



Writing from the Heart: An Approach to Self-Expression through the Journal

Curriculum Unit 86.04.12
by John Severi

I. Introduction

This writing unit is dedicated to my students in Developmental English I at Hillhouse High School. My experiences with them this year have been an education in themselves and have motivated me to learn more about the special needs of the developmental student. I faced challenges this year of every conceivable variety as a regular classroom English teacher who is uneducated formally in the diagnosis of ED/LD or special needs problems.

Teachers of the lower strata in the hierarchy of English classes often operate by gut-level instinct when they encounter the special or exceptional student. It was because of this instinct that I began the year with much trepidation as to how I would manage these two classes which included twenty-six newly mainstreamed ED/LD and special education students. The average reading level was fourth grade and the scores ranged from second through the fifth grade.

These are the students who very few others want to deal with. A high stress level is inherent in coping with the developmental student. They exhibit an unaffected nonchalance toward formal academics and traditional teaching methods. They are the perennial losers in education who think that they cannot succeed because of their history of failure. They are quick to tell a teacher that they don't care for nor need the subject matter being presented. This statement is usually accompanied by emotional outbursts of frustration and anger.

Yet they jump quickly at the opportunity to relate what is happening in the projects, the streets, and other neighborhoods. Thus, I know that they *are* interested in the world around them, and expressing how they feel about it.

The trick, then, for me as an educator is to make the school and the classroom as interesting as the student's environment. I have learned that I cannot sit back and watch and assume that learning is happening. I need to be active, vocal, and definite about what will happen in the classroom. Students must be actively engaged in something relevant to their interests and relative to their needs. It is towards these ends that I present the following unit objectives.

II. Objectives

Writing from the Heart is a unit which is designed to be used throughout the first marking period with developmental ninth graders as part of their first introduction to the high school environment. It is an attempt to encourage students to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses of their oral and written language. I want to generate enough concern and genuine interest in students to make them want a real attempt at remediation and improvement.

My first objective is to change the negative attitude that is so common among this segment of the freshman class towards school and themselves as serious students. I will also attempt to convince these students that the act of writing is a natural extension of how they think and speak and can be a means of self-expression as well as a tool for communication with others.

My second objective is to teach the use of oral discussion and journal writing as vehicles to be used to investigate the process of values clarification through speaking and writing. Through this process, students will be encouraged to care enough about their skills to say something about what they think and write something about it.

Third, as prerequisites of journal writing, I will introduce a writing process along with paragraph composition skills as means of formalizing ideas and opinions in written language. All writing process and journal exercises will be filed in a loose-leaf notebook. A separate writing folder will be used to reserve "final" copies of journal entries.

Fourth, I will combine writing skills with an artwork project at the end of the marking period; therefore, merging left and right brain activities. Students will be exposed to a unique learning experience where they are given full range of expression. Students will construct a "Values" Coat-of-Arms Shield" where they will artistically represent what they have written about throughout the marking period.

In combatting negative attitudes, my first objective encompasses much more than finding the right textbook, appropriate reading materials, or ditto spirit masters. It also involves creating an atmosphere in the classroom where the student feels accepted as he is personally and academically upon entering the course. With students who have not mastered the rudiments of grammar and structure in their writing, I must be willing to start at whatever skill level I am faced with in the first week of classes.

With the developmental student, I know I will encounter numerous problems in written expression. They range from the student who struggles to get a sentence down on paper to the one who fills the page with fragments and run-ons. Wherever they are, it is important that I instill in them confidence in their natural ability to write something in response to a thought or other stimulus. At this pre-writing stage in the process, I will use the clustering and trial-web shift techniques of Gabriele Rico as described in *Writing the Natural Way*.

Clustering is a non-linear brainstorming and note-taking process where the writer records a key word representing his topic in the center of the page and draws a circle around it. As thoughts come, the writer records "clusters" of word associations around the key word, circling each word as it's written, and connecting each with a stem. The writer is encouraged not to censor any thoughts but to allow them to spill out in whatever patterns they will. (See Rico, p. 28)

The trial-web shift is the writer's recognition of the first "whole vision" of where the writing is headed. After

the initial clustering activity, or at times during it, the writer suddenly gets an idea of where to start. An important part of this process is the writer's willingness to go with this transitional urge from the mind to put something cohesive down on paper. (See Rico, p. 88)

At first, I will allow my students to speak and write in whatever voice or style they feel comfortable with and competent in. The next step is to let them know that there is a big difference between the way they speak or write and Standard American English, but they have the natural ability to bridge this gap with a lot of hard work. Hopefully, the results will be that these students will feel proud about what they say and do in class, as much as for how they get the message across. The use of journal writing will offer students the most freedom in responding in a variety of styles and, thereby, give them ample opportunities to discover or further develop a written voice.

Let me define what I mean by journal writing. In this unit, the journal takes on a number of roles. At first, I will introduce the journal as a class diary where we record something of everything that we do. Students are faced with easy writing assignments to complete that are about their immediate experiences. Thus, topics will be relevant and high-interest. A sense of privacy will accompany some of the writings which the student may allow a trusted "other" to see.

At other times, the journal will be a data collection bank where students record their reactions to what is presented in class in non-text oriented exercises. These exercises may be centered on the responses to classmates, the teacher, a visitor, small-group value clarification exercise, or an A-V production. Students will be supplied will forms on which to record their responses. The fill-in format encourages students to respond in a style that they can handle. (See Lesson Plan #1)

On yet other occasions, the journal is a place for experimentation in writing style and remediation of writing skills. This technique is my answer to the workbook approach to teaching writing. Students will not improve their writing if it is left up to them to practice on their own. They don't know how to do it, and they don't enjoy the act of writing itself.

