  (http://www.refworks.com)
- Citation [$99.00]
  (http://citationonline.net)
- NoodleTools [Subscription]
  (http://www.noodletools.com)
- SourceAid [Subscription]
  (http://www.sourceaid.com)

Internet Detection Services

Although there are many services, http://www.turnitin.com (Subscription), is seen as the industry leader of Internet detection services. These services compare a student's paper with the contents of their extensive databases of Internet pages and previously submitted papers. However, there are several drawbacks to using this technology:

- The teacher receives a report of any potential plagiarism found in the paper *after* it is written, rather than helping students understand the material they are reading and avoid plagiarism *while* they are taking

notes and writing their papers. Thus, students learn not to get caught plagiarizing, rather than how to write a research paper with integrity.

- Internet detection services attempt to catch students committing plagiarism without distinguishing between intentional cheating and simple documentation errors. They do not help students avoid plagiarism by teaching or reinforcing good researching skills taught in classrooms.
- Internet detection services assume that students cheat and that teachers are too overworked to spend time trying to detect plagiarism; thus their services are required to keep students honest. Teachers become teachers because they believe that students can learn—in this case, to write with integrity. Plagiarism is merely a symptom of a greater learning problem: Students are disengaged from their learning, they do not understand the information they are reading, or they do not document carefully. This technology does not address these crucial issues.
- Internet detection services give a false sense of thoroughness: They cannot access text for comparison purposes from websites requiring passwords, paper mill sites that e-mail purchased papers, non-electronic sources, or papers written by friends or classmates.

Research Management Software

- PaperToolsPro [$42.50–$55.00]
(http://www.papertoolspro.com)

PaperToolsPro safeguards against plagiarism and provides an environment in which students can prepare information for a research assignment. The program breaks down the assignment into separate windows for each step

of the process of documenting researched information and transferring it into a draft. Thus, it can help students with a wide range of abilities meet these challenges with confidence. By following the instructions provided in the program's tutorial, students are able to:

- take notes electronically in a note card format,
- identify information in the notes using descriptors and keywords,
- enter bibliographic information that will correctly generate a bibliography and citations in six styles— MLA, APA, ACS, CBE, AAAS, and Chicago style,
- append a citation to each note card entry,
- organize notes using several methods of varying complexity,
- create a sentence outline, and
- transfer the notes, citations, and final bibliography to a draft in a word processing page.

The software is intuitive and easy to learn for teachers and students. Information cannot be entered in the wrong place, out of sequence, or omitted without a reminder appearing. Help is always available through a screen help menu, a quick start page, an indexed tutorial, and resource pages for information about plagiarism, evaluating sources, and different styles for bibliographies and citations. Also, a message appears on the window where students enter notes ways to properly handle information from a source, and thus avoid plagiarism. Quickly, the program becomes second nature because entering data is simple, especially for students whose comfort zone lies at a keyboard and computer screen.

Good teaching, not just good software, is the key to student learning. Teachers across the curriculum do teach the incremental steps of the process of doing research by direct instruction and modeling, checking for understanding, and

guided practice, but students may not follow through when they work independently. Technology can assist both struggling and confident students throughout the research paper process so that they produce *their* best work.

Dorothy Mikuska owns ePen&Inc, one of two companies that collaboratively developed and currently markets PaperToolsPro, the software featured near the conclusion of this article. After teaching high school English for thirty-six years at Glenbard South High School, Ms. Mikuska retired and now consults in the areas of technology, communication, and professional development. She holds degrees in English (BA, Loyola University; MA, Northwestern University) and curriculum and supervision (CAS, National Louis University). Ms. Mikuska is a member of IATE, NCTE, the Illinois School Library Media Association, and Illinois Computing Educators.

A spry-looking Hamlet visits with Yorick once again
at IATE 2005

THAT IS THE QUESTION

TIM PAPPAGEORGE

Monday's Lesson

"So what do you think Fitzgerald is saying about society in this section?" Silence. More silence. *Ok, remember, "wait time" is important,* I say to myself. Reluctant hand at half mast. *Janie! Yes!! I can always count on Janie to jumpstart a discussion…* "Um… I dunno… does it have to do with the green light?" she offers tentatively.

