

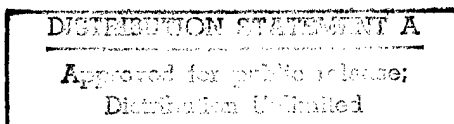
GETTING TO THE POINT: STORYING THE UNITED STATES MILITARY
ACADEMY'S AND ITS PREPARATORY SCHOOL'S ENGLISH PROGRAM

by

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JEH

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Foreword

I never wanted to be a teacher. My father was a teacher. His mother was a teacher. Aunts, uncles, and cousins on both sides of my family were, and are, teachers. But I never saw myself as a teacher. I never liked kids much even when I was one. But Daddy always said that I would be a good teacher and that I shouldn't rule it out. He drowned in 1979, the Friday after Easter and two months before his second grandson, Joel—named for him, was born.

I had joined the Army in 1977—the last year of the Women's Army Corps and the last year in which women could enter the military through direct commission. The previous year, 1976, had been a year of sweeping changes in the military: The service academies (at West Point, New York; Annapolis, Maryland; and Colorado Springs, Colorado), the Coast Guard Academy, and ROTC had finally opened their doors to women, thus ending the reason for separate means of accession for women who wanted to serve as officers. By April 1979, when Daddy drowned, I was a first lieutenant stationed at the now decommissioned Fort Ord, California. In 1982, West Point's selection officers chose me to teach at the Military Academy, sending me to Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for a Master's in Literature. I imagine that, in 1984, when I first began teaching at West Point, Daddy was laughing up in heaven as he watched me stumble through my first attempts to coax unwilling cadets to write.

During my first tour at West Point, from 1984 to 1987, I learned that I love to teach. I found the experiences that came with teaching challenging, exciting, and

fulfilling, and I believe that what I did as a teacher really helped cadets survive the challenges of West Point. In that period, I helped build both the EN101 and EN102 syllabi, served as the course administrator for EN102, and trained junior faculty to teach the course. In my third year, I taught the advanced literature course, EN301, as well as a senior seminar on Zora Neale Hurston. All of these experiences convinced me that I could truly make a difference here.

I left West Point in the summer of 1987, fully content to finish out my military career doing whatever the Army asked. In my years away, I encountered several of my former students. Each commented on how much my class had meant to him or her. Buoyed by their positive comments, I toyed with the idea of returning to West Point, but never seriously considered it a possibility. Now, however, what the Army asks, and what I want have marvelously joined together. Colonel Peter Stromberg, the department chair, asked me to return to West Point as an assistant professor in 1993.

During this tour, I have taught the professional writing course, several mini writing courses for faculty and staff at West Point and the Reserve Command in Atlanta, and African-American literature. I also have been involved in the day-to-day administration of the department and even sat on the Academy's Admissions Committee for two years. Now, I've been selected to remain at West Point as a tenured associate professor for the rest of my military career. And I want to remain here where I truly feel that I have made, and can continue to make, a difference in the lives of young men and women who are going out into the Army to support and defend our country in the twenty-first century.

Now that I find myself so thoroughly committed to teaching, I am approaching this dissertation with an eye toward improving how we teach composition at West Point. In EN101, the course for which I will be responsible, readings and discussions focus on diversity issues. I have not taught this course in its current form, though I have read portions of the texts currently used in it and discussed them with EN101 instructors. During academic year 1997-1998, when I have also worked on this dissertation, I have followed the course closely, observing classes, providing feedback to teachers, and doing as much as I could to understand the course from the inside out. This dissertation, then, is my way to pay back the Academy and Army for their faith in me. This dissertation must serve the interests of those whom I serve—the cadets, cadet candidates, and instructors at both the Academy and the Prep School—rather than merely my own.

Introduction

My purpose in writing this dissertation has been to provide a document that will work in several ways:

First, I hope that it will serve as a comprehensive, theory-based, research-grounded dissertation that will meet the stringent requirements of the Teachers College doctoral program. Next, as I report on surveys and interviews that I conducted with members of various West Point constituencies, this dissertation provides a broad view of the strengths, weaknesses, successes, and pitfalls of the English programs at the United States Military Academy Preparatory School (the Prep School or USMAPS) and at the United States Military Academy (the Academy or USMA). Using a retrospective look at the theories and practice of American Composition scholars, this text will locate the current Composition programs at the Prep School and the Academy in historical perspective. This dissertation tells the story of the English program offered at the Military Academy and its Preparatory School. Though located separately, the Academy and its Preparatory School are one entity with one primary mission: To provide the Army with academically grounded leaders of character.

Overview:

Plan.

In my original proposal, my plan was to focus primarily on a survey of and interviews with a group of cadets who graduated from the Prep School in June 1996. The narrative report of that study was to be a major portion of the final document. However, the study—while useful in describing the experiences of cadets who had

experienced both Prep School and Academy Composition courses—did not address my most pressing concern: How can I, as the Director of Freshman Composition-Elect, develop a text that will better prepare new MAs in Literature for the teaching of Composition at the Academy? Given that the developing text must also be qualitatively supportable as a dissertation, the task became more formidable: How can I, as the Director of Freshman Composition-Elect and a Doctoral Candidate in English Education, develop a text that will better prepare new MAs in Literature for the teaching of Composition at the Academy **and** meet the academic requirements necessary for awarding of the Ed.D.? These concerns led me to reconsider the form, scope, and tone of the dissertation.

Form

The text now provides:

- An updated look at national trends in Composition theory and practice;
- A brief history of the evolution of the Composition program at the Academy;
- A brief history of the Prep School Composition program;
- A report of my survey of Prep School instructors that considers the most recent changes in the Composition program at that site;
- The report of a case study that I conducted on and with two instructors new to the West Point Department of English;
- A text supplement to the department's New Instructor Training (Appendix A) that contains
 - i) a comprehensive review of literature on theories of teaching Composition (selected based on their appropriateness for the Military Academy and Prep

School programs),

ii) suggestions for the practical application of those theories in our classrooms,

iii) A narrative report of my survey of Academy Composition instructors departing in the summer of 1997; and

iv) an additional reading list.

Other Appendices.

Scope

The resulting text is certainly more comprehensive and far-reaching than originally planned. However, despite my desire to (for lack of a better phrase) “kill two birds with one stone,” I believe that this expanded text will be preferable to that originally planned. It documents, albeit briefly, for the first time in any systematic manner, the historical evolution of the Composition programs at both the Prep School and the Academy, locating them in the context of current Composition theory and practice. Also for the first time, we have narratives that address the experiences of Composition instructors at both institutions that capture their voices and concerns. These narrative reports address the original study questions and more.

And, since the dissertation includes a section designed to introduce new masters in Literature to the teaching of Composition—the text supplement to New Instructor Training—the review of literature also is a different sort of review. The review—the first section of the supplement—begins with an overview of the Composition theorists used by the curriculum planners at the Prep School to align their new program with that of the Academy. It grows into an examination of selected, more

current, theories enhanced by stories from my own personal (as student and teacher) experiences as well as suggestions for practical application in the classroom. The second section of the supplement shares the responses of faculty members who departed the Academy in the summer of 1997. And the third portion of the supplement advances my own views of how current Composition theory can be applied in the West Point classroom via a course plan for an updated EN101.

Tone:

I attempted to create a warm and friendly text—truly a “Welcome to West Point”—for our new instructors of Composition. The tone of the supplement, therefore, is conversational and slightly informal. While the subject matter covered may be technical, especially in the review of literature, I hope I’ve kept the text from becoming stuffy or unnecessarily difficult.

Contents of the Dissertation:

Chapter 1

A brief examination of the various trends in Composition curriculum and theory in United States colleges and universities since the publication of Stephen North’s *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*. This chapter also provides a timeline of the project development, as well as a discussion of my project methods.

Chapter 2

A brief history of the USMA program. This chapter focuses on the evolution of the core writing program through the development of the current course sequence. The chapter also includes a summary of the four core courses offered in the USMA

Department of Arts, Philosophy, and Literature, with emphasis on the two Composition courses.

Chapter 3

The first section of this chapter features a brief history of the origins of the US Military Academy Preparatory School. The second section of Chapter Three examines the circumstances leading up to the restructuring of the Prep School's English program. The final section of Chapter Three considers the current Prep School English program. Set against the backdrop of the previous program, this section follows the evolution of the new program from its 1995 beginning through the first part of Academic Year 1998.

Chapter 4

This chapter reports on my survey of the Prep School English faculty and their responses to the changes made in the curriculum following external review. This chapter also examines the initial responses of the Prep School's English faculty members to the ten major changes that took place during Academic Year 1995-1996.

Chapter 5

At the midpoint of the fall 1997 semester, I surveyed the six new military instructors who had arrived directly from Master's programs in Literature. In the second half of the semester, I worked closely with two of those new instructors, observed their classes, and talked with them about their preparation for class. I also asked them to assess their goals, their activities in support of those goals, and the

level of success at meeting those goals in the classroom. The report of my study of their early development as teachers provides valuable insight into the frustrations—and joys—new instructors experience as they make the transition from student to teacher.

Appendix A: The USMA Composition Instructor Supplemental Text

The supplement has emerged as the most important section of the dissertation. While the dissertation's main chapters concern themselves with examining the English programs at West Point and Fort Monmouth, the supplemental text is a practical bridge to teaching Composition for officers who have completed their masters in Literature. This supplemental text is a living document that will grow and change over the years as we learn more about ourselves as students, teachers, and writers. If implemented as I intend, this supplemental text will provide the means for us to make well-thought-out, incremental, pedagogically sound changes in our programs without lowering standards or rigor. My ultimate intent is that each instructor develop and clearly articulate his (or her) own theories of teaching composition that acknowledge his responsibilities to his students, to the Academy, and to himself and his colleagues.

The first section of the supplement is the annotated bibliography as explained above.

For the second section of the supplement, I surveyed twelve of the instructors departing the Academy's Department of English during the summer of 1997. I asked twenty-one questions in my survey—some with directed responses, some open-ended. I also left one page blank for them to enhance their responses to questions

they felt needed elaboration or to offer comments on other issues they felt were also important. This section provides a complete report on the entire survey. I believe that sharing lessons learned with our incoming instructors will help them avoid—as one departing instructor deeply regretted—“reinventing the wheel” each semester in the classroom.

The third section of the supplement considers what thinking must go into developing a model Freshman Composition course curriculum for the Academy. My next job is to develop the EN101 course at the Academy. I believe that this dissertation is the right place to begin to articulate an approach to planning such a course. The supplement provides me with a means of talking with those who will assist me in final course design.

The last section of the supplement is a list of recommended readings on Composition theory and practice for instructors at the Academy and the Prep School.

Other Appendices

These include a quantitative SAT-V study of the Prep School class of 1996, the informed consent form used for both the cadet and instructor surveys, copies of the surveys, and roll-ups showing the range of responses to the survey.

I: What The Theorists Were Saying When We Were Soldiering On

... The trend of every recent reform in composition-teaching has been toward a responsible freedom for the process of writing—a freedom from laws apparently arbitrary and externally imposed, a responsibility to the law of its own nature as a process of communication. Thus free and thus responsible, composition becomes for the first time a normal act, capable of development practically unlimited. The initial movement has been made toward teaching the student, in any genuine sense of the words, to write.

Gertrude Buck (250)

Composition theorists and practitioners continue the trend that Buck discusses in her 1901 *English Review* article. Ninety-seven years later, we still seek to make writing a “normal act” for our students. We still believe that we can teach them “to write.” Yet, despite years of study and research, we still haven’t identified the best way to teach writing. We know what doesn’t work, but not why some techniques work in some environments but not in others. We haven’t found the perfect answer, and will probably never find such.

In 1901, the United States Military Academy had no formal Composition instruction as we understand it today. Writing instruction, which fell under the auspices of the Department of Modern Languages, consisted in having cadets gain “additional practise in the art of written expression” by translating short French selections “into the best English form” (Annual Report 145). The Academy, it seems, was not attempting to keep up with the “movement” to which Buck alludes.

Stephen North calls his 1987 study of the “movement,” *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, a “book about how knowledge is made in the field that has come to be called Composition” (North 1). He attempts, through a review of what he calls

“methodological communities” (317) of Composition, to help his readers understand the forces at work on the teaching of Composition here in the United States. I won’t pretend to reproduce that study here. I want, however, to use that study—and other later, related studies—as a lens through which to examine how (and whether) the Academy English program used the growing body of theory in the teaching of Composition to inform its practice. Before I begin, though, I believe a discussion of the method of this project is in order.

Method

I wish I could say that I knew when I started this effort in 1995 exactly where I was headed and how I would get there. Unfortunately, as I discovered both to my chagrin and relief, such prior knowledge is neither possible nor advisable. As in any journey of exploration, getting there is only half the fun. It’s the stops, starts, redirections, and occasional missteps that make the trip more enjoyable and—dare I say it?—more edifying. So, there is no little madness to my method. However, there is a constant underlying purpose to my method that informs every aspect of this dissertation. That purpose is to provide instructors in the United States Military Academy’s Department of English a foundation for teaching Composition so that we can give cadets the best instruction possible.

As I took my first toddling steps along this road of exploration, I knew only that I wanted a product that served those whom I teach, the cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point. I show below a timeline that gives general information on the progression of my journey. I will attempt a more complete and coherent explication in the text that follows on the pages beyond.

Study Timeline

1995	
Summer Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began studies at Teachers College, Columbia University
Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decided to focus on the English program at the Preparatory School • Conducted SAT Study, which appears as Appendix I— Changes to the English Curriculum at the US Military Academy Preparatory School: Their Effects on SAT-V Performance • Developed questionnaire addressed to USMAPS instructors; concerned with their response to the changes in the English curriculum • Continued coursework
1996	
Spring Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered questionnaire to USMAPS instructors (by mail); 100% returned their responses • Began to question my focus on the USMAPS program and to take a harder look at the USMA program itself • Wrote results of USMAPS instructor study and submitted as 5500 essay • Continued coursework • Awarded Ed.M.
Summer Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed questionnaire addressed to those 1996 USMAPS graduates identified (by SAT-V) as being 'at risk' • Coordinated with Office of Institutional Research and the Office of the Commandant to administer the questionnaire during the fall semester • Continued coursework • Passed first certification exam • Began work on dissertation proposal: Initial focus on the instructors' and graduates' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the USMAPS revised English program

Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered USMAPS graduate questionnaire; approx. 85% response rate • Developed interview protocols for a select sub-group of the USMAPS graduates; conducted interviews • Continued work on dissertation proposal • Continued coursework
1997 Spring Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully submitted dissertation proposal • Decided to look more closely at the conduct of Composition teaching at the Academy • Developed and administered questionnaire to departing Academy Composition instructors; 100% response rate • Completed coursework
Summer Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted document research at Academy Library and Archives • Passed second certification exam • Completed report on departing instructor questionnaires (Chapter 5)
Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed EN101 classes • Developed and administered questionnaire to incoming Academy Composition instructors; 100% response rate • Conducted three-week case study of two new instructors of Composition • Completed report on incoming instructor questionnaires and case study (Chapter 6) • Continued research on Composition
1998	
Spring Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted draft of dissertation • Continued research

Figure 1-1: Study Timeline

Explanation of the Timeline

When I entered Main Hall to begin my first classes at Teachers College that hot Monday morning in August 1995, I was not sure what to expect. I remember thinking, as I found a spot in an overcrowded classroom with paint peeling off the walls and ceiling and an overworked window air conditioner sputtering away to no avail, "For THIS the Army's paying \$600 a credit hour?" The instructor, an adjunct in the Curriculum and Teaching program, was at least ten years my junior, but probably more like fifteen. Enough members of the class, however, were my age and older that I was able not to dwell on the age disparity. As it happened, the instructor in my English Education course the next day was also a younger man; but the professor who taught my third course was at least twenty years my senior, so it all evened out.

I used that first period of study at TC to get a sense of things—what I could expect of the program; what the program expected of me; where I should place my focus. There were many things that piqued my interest: Literacy politics was the most appealing to me, probably because I remain a social worker at heart. But I wanted something that would serve the Army's interest. The Army was, after all, paying the cost of my tuition; and I would be obligated to remain on the faculty at the Academy for several years after completing my degree. After consulting with Colonel Stromberg, our department chair, I set my sights on examining the English program at the United States Military Academy Preparatory School (the Prep School).

The Prep School was then in the middle of a reorganization prompted by two external assessments of its program. I would, we decided, determine whether or not

the changes undertaken had improved the writing ability of the school's cadet candidates.

With the assistance of the Academy's Office of Institutional Research, I compared the SAT-V scores of the entering and January administrations of the test to the 93-94, 94-95, and 95-96 Prep School Classes. The initial evaluation suggested that, indeed, the changes in curriculum during AY 95-96 had had a real, positive, effect on that year's class. (The two previous classes studied under the old curriculum. The complete report is shown as Appendix I.) However, because the Prep School English Department instituted in one year ten fairly significant changes in the presentation of the curriculum, it was impossible to pinpoint which one(s) made the most difference in the cadet-candidates' SAT-V performance. It's possible, too, that the amount of flexibility and freedom allotted the instructors under the new curriculum rather than any curricular changes was just as responsible for the perceived improvement. The new program increased instructor's classroom flexibility, authority, and responsibility and treated them as teaching professionals. It energized their teaching and motivated them to improve.

I addressed, among other subjects, the instructors' motivation in a questionnaire sent to them at the beginning of the Spring 1996 semester. Their responses to the curricular changes, reported on at some length in Chapters three and four, were generally positive ones. The ability to provide input to the curriculum change process was a key factor for several of them. The questionnaire asked specific questions about each identified change in the English program and allowed both directed and open responses. Some instructors chose simply to answer the

directed responses; others prepared longer responses to several questions, even provided anecdotal evidence to support their positions. As a follow-up to the questionnaire, I traveled to the Prep School, met individually with some of the instructors to discuss their responses, visited classes, and discussed the program with the department head.

As I began to understand the Prep School's program and the intentions behind the changes being made there, I began to question my own motivation for focusing on that program. Am I assuming, I asked myself, that the English program at the Prep School is the source of all the problems in the Academy program and that the Academy's is perfect? That there's no need to interrogate it?

I didn't immediately pursue this question, however, because the Prep School class of 1996—the first to complete the new curriculum—was entering the Academy. During the period of their Cadet Basic Training—six weeks in July and August—I sought the necessary permissions from the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), the Dean's Office, and the Office of the Commandant of Cadets to issue a questionnaire to a designated group of the Prep School cadets and to interview a smaller number of cadets from that group. OIR identified the Prep School cadets who had entered the Academy as verbally 'at risk' based on SAT-V scores. Working through a designated point of contact in the Office of the Commandant, I issued a questionnaire to each of the 'at risk' cadets. (Corps of Cadets policy did not allow me to issue the questionnaires directly.)

With the help of that same point of contact and statisticians in OIR, I identified a smaller group to interview. I administered the questionnaires and

completed the interviews during the cadets' first academic semester, fall 1996. Since that time, I have periodically followed up on the cadets' academic progress—specifically in English and other writing intensive courses like History—via the Dean's records section. I have not contacted any of them since fall 1996, though I plan to do so once they have taken EN302 (the West Point Professional Writing Course) during Academic Year 1998 (AY1998). Interestingly, the failure and dropout rates for this class of Prep School cadets are little different from those of previous Prep School classes. One of the benefits expected by those recommending the change in curriculum was that the failure and dropout rates would be lower. So far, this is not the case. Because this study is still ongoing—the class has not completed the English curriculum and graduates in 2000—I include no report of it in this dissertation.

Finally, in the spring of 1997, spurred on by a course I was taking, College Teaching of English, I began to look more closely at the Academy's Composition program to determine whether our program reflected an understanding of current Composition theory and practice. I recalled my earlier assignment to West Point, from 1984 to 1987, and what I considered the then woeful preparation we Literature types had received before first entering our Composition classrooms. I wondered what had been done since then to better prepare new instructors for their first days and weeks as instructors of Composition. As a first step, I asked for assistance from the Office of the Dean to develop a questionnaire for the large contingent (fourteen) of Composition instructors leaving the department in the summer of 1997. This questionnaire asked them to remember three, in some cases four, years back to their

New Instructor Training (NIT) period and to evaluate that experience. It also asked them to characterize ongoing department training, support they received from senior department personnel, curriculum and texts, and provided space to address any other issue(s) they considered important. In preparing my report on the results of this questionnaire (Supplement Section 2), I tried to silence my voice as much as possible and to let the instructors' voices speak. Nevertheless, as I am both filter and lens, their voices are greatly subject to my control and interpretation.

So, too, are the voices of the two new instructors reported on in Chapter Five. These two instructors, of the group of six newly assigned to the Composition program in the summer of 1997, volunteered to be the subject of a short study I conducted during the last phase of Freshman Composition (EN101) that fall. I had administered a questionnaire to all six of the incoming Composition instructors near the midpoint of their first semester of teaching, asking them, as I had the summer departees, to evaluate their NIT experience, the quality of ongoing training, and so on. I had spent the second third of the semester visiting every EN101 instructor's class at least once, using a protocol developed in conjunction with a point of contact in the Office of the Dean. All told, I visited twenty-nine classes (there were a total of twenty-nine instructors, new and experienced) over a four-week period. I later visited one senior instructor twice, at her invitation; another senior instructor a second time; and one new instructor a second time. I report only on the classes visited during the four-week block, however. I observed the classes, participated when appropriate, and discussed the purpose and conduct of the class with each instructor immediately afterward either orally or via electronic mail. The questionnaire provided an

opportunity for those officers interested to take part in a joint study with me of their teaching during the final phase of EN101. Again, the report of that study is the subject of Chapter five.

The two chapters immediately following this one are concerned with capturing the histories of both the Academy's and the Prep School's Composition programs. I try, specifically with the Academy program, to examine it in light of what was going on in the halls of academe away from West Point. What I discovered is that there was, for a long time, a certain head-in-the-sand mentality that refused to acknowledge or respond to the changing demographics of the entering cadet population. For instance, though Harvard in 1869 inaugurated a curriculum-changing electives program, the Academy did not add electives to its academic program until 1960, and then offered only a limited number. Consider, too, that by 1902, Harvard had had a Freshman Composition program in place for thirty years; but the English program at West Point focused on "[r]hetoric; rules and exercises on composition; study of words and sentences; study of synonyms; history of the English language; history of English literature" (Regulations 1902, 17). Changes to the overall academic program have moved more rapidly since the advent of its elective program, as Academy planners have sought to make the West Point experience more college-like while still preparing cadets for their roles as Army officers.

The final section of this project, Appendix A, grew in response to the nagging sense of frustration with the Composition program at the Academy that hung in the air in the fall of 1997. Several instructors, knowing that I am to be course director for EN101 beginning fall 1998, came to me at different times to express their concerns

about the course. So, to jumpstart my own thinking about developing a new Academy curriculum, I used, simply as a starting point, the texts that the instructors at the Prep School had consulted while developing their new curriculum. The texts were, on the whole, older ones, but since the curriculum had remained unchanged for more than twenty years, they were a step in the right direction. In addition to that reading, I sought to read more and more widely from texts on curriculum development, Composition theory, and classroom practice. I was seeking, ultimately, a point of entry that would help me introduce theory into a discussion of classroom practice that I could give to Composition instructors both at the Academy and the Prep School.

That point of entry proved to be reflective practice, examined in greatest detail by George Hillocks, but certainly the focus of numerous books and articles I found in my search. Throughout the text, I will bring the focus of my examination back to the point of entry, to the theory that our practice as teachers must be rooted in what teacher-educator Ruth Vinz calls “Teaching Mindfully.”

“Futures” Revisited

In the next few pages, I provide a brief overview of what has happened in the Composition community since the publication of North’s *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*. I want to call this an extension of North’s twelfth chapter, “Futures,” in which he projects the future of Composition based on the “twenty years of its modern history” examined in his book.

North begins “Futures” with an observation that the field’s public display of unity might begin to fracture. The rift between the pro-Researchers and the pro-

Scholars is already apparent, he says, but adds that “even further division along methodological lines” (363) is possible. The pro-Researchers are those who, in studying Composition, have “adopted modes of inquiry geared to lead them to more ‘scientific’ knowledge” (135) and those who support them. The pro-Scholars group was “trained in the traditions and methods of Western humanist thought . . . [and] produce new kinds of knowledge about how writing is done, taught, and learned” according to that training (59).

As each group competes in the high stakes game for “power, prestige, professional recognition and advancement” (363), the Composition community loses its reasons for cohesion. North predicts that Composition will, like linguistics, be “unable to sustain an autonomous academic existence,” each constituent community “absorbed by some other field with a compatible methodology” (365). North envisions a continuing dissolution of the Composition community, such that finally, “the remaining Composition Scholars will try to increase their distance from practice” (367), because such practice implies service, not knowledge-making. Pessimistically, North predicts “that either (a) Composition as we know it will essentially disappear . . . ; or that (b) it might survive, but probably only by breaking its institutional ties with literary studies and, hence, English departments” (373).

In the years since 1987, neither of North’s predictions has come true. Composition studies have flourished. It has remained, at most colleges and universities, linked with literary studies in English departments, though often treated like a highly-resented stepchild. The Modern Language Association, which for many years ignored Composition study completely, includes in its 1997 *Profession* two

Practitioner articles specifically addressing student writing. Articles and book-length histories of Composition's early years show continuing interest in the study of its developments in theory, curriculum, and practice. David Russell's 1991 work, *Writing in the Academic Disciplines, 1870-1990: A Curricular History*, illustrates that the movement now called "Writing Across the Curriculum," which began to be widely espoused in the 1970s, has a very long history prior to that time. *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875-1925*, edited by John Brereton (1995) makes available many of the documents—courses of instruction, textbooks, letters, speeches, reports, essays—that started the legions of Compositionists down the road which we now journey. Other works—Sue Carter Simmons's "Constructing Writers: Barrett Wendell's Pedagogy at Harvard" (1995); *A Short History of Writing Instruction*, edited by James Murphy (1990); Albert Kitzhaber's 1990 *Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900*, and many others—suggest that the study of Composition's past continues to be important within the community.

Since 1987, it seems, the voice of Practitioners is being heard more widely and taken more seriously, a change that North indicated was necessary for the discipline to grow. Leo Ruth and Sandra Murphy, in their 1988 *Designing Writing Tasks for the Assessment of Writing*, argue for "elevating the status of practical knowledge" (18) and ground their study in practice leading to theory, rather than theory leading to practice. Teachers, they say, represent a "well" of reflective knowledge that "deserves to be as honored and valued in academia as knowledge based in research" (37). Lad Tobin, in his 1993 *Writing Relationships*, attempts to demonstrate how interpersonal relations (teacher-student, student-student, teacher-

teacher) affect curricular decisions, classroom behaviors, student writing, teacher response, and so on. Tobin's intent is to force us to stop looking for the ideal classroom and to start looking at the real ones, the ones we must enter each day.

Cathy Fleischer's 1995 book, *Composing Teacher-Research: A Prosaic History*, posits that Practitioners—teachers—should be involved in the “necessarily messy and sometimes confusing” arena of teacher research because it “is the most powerful means [she] know[s] of enabling” teachers’ commitments “to improving [their] teaching practice and to benefiting [their] students’ learning” (245). Another 1995 book, Patricia L. Stock's *The Dialogic Curriculum: Teaching and Learning in a Multicultural Society*, shows a group of teacher-researchers conducting a two-pronged study of their students’ learning and of their own teaching. Stock says that teacher-research goes largely unrecognized because “teachers customarily conduct and report research in anecdotal forms.” Teachers find that “abstract theoretical statements . . . are not representative of teaching and learning” (98). She reminds educators that “teachers’ stories have significant place and purpose in the body of knowledge that informs the work of the profession” (102).

Another significant influence informing the work of the profession is the greater attendance to social issues—cultural diversity, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual preference—and their effect on the Composition curriculum. 1992's *Social Issues in the English Classroom*, edited by Mark Hurlbert and Samuel Totten, asserts that the English classroom “is a good place for students and teachers to explore . . . in cooperative and socially responsible ways, the issues and conditions affecting this time and the public lives we lead in it (2). The explosive national

discussion over the use of Ebonics in the English classroom is an example of but one of the many diversity issues that will continue to challenge those who study the teaching of Composition. Those who cannot communicate in standard American English suffer educationally and economically in our society; but to deny a cultural group its language is to deny its humanity. Twenty-first century Composition scholarship may help resolve the issue. Also in 1992, Nancy Mellin McCracken and Bruce E. Appleby edited *Gender Issues in the Teaching of English*. The book grew out of their discovery that they had separately reached the conclusion that “women and men have been harmed by the expectations and limitations of gender as traditionally defined” (viii), and that the way we teach English can help to alleviate that harm. In her own essay, “Gender Issues and the Teaching of Writing,” McCracken says that we as writing teachers must become more receptive of women’s and non-western modes of thinking and writing, that we must understand how traditional insistence on “[l]inear, Aristotelian rationality” has excluded other, equally legitimate, modes of thinking and knowing (122).

John E. Bassett suggests that many of these changes stem from a redirection of the discipline in three interrelated ways.

One is the emergence of writing and composition as a significant area of research separate from literary study. The second is the expansion of the landscape of literary study to include more writings by women and minorities, more writings once considered nonliterary, and more multicultural dimensions of artistic expression and achievement. The third is the explosion of interest in theory, which has been the key to the movement of literary study toward the social sciences. (321)

This would seem to suggest that North’s prediction that Composition would survive only by separating itself from literary studies was incorrect. It suggests, in

fact, that literary studies, to survive, is following Composition's lead by becoming more open to embracing other ways of knowing and learning.

The relentless expansion of the World Wide Web and the growing availability of computers in classrooms have helped to change the face of Composition as well. Cynthia Selfe has been involved since the early 1980s in exploring how the advent of the computer age has affected the ways teachers teach and students learn to write. Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Cynthia L. Parris, and Jessica L. Kahn published their 1991 *Learning to Write Differently: Beginning Writers and Word Processing* as a synthesis of then-current research on learning to teach writing with computers and learning to write with computers. Their study showed that teaching and learning changed as the writing classroom moved from one using pen and paper to one using word processors.

Perhaps one significant reason for Composition's not succumbing to North's predictions is that "[o]ur national preoccupation with literacy [holds reading and writing as] central to the successful operation of our democracy" (North 375).

Richard Lloyd-Jones, in "What We May Become," expands on North's notion:

Writing is valued. The periodic views-with-alarm in the newspapers would not exist if we were not considered important. Political people would not forever be urging tests or demanding better performance if they did not think the electorate cared. Employers would not list writing as one of the top two or three most needed job skills if they weren't willing to buy our best graduates. Our colleagues in other departments would not spend so much time accusing us of malfeasance if they didn't think it was essential that students master writing. (204)

The Internet, a concerned public, social issues, increased acceptance of teacher research: All are working together against the bleak future North envisioned

for Composition. The face of Composition is changing, yes; but it is not in danger of disappearing, not just yet.

The changing face of Composition went largely unnoticed at the United States Military Academy and its Preparatory School for decades as the following chapters show. The next chapter traces the evolution of the English Department at West Point. Its Composition program finally entered what North calls Composition's modern period in the mid-1980s under the leadership of Colonel Pat C. Hoy. When we place the program in the context of the Academy's own development, I believe it is easy to understand why the program was so long in getting to currency.

II: The United States Military Academy's English Program: A Brief History and Summary of Recent Changes

*Young men entering military life should
be actuated by the highest motives that govern humanity,
and learn to fear dishonor more than death.*

From the June 1878
Examination in English Grammar,
USMA

West Point's Earliest Years

By 1780, the garrison at West Point—which Benedict Arnold was then commanding as an officer in the Continental Army—was home to an engineer school, the first government library in the United States, and a garrison of 3000 soldiers (Holden 205). The location had long been considered a strategically important one and, had Arnold's scheme to surrender West Point to the British in September 1780 been successful, the tactical and psychological devastation rendered the struggling Colonial Army might have turned the war to Britain's favor. His and his fellow traitors' failed attempt to wrest, via subterfuge rather than direct military action, the West Point garrison from the Colonists perhaps reinforced even more the importance of that majestic rise on the Hudson (Reeve 171-191). Arnold's scheme, had it been successful, would have handed the British one of the most strategically prized military sites in the fledgling nation.

Before and after the pivotal 1780, senior military men called for the establishment of a military academy. Colonel Henry Knox, in 1776, proposed an academy like Britain's Woolwich, “where the whole theory and practice of Fortifications and Gunnery should be taught” (Holden 202). Brigadier General du

Portail agreed, calling the academy's establishment "too obvious to be insisted on" (Holden 207); but worries about costs delayed establishment of the academy. On March 16, 1802, after long delays and much debate, Congress authorized establishment of a military academy (consisting of one major, two each captains and lieutenants, and ten cadets) at West Point. President Thomas Jefferson signed the bill that same day. The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, went into official operation on July 4, 1802.

The Military Academy's Development Period

From 1802 to 1906, the teaching of English was farmed out to various departments—Belles Lettres; Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy; Geography, History, and Ethics; Modern Languages—if it was taught at all. (Which it was NOT from 1867 to 1877 (Tozeski 18).) Even when English was taught during the period, it was never valued highly. As the graph of the relative weights assigned each First Class (senior) course of study shows (next page), French and Drawing were each weighted twice as much as English; and Engineering and Mathematics each carried six times the weight of English in the Cadet Academic program (Tillman 232).

Information on admission requirements during the Academy's first ten years is sketchy, but from 1812 to 1866, candidates were required to be "well versed in reading, writing, and arithmetic" (Tillman 228). By 1867, candidates were expected to have "a knowledge of English grammar, United States history, and geography" (Tillman 228). During the period following the Civil War, the Academy—for unexplained reasons—decided to forgo formal English courses for a time, trusting that the cadets admitted had already received enough such education.

Formal admission examinations apparently began in 1818 and, until 1870, all such examinations were oral exams given at West Point. Even after written examinations began to be administered, candidates had to come to West Point to take them until that practice ended in 1892 (Tillman 229). (Imagine yourself an enthusiastic candidate from the western shores of the United States having come eagerly to West Point to take your examination, only to fail and have to make that long, arduous trip back home. The disappointment such young men experienced must have been immeasurable.)

	1820	1840	1860	1880	1900
Engineering	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Natural Philosophy	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Mathematics	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
Drawing	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
French	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Chemistry		} 2.0	1.5	1.5	} 2.0
Mineralogy and geology			1.0	.75	
Tactics: Infantry	} 1.0	1.5		} 1.0	} 1.0
Artillery		1.5			
Cavalry					
Conduct	1.0			2.0	1.0
English: Ethics			.50		
Geography	} 1.0		} .50		
History					1.0
English		} 2.0	} .50		} .50
Rhetoric					
Ethics*			} 1.50		
Law				1.50	1.50
Logic			1.0		
Grammar			1.0		
Ordnance			1.0	} 1.0	} 1.50
Gunnery					
Spanish			1.0	.75	.85
Practical engineering					.45
Military efficiency					1.30
Military deportment					.20

*As shown in original table; no explanation given for split of Ethics grade

Figure 2-1--Relative Grade Weights, 1896

Though apparently valued less highly than other academic subjects in the nineteenth century Academy curriculum, the study of English was treated as strictly

as other courses. Colonel Tillman—himself an 1869 graduate of the Academy (and who would have studied English during his Fourth- and Third-class years before English was dropped from the curriculum) explains an English “recitation” thusly:

In English studies as many members of the sections are assigned subjects for recitation at the blackboard as the size of the section will permit, reserving one member, and sometimes two, for questions on the lesson of the day or on the lesson of the preceding day. Each Cadet, when his name is called, takes his place in the center of the room facing the instructor, and standing at attention receives his enunciation. He then goes to the particular blackboard assigned to him by the order in which his name was called to receive an enunciation or subject of recitation, the first Cadet called taking the first blackboard to the right of the instructor on the side of the room opposite the latter, the others following in consecutive order from right to left. Immediately upon arriving at his proper blackboard the Cadet writes his name in the upper right-hand corner and under his name the number indicating the order in which he received his enunciation. He then proceeds to put upon the blackboard the work called for by his subject. He is not permitted to write out the subject-matter of his recitation, but is required to write the different heads thereof in the form of a synopsis showing their relation to one another, and is required to make the explanation orally. At each recitation one member of the section is required to write a synopsis of the day and another member to write a synopsis of the lesson of the preceding day. When the Cadet is ready for recitation he indicates it by taking the pointer in his hand and standing at the blackboard facing the instructor. Until the first Cadet is called upon to recite at the blackboard the time has been occupied in questioning those members of the section who were not sent to the blackboard.