The first journal entries need to highlight the knowledge gained from the act of writing and the fun one might experience in the act of written expression. Whether the student is involved in clustering, modeling, copying, composing prose or poetry, or writing freely and spontaneously, the goal is the same. It is to set little-used imaginations free to create and to release artistic egos to stretch out and be recognized for their worth.

In this "workbook" journal, students will keep a log of their reactions and writings. From these, they will compose a more structured response in some written expression of these ideas. During the first marking period, I will concentrate on introducing several types of "form poems" (See Koch) and "paragraph patterns" (See Lesson Plan #2) as the bases for these writings. In these preliminary composing sessions, my goal is to present a writing process that the student will use throughout the year to work on improving the organization and the overall quality of their writings.

The entries in this phase of journal writing will concentrate on one or more of the following list of writing process activities:

1. brainstorming
2. pre-writing

3. organization
4. rough draft
5. peer conference
6. revision-rewrite #1
7. teacher conference
8. revision-rewrite #2
9. additional peer and teacher conferences; additional rewrites
10. final draft
11. Motivation Research and Strategies

How, the reader might ask at this point, are you going to motivate students who can barely write sentences or paragraphs to go through your ten-step process with a piece of journal writing? I agree that this is a pivotal point upon which the whole success of the unit is balanced. The discovery and exploration stages are integral and useful in journal writing, but the actual writing of them requires thought process skills that these students don't possess. Using the traditional writing process assures, however, that these skills are developed.

In order to motivate the apathetic, turn on the unteachable, and make the rejected feel accepted, I intend to turn my usual approach upside-down. I have adopted a response-centered approach to the language arts curriculum. I have turned the focus of the subject matter away from the English textbook and onto the beliefs and the stated responses of the students on their education, their goals and values, and what they will share of their personal lives.

In the wide spectrum of techniques and subject matter which English teachers have to choose from to construct a particular unit, the response-centered approach fits most easily in with what is commonly known as "value clarification." Some educators criticize the inclusion of value clarification as nothing more than glorified "rap sessions." For them, it is more beneficial to see students lined up in rows quietly working on a dittoed grammar exercise than for them to be engaged in conversation about relevant issues in their lives. From my experience, all the textbook exercises in the school system will not force a developmental student into a real learning situation. A student might please the teacher by completing an assignment, but there is no guarantee that the student can then transfer the exercise to a real situation.

A teacher needs to carefully think out an approach to values, particularly those connected to controversial issues. We do the student a disservice if we avoid relevant issues altogether. The writing process has much to do with the thinking process which precedes it. If we assume that students possess basic skills of logical thinking, when in reality they are severely lacking in them, then we as teachers doom students to failure before they can ever begin a writing assignment.

Rather than avoid them, I will concentrate my efforts on allowing students to investigate and make decisions on developing values that pertain to their self-image as an adolescent, a student, and a potential writer. These areas of the developing self are the focal points which I will continually bring the class back to whenever tangential issues get us sidetracked.

Much research among educators and humanistic psychologists states that a combination of relevant subject matter, values clarification, and a response-centered curriculum is just what the developmental student needs to motivate them to want them to improve their reading and writing skills.

Abraham Maslow, a pioneer in the humanistic approach to the psychology of basic human needs, states that we think and act the way we do because of a hierarchy of needs which we all share. Our behavior develops from the desire to fulfill a need and, in turn, our values develop from repeated attempts to satisfy them. Maslow constructed five levels of needs which are outlined below.

- A. Basic Needs (food, shelter, clothing)
- B. Safety
- C. Love, Belonging
- D. Skill Accomplishment
- E. Self-Actualization (See Maslow, pp. 126-196)

In trying to keep the “ideal” of this research in perspective with the “reality” of the New Haven secondary schools and Hillhouse H.S., we are very fortunate to have the services of James P. Comer, M.D., a Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychology at Yale University’s Child Study Center. He has run workshops for the faculty at Hillhouse where he has bridged the gap between Maslow’s theories, the young, black adolescent learner and the classroom in very real terms.

Comer believes, along with Maslow, that we operate schools “on the premise that the three lower needs (according to Maslow) have already been met, and that the child is now in a position to accomplish or learn skills. The reality may be that many children are discipline problems because they are trying to get lower-order needs met through their immature and/or unacceptable behavior patterns” (Maslow, *Being* , pp. 149-178). It is Comer’s belief that schools need to stop and think what they can do to help students meet basic needs, and thus get beyond them to the higher orders of needs.

Comer states that teachers are among those who have access to the inner world of the child through the high level of trust that can develop through the classroom learning experience. He lists teachers, along with grandparents, neighbors, and recreational leaders, as parent substitutes that the pre-adolescent and teenager seek out for someone “to try new ideas, values, and ways” with (Comer, p. 163). This is the classic, natural process of rebellion and the rejection of parental morals and values, whether they be conservative, moderate, or liberal.

Comer gives these reasons for this phenomenon. The teacher or other parent substitute provides an empathetic ear and is less likely to threaten or criticize the adolescent in responding to his or her questions. Their suggestions are viewed as being unique and different from the parent even though the advice is identical to that of the parent. It is important to note that the parent substitute also provides the teenager with a viable, trustworthy alternative to peer group experiences when they “are trying to determine what part of us—our attitudes, values, and ways—they reject, and these determinations are emotionally charged and painful” (p. 163).