Ugh!

How many of us have found ourselves in a class discussion that seems to fall flat or that we wish would go deeper than it does? How many times have we wanted to see students take greater ownership of and agency in the class discussion? This is our grail—the cup of combined high student engagement and high student literacy.

Getting students to ask originally crafted questions in class is a key strategy to help us in our pursuit of this vision,

this type of classroom dynamic. QAR, hotseating, and the art of skillful follow-up questioning all help give students the kinds of tools they need to be more successful in crafting their own questions.

Authentic Discussion Defined

The research by Martin Nystrand is most instructive on the topic of questions in classroom discussion.[1] In his research, Nystrand looked at 32,000 classroom questions, and he begins by sketching out the differences between the "monologic" discussion and the "dialogic." Monologic discussions are statistically typical, where "normal teachers talk, students listen" and are characterized as "orderly but lifeless" (3). These questions are often "test" questions that merely elicit a report of what is already known. In his research, Nystrand found that eighty-five percent of classrooms are monologic, with seventy-five percent of ninth grade classrooms falling into that category. Most regrettably, lower-tracked students are taught almost exclusively "recitable information," both in class and through paper comments.

In contrast, the dialogic classroom challenges students to think, interpret, and generate new understandings through quality teacher-student interactions. And it's more fun. In this mode, we assign students "serious epistemological roles." Students end up learning more because shared understandings are built through construction of knowledge (31).

What are the hallmarks of questions in the classroom that increase the level of dialogic discourse? Nystrand offers three criteria. All seem common sense, but are worth our focus as we frame our lessons:

Authenticity—The source of a question rests in the core beliefs of the student.

Uptake—Incorporates a response into a "train of thought."

Complexity—Centers on the cognitive level of the question, the source of the question, the experience/ability needed to answer it, the nature of the instructional activity, and/or the source of the information needed to respond.

The question, then, becomes, how can we ask more of these types of questions in the classroom discussion? Moreover, how can we get our students to ask these types of questions?

Getting Students to Write Their Own Questions— Opening Gambit

From my experience, students are more interested in these types of questions, anyway. They simply need skills to frame good questions. They also need to be guided and pushed over the hump of something that is new and unfamiliar, and being assigned to ask questions in class definitely stretches their thinking in new ways. The following is one technique that I have used to help guide students to ask questions in class, and it seems to work well because it has a high level of social engagement embedded into it.

Around the Clock Interviews[2]

Directions:
1. Book three appointments, writing each person's name on the blanks I, II, and III. Mix genders.
2. Write two questions for each appointment.
3. You will have five to seven minutes for each appointment.

I.

III.

II.

Review—Question Types

Right There—These questions can be answered from one line of the text.

Think and Search—Answers to these questions can be found in two or more spots.

Author and Me—Requires the reader to look into the text to see motive and/or symbolic meaning. To answer such a question, the reader must infer the author's meaning from his or her tone, connotations, etc.

On My Own—Gives the reader the chance to ask a question that applies the ideas in the text to real life. To answer such a question, the reader must rely on his or her life experience, not just what's on the page.

To use the above activity and lesson, I begin by teaching the students the reading strategy known as QAR[3], providing a demonstration that takes about ten to fifteen minutes and can be done the day before the "around the clock" discussion is to take place. We will workshop the four question types, using a non-academic prompt so that I can gauge the students' comprehension of the question types. The McDonald's menu works well for this. Popular sitcoms also serve as apt fodder for students to begin contextualizing the four question types.

How much does a Big Mac cost? That's a "right there" question. How much do a Big Mac and a large orange drink cost? That requires adding two literal pieces of information together, so it's a "think and search" question. How is the menu organized? (With the breakfast items in one area and the side orders in another, etc.) An "author and me" question. Finally, what's your favorite item on the menu, and why? An "on my own" question.

It should be clear that the levels of the questions increase in cognitive complexity and that the final question is a reader-response type question. The notion of increasing complexity brings student-generated questions into focus with Nystrand's picture of the authentic discussion; often teachers will ask increasingly complex questions in a discussion[4], but the students may not intuit the links between the questions. By framing the questions themselves, the students are guided by the nature of the QAR framework to relate the increasingly complex material to the simpler questions preceding. I have found that students will be able to generate five to ten sound QAR-type questions in an evening's worth of homework, and their preparedness for the following day's discussion will be much greater than it otherwise can be.

