W I N G S

A newsletter sponsored by The Daedalus Group, Inc.

Spring 1993 Volume 1, Number 1

Welcome to *Wings*

You are holding the first edition of *Wings*, a tri-annual newsletter produced by The Daedalus Group. We initiated this newsletter for both practical and professional reasons. As most of our users know by now, The Daedalus Group is comprised, first and foremost, ofeducators—specifically,peoplewhobelievethatlearning to use language consciously and responsibly should be one of the greatest goals of any world citizen. As we've talked with the thousands of people who are attempting to teach language arts with computers in various educational settings, we quickly realized that there are very good reasons why educational software endeavors have difficulty addressing the range of needs and questions that come up in phone conversations or during brief encounters at professional conferences: there's just too much creation, innovation, and education going on out there to be captured in a few comments here or a couple of presentations there.

So *Wings* took flight. Why? To offer educational software users a forum for disseminating what they do and don't know about computerized instruction, and to articulate what they want to know next. To demystify the day-to-day operations and requirements for setting up computerized classrooms. To provide a place for teachers / innovators (we think they are, more often than not, one andthe same) to tell their colleagues about their successes and failures and to elicit solutions to the various theoretical, pedagogical, and financial problems that face educational institutions and practices right now in 1993 and beyond. And to speculate about the social and political implications of the grand educational dreams we all have from time to time as we work with our students on new ways of expressing the very human hope for a future where we learn to rely more on our words and less on our fists in order to bring about change.

Welcome to *Wings*. We hope you'll soar with us often.

Nancy Peterson
Editor, *Wings*

Avoiding the "Lone Ranger" Syndrome in Computer-Based Writing Instruction

In my discussions with people who are setting up computer-based writing classrooms, I stress the importance of four components: the right equipment, the right software, the right pedagogy, and what I call the "project effect."

The right equipment would be Macintosh or DOS computers and a good LAN (local area network) using

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Localtalk, Token Ring, or ethernet connections. The right software would be good netware like Appleshare or Novell and good groupware like the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE), with a powerful word processor like Microsoft Word. The right pedagogy would be a "text-sharing" pedagogy which uses the LAN to allow many writers to write to many readers and facilitates the close reading of student text for critiquing and revising.

These three components of a good computer-based writing classroom are not set in stone. I can imagine, for instance, using a VAX cluster instead of DOS or Macs, or using Textra instead of Microsoft Word for the high-end word processor, or using some other groupware besides DIWE, or even using hypertext or hypermedia mechanisms.

The fourth element, the "project effect," is not so variable, and yet it is the one aspect of computer-based writing instruction consistently ignored by institutions and departments. The "project effect" refers to the community of instructors which must form to support the computer-based classroom. In the seven years I have been putting together my own classrooms, supervising those of others, and communicating with other campuses regarding computers and writing, I have seen over and over the value of collaboration among instructors.

All too often the computer-based classroom is enthusiastically supported by vice-presidents and deans, moderately supported by department chairs, and ignored by the senior faculty. One or two or three junior faculty and graduate students will "condescend" to use the new facility, and will move into the room with a great many intuitive notions about writing on computers and very little study of the literature (and there is a growing body of both practical and theoretical writing on computer-based instruction). Often these faculty, though there may be five or six of them, function as "Lone Rangers," communicating with others who use the facility only to report problems or complain about the frustrations in using the new instructional environment.

Seldom do these Lone Rangers visit each other's classes both to support the instructors and to learn from them. Seldom do these Lone Rangers meet regularly to share not only frustrations but the many invigorating insights and small triumphs that come with teaching in a LAN-based environment. Seldom do these Lone Rangers set up orientations for prospective users and interested faculty, develop model syllabi for the room, and communicate on a regular basis with other computer-interested instructors on other campuses.

Often these Lone Rangers will complain loud and long that the department and the school are not supporting them technically and financially, and yet they themselves take no concrete steps to support themselves and others like them. Eventually, feeling overburdened (and sometimes just plain ignored), such Lone Rangers abandon the computer-based classroom, convinced that the shift from the traditional environment to the computer based LAN environment is too tricky and not feasible.

