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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 over 1,000 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* 103.3 (SUMMER 2016)

JANICE NEULEIB

The first essay in this collection appears at my request: Tom McCann writes knowingly about the need for guided discussion as students develop their essays. Tiffany Flowers introduces readers to some texts for student readers, some likely familiar to *IEB* and some perhaps new and enticing. Kristina Austin is just finishing her student teaching; she wrote this essay in an honors independent study. In it, she gives us the perspective of the learning teacher. Vicky Gilpin, longtime member and committed participant in IATE, presents us with a poem that will help us ponder our places as teachers in our profession. Finally, IATE Past President Elizabeth Kahn and teacher colleagues, Shirley Morikuni, Julianna Cucci, and Jamie A. Kowalczyk provide helpful scales for measuring critical inquiry. Please enjoy this wonderful

mix of perspectives across our discipline and across teachers' experiences.

As always, I want to thank all these authors. I am so grateful for our brilliant and committed community of IATE members and for new authors as they join our ranks. Then, as ever, I thank our Publications Unit's faithful editors who work so hard to make our elegant *Bulletin*: Steve Halle and Holms Troelstrup. IATE owes the Unit a constant debt of gratitude.

TALKING AND KNOWING: THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCUSSION IN THE WRITING PROCESS

THOMAS M. MCCANN

When I worked as a school administrator, I frequently observed in classrooms as part of the protocol for teacher evaluation. On one occasion I observed an eleventh grade US History teacher as he administered the "unit test" on the Louisiana Purchase. He relied on an essay test, which he deemed a more authentic assessment than other possibilities. As I observed, he wrote the essay prompt on the board: "Describe the Louisiana Purchase." That was it. Students were allowed to rely on their notes. They seemed to know what to do, and they quickly set to work in essaying as much as they could in the next forty-five minutes.

To be fair to the teacher, the students knew the teacher well and were familiar with his routines and expectations. But consider the challenge for the writer uninitiated in the

ways of this history teacher. What would you need to know, and what would you need to be able to do, to complete the writing task successfully? In this context, *successfully* would mean writing a viable academic essay to earn a good grade from the history teacher.

I suggest that to be able to complete the task successfully, the students would need to know something about the Louisiana Purchase: the historical period; the political and economic situations and pressures in Europe and North America; the political figures involved in the purchase; the cautions, criticisms, and other reactions among observers at the time; the details of the transaction; the long-term consequences for the United States, France, and other countries; and the long-term impact on Native Americans, native wildlife, and the environment. Some students might readily bring these details to mind. Other students would have to rely on their notes as part of the procedure for accessing the information that is necessary for the writing. To begin, then, the writers would need to know some content and would need to command some procedures for accessing, sorting, and selecting the content for the purposes of the writing task.

But knowledge about the content and access to the content would not be enough. The teacher prompted students to *describe* the Louisiana Purchase. This verb suggests several possibilities: a description of the physical territory, a narration of the events, an analysis of actions and their consequences, an analysis of the benefits of the purchase to the United States, or an analysis of the devastating consequences to native peoples. You can imagine students wondering, "What do you want me to *do*?" In other words, the writers would need to know what form the writing should take: description, narration, analysis, or some hybrid that combines all of these forms. In the US History class that I observed, the students probably

knew from past experience with the same teacher what form he expected them to produce.

Of course, it is one thing to be familiar with the form of writing; it is another thing to be able to produce the form. The procedures for description, narration, and analysis are not interchangeable. I suggest also that it is difficult to look at a model and then know how to produce it. The model has some limited value in guiding production, but the writer still has to think about the subject of the writing and produce something that is more than the imitation of someone else. I pride myself in being able to distinguish a William Faulkner short story from one written by James T. Farrell or Eudora Welty, yet I would be hard-pressed to produce anything similar to the form practiced by Faulkner. Recognizing the characteristics of the form places me in the territory for writing but does not guide me in producing my specific expression of the form.

Task Analysis and the Writer's Knowledge

Hillocks (1986) reviews the research literature to help teachers of writing think about the different domains of knowledge that a writer needs to tap in order to produce something. Smith, Wilhelm, and Fredricksen draw from Hillocks's review and describe an "inquiry frame" (21) that influences how they prepare for writing instruction. A systematic review of the knowledge domains would amount to a task analysis, and would involve reflection on the following questions:

> Do the students know the content about which they will be writing?
>
> Do the students command some procedures for accessing, sorting, and selecting the information that the writing task requires?

> Do the students know the characteristics of the form that they are expected to produce?
> Do the students know the procedures that guide their production of a particular form of writing?

Of course, a teacher cannot answer these questions without knowing the students well, drawing insights from students' past writing, from daily discourse, and from past experience with students at the same grade. The task analysis is not just a consideration of the demands that a writing task might pose to any writer but a judgment about the challenges for a specific group of students.

If one were to consider the history teacher described above as a teacher of writing (and he has, after all, asked students to *write* essays), then part of his responsibility to prepare learners for writing is to make sure that students know the content about which they will be writing. He has probably focused most on this responsibility. For teachers who have emphasized the processes of composing, this might seem like a curious emphasis; nevertheless, making sure that students know content and have access to information is an important consideration. Other teachers might focus more heavily on the form of writing that students will produce, emphasizing rubrics and "mentor texts" (Gallagher) to detail for students the kind of writing they are supposed to produce. But, in either case—an emphasis on content or an emphasis on form—students might struggle with the procedures for accessing what they know and for producing the kind of writing that a rubric defines abstractly and that an exemplar is supposed to illustrate. In short, while students might know content and recognize a form, they still may not command the procedures for drawing from their content knowledge to produce a particular form of writing.

An old friend, a former high school English teacher, once complained to me and other old university classmates, "We ask kids to write about this stuff, and they don't know the stuff." He knew that high school teachers prompted students to write about a range to topics, including specific works of literature, when the students often had little command of the content. Another colleague, a college composition instructor, voiced this complaint at a faculty meeting: "These kids don't know how to *think*. They don't know how to write because they don't know how to *think*." To put matters simply, the two complaints serve to set an instructional agenda for the teacher of writing: Teach students about the "stuff," and teach them how to *think*, especially if that thinking means how to work with the content in conveying ideas, judgments, sentiments, or analyses for a particular audience.

It is hard to teach students how to think, so the frequently missing instructional element is the emphasis on teaching the procedures for writing. To analyze further the essay writing task in the US History class, we might think carefully about what is involved in "describing" the Louisiana Purchase. If *describe* in this context means *recall the events* and *analyze* their cause and significance, and the teacher is uncertain that students can readily recall and analyze, then the teacher would do well to teach students how to do these things. How is that possible?