To kick off the question-asking sessions in class, I like to play a game called, appropriately, "stump the class." Generally,

we teachers underappreciate how much students—particularly our younger students at the grade nine and grade ten levels—enjoy the concrete certainty of the literal question. At the same time, we find the typical "right there" questions to be simplistic, probably for the very reason that, if used exclusively, they run dangerously close to being the sort of "test questions" that define the monologic classroom discussions that we strive to avoid. Still, "stump the class" allows a game-like atmosphere to create student interest around these types of questions: I simply ask the students to recite their questions aloud in rapid fire, in sort of popcorn fashion. They get one point for asking and answering a question, but if the question cannot be adequately answered by a classmate, then I give four "bonus discussion points" to the question asker. Everyone likes a freebie, so this is a big hit. Also, there is a certain gamesmanship that attends this session of class, as students are somewhat (or very) competitive by nature. Finally, after a five to seven minute session of "stump the class," we are ready to move into the higher-order questions at "think and search" and "author and me." Only later do we move to "on my own." But I find that the students are ready for a deeper, higher-level discussion after they have reviewed the literal level of the text in the opening gambit. Remember, we are using student-generated questions throughout the discussion; as a teacher, I reinforce the quality of the questions as well as entertain their content.

But how to get students to write good QAR questions in the first place? I begin by using the above "discussion clock," a technique that I learned from the Johnson and Johnson brothers, but that I've also seen demonstrated by Gayle Elkins, a consultant out of Portland, Oregon. Simply, students arrange three appointments, one at each time frame. I typically guide their selection, as is evident on the figure above. The students,

often, are able to pick one friend of their choice, but I also guide them to pick one unfamiliar person and one person of the opposite gender. Their assignment at each of the successive appointments is to generate two QAR questions, and they typically do quite well. They love the social interaction of working in the "discussion clock" format, but the key is that they develop strong questions on their own. Following this session, then, we'll have the student-generated discussion, and sometimes the discussion will move into the next day's class period.

The Art of Follow-Up Questions

As a follow-up lesson, perhaps about a week or so later, students are typically ready to write their own questions for class discussions, and I usually give them practice a few times before combining this activity with the "hotseat," a neat student-centered activity that I learned from Jeffrey Wilhelm[5].

The key to this lesson is the mix of structure and spontaneity, as well as increased "uptake" that the activity generates. Students come to class with a set of "right there" and "think and search" questions geared toward their assigned character; in the case of Wiesel's *Night*[6], I have half of the class write questions for the father and half for the son in the novel, but more characters can be used, and the teacher can assign a range of characters across the room, one to each group if many minor characters exist in the given text. Each student, then, will bring his or her homework questions to the group (of say four students) and they will brief each other on the questions that will be asked. The goal is to establish a comfort level for each of the students because one of them will be assigned to sit on the hotseat and answer questions from each of the group members.

Now the magic: the rest of the class, then, is assigned the task of listening to the basic-level questions and answers, and they are responsible to ask "follow-up" questions at the "author and me" or "on my own" question level. The level of inquiry required of students here seem as though it is too difficult a task, but they typically rise to the occasion, showing their ability to ask natural, increasingly complex questions. The teacher will play the role of facilitator, helping the watching students to enter the conversation.

As for grading, I typically award fifty percent of the discussion grade for the written, prepared questions, and fifty percent of the grade comes from the spontaneous class-discussion-generated questions. I also reward the person sitting in the hotseat for his or her ability to respond to questions; just as with a classroom mock trial or any other character dramatic interpretation, the person sitting on the hotseat can fill in details that may not be explicitly stated in the text, but he or she must stay consistent with the factual details of the text and also with the character's personality as laid out by the author.

In the following figure, I have a write up of the activity, along with some sample student responses. The student-generated discussion has all three of Nystrand's criteria for an excellent class discussion: there is authenticity because the questions move toward more complex, values-based responses while still having an anchor in the text itself; there is uptake because roughly half of the job of the assignment is geared toward the interaction that occurs in the classroom.

