



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1982 Volume II: Autobiography

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## **Student Autobiography: An Approach Through Journal Writing**

Curriculum Unit 82.02.07  
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In September, I'll begin my third year working with target cluster ninth graders at Hillhouse High School. These are students who are reading four to five levels below their grade level. They are clustered together in English, science and social studies classes in order to keep a close watch on academic progress and attendance. These students fall into the developmental track due to their deficiencies in reading and writing skills.

During the 1981-1982 school year, 38% of the sixty-five ninth graders I worked with failed for the year. An astounding 89% of those who failed did so because of attendance policy violations. Coming to school on a regular basis is a major task for some of these students. Some show for the first weeks of school and then vanish. Some take off at regular intervals during the first half of the year and reach their allotted twenty days sometime in the third marking period. One student "bugged out" on me towards the end of the second marking period, showed up for the mid-term exam and received the highest grade in the cluster and then vanished for the rest of the year.

A severe lack of order and of continuity exists in these students' lives. This is why I emphasize the use of a step-by-step process in this unit. I need to establish in the classroom some sense of one activity naturally following another. I need to reinforce the idea that what we do today is a result of what we did yesterday and effects what we will do tomorrow.

Based on my observations in other areas, these students exhibit the following characteristics. They are eager readers. No sooner do I have the *Read* magazines in sight when the competition begins for the first oral reader of the day. Verbally, they are very active and this becomes a main problem in the classroom. The amount of insults and cutting in on others' reading and speaking time far outweighs constructive comments. Class discussions have to be interesting and highly structured in order to succeed.

Writing skills seem to be where "target" students need the most help. Most students respond with tortured looks when a writing assignment is announced. A common problem concerning writing is students coming to class unprepared to write—without pencils or pens, paper or notebook. This shows to what extent writing fits into their role as students. A teacher, as a result, has to play parent in providing writing materials for the chronically unprepared students.

In combating these problem characteristics, I have used journal writing to focus students' attention on their writing problems. Individual grades are given for being prepared to write and for following the format of the

writing process being taught (notes, rough draft, revision, final draft). Envelopes and folders are provided to keep writing materials in. These are stored in a box in the classroom for each period. Students are encouraged to decorate their folders to make them their own, to give them an identity. This is an attempt to change the punishing nature of writing which has already been learned.

In order to match the identity *on* the folders to what is *in* them, most writing assignments are autobiographical in nature. In the past, I have relied upon value clarification related exercises and discussions to get students to write about themselves. (see Appendix A) This seems to be the one area that developmental students have confidence in responding to in writing. It is the one content area that they are sure of. Even if they can't write correctly in standardized English, they know that they are correct in what they are writing about. To encourage this more positive attitude, this unit offers a structured approach to the study of autobiography through student readings and writings.

Current research on the teaching of writing points to the writing process as one of a few key factors in changing a student's attitude toward writing. In teaching a *process*, a teacher emphasizes that language learning takes place by incorporating "teaching how" techniques with "teaching about" techniques. The student becomes involved in a search-and-discover type of exercise based on something they know or have been told about. Since a process is being taught and not facts, the student knows that he/she has a long period of time in which to ask questions and work problems out. What students do in the class truly becomes "developmental" in nature and the pressure to respond correctly at all times is reduced.

In *Teaching English to Speakers of English*, Bradford Arthur sums up this idea in stating that "language is not constructed like an office building but grows more like a tree; teachers should be more like gardeners than mechanics." <sup>1</sup>

Arthur's statement is representative of the linguistic approach to language study which I have based the methods of teaching the writing of autobiography on. Other proponents of this method are Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner. In *Linguistics: A Revolution in Teaching*, they write that "language study is most effective when placed in the context of the scientific method of inquiry." This method involves defining, questioning, observing, classifying, generalizing, verifying and revising. <sup>2</sup> These techniques are used in most English classes in one way or another, but usually in the reverse process from the linguistic approach. The *teacher* is usually doing the discovering and questioning rather than the students. The focus is on the one person who already knows the sought-after facts or skills instead of groups of students learning how to learn.