Elements of Practice in Teaching Argument

Over the last couple of years, I have followed closely a few teachers of writing who rely heavily on purposeful peer interactions as part of the preparation for writing (McCann). I list here the practices in common across the six teachers, representing these grades: grade five, grade six, grade nine, grade ten, and community college. I follow the list with a discussion of what each element of practice looks like and why it is important.

Seven Elements of Practice

1. Emphasize the learning of *procedures* for producing particular forms of writing.
2. Rely on *authentic discussions* in small groups and large groups as a means for students to learn procedures through frequent oral interchanges.
3. Frame a line of *inquiry* as the context for discussions.
4. Introduce a *narrative*—complete with characters, conflict, and details—to initiate inquiry.
5. *Scaffold* discussions so that each opportunity prepares learners for extending and refining thought for the next conversation.
6. Follow through with a *supportive process* that allows students to move from exploratory attempts to drafts and to refined efforts.
7. Build in a stage for *reflection* to prompt awareness of the procedures that the learners applied in completing a composition.

I offer as an example one tenth grade teacher who introduced students to a problem inspired by a news story. In introducing the story, he connected it to a broader line of inquiry that included the close examination of several connected texts that explore issues related to individual liberties and obligations to authority. Here is the essence of the narrative: Through the use of cell phones and video cameras, a set of parents have devised ways to track the whereabouts of their three children and monitor their actions. Although the children, ages fourteen, twelve, and ten, find the efforts at protection too invasive and restrictive, the parents feel justified in doing all they can to ensure the safety of their family. At the same time, the parents resent when commercial and

government entities track their movements (e.g., cameras at intersections), purchases (e.g., Amazon, Ebay), and interests (e.g., Google, Facebook, Pinterest). The question for discussion and writing is the balance between attempts to secure safety and support interests and the individual's right to privacy and anonymity.

In this case, the students began by considering the problem in small groups from an assigned point of view, such as the parents, each of the children, a police officer, and a representative of a company that accumulates "big data." The individual and small group preparation included the reading of related news stories, exploring problems related to police use of GPS trackers, government operatives examining library records, drones equipped with cameras photographing properties, etc. This small group work could be characterized as essentially *exploratory talk* (Barnes; Smagorinsky), as students discovered more about the problem and how any one individual might be affected. The teacher understood this small group work to be exploratory and listened to hear evidence that students were finding their way to being able to express a viable argument in the large group forum.

In the large group forum, the students argued from the point of view of their assigned characters. The oral exchanges exposed students to a variety of perspectives, and the interplay required students to support their positions in the face of questions and challenges. This phase in a discussion sequence had students drafting arguments, summarizing the arguments of others as an element of uptake, evaluating the competing positions, and connecting several arguments. In some instances an argument posed a contrast to other perspectives, and in some cases an argument offered an alternative expression of an argument that some students already supported.

In a variation of the large group discussion, the students abandoned their assigned points of view and argued from their own personal perspectives. Drawing from the many exchanges that preceded this discussion, the students were able to refine their arguments. A tenth-grade student named Kanji reports what helps him to write a composition for his English class:[1] "I'd say I get ideas from what we talk about in class, and the… Talking with classmates, like, in class and outside of class to get ideas, but also, during the assignments, I try to keep it in my mind so I can point it out whenever I see a connection between the assignment and what I'm doing in life."

Kanji and his classmates drew from their discussions in many ways, including the exposure to content knowledge, a review of a variety of arguments, the practice in formulating arguments, the recognition of alternative views, and even the growth in vocabulary. In the following example, a student named Fiona drew from her experiences in the discussions to gather her thoughts in an essay.

Safety and Privacy: A Balancing Act

Fiona Cadogan

Safety of the general public is a very important subject; it is a responsibility of each community to make sure that it has this protection. Disagreement, however, comes up when debating how many cautions need to be put in place so people are safe. If an agreement could be made on how many protective devices and safety cautions are needed to keep everyone safe, then everyone would be able to feel more secure in their daily lives. Many measures, such as video cameras, GPS trackers, and corporate business trackers, are taken to ensure the safety of people, but the extent of these cautions should be to provide the best protection possible to each age group, while, at the same time, not invading a person's privacy.

Safety measures should be directed more toward children than adults, but overall, everyone needs to be able to feel secure; these cautions also need to not interfere with one's privacy. Adults know more than children about dangers in the world, so adults have more responsibility because they would know if what they're doing is wrong. In most cases, children are innocent and want to believe everyone is good, but adults know better and need to make it their job to protect children from harm. They use general security techniques like video cameras, GPS trackers, and corporate business trackers. These devices all help to make sure nothing bad happens because they can focus on suspicious actions or posts; they also notify authorities to stop situations from happening. In the case "The Parents Are Watching," Mr. and Mrs. Casto track their children from a GPS app on their cell phones. In this way, they are able to know where their children are and if they are supposed to be there. However, these tools can be overused. For example, video footage could be leaked, GPS trackers can be a key factor in stalking, and a business tracker could be misused by keeping all addresses. The Casto parents installed video cameras all over their house, so the children don't feel comfortable in their own house. This misuses the technology since it's supposed to help a person feel secure, not insecure. Yes, the parents could keep their children safe from all harm, but they ruined their trust with their kids since they made too much effort to see what the children were doing. In the end, it all comes down to the factor of who is using these security measures and why. These tools should be used only by trusted figures, so everyone is protected without having their privacy taken away.

Most of the problems concerning public safety also develop around the different opinions of different types of people. Parents feel they have every right to control their

child's life. Police officers figure it is OK for them to do a random search on any person to make sure they're not doing anything suspicious. Companies believe they can track their consumers' usage of their products so they can make their products better. According to the *New York Times*, "Simply asking for name and address information poses many challenges: transcription errors, increased checkout time, and, worse yet, losing customers who feel that you're invading their privacy." As the *Times* suggests, businesses are going to lose customers if they continue stalking their usage of their products. All of these invasions of privacy lead to loss of trust. Security measures need to be taken, but compromises need to be involved for everyone to benefit. Parents have every right to monitor their children, but they should trust their children enough to know they won't put themselves in dangerous positions. Police officers should be allowed to search people, but the person should be someone who is a suspect not a random person. Companies could send out surveys instead of tracking their customers' usage of their items. If compromises similar to these were made, safety cautions would be met and people's privacy wouldn't be invaded.

Protective measures are different depending on age, but they should all ensure safety and respect a person's privacy. What could happen without safety cautions in place is a scary thought. This is why the debate over the extent to which safety measures should be taken is such a big deal. All in all, the best method of protection is keeping the general public safe without intruding on one's personal space.

Features of the Response

The length of this response reveals in itself that the writer has invested considerable thought and energy in learning about the issues at the heart of the case and in planning an

elaborated analysis. The introduction to the essay illustrates that the writer is familiar enough with the issues related to security and individual rights to frame a problem for the reader to anticipate and think about. In part, this recognition of the critical issues comes from reading the instructional material, but it is also the product of witnessing the competing views expressed in class, contributing to the conversation and perhaps through some online forum not planned by the teacher.