Moreover, students often write questions for a class discussion and then simply wait for their turns to offer their contribution. The discussion, in this case, lacks the organic quality that we grow to love and expect from our best classes. However, if students are rewarded and recognized for listening

and reacting to what is said and discussed, the discussion will gather steam. Further, when we give students the framework through which to build a discussion—particularly when the social drama of a classmate on the hotseat will continue to create personal interest—then we equip them with the tools of success to build organic discussions for themselves.

Hotseat Activity for Elie Wiesel's *Night*

The Lesson: Follow-Up Questions

As a follow-up to QAR instruction, I ask students to create four QAR questions for a character from the novel. In the case of *Night*, roughly half of the students were assigned to write questions directed toward the father, and the other half were asked to write questions for the son.

The next day in class, students were then put in their cooperative base groups and asked to prep each other with questions. Then, I would call on one student, at random, to field questions from their group and then the whole class. The goal of the discussion is to enable students to see the story from the character's point of view, to develop empathy for the character, to read the story at an increasingly complex level, and to have an active discussion that promotes inquiry.

A recent discussion resulted in one hundred percent student participation among my regular-level English II students (not common) with some great "uptake" and complex student-generated questions as follow-up. As for grading, roughly half of the grade came from the questions that the students bring into the classroom and the other half came from follow-up questions and responses that the students make in class.

Student-generated questions (**bold**):

1.What is the name of the second camp that they went to? (think and search)

2. What does "work is liberty" mean? (right there)

3. Why does the author tell the story of how he ran into the French girl years after the concentration camps? (author and me)

4. Would you have run into the electric fences to take your own life to avoid the crematory? Why? (on my own)

Student-generated questions (**bold**) with sample uptake follow-up questions (*italics*):

1. What was Madame Schachter saying on the train on the way to camp? (right there)

2. How did her screaming make you feel? (a follow-up question, author and me)

3. How would you react in this situation? (a follow-up question, on my own)

4. Why does Elie say that he is eighteen when he is actually fifteen? (think and search)

5. How does Elie feel about his father in this section of the book? (a follow-up question, author and me)

6. What do you think Elie means when he says, "I became A-7713. After that I had no other name"? (author and me)

7. How does this dehumanization affect his view of God? (a follow-up question, author and me)

Questioning in Role

A final method for generating student questions centers on the panel discussion. I spend time creating fictional scenarios that center on key/essential unit questions.

From the following figure, one can see a sample of the type of scenario that might be used as a gateway activity to draw student interest in a thematic or conceptual unit—the concept of justice, for example. I've used the scenario several times, most recently in conjunction with an English II (grade ten) reading of *Tuesdays with Morrie*[7].

The students were given the following scenario, and several students were assigned to respond to it in character; the remainder of the class would ask them questions, in character, by using the QAR technique. The characters sit in a row of desks (the panel) with the character's name displayed obviously. The teacher moderates the discussion, guiding students to ask and respond to each other, and again, the goal is to encourage as much student-to-student question asking; again, the goal is to raise the level of engagement in the class discussion by closely monitoring the levels of authenticity, uptake and complexity raised by the discussion questions and responses.

"Little Angels" of Springfield

Angel Claire pushed back a lock of her wispy black hair to reveal a quadruple-pierced ear, with clear stones and silver glistening, her weathered black leather advertising her favorite metal band. Teachers regarded her with a strange mix of distrust and fear as she spoke her mind, but often put down other students and broke the rules. Recently, though, she had made friends with Bonnie Berg, a more timid well-meaning girl at Spring-

field High School. Bonnie was a great favorite of all her teachers for her smile and her hard work.

Throughout the past semester at Springfield, there had been a rash of class cuts. Students were not really going to class, and the perfect spring weather didn't help things at all. Teachers complained to the deans that attendance in their classes was sagging. Finally, a special meeting between all the teachers and the student council brought about the following policy: three cuts for any student would result in a failure in the class.