When a Cadet at the blackboard is called upon to recite, he first gives from memory the enunciation of his subject in the exact words in which he received it, and then proceeds to explain and illustrate the subject by the knowledge of it that he has obtained by his own study. If his recitation be entirely satisfactory in every respect, he is then told that it is sufficient, and takes his seat. If not so, the instructor then goes over the subject until, by explanation and question, the Cadet understands it.

The work upon the blackboard, including the Cadet's name and number, is required to be written neatly and spelled and punctuated correctly. In the case of illustrative examples and exercises for correction, the whole work, of course, is put upon the blackboard.

(337-338)

The “Father of West Point” Takes Charge

This method, then and now called the “Thayer Method” in honor of Sylvanus Thayer, the “Father of West Point” who served as Academy superintendent from 1817 to 1833, was adapted for use in all academic subjects and continues to be used in some departments even today. (Just yell “Take boards!” at a current or former member of the Corps and watch what happens.)

Sylvanus Thayer’s contribution to education, both academic and military, remains worthy of comment. During the two years prior to his assumption of command at West Point, Thayer traveled through Europe, studying the various military schools and finding the French Ecole Polytechnique most to his liking. (Founded in 1794, the Ecole Polytechnique was the world’s first technical college. France’s revolutionary government founded it to provide training for scientists with special emphasis on mathematics and applied science. (From *The People's Chronology*, licensed from Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright © 1994 by James Trager. All rights reserved.)

When he came to West Point in 1817, Thayer followed the French lead in reorganizing the Academy. In organizing the cadets into a battalion of two companies under cadet officers and appointing an Army officer as Commandant of Cadets—responsible for tactical instruction and discipline—Thayer imposed an order on the Military Academy that had been sorely lacking since its founding in 1802. Thayer also reorganized the faculty, appointing an Academic Board that would establish academic requirements and review cadet performance; and began a system of classifying cadets according to scholastic standing; he also included English

studies under the Department of French (McMaster 14). The structure that Thayer laid out during his tenure remains at the heart of today's Academy structure.

Finally, A Separate Department of English

The Academic Board separated English and French and established the provisional Department of English and History in 1908, which was made a permanent department in 1910. Finally, in 1926, a separate Department of English was established with Colonel Clayton E. Wheat as its first professor and head. Fourth- and Third-Class cadets (freshmen and sophomores) studied "the use of plain English in writing, . . . good English in speech and a survey course in 19th-century literature" (Tozeski 18).

From 1802 until 1952, when the Corps of Cadets studied English, every cadet took the same course of study as every other cadet in his class. In 1820, for instance, every Plebe (freshman) studied English grammar and composition while every Firstie (senior) took a review of English grammar. In 1857, every Yearling (sophomore) took a course in Literature. In 1931, Plebes and Yearlings studied Composition and Literature, alternating classes with French and Drawing (*Regulations Calendar Years 1820, 1857, 1931*). By 1950, all Plebes took composition and public speaking; all Yearlings took literature; and all Firsties took a course in advanced exposition and literature (Alspach 165). Historically, the Academy used what it termed "merit sectioning" in order to give additional attention to below-average cadets. Merit sectioning worked like this: Plebes were randomly sectioned into classes at the beginning of the academic year. At the end of the first month of classes, they were resectioned into classes based on their standing within each course. Instructors, too,

were reassigned to new sections. (It was possible, for a Plebe who was doing well in English but poorly in Math to be assigned to a top section in English and a bottom section of Math.) This resectioning occurred several times through the year and “enable[d] the instructors to suit the pace of their teaching to the level of their students”(Ashley 37). The perceived disadvantage, however, was that though cadets in the lower sections received extra help in composition or literature or public speaking, there was no additional challenge for cadets in the upper sections.

So, in spring 1953, the English Department embarked upon a stratagem meant to academically challenge every cadet taking Freshman English. The course would remain the same for cadets in the lower sections, but the upper three sections (then, Ashley explains, a “section” was about sixty cadets subdivided into groups of fifteen) would receive a “series of extra assignments in modern literature” (Ashley 37). Still responsible for the basic course assignments, upper section cadets received additional assignments:

The syllabus for the 1952-1953 spring term shows more clearly how this plan worked out. During the four class hours devoted to the study of logic and the sixteen hours devoted to public speaking, all sections had the same assignments. But in those class periods when the lower sections were receiving detailed instruction on such matters as the feature article, the factual report, the book review, and the use of the library, the upper sections were reading and discussing such modern stories as “The Apple Tree,” “The Red Pony,” “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” and “Haircut”; such modern plays as “Winterset,” “The Emperor Jones,” “The Glass Menagerie,” and “The Little Foxes”; and such nineteenth and twentieth-century poets as Kipling, Masfield, Robinson, Burns, Shelley, Keats, Whitman, Sandburg, Tennyson, Browning, Frost, Dickinson, Jeffers, and Eliot. While the lower sections were spending eight lessons on *John Brown's Body*, the upper sections spent only five, devoting the extra three lessons to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Finally, while the lower sections were devoting four class periods to the four parts of the final examination, the upper sections were reading and discussing Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*.

The enrollment in the upper three sections at the start of the term depended on the class standings at the end of the first-semester course. But if a cadet did not maintain his relative class standing, he might, at one of the periodic resectionings, slide out of the special course into the regular sections below. Conversely, an equal number of cadets might work their way up the ladder into the special course. (Ashley 38)

Over the next few academic years, the special course evolved based on input from instructors and cadets alike: It began in the fall term with the mid-November resectioning, instead of being delayed until the spring term; it dropped the study of modern poetry and added Shakespeare and other "classic" literature; it allowed upper-section cadets to write on themes of their own choosing, rather than follow the basic course theme requirements. By academic year 1956, Plebes who did well in the upper sections were even exempt from taking the English term-end exams (then called Written General Reviews) (*English Courses*, 1955-56, 1). I have found nothing to indicate what was done to aid the development of cadets in the lower sections.

Of course, the Plebe courses were not the only English courses in the core curriculum. In Academic Year 1956 (AY1956), while the Plebe course was as outlined above, the Yearlings studied how literature informs about and responds to "the continuing problems of humanity"; and Firsties studied literature and speeches concerned with man's relationship to society, to the state, to the future, and to God (*English Courses*, 1955-56; 1). By AY1958, the Yearlings had begun to study many of the same issues as the Firsties, but no longer did either course deal directly with the study of man and his relationship to God (Department of English 3-5). Despite the "special course" offered to enrich the advanced Plebes, cadets in all classes studied

the same core curriculum across all academic subjects. But in 1960, Brigadier General William W. Bessell, Dean of the Academic Board, called for changes in the entire cadet curriculum.

The Academy Begins Its Electives Program

“Requirements for our graduates are very different today from those of earlier years,” Bessell wrote (“Proposed” 14). He cited a 1956 requirements review that had “caused [the Academic Board] to wonder” (“Proposed” 14) what the Academy could do to provide cadets with the skills they would need in a more modern, more technological Army, and also give them the needed background in humanities and social sciences. They wanted a curriculum “more flexible and more challenging” than the then current curriculum, but they did not want to sacrifice the emphasis on “basic military virtues: a high sense of duty, strong character marked by unquestioned integrity, a keen sense of discipline, and a strong motivation toward a lifetime of service” (“Proposed 14). They embarked upon a plan that “provide[d] for a system of validation for advanced placement, for acceleration within and across department lines, and for a program of free electives” (“Proposed” 14).

They ended up with, essentially, two academic programs, a Standard Academic Program and an Advanced Studies Program:

The Standard Academic Program added two First Class electives to the regular core curriculum. Each Firstie was required to take one elective during each of his last two academic semesters. During the start-up year of the new curriculum, Firsties could choose from among sixteen total electives. The Department of English offered two of them. The first, “Contemporary Literature,” covered “Major American

and British writers from 1900 to the present” (Bessell “Evolution” 15). The second course, “The Novel,” examined “national traits and attitudes as depicted by major writers in their respective countries” (“Evolution” 15). In the second year of transition to the new program, a Shakespeare course was added that provided a “representative selection of his work” (“Evolution” 15). By the second year of the program, the academy offered a total of thirty elective courses.

The Advanced Studies Program offered expanded opportunities for cadets to take more advanced or accelerated versions of standard courses. In order to take those courses, cadets had to demonstrate mastery of the standard course requirements. The advanced courses, Bessell explained, “normally cover the ground of a standard course but are more sophisticated and cover the subjects in greater depth and breadth” (“Evolution” 16). The Advanced Studies Program also offered a limited number of Honors courses. The Honors courses “emphasized independent work, reading, study, and investigation” (“Evolution” 16”) Bessell reported, and were offered only to exceptional students.

The English Department offered, in lieu of the five credit Plebe course in English Composition, two 2.5-credit courses on the “Evolution of American Ideals” (“Evolution” 18). The first course covered the period from 1607 to 1860; the second, from 1860-1961. Instead of the standard Yearling course in Comparative Literature, students in Advanced Studies studied nineteenth century British Literature. Though there was no special Advanced Studies substitute for the First Class Literature and Advanced Exposition Course, students in Advanced Studies could choose from the courses offered in the elective program or an individualized Honors program of study.

By Academic Year 1967-1968, the number of English Department electives had expanded to include not only courses on the novel and Shakespeare, but also introductions to music and the fine arts. Other elective courses studied contemporary British, American, and European writers; eighteenth and nineteenth century American thinkers; nineteenth century American literature, in survey; and modern American criticism (English Courses 1967-68, 28-29).

In the next academic year, the United States Military Academy took what we might, from our 1998 vantage point, call the inevitable next step: It began requiring cadets to select a chosen area of concentration. Depending on that chosen concentration, cadets were now required to select a minimum of six to eight elective courses. English department electives were generally geared to be supplementary courses for political science, American history, or European languages and literature. Cadets taking the department's electives also could obtain the equivalent of a major in English and American literature or American Studies (though, at that time, "majors" were not identified).

Through the 1970s and early 1980s, the English department's offerings remained much the same, though the mix of elective offerings occasionally varied, based on instructor availability and interest. In Academic Year 1982-1983, Philosophy was added as a Humanities field of study, necessitating an expansion in electives offered by the English department, which remains responsible for instruction in philosophy.

Today's English Program

Today, in addition to the core courses which all cadets take, we offer either a major or field of study in Arts, Philosophy, and Literature (APL—affectionately

called “Apple”). We no longer offer Advanced Studies courses, but cadets may take exams in the semester prior to their taking a particular core course which—if successfully completed—may allow them to validate and, thereby, avoid taking said course. This is true in all departments. New cadets take validation exams for core courses at specified times during their first summer at West Point. Each year, approximately thirty Plebes validate EN101 (Freshman Composition) and study EN102 (Introduction to Literature) during the fall semester.

The APL program, introduced in Academic Year 1996-1997, is the brainchild of current English department head, Colonel Peter Stromberg. Cadets choosing APL as a field of study must choose eight of the courses listed below, supplemented by at least one elective course from outside the department, plus the mandatory EP (English/Philosophy, but we promote it as “Educated Persons”) 333 and EP485. Cadets choosing APL as a major have the same basic choices, plus the additional requirement of EP486. The department offers eight of the possible electives each semester: Cultural Studies, Logical Reasoning, the Senior Seminar, and five others each fall semester; the Senior Thesis and seven other courses are offered each spring.

Course Number	Title
EP333	Cultural Studies
EP359	Logical Reasoning
EP361	Masterpieces Before Giotto
EP362	Aesthetics
EP363	Political Philosophy
EP364	Medical Ethics
EP365	Ethics of the Military Profession
EP366	Philosophy of Mind and Artificial Intelligence
EP367	Dramas
EP368	Modern Philosophy
EP369	Contemporary Creativity
EP370	Short Fictions
EP372	The British Tradition

EP374	The Arts of War
EP381	Philosophy of Religion
EP382	Giotto and Beyond
EP383	Reality and Knowledge
EP384	Environmental Ethics
EP385	Novels
EP386	Philosophy of Science and Mathematics
EP387	Epics
EP388	Ancient Philosophers
EP389	The American Canon
EP390	Poems
EP392	Ethnic Literature
EP394	Shakespeare
EP485	Senior Seminar
EP486	Senior Thesis

Figure 2-2--The "Educated Persons" Curriculum

The class of 1998 will be the first class of cadets to graduate from the new program.

The Core Courses

EN101—Freshman Composition

In the eighties, when Colonel Pat C. Hoy directed EN101, the course emphasis was on 'personal voice.' Cadets wrote a series of personal essays, many of which were extremely revealing of the most intimate details of their family lives. The prose they wrote was often brilliantly compelling, but when spring semester began, and cadets had to write about literature in EN102, their writing often became wooden and pedantic, listless and uninspired. Since Colonel Hoy's departure, EN101 directors have struggled to make the course one which meets the clear need that cadets have to express themselves as individuals, but that helps them to develop the skills they will require in other courses and venues.

Syllabi for every year since he departed are not, unfortunately, on file, so there are gaps in what I was able to locate about this and the other core courses. The EN101 syllabus for Academic Year 1992-1993 shows that the course still included as

phase one "The Reflective Personal Essay." Later phases were "The Enriched Exploratory Essay," "The Inquiry Paper," "The Analytic Essay," and "The Short Research Essay." The following year, the course focused almost entirely on teaching cadets to write argumentative essays. During each of those years, instructors taught grammar directly, without tying the teaching of grammar to actual student writing. Students also had to memorize words from four spelling lists. Grammar and spelling quizzes were regular parts of the curriculum.

During the next three years, EN101 put less emphasis on direct testing of grammar and spelling; the course director expected instructors to help cadets overcome individual weaknesses and error patterns. The most recent iteration of EN101 takes cadets from personal narrative to argument, in a course reminiscent of that offered in 1992. There is in this course, however, a greater focus on revision, with no mandated grammar or spelling instruction or examination (though instructors are again expected to address cadet problems and weaknesses as they encounter them).

Despite the changes that EN101 has made over the years it must, I believe, continue to evolve. This constant evolution often frustrates instructors, but the growth and development are necessary if we are to continue to meet the needs of each new group of Plebes. Next year's course will take the lessons learned from this year's course, retain those elements that worked well, and retool those that were less useful. I have observed every EN101 instructor in the classroom this year, a luxury not always available to the course director. In my talks with the instructors afterward, I have often been pleased with the quality of their reflections on their classroom roles.

Nevertheless, many of them look at each lesson as a discrete portion of the curriculum, and do not consider how to draw connections between a given lesson and the complete course. Establishing a program like those at the University of Central Florida and at Pittsburgh—programs that begin before the academic year to help instructors understand the Composition courses and their roles in teaching the courses and continue through the academic year with teaching seminars and one-to-one mentoring—might provide a sensible, workable solution to the problem.

I think that it's important for us to understand the recent history of the course and to use it as a way of understanding whence we have come and where we have yet to go. The record isn't clear about the EN101 course prior to the 1980s. Much of what we have on record shows that the Composition program was decades behind those in other colleges around the country. During Pat Hoy's leadership, though, EN101 moved forcefully into the modern period of Composition. (Hoy currently is director of the Writing Program at New York University.) Even with the gaps in information about the program in the period following his departure, it's apparent that even while retreating from the Personal Essay, the EN101 program directors have kept current with Composition theory and practice. There is so much to choose from, however, that the course has seemed not to evolve, but to move in different directions each year.

EN102—Literature

By 1989, the senior members of the Department of English determined that, given the crowded core curriculum and the Plebes' demonstrated inability to manage the reading-heavy load of EN102, the course would have to change dramatically.

Colonel Terence Freeman, the course director at the time, began moving the course from one that concentrated on the novel and short story to one that focuses only on poetry. Colonel Freeman believed that “by focusing only on poetry, the course could retrieve time by eliminating the hunt for language, by dropping cadets directly into language ‘when it is hard at work’” (44). The course affords cadets the opportunity to encounter at least four poems by each of four contemporary poets selected by the course director each year. This academic year (AY1998), for instance, they will read and write about poems by Mark Irwin, Pattiann Rogers, Carol Frost, and Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky. Each poet will visit West Point and will hold at least two readings for EN102 students. At least 300 cadets attend each reading prepared, in Colonel Freeman’s words, to ask “questions about the poetic mind and the nature of poetic language” (45).

In addition to reading modern poetry and talking with various poets, cadets also memorize passages from a Shakespeare play that they read during one phase of the course. The intent behind having cadets memorize and transcribe these passages is to “sensitiz[e] cadets to the beauty and power of poetic language [in the hope that it] will ennoble and enrich their leadership in a profession that must involve saving lives more than it does taking them” (Freeman 46).

Certainly, the poets who have visited here over the years have been impressed with the Academy’s officers and cadets. Jane Hirshfield, during her visit, discovered elective classes that were “broad-minded, thoughtful, and marked by genuine inquiry and self-examination” (Hirshfield). Carol Muske expected a clash between “Army and Poetry” and found among the instructors many of like minds and sensibilities,

with a “desire for both substance (as in the immortal stuff of poetry) and spiritual fulfillment” (35). Their words, and similar ones from previous visitors, like Jorie Graham and Charles Wright, Adrian Louis and David St. John, Charles Simic and Lucille Clifton, have in many ways blinded us to some of the limitations of EN102, however.

Perhaps the greatest of these limitations is not—despite cadet protests—the memorization of passages from *King Lear* or *Macbeth* or *Henry V* or other Shakespeare plays. Rather, it is the lack of development in the approach to reading and responding to the poems read in the course. For each poem the class reads—eighteen this year—each instructor prepares a question and sample essay in response to that question. This preparation takes place during the fall term, so the instructors know the poems and the course well by the time the spring semester begins. However, from the first poem to the eighteenth, the form of the question and response remain the same: The question summarizes what the instructor believes is the poem’s theme, focuses on a particular word or pair of words (called a “word bite” in the course instructor packet). The cadet essays in response to the question must assume that the instructor’s interpretation is the correct one and must “establish effective and well-supported connections between [the] assigned language and [the] stated theme” (AY 1997-98 Note to EN102 Instructors 6). Not until the final two poems, when the cadets develop their own questions, are the cadets invited to explicate the poetry for themselves.

This course is dependent upon a view of teaching that few outside the Academy would endorse or condone. It is a highly-structured, top-down, “teacher-

course director, we expect cadets to:

- Understand the fundamental branches and objects of philosophic inquiry;
- Identify the main argument in philosophic texts;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments;
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of major ethical theories;
- Exhibit a sure sense of the ethical implications of commissioned service in war; and
- Identify and explore ethical issues in properly formed argumentative essays leading to reasoned conclusions and meeting department writing standards. (PY201 Syllabus, AY1997-98)

The course texts include an Army Field Manual, *The Law of Land Warfare*; Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*; Michael Morgan's *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*; and a department-developed supplement, *Essential Ideas in Ethics*.

The approach to teaching PY201 varies from instructor to instructor. Though instructors must use the same course texts, each is free to develop his or her own syllabus to meet the course requirements. Each military officer who teaches PY201 has at least a masters in Philosophy; civilian faculty have doctoral degrees.

PY201 reinforces the education cadets receive through Company Honor Education Teams and other cadet-led informal courses on honor, military ethics, and respect for others. As I am not a philosopher myself, I can't comment on the course or its quality. Cadet response to it varies, probably because their individual experiences—before and during the course—vary so widely. Academy planners consider the course important as a foundation, however, saying that it gives cadets the tools to think about the values which the Academy espouses: Duty, Honor, Country.

EN302—Advanced Composition

EN302 is the course that cadets love to hate. Inaugurated in 1988, the course is a must-pass one for graduation. Cows (juniors) who fail the course once may take

proofed” course that affords instructors little time for personal reflection on or, even, input to the course. And, in an effort to develop a course for which cadets will have ample preparation time, we have created a course that in many ways discourages cadets from reading or thinking about poetry in their own terms. A few cadets have even confided to me that they wrote their best EN102 essays when they looked only at the question and the word bite they were to consider. If they read the poem at all, it was only after having written the essay. That way, they explained, their own ideas about the poem wouldn’t interfere with their ability to respond to the theme the instructor had identified for them. Many of them actually enjoyed memorizing passages from Shakespeare, though not so much the transcription of those passages. Still, Shakespeare provided them a welcome diversion from modern poetry.

As EN102 continues to evolve, I suspect that it will become a more worthwhile course. This year is the first in which cadets will actually explicate poems, though only the final two. And this year is the first in which they will study a complete Shakespeare play; in previous years, they had memorized passages taken out of context, passages chosen for their applicability to military and social ideals (Macbeth on death; Falstaff on honor, and so on). The potential for this course is great. I am eager to see it develop into a course that truly engages students in literature—exploring it, analyzing it, enjoying it.

PY201—Introduction to Philosophy

Cadets in their Yearling (sophomore) year take PY201, the department’s third core course. This course is offered during both semesters, allowing half of the class to take it during each semester. According to the course goals, developed by the

it again during the next semester that it's offered. If, however, they fail EN302 a second time, dismissal from the Academy is nearly automatic. In its first year, Firsties (seniors) took the course. The failure rate was so high that many Firsties found their graduation date (and wedding plans for many, because they had planned weddings for the days just following graduation; if they couldn't graduate, they couldn't get married because cadets cannot, by law, have spouses) delayed while they retook the course. Some disgruntled Firstie even threw a note, wrapped around a large rock, through a window of Lincoln Hall, where the English Department has its offices. (Rumor has it that the note read, in part, "We be mad . . .") Because the course adversely affected so many Firsties, and without regard for the incident with the rock, the course was immediately retooled and offered during Cow (junior) year, where it has remained since.

The course asks cadets to "read critically and communicate effectively, especially in writing that embodies precise language, correct sentences, and concise, coherent paragraphs" (EN302 Syllabus, AY1997-98). Cadets read folklore, myths, legends, and canonical literature in which they "can identify and discuss the complexities, moral dilemmas, and tensions that can exist between civilian and military leaders and within those leaders trying to fill both roles" (EN302 Syllabus, AY1997-98). The course culminates in the West Point Professional Writing Exam (WPPWE—pronounced, not without irony, "Whip We"), given at lesson 35 in the 40-lesson sequence. Those who pass the WPPWE pass the course at that time and are excused from further class attendance. The twenty-five percent or so who fail the WPPWE, however, return to the classroom for additional instruction and take a

second WPPWE during term-end examination week. Ninety percent of this group usually passes during the term-end exam period.

The best thing about EN302 is the WPPWE grading itself. The course makes good use of current theory on the usefulness and reliability of holistic scoring. Officers and senior civilians from all areas of West Point—doctors and nurses, lawyers, academics, commanders, chaplains—gather to read and evaluate the cadets' essays. After a detailed and fairly lengthy training session, graders read and assign GO or NO GO grades to each paper. Five graders read each cadet paper, identified only by an anonymous examination code. A paper receiving three or more GO's passes without further review. One with four or five NO GO's fails automatically. A paper receiving three NO GO's, however, goes to a three-person review panel. If two members of the panel agree that a paper is a GO, the cadet passes the course at that time. If two members agree that a paper is a NO GO, that paper fails. All failing papers then go to the Course Director for review. If he confirms the NO GO, he then forwards the paper to the Department Head and recommends that the writer continue to attend class. (At the conclusion of the second WPPWE, the course director would recommend course failure.) The Department Head, again, may declare either that the paper meets department standards or that the cadet must receive additional instruction (or, after the second WPPWE, has failed the course).

The community, because of its willing involvement in grading the WPPWE, accepts at least partial ownership of the course. That involvement serves as a reminder to cadets that their writing will not always have just the instructor as audience, that when they are officers in command positions or on staff, they will have

to write for many different personalities. Their writing, we tell them, must be substantive, logically organized, fluent, precise, and correct in order to be acceptable.

Having said all that, I wish I could also say that I am proud of the EN302 course and that it gives our graduates a competitive edge over other college graduates when they reach the Officer Basic Courses or their first duty stations. But comments from recent battalion commanders currently attending the U.S. Army War College suggest that we still have a long way to go before the course begins to accomplish what we seek. The former commanders tell us that our graduates, in their ability to communicate effectively in writing, are virtually indistinguishable from their Reserve Officer Training Corps or Officer Candidate School peers.

On a recent Prep School visit to West Point, several of its English instructors sat in on EN302 classes. One of those instructors made it his point to tell me that the instructor he observed spent the entire class period reviewing grammar rules in the course supplement and not drawing any connections between those grammar rules and the cadets' own writing. We are guilty, in this course at least, of not following our own guidance to the Prep School staff: *Do not teach grammar for its own sake. Tie any teaching of grammar to the cadets' writing.* It's almost as if the officers who direct the Plebe courses don't talk to the officers who direct the Cow course. Now, of course, we know that's not true, but the results don't prove it.

EN302 and Reflective Teaching

Since I won't address EN302 again in any substantive way, this seems an appropriate place to digress and discuss how reflective teaching/teaching mindfully might help to improve the course. Course planners must clearly determine the

purpose of the course. If it is truly a course meant to prepare Cadets to do the writing expected of them as Army officers, planners should refamiliarize themselves with the writing requirements most often assigned to lieutenants and captains: Letters of counseling or reprimand, promotion and award recommendations, reports of training, staffing actions, action documents, survey reports, and book reviews, to name a few.

The writing that our students will do as officers will have immediate purpose. It will have to convince a board that a soldier deserves an award or a promotion. It will spell out specific expectations for a soldier's performance. It will lay out a recommended plan of actions for the commander to take during a command function. It may even tell a soldier's parents how well their child served our country in the final moments of life. They may have to do such writing, as one officer reports having done during Desert Storm, while sitting on the floor of an armored personnel carrier moving at full speed toward contact with the enemy. Under duress.

Just as EN101 gives cadets the writing tools they need to successfully complete the Corps's academic program, EN302 should, by building on EN101, give cadets the writing tools they'll need to succeed as Army officers. Those who will move the course into the twenty-first century must have, as Hillocks says, "clear, specific objectives . . . [that have been made] operationally clear to students" (*Reflective* 58). Currently, cadets see EN302 as a "haze" course, one that they must pass in order to graduate, but one that gives them nothing worthwhile to carry forward into their Army careers. Until we can change the course—and, thereby, cadets' perceptions of it—EN302 will be an obstacle rather than a stepping stone.

Looking Ahead

In coming years, as course directors change and new Army imperatives guide our choices for all of our core courses, none of these courses will remain static. The need for a Department of English is clearer now than it was in the nineteenth century. Then, cadets came primarily from the families of the elite and were expected to be able to read and write well before ever being admitted to the Academy. Today's cadets come from all classes of society. Some have been blessed with access to well-equipped schools and with teachers and administrators who cared about providing a good education to their students. Others have to struggle to overcome the handicap of inferior preparation. Those cadets' future success is very much in our hands. How we meet the challenge of preparing them for the new millenium will be reflected in how well our graduates perform as junior leaders and staff officers. If we can consistently work as a team dedicated to giving our students the best that reflective teaching can offer, I know we will not be found lacking.

The next two chapters are concerned with the portion of our program specifically designed to prepare at least a few candidates handicapped by the "inferior education" just mentioned. These candidates, at least half of whom are young soldiers whose commanders have recommended them for the Academy because of demonstrated leadership abilities, deserve a well-planned, thoughtfully-executed curriculum. These chapters will help readers understand how important the Prep School program is for the success of the Academy's overall mission to provide leaders for the Army.

III: United States Military Academy Preparatory School: A Brief History and Summary of Recent Changes

Without rigorous academic preparation, many high-quality enlisted members with leadership potential would not have the opportunity to become officers by means of an academy education.

From the Report to the House and Senate
Committees on Armed Services on
Service Academy Preparatory Schools,
April 1993

USMAPS History

In 1917, Congressional legislation authorized the military services to prepare high-quality enlisted members for the academic program of instruction at the academies. That legislation did not create the preparatory schools, but Army and Navy officials established them to "coach enlisted nominees for service academy entrance examinations" (GAO 8).

Officially established in 1946, the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School (after several interim moves) is now located at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Over the years, the Prep School's mission has expanded to "provide an avenue for minority applicants" and "student athletes with demonstrated ability in interscholastic sports" to improve their academic qualifications for academy appointment (OASD 2).

The Prep School is a special one year, post high school course for promising soldiers, minorities, or athletes who are high school graduates otherwise qualified for Academy admission, but who need remediation in math or English. Students do not pay tuition. Instead, they receive a salary based on their military rank at time of entry. If they have no prior military service (Invitational Reservists), they receive pay at the

lower Academy Cadet rate. Officially, they are “selected candidates who have demonstrated leader potential, but who require additional preparation in order to succeed at the Academy” (Decision Memo Tab A). The Prep School program runs for one academic year. Until academic year 1995-1996, Prep School graduates competed for Academy acceptance. Historically, 56% of the Prep School graduates received acceptance certificates from West Point (Decision Memo Tab E). Since 1996, however, all those who successfully complete the Prep School program receive offers of admittance to the Academy.

The evolution of the United States Military Academy Preparatory School (the Prep School), specifically its English program, is the focus of this chapter and the next. These chapters grew out of a desire to determine how well the Prep School’s English curriculum reflects understanding of the Academy’s ultimate goals as it prepares cadets to be officers. Can the Prep School improve in giving its cadet candidates the skills they will need to succeed at the Academy? What changes need to be wrought in the Prep School English curriculum, if any?

Initially, my plan was to look at the present state of the English program at the Prep School and to address the question of how well the current Prep School English curriculum prepares cadet candidates (particularly those weak in English language skills) to succeed at the United States Military Academy (the Academy). What I discovered, however, is that it is too early in the process to be able to evaluate levels of success or failure. Not until several Prep School classes, beginning with the Prep School class of 1996, have completed EN101, EN102, and EN302 will I be able to make any reasoned evaluation of the program’s success. At that time, I will be able

to visit the Office of Institutional Research and compare the rates of success for cadets from the current program with the rates of success for cadets who attended the Prep School during the previous program.

My initial step was to familiarize myself with the changes the Prep School has made, to include the theorists whose ideas they have drawn from in order to make those changes. I have also asked the English instructors themselves what they think of the early changes to the USMAPS curriculum. The questionnaire I sent did not require them to identify themselves, though most did so. In it, I asked about each identified change to the curriculum and how effective they thought it was, or might ultimately be. I also asked about the influence of the theorists that the department head, Mr. Mark Hendricks (names of all USMAPS personnel have been changed), indicated as being important in establishing the changed curriculum.

Ultimately, this project will require me to look closely at the Prep School and the Academy English programs past, present, and future, and to examine the current political and economic controversy that challenges the need for the Prep School. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) has presented a strong argument against the Prep School, based primarily on the economic bottom line and its contention that prepsters could receive the same level of education at private preparatory schools for less than half the cost. The Prep School's response to that challenge will certainly have to be based on outlining its unique ability to prepare young men and women who are strong leaders of good character, but who are academically weak students, specifically for the Academy. The larger project also will allow me to interview the cadet candidates who attend the prep School (Who are they? Why are they at the

Prep School?), and to pursue case studies of those who graduated from the Prep School and succeeded or failed at the Academy. Naturally, I will concern myself with the English program only.

The Prep School has specific "composition objectives" for each of its entering classes. Beginning with the 1994-95 class, the Prep School class consists of approximately 220 cadet candidates, fifty percent of whom are Regular Army soldiers. The other fifty percent are Reserve Forces soldiers (National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve, or Invitational Reserve--those without prior military service). Current objectives: 25-30% African-American; 5-10% Hispanic and Native American; 10-15% women; 25% athletes (Decision Memo Tab B). The Prep School's goal is to provide 170-175 new cadets to the Academy each year (Decision Memo 2). This goal is based on the Congressional limitation of 180 soldier entrants into the Academy each year. Some soldiers enter the Academy directly from military service.

For most of its forty-nine-year history, the Prep School had been a separate command, answerable not to the Academy for its success or failure, but to the Department of the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER). Since DCSPER has responsibility for many organizations, one as small, relatively, as the Prep School is easily lost. An arrangement such as this tends, then, to mean that the organization has no real checks and balances. In 1992 and 1993, the academic programs of the preparatory schools for the three military academies (Army, Navy, Air Force) were evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE); GAO evaluated their fiscal programs. Both the GAO and the ACE reports cited the lack of clear guidance as problems.

THE GAO REPORT

The GAO's March 1992 report, *DOD Service Academies: Academy Preparatory Schools Need a Clearer Mission and Better Oversight*, criticized Defense for not formalizing preparatory school missions or monitoring school operations "since the schools were created" (11). GAO further chided Defense for not establishing academic success goals for the preparatory schools or specifying how the schools should manage funds (18).

GAO found that "the academic and military performance of prep school students at the academies" was lower than their non-prep school peers, and that they graduated at lower rates than their peers at the Academy and the Air Force Academy (28). Graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School graduated at higher rates from the Naval Academy despite their lower academic and military achievement (28). The GAO report does not call these reports unsatisfactory, but calls on Defense to establish goals for clear evaluation.

Defense's initial response to the GAO report was to develop new accounting procedures in order to determine how much the services were paying for the preparatory schools and whether those costs were "appropriate" (OASD 3). The change in accounting procedures limited reporting to "direct mission support," eliminating reporting from the academies on "community related expenses which also benefit dependents and/or retirees" (OASD APP C, 1-1). Defense chose to defer any academic options until the American Council of Education (ACE) completed its evaluation in spring 1993 (OASD 6). The ACE report found similar situations at all three preparatory schools. Here, we'll consider only what the ACE panel noted at the Prep School.

THE ACE REPORT

The "For Black Recruits, Prep School, Now in Peril, Is Path to West Point" headline that ran on page B1 of the September 26, 1995, *New York Times* probably meant very little to most people who saw it. One of the black cadets interviewed for the article, however, resented the reporter's insinuation that the Prep School emphasizes black recruiting and called that insinuation misleading to the public.

This cadet, a former prepster who entered from the Army's enlisted ranks, agrees with the ACE report's finding that "recruitment [to the Prep School] of minorities is secondary to athletic recruitment" (33). The report suggests that the Prep School should synchronize its efforts to recruit athletes with its effort to "attract minorities, women, and prior enlisted" (57). While every Academy cadet is expected to participate in some form of athletics, the Prep School has been key to bringing in athletes skilled enough to compete in intercollegiate competition.