The writer appears to have benefited from her own research and from the research completed by others. She cites a specific passage from a news article to illustrate the benefits and dangers attached to monitoring and surveillance. She does not dismiss one side of the question in favor of the other. In fact, the writer admits the value in some surveillance in public places, but offers guidelines for checking the extent of the surveillance.

I judge that Fiona's essay is one result of her inquiry, which involved scaffolded discussions with classmates on at least three levels: small-group work, role-playing to simulate a community meeting, and a whole-class discussion in which students advanced their own arguments. It certainly appears that learners use the interactions with peers as opportunities to work out their arguments, which they can then transform into written expression. They contend with opposing views and exceptions, and offer the rationale for their own positions. Various contributors to the discussions in Fiona's class shared what they knew from their small-group discussions and from their related reading. All of this talk, I suggest, positioned students to write elaborated responses about the contemporary problem of protecting privacy while taking appropriate measures for safety and security. Fiona's and Kanji's teachers orchestrated an inquiry progression with a series of discussions that began as purely exploratory, progressed to

the drafting of arguments, included the assessing of other arguments, and then connected a web of arguments focused on a central proposition.

Knowing the "Stuff" and Procedures

To return to the US History teacher and the students who faced the challenge of *describing* the Louisiana Purchase, it might be useful to think about how the teacher might have sequenced instruction to help the learners to be successful in completing the task that he had assigned them. Do they know the content about which they are supposed to write, and can they readily access this content? The teacher could have had the students meet in groups to recount the series of events that led to the Purchase. They could also have shared their judgments about why the Purchase occurred and why it was significant. But, knowing this content, would the students have a cause to write and a prompt for analysis? Perhaps a large-group discussion could have drawn on the distributed knowledge across the class to respond to the following supposition and question: *Many critics of today judge that the Louisiana Purchase was a significant step in the almost complete annihilation of many Native American tribes and the destruction of the lands that sustained them. Given this awful price, to what extent did President Jefferson act wisely and appropriately in agreeing to the Louisiana Purchase?* Even if almost all of the students were inclined to justify the action, it is likely that many of them would engage with each other in explaining how, in the long run, they thought that the Louisiana Purchase was a good political and economic move. It is possible that some students or the teacher would challenge the decision, if only to prompt others to defend their judgments. The focus for these exchanges would be for the students to develop the *procedures* for *analysis*, if that is what "describe" in the directions means.

In summary, then, I suggest that for students to write well for the kind of academic writing tasks that they face in school, they will need to know the subject about which they are writing, and they will need to know the procedures for producing a specific form of expression. The teacher will need to teach the learners the "stuff" and will need to teach the learners the procedures for composing, sometimes through modeling of processes, but usually through their daily interactions and their reflections about the processes they followed.

If teachers are to follow the example of Kanji's and Fiona's English teachers, they would carefully sequence the discussions, considering the specific purpose for each stage in the inquiry process, and plan that each discussion positions students to contribute effectively to the next. The last element involves asking students to reflect in one form or another on how they were able to complete their current writing task. What processes did they follow? In the history class with the unit essay tests, after students have successfully described the Louisiana Purchase, they would want to be aware of how they did this so that they could apply similar procedures when they have to *explain* the Missouri Compromise or *discuss* the Monroe Doctrine somewhere down the line. Equipped with the generative procedures, learners would likely be able to *explain* and *discuss* a variety of topics, if they know their stuff. Unlike the rigidity of a composition template, the internalized procedures travel with the learners to serve them again and again, supporting the problem-solving flexibility to allow the written product to follow from the inquiry and dialogic processes, rather than defined by a predetermined form limiting thought and expression.

Notes

[1] The names of the students cited in this article are pseudonyms.

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Thomas M. McCann is a professor of English at Northern Illinois University, where he contributes to the teacher certification program. His recent book, Transforming Talk into Text *(Teachers College Press, 2014), draws from his two-year research project that examines the impact that authentic discussions have on students' academic writing.*

YOUNG ADULT BOOK REVIEWS

TIFFANY A. FLOWERS

Myers, Walter Dean. *Monster*. New York: Harper Tempest, 1999. Print.

Monster is a must have for every middle and high school language arts teacher. This novel is about an African American teenager named Steve. He is from a middle-class household with college educated parents. He falls in with the wrong crowd and ends up being with other teens that bully him into going along as they commit a murder. He is imprisoned and charged with murder. He begins writing a screenplay about his life while awaiting trial. During his trial, the district attorney prosecuting the case calls him a monster. This sets the tone for how he is treated throughout this work. At the end of the book, Steve is set free. However, his family, lawyer, and friends view him differently. The entire ordeal changes him in ways that he cannot fully express. This book is written in a screenplay format. Therefore, using this book

for a read-aloud text is not the best idea. This text can be used as a literature circle choice for students. Each student can read this book from the perspective of a lawyer, judge, parent, jury member, victim, etc. This book is written in a reader friendly format for children in grades six through ten. The language is not complicated and can be read and understood by students with a fifth grade or higher reading level in the middle or high school.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Hush*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2002. Print.

Hush is about an African American girl named Evie watching her family have difficulty adjusting to living in a new city and practicing a new religion due to a life-threatening situation. Her father was an African American police officer that agreed to testify against two white police officers for shooting a handcuffed teen in the back of a police car. As a member of the police community, Evie's father loses everything and their family ends up having their lives threatened by former friends and officers. The entire family relocates under the Witness Protection Program until the trial, and Evie watches her father go into a depression until he discloses why he agreed to testify. This is a great addition for any language arts classroom or library. This work can be paired with other books about the Witness Protection Program. This book can also be read by students in grades five through ten. It is written as a traditional novel. Therefore, it can be read as a read-aloud book as well as a book to get students to do reader response in language arts classrooms.

Flake, Sharon G. *Who Am I Without Him?* New York: Jump at the Sun, 2004. Print.

Who Am I Without Him? is a collection of nine short stories that includes the real life experiences of young African American teens and their relationships with young boys. The stories in this collection include issues related to verbal abuse, cheating, breakups, interracial relationships, self-esteem, violence, and respect. This text is written in the backdrop of almost any school with a diverse population of students. This collection is a great way to get students interested in reading fiction with exciting stories. Many of the stories can be paired with other collections of short stories or short essays that focus on issues related to violence among teens, relationships, and self-esteem. This text is great for students in grades six through ten. Additionally, the essays are great for paired reading activities with students such as teaching students to identify the narrative arc in writing.

Marshall, Rita. *I Hate to Read*. Minnesota: Creative Editions, 1992. Print.