As fourth quarter came and rolled along, Angel and Bonnie cut class twice together to go to McDonalds for breakfast. They weren't doing anything seriously wrong, Bonnie figured, and it felt good, as Angel said, "to bend the rules once in a while." However, a few days after her second cut, Manny Batzel, the school dean, called home to talk to the Bergs about Bonnie's two recent absences. "Are you aware of Bonnie's two recent absences at school?" he asked. Manny went on to explain the problem and the new attendance policy.

"Don't worry," Mrs. Blair reassured him. "Bonnie will not miss another class this semester." Mr. and Mrs. Berg sat Bonnie down to a heart-to-heart lecture about her responsibilities. Bonnie left the room crying but agreed never to cut another class.

About a week later, on the way to school, Bonnie stopped by to walk with Angel to Springfield.

"You've got to stay with me, Bon—" Angel begged. "My mom hates me!"

"But what do you want me to do about it?" asked Bonnie.

"Maybe she'll listen to you," Angel pleaded with Bonnie. "We can be late to school, it'll be alright. Don't worry about it!"

"Let me tell you why I called you into my office," began Marvin Castiglione, the school principal. "Your parents and I have been friends for years, and I feel I owe it to you to hear your side of the story. This morning, you were again late for class, and since you were fifteen minutes late—more than the ten-minute 'cut rule'—you received your third cut in the class. By the rule, you receive an 'F' in the class."

"I can explain," Bonnie pleaded, telling of the morning's occurrences at the Claire's residence and how Angel's mom had threatened to throw her out, if Bonnie hadn't intervened.

"Oh, I see," Castiglione said. "I should have known you'd never be responsible for this!"

Should Bonnie get an "F"?

Directions for Characters: You will be entered into an assigned role with a partner or group. *Prepare a statement from that character's point of view. Be ready to field questions from the committee.*

Angel Claire: You are angry that the school's administration seems to make decisions in a *haphazard* way. They should think about what's important: friends. You think she's a good friend who should be spared the "F" in this case.

Bonnie: Just because you *spontaneously* decided to go out for breakfast a couple of times, does not mean you are

a rule-breaker! It was not your intent to hurt anyone's feelings, and now everyone is angry at you.

Principal Castiglione: You are concerned for Bonnie, and you are a friend of the family. Probably she's a good kid that got *unwittingly* swept up into Angel Claire's world. Although you are sympathetic toward her, you know that there is only one way to handle this situation—to enforce the cut rule.

Dean Batzel: As the school dean, you are mostly concerned with the rules being enforced. There has been much *deliberation* about the rules when they were put in place, and now it's time to enforce them. Maybe Bonnie's third cut was beyond her control, but her first two cuts were *premeditated*! How can she be let off the hook?

Mr./Mrs. Berg: You feel that your daughter should be held accountable to the rules, although you feel sorry for what has happened to her here. She was just being a good friend, but her first two cuts were for her own reasons. In the end, you are torn as to what to suggest to the committee.

Morrie Schwartz: You are an aging professor who cares for everyone in your life. At the end of your life now, you realize that what counts most in life is helping others.

Sandra O'Malley: Ms. O'Malley has been teaching for eight years at Springfield High School. She loves her students and they really enjoy her class, year in and year out. However, she has seen many of her students fall through the cracks, fail out and just waste their gifts. As a result—although she normally prefers to take the student's side—this is one case where she knows the

attendance policy has to be enforced.

Mitch Albom: Nearing your midlife crisis, you have gotten far in your career by being responsible and driven. At the same time, Morrie's lessons to you have helped you see the value in caring.

Directions for Committee: Imagine that you are on a committee of parents, teachers, administrators and fellow students that have been selected to decide whether or not Bonnie should get an "F" or *contrive* an alternative plan that seems fair to all. After hearing the testimonies and questioning each character in a moderated debate, you will render your decision. *To prepare for the debate, write down* two *insightful questions for each witness.*

Throughout the above activity, the teacher should take notes on the characters' comments, raising their comments in a post-game processing, reflection discussion. On a conceptual level, the teacher is looking for student comments that begin to elucidate the key questions for the unit or novel, and the follow-up discussion can be used by the teacher to begin to build the cognitive schema for the unit so that each student begins to gain a deeper understanding for the them of compassion or justice and also so that the students can gain deeper buy-in because their ideas are honored by the discussion process.