Other researchers call on teachers to tap this avenue of real communication with the student. Language arts teachers enjoy a special advantage in that they deal with basic oral and written communication skills. This

fact, along with the range of curriculum subject areas the English teacher has to choose from, provides the perfect setting for the use of a response-centered value clarification approach. The research also reveals that there is sound reasoning and well-developed theories validating the use of value-oriented exercises and discussion of relevant student issues.

According to Simon, Howe, and Kirchenbaum in *Values Clarification*, there is a list of approaches which adults have traditionally used in dealing with values and the teenager. First, there is moralizing, which is a direct indoctrination of the child in the benefits of the adult's value system. Second, there is the laissez-faire attitude toward values. The adult rationalization is to let children think and do what they want since no one value system will be right for everyone. Modeling is the third approach, one in which the adult presents himself as a shining example of what is good and true. The problem here is that a child is faced with many different "good" models to follow. How does a child make a choice when it comes down to real, everyday issues? (Simon, pp. 15-17)

Values clarification is the fourth approach; the authors describe it as being developed by Louis Rath who took the idea from John Dewey. It differs from the other approaches in that the emphasis is placed on the *process of valuing* rather than on value content. In other words, it is concerned with how people arrive at a certain set of values rather than another.

Rath, in *Values and Teaching*, breaks down the valuing process into the following steps.

Prizing one's beliefs and behaviors

1. prizing and cherishing
2. publicly affirming, when appropriate Choosing one's beliefs and behaviors
3. choosing from alternatives
4. choosing after consideration of consequences
5. choosing freely

Acting on one's beliefs

6. acting
7. acting with a pattern, consistency, and repetition (Rath pp. 28-32)

Considering the above list, the teacher's role is to help the student utilize each step and apply it to established and emerging beliefs. The teacher encourages students to consider the full spectrum of alternatives and sides of an issue. The teacher also gives the students a range of options in how they go about making choices in expressing themselves. Students must be allowed to make decisions along the way in the process to truly develop their own values (Simon, p. 19-20).

Several other researchers validate these theories on value clarification and response-centered curriculum. John Holt, Herbert Kohl, James Moffett, Alan Purves, and Delores Minor all recommend a move away from teacher-centered learning in our English classrooms and toward subject and student-centered education. They also recommend that this move happen at all levels of learning in a school system, and that whole schools

rather than individual teachers adopt this style of teaching and learning.

In his introduction to Kohl's *Teaching the "Unteachable"*, John Holt emphasizes the need for relevant subject matter in urban classrooms. The following is an excerpt from his statements.

A student will only be concerned with his own use of language, will only care about its effectiveness, and therefore try to judge its effectiveness and therefore be able to improve its effectiveness—when he is talking to an audience, not just one that allows him to say what he wants as he wants, but one that takes him and his ideas seriously (Kohl, p.8).

In *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13*, James Moffett explains the principles which form the basis of the student-centered curriculum. Each principle is directly quoted below, either in entirety or in part. I urge those who are not familiar with the method to read the full explication of them in Moffett's book.

1. A course in language learning is a course in thinking. A writing assignment is a thinking assignment.
2. The stuff to be conceived and verbalized is primarily the raw stuff of life, not language matters themselves. Rendering experience into words is the real business of school . . .
3. What a student needs most of all is to perceive *how* he is using language and how he *might* use it.
4. The role of the teacher is to help students expand their cognitive and verbal repertory as far as possible, starting with their initial limits.
5. The sequential pathway to this goal is a growth scale growing from the personal to the impersonal, from low to high abstraction, from undifferentiated to finely discriminated modes of discourse.
6. The most effective and best motivated learning process for approaching this goal is trial and error. . . The teacher selects the trials—the speaking, reading, and writing assignments. . .
7. The only way, short of tutorial, to provide and feedback is to develop small-group interaction into a sensitive learning method. . .
8. Using language is essentially a social action, which, however, becomes internalized as a private behavior. The quality of individual utterance depends much upon the kinds of dialogues that have been previously absorbed.
9. Producing language is more difficult than receiving it. (Moffett, pp. 11-12)

It is upon this backdrop of principles that Purves and Minor, among others, paint their mosaic of response-centered class activities in *How Porcupines Make Love*. They supplied answers to my questions about how,

specifically, I would go about managing this type of class. I learned how I should act, what to do, and how to assess or measure what I had done.

In “The Response-Centered Curriculum,” Alan Purves begins an outline of the teacher’s duties based on his experiences in teaching poetry, and he arranges them in a sequential order. Later in my unit, I describe how I have adapted this method to the writing process.

To begin the process, the student and the teacher select materials to be read together. The student then reads a—selected piece and, either an individual, small group, or class setting, discusses the piece with classmates who have read it and the teacher. The teacher suggests different or alternative forms for the student’s response to the piece. If need be, the teacher structures a particular form of response for the student based on his or her individual ability. The teacher then works toward drawing the fullest response possible from the student. He calls attention to and isolates certain parts of the text. In the process, the teacher also tries to convince students that they can help each other when the teacher is not available immediately. He also elicits the class’s aid in determining types of remediation and allows the more competent students to help with the remediation and evaluation of classmates. In doing so, the teacher encourages students to try new approaches to an old problem (Purves, pp. 29-56).

In “Structure of the Classroom,” Delores Minor adds to the Purves list of teacher responsibilities and methods.