I Hate to Read is a great book for teachers that have children in their classes that emphatically state they hate to read. The main character in this book is Victor Dickens. He is a little boy that loves to do just about anything except read. One day, a slew of characters emerges from a magical book. They are on a mission to get Victor to read. The characters all entice him with reading and Victor is just not convinced. Toward the end of the book, Victor begins to think of the interesting characters he met in the book. He decides, as his classmates exclaim that they hate reading, to change his mind. The illustrations in this book are gentle, inviting, and relatable. The language in this book is appropriate for children in grades two through four. Some of the more difficult words in the book are *unison*, *protested*, and *cautiously*. This text is a great choice for teachers that want to focus on the aesthetic aspects

of reading for boys. I highly recommend reading this book at the beginning of introduction to Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R.) time in elementary classrooms.

Pinkney, Sandra L. *Read and Rise*. New York: Cartwheel, 2006. Print.

Read and Rise is a must-have for parents, teachers, librarians, and reading specialists interested in getting children to love reading. The book is written in a call-and-response format. The reader is supposed to read through the pages and say, "Read!" The children respond back by saying, "Rise!" It is a great book to include during the first few weeks of school when teachers are trying to get children to foster an interest in books. The language in this book is simplistic and it is appropriate for children in grades Pre-K through grade three. Many of the words in the book repeat and children in grades one through three can read this book independently. The book is illustrated using diverse photographs and graphics on each page. I highly recommend this book for literacy professionals to add to their resource library to use with young children.

Miller, William. *Richard Wright and the Library Card*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1997. Print.

Richard Wright and the Library Card is a great resource for teachers, librarians, parents, and reading specialists that work with children in grades three through five. This book is written as an episodic biographical/historical fiction account of Richard Wright's experience with integrating a public library. Richard does everything he can to gain access to the libraries holdings in the 1920s. It is not until he befriends the librarian that he is able to gain access to the books he needs to read in order to later become a well-known and prolific

writer. This is a great book to foster discussions about reading motivation. What compels a reader to want to read books? This book is designed with tasteful and diverse illustrations. I highly recommend this book for those that want to motivate children to read during the intermediate grades. It is a great resource for all literacy professionals.

Dr. Tiffany A. Flowers is an assistant professor of education at Georgia Perimeter College. She is an Indiana Minority Faculty Fellow, Frederick Douglass Teaching Fellow, and an NCTE Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award Recipient. Her research interests include literature, traditional literacy, diversity issues in education, African American literacy development, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Correspondence concerning these reviews may be e-mailed to tflowers@gpc.edu.

GETTING REVISION ~~WRITE~~ RIGHT: INCORPORATING PROFESSIONAL VOICES INTO THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

KRISTINA AUSTIN

During our conference to discuss his revision choices, J. D., a struggling writer, said, "Ms. Austin, I'm not a good writer like Thomas is."

Putting my own ideas about his writing abilities aside, I asked, "What makes you think that, J. D?"

He sighed, "Writing is hard for me," hanging his head. "I try and try, and the right words don't come out on paper like they are in my head. It's easy for Thomas. He's a good writer, and I'm just not."

Thomas consistently met the writing standards in our classroom, and I wondered if he would be willing to make his revision process visible to exemplify that quality writing takes consistent effort through revision, even from the most talented writer.

When I asked Thomas to explain his revision process to me, I was surprised when he said, "I don't revise. My writing is good enough the first time."

I explained, "Every piece of writing can be improved, Thomas. What can you do to clarify your main ideas, strengthen your language, and appeal to your audience?"

"Good writers don't revise, Ms. Austin, so why should I?"

After the revision conferences that are narrated above, it became clear that my students were gravely misinformed about how "real" writers go about the revision process. J. D. was discouraged by the difficulty of writing, not realizing that even the most skilled writers must battle to root their intricate thoughts in written words. Meanwhile, Thomas was growing apathetic towards his work, dismissing the possibility of the continued growth that we know professional writers chase endlessly. With the voices of writers like Anne Lamott in my head, I diagnosed J. D. and Thomas with the "fantasy of the uninitiated," the assumption that good writers sit down confidently and write masterpieces immediately (21). It had not been too long since I was a high school writer myself, one who struggled to find inspiration in cookie-cutter activities like mind maps and topic inventories. I failed to discover my personal, authentic writing process until after I struggled through my first two years as an undergraduate student. Until then, I had been writing "shitty first drafts" that I didn't allow to be shitty, that were stuffed into the same pretentious box that contained my writing throughout high school. Nearly in tears over one particular draft that was stuck in my head instead of on the page, I turned to Lamott for words of advice on the revision process. She gave me permission to let my writing "romp all over the place" (22) until I shaped it into something "beautiful or wild" (23). I wished all my students, including J. D. and Thomas, had a professional role model in

writing, like Lamott had been for me, to provide inspiration, motivation, and strategies as they revised their writing.

The reality is this: When teaching revision in the secondary classroom, it is essential to share the perspectives of professional writers with our students in order to legitimize the craft of writing beyond the classroom walls. In the same way students look to professional athletes, singers, and actors for inspiration and advice in their extracurricular activities, we should strive to provide writing idols for students to look to for an exciting and recognized standard of revision. Inviting professional perspectives is especially essential when teaching the deeply personal and unique revision process that is too often simplified by cookie-cutter texts that talk about revision as a formula rather than a personal process. Rather than view revision as a "mixture of magic and talent" we can decentralize the fallacy of perfection in drafting by providing appealing idols, professional writers, and our expertise as great coaches and teachers (Hairston, 79). Dawn Kirby and Darren Crovitz as well as Hairston all compare our job as teachers of revision to that of coaches, and as Hairston says, "[Coaches] help people become tennis players by showing them the strategies that experts use and by giving them criticism and reinforcement as they practice those strategies" (80). As coaches of writing and revision, it is essential that we do the same by making the strategies that expert writers use to revise visible for our students so that they are able to apply them to their own deeply personal processes. By doing so, we assure students that great writing is created not through magic but through really hard work. We encourage both our struggling and striving student writers to take up the wrestling match between themselves and the words they want to say with all the determination of the literary masters that came before them, and by literary masters, I mean people just like

them who had enough stamina to keep coming back to their work over and over again until they got it right.