Most teachers today have moved beyond the monologic classroom dynamic and engage in myriad methods for increasing student engagement. We want our students to engage deeply and actively in the text. We want to hear their ideas and to see them construct meaning on their own. Getting students to ask questions—to think critically on the text

or on any issue, for that matter—is a step toward the kinds of discussions that we know serve our students well.

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Mark Twain entertains the IATE luncheon crowd

CIVIL STRIFE:

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES
OF INTERDISCIPLINARY CO-TEACHING

STEPHEN HELLER

Ten years ago I had the opportunity to team teach a course in American studies. Asked to serve as an author and teacher for this pilot course, I worked with another Social Studies teacher to create a two-period course for juniors. Completion of this course would earn students one year's credit in both English and Social Studies.

Such a course signaled a growing trend in high schools: interdisciplinary classes. The thinking was (and still is) that knowledge is artificially divided between classes, subjects, even teachers, and that the more we can build bridges in a high school, the more effective the learning experiences will be. Other examples of such interdisciplinary approaches have included freshmen integrated studies and fine arts/humanities programs. At the suburban high school I was then

teaching, the junior-year English curriculum was American literature, and the junior-year history curriculum was U.S. history. Therefore, the marriage of the two made perfect sense, and American studies chapters have sprouted across the country over the last two decades. At the time of enrollment for the class I codesigned, over ninety students signed up, which meant that two sections (or four-fifths of my day) were devoted to teaching this class.

What followed was perhaps the low point of my professional career. It was a year fraught with insecurity about my relationship with the curriculum, the students, the administrators, and above all, my co-teacher. I left the course after one year, and I left the school the year after that. Since then, I have been involved with both successful and unsuccessful collaborations, but none have asked for the same degree of commitment that co-teaching a course does, and I have generally shied away from even thinking about the 1994–1995 school year.

But I have since heard of others' accounts of these troubling relationships, and in an effort to offer some insight into the dynamics of a failed relationship—in the hopes of clearing the way for future teams—I offer this reflection of the events from the past.

On paper, we should have succeeded as a team. In reality, the paper had nothing to do with why this relationship failed. When I think back to my major complaints about that time, they were usually couched in academic jargon. I railed against having to teach American literature chronologically, and poets such as Anne Bradstreet had little to offer students. Why couldn't we begin the year with something relevant, I argued. I felt that students could learn as much about history through literature, not the other way around, and I constantly pushed to be the "lead" wagon on our journey. I felt that my

own teaching style was much less content driven, and much more organic, so much that students' ideas came before historical fact, or even in place of historical fact.

The problems manifested themselves in various ways. I argued for the accordian-like wall to be put up for more days, so that we could present our ideas individually, and not have to teach to the whole assemblage of forty-five students at once. I stopped reading history, and I stopped caring about what history they were learning. I stopped creating ideas about how best to work with students. But not without some effort. I kept arguing for a "Best of Show" approach with my partner, whereby we could take turns being the lead teacher. This way, we could learn from each other and grow accustomed to each other's styles. This way, we could also feel that at least part of us was making its way into the lifeblood of the classroom.

In fact, we tried this a bit, but we were not able to sustain this. Ironically, I remember more of the course where I felt I had a greater voice in what curricular decisions were made. Once, for example, we read *The Education of Little Tree*, followed by a study of the Trail of Tears.

No other teachers or administrators could help here. Why not? I suspect it was because no one had much experience with this type of team approach before, and even if they had, the issues had more to do with personality than curriculum. I remember talking primarily to English teachers about this, as if some kind of wall had built up around all Social Studies teachers, never mind the fact that I was friends with a number of these teachers.

And this shutdown in myself that I described was unexpected, given that I had considered myself a student of American culture and history; further, my English classrooms made active use of connections to other disciplines through

assignments, reading selections, and activities. Interacting with students fueled my creativity, so there was little joy in teaching this course.

I remember one moment where my teaching partner asked me to render an opinion on the poetry of Phillis Wheatley. I read it, and I merely responded, "This will work." Even then I knew that even if I had been a Phillis Wheatley expert, my response would not have been much more extensive. Our planning sessions—which occurred during our common free periods—became more and more silent. If there were no real conversations about ideas before class, one could hardly expect any healthy exchange of ideas during class. I sometimes wondered what the students thought of this failed relationship; could they tell that there was no communication between us? Did they suffer in any way?