It is the consensus of researchers that there is a need to make learning in the English classroom more "real". The emphasis on error-oriented evaluation and textbook-oriented lessons in teaching writing only compounds the problem of the writer's low self-image and provokes even more hostility toward writing in general. Mastery of details in the mechanics of writing and major attention to grammar and usage errors should come only with advanced students and never be seen as the only criteria for evaluation.

Students should be asked to write for a variety of situations and people. Education is the preparation of life and people in real life write for many reasons and not just to show that they know a narrative paragraph from a descriptive. Teachers have to get away from the idea that they are the only audience and evaluator for whom their students write. This is an unrealistic view of the world to impress upon fourteen year-olds.

This is why my unit begins with readings and discussions on the topic of autobiography even though the title infers that the emphasis is on writing. Students should have the opportunity to develop a background of information from which to proceed. The inductive method of inquiry applied to the autobiography will produce

such a background, with each phase adding more detail to it.

In the *definition phase*, the teacher and students invent meanings for words which will describe the different roles they will play in the process of studying the autobiography. These are speaker, listener, investigator, writer, editor and evaluator. The teacher must be aware of the importance of allowing the *students'* input a valid position in the beginning of this process. It will set the tone for the succeeding phases by setting the focus on the *students'* imagination and thought processes and not the teacher's. Remember that it is the process of defining which is being *learned* and not the teacher's definition being taught.

To facilitate the beginning of the process, the teacher must take the lead and, thereby, establish the importance of his/her position as guide and educator. Using the small group process, the teacher can assign each group a term or list of terms to invent a meaning for through discussion. Knowing what autobiography, recollection, memoir, portrait, dialogue, narrative, description, composition and essay mean to the students and the teacher gives the class a sense of familiarity with the variety of modes of expression that will be dealt with. Assigning individual group names will solidify the group and the process and will give both an identity for the students to relate to. Let their imaginations run wild in this specific task!

In the *questioning phase*, the groups turn their attention specifically toward the autobiography. They will discuss the following questions. What are different types of autobiography? What are some examples of autobiographical writing? Which are good examples for students to read and try to imitate? What common elements can be found in different autobiographies? What are the benefits from students writing about themselves and other people, places and things in their lives? What else associated with language study will students learn about by reading and writing autobiography? What do people choose to write about when describing themselves? To give the students specific information to use in their discussions, the teacher will provide excerpts from a variety of autobiographies as reading material on which to base answers to the above questions.

The *observation phase* is vital to the process. It allows the students to base their statements of facts about autobiography on what they have discovered through their own readings and not on authoritative word or others' conclusions. This encourages students not to accept factual answers on hearsay or from ancient authorities simply because they feel that they *should* be true. This phase helps develop critical thought processes applicable to any subject matter. In this phase students will read selections from or entire autobiographies and discuss questions from the preceding phase and those which deal with a specific reading. Depending on the progress of the small group process, students will develop their own specific questions or the teacher can supply a list as a starting point. (see Appendix B)

The *classification phase* will investigate the process by which all autobiographical information gained from the readings and questions will be categorized. This necessitates the selection of a series of recorders throughout the inquiry process for each class or the use of tape recorders and transcribers. Possible headings for this classification are those supplied by Richard Brodhead, English professor at Yale and autobiography seminar leader. These are the following:

1. different voices (poses or attitudes) used by each of the writers studied
2. how the self is seen in different historical eras
3. quality and intensity of feelings expressed
4. kinds of personal crises included

5. aspects of ordinary, everyday life included
6. unique or unusual beginnings or childhoods; family structure and family position of the author
7. effects of schooling and the role of a student
8. how one pictures or describes other people, places and things in their life

The *generalization phase* sums up the information gained from the classifying phase. A series of factual statements are produced by the class concerning how to go about autobiographical writings of their own. This provides a blueprint or outline for students to use in the next phase in which they attempt to make concepts “real”.

The last two phases incorporate the writing process and what the class has learned up to this point about the autobiography. In the *verifying phase*, the student begins to investigate and observe his/her own life and write about it in a variety of modes. The teacher becomes a guide in preparing practice lessons in narrative and descriptive writing while incorporating letters, compositions, essays, poetry, recorded and transcribed interviews, memoirs and portraits.