Professional Writers Tell All

Perhaps one of the most authentic ways to survey what current professional writers are saying about revision is to look at the advice from my own writing mentors: Anne Lamott, a *New York Times* best selling novelist and nonfiction writer of *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, and Donald Murray, journalist, nonfiction writer, and teacher of writing. Both professional writers echo the idea that good writing and patient revising are inextricably connected. The same "fantasy of the uninitiated" that J. D. and Thomas suffered from is what leads our students to view drafting as the primary objective, whereas professional writers insist that revising is actually where good writing is born (Lamott 21). In her cheeky narrative "Shitty First Draft," Lamott explains that most good writers produce terrible first drafts in order to write good second drafts and terrific third drafts. She defines a first draft as a "down draft – you just get it down," and it's not until the second draft, the "up draft," that you even begin to fix the writing up, leading to the "dental draft," where you check every detail like a dentist examines every tooth (25–6). This framework that allows writers to "get it down" before we "get it right" is reinforced by Kirby and Crovitz, a teacher and scholar who argues the same philosophy is essential when teaching students to revise (191). Through reading about Lamott's revision process, I learned that terrible writing should be viewed not as a shameful demonstration of a lack of talent but as a starting point for great revision and writing to be born. When we share that philosophy with students and alleviate the pressure for perfection in drafts, we can begin to focus on revision as an essential partner to the teaching of writing.

Another personal writing mentor, Donald Murray, unpacks the maxim that "writing is rewriting" and outlines how writers can become their own best critic in his article, "The Maker's Eye: Revising Your Own Manuscripts." He criticizes, "When students complete a first draft, they consider the job of writing done—and their teachers too often agree… When a draft is completed, the job of writing can begin" (104). Developing the "maker's eye" means viewing the process of revision as recursive, always doubling back on itself, and never really final (108). That means we should spend a substantial amount of time and energy coaching students through the revision phases with our fresh ideas and questions, even though that may be draining, so that at the end of their revision processes, students can feel the success of their terrific drafts. While some teachers may think that our students are too lazy to engage in this type of recursive revision, Kirby stresses that students are capable and willing to work at revision when they are given choice and independence in the way they work through their revision processes, much like professional writers (186). Possibly the most important aspect of Murray's article is his validation that, "Most underestimate the effort in rewriting good writing requires" (105), making it our job to dispel the myths and make the revision processes of "real" writers visible for our students.

High-Interest Voices in the Classroom

Outside of academia, there are current young adult authors who have pushed back against the idea that writing is an act of isolation and have made their writing processes visible and accessible to our students. These authors are ideal candidates to mentor and inspire our students through their virtual presence, and we should invite them into our classrooms by first discussing the value of professional writing mentors and

then sharing their perspectives with students. One example of a student-friendly writing mentor is John Green, the *New York Times* best-selling author of novels including *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Paper Towns*, the author my students raved about after summer vacation. He has published many inspirational tips for writing through his official website and video blog, testifying to the importance of rewriting and revision. He explains his philosophy on first drafts, "I just give myself permission to suck," echoing Lamott's permission to produce "shitty" writing and releasing the expectation for perfection in writing. He continues, "I delete about 90% of my first drafts… so it doesn't really matter much if on a particular day I write beautiful and brilliant prose that will stick in the minds of my readers forever, because there's a 90% chance I'm just gonna delete whatever I write anyway. I find this hugely liberating." As a "real" writer, Green is saying that it is not cowardly to admit failure and hit the delete button on the work we have produced, inviting our students to play with the ideas and phrases on the screen that they are working with. That might be just the piece of advice our students are looking for.

Many other high-interest authors can mentor our students through their published confessionals about their revision processes. *National Novel Writing Month's (NaNoWriMo) Young Writers Program* has compiled a series of pep talks from relevant authors that are useful to students. When selecting professional writers' philosophies to share with students, this website provides a solid foundation to start with: www.ywp.nanowrimo.org/pep-talks. Beyond these pep talks, which deal specifically with the confines of writing a novel in a short amount of time, authors often publicize their processes on their personal websites, as was exemplified through John Green. Almost all modern authors' processes can be found through a simple Google search of the author's full name and

the following keywords: "revision" or "the writing process." Below are a few examples of relevant authors' resources on revision:

James Dashner: www.dashnerarmy.com/2007/12/qa-the-writing-process/
Ransom Riggs: www.ywp.nanowrimo.org/ransom-riggs
Veronica Roth: www.veronicarothbooks.blogspot.com/2011/10/writing-revising-and-not-making.html
Cassandra Clare: www.cassandraclare.com/writing-advice/
Lois Lowry: www.teachingbooks.net/content/interviews/Lowry_qu.pdf

Really the most engaging writing mentors are self-selected by students. For example, if a student enjoyed reading the *Divergent* series, why not encourage them to draw inspiration from Veronica Roth's revision process? However, not all students will choose *New York Times* best-selling young adult authors. Take my writing mentor Donald Murray for example: he may not be well-known in all disciplines, and his texts certainly would not be considered high interest to everyone, but his philosophy on writing and revision resonates with the teacher in me. In the same way, we must give students permission to choose a writing mentor that is important to them and respect their choices, even if they select writers that we are not familiar with.

Strategies: WebQuest and Meta-Cognitive Reflection

Incorporating professional writers' voices into the secondary classroom can be led by authentic student discovery. After examining the teacher's model of what he or she has learned from a writing mentor, students can discover their own mentor by engaging in a WebQuest—an Internet search for writing mentors' revision philosophies. Before entering

the Internet's vast space, students should compile a list of five writers who have impacted them as readers, for better or worse, to guide their quests. Once they have identified the focus of their search, students should search Google using an author's full name and the following search terms: "revision" or "the writing process." If students are unable to locate a particular author's philosophy, encourage students to take advantage of the connectedness of the modern writing community by reaching out to their potential writing mentor via social media or e-mail. After students review several writers' processes, ask them to identify their writing mentor and explain how that writer approaches the revision process. As the capstone of their WebQuest, students should create their own revision philosophy and reflect on how it will be shaped because of their writing mentor's words of advice. The final reflection is essential in validating students' personal and developing writing processes.

Implications

Although some teachers may be hesitant to bring this strategy into the classroom because they feel it may be intimidating for a novice writer to compare their revision process to that of a professional writer, this framework counters the issue of isolation that comes with writing—the same issue that perpetuates myths about how "real" writers create text. By making the seemingly invisible revision process visible for students, we encourage them to develop recursive revision skills and motivate them to apply the strategies their writing mentor has suggested. Because professional writers are willing to make their own processes visible and public, it is our responsibility, as coaches of writing and revision, to introduce our students to the experts' strategies and continue to reinforce the growth of student writers' personal revision processes.