She describes the teacher as a challenger and a stimulator who circulates around the room from one group to another making contact with each student as he or she works within the group activity. The teacher suggests rather than tells, demonstrates rather than lectures. At times, he is a devil’s advocate; at others, he is a facilitator and listener. The atmosphere which the teacher strives to create is one where conflicts or disagreements are viewed in the light of mutual respect for the opinions of others. The teacher also insists that students be responsible for what they say and do in class while he offers resources and opportunities for individual growth. In general, the teacher is creative and can be further described as being observant, sensitive to others, honest, knowledgeable, helpful, resourceful, intuitive, and open-minded (Minor, pp. 59-68).

III. Unit Grading and Classroom Methods; Lesson Schedule

Theoretically, the student-centered curriculum sounds like an ideal situation for real learning to happen. How one goes about determining whether learning is happening is another aspect of the response-centered approach that I have examined for the implementation of my unit. In the realities of the public school system, teachers are under ever-increasing scrutiny of their methods and grading systems. They need specific evaluation techniques to support the grades listed in their grade books. These figures assure principals, department heads, and themselves that measurable progress is being made by the individual student.

In the category of grading, the researchers failed to supply the kind of system I need to handle the variety of evaluations I face with developmental ED/LD students. James Moffett suggests that grades should be based on the student’s writing folder. At the end of the marking period, the teacher sifts through the folder, arrives at a general appraisal of the student’s progress, and assigns an equivalent letter grade. This process is too vague for the developmental student to follow. I want the student to be an active participant in the developing grade. The student will want to know an approximate average at mid-marking period and the teacher will need an average to determine failure warnings.

I am using a point-based system which was developed for the target clusters as part of the original version of the Freshman Cluster System over ten years ago at Hillhouse. This point system is based on the reinforcement of positive actions by the student and was designed to highlight the following areas of student activities in evaluating growth and progress. To the right of each category is the maximum amount of points that can be accumulated during each marking period.

I. Preparation	450 points
II. Classwork/Homework	450 points
III. Evaluation (Quiz)	300 points
IV. Evaluation (Test)	200 points
V. Notebook (Organization)	100 points

The student is able to accumulate ten points per day for being prepared with a notebook, pen or pencil, and text or assignment. Another ten points can be added for the *completion* of a homework or classwork assignment and the fact that it is in on time. A wall or table chart is used to keep track of the points. My classroom aides and student monitors are responsible for recording daily totals. Having the charts visible and accessible to students encourages their active participation in following their progress in various categories. Students are proud to have their attendance and grade lines filled in with points and show genuine concern over those students whose chart boxes are empty. In some cases, this positive form of peer pressure will be a deciding factor in a student's attempt to turn over a new leaf or try to improve in a certain area. In other cases, a student becomes willing to face up to the realities of what his strengths and weaknesses are, and he is motivated to change the weak spots into strengths.

At the end of the marking period, I total the points and use the following chart to determine an equivalent letter grade for the student's report card.

1350Ð1500 points = A

1200Ð1349 points = B

1050Ð1199 points = C

801Ð1049 points = D

below 801 points = F

I compute the grade with the student in a private conference where I present the grade breakdown and point totals in the various categories. The student can see where they have been successful and where they need to place more effort. The student then records the results of this conference in his notebook for future reference. This type of journal entry may be a fill-in form or a short paragraph describing the specific plan of attack for the next marking period.

Other meetings and resultant journal entries are built into the Cluster system. One period a day is reserved for the cluster teachers to meet and discuss attendance and behavior problems and specific student needs and progress. It is also a time for individual or small-group meetings concerning behavior or extra-help and make-up sessions.

Journal entries from these meetings may be a behavior contract between a student and a particular teacher or a memory writing of a problem-producing incident. Students may also write in academic progress reports or

tips and suggestions for improvement. (See Lesson Plan #3 and #4)

If necessary, administrators, parents, counselors, and other professionals may be brought into these meetings to work one-on-one with a particular student. Due to the nature of the ED/LD student's academic problem, additional diagnosis and testing may be necessary to determine how to best approach a remediation plan. Due to severe personal or emotional problems, the school social worker may schedule private sessions during the cluster meeting.

These meetings, along with the point system, are used in the student's Social Studies and Physical Science classes. Thus, he or she hears the same goals and values in all their cluster classes and they all operate under a common system. The student comes to identify with the cluster group and to relate to and strive for the cluster values of respect, honesty, responsibility, effort, and courtesy. These values become the focus of some of the first journal writings and value clarification exercises of the first marking period.

Since the response-centered classroom breaks down into a series of small-group sessions, I have adapted William Glasser's "classroom meeting" to my unit as the instructional setting. Glasser describes this method in *Schools Without Failure* which he bases on his theories of Reality Therapy (See Glasser, *Reality*). He discusses three types of classroom meetings: the social-problem-solving, the educational diagnostic, and the open-ended. I used these models to plan out the average week of activities for this unit.

The "social-problem-solving meeting" focuses on any problem which the students as a group or as individuals are having in school or related to school in their private lives. In this type of meeting, it is important for the teacher to continue to stress the positive. The purpose of the discussion is to *solve* the problem and not to *punish* (Glasser, *Schools* , p. 143). The problems which I am focusing on in the unit meetings are the social and academic problems of developmental ninth graders as described earlier. Individual problems which threaten to become chronic will be isolated from the classroom meeting and referred to the cluster meeting described above.