I realize that this process of inquiry is untried in the study of autobiography, and as such is an experiment in theory. Many adaptations in the length and complexity of each phase may be necessary depending on the make-up of each class. It is important to attempt each phase at some level and give each a level of completion. The process itself is intended to instill order and responsibility upon chaos and apathy.

The schedule which I have tentatively set up extends throughout the school year. In the first month of school, the journal writing sessions progress from a timed (ten min.) entry to two full period (forty-two min. each) sessions which run through the notes, rough draft and final draft process which will be used on the Ninth Grade Proficiency Exam in October. Group dynamics, value clarification and academic review exercises will be the format used in classes up until the proficiency exam. From the students’ first writing samples and their response to these types of exercises, I will get a sense of their reading and writing skills as they enter the ninth grade. The Nelson Reading Test will be administered at this time and decisions made concerning those students who should be moved up or down in the cluster system.

The autobiographical reading and writing responses will begin after the proficiency exam and continue on the average of one assignment a week until review for the mid-term exam begins. The small group revision and evaluation phases will be introduced in the last half of the second marking period depending on whether these classes have begun to “gel”.

By the third marking period, class attendance generally stabilizes. The students in class at this time are the ones who will receive an academic evaluation in June. Most students with chronic attendance problems have been weeded out or have been forced to audit the class. The third marking period will be reserved for the

introduction of the cultural journalism segment of the unit discussed below.

The final editing and production of the autobiographical booklet will be done in the first half of the fourth marking period. This will give the classes time to evaluate the unit through discussion and apply the evaluation process learned to assessing yearly grades based on student/teacher interviews.

As the student enters the writing stage of the unit, it is important to remember what current research points out about the teaching of autobiographical writing. Richard Beach, in *Writing About Ourselves and Others*, states that

some focusing is required on a particular time period or set of experiences on the part of the student. The writer should try to capture the essence of the self through physical characteristics (age, sex, weight, height, etc.) and personality traits (needs, values, social roles, family position, etc.). Other vehicles of the expression of the self are through details of dialogue, overall appearance, non-verbal behavior and expressed thoughts and opinions. By narrowing the focus of a particular incident through detailed description, the student might discover the reason behind his/her actions in that situation. <sup>3</sup>

This type of focusing can produce a therapeutic effect for the student in his/her coming to a realization about how to deal better with a similar situation in the future and produce more desirable results. This also forces the student to develop an objective viewpoint through reflective thinking and a sense of a writer's "voice".

Keeping the developmental student in mind, a few ideas from Lou Kelley and Douglas Barnes are well worth remembering. In his writing workshop described in "Learner-Teacher Dialogue and Writing That *Is* Learning", Kelley allows students to "talk" on paper. This gives the student an opportunity to begin to develop a "voice" of his/her own and gives added significance to the piece." <sup>4</sup> By writing in their own dialect, students gain a sense of who they are, what they sound like and what attitude or pose they are communicating in. This is an individual learning experience which has to be constructed. Don't ask students to write like themselves. Few teachers would be able to describe what they sound like in their writing. It is unfair to expect students to be able to. Let them discover the range of possibilities on their own. Construct exercises in role playing through impromptu drama sessions, puppetry or ask students to try to imitate an author in describing a moment in their own life. Let them decide which moment is crucial to include and which is not. In writing about their lives there might be segments which students do not want to remember in detail.

Talk-writing is a good place to start for those students who are verbal but who can't put a simple sentence together. Let them begin with something they can handle—their own dialect—and work for a more standardized version from there. Build their confidence with small successes. By denying a student's way of speaking, one denies his/her ideas, identity and basic attempts at communication. By remaining in this negative mind set, the teacher cuts himself/herself off from ever establishing a meaningful relationship with the student.

Douglas Barnes adds to Kelley's idea on the role of talking in the learning process in *Language, the learner and the school*. He comments on the barrier which the actual language the teacher uses can become in the classroom. For the student, new material is always clouded by the "jargon" the teacher uses to explain it. Only the teacher knows exactly what he/she is talking about. Thus, a gap exists. The student can bridge the gap only when the material takes on a conceptual function through talking, thinking and writing. So the student must make the jargon real by doing something with it, not just listening to it. Barnes suggests that "students actively participate in gaining information that is openly available to them." <sup>5</sup>

The last and most difficult phase of the unit to cultivate to fruition deals with *revision*. Here, the student seriously looks at a piece of writing selected for editing and submits it to an evaluation process involving small groups of classmates and then a one-to-one conference with the teacher. I have never been satisfied with my attempts at this phase because students never remained serious about revision in small groups. This phase has to be structured throughout and the students prepared for it before it is used in actual editing.