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ANOTHER DEGREE EARNED: LIMINALITY BEGINS

VICKY GILPIN

He's hungry again—unfulfilled,
though seemingly sated just abreath awhisper agasp ago.
"Desire" is merely a hazedream, a tepid mirage by comparison—
Instead: a growling growing compulsion.
At first, like the poets claim,
the freedom to dream—merely hypothetical
a spark a breath a flame
cerebral.
Later—faux leash dissolves
or alters:
chained with,
chained to,
choke chained;
Dense with reality—beyond VISCERAL.
The tension, the balance

between chaos and order—delirium and control:
Who's
What's
in control?
Weight, heft, speed, threat
Steaming pelt
Matted and mottled with ink, with bloodsweat
Sometimes, the exhilarating windrush as we speed by, all speeds by,
life speeds by
when I ride him.
More often, the delicious clawscrape-slicesink
hold deepens
down spine, along ribs
when he rides me.
There's safety from stopping but a fear of slowing:
Too much sharpness in soft places—trepidation—*keep going*.
The threat of fangs dissuades obstacles—devours them
but they self-encage, self-trap through the thwarting.
Lungs burning—can't catch breath—
He pushes aside death
But he races toward death
Memento mori—carpe diem—carpe noctem
Marrow bone crunch, tension, skullpunch
Not flight, not soaring
Instead: Physicality, performativity, reckless intentionality
No wispy imaginings, next decisiveness, then glorious satisfaction.
Instead: Treacherous, laborious, often ominous
Rush-thrust against failure
Gasping incompletion—awful almostness.
Instead: A steady devouring.
of anomie of apathy of health of everything
Ambition's true name is obsession.

"DON'T BE MASHED POTATOES": TAKING, MAKING, AND COMPLICATING OPPORTUNITIES (AKA "NOT A SPEECH OF COMMENCEMENT, BUT ONE OF CONTINUATION")

VICKY GILPIN

My fellow Illinois teachers of English, it is my privilege to celebrate with you today as you continue with your daily activities; we must celebrate every day we continue to reach for our goals, not only for ourselves, but for our students. "Have you ever suspected that you were harboring, without your knowledge, the seeds of a destiny you are afraid to contemplate, to name? Just wondering" (Wright 78). Franz Wright's poetic query has goaded me for years. In fact, this question compels me to force my students, *and anyone else I can corner*, to play with mashed potatoes, or to—at the very least—ponder the experience of touching, molding, and playing with mashed potatoes.

Synectics or synectic metaphor encourages the connection between an abstract idea with easily-envisioned prior knowledge, such as the experience of touching, squishing, or even throwing mashed potatoes. Consequently, a person without a path, a goal, a passion, a drive, or "seeds of a destiny"—whatever label one gives—a person who denies his or her potential agency or proactivity *is* mashed potatoes: malleable, easily altered, ineffective under pressure. This becomes an extended metaphor I revisit throughout the year with both high school and university students; however, it is an important reminder for all of us within this profession: Apathy and anomie can only be fought by those who are not mashed potatoes, and *not being mashed potatoes is more than chance*.

We have choices regarding how we approach our potential futures, and the results of these choices determine how we act, react, and interact, not only with our students, but also with our colleagues and family members. We must constantly make the choice not to be mashed potatoes; for example, Jon Rappoport describes the difference between those who choose opportunities for excellence versus people who allow themselves to become apathetic: "In some humans, when you open their souls, you see fierce joy, oceanic energy, and imagination. In others, you see dust, and a machinery that pretends to these things. Knowing the difference makes all the difference in the world. The dust-and-machine people can voice the highest ideals and thoughts, but it's all pre-recorded." The person who chooses the easiest path—to pretend, to give in, to tune out, to dissolve into the couch another hour, another day, another lifetime—chooses to become mashed potatoes and chooses a life of minimal impact. Dennis Cooper recognizes this type of apathy as a pandemic: "A wise man told me that I'm wasting my life. I am. So are my friends. I have a friend whose mind could cure death, but he watches TV all day. He gave up"

(26). As teachers, the idea of giving up can be seductive, and it can be a daily fight for many of us.

Our continued dedication to teaching our students today and every day demonstrates one type of commitment to experiences that foster excellence. However, we are not finished; we have to continue to choose excellence over apathy. Harlan Ellison warns, "Possibly the only dismaying aspect of excellence is that it makes living in a world of mediocrity an ongoing prospect of living hell" (8). Thus, we defend against mediocrity, both within our classrooms and within ourselves. Instead of becoming mashed potatoes in the face of infinite seductive or confounding possibilities, one must fight anomie, apathy, and mediocrity by not only *taking and making* opportunities, but also by *complicating* them. The idea of "wallowing in complexity" (as suggested by Ramage, Bean, and Johnson's *Guide to Writing*) is not only a way to increase depth in writing; it is an approach to fighting apathy. We may take, or trip over, certain opportunities due to flukes of familial, financial, or social circumstance, but we also *make* different opportunities by seeking potential experiences in our chosen fields or aimed toward our chosen goals—perhaps in the process even discovering a new potential for excellence we did not know we harbored within. However, we can further *complicate* opportunities for increased benefit not only by solely seeking experiences but by seeking *certain types* of experiences that will keep us from descending into the rut created by life's repetitious patterns, social expectations, or general tedium. Lifelong learning, whether through books or practical experience, provides such opportunities, but—to complicate matters—we must seek to venture beyond even our own expectations of excellence.

Ignoring negative self-talk in order to continuously assert—to the world and to ourselves—our right to learn, to interact, to teach, to develop the tools we need to make

an impact, however we define it, repels apathy. Choosing "The Teaching Experience" is one, *but only one*, example of a complicating opportunity that potentially prevents us from being mashed potatoes. Becoming our most effective selves also involves connecting with other lifelong learners who complicate their own opportunities. For example, Ed Trautz commands people to "align yourselves with those whose air you don't feel you have the right to share. Basically…you don't get better at anything by hanging with the losers who make you feel good about yourself" (qtd. in Stepnowski xiv). The personal, professional, and academic goals stimulated by being a teacher encourage rigorous lifelong learning while discouraging the slide into mediocrity. In relation, Dante Alighieri might have been speaking of the process one undergoes to grade research papers, or perhaps all of the steps that follow that first step as a new teacher, when he wrote, "It seemed I had undertaken too lofty a theme for my powers, so much so that I was afraid to enter upon it; and so I remained for several days desiring to write and afraid to begin" (31). The tension created by the fear of starting a new or challenging experience exemplifies a common barrier to success, but once you begin, it alters from being a barrier to becoming a type of motivation; within the lofty themes of the journey occur potential complications of opportunities.

Most teachers succeed not only in being excellent teachers; instead, they have done so while also succeeding in multiple other areas: their own academic journeys, children, activities, or while facing personal difficulties. If the choices are too easy, they are not opportunities but potential quagmires of mediocrity. If you are not challenged, sliding into apathy can become a default response. Instead, lifelong learning experiences reject the path of least resistance, creating layers of complexity throughout the journey. No matter

the challenges, the opportunity is worth the effort; Harvard University's Dr. Nick Halpern alludes to the benefits of the complications within opportunities when he says to his students, "Nothing makes me happier than close reading to the point of insanity" and "there's a paper in that."