(A related article appeared in the December 29, 1997/ January 5, 1998 issue of *U.S. News and World Report*. That article, part of *U.S. News'* end-of-year "16 Silver-Bullets" issue, enthusiastically endorses the Prep School's academic program and recommends that civilian colleges and universities develop equivalent programs as a means around "some of the worst dilemmas of affirmative action" (Dickerson 74).)

The ACE report also criticized the Prep School's accepted attrition rate of 40% as "a waste of resources [that] contributes to morale problems among the cadet candidates" (33). It recommended a "student-centered program" that aims for 100% qualification (59). While acknowledging that 100% expectation of success is unrealistic, the report suggests that improved expectations could positively change the "atmosphere" at the Prep School (59). One way to move toward this goal, it suggests,

is to develop a "more sophisticated recruitment process [which] . . . should positively affect the quality of the entering class and the retention rate" (61).

The report found that the Prep School curriculum satisfies the Academy's requirements (33), but was critical of the Prep School policy of not allowing "faculty participation in the determination of the curriculum or academic standards" (34), and recommended increased faculty involvement in the evaluation and design of the curriculum (51). According to the ACE report, the faculty's "level of experience is not commensurate with their low level of professional responsibility. . . . This system creates serious tensions between the Command and the civilian faculty" (50).

Dr. Kenneth Phillips, a member of the Prep School faculty for more than twenty years, says that the previous dean and commandant "were at war" over the curriculum and that the faculty had no voice. During his tenure, only one previous commandant had had academic experience. Though commandants were "well-intentioned," Phillips said, they had "no idea how to run a school" (interview, Oct. 24, 1995). Dr. Joseph O'Leary, also a long-time member of the faculty, agrees. "[The new commandant] Colonel Seymour is inspirational," O'Leary says. Of Colonel Seymour, who remains an official member of the Academy faculty, O'Leary says he is "the first commandant to listen to instructors" (interview, Oct. 24, 1995).

MOVEMENT TO CHANGE

Clearly, based on the GAO and ACE findings, much needed to change at the Prep School. Following the receipt of the ACE report, Defense asked the military services and, specifically, the academies, to review the report's findings and recommendations.

The Academy formed an Initiatives Group to “develop an action plan for enhancing the Prep School's productivity and reducing its costs” (Decision Memo 1). This Initiatives Group, composed of members from the Prep School, the Academy, and outside agencies, made several recommendations in response to the GAO and ACE reports.

The Initiatives Group recommended reducing initial class size to 220 from 300, enrolling only cadet candidates who are committed to successful completion of the Prep School program, and increasing the graduation goal from sixty to eighty percent. The group called the ACE goal of 100% success a worthy goal, but a “not realistic” one. The initial enrollment of 220 candidates is a more than twenty-five percent reduction in normal initial enrollment, the group said, still a significant increase in productivity with a corresponding reduction in costs (Decision Memo Tab C).

In addition to the reduction in costs provided by the need for fewer staff and faculty members, reducing the pay to Invitational Reservists and limiting coaching pay to football and basketball would generate cost savings, the group predicted. GAO estimated that the cost per Prep School graduate for one academic year is \$60,900 (GAO 4). The group estimated that, if its cost-saving measures were implemented, the Prep School could cut that cost to \$33,860 per year (Decision Memo Tab C Figure 1).

Key to the success of the recommended initiatives, in the group's vision, was placing the Prep School under the control of the Superintendent of the Military Academy. Since, as part of the Defense initiative, the Academy would select the Prep

School candidates, evaluate their remediation, oversee resourcing, planning, staffing, curriculum development, and program development for the Prep School, the group decided that placing the Prep School under the superintendent's official control was logical and consistent (Decision Memo Tab D).

The class that entered the Prep School in the fall of 1994 was a reduced class of 220 cadet candidates, carefully screened for their commitment to entering the Academy during the summer of 1995. They would study a slightly revised curriculum, but the real changes were saved for the class to enter the following year. In the summer of 1994, just before the first reduced group began its studies, Lieutenant General Howard Graves, then-Superintendent of the Military Academy, established a new task group composed of members of the senior faculty and academic staff at the Academy.

This group's missions were to redraw the rules for Prep School admission, develop appropriate evaluation criteria to demonstrate that the Prep School graduates qualify for the Academy appointment, implement changes to the Prep School admissions procedures, and put the ACE report recommendations into action (Final 2). While accomplishing these missions, the task group was to ensure that each Prep School student's academic program was "tailored" to his or her needs; to consider costs, manpower, the admissions process; and to "promote harmony between the faculties/staffs at the Prep School and the Academy" (Final 2).

The task group would be working also with the clear knowledge that General Graves had recommended in strong terms that the Prep School be placed under the Academy control as being "in the long-term best interests of the Army" (Decision

Memo 3). The task group completed its work in April 1995, and the Prep School became an Academy subunit in July 1995.

THE TASK GROUP'S ROLE

The work of the task group appointed by General Graves was influential in the Prep School English faculty's movement toward a student centered approach to teaching. One element of the group's charter, to shift the Prep School curriculum to one that emphasized skill development over test score improvement (Superintendent 10) freed some members of the faculty to make the bold recommendations that they had advocated for as many as twenty years.

The new leadership at the Prep School, certainly chastened by the ACE report's indictment of the top-down curriculum which ignored the faculty's experience, and perhaps spurred on by the Superintendent's fervor for reform, supported many of the proposed changes. Certainly, to borrow McLaughlin's language, the pressure from above forced the Prep School leadership to "initiate innovations that require[d] change in the traditional roles, behavior, and structures that exist[ed] within the school organization" (McLaughlin 167).

The task group focused on specific curriculum "modules" identified as key to the needed changes at the Prep School (Final 11). Three modules—composition/grammar, precalculus mathematics, and performance enhancement—formed the "baseline" areas which the Prep School students must successfully complete before being considered fully qualified for admission to the Academy. Three additional modules—literature, advanced placement mathematics, and introduction to calculus—would be available to students who completed baseline work early in the year.

Assessment was also central to their study. The task group's academic subcommittees (composition/grammar and performance enhancement, and precalculus mathematics) set out to determine how to define mathematics "gateways," to examine composition and grammar abilities, and to measure study skills (Briefing 13). Other subcommittees evaluated the military training and physical development programs at the Prep School. The ultimate goal of assessment was to "provide acceptable evidence that expectations have been achieved" (Briefing 16).

The academic subcommittees were asked to develop "an idealized POI" (program of instruction) and then to develop "realizable POI's" that considered constraints in instructional techniques, resources (physical and personnel), faculty development (via workshops), and other faculty exchanges (Briefing 17).

The composition/grammar and performance enhancement subcommittee, along with a pen-and-ink, three-track "idealized POI" for the Prep School Department of English, developed what it called a "List of Observable or Measurable Skills in Reading, Studying, and Writing." These seventeen skills led to eleven specific changes in the English program, and thus form the nucleus around which the Prep School faculty developed its new, student-centered curriculum:

List of Observable or Measurable Skills in Reading, Studying, and Writing.

Prep-Schoolers should arrive at West Point able to do the following:

Reading and Study Skills

1. Process text at a rate of 350-400 words per minute with an 80% comprehension rate.
2. Apply goal-setting and time-management skills and effective study habits to their academic work.
3. Use a textbook learning system that includes strategies for identifying and retaining critical information.

4. Apply appropriate test-taking strategies.
5. Employ an effective note-taking system in class and in reading texts.

Research Skills

Perform basic research in a library organized under the Library of Congress Catalog system. This skill includes:

1. Familiarity with general library reference materials and guides such as the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, and Historical Abstracts.
2. The ability to locate sources of information (to include articles from scholarly journals) for use in the preparation of research papers, particularly in history.

Computer Skills

Use Microsoft Word to create, edit, spell-check, format, print out, and save documents, with formatting skills to include those for producing not only parenthetical documentation, but also proper footnotes and endnotes.

Analytical Skills

Assess an author's success or failure in defending a thesis based on the evidence and the logic of the argument. This entails being able to:

1. Identify an author's thesis and the question it seeks to answer in a text.
2. Describe, explain, compare, and contrast textual evidence, including historical evidence.

Composition Skills

Write short essays, both in and out of class, that articulate and support their theses, essays that have effective and functional beginnings, middles, and endings. This necessitates students' being able to:

1. Use idea-generating and pre-writing strategies to clarify requirements and to develop interesting, restricted, and workable theses and organizations, with the aim finally, of producing competent first drafts of essays.
2. Identify and employ the patterns and aims of discourse. This means being able correctly to apply such labels as Process, Comparison and Contrast, Explanation, Description, Narration, or Argumentation to writing samples. It also means being able to use the patterns and aims to organize their own work.

3. Recognize paragraph coherence and unity by identifying both topic sentences and irrelevant sentences in sample paragraphs or their own work. Use this recognition to revise their own paragraphs.
4. Correctly and coherently integrate sources into their own sentences by paraphrasing sources, summarizing sources, or directly quoting sources; furthermore, recognize plagiarism in written samples.
5. Identify and employ basic sentence types by correctly classifying those in a writing sample or in their own work as simple, compound, and complex. Manipulate and transform such sentences for maximum effect in their compositions.
6. Proofread and correct surface flaws in writing samples or their own work, including the following: subject-verb agreement errors, pronoun reference errors, sentence fragments, comma splices, punctuation errors, inappropriate use of passive voice, and obvious misspellings. Use a dictionary to check the spellings and denotations of words.
7. Apply the principles of documentation using the MLA style, including the use of parenthetical citation, or footnotes and endnotes; the use of explanatory notes; and the formatting of bibliographic entries on a "Works Cited" page.

Figure 3-1--Measurable Skills List

In like manner, the mathematics subcommittee provided several pages of "Required Mathematical Skills for Entering Cadets," and a five-track "idealized" mathematics curriculum.

In its final report, submitted in April 1995, the task group presented the results of its work to implement the revisions requested in the Prep School program.

The Faculty's Response

Mr. Hendricks, head of the Prep School's Department of English for most of the nearly thirty years he has been with the school, greeted me on my two-day visit to Fort Monmouth with surveys and documents and other papers heralding the curricular

changes.

One thing that luckily didn't change, Mr. Hendricks said, is the size of his faculty. The cut in the number of students, however, made it possible to lower the average class size from 28 in previous years to 18. This is a crucial change, given the new emphasis on a student-centered curriculum, Mr. Hendricks said (interview, Oct. 23, 1995).

During my visit to the Prep School, in addition to Mr. Hendricks, I talked with several other faculty members and visited them in their classrooms. I talked at length with Dr. Kenneth Phillips about the Student Success Course, which he now teaches to every student at the Prep School, and also about the changes to the Department of English curriculum, brought on by the GAO and ACE reports. "We've made drastic changes," Dr. Phillips said. "Our curriculum basically had been the same since 1972. We spent too much time on SAT prep. We had students memorizing words out of context. Our new commandant is an academic. It's an entirely new atmosphere now." In all, Dr. Phillips is happy about the new curriculum. "It's more work for me, of course," he said, "but it's better for the students. And that's who I'm here for."

Dr. Joseph O'Leary, who directs the English program for all three levels, echoed Dr. Phillips's attitude about the changes. "I'm no longer thinking about taking early retirement," Dr. O'Leary said. Even though he finds himself spending more time preparing for class and providing additional instruction to his students, he says "this has been [his] happiest year here." Dr. O'Leary said that the Prep School is "now functioning closer to the way a real institution works." In the past, the commandant led the curricular meetings, he said. Now, as course director, he leads

the meetings, giving a proposed agenda to his instructors in advance so that they can provide input or feedback. Dr. O'Leary admits that it's "taking some of the instructors some time to get used to not having to go to the command. This new way allows teachers to develop."

The new curriculum sets clear, measurable goals, he said. Instructors get to decide how to meet those goals. "We have to subordinate our needs and focus on student needs. We're having to find other means of evaluating students besides giving more tests," he added.

During my two-day intensive visit to the Prep School, I attempted to get a snapshot view of typical classroom activities, in both lab and "lecture" activities. Each instructor has three hours of classroom contact with two sections of cadets daily, as Figure 4-1 shows. I visited Dr. O'Leary's advanced section, Mr. Hendricks's standard section and one of Dr. Warner's standard sections, and one of Mrs. Davison's remedial sections, as well as one of Dr. Phillips's Student Success Course sections.

Dr. O'Leary's had chosen to hold what he termed a one-hour writing lab at the time allotted for "lecture." The class was relaxed with Dr. O'Leary, having been with him since the midterm of the previous quarter, when all the Prep School's students took a common midterm, and the students were divided into advanced, standard, and remedial tracks. There were thirteen students in his class, the only advanced section. Dr. O'Leary also teaches one of three remedial sections.

Dr. O'Leary used the hour with the class to help them think of ways to bring imagery into their persuasive papers. He began with an experience he'd had the night

before, in which he'd driven past a deer lying injured, but not dead, in the road; he related his frantic and fruitless attempts to call for help for the deer; he read a poem he had written in response to the event. All of this he linked to his dissertation on analogies between Elizabethan and Japanese theater, then took his class through a brainstorming activity to help them develop topic ideas for papers due a month later. The students were animated, involved, even joked with him about his family. They worked individually on their paper planning after the initial discussion period, and seemed to actually get a lot of work accomplished. As I circulated through the room, I noted that students seemed to enjoy the work, and no one was distracted by my presence. (In fairness, I should note that I dressed in civilian clothes rather than military uniform for the duration of my visit.)

Later, Dr. O'Leary told me that the new division into tracks has helped provide the right sort of instruction to all the students. Though they didn't have an official advanced track under the previous program, they did pick the top students toward the end of the year and allow them to take an elective or two. Those students who are ready for greater challenge can now get that right away, while those who need additional help get that right away, also.

Mrs. Cassandra Davison, one of the newest members of the Prep School English faculty, teaches the remaining two remedial sections. She arrived at the beginning of the 1994-95 class year, during the last iteration of the old system. "I'm glad it's gone," she told me when I visited her class. Like Dr. O'Leary, Mrs. Davison thinks that some of the other instructors are a little nervous about the new situation. "The old system was more comfortable for teachers, but I like the new one. It's better

for the students,” she said. “The course director [Dr. O’Leary] sets up quarterly goals, and instructors determine how to meet them.”

Mrs. Davison sees her students daily and works with the *Prentice Hall Reader* and *Developing Reading Skills* as primary texts. In addition, she uses *English 3200: A Programmed Course in Grammar*, and Science Research Associates (SRA) materials. She also offers students who want additional help the opportunity to keep reader response journals, in which she and the students develop an ongoing written conversation about their reading, their writing, their questions about approaching texts, or whatever is important to them about the course at the time.

She uses almost all of her time with students as workshop time rather than lecture, preferring to keep them focused on their writing, rather than lecture them about grammar. Though she put on a cheerful façade and tried to keep the atmosphere lively, there was a bit more tension in her classroom than in Dr. O’Leary’s class. The long, narrow configuration of her classroom—the end of a wing in a renovated World War II barracks—may have contributed to the apparent anxiety. There was no way for her to set up the U-shaped classroom she wanted without spreading the students out even more than they were already spread. Mrs. Davison was somewhat frustrated by the room, but said that she is learning how to work in it.

Despite her preference for working with their writing to deal with grammar issues, Mr. Hendricks insists that her students—because they are “remedial students”—work almost daily on some of the many grammar exercises that he’s developed over the past twenty years. Some members of the all-male fifteen-member class seemed to want to challenge Mrs. Davison’s grammar knowledge as the class

reviewed the previous night's homework. Though she answered their questions, she was obviously frustrated and somewhat unnerved by the challenge. Mrs. Davison is the only woman teacher in the English Department, the least experienced, and the lowest paid; her students know this and, apparently, some feel obliged to constantly put her to the test.

In addition to sitting in on the Student Success Course and the advanced and remedial sections, I visited two very different standard sections. Mr. Hendricks's class reviewed and discussed three articles from the October 23, 1995, *Newsweek*; Dr. Warner's class, just starting to prepare for a literature paper due in December, discussed the novels from which they could choose. While the students in both sections seemed alert and interested in the discussions, neither section did anything other than talk. Though the sections were billed as writing labs, no writing of any sort took place. Still, both instructors said that they were working within the broad guidelines Dr. O'Leary had outlined for the course, and both seemed positive that they would be able to meet their goals for the quarter.

I was struck by the variations between classes. The Prep School, having moved away from the mandated curriculum of the past, away from the teacher-proofed courses fully choreographed in advance, seems to have stepped into a completely new world. Teachers find that their training and experience are now taken seriously by the course director and commandant, that they have much greater leeway in planning their classes, and that they are happier about coming to work.

Positive Thinking Isn't Always Enough

Though the instructors were energized by the opportunity to meet the course goals in ways that made sense to them, the course goals were in many ways too

general to help them determine a real focus. And, despite reciprocal visits from and discussions with the Academy's Freshman Composition director, the course director's primary emphasis in the Prep School English course continues fall more heavily on teaching cadet candidates discrete grammar rules rather than on building their writing skills.

The course objectives during the first year of the new program were listed in the Prep School's summer 1995 Standing Operating Procedure as follows:

A. That the cadet candidates (C/C's) achieve an understanding of the basic terms used in grammar as they relate to the principles of formal standard written English and the study of a foreign language at West Point; that the C/C's develop the ability to write both in-class and out-of-class college-level argumentative papers which reflect a logical thought-process, a clear thesis, adequate support, and which satisfy West Point Plebe English requirements. The ultimate goal is to develop independent writers who are comfortable with putting their own personalized thinking into writing following natural organization and logic.

B. That the C/C's achieve college freshman independent reading and vocabulary recognition levels that will help her or him with entrance requirements to West Point.

C. That the C/C's develop and maintain good listening, notetaking, and studying skills to enhance success in all academic courses at West Point.

D. That the C/C's achieve within the English program at USMAPS the highest level of understanding and achievement of which he or she is capable.

Though the course goals prominently included Composition, in point of fact, graded requirements for the course situated written work as twenty-five percent of the course. The other seventy-five percent of the course grade came from grades on grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary quizzes. There's an old Army saying, "The company does best what the commander checks." In this case, the commander spent most of his time checking grammar, reading comprehension, and

vocabulary, usually outside the context of student writing. The company—the cadet candidates—had very little incentive to focus on building their writing skills because the Prep School program still seemed to devalue writing. The Prep School objectives justify the emphasis on grammar skills by suggesting that those are skills the cadet candidates will need once they begin taking foreign languages at the Academy.

However, except for those cadets who validate several Plebe courses and begin taking their foreign language early, foreign languages are not a part of the Plebe curriculum.

The Prep School English department, in drawing up its Standing Operating Procedures (SOP), has discounted the contract it has with the Academy, as defined in the “List of Observable or Measurable Skills in Reading, Studying, and Writing” (see Figure 3-1). That contract, while it does ask the Prep School to help cadet candidates improve their reading comprehension, develop better study habits and time management skills, as well as to be able to proofread their own writing, does not call for the sort of grammar study necessary in the study of foreign languages. I believe that the Prep School course, to be more fully integrated into the Academy program, must place greater emphasis on getting cadet candidates to write.

IV: On Changing the English Curriculum at the United States Military Academy Preparatory School: The Instructors Speak

When the academy charges us to make sure students write correctly, we behave like novices and take the frontal approach: we teach grammar, often much the same way that we were taught. Were we to behave like the experts we really are, we would look instead for cognitive relationships and examine exactly what principles of grammar students need to know to write well.

Suzanne Strobeck Webb,
 "Do We Really Have to Teach Grammar?
 And If So, How?" (139)

All of the instructors I spoke with seemed committed to making the new curriculum work. They are dedicated to giving their students the best education possible, and are eager to see their students succeed and move on to the Academy. They were enthusiastic to share with me the concepts that they are trying to incorporate into their teaching, and encouraged me to contact them again as they came to know more about the new curriculum.

The eleven specific changes in the curriculum, all in response to the Academy's "List of Observable or Measurable Skills in Reading, Studying, and Writing," are: 1) change to the whole language approach; 2) establish daily writing labs; 3) study vocabulary from readings; 4) stop teaching specifically for the SAT; 5) give instructors more input to grading; 6) reduce the teaching of literature to poetry only; 7) establish an alternating "A/B" class schedule; 8) move away from "naming and labeling"; 9) mandatory Student Success Course; 10) use two basic writing texts coordinated with the Academy's English department; 11) obtain Academy approval for the new curriculum.

Whole Language Approach

Mr. Hendricks defined the whole language approach for his teachers as the “integrated reading/ vocabulary class with grammar/composition class in one, two-hour reading-writing-thinking-speaking block of instruction.” He anticipated that it would provide greater flexibility for his instructors than the Prep School’s former program, which he explains in his article, “English Classes Adjust to Changing Environment,” which appeared in the Fall 1995 *USMA Prep Newsletter*:

For many years, the Prep School English Department conducted two separate one-hour classes which were held every day of the week. In the EN11/21 course, students studied, in great detail, grammar, usage, rhetoric, logic, speech and narrative, expository, and argumentative writing. In grammar, for example, students were expected to know such esoteric terms as attributive adjectives, separable adjuncts, and retained objects and heavy emphasis was placed upon labeling these terms correctly on unit examinations.

The second class, EN12/22, focused upon reading improvement using the SRA Reading Program, (copyrighted 1959 but still used in many high schools today), and upon vocabulary development through study of a formal list of some 481 words arranged alphabetically from A (abate) through Z (zenith). The words were not easy as evidenced by such words as assiduous and auspicious; loquacious, lugubrious; and vicissitudes and vitiate. Students also practiced extensively with College Board verbal test items such as antonyms, analogies and sentence completions in their Senior English Review Exercises text. Finally, in the Second Semester students studied the various literary genres and wrote timed in-class essay exams (known as blue books) on assigned works of literature.

Students were in one track and everyone took one departmental examination at the end of each unit. Pass or fail, the student continued on to the next unit; there was little or no provision for remediation. (2)

In other words, the Prep School English program had been, for nearly 50 years, a program that did little, if anything, to truly help students overcome weaknesses in English skills. While the 60% who graduated demonstrated measurable improvement in their SAT scores, the 40% who did not graduate were simply reinforced as failures (ACE 52).

Mr. Hendricks says that several “signs of change” appeared beginning in the spring of 1993. First, General Graves talked with the Prep School’s students and faculty about needed changes in the grading system. The then Prep School Commandant surveyed the Prep School graduates and non-graduates on their opinion of the Prep School academic program. His replacement arrived in June 1994, asked “Why are you doing what you do in English?” and “initiated the most significant changes in the English Department in the past twenty-five years” (Hendricks 2).

In academic year 1994-1995, the English curriculum shows three distinct tracks: Advanced, Standard, and Fundamental (Synopsis of English Program, the Prep School). All students took Unit One (of eight 4- or 5-week units). Those who needed remediation moved to the Fundamental Track during Unit Two. Those who received high Unit One scores, had correspondingly high SATV scores, and received instructor recommendations were moved to the Advanced Track (Synopsis).

These events, combined with the need to respond to the GAO and ACE reports, and to work with the Academy task group assigned by General Graves, ultimately led Mr. Hendricks and his faculty to develop “a learner-centered, results-oriented system rooted in competency-based instruction and mastery learning” (Hendricks 2).

While the Prep School’s English instructors generally agree that this year’s approach to teaching writing is better than previous years’ – “makes much more sense . . . practical”; “a very positive change [that] works well and produces more lively and effective classes”; “requires that I be more creative and inventive in both class preparation and actual instruction”; “everything the students learn has some value

above and beyond its own intrinsic value” –not all agree that the approach is appropriately labeled “whole language.” Mr. Barston says that the absence of literature instruction, on which whole language teaching is based, makes him feel “that the curriculum is not truly Whole Language based.” Mrs. Davison agrees. “We don’t teach literature, [and our] syllabus is so very full that little time is left for the actual predicting and self-questioning techniques required in using the Whole Language approach,” she says.

Mr. Smithson suggests that the more correct label for the approach that the Prep School’s English program has taken is “integrated.” The Prep School’s Program of Instruction (POI), Mr. Smithson says, centers on “eclectic and non-literary readings, inductive vocabulary improvement, functional grammar, ... and composition without a literature-based strategy.” He and several other instructors are disappointed that, outside of a limited amount of poetry, the new program offers no literature instruction. They say that many students, too, are disappointed with the lack of literature in the program. Mr. Smithson has observed, though, that the students “seem more alert, more willing to participate, and less taxed” by this literature-less approach to the teaching of English.

It is interesting to me that the Prep School is embracing even the label “whole language” at a time when the whole language approach to language education is facing such negative press. Given the conservative nature of the Prep School and its concern with providing its students the skills they will need to succeed at the Academy, one would not expect them to take a direction that, in many ways, leads them toward a new frontier in education. I hope, over the next year or so, to follow

the current class and to try to evaluate how much more effective their “integrated” approach is than the previous product-centered approach.

Daily Writing Lab

Mr. Hendricks established this new feature in order to allow time for students to develop their papers in the presence of instructors who could provide immediate feedback and to revise their work through peer evaluation. The most important feature of the writing lab, he says, is its allowance for “one-on-one conferences with the instructor” (Hendricks 3). For his own class, Mr. Hendricks believes that “this is the best change” the new program offers. The writing labs allow time for “brainstorming, peer review and evaluation, oral and silent workshopping,” and the students like it, he says (response to questionnaire).

His instructors agree with his assessment. Dr. Warner uses some of the time in writing lab to have his students read drafts to the class. He observes that the student reader “frequently hears mistakes his eye misses.” He also finds that the student listeners pay careful attention to their classmates, and “develop critical analysis skills” (response to questionnaire).

Mrs. Davison finds the writing lab useful to help her determine whether students are paying full attention to the writing process, or whether they are simply “writing the paper the night before.” She uses the time to allow her students to follow the writing process in class, as well as work in the writing lab. Mr. Barston, while he likes the idea of the writing lab, and even considers it “the most effective way to teach writing,” says that, in his own struggles with time management this year, he has not been able to use the writing lab effectively.

Dr. O'Leary relates a story which vividly illustrated for him that "sometimes strengths and weaknesses in an essay may not become apparent until meaningful discussion and a mutually respectful flow of ideas can be exchanged between student and teacher":

I was quite upset with a student's effort because I could discern no organizational strategy, nor could I perceive a conscientious effort on the part of the student. But during our writing conference, when I questioned his motivation in regard to the essay, he slowly but methodically began to explain his game plan presented in the paper. As he systematically moved from his introduction through the body of the paper to the conclusion, he displayed an understanding of many good writing principles, and I began to see what he was attempting to do in the essay. I also realized that this young writer's problem was not motivation nor the ability to organize. It was his inability to provide the correct logical and grammatical transitions between the ideas. After apologizing for my earlier suspicions, I praised him for his effort and then explained why I did not see what he was attempting to accomplish in the essay. I also told him that I would change his near failing grade to a C-. The student and I then proceeded to collaborate on how he could break up some large paragraphs into smaller units and how he could better delineate his topic. In return for the increased grade, the student kept a promise to revise the essay and place it in his portfolio. During that conference we were no longer writer and critic but were "writers-in-arms"—so to speak—working together for the success of the student. The teaching session became a bonding session.

Dr. O'Leary discovered the truth of Carnicelli's observation that students "know, more or less, what they were trying to accomplish in the paper" (108). In his discussion with the student, Dr. O'Leary came to understand the student and the student's paper better, and was able to modify his response to the paper based on their dialogue. Like several of the Prep School teachers, Carnicelli believes that "the conference method is the most efficient use of the teacher's time" (110). This writing lab or conferencing time, in practical terms, will serve the Prep School students well in their work at the Academy, since the two core writing courses emphasize

workshopping, peer evaluation, and individual conferences between instructor and student.

Vocabulary Development.

Mr. Hendricks says that the Prep School discarded the old vocabulary list primarily because all the students did was to memorize the list words for the exam at semester break, then promptly forget them. The instructors, though, mindful of Nagy's three keys to improving vocabulary—integration, repetition, and meaningful use—have students collectively develop word lists from their readings. They experience the words in context, see them, and use them repeatedly.

Dr. O'Leary, the writing course director, says that it is "too soon to tell whether our vocabulary approach will enhance student learning." He believes, however, that students "should do better since the words studied were learned in the context of a broader educational experience and the words were necessary to the understanding of assigned reading." Mr. Smithson characterizes the old method of studying vocabulary as "slavish," and says that the new approach is effective in creating individualized instruction for each student.

Mrs. Davison finds that this new vocabulary approach allows her to use some whole language in her classroom. Dr. Warner calls the approach "infinitely better." Mr. Hendricks has discovered that his students are getting better vocabulary grades this year than in previous years. Still, he admits that he was "a bit reluctant to relinquish the Vocabulary Builder Book I . . . because it contained proven college-level vocabulary that most of our students just did not know."

Despite the teacher happiness, much rests on students' performance on the SAT.

If, when students' test results are in, the vocabulary scores show no improvement over previous years, or drop, I am sure that the department will probably rethink its approach to teaching vocabulary. Despite the tedium of memorizing word lists in past years, students showed clear improvement in their SAT results. If that improvement doesn't continue, because Academy acceptance relies so heavily on SAT performance, the Prep School teachers may be forced to move back to their earlier methods of teaching vocabulary.

Dropped SAT Text.

For many years, the Prep School used the *Senior English Review Exercises (SERE)* text to help students prepare to take the SAT. While the *SERE* seemed to have positive effects, its continued use was not in keeping with the movement toward a student-centered curriculum, Mr. Hendricks said.

Dr. O'Leary says that many of the materials the department now uses closely parallel the *SERE* text, and that he doesn't foresee "any radical change in regard to SAT enhancement." Mr. Barston believes that their giving students practice tests, then going over the results with them seemed to make sense, and that "the students seemed to get something out of the sessions."

Other instructors were equally noncommittal about the dropping of the SAT text. Mr. Smithson, however, believes very strongly that the *SERE*, and other dropped texts—*College Entrance Review in English Aptitude; English Grammar and Composition, Complete Course; New Concise Handbook; and Writing for Reading Improvement*—"would still have viable, feasible, and beneficent effects on students' improvement in reading, vocabulary, study skills, and rates of reading."

Again, it seems to me that, like the changes made in teaching vocabulary, if test scores don't show an improvement over previous years, the English faculty at the Prep School may find itself moving back to older approaches that helped students improve their scores on standardized tests, whether or not they were effective in increasing students' writing ability.

Instructor Points

Unlike their Math Department counterparts, English instructors had no real input to their students' actual grades. The instructor points "have been added to the quarterly grades for more instructor input and flexibility in teaching" (Hendricks 3).

Dr. O'Leary, the course director, believes that "instructor points have the potential to save marginal students, [and] should be based on those factors which may reveal a side of the student which may predict success in a way that traditional tests cannot." He believes that instructor points should be based on "an educationally sound 'gut' feeling which the teacher senses and which may not always be in accord with the student's achievement on tests." While he has expressed his philosophy to his teachers, he has not made his method of determining instructor points mandatory.

One instructor, who chose not to be identified, does not follow Dr. O'Leary's advice: "I envied math instructors before, so I am also happy with this [change]. Instructor points give me more control over my students' effort. Using these points I evaluate progress through quizzes and writing assignments, and I reserve some points for class preparation and participation."

Mr. Barston says that he has "struggled with instructor points from day one." Through trial and error, he developed a system that, like his colleagues', is based at least in part on student success on quizzes. "What I find particularly difficult about

Instructor Points,” he complains, “is the question of subjectivity. Some faculty have a rigidly structured plan for Instructor Points while others are much more flexible.”

Mr. Barston says that he is “trying for a ‘happy medium,’ but [doesn’t] know whether [he’s] truly found one.”

Dr. Warner uses his instructor points to “reinforce classroom objectives—coordination and subordination, let’s say—by having the students find their own instances [in their assigned reading]. And they quickly catch on that they can improve their grade.”

Dr. Phillips appreciates the new “leverage” that he now has as an instructor. “The grade is not based only on test grades,” he says. Instructor points allow him to evaluate students’ preparedness for and attention in class.

Despite the varied methods of assessing instructor points, Mr. Hendricks says, the students have also responded favorably to the new grading strategy.

Instructor points may help those students whose performance on standardized tests does not reflect their actual ability to perform at expected levels in the classroom. However, if used improperly, the system could undermine the Prep School’s goal to send the best qualified Prepsters on to the Academy. On one hand, improperly used instructor points could conceivably be used to beef up the grade of a student who otherwise is incapable of competing academically at the Academy. On the other hand, a student who offends a teacher’s sensibilities, or has a personality conflict with that instructor, could conceivably be kept out of the Academy. While I doubt that either scenario will happen, each is certainly possible.

The Study of Literature Limited to Poetry

In the past, students at the Prep School studied a Greek tragedy, a

Shakespearean tragedy, novels, and short stories in addition to poetry. Mr. Hendricks and Dr. O'Leary have limited their students' study of literature to poetry in order to make the course more in keeping with the Academy's EN102 course.

Dr. Phillips's comment most succinctly sums up what the majority of the responding instructors had to say about this change: "The elimination of other genres was not necessarily a wise decision."

Mr. Barston, the newest instructor at the Prep School, says that it is "good for students to be exposed to poetry and poetic forms, but I also feel that including poetry and excluding literature makes little academic sense." He and other instructors note that the students, once they realize that they will not read novels, short stories, or literature other than poetry, feel cheated. Mrs. Davison's students feel that "knowing about pentameters will have little to do with leadership positions." Mr. Smithson's students have expressed "tremendous disappointment." Mr. Smithson believes that the poetry-only literature curriculum "is an unwitting insult to the intelligence of the" Prep School students.

Dr. Warner agrees. The reduction of literature study to poetry alone, he says, is "unequivocally negative. Students discover, because they tell us, that an English program with imaginative literature represented only by poetry is arid indeed!"

I must say that I wholeheartedly agree with the Prep School instructors. When I returned to the Academy to teach in the fall of 1993, I was appalled to learn that EN102 had become a poetry-only course. This would not have been so tragic, I believed then and do now, had the Advanced English course continued as a literature course. But EN301's Literature course has evolved into EN302's Professional

Writing course. In effect, this means that students who do not have the individual will to read humanizing literature on their own, or who do not major in English, will have no experience past high school of the (to borrow Mr. Smithson's terms) "vast 'universe' that literature is." It seems to me that these Prep School students especially, many of whom are there because of their weaknesses in English language skills, would be better served by a broader literary experience.

Alternate A Day/B Day Schedule

In the old scheduling plan, teachers taught four 60-minute classes every day. Under the Alternate A Day/B Day schedule (which attempts to mirror the Academy's 1-Day/2-Day schedule), teachers now have three 55-minute classes a day, and no students overlap across sections. The instructors teach two sections each. This table shows the typical instructor's weekly class schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Section A: 1 hour 'lecture'	Section B: 1 hour 'lecture'	Section A: 1 hour 'lecture'	Section B: 1 hour 'lecture'	Section A: 1 hour 'lecture'
Section B: 2 hour writing lab	Section A: 2 hour writing lab	Section B: 2 hour writing lab	Section A: 2 hour writing lab	Section B: 2 hour writing lab

Figure 4-1: Instructor Class schedule, Prep School

Mr. Hendricks complains that the computer program that runs the new schedule is "inflexible," but that it does allow him to do "different things on different days." Dr. O'Leary says that in the past he occasionally had the same students in two different classes five days a week. "Some of [my] students had to listen to repeat performances of my favorite anecdotes." That doesn't happen under the new schedule. "A teacher has just so many good stories to go around." Dr. O'Leary adds that now, students have more time to study and to complete their homework, and instructors have extra preparation time. Beyond their class time, instructors are

expected to be available several hours each day for cadet candidates seeking additional instruction (AI).