G. Robert Couillard of the Hamden school system, in commenting on the use of small group evaluation at this year's CTE Conference, stated that he waits until sometime during the latter half of the second marking period before he introduces this style of evaluation. Students will be too unfamiliar with it and rebel against it if thrust suddenly upon them. A seriousness in students' attitude and the need for positive and constructive criticism first needs to be generated through class discussion and trial runs with the small groups based on the exercises contained in *Value Clarification* and *Developing Effective Classroom Groups*.

Once I decide that students are ready to handle the group process, I will use the format developed by Joyce Armstrong Carroll in "Talking through the Writing Process". After students have completed a piece of writing, they proceed to meet in groups of five in what Carroll calls the "analytic talk" stage. Activities include students talking about a piece of writing after each member reads theirs to the group twice. During the first reading, the others listen and then respond with their impressions recorded during the second reading. The group discusses their reactions according to the following questions:

1. Did I like the opening sentence(s)?
2. Was the opening clear and interesting?
3. Would I continue reading if I read the opener in a magazine?
4. Was there a lazy or phony question? (ex.: Have you ever been in love?)
5. After hearing the beginning, am I sure what the writing is about?
6. Did I ever get lost during the reading? If so, where?
7. Did I get confused during the reading? If so, where?
8. Was I left hanging at the end? If so, was it intentional, effective or due to lack of detail? <sup>6</sup>

This stage is followed by "evaluative talk" with the teacher in Carroll's process. The evaluation phase of my unit is based on my process of evaluating my students' academic progress six times a year. Half-way through and at the end of each marking period, I sit down with each student behind my desk and talk about how they are doing and what grade they are heading for and why. This process takes about two days while the other students waiting their turn complete silent reading and reviewing assignments. I will adapt this to the evaluation phase of the autobiography unit in discussing the result of each student's group reactions to a piece of writing.

This discussion with the student will include positive, constructive comments on the piece and suggestions made for revision. The piece is graded on completion of the writing process, sticking to the topic and a few points of attention to grammar/usage mechanics. These will be determined before the initial writing of that assignment and changed for each assignment depending on the class's or individual's needs. For example, some students write one, long, run-on sentence for a paragraph. One of the grammatical points they would be graded on would be end punctuation or writing complete simple sentences.

During one of these evaluative interviews, I will show the student either my original notes, unit description, prospectus or my first, second or third drafts of this unit to get across the idea that no one, not even a teacher, writes their best attempt, perfectly, the first time. This will reinforce the concept that editing and revision are a natural part of the process being learned.

Carroll concludes her process with "closure talk". After a revised piece has been evaluated and handed back, the class meets together and discusses the following questions:

1. What did you like best about your completed piece?
2. What did you have the most trouble with?
3. Do you know why you had that trouble?
4. Did you receive any help with that problem?
5. Did you learn anything about writing?
6. Did you learn anything about the process of writing?
7. Would you do anything differently if starting again?
8. How do you feel about this piece at this moment? <sup>7</sup>

This class meeting is designed to foster a sense of completion and satisfaction about writing. These good feelings could also spill over into other phases of study in the curriculum.

Specific autobiographical topics for students to use in the "talk-write" process follow. The first lists were included in a research report done for NCTE in 1969 by John C. Mellon entitled *Transformational Sentence Combining* .

your most unlucky day

your narrowest escape

your most frightening moment

your proudest moment

your hardest job accomplished

your luckiest day

your greatest thrill

your most embarrassing moment

your first time being away overnight

your first bad fight or quarrel

your first time winning a contest or prize

your first time in the principal's office

your first real job

your first plane flight

your first date

your first time being lost <sup>8</sup>

Another assignment would be to write about an ordinary, everyday happening such as riding in the family car, preparing for school in the morning, doing the wash, shooting a foul shot or sitting in English class. The benefits of using this type of topic is that every student has this type of experience to base a writing on and can examine it in detail. It also forces a student to look at how he/she spends time during the day and possibly how to use time more wisely.