Whatever goal we meet, it cannot become the pinnacle of our academic, professional, or personal experiences. With so many teachers leaving the profession, every day we teach is a celebration, not validation, a continuation, not cessation. Instead, we must look forward: What are you planning tomorrow? What opportunity do you plan to complicate next? You will not find your path, your passion, your goal, your bliss while mired in apathy born of mediocrity. Instead, be constantly aware of those potential "seeds of a destiny" you may be "afraid to contemplate, to name." Now is not the time to be mashed potatoes. However, I have every confidence that Illinois' teachers of English will continue to seek opportunities to complicate and inspire the same ambition in their students.

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EMPOWERING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: CRITICAL INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

SHIRLEY MORIKUNI, JULIANNA CUCCI,
JAMIE A. KOWALCZYK, AND ELIZABETH A. KAHN

"They've set the bar too high."

This is the comment that a group of Master's-program teachers kept repeating as they discussed Common Core Standards and testing in their various schools, ranging from preschool to high school. The comment reflects anxiety about helping students to reach high standards on high-stakes tests. It also reflects how many teachers feel that standardized testing (or the test makers) dictates their lesson planning and classroom activities. We have worked with teachers who have been told to choose multiple-choice questions from a district-wide question bank and to teach to these questions, even if they are inappropriate for their students. Teachers in other schools have been told to use assessments that do not reflect their teaching goals or instruction. However, teachers

can have much more agency in terms of how assessments are used in the curriculum. Indeed, some of the most meaningful data teachers can gather comes from student performance on assessments that they design themselves. One such type of meaningful assessment is the Critical Inquiry Assessment (CIA).

Critical Inquiry Assessment

CIAs engage students in inquiry-based performance tasks and provide teachers clear guidelines for creating and scoring these assessments. Thus the teachers focus on inquiry about their students' learning processes, beyond simplistic, baseline numbers indicating successes or failures on tasks. One type of CIA is based on a taxonomy of questions developed by Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell and Hillocks and Ludlow. In this taxonomy, there are two major categories of questions: literal and inferential. In each of these major categories, question types are ordered from less sophisticated to more sophisticated levels of analysis and interpretation. In this way, the taxonomy enables teachers to evaluate students' abilities to respond to the array of interpretative levels involved in reading and comprehending complex texts—from recognizing key details to analyzing rhetorical techniques. Student responses give teachers a basis for customizing instruction to help their students develop the skills they need to become better readers.

More specifically, in the first category, the three question types require students to find increasingly complex information that is explicitly stated in the text. In the second category, the next four types of questions address, in increasing complexity, information that is implicit.

Figure 1 below details the taxonomy's seven types of questions and gives examples of each question using Sandra

Cisneros' short story, "Eleven." In the story, the main character, Rachel, retells what happens at school on her eleventh birthday. Her teacher has found an old, ugly sweater in the coat closet and has asked the class to whom it belongs. Because Rachel is silent and another student implicates her, her teacher assumes the sweater belongs to her and eventually makes her

Basic Stated Information Identifying frequently stated information that presents some condition crucial to the story. *What question has Mrs. Price asked the class?*
Key Detail Identifying a detail that appears at some key junction of the plot and bears a causal relationship to what happens. *When Mrs. Price asks the question, describe what Rachel does.*
Stated Relationship Identifying a statement that explains the relationship between at least two pieces of information in the text. *To whom does the red sweater truly belong?*
Simple Implied Relationship Inferring the relationship between two pieces of information closely juxtaposed in the text. *In the story, Rachel wishes she were 102. Explain why being 102 would help her talk to Mrs. Price about the sweater.*
Complex Implied Relationship Inferring the relationship(s) among many pieces of information spread throughout large parts of the text. A question of this type might concern, for example, the causes of character change. *When Mrs. Price puts the sweater on Rachel's desk, Rachel compares the red sweater to a "big red mountain" and later to a "waterfall." What do these comparisons (or similes) suggest about how Rachel feels about Mrs. Price's actions? Explain how you know.*

Author's generalization

Inferring a generalization about the world outside of the work from the fabric of the work as a whole. These questions demand a statement of what the work suggests about human nature or the human condition as it exists outside the text.

What comment does Sandra Cisneros suggest about the challenges girls may face with authority figures while growing up? Give evidence from the story to support your answer.

Structural Generalization

Generalizing about how parts of the work operate together to achieve certain effects. To belong properly to this category, a question must first require the reader to generalize about the arrangement of certain parts of a work. Second, it must require an explanation of how those parts work in achieving certain effects.

Cisneros presents the story of a girl's eleventh birthday in the middle of the text. Explain how this story relates to the first four paragraphs of the text. Present evidence from the story to support your answer.

Figure 1: Taxonomy of Critical Inquiry Assessment categories including sample questions

wear it. Angry and humiliated, Rachel begins to cry.

What's the value in using this type of CIA based on a taxonomy? In a taxonomy, the questions are hierarchical in terms of difficulty. In addition, answering a question at one level requires that students are able to answer the questions preceding it. In other words, students need to understand basic stated information, key details, and stated relationships in order to answer any of the inferential questions (Hillocks and Ludlow). As a result, the CIA provides a way for teachers to get a snapshot of students' skills based on what level the students can reach on the inventory. Working hierarchically is necessary, and knowing the hierarchy of levels provides a pathway for doing so. For example, if students are proficient

at working with simple implied relationships, the next step would be helping them learn to interpret complex implied relationships, rather than expecting them to make structural generalizations. As Hillocks warns, working at two or more levels above student competence is likely to result in failure to comprehend, frustration, and hostility toward literature (Johannessen, Kahn, and Walter).

Using CIAs to Design Instruction

By evaluating the student results, teachers can see how this type of CIA provides information on an individual student's needs, as well as the general learning needs within a class, which, in turn, can directly inform instruction. For example, in one sixth grade language arts class, most students are able to answer the first three literal level questions of the assessment but begin to struggle at the level of simple and complex implied inferences.

When students answered the complex implied question, "*When Mrs. Price puts the sweater on Rachel's desk, Rachel compares the red sweater to a 'big red mountain' and later to a 'waterfall.' What do these comparisons (or similes) suggest about how Rachel feels about Mrs. Price's actions? Explain how you know*," they tended to respond in the following ways:

Eric: *She says it's like a waterfall because when it was hanging all over the edge of the desk that's why she thought it looked like a waterfall. She thought it looked like a big red mountain because it's all big sitting right in front of her.*

Jess: *She thought the big red mountain was huge, and then she pushed it off her desk and it was falling off her desk so it was a waterfall.*

Bogdan: *The big red mountain describes how Rachel is angry, and the waterfall describes how she was sad.*

Mia: *Rachel feels that the sweater is dirty and doesn't want to wear it but she gets mad and sad because Mrs. Price says the sweater is hers when it really wasn't. She compares the sweater to a waterfall when she knows it wasn't hers but she know that Mrs. Price won't take it away so she doesn't have to be near it. I know because I made inferences on what other people would have felt if they get something like that too.*

Teachers can see that two students, Jess and Eric, paraphrase the quote and do not identify the protagonist's emotions. While Bogdan and Mia identify Rachel's anger and sadness, they also do not address the "So what?" part of the question, making a connection between the character's emotional reaction and the use of metaphor. By studying students' responses, teachers can pinpoint areas for instructional focus.