During the one period of the day where I taught my own class I was a different person. My confidence and creativity returned, and I felt that I had a healthy relationship with students—one that grew and developed as it should. But in American Studies, I was counting the days until June.

Why the shutdown? I think it was because I felt that I had no voice in the process. I abdicated my own voice and responsibility. In the interests of putting up a "united front," I had sacrificed too much of my own creative instincts. Further, I lacked the fortitude to be more forthright and confident in my own instincts, and I was too willing to complain to my administrators, instead of making a more direct statement to my partner. What was I afraid of? Conflict. Confrontation. Rejection. The more I complained to others about the failures of this course, the more I failed to accept my own responsibility in working towards a solution. In retrospect, I was pursuing a pity party; I wanted everyone's support but I didn't want to have to do anything about it.

In fairness to myself and to my partner, there was not much time to iron out these differences, given the daunting pace of a school curriculum—and the new course. Take the anxiety associated with teaching a new course, couple this with twice the students, add to that a partner you have not yet worked with, and things can get hectic fast.

The experience also revealed to me just how essential human contact is to nurture the teaching spirit. No matter how carefully crafted a curriculum is, the experience lacks recognition without that interactive quality between teacher and student. I remember no student names from that year, and I remember little except a few of the titles we read, such *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Crucible*. Sadly, I learned no new history.

I sometimes wonder if the two of us were put together again today, would things be different? I am not the same person I was a decade ago. As a husband, parent, and educator, I have been chastened by life experiences. Curricular choices are important, but they are not as important as they used to be. Even though I'm not a fan of chronological approaches to history, I could live with it. I've come to respect and teach the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, and I have incorporated more historical texts in my English curriculum. I've even integrated more of a content-based approach to some aspects of my teaching, for I affectionately encourage my students to note that certain things simply won't come through divine intuition.

Despite the fact that I am a better educator today as a result of this failure, I have little desire to revisit the past with my former partner. Indeed, we have not spoken these ten years.

I'll conclude with some lessons I learned, and wish to share, regarding interdisciplinary co-teaching:

a. It's better if the team is organic. To place two people together in the same room may work, but there are no guarantees. Had we worked together before this experience, things may have been different.

b. Integrating curriculum does not necessarily change the learning outcomes of the students, especially with respect to American studies. Essentially, our class was one period of history and one period of English, simply taught by two people for ninety minutes. Sadly, there were times one of us would teach while the other would go to a desk and do work.

    Even without our dysfunctional relationship, we must consider that much of Social Studies—as a synthesized discipline—is content driven. We ask students to develop informed opinions based on facts, trends, figures, and awareness. While the attainment of such knowledge follows a similar path as the language arts—reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening—the field of Social Studies has clearly articulated content-driven outcomes. Put another way—teaching English is more about process; teaching history is more about product.

    I do believe that there are issues related to priorities. I am struck by the thousands of pages students in AP U.S. History are asked to read, and while they may become more conversant with, say, Puritan ethics, we must ask ourselves if this unit will develop the lifelong literacy skills of a student. Interestingly, teaching *The Crucible* was one of the more meaningful times early on in the class, because Arthur Miller's play transcends the boundaries of department-segregated high schools.

    If you have English or Social Studies teachers able to ask and answer these questions of priorities, then

American studies can produce something greater than the sum of the parts.

c. Team teaching is a sort of marriage. There needs to be a period of courtship, which should feature (in my opinion):

- opportunities to observe each other's practice and to talk about respective styles, prior to actually teaching together,

- individual teachers willing and able to learn from each other, while still able to retain their own teaching identity, and

- administrative support that is disciplinarily neutral. It would have been better had, say, the Math department chair been our supervisor. Such support also would mean regular opportunities for all parties to talk together about the progress of the teaching team, as well as the feelings of the individual teachers.

Deborah Meier, noted principal and educator in New York City, notes that learning is speaking and teaching is listening. Even teachers need to be heard, and if they feel that their partners have not heard them, then they may begin to question their purpose altogether.

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