An assignment which reinforces what Richard Beach says about focusing on essence is to have students write about at what point in their life they feel they discovered themselves as an individual. What was the big moment or turning point? When did other people begin to notice you? When did you find out that you were special? Did this event cause you to begin to actively pursue your life instead of waiting for things to happen?

Another assignment which examines essence is having students describe and explain the significance behind a piece of "junk" in the attic, room or basement. These types of items are symbols of importance in a specific phase of their lives or that of a family member.

The final segment of this unit entails getting students out into their community to investigate further additions to their autobiographical folder. I hope to be working with the Wilderness School in Goshen, Ct., and incorporating their techniques described in their "Cultural Journalism" course. In this course, they work in the classroom and out in the students' environment to produce an autobiographical booklet.

This last phase of the unit has important implications for three reasons. First, remember that these students are at a highly impressionable age. Their view of what is really going on is shaded by a media blitz and what is being talked up in the streets which is carried right into the classroom. The interest and energy to pursue the autobiographical issue is already there. By focusing that interest into writings about their neighborhoods and their people, the teacher taps into that energy and relates it to the pieces being read, or written about or

discussed. Students are forced to investigate what is *really* there, ranging from the benefits of hidden resources to the pitfalls of absenteeism.

The second reason is the effect that the final product, the autobiographical portfolio, will have on supplying a sense of completion. In teaching a process, the end is the last step. For the students, hopefully, the real final product is the learning of the writing process, the inductive method of inquiry and some knowledge of the autobiography with very personal and practical applications.

The third reason is purely fiscal in nature. If we use Wilderness School personnel, we will need to raise money for each class session to pay for their services. The New Haven Foundation has provided matching funds for Wilderness School services in the past. I would make it the students' responsibility to raise the first half of the costs. Fund-raising activities have the effect of unifying classes in an atmosphere which seems non-academic. However, the steps necessary for successful fund-raising is another *process* which students would learn. This would only lend support to the application of the writing and small group discussion processes.

If the fund-raising idea fails, I would go with the following alternative plan. Using the small group process, students would schedule excursions into the community on a monthly basis as homework assignments or with a teacher during the "cluster periods" block of class time. Each group would be responsible for one of the following chapters of their neighborhood/city supplement to their portfolio.

1. a history of Hillhouse High School
2. a history of the immediate neighborhood near the school
3. reports on industries, churches, libraries, colleges, parks and other natural resources
4. a history of New Haven
5. a history of Blacks in New Haven
6. a history of other ethnic groups in New Haven

## **Appendix A Student Suggested Topics for Journals (value clarification)**

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1. If people could control their "high", do you see anything wrong with smoking marijuana?
2. Do you think that everything you say or do is right? What do you think about people who do?
3. Do your teachers deserve the same respect that you give your parents/guardians?
4. Have you ever become jealous of a friend because of his/her special talents or skills?
5. How do you feel when people talk about your parents or someone in your family?

(submitted by Eric Daniels)

1. Would you like to live in Paris in a castle? Explain why.
2. If you won a trip to Las Vegas, who would you take with you?
3. Are you really serious about how you are preparing for life?
4. Explain how you feel about having reached puberty.
5. What famous star/celebrity would you like to be with? Why?

(submitted by Marvin Keen and Linda Hooks)

1. How would you feel about being in an overcrowded classroom next year? (submitted by Felicia Curry)
1. Would you be able to cope with having a retarded child? Why or why not? (submitted by Raceta Thompson)
1. If the KKK came to New Haven to make all Blacks move out, what actions would you take?
2. If your family was held in Iran, would you sit and wait for Carter or would you make plans?
3. If you won a trip to Fantasy Island, what would your fantasy be? Explain it.
4. If a famous person came to your house for dinner, would you act richer than you are? Why or why not?

(submitted by Pam Maybery)

1. Are you bored with your home life? Why or why not?
2. Is school worth all the trouble, work and frustration to you? Why?

(submitted by Marvin Keen)

1. Do you think the legal age (18) in Conn. is a good age or should it be changed to 20 or 21?

Why?