One instructor says that the “previous system was very draining,” and that he appreciates the change. Dr. Phillips agrees: “[It’s] more like a college than a mechanical high-school schedule—less ‘burn-out’ for both teachers and students.”

Mr. Barston, too, “hope[s] that it is retained” in future years.

Mr. Smithson says that “many of the students like the flexibility in the schedule because it breaks the day up so that their classes are not back-to-back.” The schedule has not been as positive a change for him as he had thought it would be, however. “I . . . have such a confused juggling between two groups crisscrossing academic classes and writing labs that I cannot readily sequence assignments and so do not feel that I have great flexibility in my classes,” he says. He says, though, that any increase in flexibility that he has experienced has come because “there has been far less micromanaging of teachers this year than in the previous years.” The new schedule is only a small part of this, he says. Dr. O’Leary, Mr. Hendricks, and Colonel Seymour are the real reasons behind increased instructor flexibility, Mr. Smithson says.

The administration’s openness to new ideas—including taking on the change in teaching schedules and allowing teachers more control over classroom instruction—has clearly improved the morale of the instructors. I sensed during my visit and from the responses I received that instructors feel that they are being treated more like educational professionals than ever before.

Interlinears, Paraphrases, Summaries

Dropped from the Prep School curriculum in the early Eighties, interlinears—essentially, short articles printed with several differing errors or other weaknesses which students must locate and correct—give students formal practice in proofreading. Mr. Hendricks returned interlinears to the program and added paraphrasing and summarizing because the Academy “indicat[ed] the necessity of students being able to perform these tasks in EN101.”

One instructor likes the interlinears because they “make the student realize that grammar and style are real-world, not artificial, considerations.” Another finds them “difficult to grade because of the grammatical/mechanical ambiguities they sometimes raise,” but finds them still an “efficient teaching tool . . . which helps students understand just how complex writing can be.” Mr. Smithson believes that interlinears are “an effective instrument, on objective tests, for measuring the [students’] abilities to proofread without using grammatical names and labels.”

At the time of my visit, the students at the Prep School had not spent much time working to paraphrase or summarize texts. That work began with the quarter they were just beginning. While teachers couldn’t comment on the educational benefits experienced, all agreed that these tasks are essential to helping students improve their critical thinking for reading and for writing.

In practical terms, once Prep School students reach the Academy, they will find all of these skills necessary right away, not only in EN101, but also in their history, foreign language, and social science courses. As they progress through the academic program, they will also find that math, science, and engineering courses also require them to read and write critically. In the past, students have resented the fact that departments other than English insisted that they be prepared to write well. Perhaps this practice now will help lessen that resentment. (I have seen numerous instances, however, of students who were perfectly able to edit, correct, and even improve interlinear texts but were absolutely incapable of transferring those skills to texts they had created themselves.)

Every student takes the Student Success Course

Please consider whether this change has translated into more success in your

classroom.

Mr. Hendricks said that while Dr. Phillips had been campaigning for years to take a whole language approach, to move away from constant testing, to emphasize success, and to set measurable goals, this year marks the first time his ideas have received wide-scale support. For the first time, every Prep School student will take Dr. Phillips's Student Success Course, Mr. Hendricks said. In previous years, only the very weakest students took the course. This ultimately led to an overabundance of Prep School graduates taking the Study Skills Course at the Academy, effectively keeping other cadets out of the Academy's program. This year's prep school graduates, and future graduates, will not burden the Academy's system, Mr. Hendricks said, and other cadets who need the assistance the Study Skills Course provides will be able to take the course.

Dr. Phillips is the only one who teaches the Student Success Course, described in an information sheet as "a practical course in performing tasks . . . reading, effectively using reading strategies, organizing a notebook, notetaking (including mapping and clustering), goal setting, time management" etc. Dr. Phillips teaches eight sections of ten students each, eighty students per quarter. In previous years, when only the weakest students took his course, the course ran for a full semester. The plan this year is to "recycle" any student who doesn't pass during one quarter into a section in the following quarter.

Mr. Hendricks (as department head) assigned the eighty weakest students, as assessed by standardized test scores and evaluation of a writing sample produced prior to the first day of class, to the Student Success Course in the first quarter. The

The plan this year is to “recycle” any student who doesn’t pass during one quarter into a section in the following quarter.

Mr. Hendricks (as department head) assigned the eighty weakest students, as assessed by standardized test scores and evaluation of a writing sample produced prior to the first day of class, to the Student Success Course in the first quarter. The next higher eighty students were assigned to the course in the second quarter, and the highest sixty in the third quarter. Any students needing to retake the course were integrated into the sections in the following quarter. Neither Mr. Hendricks nor Dr. Phillips anticipated needing the Student Success Course during the fourth quarter, when Dr. Phillips will teach the elective literature course. Both, however, acknowledged that the possibility clearly existed.

Dr. Phillips wrote about his Student Success Course for the January 1994 *Journal of Reading*. He explained in his article, “Theater of the mind: Nonconventional strategies for helping remedial readers gain control over their reading experience,” that he tries “to help [his students] become more aware of their own thinking process so that they can adapt these processes and make better choices of strategies” (Phillips “Mind” 310). Key to that adaptation is showing them that “their mind is a theater where they control the play being staged” (“Mind” 310). Once they developed that control, he said, they could “shift the negative mental framework that [they] were using in reading to something more productive and need fulfilling” (“Mind” 311).

His methods, adapted from the work of many researchers and interwoven as a series of unconventional “but valuable interventions” (“Mind” 311), often meet with some

resistance from students. Dr. Phillips requires his students to keep a written record of their work in the Student Success Course. In that journal, which he calls the "Book of Myself," students keep their classroom work, their exercises, their grades, and personal reactions to classwork. He also gives them a series of questions about their reading which they are to answer periodically throughout the course. (For instance: "What do I think of reading at this moment?" "Do I really want to do better in reading? What am I avoiding by not doing better in reading?") Dr. Phillips says that he wants the students "to make ongoing evaluations of the quality of their own thinking. Once they become more aware of their own thinking, they automatically create the possibility of changing it" ("Mind" 311).

The move from awareness to change is crucial to the Student Success Course. Once students realize that they have a negative, "self-defeating perspective" ("Mind" 312), they can become "actively engag[ed] in their own improvement" ("Mind" 313). "Once the faulty attitude is identified and admitted, we have something to work with" ("Mind" 313), he says.

Having identified their negative thoughts, students get Phillips's help in "rewrit[ing] the script of their mental drama" ("Mind" 314), and in using other tools that help them change their reading strategies. Phillips uses attention focusing exercises, sensory memory activities, exercises to activate "inner-child creativity," all to help his students develop a feeling of empowerment in their reading. He says that, since he began using the mental theater exercises, his students have shown "some concrete evidence of progress" ("Mind" 320). Most have "improved confidence and motivation," he says, but more significantly, "about 20% of my remedial students advance into the standard program . . . ; more than half the class improve verbal SAT

scores sufficiently to enter the college of choice; and overall improvement in the Nelson-Denny Reading Test score is 1.5 grades with about 20% of the students improving more than 2 grades" ("Mind" 320-321).

During my visit to the Prep School, I sat in on one section of Dr. Phillips's course. The students had just begun a new quarter, so they were only at lesson three, and most of the ten young men in the class still seemed a little unsure of themselves and what was expected of them. Dr. Phillips's manner is brusque and challenging, and several of his students gripped the edge of the table so tightly that their knuckles turned white as he forced them to question themselves about their goals, their study habits, their own concepts of self-worth. One cadet candidate, red-faced and trembling, refused to answer when Dr. Phillips turned to him. The classroom itself, clearly dedicated to the Student Success Course, was literally festooned with banners and posters proclaiming: "SUCCESS: Don't just dream it, DO IT." "Either you control your mind or your mind controls you." "Do or do not. There is no try." "When I'm afraid of losing, I never win." Hanging by a cord from a bulletin board was a round mirror, with "Child of the Universe" painted around the frame.

Clearly, Dr. Phillips was serious in his attempt to get his students to see that they could take control over their success. "A successful person does not play victim," he told them, and used a toy car to show how they must choose between letting the rear, drive wheels (body and emotion) run their lives, or taking control of the front, steering wheels (doing, thinking). He had what he called a "cosmic message for the course: You go where your attention goes." He dismissed the class

with a challenge to assess how they approached their studies. "Focus on what you want," he told them, "not what you don't want."

Ultimately, the aim of the Student Success Course is to prepare students to develop the necessary study skills outlined by the Academy's task force. Dr. Phillips's work with the students' reading is designed to help them read faster, and with greater comprehension. His focus exercises help them set achievable goals and manage their study time more effectively. He teaches a planning matrix that helps students develop test-taking strategies appropriate for different types of tests. That matrix teaches them to use a textbook learning system that includes strategies for identifying and retaining critical information, and to employ an effective note-taking system in class and for reading texts.

During Dr. Phillips's hour break between classes, he talked with me about the Student Success Course. There are forty class days each quarter, he explained, and he meets with each section twenty times. "My whole idea is to undermine their negative attitudes," he said. "I want them to realize that everyone can benefit from reading." The course helps all of them, even those who consider themselves "good" students, get better organized.

The idea of working in the sort of overcharged atmosphere I witnessed for four hours each day would have overwhelmed me, but Dr. Phillips explained that, of the senior faculty, he is the best prepared for this sort of course. In addition to his MA in American Literature and his Ph.D. in English Literature, Dr. Phillips has spent a great deal of time studying reading theory, and has had extensive training in reality therapy and control theory. In his spare time, he counsels HIV-positive men and

women, as well as those dying of AIDS, using many of the same techniques he uses with his students to help the patients achieve a sense of quality in their lives. He wants to bring his patients, and his students, to a point where they no longer dwell on their past—which they cannot control—into the present—which, he believes, they can.

Dr. Phillips's colleagues give varying responses to the efficacy of the Student Success Course, apparently based on the level of awareness each has of the students who have taken the course. Mrs. Davison's students, because they are all basic students, were the first to take Dr. Phillips's course. "I think the students have learned from the Student Success Course," Mrs. Davison says. But, she adds, "I don't know that my class is any more successful because of the course." And she notes that the students "have varied feelings about the course." She says, though, that students' negative feelings about the course have not "hindered" her classroom strategies (response to questionnaire).

Mr. Barston is new to the Prep School this year, and acknowledges that he can't yet tell whether the class makes "any appreciable difference in the way students learn." He does, however, counsel several students who have taken the Student Success Course. They "feel that it is different from anything they've had before," he says. Also, Mr. Barston observes that "many of them initially reject Dr. Phillips's theories about learning, [but this] is a common reaction when students are faced with something new" (response to questionnaire).

Dr. O'Leary, who teaches both a basic section and the advanced section, says that the "study skills program has taken a tremendous burden" off him and his

instructors. They no longer have “the responsibility of teaching study skills” during an already heavily laden course of instruction, he says. Those among his students who have already taken the Student Success Course are “more receptive to the learning process,” he says (response to questionnaire).

Mr. Hendricks, as department head, teaches only one section. His experience is that when he uses Dr. Phillips’s language in class (“There is no try; you either will do or not do”), he receives quick responses from students who have taken the Student Success Course. He’s satisfied with his students’ note-taking, notebook-keeping, and time-management skills. Still, he admits that it is difficult to judge improvement over past years (response to questionnaire).

One of the instructors, Mr. Smithson, says that the course’s impact of his students’ academic success has been “imperceptible.” Mr. Smithson, who has taught at the Prep School more than twenty-five years, also sees heavy irony in the removal of study skills teaching from the English classroom to a “meta-educational learning center.” He believes that in past years, the department “did a very good job . . . in helping students to develop not only study and learning *habits* but also study and learning *skills*.” Still, Mr. Smithson tempers his objections by saying that he does not oppose the Student Success Course or a formal learning center. He *is* opposed, however, to “the separation of the formal instruction of study skills from functional instruction in the regular classes,” and to the requirement that all Prep School students must take the course “whether they need it or not” (response to questionnaire).

Ultimately, it may be impossible to sort out what effect, if any, the Student Success Course has on the ability of Prep School graduates to complete the academic

program at the Academy. (The Academy's Center for Enhanced Performance, which monitors cadets' study skills, has so far been unimpressed with the results of the Prep School's Student Success Course and still sends most Prep School graduates through the Academy's skill program.)

The Prentice Hall Reader AND Developing Reading Skills

Mr. Hendricks says that this is the first time the Prep School has used any reader. Above-average and average readers are "not especially excited" about having reading instruction, he adds. Dr. O'Leary says that Prep School teachers have always brought in poems, essays, and other reading matter for their students. The advantages of using a reader, however, are that teachers' "energy can be concentrated on preparing and presenting the material, not on compiling it." The fact that they now have a common reader allows students to receive more consistent reading experiences, and eases creation of the departmental examinations. Dr. O'Leary sees as more important than anything the fact that the reader "provides a resource for the students" and takes the "onus for acquiring information" from the teacher and puts it on the students' backs. The students "learn to be responsible for their own success," he adds.

Despite their overall approval of the texts, most of the other instructors feel that the *Prentice Hall Reader* alone would have been enough text for the students to buy. That text is "more helpful and more enjoyable for the students," one teacher said, and added, "I would like to use the *Developing Reading Skills* text for my own supplementing." Another teacher agreed, suggesting that the faculty "should be able to find one book that combines the reading skills of *Developing Reading Skills* with the writing skills of the *Prentice Hall Reader*." The switching between texts is "cumbersome" for him, and "expensive for the students," he says.

In addition to the cost of the books, another instructor complained about the page count—589 pages for the *Prentice Hall Reader*, 568 for *Developing Reading Skills*, and 816 pages for a text added during the third quarter, *Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Arguments with Readings*. “What the English Department has not used to date in the 1,973 pages [of those texts] is very much heavier and very much thicker than what the English Department has assigned and used in class from those books,” he says. He notes, too, that the students use *Newsweek* weekly all year long, that they read from former students’ model compositions, have an *Analogy Booklet*, a *Dictionary and Prefix-Root-Suffix Workbook*, a *Diction Worksheets* booklet, a *Grammar Worksheets Booklet*, and several other texts, including *Introduction to Logic and Logical Reasoning*. He agrees with his colleague that the department should “conduct a textbook search to find one satisfactory textbook that comprehends all the major needs of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.”

While the effort of searching for a text that does all of these things might seem daunting, I believe that teachers and students will be happier in the long run. At the Academy, we have gone through several searches, which can be exhausting if left to one or two action officers. However, both programs are large enough to involve more teachers in planning and conducting the search, and course and program directors do not need to be heavily involved in the day-to-day work of the search. The Prep School program has more than enough supplemental texts to augment one basic reader. Perhaps cutting back on the number of required texts will help teachers will feel less overwhelmed by the volume of text to work with.

The Prep School's experience with change serves to remind me how difficult it is to make changes in a system with which we have become comfortable, even if it isn't accomplishing all that we seek. Despite the honest desire to emphasize writing, the instructors developing the Prep School portion of our English program still feel compelled to behave like Webb's novices, to "take the frontal approach [and] teach grammar" without tying it to candidates' writing. In conversations over the past months with Mr. Hendricks, I've come to understand that they—or, perhaps, he—feel comfortable with the objective tests they've used over the past twenty years. Relying on instructor evaluations of students' writing may—for now—be outside the comfort zone to which they've become accustomed over the years.

V: Transforming Soldiers into Writing Teachers: The Incoming Instructors

Like writing itself, teaching is a practice. There is no satisfactory way to learn about it in the abstract. . . . Inexperienced teachers can be cautioned about obvious pitfalls. Beyond that, they have to have the freedom to fail as well as to succeed . . .

William F. Irmischer,
“TA Training: A Period of Discovery” (32)

While the preparatory school portion of the USMA English program has as its primary goal to ready soldiers to enter the world of academic writing at the Academy, the Academy’s portion of the English program is two-fold: First, we must take soldiers—usually Army captains who have been successful at platoon- and company-level commands, as well as lower-level staff positions—and transform them into writing teachers. These teachers must, in turn, build on the preparation cadets have received from the Prep School and from high schools around the country and transform cadets into competent academic writers. This chapter ends with the story of my work with two of the Academy’s newest writing instructors as they began to reflect on their development into writing instructors. It begins, however, with the story of my visits to the classrooms of every EN101 instructor during the fall semester of 1997.

I visited, at least once, each of the twenty-nine EN101 instructors between Wednesday, September 10, 1997, and Wednesday, October 8, 1997. This period of instruction covered lessons nine through nineteen of the Fall 1997 EN101 syllabus and allowed me to observe teaching of Unit 2 of the syllabus in its entirety. The chart below gives some insight into instructor experience levels:

#	Category	Degree	Experience
1	Course Director, Military, Tenured	Ph.D., Literature	10+years teaching Composition and Literature at USMA
1	Assoc. Prof., Civilian, Tenured, not in D/English	Ph.D., Literature	10+years teaching Composition and Literature at USMA and elsewhere
3	Asst. Prof., Civilian, 3-yr contractors	Ph.D., Literature	5-7 years teaching Composition and Literature
2	Asst. Prof., Civilian, 3-yr Contractors	Ph.D., Philosophy	Limited Composition experience
3	Asst. Prof., Military, On second tour	MA, Literature	4 years teaching Composition and Literature at USMA
6	Instructors, Military, on initial tour	MA, Philosophy	No Composition experience
7	Instructors, Military, on initial tour	MA, Literature	1-2 years teaching Composition and Literature at USMA
6	Instructors, Military, on initial tour	MA, Literature	No Composition experience

Figure 5-1—EN101 Instructors

I obtained permission from the department head and the course director to observe classes during the semester and chose to begin my visits following completion of the first block of instruction. That instruction block ran from August 18 to September 9, 1997, and took cadets and instructors through an introductory cycle that led to one essay written out of class. I chose not to observe during that period because I wanted to visit at a time when—I hoped—cadets and instructors would be familiar and, perhaps, relaxed with one another. I used the visit protocol shown on the next page.

Classroom Visits

I wanted to visit the instructors alphabetically during the visit period, but the teaching schedules of the philosophers and some English types who taught courses other than EN101 forced me into an unintentionally random visit schedule. I visited four classes each of lessons 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, and 18; two each of lessons 12 and 13; and one of lesson 19 during the main visit period. I was not, therefore, able to complete all of my observations during Unit 2; lessons 17, 18, and 19 were the first three lessons offered in Unit 3. The Academy's academic schedule differs from other school schedules by offering four "identical" iterations of the same lesson (two per day) in a two-day period. There is no MWF or TuTh schedule; cadets attend classes five and sometimes six days each week. (A few instructors invited me back to observe classes in a later block of instruction, but I am not reporting on those visits in this text.)

Date/Class Hour _____ Lesson # _____
Instructor _____
Class objective:
Stated by instructor _____
Implied from class _____
Syllabus _____
Conduct of class:
Clear plan for the class? _____
Classroom activity(ies) appropriate for the objective(s) given? _____
Discussion concerned w/writing? _____
Classroom atmosphere
(Characterize interaction between instructor and cadets)
(Characterize interaction among cadets)
Does instructor follow department guidance?
(i.e., receive report from section marcher; no first names w/cadets; proper decorum, etc.)

Figure 5-2—Visit Protocol

In the minutes prior to the beginning of any Academy class, several activities take place: Cadets enter the classroom and take their seats according to their position on the Section Marcher's roster. The Section Marcher, whose role I'll explain momentarily, takes the first seat, usually the chair nearest the instructor's desk; his or her classmates know—even before the first class day—their own roster numbers and take the corresponding seats. Before class begins, the Section Marcher must take the class role, attempt to account for any missing cadets, and be prepared to render a report to the instructor when he or she enters the classroom.

The first two minutes of every Academy class, regardless of department, follows a standard script: As the instructor enters the classroom, the Section Marcher calls the cadets to attention. When the instructor reaches the front of the classroom, the Section Marcher salutes (if the instructor is military) and reports the status of the class. "Sir (or Ma'am), section 14K is formed. One cadet absent." The instructor returns the salute (if military) and responds with "Thank you Cadet _____. Class, take seats." In EN101 during Fall 1997, most instructors followed the reporting period with an opportunity for cadets to share jokes or interesting quotations they had found in their reading.

Most instructors followed the joke of the day with a period of class discussion on the previous night's reading. With only one exception, the instructor was the pivot on which every classroom discussions swung. When cadets wanted to comment on points that their classmates had made, they went through the instructor in order to respond. If the instructor didn't notice the cadet's raised hand, the response was lost. Also, most instructors talked too much, assuming, as George Hillocks says in his own critique of teachers' habits, that "teaching is telling, [and that] proper teaching has taken place when

proper basic formulas about writing have been presented (*Reflective 28*).

Typically, while instructors were busy dominating the class discussion, they failed to notice that only two or three of their students were responding to their comments and questions. In many cases, I observed uninvolved cadets doodling, reading novels tucked into their texts, writing what appeared to be letters, and even taking short naps during class. Several instructors positioned themselves with their backs to some of their students, effectively cutting off possible discussion participants. In at least one case, my notes indicate that a few of those cadets actually were attempting to get the instructor's attention in order to add to the discussion. In a few cases, the physical layout of the classroom seemed to keep instructors from being aware of several cadets in the classroom. Fewer than half of the instructors tied the discussion of the reading to the cadets' own writing, and only ten of the twenty-nine instructors allowed time for writing in class (time period varied from three to ten minutes).

Two-thirds of the instructors had moved away from the syllabus. The philosophers had all made major changes in readings, written assignments, and classroom activities. I sat in one philosopher's class where cadets were reciting Shakespearean sonnets from memory. When I asked him afterward why he asked his cadets to memorize sonnets, his e-mail response to me was:

The Sonnet Presentations are designed to open the imagination. I believe that good writing focuses the explosive and creative forces of the imagination. But many writers have not learned even to employ the imagination, let alone focus it. So, through the successive presentations of the Sonnets, my cadets must reach into their imaginations and produce.

His class was a lively one, though I have some lingering doubts about the efficacy of his method.

The most student-centered class, and one of the few that remained true to the syllabus, was taught by a civilian member of the Dean's staff rather than a member of the Department of English. Though she is not a member of the faculty, her experience and background are in English, and she teaches for the department whenever her duties allow. After receiving the report from her section marcher, she opened the floor for what became a very lively discussion on speech communities. Cadets felt comfortable talking directly to each other during the course of the discussion; they didn't talk through her or wait for her to acknowledge them before responding to each other's comments. During the discussion period, she acted as class secretary, writing the categories they identified on the board. She followed the discussion immediately with a writing activity that captured the discussion's lessons learned about speech communities. They wrote first to a classmate about having failed a mathematics exam, then to their parents, then to their math instructor. The entire writing activity took about seven minutes, and cadets eagerly shared their work by reading their letters aloud to the class. Their instructor reinforced the concept of speech communities illustrated by their responses. One cadet had played not only with speech but also with level of responsibility as he wrote his letters. In the letter to his classmate, he blamed all of his failure on his professor; he took some responsibility for his failure in his note to his parents; and shouldered all of the blame for his failure when writing to his professor.

I asked this instructor later how she developed such a marvelously interactive class. She responded via e-mail:

I think the key may be that I approach teaching in the same way I approach workshops. My presentation style was really honed in workshop settings to adult learners--and, in many cases, to women and to volunteers. Developing a style that emphasizes inclusivity and the individual worth of

the participants (so that they continue to volunteer, for heaven's sake!), while still exerting your authority as an expert (if and when you are), is key to being a successful workshop presenter. I've also had a good deal of training in facilitating group discussion that focused on believing in the group process. If you give a group freedom--after asking the right question--the group will get to the answer you want them to get to. When I trust the group discussion, discussion works.

As someone who honestly values what cadets have to say, this instructor may be among the minority on the faculty. All too often, as I visited with instructors waiting to enter their classrooms, or sat with them in my office following my classroom visits, I heard comments like, "They can't write because they don't know enough to write about anything." Or, "It's not their fault. They didn't learn anything in high school." Or, "It's too late to try to teach them to write. Our job is to weed out the ones who don't belong here."

After each visit, I shared my observations with the instructor either through direct conversation or e-mail and asked questions about his or her approach to the particular lesson. These discussions often resulted in my learning much about instructors' frustrations as well as their insights into their own teaching. It also reinforced my conviction that we senior department personnel are not doing all we can to give our instructors the tools they need to be effective teachers of Composition. These discussions, and the instructors' responses to my surveys, made it clear that NIT does not provide the sort of assistance and ongoing support that instructors need in teaching EN101.

In the final third of the semester, I worked closely with two new instructors, observing their classes, talking with them weekly about their preparation for class, and reviewing cadet essays they had graded. More than anything, I wanted to help these

young captains develop and clearly articulate their own theories of teaching composition. I wanted them to acknowledge their responsibility to cadets, to the Academy, and to themselves and their teaching colleagues. Certainly this is what I want from all of our instructors.

Starting out.

During our first meeting, Captains Smith and Jones (obviously not their real names) and I worked out a plan for my visits to their classrooms and briefly discussed their responses to my questionnaire. Both officers had volunteered to be my “guinea pigs” for the final portion of the semester because they wanted feedback on their planning and classroom effectiveness. I gave them as additional reading Chapter 6 of my dissertation (now the first section of Appendix A), and the abstract of my proposed CCCC 1998 presentation. (The presentation’s focus: Transforming Soldiers into Writing Teachers.) Since they would begin the final formal block of instruction in EN101 about ten days later, I committed myself to reading through the assignments in the syllabus and meeting with them the Thursday before they began that block of instruction on analysis of arguments.

When we met again, they had begun to formulate their own ideas about approaches they might use in the classroom. We talked through the analysis block lesson by lesson and it was clear that they had carefully considered the goals of the block. The readings assigned in the syllabus, however, were another matter. Smith and Jones both felt that the text used in the course, *Frame Work*, while interesting, worked against what they understood to be the ultimate purpose of the course, to help cadets reach a measurable level of competence and confidence in writing simple argumentative essays.

The final block of instruction, Unit 4: Story Frames, was a series of eight lessons

that ran from October 27, 1997, to November 20, 1997. The instructor-group lesson notes, prepared by two experienced instructors to assist colleagues through the block, set up a plan which would, theoretically, help instructors guide cadets to the following knowledges, skills, or techniques: a) recognize patterns in writing; b) think critically; c) read critically; d) write critically; e) recognize stock explanations; f) recognize irony and satire; g) understand and join the discourse community; and h) write an argumentative essay. The notes provided an objective for each fifty-five minute lesson within the block of instruction (e.g., Lesson 28 objective: "Students understand that critical thinking is an active, collaborative process that results from a communal dialogue of ideas.") The notes provided the barest outline of suggestions for classroom activities and no guidance that might help new instructors like Captains Smith and Jones to put the unit into the overall context of the course.

New Instructors in the Classroom

Captain Jones's frustration with Lesson 25 (Students learn to read critically) was evident when I visited his classroom on his second teaching of the lesson (each new English instructor teaches four sections of EN101 and, thereby, the same lesson four times). Cadets were to have come prepared to share answers to assigned questions on their reading. It was clear to me that many, perhaps as many as half, of the cadets in the classroom had not completed the assignment. Unable to generate any discussion because his students were unprepared, he moved to another portion of the lesson and randomly broke cadets into groups to discuss another of the assigned readings. He did not put the purpose or thrust of the discussion into clear context for them, nor did he limit them in the amount of time they should spend on each section of the discussion. I circulated through the classroom and found that the members of at least one group were working

independently of each other, not as a team—though, given the loose nature of the assignment, that was not unexpected.

Ultimately, the section spun its wheels and, when CPT Jones and I talked about the class as we walked back to our Lincoln Hall offices, we considered alternatives to his lesson plan, ideas he might use in the final two classes on this lesson. First, I asked him to articulate to the class his purpose for the group exercise. While he understood what it was he was asking them to accomplish, I suggested that he shouldn't keep that purpose secret from them. He needed to set clear goals for their activity and establish time constraints, I told him. He agreed to put these and several other suggestions I made to use during the final iterations of the lesson.

When we talked later, CPT Jones told me that using my recommendations had helped him feel more in control, not of the class, but of himself. The suggestions had helped him get more focused and, with more personal focus, he was better able to guide the class and to meet the lesson's objectives. We still didn't "fix" the overall problem with the content of the lesson, but we were able to take some mini-steps in improving his classroom presence and lesson presentation.

The hour before my visit with Captain Jones, I sat in on Captain Smith's first presentation of Lesson 25. As always, his section began with at least one cadet telling an almost invariably lame or tasteless (at least on the days I visited) joke. The day's joke was no exception: "I, Cadet Smedlap, will be an officer one day." Not surprisingly, no one laughed.

Captain Smith's classroom presence is more confident than Captain Jones's and he leads the class more forcefully. He is more explicit about what he expects group work

to accomplish, and he is better at setting time constraints. As a result, his cadets both came to class with the assignment completed and stayed on task during group discussion. Captain Smith had felt that the final block of instruction, at least as outlined in the provided lesson notes, would not help his cadets succeed at term's end. He had, therefore, spent a good deal of time constructing what, for him, seemed a better approach. He managed, I believe, to maintain the spirit of the course and to accomplish its goals. Still, he expressed frustration at having to put so much time and effort into preparing for the class; he felt that the lesson notes provided to the instructors should have been more helpful.

Lesson 26 (Students learn to recognize Irony and Satire) was even more frustrating for Captain Jones than Lesson 25 had been. This time I sat in on the very first iteration of the lesson. CPT Jones began with a quiz on terms from their reading (prejudice, opinion, assertion, argument, evidence, expert opinion, fact), but never revealed the purpose of the quiz to the cadets and, rather than review it immediately, took it up to grade later. Ultimately, the quiz proved to be time wasted. He moved into a full-group discussion of "stock explanations," a concept from their reading, in which only three cadets were fully involved. Again, the majority of his cadets were not prepared for class and his lack of assertiveness in the classroom did not inspire them to change. Captain Jones ran out of things to do with the class about ten minutes before the end of the period. He dismissed them.

This time, while trying not to be too directive, I suggested several changes to Captain Jones that he could easily make before teaching the next three iterations of Lesson 26: 1) either skip the quiz completely or correct it in class and put it immediately

in the context of the lesson; 2) call on non-participants—pay closer attention to who's involved in the discussion and who's not; 3) reinforce those responses that are on the mark—clearly explain why the responses are good ones; 4) have them write for a specific period of time in response to a clear prompt built from class discussion—don't throw away ten minutes of class time.

Captain Jones's classroom presence always surprised me. I know that he was much better prepared than he seemed to be in class. I even asked at one point whether it was my presence that threw him off, but he admitted that he was always nervous in the classroom. Nothing in my training has taught me how to make someone confident of what he or she knows, but I reminded him again that he should work at appearing confident even if he didn't feel that way. As time passes, I hope, Captain Jones will become more effective as a classroom manager, but the growing pains are very difficult to watch. (Unfortunately, my observations of another, more senior and ostensibly more experienced instructor whose classroom effectiveness has not improved over time makes me reluctant to express wholehearted confidence that Captain Jones's classroom presence will actually improve. Her ineffectiveness has not gone unnoticed and the evaluations she has received in the course of her assignment to the Academy may well keep her from being promoted beyond her current grade. Despite interventions along the way from her course directors, she remains incapable of managing a classroom or giving adequate feedback to written work.)

In their own words

By the end of Block 4, both Captains Smith and Jones had made substantive revisions in the syllabus, changing the course to fit their understanding of the preparation cadets would need to finish EN101 successfully. Captain Jones was still less sure of

himself in the classroom than Captain Smith, but he had made some progress toward developing an air of assurance, something instructors at West Point desperately require in order to be respected in the classroom. As something of a valedictory exercise, I asked each of them to think over his aims for the final block of instruction and evaluate his achievement of those aims.

Captain Smith:

Goal(s): At the conclusion of section 4, I wanted my plebes to have gained an appreciation of how to read and think critically. Armed with these tools, I wanted them to be able to articulate their study of a given subject effectively in writing. I envisioned reaching this goal through a series of exercises that challenged each cadet to think “outside the box” and which pushed them to search for alternative readings or interpretations of a subject.

Observation: I found that while I could encourage the plebes to think “aggressively” I could not seem to get them to develop a sense of objectivity. As they read competing stories they seemed to embrace the last one they read and invariably bought the author’s argument without question. This was overwhelmingly apparent through the essays I received that contrasted the different versions of Columbus’ discovery of America. Well over 95% of these essays submitted at the end of section 4 indicated that Columbus was a murderer and more. The students who wrote on this topic were not able to question the motivations behind each of the contrasting essays found in *Frame Work*.

Discussion: I’m not quite sure why this happened. I know that as a whole the plebes made progress, but not as much as I hoped for. I think part of the problem is that the plebes are conditioned to think in terms of absolutes; things are either black or white. To remedy this I would begin earlier in the semester and work towards forcing the cadets always to explain their views. All too often I think we allow the cadets to rely on hard evidence that allows them to minimize their own involvement with their writing. I think an approach that requires them to explain their views might be more effective. The TEE exam, while not perfect, is a step in the right direction. The TEE exam at least forces them to explain the “why” of their analysis and forces them to justify their response.

Observation: Coupled with the observation above is the realization that most cadets still cannot effectively show a relationship between the evidence they cite within their essay and the thesis of their paper.

Discussion: This is a tough one. I know that I stressed that for evidence to be effective it had to be explained. All too often I find that cadets will offer a quote or some other evidence and will fail to explain the relevance of what they have provided the reader. This becomes even more clear as I grade their portfolios. Despite my rather lengthy comments on their previous essays telling them how to develop a "cause and effect relationship" some students still have not grasped the idea. In the future I will force them to write paragraphs in class that focus on this process and I will then force a critique of their efforts.

Observation: I spent an inordinate amount of time preparing for class.

Discussion: The shortcomings of *Frame Work* are obvious and require no further review. I believe this took away from the time I could have used to further evaluate cadet writing, or that I could have used to simply read about teaching techniques. The solution to this problem is simply not to "work harder." I think that whether we use *Newsweek*, or some other reader is really not that important; however, I think what we lacked and what made my preparation difficult was the fact that EN 101 lacked a clear direction. As a result, 30 different EN 101 courses emerged that all varied slightly. While this will certainly to some extent be the case, I feel that our lack of clearly defined course goals left many of us floundering. To say that we will develop students who can write essays that reflect style, correctness, organization and substance is not enough. I think we need to clearly articulate the type of essay we expect the plebes to write and it should be linked to what they will have to do in both EN 102 and in EN 302. At the present moment I don't think the goals of any of these three courses are compatible and to some extent they should be. To some extent the McGraw-Hill text (*we're currently planning to develop our own text for AY 1998-1999 in conjunction with McGraw-Hill*) will fix some of these problems, but it must reflect a definite direction. The ultimate challenge is to rethink how writing is evaluated across West point and to integrate each department into a plan that is aimed at a common goal.

Observation: Instructor prep was poor and did not adequately prepare me to teach composition. Right, wrong, or indifferent, I think that the department needs to develop a standardized approach to teaching writing.