Emphasizing the "project effect" avoids the "Lone Ranger" syndrome and the fragmentation of a departmental computer-based effort. But the instructors who want to use a computer-based classroom should not wait for administrators or computer services people to establish a community of interested instructors.

For instance, at Texas Tech University in 1990 we established the "Computer-Based Writing Instruction Research Project" (I put "research" in the title based upon long-standing advice from Hugh Burns). This "project" came about at a meeting of six instructors interested in using the computer-based classroom. We began a newsletter called *The Projecteer* filled with fifty and a hundred-word tidbits about logging on, cutting-and-pasting across DIWE features, printing tips, etc. We met every week. We set up "internships" for prospective new instructors. We set up a three-week "support exchange" at the beginning of each semester when instructors would visit each other's classrooms (no exceptions) to help with all the dinky problems of getting confused students on computers and networks for the first time. We reviewed each other's syllabi and made suggestions. Finally, we met regularly each Friday (attendance not mandatory) at a local watering hole to chat about life in general and computers in particular.

Our Project now numbers about sixteen instructors (two full-time faculty, two lecturers, and twelve graduate students), and while instructors continue to experience frustrations, both technical and pedagogical, the support of an identified, semi-official, similarly-minded community keeps those frustrations in perspective. Our sense of shared identity and purpose has produced conference papers and the beginnings of serious research into computer-based instruction. I am hopeful that we will be taken more seriously by administrators and university officials and will receive the formal technical and financial support that all such efforts need.

Fred Kemp, Asst. Professor
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Do you know people who need to receive *Wings* but aren't? Send their names and addresses to:

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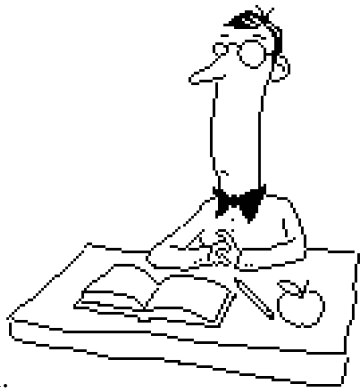
TEACHER TALK



NoteWork™: A Noteworthy Improvement on Classroom E-Mail Software

NoteWork™—a pop-up e-mail application from NoteWork Corporation, Brookline, Massachusetts—looks like a cross between the Daedalus™ InterChange™ program and the Daedalus™ Mail program. Although NoteWork™ behaves a little like both of these Daedalus modules, the power of this application lies in its spontaneity. I used NoteWork™ in my developmental writing classes at Austin Community College this semester because our lab did not have the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE). NoteWork™ proved to be the vital link between the local area network and WordPerfect, the only other software at my disposal. Further, I discovered that NoteWork™ created new rhetorical possibilities that even DIWE does not as readily offer.

Three features account for the special utility of this e-mail application:

- NoteWork™ can be accessed from any place in any application. The key-command <ALT> <Tab> pops up a menu window with several message options, including "Open Mail" and "Send a Message"; the selected option, in turn, opens up another menu window with dated message, format, and addressee options, etc.
- NoteWork™ alerts the receiver that he/she has a message. These alerts are visually and audibly coded according to urgency. For example, a flashing red quarter musical note in the upper right corner of the screen along with a short beep indicate a message; a sixteenth note and longer beep signal a more urgent message; and a flash, which actually overrides whatever the receiver has on-screen, pops up the message and waits for a reply.
- NoteWork™ has a reply function that appends a receiver's reply to a sender's message; then that receiver can reply to that reply. Thus, two people can easily initiate and spontaneously carry on a conversation, a conversation usually elicited from reading one another's work. A copy of the conversation can also be forwarded to another person's (e. g., instructor's) mailbox.

In sum, these features combine to offer an immediacy that reinstates the social dimension of writing; simply put, writers are writing to a real audience who respond (usually) immediately. NoteWork™ has proven indispensible as a class management tool and for one-on-one conferencing during class, a viable alternative to lecturing that instead individualizes instruction. It also invites dialogue—not just a one-way response—between writers and readers at all stages of the writing process.