Teachers might create activities that help students discover how to build inferential connections between textual evidence and deeper meaning, as well as activities that engage students in practicing these strategies in different contexts. They might start by having students examine some detailed portraits or photographs of individuals and asking what they can infer about the person. Then, they would ask students to support their inferences with specific details from the picture. We have found that it is important to choose pictures that are rich with detail and that are not overly obvious to encourage more than simple generalizations such as, "I know she's sad because she is crying." One such picture used by George Hillocks (2011), is James Gillray's "A Voluptuary" (<http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Arts/Arts_/Pictures/2012/9/24/1348494267919/James-Gillrays-A-Voluptua-001.jpg>). It is a satirical etching from the eighteenth century that depicts an unflattering caricature of the Prince of Wales. We have found that students are immediately engaged in examining the caricature and are quite eager to

form generalizations about the man in the picture. We ask questions such as the following: What is the artist trying to say about the man in the picture? How do you know? So what?

After students have practiced making inferences and supporting them with specific evidence, teachers can point out that writers choose specific details to create impressions about characters as well. Teachers could examine the literature in their curriculum for shorter passages with rich characterization. In groups, students examine passages of description and make generalizations based on what they read. As they do so, they practice explaining how details in the passage support their inferences.

Teachers of this sixth grade LA class may also want to address students' understanding of how metaphor works to influence interpretation in literature. Unfortunately, sometimes much of textbook instruction focuses heavily on defining and identifying terms like metaphor or simile. This is usually not sufficient for helping students analyze extended metaphor and the way metaphor works to influence literary meaning. Students need practice thinking in this way.

Teachers might also note that students' responses demonstrate an inability to write clearly about their understandings. Responses sometimes suggest that students "get it" but do not really explain "it" well. As a result, they will want to teach students how to develop their literary interpretation in academic writing. For instance, teachers could provide students with a set of answers to a sample CIA, ranging from weak to strong. Students then rank the responses from strongest to weakest and defend their rankings. When they defend their selections for the strongest writing, students identify criteria for excellent responses, which will inform their future writing. In groups, to reinforce their understandings, students could work to revise one of the weaker

samples. Examining models of the type of writing expected of them should help students the next time they write responses to literature.

Empowering Teachers to Create Meaningful Assessments

As teachers implement the Common Core Standards or other challenging standards such as Advanced Placement, they often feel there is not a clear set of instructional guidelines for reaching these goals. The Hillocks and Ludlow hierarchy provides an assessment structure that offers teachers insights that can inform instruction. While many schools are creating benchmarks in reading comprehension, they question how to develop assessments that best gauge students' critical thinking skills over the course of a semester or a school year. By choosing a CIA model for creating a series of mirrored formative and summative assessments, teachers can assess student progress in learning higher order strategies of skilled readers and writers. They can chart students' progress on complex tasks that are meaningful and worthwhile.

What are the advantages to the CIA approach?

By creating a series of mirrored CIA assessments and having thoughtful conversations about the student responses, teachers can develop greater fluency with the sequential skills and strategies needed for reading complex texts. Surely student learning depends on teachers having just such clarity and fluency regarding the thought processes involved in the many performance tasks we aim to teach. Often, we believe we have clear ideas about what it takes to foster students' success, but when pushed to explain and elaborate these ideas, we find we need to further develop and refine our thinking. CIAs are helpful in clarifying what students need to know and be able to do.

In addition to helping teachers design targeted and sequenced instruction for their students' needs, CIAs are beneficial for teachers in other ways:

> *Provide timely feedback*: Since CIAs are designed and scored by teachers and teaching teams, there is no need to wait for test results to arrive from somewhere else.
>
> *Differentiate instruction*: Teachers can find opportunities to differentiate instruction for struggling or advanced students.
>
> *Empower teachers in assessment*: With teacher-created CIAs, not only can teachers change instruction by supporting student-tailored curriculum, but they can also monitor their own performance with demonstrable student growth.
>
> *Celebrate growth*: The CIA, by design, offers all stakeholders—students, parents and teachers—the opportunity to document and celebrate growth by providing pre- and post-assessments.

CIAs can fundamentally alter how we think of assessment in ways that guide instruction and move students toward higher-level critical inquiry. CIAs engage both students and teachers in inquiry. Students can demonstrate their ability to analyze complex texts and write about them in meaningful ways. Teachers develop professionally by inquiring into the most meaningful data they can work with—the thought processes and understandings of their students.

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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 55. 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

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

Submission Guidelines

(See page 58 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 either the current *MLA Handbook* or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 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 50 words or fewer. (Blurbs for manuscripts with multiple authors should total 50 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 editors by the previous November 1.

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

To be considered for inclusion in the fall issue ("Best Illinois Student Poetry and Prose"), materials must be submitted electronically through the IATE submission manager (iate.submittable.com/submit) by the previous January 31. Please see page 59 for the two-page special submission guidelines 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 Exceptional 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's Contact Information

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CALL FOR STUDENT WRITING FROM ALL LEVELS FOR IATE'S BEST ILLINOIS POETRY AND PROSE CONTEST

DEADLINE: Submit all contest entries electronically through the IATE submission manager (iate.submittable.com/submit) no later than January 31, 2017.

FORMAT: Accepted file types include .doc, .docx, and .rtf.

COVER LETTER: The "Cover Letter" field must include:

- Full name of student
- Student's grade level at time piece was written
- Full name of school
- School's complete mailing address
- Full name of teacher (indicate if IATE member)
- E-mail address of instructor

IMPORTANT: The student's name, the school's name, and the teacher's name must not appear anywhere other than in the "Cover Letter" field.

LIMITS:
1) Five prose and ten poetry entries per teacher.
2) One thousand words of prose per entry; forty lines of poetry per entry.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM THE JUDGES:
1) Please see that students abide by the line and word limits. Have them revise and shorten pieces that exceed these limits.
2) Please emphasize to students that prose and fiction are not synonymous. Encourage them to explore the possibilities of expository essays, arguments, and personal narratives.

CONTEST COORDINATORS:
Delores R. Robinson
Illinois Valley Community College
IATE Prose Contest

Robin L. Murray
Department of English
Eastern Illinois University
IATE Poetry Contest

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