Discussion: What I have learned through my research is how many different approaches exist that detail how to teach composition. I suggest the department adopt one and adapt it to our needs and integrate it across the board. I do not think this will unnecessarily stifle initiative, but I do

think it will ensure a uniform approach that is fair to the cadets. Failing this, I suggest the implementation of EN 101 unit reviews that actually serve a purpose. I think they should consist of a review of the previous unit and the layout of the unit to come. The process could be rotated among the different instructors with an emphasis on sharing experiences and insights. I firmly believe that participation in the form of preparation must be open to first year instructors as well.

Captain Jones:

In considering my planning and preparation for the final block of instruction, I have noticed two things which seemed to have worked well:

1. In-class analysis proved beneficial to most cadets because they could immediately ask questions and clarify their misunderstandings about the reading.
2. Comments and illustrations that I made or that were discussed in class ended up in quite a few of the students' papers in some form or another.

My goal for the unit was to insure that each student go through the process of analyzing an article in a systematic way, and then apply that analysis to the writing process in the form of an argumentative essay. My secondary goal was to have them reflect upon their own substance, organization, and style as a writer by using these same elements as criteria for the evaluation of another writer's work. By evaluating and analyzing a writer according to this framework, it was my hope that they would in turn see how their own writing succeeds or falls short.

In retrospect, I think that I put too much on their plates. I think I should have had them use the evaluative framework earlier in other writing exercises until they could fully articulate each element. Once this was achieved, then I could have more effectively taken them step by step through the process of writing an argument. Along with teaching critical reading and other forms of analysis, I see this as a semester long process.

Another area that I will focus on in the future will be classroom management. I think that in focusing on the material alone, that I forgot the human element. As the semester progressed and the cadets became more accustomed to the environment, they began to discover ways to "beat the system" and "get over." In the future I will incorporate events that will keep them accountable for their work.

My thoughts on the matter

Each officer ultimately managed to make sense of the course for himself, but not until very near the end of the semester. Captain Smith saw the weaknesses inherent in the course as it was presented to them to teach and worked very hard to correct those weaknesses before presenting the course to his students. Captain Jones was more inclined to blame himself for any failings, but he, too, recognized the problems and tried, as well, to keep them from affecting his students' ability to succeed.

One of my aims in working with these two new instructors was to give me some idea of the changes I will need to make, as course director, in the preparation of New Instructor Training sessions, as well as the periodic lesson conferences. Knowing what helped these new instructors—and what hindered them—will better prepare me to help them become the sort of instructors I envision for EN101.

Another of my aims for this brief study was to get them to think, in Captain Smith's terms, "outside the box." I wanted them to go beyond accepting the syllabus as given and funneling it to cadets, to actively think of themselves as involved teachers. I wanted them to start on the path toward becoming truly reflective teachers, teachers with "both technical skills and the professional judgment needed to adapt or modify those skills in response to student needs and the curriculum goals" (Freiberg and Waxman 124). Though they were frustrated early in the semester with the course, as new instructors they were understandably reluctant to make changes, even those they felt were necessary. By course end, however, Captain Smith especially, they felt more at ease making alterations to the course plan when they felt that their students would benefit.

Captain Smith observes a problem—as *[cadets] read competing stories they*

seemed to embrace the last one they read and invariably bought the author's argument without question. He suggests a reason for the problem—*the plebes are conditioned to think in terms of absolutes; things are either black or white.* And he provides a possible remedy—*I would begin earlier in the semester and work towards forcing the cadets always to explain their views.* This is a young officer well on his way to becoming a reflective teacher of Composition. He has considered his mission carefully and proposed alternative approaches to more effectively reach the mission's goals.

Captain Jones is able to comment on his own classroom behavior and determine ways to strengthen his classroom presence: *I think that in focusing on the material alone, that I forgot the human element. As the semester progressed and the cadets became more accustomed to the environment, they began to discover ways to "beat the system" and "get over."* *In the future I will incorporate events that will keep them accountable for their work.* Here, too, is a young officer struggling to find himself as a teacher, reflecting on the climate of his classroom and what he might do to change it.

These are the sorts of observations and reflections that I hope all of our instructors will be able to make someday. It may be necessary for me, as the EN101 course director, to treat my instructors as graduate assistants and assign each the task of maintaining reflective teaching logs. I hope not. What they should be able to do, however, is to think deliberately about the purpose of each lesson before they teach it, design a lesson that fits both the purpose and the students, then look back at the class later and determine what went well and what didn't.

The new instructor survey

I had to wait until the end of the semester to receive the final three surveys from the new instructors. The holdouts all blamed time constraints—grading EN101 essays

and writing essays for EN102—for the delay. I had much the same problem with time myself. There wasn't enough of it to go around this semester. In retrospect, I'm not sure how they did everything they needed to do to be prepared to teach with the EN102 essays (and the reading they required) hanging like the sword of Damocles constantly over their heads. It was more than enough for me to prepare for EN102, visit classes, meet with publishers' representatives for next year's EN101 course, prepare to teach the Ethnic Literature elective, and work sporadically on this dissertation. All that said, the responses from the six new officer instructors are shown at Appendix H, following the bibliography.

As you can see from their responses and comments, not one of these new instructors felt himself well-prepared to teach composition when he reached West Point. New Instructor Training (NIT) was somewhat effective for them, but two of them advocate complete overhaul of the program. All six believe that we need to make some changes in NIT. Despite the weaknesses of NIT, all were able to use some portion of that program in the teaching of their classes. These instructors also believed, as I do, that they would have been better served in graduate school to take courses on Composition theory and practice rather than literary criticism and research which had, as one instructor complained, "no immediate payoff for EN101." They felt that they would have been better instructors earlier in the semester had they known something about the practical aspects of teaching.

Fortunately, they have all found the more experienced rotating faculty—and, to a lesser extent, the permanent faculty—extremely helpful in planning for individual classes. Despite their positive portrayal of the assistance they received individually from

experienced instructors, these instructors were disappointed with the quality of the periodic lesson conferences. They suggested that the conferences should review what worked and what didn't in the classroom, and that all instructors—even the new ones—should be allowed to provide input. What's missing, in their view, is a common approach to the course. The conferences reveal that there are as many different EN101s as there are instructors, they say, which they see as, possibly, being unfair to the cadets.

Perhaps the greatest amount of unease lay in their response to the course texts, specifically *FrameWork*, which they agree is very one-sided politically. They all want to substitute a more process-oriented text in the future, one that provides a more balanced approach and moves more gradually and more quickly into the study of argument. The text pokes fun at the five-paragraph essay without providing any other sound approach to the writing process. While these instructors understand the restrictiveness of the five-paragraph essay, they don't believe cadets are ready to dispense with it, especially if there's nothing offered to take its place. Cadets need, these instructors believe, some sort of methodical approach to developing an essay.

Though it would require a rethinking of department aims, we probably should consider the advice of one of the instructors who departed in the summer of 1997. He suggested that we open the discussions on course goals and course activities to all instructors—new and old, rotating and permanent. This would certainly keep our approach to teaching Composition at the Academy from getting stale over the years.

The toolbox

What I have presented in these past two chapters is just the beginning of my own attempt to revisit the department and its role in preparing young men and women to take their places in the twenty-first century Army. My view is an evolutionary one, not a

revolutionary one. We do much well, but we could do much better. Our instructors deserve every available tool to help them be the best practitioners possible. This document is my contribution to the toolbox.

VI: Looking Backward; Looking Forward

If education is the process of coming to understand the world around us and how to act in it, and if the world around us is in a constant state of change, then education must endeavor to prepare students to deal with what no one has dealt with before.

George Hillocks, Jr.
Teaching Writing As Reflective Practice, 211

Change, as we have seen in these past few chapters, comes very slowly and with great consternation at both the Academy and its Preparatory School. Despite the excitement in 1994, when the Prep School curriculum was revised in response to the ACE and GAO reports, much there remains as it was before. Cadet candidates' course grades—still—are based primarily on reading exams and grammar quizzes, rather than on their written work. And though Academy course directors, beginning with Pat Hoy in the eighties, have personally kept current with Composition research—even implementing that knowledge in their own classrooms—Composition teaching at the Academy remains focused on product rather than process.

Still, change can occur even here. When, in 1976, the Academy was forced by Congress to accept women, many “old Grads” predicted the sure death of the Academy. But as quickly as 1984, when I attended a briefing by the Dean to new Academy instructors, I overheard one male Grad returning as an instructor say to another male Grad colleague, “I’ll be glad when the women who graduated from here are senior enough to return as instructors. We need female West Pointers in here—not these ROTC-types. They don’t know what we’re all about.” I guess it’s a good thing he didn’t know that I was a direct-commission-type. He’d probably have

considered me so far down on the food chain as to be unworthy of mention. Now, women have been fully integrated into the corps of cadets; a female non-Grad is head of the Department of Physical Education; another has been selected as head of the Department of Foreign Languages.

As I plan for the upcoming year, I expect resistance to implementing the EN101 that I envision. The members of my EN101 planning group—instructors with whom I am working to breathe life into the course I envision for EN101—are, despite the fact that only one of them is an instructor who's been at the Academy longer than one academic year, clinging very tightly to a rigid approach to teaching the five-paragraph essay. They are resisting—almost as rigidly—the notion that writing instructors should also be writers. Their experience with EN102 (highly structured; incredible workload on instructors prior to teaching) probably colors their attitude most negatively for me!

My work with them, and with the two instructors I followed during the Fall 1997 semester, has already caused me to change how I intend to use the Instructor Supplement at Appendix A. I had planned to use it as a 'handbook' for teaching and to distribute it at the beginning of New Instructor Training. I now intend to use the supplement later in the training cycle—perhaps distribute it after I have introduced the course and taken the instructors through the first cycle of the course.

The supplement also provides a sort of outline for continuing staff development. The subject headings—"Process writing and writing to learn"; "Active teaching: 'empathy and support'"; "Writers teach writing"; "Transitioning from literature to composition"; and so on—lend themselves to mini-lessons and what I

hope will be worthwhile discussions and corresponding changes in the way we teach Composition as a department. I want it to become the basis of a full-fledged training course similar to that used to prepare Graduate Teaching Assistants at universities around the country.

We at the Academy take pride in our ability to produce Army leaders who can solve complex problems through improvisation in difficult situations—on the battlefield, in staff work, on the fields of friendly strife. Our graduates can think on their feet, we insist. They are able “to decide what to do in a new situation and how to think about what to do when the what is new” (Hillocks *Reflective* 216). Hillocks tells us that this is what writing teachers do as well. We not only give our students the knowledge of how to write arguments or narratives, but we must give them tools that will help them develop strategies for dealing with those writing situations we have yet to anticipate in their future, and to write effectively when those needs arise.

Whenever anyone in the family was disheartened by any setback, my father would inevitably say, “A hundred years from now, no one will know the difference.” It was, I believe, his way of saying that life goes on and that we have to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and get back to work. I’ve come to think of it as a test question as well. To determine whether what we’re doing right now is truly worth fretting over, ask whether anyone will know the difference one hundred years in the future. I have put the changes in EN101 I envision to the test, and I believe that the answer in this case is “yes.” What we do in EN101 will have long-term reverberations in the Army of the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries. How well we prepare cadets to write in difficult situations, to “think about what to do when

the what is new," may well spell the difference between a serious international incident and peaceful resolution of a conflict.

Afterword

In many ways, I regret putting closure on this text. So much of what I set out to do three years ago remains undone. But, as I reluctantly put aside that 1982 syllabus developed in a period of naïve expectation, I have also put aside the notion that I could accomplish—in the time allotted me by the Army to complete my doctorate—a study of everything I believe I must know in order to help bring the Prep School and Academy English curricula into the twenty-first century.

Much of my regret comes from knowing, too, that I will never again have that special classroom camaraderie that develops between classmates. My relationship with some classmates will remain strong, as we have developed bonds outside of the classroom. But the relationship between students in the classroom is different from that between people who have left that classroom and moved away from its special tensions, frustrations, annoyances, and—what I will always treasure—joys.

I will miss, as well, working with Ruth Vinz and David Schaafsma and Stephen Dunning, professors who came to be more to me than teachers. I treasure their friendship, and I hope that we will remain friends for many, many years. They accepted me not just into the program, but as a part of their lives. For that I am grateful.

This closure is by no means an end to doing what I set out to do three years ago. If anything, it signals the start of what will be a career-long effort to remake the Academy and Prep School English programs. It means that I no longer have the luxury of saying “I’m working on my dissertation now,” when I’m asked to sit on a

committee considering changes at the Prep School. No longer will I be able to plead having to study for my comps in order to avoid taking on another department tasking.

It means that I have to finally decide what I'm going to do when I grow up.

I am, I hope, ready to take on that challenge as well.

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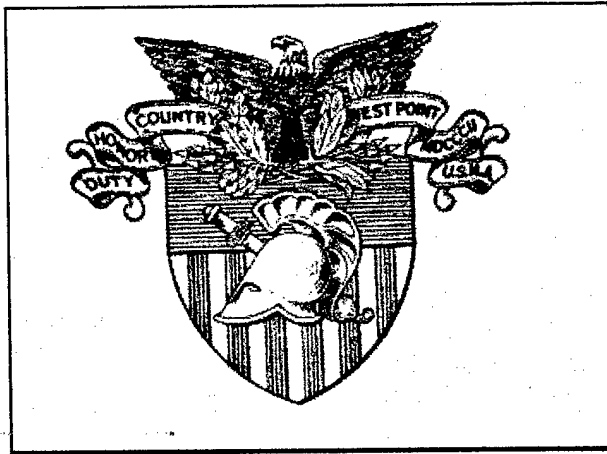
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The USMA Composition Instructor Supplemental Text: Things to think about before ever setting foot in the classroom

Preface to the Supplement

Audience

If you are a newly arrived member of either the USMA English Department's Composition faculty or the USMAPS English faculty, this text has been prepared to supplement the teacher preparation you received during New Instructor Training. Start here as you begin your journey of teaching Composition in the USMA English program.

If you've been here awhile and want new inspiration or insight into the teaching of writing, this text is for you, too.

If education is the process of coming to understand the world around us and how to act in it, and if the world around us is in a constant state of change, then education must endeavor to prepare students to deal with what no one has dealt with before. (Hillocks *Reflective* 211)

Purpose

I have developed this text to provide Composition instructors new to the United States Military Academy (who usually arrive from Master's programs in Literature) a foundation for beginning to teach Composition. It is not a "how to teach" guide. Rather, it provides a foundation for teaching Composition. It gives a very broad overview of teaching writing as a process, suggests teaching and response strategies, and reminds us of our responsibilities to a multicultural student body. The text provides, as well, words of wisdom from your predecessors. Listen to and heed them as you make the transition from Army officer/student to Army officer/teacher. Lastly, the text provides a Composition syllabus modeled on the syllabus you'll encounter this Academic Year. The text is liberally flagged with quotations from texts on Composition research and practice, as well as what I hope you will consider "words of wisdom" drawn from my own experiences here at the Academy.

What this supplement doesn't provide, however, is a sure-fire way to deal with the tensions inherent in teaching a process writing course in a product-driven environment. The truth of the matter is that, at the end of the semester, we must judge our students' work by how well they manage to meet the requirements

of Substance, Organization, Style, and Correctness laid out in the course syllabus. Are the two schools—Process and Product—mutually exclusive? I don't think so. Will we struggle as we try to give our students the best of both? Yes. But if we work together to keep this supplement a living document, the instructors who follow us will learn from our experiences.

Remembering teachers and reflecting on how they have influenced our constructions of teaching may help us understand our own beliefs and practices. (Vinz 5)

Reflective teaching

In his Foreword to George Hillocks's *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice*, Michael W. Smith reminds us that the job of the teacher of Composition is "increasing students' ability to use writing to make meaning" (Hillocks *Reflective* x). Reflective teaching—"teaching that considers what students know, uses that to engage them in more complex procedures, provides support of various kinds, and allows them to become active learners" (Hillocks *Reflective* 23)—is at the very heart of the Composition instructor's job. This text gives you some of the tools you need to become a reflective practitioner.

My ultimate intent is that all instructors develop and clearly articulate their own theories of teaching composition that acknowledge their responsibilities to their students, to the

Academy, and to themselves and their colleagues.

Please put this text to use and feel free to recommend changes. Have a good year in the classroom.

Assess yourself:

1. What language learning experiences have you had and how successful have they been? What are your criteria for judging success?
2. If you were clearly representative of all language learners, what would we have learned about language learning from reading your autobiography? What can be learned about effective (and ineffective) teaching by reading your autobiography?
3. How has your experience as a language learner influenced you as a language teacher?

(Bailey, et al. 12)

LTC Janice E. Hudley

I -- A Foundation for Teaching Composition
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A. Preface

B. The US Military Academy Preparatory School Bibliography

Process writing and writing to learn
 Active teaching: "empathy and support"
 Writers teach writing
 Transitioning from literature to composition
 Good writing lives
 Cooperative learning
 Writing beyond the composition classroom

C. Teaching Strategies

Articulate a theory of writing
Plan to be effective
 See the big picture
 Reflect on course objectives
 Write with your classes
 Become a model writer
 Share your students' pain

D. Evaluation (and Grading) Strategies

Make the standards clear
 Give helpful responses
 Ask for feedback to feedback
 Set conference agendas
 Don't seek an 'ideal text'
 Embrace individuality

E. Multiculturalism

One false assumption
 A "Monday morning" response
 The (un)real response
 Be careful of labeling
 "Absent" cadets
 Exorcise prejudice

The Department of English contributes to the total education of cadets by teaching them to organize their ideas effectively and express them clearly in writing; to understand the power of imagination and the beauty of language through a study of literature; to reason clearly, through a study of philosophy, about fundamental matters affecting their desire to lead worthy, examined lives; and to appreciate the diverse cultures that constitute America and the world by studying texts that define those *cultures*. In addition to core courses in composition, literature, and philosophy, the Department of English offers a field of study and major in Art, Philosophy, and Literature.

A. Preface

This chapter begins with a brief look at the texts our counterparts at the Prep School used in developing their most recent program of instruction, then moves into a discussion of the need for teaching strategies, emphasizing the notion that instructors at both institutions must develop into more reflective teachers. The third section of the chapter discusses grading and evaluation—hateful subjects, but which are absolute requirements at our institutions. The final section of this chapter focuses on the role this department plays in the Military Academy’s goal to have cadets learn about and live within our multicultural society.

B. The US Military Academy Preparatory School Bibliography

In the past, those of us teaching Composition at the Military Academy have snubbed our noses at the instructors in the trenches teaching “remedial English” at the Prep School. For whatever reason, we believed that, since they taught “basic” students they, too, must be basic in some way. Often, that belief revealed itself in the attitude with which we greeted the Prep School’s instructors during their annual visit to the Military Academy. We were at times dismissive, patronizing, condescending: Superior. However, the Prep School instructors are true teaching professionals, most with doctorates in English

Literature, all with pedagogical training, and most with long-time experience in the teaching of Composition—basic and otherwise.

1. Process writing and writing to learn

As we begin to develop our own course of reading in order to prepare for teaching EN101 and EN302, we should look first at some of the texts that the faculty at the Prep School have used in developing their curriculum. The Prep School English department's bibliography focuses on process writing and writing to learn. Since these are not terms often heard in Lincoln Hall, I will turn to Arthur N. Applebee in *Curriculum as Conversation: Transforming Traditions of Teaching and Learning* for a brief definition of process writing; and to Janet Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning" for an explanation of the "writing to learn" concept. I choose to use definitions advanced by Applebee and Emig because they are members of the group of "highly-respected" academicians who focus on the teaching of writing.

Applebee tells us that the move toward

What does it mean to be an educated person? What knowledge is of most worth? Are the graduates of our schools educated people? The very absence of such questioning suggests a failure in educational thinking. (Ravitch 203)

teaching writing as process began spreading in the 1970s, when writing teachers "began to conceive of writing as a set of processes of generating ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing, . . . [and] to reorganize classroom activities around their understanding of these

processes" (111). For our teaching purposes, it is important to remember that there is no set order for these processes, that they are recursive throughout the writing task, will vary from writer to writer, and will differ as the purpose for writing differs. We teach these processes as "a set of strategies that writers have found to be useful when exploring ideas or genres or experiences that are new or unfamiliar" (Applebee 113), not as rules to be followed slavishly.

It is this exploration of "ideas or genres or experiences" that Emig addresses in her short essay on writing to learn. Emig bases her early comments on research studies carried out at Harvard and Cal Tech which indicate that "[w]riting involves the fullest

possible functioning
(73). She cites
psychological and
studies that further
notion that "writing
learning because it
its pace" (75).

Writing to learn privileges the learner's language and values. **Writing to communicate** privileges the reader's language and values. The primary goal of writing to learn is *to please the writer* by leading to new discoveries, information, perspectives. The primary goal of writing to communicate is *to please the reader* in providing new discoveries, information, perspectives. (Young 11)

of the brain"
several other
educational
support the
can sponsor
can match
Writing,

unlike speech, is slow, she says, and "this slower pace allows for-- indeed, encourages--the shuttling among past, present, and future. Writing, in other words, connects the three major tenses of our experience to make meaning" (76-77). Teaching writing, therefore, is more than teaching process leading to product. We are also

responsible for ensuring that cadets come to see writing as integral to their learning across the curriculum.

The Prep School's bibliography on the teaching of composition includes James Britton's 1972 book entitled *Language and Learning*, Ken Macrorie's *Writing to Be Read* (1984), Emig's *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (1971), and several other useful texts. (Those among us who are not familiar with these texts may find it useful to skim through them early in the fall semester. You will find them, if not in the department library, in the Cadet Library or via interlibrary loan.)

2. Active teaching: "empathy and support"

Though dated (1971), *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* remains a text that challenges teachers to take an active part in their students' composing process, to write along with their students, and to help students maintain interest in writing by providing "empathy and support" (97) as well as criticism and error correction. More recent theorists have taken issue with the limitations of Emig's study

In their hurry to solve writing problems and to liberate students from oppressive pedagogies, process texts, like Emig's study and others influenced by it, favored a particular kind of writer that presented problems for writing students who had become more diverse than ever before. (Schreiner 101)
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composition

(notably, Stephen North, in his *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*; and Steven Schreiner,

in “A Portrait of the Student as a Young Writer: Re-evaluating Emig and the Process Movement,” take great pains to dissect the study); however, the core truths of her study remain intact. As a group of instructors, those of us at the Academy and the Prep School are well versed in providing the “empathy and support” that Emig proposes as a key element in teaching writing. We do less well in the other two categories. We must, it seems to me, consider more carefully the types of assignments we give to our students and test the worth of those assignments by responding to them ourselves. Additionally, we must make it our goal to continually improve our written responses to students’ writing attempts.

3. Writers teach writing

Donald Graves’s 1983 text, *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*, echoes Emig’s contention that writing teachers must be writers as well. Teachers who have not “wrestled with writing,” he says, cannot “effectively teach the writer’s craft” (6). Graves provides an extensive primer for the teacher on how to teach writing as craft, and how to help students work from idea to rough sketch through revisions to completed projects. He provides guides for

I teach because my eyebrows raise in delighted surprise when a writer speaks about a draft and says things that neither she nor I would have thought on our own. I write because, as grueling as it can sometimes be—almost like lifting bricks off an assembly line as my father did in the 1920s—I love the small success that come with picking the right word, following a line of language in argument and image, perceiving a new idea, seeing meaning emerge from flash of memory or chaos of data.
(Romano 17)

conferencing at various stages in a paper's process, and tries to help teachers deal with what he calls "writer variability" (270). I remember that, during the early days of my first assignment to West Point, I was unprepared for what Graves so generously calls "variability" in writing ability. My expectations—built on the belief that students who had achieved status as "cadets" would certainly have few troubles with writing—were so badly shattered that I found myself calling my mother long distance, reading paper after paper to her in disbelief, and asking "What can I possibly do in one semester to fix *this*?" Somehow, my fellow first-year instructors and I survived that initial semester and managed to help most of our cadets succeed in EN101. I can't help but think, though, that if we had known of Graves's work, we would have been less shell-shocked by TEE time.

4. Transitioning from literature to composition

Carol Laque's and Phyllis Sherwood's 1977 text, *A Laboratory Approach to Writing*, attempts to guide English educators who may have been better prepared to teach literature than Freshman Composition through a program that will prepare them to teach writing as process. Since most of us come from MA programs in literature, this book speaks to many of our practical concerns about teaching the writing process. The book guides teachers through planning, prewriting, writing, revising, even

group work and peer evaluation. It provides a lengthy bibliography to help the literature teacher make a smooth transition to becoming a teacher of composition. The book's very practicality, however, could lure us into treating the teaching of writing as a mechanical task, rather than as the complex learning activity we know it to be. While for some of us (though not all, I'm sure—certainly not for me), writing has become a nearly automatic process, we need to constantly remind ourselves that our students don't share our experience or love for writing. If we teach writing mechanically, we may miss the last chance to help this batch of cadets find what Ken Macrorie calls their "authentic voices."

5. Good writing lives

In *Writing to be Read*, Macrorie emphasizes the fact that good writing, powerful writing, has a life of its own. His book, primarily aimed at writers, provides writing samples from students around the country that illustrate the life, the voice, the character that he means when he writes about writing. He devotes his last chapter, "Suggestions to Teachers," to giving English teachers ideas on how to set up a classroom climate that contributes to what he calls the "three essentials":

- raising the level of truth-telling in a class
- inducing students in the first week to forget their English-teacher-inspired fears, and find authentic voices in writing

“—creating a seminar in which students help each other learn the disciplines of the writing craft – partly unconsciously, as they constantly hear their writing and that of others read aloud and see it responded to” (269).

6. Cooperative learning

By their very nature, the Prep School and Military Academy stifle open honesty (while focusing on ‘honor’). Rigid codes of discipline reinforce any fears that cadets bring from their high school classrooms. Still, the cadet candidates’ and cadets’ unwritten motto, “Cooperate and graduate,” simplifies our job when it comes to teaching them to listen and respond to each others’ writing.

7. Writing beyond the composition classroom

In his 1972 work, *Language and Learning*, James Britton is not simply concerned with teaching writing, but primarily with

When the academy charges us to make sure students write correctly, we behave like novices and take the frontal approach: we teach grammar, often much the same way that we were taught. Were we to behave like the experts we really are, we would look instead for cognitive relationships and examine exactly what principles of grammar students need to know to write well. (Webb 139)

examining how our use of language helps to inform our understanding of the world in which we live. He concludes his examination of the work of Piaget, Harding, Vygotsky, Luria, and others by reminding us that “we

cannot afford to underestimate the value of language as a means of organizing and consolidating our accumulated experience, or its

value as a means of interacting with people and objects to create experience" (278-9). He, too, provides an extensive bibliography designed to help teachers better prepare themselves for the classroom. His work serves to remind us that writing is a powerful tool for learning and that, as we help our students hone their writing skills, we should continually reinforce writing as a useful tool for studying subjects other than English.

8. No easy answers to teaching composition

Perhaps the most practical of the books from the Prep School bibliography are Timothy Donovan and Ben McClelland's *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition* and Miles Myers and James Gray's *Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Composition: Processing, Distancing, and Modeling*. These two texts provide

essays by teachers
from all over
the country who
have tried
various methods of
teaching
composition and
found varying

We must fight the tendency to think we know the subject we teach because we cannot know it—not in its entirety, and certainly not in advance of the text the student produces . . . (Crusius 59)

levels of success in their approaches. Perhaps the most important message the two books give us is that, while there is no one "right" way to teach our students to write, there certainly are a good number of "wrong" ways. The variety of approaches represented in the two books gives teachers currently struggling to develop a

personal method of teaching writing both flexibility of choice and reassurance that change is acceptable.

C. Teaching Strategies

While we each must develop our own teaching persona, we need a common approach to teaching writing as we prepare our students to meet a department-wide standard. We expect cadets in all of our courses to meet—in varying degrees, with growth from cadet-candidate to Plebe to Firstie—certain standards in the areas we call Substance, Organization, Style, and Correctness. George

Determine, as well as we can, the essential features and strategies of the writing tasks;
 Invent gateway activities that enable students to engage in those strategies;
 Evaluate these introspectively;
 Develop sequences . . . to develop the full range of strategies . . . required by the particular writing task;
 Put our inventions into practice so that they may be assessed and redesigned as necessary; and
 Evaluate the full sequence.
 (Hillocks *Reflective* 150)

Hillocks says that far too many college composition teachers assume that “teaching is telling, [and that] proper teaching has taken place when the proper basic formulas about writing have been

presented” (*Reflective* 28). We assume that, after we have explained to our students what we mean when we ask for more substance, better organization, clearer style, and absolute correctness, if they still produce faulty texts, then “they are weak and cannot be expected to learn” (28). If the criteria we use to evaluate student writing are as

important as we imply, our involvement in our students' learning processes should be as intense (perhaps more so) as their own.

1. Articulate a theory of writing

The substance of student writing does not improve because we as teachers will it; we must "help students learn how to generate information, analyze it, and plan how to use it" (Hillocks *Research* 231). We at the Prep School and the Military Academy often think that, because we assign a reading and write a question that should elicit a focused response, our students' failure to write to our expectations is their fault.

That failure is partially ours if we have not helped our students, as readers, "accept and carry out the tremendous responsibility of giving a voice" to the texts we assign them to read (Salvatori, 441). If we can teach our

Writing curricula must be developed locally. In the first place, there is no way to ensure that teachers will follow some prescribed curriculum guide. That, I think, is as it should be. Teachers who plan their own curricula are more likely to be reflective about them . . . In the second place, as any teacher knows, different classes react differently to the same materials . . . Third, to put some idealized curriculum in place would be to ignore the potentially rich local resources for writing. Hillocks *Reflective* 187.

students to have "conversations with texts," to "think of reading . . . as an analogue for thinking about one's own and others' thinking" (Salvatori, 446), then perhaps we'll have gone a long way toward solving our students' (and our own) substance problems. It's also true that we are responsible for our students' learning to organize their writing, develop effective personal styles, and write

without distracting correctness problems. I propose that each of us must develop and clearly articulate our own theories of teaching composition that acknowledge our responsibilities to our students, to this institution, and to ourselves.

2. Plan to be effective

I didn't understand until I began teaching that what happened each day was a construction that resulted from an interaction between many competing and often contradictory forces. Very different outcomes resulted between what I intended to put into practice day after day, hour after hour, and year after year and what actually occurred in the classroom situation. (Vinz 167)

While we all work from the same basic syllabus for the Prep School writing classes or EN101 or EN302, we have great leeway in developing individual writing assignments. That leeway may help to reinforce our status as learned academicians or as Army officers and leaders, but that very freedom may give a false sense of confidence. We may forget that, while we may be wonderful writers and proven scholars of Literature, most of us (at the Academy, at least) did not study any theories of teaching Composition and may not be as proficient in that arena as we would like. However, since both EN101 and EN302 focus on the teaching of Composition, not Literature, we have to quickly develop strategies for teaching. Whatever strategies we develop, though, cannot—as Salvatori reminds us—

One ongoing task, which I hope you will share with me, is to develop writing-to-communicate assignments and classroom practices that encourage sincere and authentic communication. (Young 39)

“be lifted out of [a] theoretical framework . . . [and used as]

Most of the reflection that occurs in teaching is not available to anyone other than the teacher. A departure from a previously laid-out plan usually indicates that the teacher has reconsidered certain variables and decided to change the plan. However, much of the reflection and resultant decision making is more finely detailed than most of the considerations included in the explicit plan. Reflection-in-action is based on the moment-to-moment observation of student responses to logistical, instructional, and social particulars of learning activities. Hillocks *Reflective* 202.

transportable tips or prescriptions” for teaching (*Reflective* 446).

Rather, our strategies must grow from what Hillocks calls the “art” of “planning for effective teaching” (*Reflective*, 124). We cannot, as we may be wont to do, replicate our own Freshman Composition experiences in our classrooms unless we consciously work through the theories and assumptions underlying those experiences.

3. See the big picture

It is clearly not enough to think carefully through curricular designs and activities and daily teaching. All of these have to add up to something. And that ought to be something we can see by the end of the sequence. We need to look at our students’ writing and ask to what extent and in what ways it has improved as a result of our teaching. There is no reason that most students should not show improvement. If they do not, the teaching needs to change. Hillocks *Reflective* 207.

We may make the mistake of assuming that, because the syllabus lays out the readings and tells us when to discuss them, when to give quizzes, and when to collect papers, we need not worry about how everything fits together. Worse yet, we may ignore the necessity of making clear to students the logic and interconnectedness of the reading and writing assignments. We

may not even ask ourselves how we should go about helping students meet the course objectives. For example, the AY97 EN101 course objectives were:

1. To develop your competence as a college-level writer. That competence includes:
 - a. The ability to read critically.
 - b. The ability to think deeply and logically.
 - c. Skill in working through the various parts of the writing process.
 - d. Skill in managing the effects of English diction and syntax.
 - e. Proficiency in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
 To offer you the opportunity to explore our nation's cultural diversity. (EN101 Syllabus AY1996-97)

4. Reflect on course objectives

How do these objectives reflect our responsibilities as writing instructors? What must we do to help our students meet these objectives? What is our role? How can we help our students to “reach the final goals we have in mind for the written page” (Weathers 325)? Is there a coherent theory underlying the course objectives? Do they reflect a “theor[y] of reading [that is] unreflexively performed *for* students”? Or, preferably, a “theor[y] that turn[s] texts and readers into ‘interlocutors’ of each other” (Salvatori 444)? Do these objectives and their accompanying assignments reflect “a value-laden theory that helps us to reason about which writing tasks are more important” (Hillocks *Reflective* 126) for our students? If, as Lynn Z. Bloom suggests, “freshman

composition . . . reinforces the values and virtues embodied not only in the very existence of America's vast middle class, but in its general well-being" (655), which are the "values and virtues" emphasized by our syllabus?

Certainly, these objectives should suggest the need to carefully reflect on what each means for us as individuals:

What do I understand "critical reading" to mean?
 What does it mean "to think deeply and logically"?
 What, really, is "the writing process"?
 What are "the effects of English diction and syntax" and how do I go about "managing" them?
 At least I understand the objective for "proficiency in grammar, punctuation, and spelling." Or do I, really?

5. Write with your classes

As you prepare to teach EN102, you become a student again, writing and submitting your writing to the Course Director, who requests revision after revision until you've successfully written the eighteen or so essays you'll use to help your students negotiate the

poetry that they'll be reading during spring semester.

As you labor over the essays,

[I]n a society much given to offering painless ways to do hard things—lose 20 pounds in three weeks, do five minutes of these daily exercises for a wonderful body, use this cream and shed your wrinkles, read this book and rejuvenate your marriage—it is worth emphasizing that writing takes great dedication and effort. Out of the writing itself may come understandings that enhance our lives, insights that stun and energize, products that touch us and others deeply, and pleasure in the writing that is narcotic in its call to stay at it—but not without effort. (Ely, et al 7-8)

rewriting and swearing silently at the Course Director as he "bleeds" all over your papers, you find it hard to imagine that this exercise is worthwhile. As fall semester ticks to its end and you

accumulate your folder of completed, Course Director-approved essays, you sigh with relief that the torture is over. And then, during spring semester, you find to your amazement that the pain of writing these essays brings tangible rewards: You have a clear idea of the difficulties your students will face when you assign the

Most of my own progress in learning to write has come from my gradually learning to listen more carefully to what I haven't yet managed to get into words—and respecting the idea that I know more than I can say. This stance helps me be willing to find time and energy to wrestle it into words. The most unhelpful thing I've had said to me as a student and writer is, "If you can't say it, you don't know it." Imagine, then, how different our classrooms would be if all academics and teachers felt themselves to be writers as much as readers. (Elbow *Writer/Academic* 77)

questions to which they must respond, and a clear idea of the strategies they'll need to use as writers to successfully respond to them. You are, in essence, a more effective teacher; because you have struggled

with the same writing assignments, you refined them until they are now effective learning tools for your students.