A drawback of NoteWork™ is cost, priced at $35 per station. So our department has decided to convert to the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment, a much better buy with more instructional options. Although we cannot afford to use NoteWork™ department-wide, I plan to continue using it along with the Daedalus™ system.

Dr. Barbara Monroe, Instructor
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Austin, Texas

Pseudonyms and InterChange™ : The Case of the Disappearing Body

One of the interesting features of the Daedalus™ InterChange™ program is the possibility of pseudonymous discussions. I'm regularly intrigued—and often amused—by the persona students use in a pseudonymous discussion. Some try on several identities as they try on different points of view in an argument. Some bait each other with provocative persona. Many may cross-gender themselves, or cross-dress, especially in discussions of gender issues. Some have even become the instructor.

Because students may lose their material identities in the movement from the classroom space to textual cyberspace, they may find a certain freedom from predetermined identity. Admittedly, some may recognize each other through language, i. e., types of comments or references made, but a very real freedom evidences itself in the donning and exploration of identities and viewpoints the student might not otherwise consider or voice.

But the loss of material identity may also be a problem, particularly for those students or instructors who are invested in their material identities as part of the discussion. This problem may arise early in the class, before students get to know one another; it might also become an issue in a class that spends most of its time in

computer interaction.

I cite one example, one moment of crisis, from my own class. In a first year composition class, during a discussion of vested interests in the teaching of history, one Asian American student focused his remarks on the Vietnam conflict. His name was Anglo, and many of the students did not yet know each other well, so his material—i. e., cultural, ethnic—identity was not coded into the the discussion. At one point, an Anglo American male from Dallas asked him jokingly, "I did not know you fought in Vietnam, what platoon were you in?" The Asian student responded, in all caps (the way people sometimes simulate shouting on InterChange™), "I AM VIETNAMESE!!!! I AM AN AMERICAN ALSO!!!!" Because his Asian identity was erased from the scene of argument, the other student could not realize the possible invidiousness of a joking comment. As a result, the Asian American student had to foreground his material ethnic identity in the text of the InterChange™ discussion itself. The presence of the body, tied to a historical and epistemological materiality, had disappeared into the computer; the body had become the ghost in the machine.

Under such circumstances, much is at stake pedagogically. As many of us begin to teach classes that in some way feature crosscultural or multicultural texts, and as we all teach in diverse classrooms, we learn that we speak from our bodies, our materialities: our cultural, ethnic, sexual, regional, physical situatedness. Our Cartesian heritage, of course, denies the place of the body in the pursuit of knowledge. But anyone who has taught first year writing courses knows that educational narratives arise out of material contexts. If we value this (re)source for its instructional diversity, or if we feel a need, as my Asian student did, to speak from our racial or historical situation, we must be aware of the way the computer may erase identity, material or otherwise.

One way to prevent this sort of disappearance, obviously, would be to more fully introduce students to one another early in the semester, so that names register as bodies in the classroom. In the pseudonymous conversation, the possibilities of the loss or exchange of identity are fruitful. But when we would speak from our own names, our own bodies, the struggle, as well as the body, may need to be foregrounded in the textual and discursive space of the computer classroom so that the work of contending with difference in the classroom continues to get done.

Ed Madden, Asst. Instructor
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Austin, Texas

Using InterChange™ Transcripts Recursively in the Writing Classroom

I recently taught an introductory composition class based on the argumentation strategies of Stephen Toulmin using the Daedalus™ Intergrated Writing Environment (DIWE). Because part of my syllabus called for students to read scores of and to work together on argumentative analyses of published articles, I was faced with the pedagogical problem of not being able to focus enough class time on my own students' texts.

My solution was to use class discussions as texts—a strategy facilitated by (but not exclusively applicable to) the networked classroom. I continued to assign readings to the students, but we spent a minimum of two class periods on each group of readings. The first class was devoted to a Daedalus™ InterChange™ session during which students began with prompts I provided; the class then continued a group analysis of the argumentative strategies employed by the article(s). Inevitably, discussion got off track, and analytical statements became less acute. But what occurred the second day not only allowed the class to focus on student-generated texts, but it also allowed me to use less directive intervention to help my students identify and understand the argumentational strategies they had read and would soon be writing.