The social-problem-solving meeting serves primarily as the setting for the discussion of personal and academic goals and the value clarification exercise. The students initial reactions to these will be recorded as journal entries which will highlight pre-writing skills. These sessions are scheduled for each Monday and Tuesday in this unit.

The "educational-diagnostic meeting" is always related to what the class is studying and how well the class and individual students are learning procedures and performing relative to their skill levels. The teacher looks for areas of weakness that will require additional instruction and assessment in the near future (p. 162).

In my unit, this meeting is used as a reading and composing session when students are working on extending their initial journal entries on values and goals into rough drafts of paragraphs, poems, or graphic responses. I am using classroom aides and Yale University volunteer tutors during these sessions to maximize the amount of individualized and small-group attention and remediation. At times a large group or class session will be used to address common problems with the values material, journal writings, or readings. At other times, students will complete performance skill exercises (quizzes or tests) for an assessment of progress throughout the marking period. These meetings are scheduled for each Wednesday and Thursday in the week.

The third type of Glasser's meetings is the "open-ended" which is used to discuss important intellectual, academic, and social issues relevant to the students. These should be student-selected issues. The teacher's main objective is to stimulate the student's thinking, writing, and verbal processes so that he will be able to

communicate what he or she knows about the topic being discussed (p. 157).

My version of this meeting is a little different. Whereas Glasser suggests that students discuss any issue with which they are concerned, I am going to guide the discussion toward the paragraphs, poems, and graphics prepared from journals on the value process of a given week. Thus, Friday will be reserved for oral readings which have been prepared and discussions which summarize the students' opinions or the knowledge gained from their week's work.

I have also designated the open-ended meeting as a time when other related sources of information are presented to the student. These sources may be a visitor from the Hillhouse administration or guidance departments, or professional "outsiders." They may also be a film strip or movie related to the values topic. At times, a video presentation will be used solely for entertainment as a reward or reinforcement of the class's progress during the week.

(figure available in print form)

The average week in the unit involves the student in three core activities (See chart below). This pattern is repeated throughout six of the eight weeks in the first marking period. This repetition provides the developmental student with a consistent pattern. Hopefully a sense of a continuum in their learning process will also emerge. It is very common for this type of student to come to class without any idea of what is going on. This happens even though I outline weekly activities in "assignment blocks" on the board which they have copied into their notebooks. I want students to realize that what they do for homework on a given day is a reflection of what went on in class and prepares them for the next day's lesson. The optimum result I seek is for the student to realize the importance of consistent effort and attendance.

The core activities are centered around the valuing process being discussed and examined that week. The students are introduced to the process on Monday with a *Value Clarification* exercise which is followed by a short journal entry that records the process, the exercise title, and the student's reaction. I will close the exercise with a short discussion to begin the reaction process. The following chart provides the reader with a sequential breakdown of the strategies used in *Value Clarification* as they relate to each valuing process and the weekly class structure of the unit.

The student has the responsibility of completing a follow-up homework assignment which zeros in on extending the student's response in the initial journal entry. I will use brainstorming and pre-writing skills such as outlining, listing, and clustering as specific methods for the student's use. An additional value clarification exercise, a short reading, a structured or free-form graphic reaction, or a short paragraph may be substituted for the pre-writing activity.

On Tuesday, I will run another value clarification exercise on the same valuing process or try to cater to a tangential issue raised on Monday. I will be using exercises from *Self-Awareness* and *Writing About People . . . And Yourself* as additional sources. The students will respond, again, with a brief journal entry which will be followed by a closing discussion. The student will try to stretch his response with pre-writing skills for homework and begin thinking about the formal writing due on Friday. These writings may be accompanied by any graphic or audio-visual arts project. These aids enable the student to develop personal symbols to relate to the value concept of each week. The graphics-oriented projects will lay important groundwork for the project which ends the marking period—the personal values coat-of-arms (See weeks #7 and #8 on chart).

Wednesday and Thursday are work sessions for the rough draft process. The class breaks into small groups for further brainstorming, writing, reading, peer-evaluating, and individual remediation. The class and homework

lessons for these two sessions center on completing the rough draft and peer-group revision of the selected formal journal entry. A specific peer-group process will be introduced to the small groups of from three to four students each (See Lesson Plans #5,#6, and #7).

Students then bring their revision of the rough draft to an aide, a volunteer, or myself for a quick assessment using a checklist to record comments and suggestions on structural and grammatical strengths and weaknesses. A holistic evaluation system will be used by the student and the assessor. Examples of the checklist and holistic scoring criteria are available to the reader in *Teaching and Evaluating Student Writing* by Mary Ann Trost (p. 28-335).

Thursday's homework is the completion of the final draft rewrite process in order to meet Friday's due date. It is important to determine the beginning of the period as the journal deadline for full credit. This insures that Friday's meeting will be used for the oral readings, open discussion, visitors, or video presentations as described previously.

A two-week break is scheduled into the unit to allow the students and myself a chance to step back from the valuing process and evaluate student progress. During these ten class sessions, I will conduct private conferences which were described in the unit's grading system.

The "break" also gives aides, volunteers, and selected student monitors a time to work on the remediation of the most prominent reading, writing, and verbal problems. A variety of textbook-oriented worksheets will provide quiet, work sessions when specific needs can be attended to in a tutorial atmosphere. Thus, the students are engaged in much needed lessons in word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, or spelling and vocabulary while I am beginning the process of oral grade evaluations.