I suggest that you do the same for EN101 and EN302, without (at least for now) the intrusion of the Course Director. We know that "teachers and students can have very different [basic understandings] of what a writing task entails," and that "[h]ow students interpret writing tasks can have significant effects on their performance" (Wallace 182). Wallace suggests that teachers should, as part of the dialogue with students at the time of an assignment, ask them directly what they believe that assignment

requires of them as writers. I suggest that, in addition—before we give a writing assignment—we spend the sort of time and effort in responding to it and refining it as we spend on our EN102 assignments.

6. Become a model writer

Hillocks tells us that “[t]he approaches to teaching that seemed to have the most powerful effects on student writing . . . always had clear, specific objectives . . . [and that] instructors appear to have made objectives operationally clear to the students by modeling the procedures, coaching students through them in the early stages, or using specially designed activities to facilitate learning” (*Reflective* 58). All that work you devoted to the EN102 essays made it possible for you to model your writing process for your students; you were conscious of possible roadblocks to successfully completing the essays and were able to be your students’ coach; you may even have developed some special methods for “facilitat[ing] learning.”

Hillocks uses an example from his days as a youthful piano student:

Learning to produce the *legato* necessary for Debussy’s “Dr. Gradus ad Parnassum” was comparable [to learning to use a clutch]. My teacher demonstrated in detail, explained the effect I was supposed to be after, asked me to try it, then made as verbally explicit as she could what I was to do: “Don’t attack the notes. Use more pressure, but it has to be

even. Don't release too quickly. Keep it smooth. More pressure here! Lean into it. You're getting it!" She would sing with me to help me get the emotional quality. That is explicit to my mind. And I am convinced that being explicit is important. (*Reflectiv* 122-123)

I'm not suggesting that you always share your writing with your cadets, though that certainly is a viable option and one that you will use to good effect with cadets in your EN102 classes. But, if you write in preparation for making writing assignments and share your work occasionally, you will be more effective in presenting those assignments to them and receive more successful products from your cadets.

7. Share your students' pain

I believe, too, that this attention we pay to our own writing and our struggle with it will allow us to be more honest with our cadets about the pains—and joys—of the writing process. Gary Tate (another leading scholar of Composition) says that a primary goal for writing teachers is “to help students pay more attention to themselves *as writers*” (Tate 6; his emphasis). Tate reminds us that “many of [our students] come to us feeling inferior, having been subjected to years of criticism and red marks on their papers” (6). In our role as (more-

How can we help them? It would be a start to treat both student writing and what students say about their writing with a rhetorical and ethical respect for the different intelligences which they represent. (Grego and Thompson 74-75)

experienced) writers helping (less-experienced) writers, we can share our writing experiences with our students “in order to banish forever the idea that ‘good’ writers always ‘know how to do it’” (6). Tate says that we must convince students that “‘writers,’ [are] people who, no matter how widely published and revered, face the same essential problems that students face every time they sit down” to write (6).

D. Evaluation (and Grading) Strategies

No matter how nurturing we are, no matter how reassuring, at some point we must evaluate—grade—papers. All of us teachers are keenly aware of the importance of grades. Only those cadet candidates who earn a C average or better will become cadets. A cadet who fails faces possible dismissal from the Corps.

If we have done as Richard Larson suggests, then while we may still have some anxieties about the power vested in our grades, we gain comfort from knowing that we

Grades are currently an integrated, even central, part not only of our academic institutions but also of our entire society. I am not only talking about the literal power of grades—the fact that they are used to determine class rank and scholarships and graduate school admissions: I’m also talking about their tremendous psychic power, about the way they shape a student’s self-image and self-esteem. (Tobin 60)

have done our best to prepare our students. Larson says that a writing assignment “ought not to be given simply to evoke an essay that can be judged. Its purpose should be to teach, to give

students an experience in composing . . . from which [they] can learn as much as [they] can from the reactions of [their] teacher[s] to [their] essay[s]" (209).

1. Make the standards clear

One key factor in teaching is, I believe, sharing with our students our standards for evaluation. "[L]et the students know on what standards they will be judged," Larson tells us (217). Now, of course at the beginning of each semester, we go over the syllabus with our students, and the syllabus outlines our grading standards:

Standards. Satisfactory written work displays the following:

1. Worthwhile substance (a thoughtful response to the writing requirement).
2. A sound organization (an appropriate arrangement of the parts of the paper).
3. An effective style (tone, diction, and syntax suited to the aim of the writing).
4. General correctness (adherence to the conventions of standard written English). (EN101 Syllabus AY 1997-98)

This may all sound clear as crystal to us, but it won't mean anything to our students unless we do more than just point out the words on the page. One method that I have found very helpful, as early as lesson one, is to distribute a copy of the course-wide essay exam (CWE) evaluation sheet used in the course, along with previous years' CWEs and copies of unmarked student responses

to those exams. It doesn't take long, really, for cadets to understand why one paper meets the standards while another does not. Over the course of the semester, I return to that CWE evaluation sheet and help students learn to apply those standards when reviewing their own writing or responding to their classmates' writing. I find that the more they understand of the process we use to evaluate and grade their papers, the more they trust the grades they receive.

2. Give helpful responses

More important than the grade is the written (or oral, in conference) response to a paper. Mary H. Beeven says that "when [she] was in grade school, one of [her] papers was returned with this comment: 'I cannot grade thoughts such as these. You must write about something nice or pretty'" (180). This is hardly the sort

of response
writing.
for the
nothing

It is important to *encourage* writing with students. Students' motivation and outlook on writing can change as a result of just one bad comment or critical remark. (Rogers and Danielson 64)

that will generate better
Rather, it will reinforce
student that s/he has
useful to say, and s/he

will try to write something "safe" for future assignments. Beeven says that teacher comments "help to create an environment for writing" (179). Part of enhancing that environment is to give comments that are helpful rather than useless or, worse, hurtful.

3. Ask for feedback to feedback

In "Responding to Student Writing: Written Dialogues on Writing and Revision,"

I think first we have to change our attitudes about error and, if possible, our students' attitudes toward us as error hunters. As Lee Odell has put it, most people think of English teachers as they do of policemen—people who lurk in the shadows waiting for people to make mistakes so they can punish them for it. (Hairston 122)

Ruth Jenkins cites research that "confirm[s] the importance of text-specific marginal and end comments that should serve to signal options or reveal the reader's reactions rather than correct or rewrite the students' texts" (82).

Following her reading of that research, Jenkins asked her students to respond to her comments on their writing. "To [her] chagrin and benefit, . . . [her] students wrote that often [her] comments were not only vague, unclear and ambiguous . . . but also that they lacked any real sense of instruction" (83). She realized that, in order for her students to profit by—to learn from and apply that learning to future writing—she had to provide "clear comments, clearly located" (84) in their texts.

When she put her reading of a research report into active use, Jenkins found that

Teachers have difficulty moving from the teacher-as-mentor role to the teacher-as-evaluator role. After they have mentored a student, seen how much progress he or she has made, observed what difficulties he or she has overcome, it is difficult to step back into the role of "objective" evaluator. There are no easy resolutions to the resulting tension teachers sometimes feel when they want to give students an honest evaluation of their writing and yet encourage further growth and learning. (Young 54)

her students "no longer wrote individual assignments in isolation; they began to write in a context which included past papers and

comments" (84). I have heard whispered around the English faculties at the Prep School and the Academy that cadet candidates and cadets look only at the grade

and not at the comments we have so laboriously struggled to give. Perhaps, if we take Jenkins's lead and ask students to respond to our comments, we might find that they look only at the grade because our comments are not useful for their learning.

4. Set conference agendas

In addition to putting written comments on papers we return to students, we often hold conferences with them as another means of responding to student writing and charting their progress through the semester. Recent research on conferences suggests that teachers should "select a relevant teaching point to address . .

. . . rather than just facilitat[e] a free-form discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of a given paper" (Patthey-Chavez and Ferris 86). A significant finding during their research was that teachers were "giving *quantifiably less* instruction to weaker students than to stronger

We need to know what students do as writers, for both planning and the evaluation of our own teaching. Further, we need to track progress over the course of our teaching. To do that we need a theory of quality for each writing task. At the very least, the theory must include (1) a conception of the range of features of the type, (2) an understanding of how the features work together to achieve the substantive and affective purposes, and (3) a conception of how audience response may be affected by variations in the features and the way they work together. (Hillocks *Reflective* 132)

students" (87; their emphasis). The teachers in the survey learned that they took a more "collegial" stance toward their strong students and by so doing, actually gave less instruction to the students who needed instruction the most. The teachers involved in the study were understandably shaken when they heard the

tapes of their conferences. Though the study does not address how they went about changing their conferencing strategies, it certainly indicates that we might all do well to take a closer look at our own conference behaviors.

5. Don't seek an 'ideal text'

No matter how our responding to student papers takes

Nicely done. The basic five-paragraph format works well for you and the paper is well-organized as a result. But the second paragraph needs some attention to transitional elements and certainly you need to catch the mechanical errors throughout. Focus attention on these two elements in your next paper in order to get over the hump of competent writing. As always, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to see me. **C**

(Smith 264-5)

You've done an excellent job with this evaluation you found so difficult to write. You are especially strong at supporting your claims with examples and backing them up with appropriate outside sources.

Ideally, you would spend a little more time establishing why you chose particular criteria (and not others). Remember in future writing that this is important.

Also remember the importance of locating well-respected scholars in the field who support your position. Some claims in this evaluation might be seriously challenged because there is much controversy about Washington's "truthfulness" these days. Show knowledge of other supports to help your defense. Great attention to sentence structure, transitions, and paragraph coherence as well. **A**

Which is a "better" response? Why?

place, whether on the page or in conference, our comments "should be full enough to let each student see exactly where he succeeded, where he failed, and why" (Larson 218). The success or failure of a paper should not, however, be predicated on the student's ability to meet the teacher's view of an "Ideal Text," Lil

Brannon and C.H. Knoblauch remind us. Brannon and Knoblauch's research indicates that "adherence to an Ideal Text interferes with the ability to read student writing in ways that can best help writers to achieve their goals" (159). When we have an "Ideal Text" in mind, we tend to tell the student what to do in order to achieve that text. Rather, the teacher should "serve as a sounding-board enabling the writer to see confusions in the text and encouraging the writer to explore alternatives" in keeping with the effect the writer wants to achieve (162).

6. Embrace individuality

We might otherwise run the risk of "mov[ing] toward system, toward a vision of students not as discrete individuals, but as in some ways comparable units acting according to articulable general principles" (North 152-153). That's an especially big risk at the Prep School and the Academy, if for no other reason than that our students are

What should teachers do about helping students acquire an additional oral form? First, they should recognize that the linguistic form a student brings to school is intimately connected with loved ones, community, and personal identity. To suggest that this form is "wrong" or, even worse, ignorant, is to suggest that something wrong with the student and his or her family. (Delpit 53)

already expected to fit certain molds. Their clothes are uniform. Their responses are, often, uniform. Why aren't *they*? Beneath the green or gray uniforms, each heart beats a little differently. The hats cover a multitude of individual minds molded in various cultures from across the country and around the world.

E. Multiculturalism

I began my under-graduate career in 1969, the year following the deaths of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. In response to those deaths, many colleges and universities—including the college I attended—instituted Martin Luther King Scholarships, intended to open the doors of colleges to black students who had the will and talent, though not necessarily the academic background, to pursue college educations.

"The constraint of inferior education for blacks at the high school level is largely removed during the college years" . . . The result is that at the end of four years of higher education, black students' intelligence test scores closely resemble their white counterparts' scores. The most important point is that the level of ability black students exhibit at the end of college would have been greatly underestimated based on how they tested when they took college entrance exams in high school. (*Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 18, Winter 1997/1998: 37)

The number of black students in Augsburg College's entering Class of 1973, therefore, was significantly larger than the number enrolled previously. (Perhaps there were 20 of us in a total class of 600+.) The biggest adjustment I faced my freshman year was learning how to stay warm. I had grown up in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Minneapolis—beautiful in spring and summer—was cold in fall and bitterly cold in winter. None of my freshman year teachers assumed that, because I was black and from the south, I needed additional or special assistance. Or, if one did, s/he never approached me with any such concerns. So, when I returned for

my sophomore year and enrolled in an upper-division English Literature course, the title of which escapes me now, I was unprepared for my professor's offer of assistance.

1. One false assumption

That professor asked me—the only black student in the class—to stay after for just a few minutes on the first class day.

Once the classroom was empty, he told me that he had heard I was

Coming to judgment too quickly, drawing on information too narrowly, and saying hurtful, discrediting, dehumanizing things without undisputed proof are not appropriate. Such behavior is not good manners. (Royster 32)

from Little Rock and that he, too, was from the South. I immediately thought that he wanted to talk about “back

home,” perhaps consider what the South was becoming, in light of the turmoil of the '60s. I was set straight right away when he said, “It's a shame we rushed to bring so many black students here. I realize that you probably aren't ready for this class. Lord knows, I know what black schools are like in the South. I just want you to know that my door is open to you whenever you need help.” For once I wished I had my mother's wicked tongue. Instead of telling him off, however, I simply smiled sweetly, said “Thank you,” and left without clueing him in.

2. A "Monday morning" response

What I should have said was this: "Obviously, you have

We all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly different. We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist? Indeed, many of us don't even realize that our own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions we have built to support them. It is as if we are in the middle of a great computer-generated virtual reality game, but the "realities" displayed in various participants' minds are entirely different terrains. (Delpit xiv)

mistaken me for someone else. Had you bothered to check my school records and transcript, you would have seen that I am here on National Merit and Augsburg Honor Scholarships. You might also have seen that I validated the second semester of Freshman English and began taking upper-division English courses in spring semester of my

freshman year. You might have noticed, too, that I made the Dean's List both semesters. You can't just assume that because I'm black that I'm also in some way deficient. It just doesn't work that way."

3. The (un)real response

Instead, I left, speechless and angry, and responded with typical 19-year-old maturity: I blew off his course, attending only when necessary to take an exam or turn in an essay. I passed the course with a "C." But I never explained that I was angry with

him; I never explained my behavior. I avoided taking any further classes with him. I suspect that, in later years, someone finally told him that appearances could be deceiving and that he shouldn't make assumptions based on skin color alone. But I didn't. I regret that.

4. Be careful of labeling

Which is the long way into talking about the multicultural student bodies at the Prep School and the Academy. We know that, at the Prep School, the enrollment "objectives" are 25-30% African-American; 5-10% Hispanic and Native American; 10-15%

"... The fact is, the genuine American, the typical American, is himself a hyphenated character. It does not mean that he is part American and that some foreign ingredient is in his make-up. He is not American plus Pole or German. But the American is himself Pole-German-English-French-Spanish-Italian-Greek-Irish-Scandinavian-Bohemian-Jew—and so on. The point is to see to it that the hyphen connects instead of separates. And this means at least that our public schools shall teach each factor to respect every other, and shall take pains to enlighten us all as to the great past contributions of every strain in our composite make-up." (Glazer 275)

women; and 25% athletes.¹ The Academy has enrollment "objectives," also: 20-25% top scholars; 20-25% outstanding leaders; 20-25% outstanding athletes; 10-15% women; 12-15%

soldiers; 7-9% African-Americans; 4-6% Hispanic Americans; 2-3% other minorities.² It should be obvious from the numbers that there is a great deal of overlap, and that none of us should assume

¹US Military Academy Preparatory School Decision Memorandum, 18 October 1993, Tab B.

that we “lower our standards” in order to admit members of any minority groups, that they are less capable, or that they need remediation. Assume a basic level of competence initially for all students; provide assistance to all who need it, regardless of color.

5. “Absent” cadets

My intent here, I hope, is clear. No one of us should make the same mistake with our students that my long-ago professor made in my case. While cadet candidates and cadets can’t choose not to attend class physically, they have their own methods of “blowing off” class; they leave their minds back in the barracks; they live down to your expectations of them.

6. Exorcise Prejudice

The Department of English, in great measure, spearheads our institutional drive toward understanding of people from many cultures. Old habits of mind, however, die hard and, in an institution still so heavily white and male, many evidences of continuing insensitivity are ignored or dismissed. John Dewey’s 1934 admonition to educators, however, clearly indicates that the death of these old habits is long overdue:

Unless the schools of the world can engage in a common effort to rebuild the spirit of common understanding, of mutual sympathy and goodwill

² Memorandum for Admissions Committee, USMA, “Class Composition for USMA Class of 2001,” 29 October 1996.

among all peoples and races, to exorcise the demon of prejudice, isolation and hatred, the schools themselves are likely to be submerged by the general return to barbarism, which is the sure outcome of present tendencies if they go on unchecked by the forces which education alone can evoke and fortify. (John Dewey, "Need for a Philosophy of Education." *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*. Ed. Reginald Archambault. New York: The Modern Library, 1964. 13-14)

We in the Department of English must take very seriously our charge to "rebuild the spirit of common understanding," helping our students enter the Twenty-first Century with greater sensitivity to and respect for each other and people of different backgrounds. To do that, we must begin by examining the ways we respond to those cadets who don't look like or speak like or act like us. Are we judging cadets based on what we "know" from their race, sex, or ethnic background? Are we telling "war stories" that leave racist or sexist or classist notions unchallenged? Are we ignoring comments from cadets that might fit in those categories? Before we can prepare cadets to be leaders of a diverse military, each of us must spend time on self-examination and self-reflection.

II -- Transforming Soldiers into Writing Teachers: Wisdom from your predecessors

A. Preface

B. Surveying the departing soldier-leaders

Instructor preparation
EN101
EN302
Department Attitude

B. Where do we go from here?

Instructor preparation
The future of EN101
Meeting challenges of EN302
Department attitude

Preface

When I reported to the United States Military Academy for the very first time, in the spring of 1984, I was, like most of my colleagues—and most of you—fresh from a fully funded Master's program in Literature in English. We were all probably well qualified to teach courses in literature, but our initial responsibilities lay in teaching EN101—the freshman writing course. We simply were not qualified to teach writing and the preparation program at USMA did very little to ready us before the first classes met in August.

From 1984 until my group left in 1987, though, the two follow-on core English courses, EN102, Introduction to Literature; and EN301, Advanced Literature, provided us the opportunities we needed to put our literature degrees to good use. In time, too, we became better teachers of composition. In the years since 1987, however, our core courses have become, primarily, composition courses. We have not kept pace with the change, unfortunately, and still send potential instructors to Master's programs in Literature in English. Nor has much been done to improve our departmental preparation for incoming instructors.

This was brought home to me very graphically in May 1997 when a woman about to graduate who was one of several cadets I had mentored for two years, recounted to me an experience she had had with her EN101 instructor. One afternoon, about mid-semester, she went to him with a question about her grade on a paper. She told him that she believed he had not graded the paper on the quality of the writing, but on the position she had taken—one with which he clearly disagreed. Rather than consider her suggestion and try to examine the paper dispassionately, he responded that “a soldier is not supposed to question the commander's decision. The grade that you received stands as is.” That instructor had come to the department the same year she entered USMA, direct from his Master's program. He had

completed our one-week New Instructor Training (NIT) Program, and had been teaching composition for about eight weeks. We had not provided him the tools he needed to deal with a cadet questioning her grade, so he used the only tool with which he felt comfortable—his authority as an officer. This young woman went on to major in English and is currently on our list of prospective instructors once she completes mandatory Army requirements. But that experience remains vivid for her. I want to do all that I can to insure that no future instructors fall back on the pat “I’m the leader, you’re the follower, so there,” answer to cadet questions. While that response might be the best one in the “Real Army,” our academic setting requires different responses. A more teacherly response might have been to note her comments, take the paper back for review—perhaps by a more experienced instructor—and seriously consider the possibility that he HAD graded the paper based on something other than its merits.

A. Surveying the Departing Soldier-Teachers

I formally surveyed the twelve military instructors who departed the USMA Department of English during the summer of 1997. All of them had taught either EN101, Introduction to Composition; or EN302, Advanced Composition, during their three- or four-year assignment. Many had taught both courses.

The survey questions considered what preparation the instructors might have received before arriving at West Point and focused on how well our NIT program prepared them to teach and evaluate student writing. The survey represents the beginning of what I hope will be a several years-long study of the USMA English program.

1. Instructor Preparation

The departing instructors are generally supportive of New Instructor Training (NIT) as we currently conduct it at West Point. One, for instance, had "studied beaucoup Lit Crit, Lit Theory, and Comp Theory in Grad school, [but] had zero prep for grammar. The NIT grammar is the most beneficial prep you can provide."

Another was

grateful, for example, that we do not require instructors to teach all 40 lessons for critiquing (as some departments do) before presenting them in the classroom. A lock-step presentation may be fine for math (although even in this case I have my doubts), but it is inappropriate, I believe, for the liberal arts. Even at a military school, instructors in the liberal arts should be permitted to allow their own personalities to show in their teaching in a way that a too-carefully choreographed class does not.

Several of the departing officers were candid enough to admit that they wished they had had some classes in graduate school on the practical aspects of teaching composition. Still, most agreed that "there is more than enough collegial help in house from old

hands to help the new instructor rapidly adjust with a minimum of pain." Several instructors, nevertheless, had suggestions about what we could do to ease the transition of new instructors even before they reach West Point. One, who admitted that he still was not sure of what we do even after completing NIT, suggested we give "prospective instructors sample essays [to] help them realistically prepare for the rigors of their first semester."

Another suggested that we encourage incoming instructors to do as he had during grad school:

In preparation for teaching composition, I did some volunteer work at my university's Writing Center. I signed up for times on a roster and would be on call for a couple of hours two or three times a week to read student papers from my discipline. This gave me confidence in my own abilities to give feedback and one can even get college credit—although I didn't. I learned that I didn't have to know every grammar rule to give good feedback, and I was able to put into practice some of the current composition theories that I was learning in graduate school.

Most agreed that they needed both theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching Composition. Several mentioned that they found themselves "reinventing the wheel" as they went through EN101 their first semester. One even admitted that such reinvention recurred each fall:

By the end of every semester teaching 101, I thought that I "had it." That is, I had discovered a logical, coherent process for improving my cadets' writing ability. But whether due to the rush of events or my own inability, I was never able to capture my lessons learned

and apply them to the next semester's students. Thus, I "reinvented the wheel" every year.

All of the instructors mentioned lack of time as a major factor in their inability to prepare as they would have liked for EN101. Many of them felt constrained—as they prepared for EN102 during the fall semester—from working on refining their EN101 prompts and quizzes. It was all they could do, several of them admitted, just to get the grading done.

2. EN101

Few instructors felt comfortable teaching EN101 during their first semester here. "Although I did not take any composition theory classes," one who did feel comfortable said, "I felt reasonably well prepared (and qualified) to teach composition when I arrived. I did, however, find a structured syllabus as was provided in EN101 to be very helpful."

Other instructors, though, found some level of frustration with cadet preparation for EN101:

I believe that we should begin the EN101 semester at a much more basic level. That is, we should begin at sentence level errors, proceed to paragraph composition, and then begin writing shorter essays before moving to 3-5 page papers. Our students are not so good that they wouldn't benefit from some basic grammar and correctness/error-avoidance training.

I think the most significant failing in the West Point writing program is assuming that cadets can read well or that cadets can read closely. I don't think they do either.

We as a department insist that writing is thinking and thinking is writing. The cadets are supposed to think about an ongoing discourse about date rape, race relations, you have it, and they are supposed to become informed about this discourse through the essays we have them read. Unfortunately, they lack the skills necessary to access the texts. Hence, they are uninformed about the issues they are writing about. I usually end up telling them what each article is about simply so I don't have to read too much garbage.

One expressed dismay at the subject matter:

I can't say that I am a big fan of using social issues as the subject matter for a composition class. Among other things, I believe that models of good writing (i.e. literature) best serve to inspire intelligent, graceful writing by students.

Let's ask ourselves how we can help kids choose reading more often as something that they WANT to do for pleasure, for information, for connections to the world. . . . And above all let's recognize that we are all learning to read all the time. Every text is a new challenge and helps deepen and enrich our competence. So rather than saying 'our students can't read' let's say: 'ALL our students are learning to read better all the time, and I'm helping them today by _____.'
What would fill in those blanks?" (Schaafsma and Vinz 4)

Another felt that we should use the same strategy as EN102 to show the immediacy of the EN101 texts:

EN101 needs to see the authors of some of the essays just [as] EN102 sees [the poets]. Fire 'em up. Make the Plebes see that their ideas have the context we say they have.

3. EN302

The Cow (junior) course drew fewer direct comments, but some rather pointed ones. To at least one instructor, the chance to "play" came as a welcome change:

I like the flexibility that EN302 allows. Cadets finally have a chance to break away from traditional forms and play with prose. The feedback I've received is that they actually start to enjoy writing. I've always been an advocate of creative or inventive responses to argument prompts. I'm usually pleased with cadet responses. Also, our single focus on argument is too narrow. Composition classes should expose cadets to other forms. Let's take off the blinders.

Another felt that the method of grading EN302 should be reevaluated, as cadets don't give their best efforts during the semester because they're saving themselves for the WPPWE [the West Point Professional Writing Exam, taken at lesson 35 in EN302 and a graduation requirement]:

EN302 must get away from the C+ for passing the WPPWE. A lot of good students sandbag and a lot of weak students are unjustly rewarded. The group grading forces the instructors to read a lot of half-hearted efforts. We spend too much time trying to figure out how to help cadets that are not trying. We need some sort of a cumulative grade to really make the students work.

And another questioned the hours of work that we, as a department, spend trying to reach calibration:

[W]e contend on the WPPWE that a person not familiar with the course ought to be able to pick up a WPPWE response and recognize whether it is a good or bad piece of writing.

4. Department Attitude

Three instructors contemplated what they thought the department aims—or should aim—for in its mission:

We . . . insist we want to “improve” cadets’ writing. To “improve,” a person must “change.” Change means stopping a behavior and adopting a different one. Human change is the most difficult thing a person can accomplish. We as a department don’t have a big enough stick or a large enough gift to encourage or coerce change. These cadets come to us with a writing facility that has gotten them through H.S. & to West Point. Why should they abandon it because some CPT or MAJ says their writing is only of “C” or mediocre quality? The answer is, they won’t change.

I found the [department’s] stance regarding process vs. product ambiguous at best. We urge a focus on process, but we award grades entirely on product. A focus on process is messy and the quality of a cadet’s process is hard to quantify outside the final product. Also, process focuses on how; we as Army officers aren’t particularly interested in “how”—we’re interested in results: Take the hill. I don’t care how, just take the hill. Write a paper. I don’t care how. Just write a paper. Product focuses on “rules” or in Army parlance, principles. Any technique is OK as long as it doesn’t violate principles. If we’re really interested in product, perhaps we should have more formal grammar instruction. If not, then perhaps we should formalize/quantify portfolio work.

Both of these courses [EN101 & EN302] really provide a service to the Academy & the Army. Unfortunately, most cadets don’t understand or believe this. I always felt it was my most important job to show the cadets at every opportunity the connections between reading/writing and the “real” world of what we do in the Army. Reading & writing are, I feel, of primary benefit in the arena of helping one to shape/make sense of the world. Cadets must learn that what we are showing them/teaching them in these courses is critical to their ability to broaden their understanding of important things as diverse as how we see the situation during combat to how we treat others while in garrison. That is really an instructor’s most important task and mission in both of these

courses; eliminating comma splices & run-ons is important also, but if we don't design the courses around the first, then these other things (grammar, etc.) become the focus, & the cadets hate the courses & the instructors, learning little of importance.

B. Where Do We Go From Here?

1. Instructor Preparation

As a start, we may want to consider giving our incoming instructors a more formalized introduction to the Department of English and West Point long before they arrive here. This introduction would help to allay some of the misapprehensions new instructors have about teaching at the Academy. Also, I think that we should encourage our officers to study Composition theory and, even, to work as volunteer tutors in university writing centers while in graduate school. Everything they can do before arriving that boosts their familiarity with student writing will work positively for us. While I see no reason to make big changes in NIT, we may want to consider minor changes that address the concerns our departing officers have expressed.

2. The Future of EN101—

It's clear that new instructors need some sort of assistance getting adjusted to teaching EN101, if nothing more than guiding hands to help them with managing their time more wisely. More direct coordination between EN101 and EN102 course directors and/or executive officers might help avoid overlapping requirements. For instance, we shouldn't call on instructors to write or brief on poems for EN102 at the same time that they are grading 120+ essays

for EN101. It would help, too, if we could arrange the EN101 syllabus so cadets aren't writing in-class essays on the same days they're turning in out-of-class essays. Despite the instructors' frustration, one of the strengths of our program is that we assume cadets reach us with some level of competence at writing. Though many have not reached that level, I don't believe that we should necessarily begin with sentence basics. Instead, those of us who are more experienced in working with cadet writers need to help our instructors work more effectively with weaker students while keeping the pressure to perform on stronger ones.

The comment about "social issues" being the subject matter of EN101 is a little more complicated. We are chartered, as part of our contract with the Dean and Superintendent, to present these varied issues in our classrooms. However, we also must continue to seek the best ways possible to "inspire intelligent, graceful writing by our students." Finding it may take a bit more work, but there is a wealth of good literature available that addresses the issues of racism, date rape, and so on. Such literature would open up the issues in ways that the essays we currently read can only approximate and, at the same time, give cadets and instructors alike a fresh (and, perhaps, refreshing) view of these complicated issues. I realize that costs may be prohibitive, but we should consider the advisability of bringing at least one EN101 author to USMA in the fall semester. If there is a

way to make these issues meaningful to our cadets, we can't stop before we find it.

3. Meeting the Challenges of EN302

Despite its apparent "flexibility," EN302 still limits the type of responses cadets can give, primarily because we grade the course on a "do or die" pass/fail basis. We need to reconsider what a "professional" writing course is, its purpose, and its ultimate goals. Do we want to offer our students a breadth of writing experiences that they can call on as Army officers? Do we want to limit their writing experiences to argumentative writing? Expository? Evaluative? Do we want to continue to grade on a "do or die" basis? Should we grade cumulatively throughout the semester as we do in the other core courses? Are we serving cadets well by inviting personnel from outside the department to evaluate the WPPWE? Is product more important than process? Probably the weakest of the core courses, EN302 continues to struggle toward purpose. We must, if we are ever to truly feel secure that cadets who complete our program enter the Army as "professional" writers, establish a clear pedagogy for the course and train instructors to meet its challenge.

4. Department Attitude

A few of the departing instructors seem to have considered why they were teaching what they were teaching. Their comments

form the bulk of the quotations cited above. Unfortunately, the majority seemed content to follow the prescribed syllabi without thinking through either the teaching or the writing process. Those who had thought about teaching and writing found themselves confused by the department's "stance" toward both. By now you have come to understand the importance of our being reflective practitioners. If we fail to understand the true importance of our mission as instructors, we will focus on minor details—grammar, punctuation, format—rather than the ideas that shape our courses. Little wonder, then, that "the cadets hate the courses and the instructors [and learn] little of importance."

III – A Workshop in Freshman Composition at USMA

A. Preface

B. What should we do in EN101?

- Writing across the curriculum? No . . .
 A reader that never/always changes
 A nightmare course
 A course to meet our needs
- a. Using curriculum research
 - b. A skeletal course outline
5. Using curriculum research
 6. A skeletal course outline for EN101

In English studies as many members of the sections are assigned subjects for recitation at the blackboard as the size of the section will permit, reserving one member, and sometimes two, for questions on the lesson of the day or on the lesson of the preceding day.
 (Tillman 337)

A. Preface

A couple of course directors ago, EN101 at the Academy was specifically designed “as a student-centered and process-oriented workshop” in which cadets learned to “treat writing as a form of discovery.” Then, as now, the major goals of EN101 have been to “encourage . . . habits of mind and practical writing skills that enable students to participate in their new and more immediate academic community[;] [to] introduce students to the standards of writing expected of college-educated men and women[;] and . . . provide . . . the critical writing and thinking skills needed by our students to participate confidently and productively in the challenges of the West Point curriculum.” The broader, more far-

reaching, goal of EN101 was, and remains, “to help our students learn about their places in the social fabric of the Army and the world and help provide them the thinking and language skills to contribute to the design of the ongoing tapestry.”

B. What Should We Do in EN101?

So much to do in a mere forty 55-minute lessons over the course of one semester. The task is as daunting as it is important. But what type of composition course is best suited to accomplishing all of these goals? I don't know. Still, I can imagine several possibilities. Can one course accomplish all of them? Perhaps not. But that doubt does not absolve us of our responsibility to *essay* the task. If we don't, who will?

The curriculum should be designed so that every student has the fullest opportunity to develop his powers, intelligence, interests, talent, and understanding. Every student needs to know how to form and formulate his own opinions. To do so, he must learn how to read critically, how to evaluate arguments, how to weigh evidence, and how to reach judgments on his own. (Ravitch 205)

1. Writing Across the Curriculum? No

In many colleges and universities across the country, individual teachers have complete control over the content of their courses, with little—if any—input from colleagues or supervisors outside their classrooms. Katherine K. Gottschalk, who directs the Writing Program at Cornell University, gives instructors from nearly every university department “adequate preparation in the possibilities for teaching writing and incentives to think about theories that may inform the

Each Cadet, when his name is called, takes his place in the center of the room facing the instructor, and standing at attention receives his enunciation. He then goes to the particular blackboard assigned to him by the order in which his name was called to receive an enunciation or subject of recitation, the first Cadet called taking the first blackboard to the right of the instructor on the side of the room opposite the latter, the others following in consecutive order from right to left. (Tillman 337)

process" (595). She then turns them loose to teach writing through the examination of physics or psychology or music or political theory or feminist approaches to science

and so on. While "Writing Across the Curriculum" programs may work at places like Cornell, at West Point, whether we like to admit it or not, the teaching of writing remains the realm of the Academy's Department of English.

Occasionally, a history or law or 'sosh' or physics or math 'P' might hold cadets responsible for writing well in his or her course, but those are exceptions. The teaching of writing is the primary mission of the Academy's Department of English, and we have discovered that here—perhaps more than at any civilian school—we must have basic agreement on the goals and the means of teaching writing in order to serve our students well. An idealized composition course for the Academy must, I believe, provide common texts and a common syllabus, but still provide "the flexibility and freedom that promote growth for both teachers and students" that Gottschalk endorses

(599).