On the second class period, the students entered InterChange™ again. Once there, they also pulled up the InterChange™ transcript file from the previous meeting and reviewed it using the split screen feature allowed by DIWE. In so doing, the current day's discussion could focus on the previous day's critique of a reading assignment. This allowed for self-correction, further reflection after the original discussion, and more insightful remarks. At times, I would print out a transcript of an InterChange™ discussion so that my students could take it home for further review.

The technique was also helpful in terms of group work. At times, students were split into separate conferences and each conducted a critique of the same article; groups then electronically "exchanged" InterChange™ transcripts and critiqued their classmates' critiques. The constant revision of this process coincided with the drafts students were working on and highlighted the multiple ways in which rewriting (and rethinking) occurs.

Beth Kolko, Asst. Instructor
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Austin, Texas

TEACHER TALK, cont'd

Daedalus™ Mail, Library Research and the First Year Composition Student

The first year rhetoric and compositon course at the University of Texas at Austin includes one substantial research paper assignment. At UT, the libraries and resources are scattered around campus and can be intimidating to first year students unaccustomed to the size, complexity, and number of university libraries. This assignment gently breaks them into the world of university research. When teaching first year writing with the DOS version of the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE), I found the Daedalus™ Mail program very useful as a means of storing information on research resources.

I began by organizing the research project as a total class assignment. At the beginning of the research paper section of the course, I brought to class a list of available research resources that can be used in the libraries at UT. On this list I included small libraries (The Public Affairs Library, for instance) as a single item along with the various electronic and paper databases. (Off campus resources can be included as well—city information bureaus, for example.)

The total number of items on the resource list equalled the number of students in the class, so that each student could sign up to investigate, use, and write a report on one resource. For example, if a student signs up for the *Social Science Index* on Proquest, they go to the machine and run a search on it, using either the topic they will be researching (optimally) or a test topic. They familiarize themselves with the resource's logistics, uses, and limitations. If needed, they ask the reference librarian for help. Their task is to write a coherent, well-detailed "how to"report on that particular research resource so that another student wishing to learn about how to use it should be able to find the resource, understand what it contains, and be able to operate it effectively by reading the report.

I had the students write their reports on their diskettes in Daedalus™ Write and import them into the "Research" Daedalus™ Mail conference. They used the resource name in their message titles so others could easily identify their resource. The result is a useful compendium of information available to all students in the class. Because Mail lists the names of all readers, the instructor can check to see if students are reading the reports. If they write their reports in Write, the instructor can also have them copy the file onto the network, or they can write their reports as Mail messages (bypassing Write). In addition to these files being a wonderful classroom resource, students can also print out the reports as a packet to take to the libraries as they work on their research projects.

Aside from the practical value of the information, the students are writing for a particular audience—each other. Whether or not their guide is effective for their audience depends on how accurately and completely they describe the resource. So the benefits of the assignment are two-fold: the students practice pragmatic descriptive writing, and the class gets a user-friendly hands-on report on each resource. The students learn quickly what is available to them for research, in itself a valuable experience, and they also learn to shape their writing to serve a very interested, expectant audience.

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Have You Heard . . .

Texas Tech University announces a new Ph.D. program in Technical Communication and Rhetoric

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JUMPING OFF . . .

Text-Sharing Pedagogy in the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment

Few athletic teams can win championships on the achievements of one outstanding player. Michael Jordon, Wayne Gretsky, and Nolan Ryan, whose teams have won far fewer championship trophies than their stars have won individual MVP awards, are contemporary examples. Films, despite Hollywood's inclination to produce "star vehicles" and lionize individuals with Academy Awards, often fail artistically if not financially without the synergy of a strong script, a visionary director, and the repertoire of its supporting cast. Likewise, the pedagogical potential of the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE) is diminished when users rely on one program, usually Daedalus™ InterChange™, at the expense of the others.