2. What do you think about the availability of pornography, XXX movies and sex clubs?
3. Due to the energy crisis, do you think the production of big cars should be stopped and the money used for something else?

(submitted by Beth Scott)

1. If you were to write a book about yourself, what would be the highest point or climax?
2. Was there ever a time when you felt like slapping your mother/father/guardian? Describe it.
3. Describe a time when you felt like you weren't needed by anyone? Why did you feel that way?

(submitted by Sheila Rogers)

1. Would you adopt a child in your later years? Why or why not?
2. Do you plan to send your children to public or private school? Why?
3. Did you ever run away from home or ever think about it? Describe the situation and the outcome.

(submitted by Thomas Biggs)

1. What would you do if your doctor told you that you had only three weeks to live?
2. If someone was about to be attacked in front of you, would you help or run? Why?
3. Do you think your life is pretty well set for the future?

(submitted by Lovell Jenkins)

*Topics submitted anonymously:*

1. How much household responsibility should the male partner have in a live-in situation?

2. Are organized religions meeting the needs of people today?
3. Who is the mayoral candidate of your choice and why?
4. What is your opinion of budget cuts in education in this city?
5. If you had to choose a place to retire and money was no problem, where would you go and why?
6. Where is a place that something important in your life happened? Explain.
7. What is one thing that you have changed your mind about? Why?
8. Who is one person who you know that seems to have it “more together” than you? What quality would you borrow from him/her?
9. Who is the fairest adult you know? Explain.
10. Describe any serious accident or illness you have had.
11. How will failing one or more courses this year effect your schedule for next year?
12. Describe your relationship with your mother/father/guardian.
13. If you could be rich through illegal means, would you do it? To what extent would you go?
14. Would life be worth living if you went through it never having loved someone?
15. If you could control it, how would you like to die? Why?

## **Appendix B Small Group Discussion Questions for *Go Up For Glory and I always wanted to be somebody***

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These autobiographies are excellent reading material for developmental students. Both supply an opportunity for quick and early success for in-class and homework reading assignments. The teacher can intersperse value clarification exercises throughout the readings with appropriate topics related to the types of questions listed below.

These questions highlight the steps to success cited by Althea Gibson and Bill Russell in their books. The focus turns to the key step or turning point in their careers. Then the essence of the key step is investigated. Journal

entries related to student writings on similar aspects of their own lives are used to supplement the answering of these questions.

***Go Up For Glory by Bill Russell/Bill McSweeney***

1. What is Russell describing in the opening paragraphs about Black Mamba?
2. What is it like to be Black and growing up in Monroe, Louisiana, and Oakland, Cal.?
3. What does it entail to become a pro-basketball player? What part does education play in the process?
4. Find examples of racial prejudice and segregation and explain how Russell dealt with them.
5. What are the effects of becoming a “winner”? What are the benefits and the pitfalls?
6. What are the effects of being famous on how a racist views that person?
7. What were the basic differences in the early years between the AAU and the NCAA organizations? How did Russell deal with the differences and what were his reasons?
8. How did Russell react to the organizers of the 1956 Olympics?
9. What are some of the things that a pro-basketball player has to cope with about the sport in general?
10. What kind of people were Russell’s teammates on the Celtics?
11. What is his opinion of Red Auerback?
12. What does Russell say about the psychology of the game?
13. How does Russell describe his match-ups with Wilt Chamberlain?
14. How does Russell describe the essence of pro sports?
15. What was Russell feeling when he hit a wire with a last second in-bound pass during a 1965 NBA championship game and gave the ball to Philadelphia with three seconds left?
16. What was Russell feeling when the Celtics overran the L.A. Lakers in the final 1965 championship game?
17. What physical problem did Russell cope with in the years around 1965? How did he cope with it?
18. How did Russell react to his trip to Africa in 1959?
19. What importance does the name, “Felton X”, have in his life?
20. In the last chapter, what does Russell say about personal freedom, success and failure, stereotypes, loss of ambition and what he can do to change things?