The concluding two-week period gets the students back into the valuing process with the accent on action. The Values Coat-of-Arms Shield project challenges students to make choices on value issues that they have dealt with throughout the marking period and to select formal writings which represent these values. The student creates a visual statement of these values through the shield which helps to concertize the choice of and the commitment to them. Not only is this tangible evidence of their ideas, but also of the process they have learned of reaching down inside themselves and recording what they have found on paper. This fixing of certain ideas to physical images may change during the student's life as one value supplants another. However, the fixing of the process of valuing, recognizing ideas, and expressing an opinion or writing a statement about them are things, once learned, that will become a constant in their lives.

IV. Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan #1 —Value Clarification Response Form

Objective : To guide the student to write a response to a "V.C." exercise for a homework assignment.

Method:

1. Setting—Mon. or Tues. social-problem-solving meeting; the class has just completed a values

exercise (ex. choosing educational goals for the year).

2. The teacher leads a brief summary discussion and stresses “key words” which have been discussed (ex. “testing,” “attendance,” “discipline, effort).

3. Using the last 5-10 minutes of class, the teacher distributes a form with the following fill-in sections for the student to complete for homework:

V.C. Exercise # ___ Journal Entry # ___

Name: ___ Date: Per .: ___

Source of Information (game, exercise, discussion, visitor, A-V) ___

Valuing Process Highlighted ___

Personal Reaction (begin with one of the following):

a) Today, I learned that . . .

b) Before today, I felt/thought . . .

c) I agree/disagree with the class opinion on ___ because . . .

d) I have a question about ___; I don’t understand . . .

Tentative Plan for Written/Graphic/Oral Response on Friday:

a) a paragraph or poem about ___ (include notes or a “cluster” of ideas below)

b) a statement or short speech about ___ (include ideas or notes below) ___

c) a drawing, collage, or poster about

4. The form is due at the next class session for a credit check and feedback from the teacher.

5. The form is then added to the student’s notebook as a journal entry. The student may use this response on Wednesday or Thursday to extend their initial thoughts during a composing session or to read more information and others’ thoughts on before beginning the writing process.

Lesson Plan #2 –Paragraph Patterns for Journal Writings

Objective : To guide students to compose a paragraph-style journal entry.

Method :

1. Setting—Wed. or Thurs. educational-diagnostic meeting; students are working on expanding their initial journal entries into paragraph form.
2. Using their “response form” entries, students will organize the structure of their paragraphs using one of the following patterns:
 - a) Open your paragraph with a statement that until a few years (months, weeks, or days) ago, you had a certain problem. Next, write an example of how this problem no longer exists. Continue with how you got the idea to deal with the problem, how you struggled with it, and how you overcame it. End with a statement about your confidence in dealing with similar problems in the future.
 - b) Open with a statement about a value topic that you would like to discuss. Describe a person who exemplifies that value to you. Continue by explaining how that person displays this value by his or her specific words or actions. End your paragraph with a statement of appreciation for this person in your life or with a commitment to following his or her example.
 - c) Open by describing your own (or someone else’s) present happy (or sad) state of mind or situation in life. Next, explain if this is something new or if it is the way life always has been for you (or the other person). Continue by giving reasons why life is so happy (or sad). End with a wish for continued success (or a change for the better).
3. The student takes this writing through the peer group and teacher evaluation processes.
4. The student revises the paragraph and completes a final copy for Thursday night’s homework.

Lesson Plan #3 —Behavior Contract from a Cluster Meeting

Objective: To focus a student’s attention on a specific discipline or behavior problem through discussion, planning, and writing techniques in a private or small-group session.

Method :

1. Setting—Cluster meeting period; the student has been asked to attend by a teacher for an incident which happened earlier that day.
2. The teacher asks the student to describe what he did to be asked to attend. The student is given time to think and respond to the question.
3. The teacher initiates a conversation with the student in which solutions to the problem are suggested and elicited from the student.
4. Based on this discussion, the teacher asks the student to fill-in a form with answers to these questions:

Behavior Contract # ___ Journal Entry # ___
 Name: ___ Date: ___ Per.: ___
 Nature of the incident ___

- a) Who was involved? ____
 - b) What words were said or actions done to instigate or begin the incident? ____
 - c) How did you react and why?
 - d) How do you plan to avoid this problem in the future? How are you going to act differently?
 - e) How can the teacher or other students assist you? ____
 - f) Do you understand that you can solve this problem by following through on the plan mentioned in d) and e)? ____
 - g) Do you understand that if this behavior becomes chronic your parent or guardian will be contacted for a visit to a Cluster meeting or you will be referred to an administrator? ____
5. The student is asked to sign this form. One copy of it becomes a journal entry in his notebook and one copy is filed by the teacher in his Cluster meeting log.
6. A follow-up meeting date is scheduled by the teacher with this student to assess his progress with the plan.

Lesson Plan #4 —Academic Progress Report

Objective : To focus the student’s attention on a specific academic (oral, reading, or writing) problem; To schedule a one-to-one remediation session.

Method:

1. Setting—Cluster meeting period; the teacher and student have arranged private meeting time for remediation.
2. The teacher asks the student to explain the specific problem which he would like to work on.
3. The teacher and student fill in the following sections of a form together, and they work through a mini-remediation session.

Academic Progress Report # ____ Journal Entry # ____

Name: ___ Date: ___ Per.: ___
Designated Problem Area ___
Methods Already Employed ___
Planned Remediation Schedule ___
Mini-session Exercise ___
Follow-up Assessment Date ___
Suggestions/Comments on Progress: ___
a) Student ___
b) Teacher ___

Lesson Plan #5 —Guided Reading for Journal Writing

Objective : To provide the student with a writing stimulus through a silent reading selection and accompanying graphics.