2. A Reader that Never/Always Changes

Because, in addition to the charter to help students develop strong(er) writing skills, our

Immediately upon arriving at his proper blackboard the Cadet writes his name in the upper right-hand corner and under his name the number indicating the order in which he received his enunciation. He then proceeds to put upon the blackboard the work called for by his subject. He is not permitted to write out the subject-matter of his recitation, but is required to write the different heads thereof in the form of a synopsis showing their relation to one another, and is required to make the explanation orally. (Tillman 337)

department has the charge to help cadets come to terms with living in a diverse world, we must choose reading material that will help them begin to think about such a life. This has been a difficult struggle over the years—Choosing texts that all instructors could use to their students' and their own best interests seems a near impossibility. EN101 has had a new reader nearly every year, to the frustration of cadets and instructors alike. I think it's healthy to have a living text; I think that the reader *should* change with the changing times. But in my idealized course, the reader changes content without changing intent, another frustration felt by instructors over the past few years. For that reason, I believe that a weekly news magazine like *Time* or *U.S. News and World Report* or *Newsweek* will work to our advantage. Such a text changes constantly while remaining basically the same; it also confronts the difficult issues posed by life in a diverse society with which the course concerns itself. And, because these publications afford real opportunities for students to respond to articles and to join in very public debates on important issues, student writers have something more than the artificial audience of teacher and, occasionally, other students. Students would have a real opportunity to go public with their writing, an opportunity that should spur them toward achieving the "substance, organization,

style, and correctness" that we so earnestly look for each year, but seldom seem to find.

3. A Nightmare Course

While I was working on my Masters in Literature at Columbia in 1982, because I knew that my primary duties at West

At each recitation one member of the section is required to write a synopsis of the day and another member to write a synopsis of the lesson of the preceding day. When the Cadet is ready for recitation he indicates it by taking the pointer in his hand and standing at the blackboard facing the instructor. Until the first Cadet is called upon to recite at the blackboard the time has been occupied in questioning those members of the section who were not sent to the blackboard.
(Tillman 337)

Point would be to teach composition, I took a seminar called "Theories of Teaching Composition." We read bibliographical essays about research into the teaching of writing, studied research on right-brain/left-brain learning differences, and—as our course-end

projects—developed one-semester Freshman Composition course syllabi. My project, as I look back on it and on Professor Dobbie's comments, would have created an impossible course. Professor Dobbie was kind in her treatment, saying "This syllabus looks like an Insurmountable challenge to the teacher." I had developed a syllabus that required eight three- to five-page papers, two major research papers, twenty-six (!) in-class essays, and two essay exams. The course asked students to write (and instructors to read) example, process, comparison, cause and effect, division and

classification, definition, descriptive, narrative, and argumentative essays. Professor Dobbie, again very nicely, said, "I do think having them write frequently in class is fine. I just want you to survive, too." She probably should have said that this course would be death to all involved. (And I hate to admit the amount of reading I was asking students to do before they wrote. Let's just say that I asked for a lot of reading. Really. Tons.)

I wanted, naively, to create a course that would give cadets absolutely every writing experience they would need to get through life at West Point and beyond. I didn't consider the limitations on the time they would have to prepare for

When a Cadet at the blackboard is called upon to recite, he first gives from memory the enunciation of his subject in the exact words in which he received it, and then proceeds to explain and illustrate the subject by the knowledge of it that he has obtained by his own study. If his recitation be entirely satisfactory in every respect, he is then told that it is sufficient, and takes his seat. If not so, the instructor then goes over the subject until, by explanation and question, the Cadet understands it. (Tillman 338)

classes; nor did I consider how much work the instructors would have in preparing for class and in grading what would literally be

The work upon the blackboard, including the Cadet's name and number, is required to be written neatly and spelled and punctuated correctly. In the case of illustrative examples and exercises for correction, the whole work, of course, is put upon the blackboard. (Tillman 338)

thousands of papers over the course of one semester. I believed then, as I do now, that in order to improve writing skills, one must write every day. Now, however, I have a better appreciation of the realities of life in the composition classroom. My ideal composition

course still would insure that students write often. However, it would be the result of a great deal of reflection not only on my part, but of a group of instructors whose sole aim is to create a course that prepares the students we all serve for writing across the Academy.

4. A Course to Meet Our Needs

As the long-running and very public debate between David Bartholomae and Peter Elbow has shown, there is no complete agreement about what constitutes "academic writing." Even at West Point—insular and homogeneous West Point—we cannot all agree. So, since we cannot possibly hope to please everyone with any given Freshman Composition course, what hope is there for my idealized course? I believe that we have much to be hopeful for. We have a self-renewing faculty, most of whose members have come from and will return to the larger community into which our students will enter upon graduation. That community experience gives us insight into the types of writing our students can reasonably expect to do during their first years of military service. That community experience, if put to good use and combined with an understanding of how people learn to write, can serve us well as we work to develop an idealized composition course for the Academy.

5. Using curriculum research

This is a project that can put to good use the curriculum research reported on by Milbrey McLaughlin. She says that while studying classroom organization projects, researchers found that

[w]orking together to develop materials for the project gave the staff a sense of pride in its own accomplishments, a sense of 'ownership' in the project. . . . But even more important, materials development provided an opportunity for users to think through the concepts which underlay the project, in practical, operational terms—an opportunity to engage in experience-based learning. Although such 'reinvention of the wheel' may not appear efficient in the short run, it appears to be a critical part of the individual learning and development necessary for significant change. (171)

Those of us involved in creating this course for the Academy will do well to heed George Hillocks's advice on sequencing: We must understand the composition courses that follow this one and, perhaps, work with those course designers, paying "attention to the broader question of what the overall writing curriculum should look like, what kinds of writing should be included, and at what levels and how often those should appear" (Hillocks *Reflective* 187). The course that we develop for the Academy may not be ideally suited to a NYU or a Cornell or an Orange County Community College, but it must make sense for where and what we are, the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

6. A skeletal course outline for EN101—

(Developed with input from Professor Anita Gandolfo, Director, USMA Center for Teaching Excellence)

Section I: The emphasis in the first half of the course is on organization and correctness, helping the writer gain control of his/her writing. In this section, content is kept simple to give the cadet more control of the writing process. The section has 18 lessons and comprises the first two sequences of the course.

1—Course Introduction—Administrivia, etc.

Sequence 1—Classification/Evaluation

Initial Reading “Deciding What’s News” from the McGraw/Hill Primis collection. For in-class 1 (ICE1) leading to out-of-class 1 (OoC1), cadets learn to question the assignment, as well as the *Newsweek*

Asking questions not only helps clarify assignments but helps students develop a broader and richer vocabulary for talking about writing processes and products, and with more words come more ways of seeing the assignment and envisioning the writing processes and what the products might look like, more ways to imagine possibilities. (Grego and Thompson 77)

articles they read. They’d be responsible for selecting the articles in question to determine the writer(s) intent, point of view; could even interpret ads/photos. Products: Classification essays.

2--introduction of the assignment: Classification (two kinds of articles-advertisements-editorials-illustrations-etc.).

As a first assignment, if the instructor stresses what the student **KNOWS** or **CARES ABOUT** as the subject, this type of assignment helps the class get acquainted with each other as individuals. It's also an assignment that naturally emphasizes paragraph development through use of specific details, etc; *mini-lessons: prewriting strategies, planning, format, avoiding plagiarism, citing outside sources; begin essay planning.*

3--*mini-lesson: writing process*; continue individual planning; draft introduction

Mini-lesson: Nancie Atwell credits educator Lucy Calkins with the idea of the mini-lesson. Atwell defines the mini-lesson as "a brief meeting that begins the workshop where the whole class addresses an issue that's arisen in previous workshops or in pieces of students' writing. . . . At the beginning of the school year, my mini-lessons deal with procedural issues. . . . Mini-lessons generally last between five and ten minutes, just long enough to touch on some timely topic." 77. In this suggested syllabus, note that I've not put in what the subject matter for many mini-lessons should be. That's because mini-lessons should come in response to cadets' needs at any given time. Mini-lessons might cover incorporating quoted material, group conferencing, revision—whatever you sense your cadets need most on a given day. As the semester progresses, **cadets may also present mini-lessons** to the class.

4--composing [cadets write in class from the plan developed in the first class]--ICE1

Do not think revision is superficial. Revision is the reordering of experience so that it reveals meaning. It is the great adventure of the mind. (Murray Craft 2)

5--*mini-lesson: responsibility of peer reviewers*; peer review

6--evaluated essays returned; *mini-lesson: one major problem for the class as a whole*; extend ICE1 assignment for OoC1: The best and the worst.

Again, this is easy to organize and emphasizes paragraph development. It can be focused on things the cadets are familiar with (e.g., the best high school teachers are those who. . . , but the worst. . . . OR the best upper-class cadets are those. . .but the worst) if instructors are finding that cadets are still struggling with organization and development of their essays. If they've gotten past that hurdle, then they should write on the editorials they've read: What makes the best editorials "the best"? What makes the worst editorials "the worst"? While the first assignment is purely descriptive, this one leads to support with REASONS, an important prelude to argument.

7/8--Counseling period--discuss course goals, develop strategy for success; Department Head briefing

Counseling periods: This is the first of two such periods scheduled in the course, though you should encourage your cadets to come to you when they feel the need (or, even, when YOU feel it). Use the counseling periods to address a relevant teaching point or points; don't just facilitate a free-form discussion. Link the discussion to class activities and overall course goals. This might also be the time to find out a little more about the individual cadet's writing history. Make this time work to every cadet's benefit. They're the reason we're here.

9--*mini-lessons*: _____;
peer review.

Students in college writing classes may have difficulty identifying problems in their own texts that they can identify in other students' texts. (Wallace 211)

10--*mini-lesson: proofreading*; proofread (in class), then turn in OoC1.

Other readings-- "Basic Principles of Paragraph Writing,"

"Paragraph Development" from Primis.

Sequence 2--Editorial (Compare/Contrast; Synthesis)

Writing teachers should expect that many college students may have different (and often simpler) basic understandings of what the requirements for a writing assignment entail than the teachers intend. . . . [A]sking students to articulate their initial intentions for writing can serve as a first step in creating an instructional dialogue between teachers and students that addresses the problem of varied interpretations of writing tasks. (Wallace 182-3)

Initial Reading: "Power, Equality, and Social Justice" from Primis. An important type of writing that they frequently have to do is comparison/contrast, and the previous assignments should have set them up for this. These assignments segue into the next section by introducing more challenging content. Products:

Letters to the editor.

11--*mini-lesson: prewriting strategies; planning*; introduction of the assignment: cadets choose several articles for response; products--letter to the editor that compares/contrasts any two trouble spots in the world; any two national (or international) leaders currently in the news; two domestic issues; etc.; prewriting strategies; planning.

Teaching writing must be *about* writing. We cannot be like the tennis coaches who spend a week of instruction explaining how to hold a racquet before actually letting our students play the game. Writers write. They write daily for different purposes, for different audiences and with different outcomes. Some writing will make it to a final draft. Other writing will be discarded along the way, and yet it too teaches about writing achievement. Not all of our attempts need to be worthy of publication. Not all of our attempts represent the pinnacle of our writing. But in the trying lies the essence of the writer.
(Rogers and Danielson 69)

12--*mini-lessons: common problems or singular strengths of OoC1; writing introductory paragraphs*; continue planning; experiment with introductions; OoC1 returned

13--composing [cadets write in class from the plan developed in the previous classes]--ICE2

14--*mini-lesson:* _____, peer review

We all have the opportunity to study our own responding behaviors. Each of us can become a researcher, or more accurately, an ethnographer, and analyze the rich data available to us. For example, we can try to keep logs of the types of responses we make and the degree to which these responses are incorporated into student revisions. (Zamel 94)

15--essays returned; *mini-lesson on major problems for the class as a whole*; extend ICE2 assignment for OoC2: read several

editorials from all sides of the issue; revise essay to explain the varying viewpoints and how they might have come to be so different.

Good teachers care whether students learn. They challenge all students, even those who are less capable, and then help them to meet the challenge. (Delpit 118)

16--*mini-lessons: synthesizing others' ideas; incorporating evidence*; plan essay

17--*mini-lessons:* _____;
write draft essay in class

Good teachers are not time-bound to a curriculum and do not move on to new subject matter until all students grasp the current concept. (Delpit, 118) *We may not have this luxury, but we're honor bound to teach ALL of our students.

18-- *mini-lessons:* _____;
bring essay draft; peer review; continue planning

19-- *mini-lesson: advanced proofreading and editing*;
proofread (in class), then turn in OoC2

Good teachers are not bound to books and instructional materials, but connect all learning to "real life." (Delpit 118)

Other readings: "Characteristics of an Essay," "Improving Your Writing Process" from Primis.

Section II - Introduce more challenging substance as well as the more complex organizational structure of argument. Ideally, by this time cadets have control of basic organization and have substantial control of correctness. This is essential in order to focus their attention on logical, coherent discourse and effective use of evidence.

Sequence 3—Research

Initial readings “Special Skills” from Primis; other readings--

As necessary for chosen subject matter.

20--In-class introduction to argument [two class sessions].

Start pressure free with an absurd argument--write as a class (or groups in the class can compete). [e.g. “BDUs should become the standard uniform for class.”]. The “research” for this can be “made up” and becomes a good exercise in thinking about the nature of sources.

I’m convinced that occasional, purposeful creative writing assignments make a valuable contribution to students’ understanding of the subject matter under study, usually from a perspective not included in tests or formal reports, and that they make a contribution to students’ language development. (Young 23)

21-- continue introduction to argument; *mini-lesson: proofreading and correcting (any lesson on mechanics that the class as a whole is having trouble with--e.g., agreement of pronouns or use of comma)*

Introduce the assignment for ICE3: choose an article or series of articles from *Newsweek* as starting point for identifying an issue to research; product--research proposal; prewriting strategies; planning; initial draft is done as homework (on computer); OoC2 returned.

22 - *mini-lesson: writing a research proposal*; peer review (revisions are done as homework)

23--*mini-lesson: the research process*; address any questions; peer review

Good teachers push students to think, to make their own decisions.
(Delpit 118)

24--Compose--ICE3

25--*mini-lesson:* _____
_____; peer review

26--ICE3 returned; discussion on writing; reinforce OoC3 assignment: mini research paper that goes beyond *Newsweek*--library sources, perhaps using Internet source(s) as well..

27--*mini-lesson: revision*; planning OoC3; draft introductions.

We use groups to help students begin to view writing as a process because group work emphasizes revision. Whether the members of groups see a paper only once before it is turned in to the instructor or see it at two or more stages of development, the critiquing process suggests that writers must revise their pieces. (Lunsford 96)

28--*mini-lesson:* _____
_____; peer review of draft OoC3

29--*mini-lesson: writing workshop*; groups evaluate peer essays; OoC3 due at end of class.

Sequence 4: Arguing for change.

Most of the pre-writing for this is helping cadets identify suitable topics--i.e., things they are capable of arguing from their knowledge and experience. However, a lot of the pre-writing time might be spent discussing how to determine whether or not something could be argued effectively--i.e., whether or not the writer has anything worth saying on the subject!

Initial readings: "Arguing a Position," "Clouse: Working It Out" from *Primis*. Products: "My Turn" essays.

30--*mini-lessons: identifying a topic; fueling your argument; introduction of assignment.*

Cadets are encouraged to explore their own life experience in relation to current issues--e.g., the U.S. should adopt a national standard for blood alcohol level for DWI; U.Conn player Nykesha Sales should/should not have been allowed the "arranged" points for the record; NYC school children should/should not wear uniforms to school (addressed in an OpEd piece by a sophomore from Styvesant HS), etc. (*Newsweek* should offer a number of possible options current at the time of the course.); brainstorming.

31--*mini-lesson: considering the opposition; begin writing OoC4; OoC3 returned*

Good teachers communicate with, observe, and get to know their students and the students' cultural background. (Delpit 118)

32/33--Counseling period; discuss draft OoC4, progress in course, strategy for successful course completion

I would argue that there *is* no model or typical conference. Like writing, the writing conferences is a process—not static, not a noun, not a thing, but rather active, dynamic, organic. (Tobin,43)

34--*mini-lesson*: _____
 _____; peer review (revisions are done as homework)

The best students not only care about their subject matter, they care about their craft. These students want to write right. They have a fear of error and at school, home, and work they had been marked down or even ridiculed because they made a mistake in usage, mechanics, or spelling. Often the person who was most critical was wrong . . . (Murray 230)

35--*mini-lessons*: *proofreading and correcting revisited; more on argument*; final peer review

36--assign PreTEE: We produce an election-related question that asks cadets to take a position. Product--a "My Turn" essay; prewriting strategies; planning; initial draft is done as homework; collect OoC4.

Good writers can handle the demands of the rhetorical situation. However, writers who do not clearly understand the rhetorical question, or see only part of it within the assignment, often cannot solve the rhetorical problem. (Oliver 424)

37—PreTEE

38--*mini-lesson*: *Winners and Sinners from OoC4*; OoC4 returned

39--*mini-lesson*: *Winners and Sinners from PreTEE*; *strategies for taking the TEE*; PreTEE returned at start of class and collected at end of class; peer review the PreTEE, giving specific requirements for reviewers (See *Working it Out*) to write in response to writer.

40--End-of-course evaluation

TEE: The TEE will extend the PreTEE question; we provide additional sources to consider and return the cadets' PreTEEs for use as source material as well.

Research suggests that teachers think more fully about the kinds of comments they make on student writing, how those comments represent themselves and their students on the page, and how they will likely be received. If "successful" comments are, by definition, those that turn students back to their writing and lead them to make better informed choices as writers, we need to continue to investigate how students view different types of comments and how we can make responses that challenge and encourage them to work productively on their writing. (Straub 113)

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Appendix B—Sample end-of year English Exams for Fourth-Classmen

From *U.S. Military Academy Staff Records, Vol. 10, June 1875-June 25, 1878.*
Handwritten, bound document:

No. . .
April 1876

Examination in English Grammar Time allotted two hours.

Division I.

1. Name the parts of speech.
2. Define a regular verb, and give an example.
3. Give the present tense, imperfect tense, and perfect participle of the verbs, awake, buy, breed, cling, cast, fall, flee, shake, and shed.
4. Conjugate the verb to be, in the potential mood, present tense.
5. Compare the adjectives, rude, holy, peaceful, glorious, bad, little, near,
6. Write the plural of wharf, mercy, deer, goose, tooth, leaf, half, cargo, octavo, gas,,day, dwarf, money, fly.
7. What is a pronoun? Give an example.

Division II

Parse the following sentence: *Vitellius possessed all that pliability and liberality which when not restrained within due bounds must ever turn to the ruin of their possessor.*

N.B.--Give no rules; but parse each word completely; state the words between which each preposition shows the relation, and the words or sentences connected by each conjunction; state what each noun or pronoun in the objective case is governed by.

Division III

Correct all errors that occur in the following sentences (*a selection from 25 offered*):

1. He borrowed a tongs from a hut a long ways off.
4. The Amazon is longer than any other river of Europe.
7. She is one of those cheerful women that always wears a smile.
10. In this connection, no principles can be laid down, nor no rules given that will cover every point.
14. One or the other of us are-greatly mistaken in our opinion.
18. You must have felt the needle have passed into the flesh.
23. Croesus had much possessions.
25. He who is wise in his own conceit I never could tolerate.

(This exam came at the end of the academic year and was a means of determining class standing, then known as "General Merit.") pages 138-141.

No. . .

June . . .

1878

Examination in English Grammar

Time allotted two hours

Directions.--Write-your No. and the Date in the places indicated.

Division I

1. What is English Grammar?
2. What is a verb? What are its properties?
3. Give the first person singular of all the tenses in the indicative mood of the verbs, drive, smite.
4. State the difference between a Transitive and an Intransitive Verb. Give an example of each.
5. What is a Participle?
6. Construct a sentence (or sentences) illustrating the use of the participle as a part of a Verb, as an Adjective, and as a Verbal Noun.
7. Name the Interrogative Pronouns, and give the rule for their use in reference to persons and things.
8. How must Pronouns agree with the Nouns for which they stand?

Division II

Directions.--In parsing, Rules are not to be given. Each word must be fully parsed, so as to show what it is, and its relation to other words in the sentence.

Parse the following sentence--*Young men entering military life should be actuated by the highest motives that govern humanity, and learn to fear dishonor more than death.*

Division III

Correct all the errors in the following sentences (*a selection from 25 offered*):

2. Every body ought to follow the dictates of their own conscience.
9. Between you and I, he acted very unwisely.
3. I ought to have told him to have gone and got it.
16. Every one of your arguments are absurd.
21. I was once thinking to have written a poem.
24. The general with-all the soldiers were taken.

(pages 397-399)

Appendix C—USMAPS Instructor Questionnaire

On Implementing a Changed Curriculum at USMAPS:

A Questionnaire for Instructors

POC: LTC Janice E. Hudley

554A Connor Road

West Point, New York 10996

(914)446-1042

Purpose: To obtain instructors' candid comments and observations on the changes to the USMAPS English Department curriculum implemented in AY95-96. I am focusing my major dissertation research on the English programs at USMAPS and USMA; this is the preliminary study prior to beginning the dissertation.

Method: This questionnaire's design does not ask you to rate changes on any scales. Instead, I would like you to answer questions using anecdotal evidence as much as possible. Feel free to be open in your comments; if you don't think something works well, please tell me why you think it doesn't work, and what you have done/are doing/want to do in order to be successful. On the other hand, if something you're doing in the classroom works particularly well, please share that information and any anecdotes that support your claim.

Suspense: I can't set a specific suspense for your response, but it would help me immensely if you would complete the survey ASAP. I'd like to have all of your responses in my hand no later than 15 February 1996. Thanks.

Section I: Changes to the USMAPS program in AY95/96

In this section, I'm recalling for you Mr. Jacobs's 18 May 1995 document that lists the specific changes in teaching strategy you implemented this AY. Please consider how you, as an individual instructor, have helped make these changes work. Feel free to elaborate on joys or disappointments you've had, or discoveries you and/or your students have made so far. How do your experiences this year differ from those of previous years?

1. Whole Language Approach: This approach asks you to integrate the teaching of reading and vocabulary with the teaching of grammar and composition.

2. Writing Lab. This allows you to have one-on-one conferences with your students.

3. Vocabulary Development. The change here is that students no longer memorize series of words from prescribed lists; they take words from their assigned readings.

4. Dropped SAT Text.

5. Instructor Points. You might discuss how you're using these points. To what end?

6. The Study of Poetry. Is this a positive change for students?

7. Alternate A Day/B Day Schedule. Has it provided the flexibility you expected?
Other comments?

8. Interlinears, Paraphrases, Summaries. Please consider their effect on learning.

9. Every student takes the Student Success Course. Please consider whether this change has translated into more success in your classroom.

Appendix D—USMA Departing Instructor Survey Responses

1. How prepared were you to teach Composition when you arrived at West Point? (Check one box)

Extremely prepared; had taught here (or elsewhere) before	2	5
Well prepared; had studied Comp theory in grad school	4	4
Somewhat prepared; had read some Comp theory	3	3
Poorly prepared; had observed some classes		2
Totally unprepared	4	1
No answer	2	

2. How well did New Instructor Training (NIT) prepare you for teaching Composition?

It prepared me very well	3	5
It gave me a fair preparation	5	4
It neither helped nor hurt me as a teacher	1	3
It could have prepared me better	1	2
It didn't prepare me at all		1
No answer	2	

3. Do you feel that NIT should be continued in its present form?

Yes, without any modifications	2	5
Yes, with a few minor modifications	6	4
Yes, but with many minor modifications	2	3
No, the program needs to be completely revamped		2
No, the program should be discontinued		1
No answer	2	

4. Did you receive enough practice in responding to student writing during NIT?

Yes, much more than needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Yes, a bit more than needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Just enough to be prepared	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
We could have had more effective practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
We didn't practice nearly enough to be prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
No answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

5. Did the grammar exercises in NIT help you in teaching Composition?

Yes, a great deal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
Yes, to some extent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
Neither helped nor hindered my teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Did not help me at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Hurt more than helped in preparing to teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
No answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

6. Overall, how good was your NIT preparation?

*Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.5	5
Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5.5	4
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>		3
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>		2
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>		1
No answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	

7. How much of what you learned in NIT did you actually apply to your teaching?

*A great deal	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.5	5
Some	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.5	4
Not much	<input type="checkbox"/>		3
Very little	<input type="checkbox"/>		2
Nothing at all	<input type="checkbox"/>		1
No answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	

*One instructor split the difference between the top choices for #6 and #7.

8. What preparation would have been most helpful for you before coming to West Point?

-- More composition instruction training in grad school. One summer seminar simply isn't enough. Need more theory & practice.

-- Prep was fine.

-- Send the list of "7 deadly sins" to the incoming officers. Tell them to know how to detect the errors.

-- Perhaps a senior instructor (sponsor) could write a letter explaining in great detail how [EN]101/102 work.

--[Prior] teaching experience was very helpful. Even so, I wish I had been much more grounded in grammar basics.

--I attempted to sign up for a course in teaching composition, but only English majors were allowed to enroll. Nevertheless, I don't feel that I was handicapped by the course's absence. *A philosophy instructor*

-- More composition courses during Grad school; a clearer notion of what courses here entailed, i.e., emphasis on the argument, emphasis on diversity, teaching composition. I thought most writing would be geared towards military requirements. I think also that having a copy of the department missions & policies would be helpful, since this SOP outlines grading, pass/leave, conduct of classes, etc. Unlike texts, this doesn't seem to undergo major changes from year to year, and it might help get instructors on board before arriving.

-- Being given syllabi and examples of student writing. Practice at formal grammar.

-- Practical instruction on the teaching of writing (I took a practical course on the teaching of Lit & one theoretical course on rhetoric).

-- I really had no idea what we taught. I would have spent more time brushing up on grammar rules.

9. How responsive were more experienced rotating faculty to helping you develop/improve your teaching?

-- Extremely

-- They were very responsive. Unfortunately, I did not make enough use of them.

-- Excellent. This was, by far, the most helpful & effective way of learning about the job. 066 was invaluable as an officemate.

-- Very.

-- Very helpful

-- Major source of ideas. An essential resource for new instructors.

-- Very. Everyone has certain tricks of the trade they use to improve their classroom performance/focus cadets on the learning objective.

-- Very. COL C. did much to alleviate problems above through his participation in NIT. He was fairly helpful throughout the first year. Am told that other sr. faculty were likewise helpful to others.

-- Not very because my office mate was a Philosopher. By the time I knew other experienced English folks well, I had enough experience of my own.

-- The "old timers" are the reality check for the first year instructors. The band I was here with taught me not to get wrapped up in the small stuff and what to set my focus on.

10. How responsive were permanent faculty to helping you develop/improve your teaching?

-- Too distant. Natural rank barriers get in the way. Except for Course Director feedback in EN102. I found that very helpful.

-- Very helpful.

-- Very.

-- Very, but much less important to learning the ropes than were the rotating faculty members.

-- In terms of providing resources, guidance, and intellectual stimulation, they were very responsive. I had several classroom visits by senior faculty that provided me good feedback. I believe that I missed other opportunities by not being here for NIT.

---[They were] also willing to help, but I found myself gravitating toward the experienced rotating faculty when I had questions.

-- Invaluable. By design or chance, D/English is a "lore" sharing faculty. 2d/3d year instructors translated requirements to tasks, helped broach the time management problems, showed quick fixes to emerging problems. I'd have been lost without officemates and other folks who'd been around a while.

-- Again, very. Any time I approached senior faculty they were responsive.

-- Never asked them.

-- Except for a few rare cases, I really didn't turn to the permanent faculty. The senior folks were usually very busy and it was easier to turn to a peer I trusted. The few times I did go to the permanent folks, I really didn't get much specific help.

11. What part of the NIT program was most helpful to you? How was it helpful?

-- The grammar review, because I had had nothing like it since the 9th grade (20 years before, if you can believe it!).

-- Grammar, Grading.

-- Grammar classes!

-- Grammar immersion—Need more of it; computer skills—focus on networking ability; USMA & dept. idiosyncracies.

-- Grammar—by JS. It convinced me that a very thorough refresher course in grammar can help prepare one for the mechanical aspects of grading.

-- Grammar review. Helped because I had not looked at grammar issues as a would-be subject matter expert to that point, and I had no idea what sorts of questions I'd have to field.

--#1-Grammar. #2-Having the course already developed and resourced.

--Doing the sort of writing assignments we expected cadets to write. (My NIT had us do an EN302 essay.) For 101 prep, we did some note taking on reading essays & discussed those texts, but never wrote any essays.

-- I think the grammar train-up and actually seeing student essays was the most helpful to me. It gave me a better idea of what I'd be seeing and dealing with.

12. What improvements in NIT, if any, would have been most helpful for you?

-- I think we ought to examine teaching a practice class, though I strongly disagree with making new instructors teach a full complement of lessons. Perhaps old-hands could demonstrate a class, and replicate cadet activities, preparation, and instructor-student dialogue as a means to prepare new instructors. Get rid of *The Art of Teaching*.

-- More exposure to EN102. At least read a poem and discuss general components of the course.

--I did not note it as having any particular deficiencies.

-- More grammar classes

--Focus on the most common grammar problems first.

-- None.

-- More writing. More instruction on active reading, instruction we can then give cadets in EN 101.

-- Too many times I was told to be somewhere and it was presented as if I knew my way around. Often folks forgot that the N stands for new.

13. What sort of ongoing instructor training or review, if any, would have been helpful for you?

--Most was helpful; however, as we do to prepare for EN102, we might look at instructor essays in response to the essays assigned to students. I would willingly submit essays to give sample responses to those we give cadets. I think we often tend to nay say cadet responses in feedback to them without having to have already addressed the issue as an argument ourselves.

--Grammar, grammar, grammar

--I think the general climate at USMA, with its emphasis on "teaching excellence," is currently such that if we are not careful, we could start "inservicing" ourselves to death. I am all for improvement, but let us not forget that people have been graduating from here for 200 years and have gone on to productive, successful careers both in and out of the Army. I think we must be doing something right already. Hence, I sincerely hope that we can resist the urge of some advocates of innovative teaching methods to re-invent the wheel merely for the sake of reinvention.

--None. I found almost all interim conferences tedious, tiresome, & irrelevant.

--I think we get enough ongoing training during course meetings, especially in 102/302.

--Student critiques were helpful, though sometimes painful. I videotaped myself teaching one class—that was helpful. Informally, I borrowed many ideas from other instructors—anything that would facilitate the free flow and exchange of good teaching ideas would help.

--Once the semester starts we are too busy. Between the VIP's guests, and grading, if you've got time to sit and chat about improving your teaching, you probably aren't doing your job. I've found that instructors willingly share things that work and that all one needs to do is keep one's ears open to hear many helpful hints.

--Good as is.

--Classroom management tips & techniques

14. Did you write responses to the essay prompts you developed for cadets? Y 1

N 7

Why or why not?

-- Yes. On the first couple I did; later, however, I did not.

--No. See #15↓

--No—I felt that writing the responses would channel my thoughts toward the idea of my answer constituting the “approved solution,” and I wanted to keep an open mind.

--No. Not in 101. There simply is no time, especially in the first year. My time was taken by trying to figure out what the hell was going on, grading, and EN102 essays.

--No. I stripmined the arguments and brainstormed the possible ways the cadets could respond.

--? Sometimes—It’s a good idea if you have time.

--Yes, for EN102—course requirement; No, for EN101 & 302—no time

--No. I think about the questions that I give. If I don’t know what I expect as an answer, I don’t give the question.

--Yes. I write to the students, with the students, for the students.

--Yes. For EN102 I did because it was a requirement. For EN101 I did not find it that beneficial to have written the essay as well as the question in EN102.

15. Did you write responses to the coursewide essay prompts? Y 1 N 7 Why or why not?

--Yes. On one occasion.

-- No. Laziness, indifference, dislike of the question. Perhaps also because I wanted to avoid a personal conception of the “right” answer.

-- No. Same as 14. (“felt that writing the responses would channel [his] thoughts . . .”)

-- No. I guess I didn’t feel it was important to improve my ability to grade the Cows’ essays. Time was a factor in this decision also.

--No. Same as 14. (“Stripmined the arguments and brainstormed . . .”)

--? Sometimes

-- No. Time constraints.

--No. After going over the source material the cadets base their responses on and explaining it to them, I don't see what would be gained by me writing an essay.

16. What other writing, if any, have you done during your tour here? (e.g., articles/short stories/etc. for publication; teaching journal; personal journal)

-- Ph.D. dissertation (440 pp); personal journal (with an entry for every day since 10 October 1978)

-- EN102 essays (60+), journal, an aborted short story or two, revisions of others' writing, letters of recommendation (many), and, of course, poetic EDFL messages.

--None.

-- None but personal letters.

-- Article—teaching journal [published by] CTE, USMA (handbook for New instructors); Article—teaching journal, CTE (Newsletter)

--None—I'm lucky that I have time to grade papers.

-- Several articles for publication, etc.

-- I wrote three papers for CGSC.

17. What classroom activities did you find most successful in improving cadet writing?

--Working through grammar exercises that focus on mistakes students have made. Discussion of prewriting exercises: active reading to identify evidence, develop theses, & organize essays.

-- Critical reading classes & a painfully close focus on the text under consideration, either prose or poetry.

-- Showing the cadets viewgraphs of actual cadet responses to their assignments; "modeling" exercises

-- Putting cadet essays on the overhead & letting the students identify problems and correct them.

-- Illustrations of basic grammar examples.

-- Listening to cadets.

-- In-class writing; In-class reading (out loud); group outline development; focused peer reviews.

-- Closely controlled peer work. If not closely controlled with a clear agenda, it is a disaster.

-- Working with their own writing; working in groups; focus on writing process.

-- Anything that was “hands-on” or had them involved or doing something. An example is having them put their thesis and topic sentences on the board and compare them.

18. How suitable were the texts used in Composition classes? What changes would you recommend, if any

-- They were garbage. One can't in one breath say “evaluate evidence” to ensure it's credible then force students to use for their evidence editorials, one-sided articles, and propaganda.

-- In my opinion, one text is just about as good as another. I think we probably fritter away a lot of energy fretting over which text to use. I think the best thing we could do is find a concise, compact grammar text that cadets can carry around and keep as a reference.

-- They were all satisfactory, but my feeling from student responses & unscientific polling is that the students, for the most part, hate writing about “diversity.”

-- *LBH* is the cream of the crop. Best! All the other instructor resources are garbage.

-- They're fine

-- Good. The new *LBH* is a wonderful book. *Speculations* is much more readable than *WAD*.

--3 reading texts and 3 grammar books in 4 years; what can I say? I've never had the opportunity to gain a learning curve on any of our texts.

--101 reader was fine; a rhetoric could be added. 302—not very suitable, in my opinion.

-- The texts were good, but I might vary the theme a bit—perhaps with some personal essay or military experience essays (I'm talking about EN101).

17. How effective were the course syllabi? What changes would you recommend, if any

-- Course syllabi were helpful & organized. They facilitated manageable courseloads for instructors.

-- The main weakness is an absence of active reading instruction. The second weakness is indecision regarding process over product. The syllabus contained much grammar instruction, yet philosophically the dept. disavowed grammar instruction (I think).

-- Generally effective.

-- I never saw a bad syllabus while I was here. They are all much more comprehensive & clear than anything a professor ever gave me as an undergraduate or graduate student.

-- Quite good.

-- All good.

-- I would make revision a course requirement.

--101 is fine and has sufficient flexibility. 302 is OK with its present end goal.

--101—needs more emphasis on writing rather than reading, & a variety of writing; 302 is a very ineffective syllabus—revamp whole course.

-- The course syllabi were very thorough and seemed to work well as is.

18. How helpful were the periodic course meetings/reviews? What improvements, if any, would you make

-- I would revamp 101 to include the purposes for and conduct of course meetings and reviews. I didn't feel they were helpful because they did not focus on argument and the components of argumentative writing.

-- None. No value.

-- I would not increase the number of course meetings at all.

-- They are very useful the first year, only slightly useful the second year, and they are really a complete waste of time by the third (everything could be accomplished via e-mail).