***I always wanted to be somebody by Althea Gibson/Ed Fitzgerald***

1. Describe the Gibson's family problems which made them move from South Carolina to New York City?
2. What does Althea remember about her Aunt Sally and Aunt Daisy?
3. What would happen when Althea played hooky from school?
4. Why did Althea's father train her to box?
5. What were some of the activities of Althea's gang of friends?
6. What kinds of trouble did Althea get into during her high school years? Why did these happen?
7. What were Althea's first jobs after leaving Yorkville Trade School?
8. What happened when Althea lost her job at the New York School of Social Work?
9. Who helped Althea begin her tennis career?
10. Who taught Althea at the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club?
11. What was Althea's first tournament win?
12. How did Althea's life change after she turned eighteen?
13. How did Sugar Ray Robinson influence Althea's life?
14. What were some examples of racial prejudice in Wilmington?
15. What major tournaments did Althea play in during her college years at Florida A&M?
16. Why did Althea almost give up on tennis in 1955 and join the WAC?
17. What was the turning point that convinced Althea to continue with tennis?
18. How did Althea handle questions about racial prejudice in the U.S.A. while she was in Southeast Asia?
19. What major disappointments did Althea have to deal with in 1956? What were some of her successes that year?
20. What did Althea accomplish after her Wimbledon win in 1957?

## Notes

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1. Bradford Arthur, *Teaching English to Speakers of English* . (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 1973, p. 28.
2. Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Linguistics : A Revolution in Teaching* . (New York: Dell Publishing Co.), 1966, pp. 7-15.
3. Richard Beach, *Writing About Ourselves and Others* . (TRIP/ ERIC, NCTE), 1977, p. 2, 12-13.
4. Lou Kelley, "Learner-Teacher Dialogues and Writing That *Is* Learning", *English Journal* , (Sept. 1981), NCTE, p. 26.
5. Douglas Barnes, "Language in the Secondary Classroom", *Language , the learner and the school* . (London: Penguin Books), 1971, p. 61.
6. Joyce Armstrong Carroll, "Talking through the Writing Process", *English Journal* , (Nov. 1981), NCTE, p. 101,
7. Ibid., p. 102.
8. John C. Mellon, *Transformational Sentence Combining* . (NCTE Research Report #10, NCTE), 1969, p. 102.

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Stanford, Gene. *Developing Effective Classroom Groups : A Practical Guide for Teachers* . Hart Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1977.

*Value Clarification : A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students* . Hart Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1978.

## Suggested Teacher Readings

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Berbrich, Joan D. *Writing About People and Yourself* . Amsco School Publications, Inc., New York, 1979.

Berbrich, Joan D. *Writing Practically* . Amsco School Publications, Inc., New York, 1976.

Capacchione, Lucia. *The Creative Journal : The Art of Finding Yourself* . Swallow Press Books/Ohio University Press, 1979.

Moffett, James. *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum , Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers* . Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1968, pp. 213-229, 387-407.

Ratliffe, Sharon A. and Herman, Deldee M. *Self-Awareness : Communicating with Yourself and Others* . National Textbook Co., Illinois, 1982.

## Suggested Student Readings

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Anderson, Marian. *My Lord , What A Morning* . Avon Books/Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1956.

The story of a black woman's journey from South Philadelphia to the Metropolitan Opera House.

Angelou, Maya. *Just Give Me A Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Die* . Bantam Books/Random House, Inc., New York, 1971.

The poetry of a black woman which reveals the spectrum of feelings in her life.

Baldwin, James. *Notes of a Native Son* . Bantam Books/Beacon Press, Boston, 1955.

The early memoirs of one of the most gifted black writers of modern American literature.)

Black Elk/Neihardt, John G. *Black Elk Speaks*. Pocket Book/ William Morrow & Co., Inc., New York, 1932.

The story of American Plains Indians' lifestyle as told by a warrior and medicine man.

Cassady, Carolyn. *Heartbeat* . Pocket Book/Creative Arts Book Co., Berkeley, 1976.

The wife of a beatnik recounts her relationships with Neal Cassady, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, the fathers of the Beat Generation of writers.

Cassady, Neal. *The First Third* . City Lights Books, San Francisco, 1971.

The story of a beatnik's beginnings and associations with other authors of the Beat Generation.

Davis, Angela. *An Autobiography* . Bantam Book/Random House, New York, 1974.