I do not offer here a comprehensive list of "tricks" to integrate the various writing activities available on DIWE (Invent, Write, Respond, InterChange™, Utilities), but rather sketch out some basic principles and illustrate them with an actual instructional sequence I have used in a number of classes. When designing any instructional sequence for DIWE, my goal is to develop a flow between private and public writing so that the activities are mutually enhancing. Following this principle, I use Invent and Write to help students explore their initial thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about a topic; I use InterChange™ and Mail to place those thoughts into the public forum so they can benefit from the feedback of others and so others can benefit from one another's diverse perspectives on the topic. Students then use what they've "heard" in the public forums to write formal papers on Write, drafts of which they once again share with peers through Mail and Respond. During this process writers receive direct feedback in the form of guided peer responses and garner indirect feedback through reading others' drafts, thus developing tacit knowledge about how others employ analysis and argumentation in the development of their drafts. Through all of this, the students are writing texts about texts, their own and others', employing analysis and argumentation, learning tone and audience, and otherwise learning to communicate with a purpose in writing with an ever present audience that constantly offers (and at times demands) reality checks.

I have enjoyed some success using DIWE in writing courses built upon reader-response approaches to literature. To begin investigations of a literary text, I design my own Invent prompts around heuristics suggested by reader-response theorists. For example, the series of reader-response prompts below (which are illustrative rather than comprehensive) ask students reading a short story to explore their pre-critical response. (Note: Daedalus™ Respond could also be used for the activity below. Respond is especially effective with poetry, for example, because the program permits a split-screen viewing of a network or diskette file. The teacher can type up the poem and make it available to students by copying it to the public area of the server using Daedalus™ Utilities. Students using Respond can then answer the prompts while reading the poem on-line.)

Q1: Describe your initial emotional response to the story.

Explanation: You know as a movie and television viewer that some films or shows evoke in you laughter, fear, anguish, satisfaction, etc. Because short stories are often complex, one emotional response may not adequately reflect the range of responses you had as you read. If that is the case with this story, be sure to describe the range of your responses, noting what events or characters evoked the responses.

Q2: Explain the range of your associative responses. Did this story remind you of any other stories you have read, or plays, movies, or television shows you have seen before?

Explanation: It is not unusual for old songs, for example, to take us back to where we were, what we were doing, and who we were with when we first heard the songs. Similar associations affect our interpretations of literature. Were there any particular characters who reminded you of people you know or knew? Did any of the

JUMPING OFF, cont'd

settings, events, or conflicts remind you of situations you once worked through?

Q3: What do you consider the most important word, phrase, paragraph, or scene in the story? Describe it below and explain why you feel it is the most important.

Explanation: By "most important," I mean that word, phrase, etc. that best reflects a theme of the story. You need not look for a particular theme, of course, but it is important that you do identify what you believe to be the most important part of the story.

If my goal is to have the students flesh out their response statements as drafts for more formal interpretations, they can load the Invent response file into Daedalus™ Write. With both the prompts and their responses to them now available in a Write file, students can begin broadening and deepening their response statements.

If, on the other hand, my goal is to have students immediately share one another's responses, reflecting the idea that seeing how others have responded to the prompts will reveal to every reader in the class the range of possible emotional and associative responses a common text can produce, I ask them to make their responses public using either InterChange™ or Mail.

If I want to generate a real-time discussion, I ask students to copy and paste the text from their Invent response files to the InterChange™ text editor box. At this stage of DIWE's development, this technique is easier to explain for the Mac version. (All the techniques described within are possible for the DOS version of DIWE. Please consult the documentation to learn the DOS techniques.) First, students should have InterChange™ open. Then, they go to Open under the File menu, and open the Invent response file, which they have saved to a work diskette or to the local hard drive. When the file opens, they Select All from Edit, and then select Copy. After selecting Copy, they make InterChange™ the active window (it will be at the forefront of the tiled windows and the title bar will be darkened), make sure they see the insertion point in the InterChange™ text editor box, and select Paste from the Edit menu. Once their prompt responses are copied to the InterChange™ text editor, students then "send" the responses to the InterChange™ transcript. As the individual's responses to the Invent prompts appear in InterChange™'s public window, it will become evident the range of possible responses to the short story. The teacher's task is to encourage a group discussion about the differences among the responses. Responses to the "most important" prompt often generate significant differences, and these differences are sites of negotiation over which InterChange™ participants clarify, explain, and defend their "most important" part of the story.