-- I would task people to provide a synopsis of all the readings for the upcoming blocks. That will give focus.

-- Current system works.

-- Depends on course. EN101—not much help except to synchronize w/others. Most of us have too little time

-- It really depended what course. For 102 they are vital for prep, but some of the others were time wasters.

-- I would make them active intellectual forums as well as training & information seminars.

-- Some were better than others. Always have a specific purpose, agenda, & goal. Course director & XO work out in advance and then “be brief, be bright, be gone.” Some did this and some did not.

What advice do you wish you had received before your first day of teaching Composition at the Academy?

--1)Take several courses in Comp Theory; 2)Teach some classes. Get right with the grammar gods.

-- Really, none that I can think of.

-- I felt that NIT answered most of my initial questions. Additionally, I found my colleagues to be very willing to answer my questions, etc.

--1)Be very hard/strict (but fair) early in the term. 2)You’ll get out of cadets what you demand—for some reason I always knew this to be true w/soldiers, but I thought the academic environment & cadets would be different; it is not.

-- I.D. [identify] the most frequently abused grammar problems. For ex:--comma w/pair, series, w/quotes; conjunctive adverb w/punct.

-- None. (Additional response will follow)

-- Have a clear plan—one of my own. Not someone else’s.

-- Set the bar high. Cadets will only go as far as you force them to.

-- A better sense of the USMA culture—students have very little time—especially in 101—to give to writing & revising—no time for library research, etc. & why this is

so--& how we can adjust to it.

-- That I should strive for interactive classes and that putting up 15 overhead slides isn't teaching—no matter what the content. The class will turn into a big snooze-fest.

Open Responses—

--1) I think the most significant failing in the West Point writing program is assuming that cadets can read well or that cadets can read closely. I don't think they do either. We as a department insist that writing is thinking and thinking is writing. The cadets are supposed to think about an ongoing discourse about date rape, race relations, you have it, and they are supposed to become informed about this discourse through the essays we have them read. Unfortunately, they lack the skills necessary to access the texts. Hence, they are uninformed about the issues they are writing about. I usually end up telling them what each article is about simply so I don't have to read too much garbage.

2) We also insist we want to "improve" cadets' writing. To "improve," a person must "change." Change means stopping a behavior and adopting a different one. Human change is the most difficult thing a person can accomplish. We as a department don't have a big enough stick or a large enough gift to encourage or coerce change. These cadets come to us with a writing facility that has gotten them through H.S. & to West Point. Why should they abandon it because some CPT or MAJ says their writing is only of "C" or mediocre quality? The answer is, they won't change.

— A second parting salvo: I found the dept's stance regarding process vs. product ambiguous at best. We urge a focus on process, but we award grades entirely on product. A focus on process is messy and the quality of a cadet's process is hard to quantify outside the final product. Also, process focuses on how; we as Army officers aren't particularly interested in "how"—we're interested in results: Take the hill. I don't care how, just take the hill. Write a paper. I don't care how. Just write a paper. Product focuses on "rules" or in Army parlance, principles. Any technique is OK as long as it doesn't violate principles. If we're really interested in product, perhaps we should have more formal grammar instruction. If not, then perhaps we should formalize/quantify portfolio work.

--The English department hosted an excellent NIT under the direction of LTC B the year I arrived. There is more than enough collegial help in house from old hands to help the new instructor rapidly adjust with a minimum of pain. I do think giving prospective instructors sample essays can help them realistically prepare for the rigors of their first semester.

--1) (RE #7) However, NIT was equally valuable for the ideas it spawned, and not alone for the things that I took from it directly. It is this thought more than any other which leads me to the conclusion that a vastly expanded NIT would likely not add a great deal of value to the system already in place. I have always been grateful, for example, that we do not require instructors to teach all 40 lessons for critiquing (as some departments do) before presenting them in the classroom. A lock-step presentation may be fine for math (although even in this case I have my doubts), but it is inappropriate, I believe, for the liberal arts. Even at a military school, instructors in the liberal arts should be permitted to allow their own personalities to show in their teaching in a way that a too-carefully choreographed class does not. 2) (RE #1) Although I did not take any composition theory classes, I felt reasonably well prepared (and qualified) to teach composition when I arrived. I did, however, find a structured syllabus as was provided in EN101 to be very helpful. 3) (RE #4) It is not the case, in my opinion, that increasing the number of calibrations which we do will enhance our ability to evaluate papers. Some of that capacity simply comes with time (a notion with which the Army as an institution seems to me to be uncomfortable). 4) (RE#14) After all, we contend on the WPPWE [the West Point Professional Writing Exam, taken at lesson 35 in EN302 and a graduation requirement] that a person not familiar with the course ought to be able to pick up a WPPWE response and recognize whether it is a good or bad piece of writing. 5) (RE#17) Another tool I used with great success was to put a paragraph on an overhead, cut it up sentence by sentence, and then have the class reassemble it.

--1) I strongly wish that I had at least one class in grad school on teaching of composition. I was very much in need of both theoretical and practical knowledge—and I had taught several semesters of 101-type courses before arriving! 2) By the end of every semester teaching 101, I thought that I “had it.” That is, I had discovered a logical, coherent process for improving my cadets’ writing ability. But whether due to the rush of events or my own inability, I was never able to capture my lessons learned and apply them to the next semester’s students. Thus, I “reinvented the wheel” every year. 3) I believe that we should begin the EN101 semester at a much more basic level. That is, we should begin at sentence level errors, proceed to paragraph composition, and then begin writing shorter essays before moving to 3-5 page papers. Our students are not so good that they wouldn’t benefit from some basic grammar and correctness/error-avoidance training. 4) I can’t say that I am a big fan of using social issues as the subject matter for a composition class. Among other things, I believe that models of good writing (i.e. literature) best serve to inspire intelligent, graceful writing by students.

--Both of these courses [EN101 & EN302] really provide a service to the Academy & the Army. Unfortunately, most cadets don’t understand or

believe this. I always felt it was my most important job to show the cadets at every opportunity the connections between reading/writing and the “real” world of what we do in the Army. Reading & writing are, I feel, of primary benefit in the arena of helping one to shape/make sense of the world. Cadets must learn that what we are showing them/teaching them in these courses is critical to their ability to broaden their understanding of important things as diverse as how we see the situation during combat to how we treat others while in garrison. That is really an instructor’s most important task and mission in both of these courses; eliminating comma splices & run-ons is important also, but if we don’t design the courses around the first, then these other things (grammar, etc.) become the focus, & the cadets hate the courses & the instructors, learning little of importance.

--1) This fall semester we culled out our worst students in EN101 and sent them to A.G. This was the best concept for us & the students. 2) I studied beaucoup Lit Crit, Lit Theory, & Comp Theory in Grad School. Had zero prep for grammar. The NIT grammar is the most beneficial prep you can provide. 3) Paglia coming to talk this semester is great. However, EN101 needs to see the authors of some of the essays just like EN102 sees them. Fire ‘em up. Make the Plebes see that their ideas have the context we say they have.

--1) I like the flexibility that EN302 allows. Cadets finally have a chance to break away from traditional forms and play with prose. The feedback I’ve received is that they actually start to enjoy writing. I’ve always been an advocate of creative or inventive responses to argument prompts. I’m usually pleased with cadet responses. 2) Also—our single focus on argument is too narrow. Composition classes should expose cadets to other forms. Let’s take off the blinders.

--EN302 must get away from the C+ for passing the WPPWE. A lot of good students sandbag and a lot of weak students are unjustly rewarded. The group grading forces the instructors to read a lot of half-hearted efforts. We spend too much time trying to figure out how to help cadets that are not trying. We need some sort of a cumulative grade to really make the students work.

--In preparation for teaching composition, I did some volunteer work at my university’s Writing Center. I signed up for times on a roster and would be on call for a couple of hours two or three times a week to read student papers from my discipline. This gave me confidence in my own abilities to give feedback and one can even get college credit—although I didn’t. I learned that I didn’t have to know every grammar rule to give good feedback, and I was able to put into practice some of the current composition theories that I was learning in graduate school.

--1) I did not like the readings from mythology [in EN302]—all of which were just abbreviated Masterplot summaries. I found there was little time to do any intervention in cadets' writing processes or to develop a workshop environment in the classroom that encouraged the development of their writing abilities through active learning and interactive instruction. Cadets write a brief essay nine times in twelve weeks all modeled more or less on the dreaded WPPWE. The principal purpose of lesson conferences was to pass out information. 2) Must the WPPWE be linked to the EN302 course? Can the WPPWE be changed to encourage a better use of class time? If we are going to teach to the test, let's have a better test to teach to. The course should include original readings, not summaries. 3) I believe that all instructors should be actively engaged in discussing, questioning, and improving on course goals and course activities. I know young instructors, who will be here for just three years, should not set course policy, But their involvement in the process will lead to better results.

Appendix E—New Instructor Survey Responses

1. How prepared were you to teach Composition when you arrived at West Point?
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Extremely prepared; had taught elsewhere before | | 5 |
| Well prepared; had studied Comp theory in grad school | | 4 |
| Somewhat prepared; had read some Comp theory | 3 | 3 |
| Poorly prepared; had observed some classes | 2 | 2 |
| Totally unprepared | 1 | 1 |
2. How well did New Instructor Training (NIT) prepare you for teaching Composition?
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| It prepared me very well | | 5 |
| It gave me a fair preparation | 4 | 4 |
| It neither helped nor hurt me as a teacher | 1 | 3 |
| It could have prepared me better | 1 | 2 |
| It didn't prepare me at all | | 1 |
3. Do you feel that NIT should be continued in its present form?
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, without any modifications | | 5 |
| Yes, with a few minor modifications | 3 | 4 |
| Yes, but with many minor modifications | 1 | 3 |
| No, the program needs to be completely revamped | 2 | 2 |
| No, the program should be discontinued | | 1 |
4. Did you receive enough practice in responding to student writing during NIT?
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Yes, much more than needed | | 5 |
| Yes, a bit more than needed | 2 | 4 |
| Just enough to be prepared | 1 | 3 |
| We could have had more effective practice | 2 | 2 |
| We didn't practice nearly enough to be prepared. | 1 | 1 |
5. Did the grammar immersion in NIT help you in teaching Composition?
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, a great deal | | 5 |
| Yes, to some extent | 4 | 4 |
| Neither helped nor hindered my teaching | 2 | 3 |
| Did not help me at all | | 2 |
| Hurt more than helped in preparing to teach | | 1 |

6. Overall, how good was your NIT preparation?

Excellent

Good

Fair.

Poor

Very Poor

	5
1	4
5	3
	2
	1

7. How much of what you learned in NIT have you actually applied to your teaching?

A great deal

Some

Not much

Very little

Nothing at all

1	5
3	4
2	3
	2
	1

8. What preparation would have been most helpful for you before coming to West Point?

--A greater focus on composition "how tos"; i.e., a practical knowledge of how to teach it.

--A more linguistically centered curriculum that is oriented toward pedagogy rather than research. Literature emphasis develops critical thinking, etc., but no immediate payoff for EN101.

--Taking some classes that focused on grammar and rhetoric would have helped. All my instruction was literature based.

--A course in teaching composition

--A discussion of classroom conduct; an arsenal of techniques that keeps students engaged. I discovered these piecemeal and haphazardly.

--After teaching composition for one semester, I now realize that I should have taken more courses in composition theory and pedagogy.

9. How responsive have more experienced rotating faculty been in helping you develop/improve your teaching?

--Extremely—They keep me from floundering.

--Very responsive.

--Very responsive—many of my best lessons were based on suggestions from experienced military instructors.

--Excellent; always ready to assist

--Very responsive—excellent feedback. They have suggested in-class exercise, teaching points, etc.

--The have been very helpful, providing me guidance on grading, written comments, and classroom procedures.

10. How responsive have permanent faculty been in helping you develop/improve your teaching?

-- Same as above.

--N/A.

--Very limited contact with the permanent faculty—they have not provided much, if any, input into my lesson plans.

--Excellent; they are always available.

--Very responsive.

--I have not sought help from permanent faculty directly, although the lesson conferences have been helpful.

11. What part of the NIT program was most helpful to you? How was it helpful?

--The overview of the WP classroom—provided an insight into the actual mechanics of the CR environment.

--Receiving anecdotal information about teaching and cadets helped me to overcome my uncertainties and calibration was very helpful in helping me understand what the desired product should be.

--Active learning classes and grammar immersion/calibration.

--Grading student essays and comparing our assessments against those of experienced instructors.

--Grammar Immersion. I wish we had possessed LBH Workbook prior to the term so that I could have sharpened my skills prior to the semester.

--I believe the calibration sessions, although far too abbreviated, were the most helpful. They gave me the opportunity to read cadet writing and effectively respond to them.

12. What improvements in NIT, if any, would have been most helpful for you?

--Focus on course objectives w/milestones & methodology; greater emphasis on cadet needs.

--More hands-on pedagogical warmup. Maybe the first week's lessons or something else with immediate practical necessity to make the New Instructor feel more confident and aware of strengths and weaknesses, etc. The flexible schedule was also great for those of us who had family to get settled.

--Expand on any aspect of active learning, lecture techniques or group discussions of assigned readings/lesson goals would be helpful.

--Writing some of the out-of-class essays before classes begin would be useful to provide meaningful paradigms.

--I needed time to digest the text—get an overall idea of the course direction.

--I believe much more calibration would be helpful, especially a lengthy session on how to properly respond to cadets' writing so as to stimulate productive revision.

13. What sort of ongoing instructor training or review, if any, might be most useful to you?

--Lesson conferences that review successes & failures.

--Successful techniques to overcome problem areas that cadets are running into. (i.e., repeated failures, second language problems, and developing critical thinking skills.)

--Expand lesson conferences and offer "think tank" sessions for the blocks of instruction (i.e. Argument or TEE strategies).

--Perhaps some seminars on the type of essays that constitute the "capstone" of each unit. These seminars would be held during the unit before.

--Perhaps a midterm calibration session—just to make sure we are on the right track—responses to student essays are on the right track.

--A mentorship program would be very helpful. By pairing new instructors with experienced ones, the new instructors will have a direct and official source for guidance, suggestions, and clarifications.

14. Do you write responses to the essay prompts you developed for cadets?

Y 1 N 5

Why or why not?

--It varies; sometimes I do based upon time available & other responsibilities.

--Didn't think about it until now. Good idea.

--Some responses are worth my time, but many of the *FrameWork* journal options sicken me.

--But not consistently. I usually respond to in-class writing prompts, but there is not enough time to write outside of class.

--Time—A weak excuse. [EN]102 essays, class preparation, grading/responding to student essays.

-- I did at first, but I very quickly became overwhelmed with grading and writing EN102 essays. I understand the value of this, yet, at the time, I did not feel the benefits outweighed the time costs.

15. What classroom activities have you found most successful in improving cadet writing?

--In-class peer responses, grammar exercises.

--Discussion and illustration of specific points systematically. This tends to bore the developed cadets as well as the unmotivated, unless you present it in a unique way and get them involved. This works well for those in the middle ground between those extremes.

--Offering more instruction that produces in-class (black board response) analysis of issues not fully addressed in FW (a very one-sided text).

--Reading their writing aloud. In groups, students collectively rewrite paragraphs.

--Activities that highlight their own writing, or force them to produce writing in class.

--I found that supervised and outlined peer review sessions were helpful in the early stages. After in-class essays, I found that providing excerpts from cadet writing that have symptomatic problems was especially helpful in correcting repeated errors.

16. How suitable are the texts used in EN101? What changes would you recommend, if any?

--I think we need to change composition texts. I recommend using one that uses a methodical, step-by-step approach to writing.

--*Little Brown* is a good reference but it appears that the cadets will not use it unless forced to. *FrameWork* is interesting and can spur discussion, but the more politically conservative student gives it a jaded reception. It's challenging to show them that you're getting them to think critically and not proselytize them (some don't buy it). A politically balanced point counterpoint rhetoric would be better.

--The *Little Brown Handbook* (which is not "Little" or "Brown") is too imposing—all 800 pages of it. *FW* is a text that does not engage the majority of students in the classroom.

--*FW* has some fine sections, particularly in the last two units, but it takes too long to get around to thesis-based essays. I recommend that a new text be more focused on argumentation and thesis-based composition.

--*FrameWork* is adequate. *LBH* is very thorough. Turabian is terrible.

--Although the text (*FW*) was useful for stimulating discussion, I found myself using *LBH* far more often. I believe a text much more rooted in composition theory would be more beneficial for the course.

17. How effective is the course syllabus? What changes have you made? Why?

--I have made numerous changes because I feel the present text does not offer students what they need (i.e., a methodical approach to developing an essay). An example of this is *FrameWork*'s mocking of the 5-para essay. Our students are not at the point where they can readily dispense w/a proven format & succeed. Admittedly, the 5 para essay is restrictive; however, the plebes need some type of text that outlines a well-defined process. As they progress, they then can experiment.

--It is effective because it gives the student assignments that they actually enjoy writing about in many cases (they have options). It leads into argument very slowly and many may need to get their feet wet a little sooner. However, an entire semester of writing argument would also be drudgery. We need to balance these two in order to develop writers with a voice and not argumentative automatons. I would limit out-of-class essays

to three (a challenge focused on development of writer); and for in-class essays I would take two days and focus on argument:

Day one	Reading articles (pro/con)/prewriting/strategy, etc.—50 minutes
Day two	Write essay (argumentative) in class—50 minutes

I'd have five in-class essays, with dates staggered to spread the paper load, holistically graded; they'd have the opportunity to revise the three graded out-of-class essays and even to publish them in the cadet journal (if they receive an A+).

--Integrate argument and TEE (Go/NoGo Task) lessons much earlier. The syllabus, when combined with the primary texts, seems a schizophrenic approach to teaching composition.

--The cycle of taking the in-class essay on the day the students turn in their out-of-class is awkward, and it compresses the time available to carefully grade their work. We should stagger graded exercises, giving students and instructors time to synthesize feedback.

--Fairly effective—I omitted some readings and replaced them w/exercises that highlighted cadet writing—or worked towards one [of] their essay assignments.

--The syllabus was an effective guide for me, especially at first. I followed most of the assignments noted on it, but I also added many assignments from *LBH* because I noted a significant problem with grammar in my sections. I also deviated from the syllabus on the in-class essay topics.

18. How helpful are the periodic course meetings/reviews? What improvements, if any, would you make?

--Next to worthless—we need to have a common focus instead of 20+ different EN101 courses. My fear is that we are short-changing our cadets.

--The reviews are helpful, but should be conducted more like an AAR [After-Action Review—an Army term] (not an exhaustive one—but simple—what did you like/dislike—what next). The freedom to adapt the syllabus is fantastic.

--Add conferences that facilitate a more OPEN analysis of the various blocks of instruction offered on the text.

--I find them quite helpful—I wouldn't make any substantial changes.

--Not very helpful—particularly since I don't think we got a very thorough overview of the course at the beginning. Periodic lesson conferences seemed piecemeal & disconnected.

--The meetings were helpful. Most helpful, though, were the written lesson plans that the more experienced instructors provided. To improve these sessions, I suggest incorporating brief sections on effective responses to cadet writing.

19. What advice do you wish you had received before your first day of teaching Composition at the Academy?

--How to actively involve students.

--Take it slow; focus on the basic essay form and standards for success; walk through the process while forcing (challenging) them to think critically in a non-threatening environment. Getting them to loosen up is a great motivator, but it is also a double-edge sword.

--Any advice on how to teach from a primary text that counters the very basic assumptions this institution functions under.

--Use some kind of grading checklist or gradesheet, and be disciplined in spending only a fair, rather than extravagant, amount of time on each paper.

--Successful classroom strategies/techniques to keep students engaged.

--I don't believe any specific advice would have helped. An assigned "mentor" would have helped, though.

Appendix F—Survey Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This is to certify that I, _____, hereby agree to participate as an authorized part of the dissertation project of LTC Janice E. Hudley, Department of English, United States Military Academy. I furthermore grant the nonexclusive right to use this data to LTC Hudley for her dissertation and for possible use of the Center for Enhanced Performance, United States Military Academy.

I understand that any data or answers that I have provided will remain **strictly confidential** with regard to my identity. I also understand that the information I have provided may appear in publication but that my identity will remain anonymous.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have no illness or disability that would increase risk to me as a result of my participation in this research.

I further understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time.

Date

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Appendix G—Student Questionnaire

On Implementing a Changed Curriculum at USMAPS:

A Questionnaire for Recent USMAPS Graduates

POC: LTC Janice E. Hudley

Department of English

United States Military Academy

West Point, New York 10996-1791

We appreciate your taking the time to answer these questions today. Your insight into your experiences in the USMAPS English program will help us continue to improve the curriculum for future cadet candidates.

I. Program of instruction (POI)

1. Did the USMAPS English POI consistently challenge you intellectually? (Check one box)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, every class was challenging..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Most classes were challenging. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Some classes were challenging. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Few classes were challenging. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| No classes were challenging. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

2. Did the USMAPS English POI take you beyond what you learned in high school English?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, I learned a great deal more. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, to some extent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| I learned very little more. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| I learned nothing more. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| High school was better preparation for me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

3. Do you feel that the present USMAPS English POI should be continued?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, without any modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, with a few minor modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Yes, but with many minor modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| No, the program needs to be completely revamped. . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| No, the program should be discontinued. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

4. Was the amount of writing in the USMAPS POI enough to prepare you adequately for EN101?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, we wrote much more than needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, we wrote a bit more than we needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| We wrote just enough to be prepared. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| We could have written more often. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| We didn't write nearly enough to be prepared. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

5. Did the grammar exercises in the USMAPS POI help you in your EN101 preparation?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, a great deal. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, to some extent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Neither helped nor hindered me in EN101. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Did not help me at all. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Hurt more than helped in preparing for EN101. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

6. Did the interlinears in the USMAPS POI help you in your EN101 preparation?

- Yes, a great deal. 5
- Yes, to some extent 4
- Neither helped nor hindered me in EN101 ... 3
- Did not help me at all 2
- Hurt more than helped in preparing for EN101. 1

7. Did the writing workshops in the USMAPS POI help you in your EN101 preparation?

- Yes, a great deal. 5
- Yes, to some extent 4
- Neither helped nor hindered me in EN101 ... 3
- Did not help me at all 2
- Hurt more than helped in preparing for EN101. 1

8. How would you characterize the USMAPS writing workshops?

- We wrote extensively during every workshop 5
- We wrote something during nearly every workshop 4
- We wrote something during many workshops 3
- We wrote during very few workshops. 2
- We hardly wrote at all during the workshops 1

9. Overall, how good was your USMAPS preparation for EN101?

- Excellent 5
- Good 4
- Fair 3
- Poor 2
- Very Poor 1

10. How much of what you learned in the USMAPS POI are you applying to EN101?

- A great deal. 5
- Some 4
- Not much. 3
- Very little 2
- Nothing at all 1

II. High School Information

11. How would you characterize your high school English program?

- Excellent 5
- Good 4
- Fair 3
- Poor 2
- Very Poor 1

12. How often did you have writing assignments during your four years of high school?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Seldom
- Never

	5
	4
	3
	2
	1

13. How did your English instructor(s) evaluate your work?

By letter grade _____

By numerical grade _____

Other (explain) _____

What type of writing did you do most often during your senior year? (creative, expository, argumentative) _____

15. Where do you believe you stood in relation to other members of your high school English class?

- At the top
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- At the bottom

	5
	4
	3
	2
	1

III. Personal information (All information will remain confidential)

16. What is the name of the city or town from which you graduated high school?

17. Did you enter USMAPS the summer after you graduated from high school? __ YES __ NO

17a. If NO, are you prior service? ____ YES ____ NO

17b. If you are not prior service, why did you delay entering USMAPS? (working, other school, etc.)

17c. If you are prior service, how long did you serve? _____

What MOS? _____

18. How would you characterize the neighborhood in which you grew up?

- Wealthy
- Upper middle class
- Middle class
- Working Poor
- Below poverty level

	5
	4
	3
	2
	1

18a.

- Rural
- Small town
- Suburban
- City subdivision (single-family homes)
- Inner city

	4
	3
	2
	1

Appendix H—Departing USMA Instructor Questionnaire

Leaving West Point

A Questionnaire for D/English Veteran Composition Instructors

POC: LTC Janice E. Hudley

Department of English

United States Military Academy

West Point, New York 10996-1791

I appreciate your taking the time to answer these questions today. Your insight into your experiences as an instructor in the USMA English program will help us continue to improve teaching preparation for future department instructors.

1. How prepared were you to teach Composition when you arrived at West Point? (Check one box)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Extremely prepared; had taught here (or elsewhere) before . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Well prepared; had studied Comp theory in grad school. . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Somewhat prepared; had read some Comp theory . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Poorly prepared; had observed some classes | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Totally unprepared | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

2. How well did New Instructor Training (NIT) prepare you for teaching Composition?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| It prepared me very well | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| It gave me a fair preparation | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| It neither helped nor hurt me as a teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| It could have prepared me better | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| It didn't prepare me at all | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

3. Do you feel that NIT should be continued in its present form?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, without any modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, with a few minor modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Yes, but with many minor modifications | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| No, the program needs to be completely revamped. . . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| No, the program should be discontinued | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

4. Did you receive enough practice in responding to student writing during NIT?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, much more than needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, a bit more than needed | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Just enough to be prepared | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| We could have had more effective practice | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| We didn't practice nearly enough to be prepared. . . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

5. Did the grammar exercises in NIT help you in teaching Composition?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, a great deal. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Yes, to some extent | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Neither helped nor hindered my teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Did not help me at all | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Hurt more than helped in preparing to teach | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

6. Overall, how good was your NIT preparation?

Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
...		
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

7. How much of what you learned in NIT did you actually apply to your teaching?

A great deal	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Some	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Not much	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Very little	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Nothing at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

8. What preparation would have been most helpful for you before coming to West Point?

9. How responsive were more experienced rotating faculty to helping you develop/improve your teaching?

How responsive were permanent faculty to helping you develop/improve your teaching?

10. What part of the NIT program was most helpful to you? How was it helpful?

11. What improvements in NIT, if any, would have been most helpful for you?

12. What sort of ongoing instructor training or review, if any, would have been helpful for you?

13. Did you write responses to the essay prompts you developed for cadets? Y__ N__

Why or why not?

14. Did you write responses to the coursewide essay prompts? Y__ N__

Why or why not?

15. What classroom activities did you find most successful in improving cadet writing?

NAME: _____ Rank: _____ Branch/Specialty: _____

(All information in this survey will be kept confidential. This information is required for researcher tracking purposes only.)

Appendix I—Incoming USMA Instructor Survey

Coming to West Point

A Questionnaire for D/English New Composition Instructors

POC: LTC Janice E. Hudley

Department of English

United States Military Academy

West Point, New York 10996-1791

Gentlemen: You've reached the midway point in your first semester of teaching in the English Department. Now I'm asking you to take a few minutes to answer a few questions about your experiences here. As if that's not enough, I'm going to ask each of you to consider becoming my guinea pig for the last half of the semester. Said guinea pig would report to me electronically at the end of each lesson (which you will have taught four times), endure a weekly visit from me, and meet with me for about half an hour each Friday. I don't believe this would intrude upon your time too much because you're probably making notes to yourselves at the end of each lesson anyway. (At least I hope you are.) And the Friday meetings could be negotiated easily. Please consider volunteering. Thanks.
LTC Hudley

1. How prepared were you to teach Composition when you arrived at West Point? (Check one box)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Extremely prepared; had taught elsewhere before | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| ... | | |
| Well prepared; had studied Comp theory in grad school | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Somewhat prepared; had read some Comp theory | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Poorly prepared; had observed some classes | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Totally unprepared | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

2. How well did New Instructor Training (NIT) prepare you for teaching Composition?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| It prepared me very well | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| ... | | |
| It gave me a fair preparation | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| ... | | |
| It neither helped nor hurt me as a teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| It could have prepared me better | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| It didn't prepare me at all | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

3. Do you feel that NIT should be continued in its present form?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, without any modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| .. | | |
| Yes, with a few minor modifications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| .. | | |
| Yes, but with many minor modifications | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| No, the program needs to be completely revamped. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| No, the program should be discontinued | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

4. Did you receive enough practice in responding to student writing during NIT?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Yes, much more than needed | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| .. | | |
| Yes, a bit more than needed | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Just enough to be prepared | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| We could have had more effective practice | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| We didn't practice nearly enough to be prepared. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

5. Did the grammar immersion in NIT help you in teaching Composition?

- Yes, a great deal. 5
- ..
- Yes, to some extent 4
- Neither helped nor hindered my teaching 3
- Did not help me at all 2
- Hurt more than helped in preparing to teach 1

6. Overall, how good was your NIT preparation?

- Excellent 5
- ...
- Good 4
- Fair 3
- Poor 2
- Very Poor 1

7. How much of what you learned in NIT have you actually applied to your teaching?

- A great deal. 5
- ..
- Some 4
- Not much. 3
- Very little 2
- Nothing at all 1

8. What preparation would have been most helpful for you before coming to West Point?

9. How responsive have more experienced rotating faculty been in helping you develop/improve your teaching?

10. How responsive have permanent faculty been in helping you develop/improve your teaching?

11. What part of the NIT program was most helpful to you? How was it helpful?

12. What improvements in NIT, if any, would have been most helpful for you?

13. What sort of ongoing instructor training or review, if any, might be most useful to you?

14. Do you write responses to the essay prompts you developed for cadets? Y__ N__

Why or why not?

15. What classroom activities have you found most successful in improving cadet writing?

16. How suitable are the texts used in EN101? What changes would you recommend, if any?

17. How effective is the course syllabus? What changes have you made? Why?

18. How helpful are the periodic course meetings/reviews? What improvements, if any, would you make?

19. What advice do you wish you had received before your first day of teaching Composition at the Academy?

20. If you're interested in being my guinea pig, please print and sign your name on the line below. I'll contact you right away and explain my plan. Otherwise, just drop your completed questionnaire in my distro box. Either way, all of your responses will remain confidential. Thanks again for all your help.

Appendix J—Changes to the English Curriculum at the US Military Academy Preparatory School: Their Effects on SAT-V Performance

The United States Military Academy Preparatory School (Prep School) is a one-year, post-high school program in English and Mathematics skills for soldiers and high school leaders otherwise qualified for entry to the United States Military Academy. Located at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, the Prep School's mission is to provide approximately 180 members of each year's entering US Military Academy class.

For almost all of the last 25 years, the Prep School English Department has conducted two separate one-hour classes which were held every day of the week. In the EN11/21 course, students studied, in great detail, grammar, usage, rhetoric, logic, speech and narrative, expository, and argumentative writing. In grammar, for example, students were expected to know such esoteric terms as "attributive adjectives," "separable adjuncts," and "retained objects"; and heavy emphasis was placed upon labeling these terms correctly on unit examinations.

The second class, EN12/22, focused upon reading improvement using the SRA Reading Program (copyrighted 1959 but still used in many high schools today), and upon vocabulary development through study of a formal list of some 481 words arranged alphabetically from A (abate) through Z (zenith). The words were not easy as evidenced by such words as assiduous and auspicious; loquacious, lugubrious; and vicissitudes and vitiate. Students also practiced extensively with College Board verbal test items such as antonyms, analogies and sentence completions in their Senior English Review Exercises text. Finally, in the second semester, students

studied the various literary genres and wrote timed in-class essay exams (known as blue books) on assigned works of literature.

Students were in one track and everyone took one departmental examination at the end of each unit. Pass or fail, the student continued on to the next unit; there was little or no provision for remediation.

With the coming of Academic Year 95-96, the Prep School instituted several specific changes in the curriculum, all in response to the Academy's "List of Observable or Measurable Skills in Reading, Studying, and Writing"; and to the American Council on Education and Government Accounting Office reviews of the old academic program. Beginning that year, the Prep School curriculum 1) changed to the whole language approach; 2) established daily writing labs; 3) called on cadet-candidates to study vocabulary from readings; 4) stopped teaching specifically for the SAT; 5) gave instructors more input to grading; 6) reduced the teaching of literature to poetry only; 7) established an alternating "A/B" class schedule, which eliminated approximately five hours of class time each week and allowed greater opportunity for individual time with the instructor; 8) moved away from "naming and labeling"; 9) mandated the Student Success Course for all cadet-candidates; 10) introduced two basic writing texts coordinated with the Academy's English department; and 11) obtained Academy approval for the new curriculum.

The SAT-V scores below show the results of the entering and January administrations of the test to the 93-94, 94-95, and 95-96 Prep School Classes. All scores are normed for the most recent exam. A quick glance suggests that, indeed, the changes in curriculum during AY 95-96 have had a real positive effect on the

current class's scores. The t tests conducted on paired years verify this effect. While the entering t test results indicate small differences between the classes (with the 95-96 class being the weakest), the January t test results show great differences between 95-96 and the two previous classes. The January t test result between 93-94 and 94-95, on the other hand, shows negligible differences between the classes: -0.12.

However, because the Prep School English Department instituted in one year ten fairly significant changes in the presentation of the curriculum, it is impossible to pinpoint which one(s) made the most difference in the cadet-candidates' SAT-V performance. The effectiveness of the new program will allow the Prep School to send more proven soldiers and leaders to the Military Academy, and will decrease the number they need to recruit each year in order to send 180 students to each new Academy class.

	N	ENTERING SATV	STAN. DEVIATION	SEM	N	JANUARY SATV	STAN. DEVIATION	SEM	DIF.
AY 93-94	283	484	76.70	4.56	260	516	81.37	5.04	35.41
AY 94-95	213	477	71.77	4.91	178	517	82.43	6.18	44.53
AY 95-96*	232	468	66.96	4.4	214	568	71.35	4.88	99.67

*Year in which curriculum changes were initiated.

Figure I-1: SAT Change, entry to retest

Entering	January
<u>a. 94-95 & 95-96</u>	
$SE_{M951 - M961} =$	$SE_{M952 - M962} =$
$\sqrt{4.91^2 + 4.4^2} =$	$\sqrt{6.18^2 + 4.88^2} =$
$\sqrt{24.11 + 19.36} =$	$\sqrt{38.2 + 23.8} =$

$\sqrt{43.47} = 6.6$ $t = \frac{477-468}{6.6} = \frac{9}{6.6} = 1.36$	$\sqrt{62} = 7.9$ $t = \frac{517-568}{7.9} = \frac{-51}{7.9} = -6.45$
<u>b. 93-94 & 95-96</u> $SE_{M941 - M961} =$ $\sqrt{4.56^2 + 4.4^2} =$ $\sqrt{40.16} = 6.34$ $t = \frac{484-468}{6.34} = \frac{16}{6.34} = 2.5$	$SE_{M942 - M962} =$ $\sqrt{5.04^2 + 4.88^2} =$ $\sqrt{49.2} = 7.01$ $t = \frac{516-568}{7.01} = \frac{-52}{7.01} = -7.4$
<u>c. 93-94 & 94-95</u> $SE_{M941 - M951} =$ $\sqrt{4.56 + 4.91^2} =$ $\sqrt{44.91} = 6.7$ $t = \frac{484-477}{6.7} = \frac{7}{6.7} = 1.04$	$SE_{M942 - M952} =$ $\sqrt{5.04^2 + 6.18^2} =$ $\sqrt{63.6} = 7.9$ $t = \frac{516-517}{7.9} = \frac{-1}{7.9} = -0.12$

Figure I-2: Standard error of dif/t tests