The story of a black Communist revolutionary's transformation into a political activist and feminist through her experiences in the '60's and early '70's.

De Quincey, Thomas. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* . Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1900.

The story of this English author's addiction to and withdrawal from opium.

Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank : The Diary of a Young Girl* . Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1967.

The diary entries of a fifteen year old Jewish girl who died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Holland during WW II.

Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* . Pocket Books, Inc., New York, 1939.

The fascinating story of a printer, inventor, statesman and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Gaines, Ernest J. *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* . Bantam Books, Dial Press, New York, 1971.

The tape recorded recollections of the slave turned black militant of the 1960's who lived 110 years.

Gibran, Kahlil. *Kahlil Gibran: A Self-Portrait* . Bantam Books, Inc. Citadel Press, Inc., New York, 1959.

The letters of a famous philosopher reveal his innermost self.

Gibson, Althea/Fitzgerald, Ed. *I always wanted to be somebody* . Falcon Books/Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1967.

A pro-tennis player's story of her struggles throughout adolescence and early adulthood to stick with a sports career and attain world champion status.

Gregory, Dick/Lipsyte, Robert. *Nigger* . Pocket Books/E.P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1964.

The story of a black comedian turned civil rights activist.

Harris, David. *Goliath* . Avon Books/Richard W. Baron Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1970.

The story of a non-violent revolutionary who was imprisoned as a draft resistor during the Viet Nam War.

Hellman, Lillian. *An Unfinished Woman : a memoir* . Bantam Books/ Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1969.

The story of this playwright's experiences in New York, New Orleans, Hollywood, in Spain during the civil war, in Moscow and Leningrad during the Second World War and after.

Holiday, Billie/Dufty, William. *Lady Sings the Blues* . Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York, 1956.

The life story of one of America's premier blues/jazz singers.

Howard, Maureen. *Facts of Life* . Penguin Books, New York, 1978.

The story of a Bridgeport, Ct., born novelist and teacher.

Keller, Helen. *The Story of My Life* . Scholastic Magazines, Inc., New York, 1967.

The story of a blind, deaf mute's struggle to communicate with her teacher, Annie Sullivan, and her education.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Warrior Woman : Memoir of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* . Vintage Books/Randam House, Inc., New York, 1975.

The story of a Chinese-American female growing up in California.

Malcolm X/Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* . Ballantine Books/Random House, Inc., 1964. The story of a thief, hoodlum, dope peddler and pimp who turned into the leader of the Black Revolution.

Mead, Margaret. *Blackberry Winter: My Earlier Years* . Pocket Book/ William Morrow & Co., Inc., New York, 1972.

The story of this famous anthropologist's childhood, school days, her three marriages and early field trips.

Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi* . Dell Publishing Co./Dial Press, Inc., New York, 1968.

An account of racial prejudice as seen by a young woman in Miss. and her later experiences in NAACP, CORE and civil rights.

Parks, Gordon. *A Choice of Weapons* . First Perennial Library/ Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1965.

The author of *The Learning Tree* recounts his experiences on a Kansas farm, in a Minneapolis brothel, Chicago flophouse and beyond.

Perls, Frederick S. *In and Out the Garbage Pail* . Bantam Books/ Real People Press, Utah, 1969.

The unique and playful story of the psychoanalyst who developed Gestalt Therapy.

Russell, Bill/McSweeney, William. *Go Up For Glory* . Falcon Books/Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., New York 1966.

A pro-basketball player's story of his life in Monroe, Louisiana, Oakland, Cal., at the University of San Francisco and as a member of the world champion Boston Celtics.

Sayers, Gale/Silverman, Al. *I Am Third* . Bantam Book/Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1970.

The story of the friendship of two pro-football players, Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo, of the Chicago Bears.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden / The Portable Thoreau* . Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1947.

The American Transcendentalist writer's account of his two-year stay at a cabin near Walden Pond.

Vonnegut, Mark. *The Eden Express* . Bantam Book/Praeger Publishers, Inc., New York, 1975.

The story of a young man's return from insanity as told through his memories of the 1960's.

Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude / Selected Poems and Sonnets* . Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963.

"The Prelude" tells the story of Wordsworth's life from his childhood through his Cambridge days and London residence.

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