Method:

1. Setting—Wed. or Thurs. educational-diagnostic meeting; students are reading to discover information for expanding initial journal entries for the week.
2. Materials—The following list includes books of low-level, high interest readings of prose and poetry which are related to value clarification issues. All use illustrations, photographs, and other graphics to visually enhance the readings (See Student Reading List).
3. The student selects a reading (or is guided to one by the teacher) which is related to the responses recorded in his journal entries from Monday and Tuesday.
4. The student reads the selection silently in a reserved reading area in or near the classroom (library or reading lab).
5. The student fills in answers to the following questions on a review form provided by the teacher:

Prose/Poetry Review Sheet # ___ Journal Entry # ___
Name: ___ Date: ___ Per.: ___
Value topic being researched ___

Reading source:

a) Title: ____

b) Author: ____

c) Literary genre: ____

d) Who is (are) the main character(s)? ____

e) What happens in the story/poem? ____

f) What “sense” images can you recall from the reading?

g) Were there any visual images or illustrations accompanying the reading? (Briefly describe or draw on a separate paper.)

h) What connections do you make between the reading, the visual images, and the value topic? ____

i) How can you relate the value ideas and the characters in the reading to your own value ideas or those of your friends and acquaintances (family, neighbors, minister)? ____

j) Would you recommend this reading for someone else? Why? ____

6. The student completes this form for homework credit and the teacher’s assessment at the next class session.

Lesson Plan #6 and Lesson Plan #7 are a four-day sequence of classes.

Day #1:

Lesson Plan #6 —Cluster Values Exercise

Objective : To engage students in a small-group exercise that examines the definitions of the Cluster values of

respect, honesty, responsibility, effort, and courtesy.

Method :

1. Setting—Mon. and Tues. social-problem-solving meeting; the Cluster values are written as the headings of columns across the top of the blackboard.
2. The teacher leads a brainstorming exercise for oral responses to each value (free word-association) which are recorded in appropriate columns.
3. The teacher asks for connections between the values and recorded responses. How do they relate to the Cluster concept? to the individual student or peers? to a “true friend”?
4. The teacher asks students to focus on the last topic of the qualities of a “true friend.”
5. Divide the class into pre-selected groups of three or four students, five groups in all, and assign a Cluster value to each group.
6. Each group selects a monitor/recorder and selects a group name which includes their assigned Cluster value.
7. Day #1 Homework—Each student completes a “V.C. response form” and is asked to include a statement about a “true friend.”

Day #2:

8. Students remain in the same groupings and must complete the following task:
 - a) Rank the Cluster values according to the importance they hold in determining a “true friend” through discussion.
 - b) List the Cluster values in descending order from most to least important to the group’s image of a “true friend.”
 - c) The monitors record the results on a group tally sheet prepared by the teacher.
9. Half-way through the period, the teacher asks for the tally sheets and lists the class results on a chart on the board. This chart will display a class ranking of the Cluster values and “true friend” qualities.
10. The teacher leads a discussion of the class ranking and presses students to give reasons why they valued one quality over another.
11. Day #2 Homework—Students are asked to think and write about their “true” friends and what quality they value most about them. Students may list the reasons why they chose a particular quality as #1 in short phrases or write a short paragraph about it. They must be prepared to read their list or paragraph to a group of classmates during the next class.

Day #3:

Lesson Plan #7 —Small-Group Peer-Conference Evaluation

Objective : To provide a setting where the student will orally read a prepared writing and assist in evaluating his or her peers' writings.

Method:

1. Setting—Wed. and Thurs. educational-diagnostic meeting; students have prepared writings on their “true friends” for oral readings and are arranged in groups.
2. The teacher introduces the peer-conference group in the positive light of improving the class’s ability to think, listen, speak, read, and write. Initially, the teacher models a conference for the class with selected students.
3. All students in each group take turns reading their pieces while adhering to the following rules:
 - a) Everyone not reading must sit quietly and listen.
 - b) The student-writer reads the piece twice; on the second reading, peers take notes recording reactions and stressing something positive.
 - c) Each listener responds to the reader with something they *liked* and with a *constructive* suggestion.
 - d) The reader uses a reaction sheet for comments on revisions of the “true friend” piece which is completed for class and homework.

Day #4:

4. Each student brings the revised piece to an aide, a volunteer, or the teacher for an evaluation.
5. The student completes any guided readings, further peer-conference revisions, or graphic presentations.
6. If necessary, the student revises the “true friend” piece once more for homework to prepare for Friday’s oral reading and discussion.

Bibliography

Unit Research:

Comer, James P. "Substitute Parents," *Parents*, June 1986. New York: Gruner + Jahr USA Publishing, 1986.

Comer's article explains the unique and trusting relationship enjoyed by teens and selected adults.

Glasser, William. *Schools Without Failure*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969.

This book contains Glasser's plan for improving the quality of American education through applying Glasser's theories of Reality Therapy to classroom meetings.

———. *Reality Therapy*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965.

Glasser presents a new approach to psychiatry where the client becomes intensely involved with facing reality, rejecting irresponsible behavior, and learning better ways to behave. He bases all human problems on the inability to love, be loved, and feel worthwhile to the self and others.

How *Porcupines Make Love*. Ed. Alan C. Purves. Lexington, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1972.

This book presents the basic principles of a response-centered English curriculum. Eight authors present articles on theory, classroom structure and conversation, film and the media, writing through visual symbols, drama, the basics of writing, assessment and evaluation, and classroom resources.

Koch, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970.

Koch presents a curriculum which guarantees success in teaching children how to write poetry. He includes a large anthology of student poetry which is divided into 18 methods and forms for writing poetry.

Kohl, Herbert R. *Teaching the "Unteachable"*. New York: The New York Review, 1967.

Kohl describes his teaching experiences in East Harlem where he put aside the textbook and taught students to write prose and poetry out of their own experiences.

Maslow, Abraham H. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: The Viking Press, 1971.

This book is a posthumous extension of Maslow's humanistic theories which address biology, synergy, creativity, cognition and education, and the role of science in expanding the study of human nature.

———. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. New York: Litton Educational Publishing, Inc., 1968.

Maslow offers humanistic psychology as an alternative to the behavioristic and Freudian models. He explains his theories in relation to existentialism, motivation, cognition (peak experiences), creativeness (self-actualization), and a hierarchy of human values.

Moffett, James. *A Student - Centered Language Arts Curriculum, K-13: A Handbook for Teachers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968.

Moffett presents a complete response-centered English curriculum in the following grade sections: K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-13. This book

is a must for teachers who are changing from a teacher-centered format to a student-centered class.

Raths, Louis E., Harmon, Merrill, Simon, Sidney B. *Values and Teaching : Working with Values in the Classroom* . Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1966.

The authors offer a value-oriented unit which can be adapted to any curriculum or subject matter. They offer 22 classroom methods for implementing a values clarification unit.

Rico, Gabriele Lusser. *Writing the Natural Way : Using Right-Brain Techniques to Release Your Expressive Powers* . Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1983.

Rico redefines the writing process through the connection she presents between the act of writing and the domains of the brain's two hemispheres. She presents a workbook and writing log approach with proven, sample lessons.

Simon, Sidney B., Howe, Leland W., Kirschenbaum, Howard.

Value Clarification : A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students . New York: Hart Publishing Co., Inc., 1978. This is a collection of teacher developed activities based on the theories of John Dewey and Louis Raths. It is aimed at letting students discover how they make decisions and develop values and judgments.

Student Reading List:

The following titles represent part of the Prentice Hall "Nova" Series, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1977. They all contain prose and poetry readings along with many photographs, illustrations, and other graphic stimuli. Each reading or graphic is followed by a guided response exercise which highlights a language arts skill or values clarification topic relevant to the developmental student's interests and academic level.

Daigon, Arthur Bernier Lois M. *Our Best & Our Worst* . Daigon, Arthur Gannon William J. *Tomorrows* .

Daigon, Arthur Norko, Rozanne M. *Food for Thought* .

Daigon, Arthur, Schmitt, Mimi. *The Plot Thickens* .

Daigon, Arthur, Weisskoff S. *Live and Learn* .

Elwood, Ann, Raht, John. *Points of View* . New York: Globe Book Company, 1975.

This anthology of short story readings defines point of view for the developmental student. Each story is followed by reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises. A mini-glossary is provided for the student's use.

Granite, Harvey R., Black, Millard H., Stanchfield, Jo M. *Ventures ; Vibrations; Reactions* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971.

These three books are part of the "Action Series." Each is a collection of short stories and poems with accompanying photographs, illustrations, and graphics which are relative to the developmental student's reading ability.

The following list of books fall into the same category as those already described in the Student Reading List—low level, high-interest readings for the developmental student. Greene, Marvin, L. *What's Happening* . Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1969.

Howard, Margaret, Goodykoontz, William. *Imagination: The World of Inner Space* . New York: Scholastic Magazines, Inc., 1970.

Niles, Olive Stafford, Phillips, James B., Pike, James. *Accent: Any Human to Another* . Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1965.

Spiegler, Charles G. *Courage Under Fire ; In New Directions* . Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1967; 1968.

Stanford, Barbara Dodds, Stanford, Gene. *Changes* . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971.

Classroom Materials:

The following books all contain writing process exercises for the basic and developmental student:

Adams, W. Royce. *Think . . . Read . . . Plan . . . Write . . . Rewrite* . New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975.

Brereton, John C. *A Plan For Writing* . New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978.

Levy, Wilbert J. *Composition : Prewriting , Response , Revision* . New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1982.

Stephens Rory D. *Sequence : A Basic Writing Course* . New York: CBS College Publishing, 1982.

The following books contain holistic and peer-conference group writing evaluation guidelines, charts, and checklists for assessment of student writing:

Grubb, Mel. *Using Holistic Evaluation* . Encino, Cal.: Glenco Publishing Company, Inc., 1981.

Toth, Marian Davies. *The Writing Teacher's Survival Kit* . Morristown, N.J.: Silver Burdett Company, 1984.

Trost, Mary Ann. *Teaching and Evaluating Student Writing* . Evanston, Ill.: McDougal, Littell & Company, 1984.

The following books all contain exercises in paragraph and composition organization skills:

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

———. *Writing Logically* . New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1978.

Levy, Wilbert J. *Paragraph Power* . New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1977.

The following books contain exercises in self-awareness, values clarification, and verbal and nonverbal communication. Foresdale, Louis. *Nonverbal Communication* . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974.

Ratliffe, Sharon A., Herman, Deldee M. *Self-Awareness: Communicating with Your Self and Others* . Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1974.

Wilkinson, Charles A. *Speaking of . . . Communication* . Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975.

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