This technique of having students copy earlier, more carefully composed responses into InterChange™ as their initial contributions improves the quality of InterChange™ sessions. As those using InterChange™ have noted, the first few minutes of sessions in which students need to think on their feet are often marked by short, off-topic, social messages generated while students attempt to think their way through a "cold" topic. Given the opportunity to consider what they have to say before contributing to a public "conversation" is less stressful for those who do not excel at impromptu writing and would therefore be reticent, even in InterChange™.

Another version of such shared response activities employs Daedalus™ Mail. In non-literature-based writing courses—for example, ones that include such readings as George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language"—I require students to write one page reaction papers on Daedalus™ Write for homework. Upon their arrival in class, I ask them to copy and paste their reaction papers to Daedalus™ Mail, employing similar techniques described above. Instead of opening InterChange™, of course, students work in Mail, copying and pasting their reaction papers to the Mail text editor, and sending them as Mail messages. As the Mail messages are sent, the Mail index lists the headers of the messages in chronological order. To ensure a random mix, I instruct students to locate the header for their own message as a reference point, and read and reply (using Mail's reply mode) to the message immediately above and below their own. The content of their replies are guided by my request that they consciously compare and contrast their reaction paper to those of their two peers, and to advance some reasons for the differences that are evident between them. Students then read the replies their reaction papers receive. This procedure creates a rapid-fire round robin of reactions and replies.

What is done with InterChange™ transcripts and Mail lists after they are created is perhaps more important than the actual fact of creating them. Again, following the principle of alternating private writing with public writing, I ask students to read the InterChange™ transcripts (which they can copy to their diskettes in electronic form or print out) and peruse the Mail lists. If assigned to write an analysis of the issue at hand (the "meaning" of a particular literary selection, multi-cultural education, the meaning of meaning, etc.), I ask students to use InterChange™ transcripts and Mail messages to generate a sort of "review of the literature" on the topic, citing classmates' comments from InterChange™ sessions or Mail messages. When I assign argumentation papers, I ask students to cite their class-

JUMPING OFF, cont'd

mates in both their bibliographies and Work Cited pages, choosing both opposing and supporting positions in order to represent various perspectives on the issue. Because of the text file compatibility of DIWE, students can easily copy pertinent Mail messages and InterChange™ transcripts onto their diskettes and incorporate them into their Daedalus™ Write-produced essays.

Drafts composed on Daedalus™ Write can be placed back into the public forum in a number of ways. One technique, for example, has students copying and pasting their drafts to Daedalus™ Mail (following procedures outlined above). Once the drafts are made public, peers can read and respond to them in Mail, providing revision feedback for the writers. Another technique for sharing drafts—one I believe is overlooked by many DIWE users—involves DIWE's Utilities features. In both the Mac and the DOS versions of DIWE, students can copy texts from their diskettes to public areas on the network server where DIWE resides. Once "published" electronically, all classmates can access "read-only" versions of their peers' texts in Daedalus™ Respond, the guided-peer editing program which prompts readers through a critical reading of a text. As with Invent, Respond allows instructors to author their own prompts, thus allowing them to customize the program based on the requirements of particular writing tasks or the needs of their particular students or course design.

Though techniques described above do not even begin to exhaust the possibilities for seamless and simple text-sharing pedagogy made possible by DIWE, the fact that all of DIWE's programs employ a common command structure, interface, and text editor means that text created in any one program can be imported to any other program within the environment. If your lab owns DIWE and uses only use InterChange™, please take some time to explore the other features of the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment. If you do pre-writing activities with your students but have not tried Invent because of the level of the built-in prompts, take a crack at writing your own, especially if you are already sharing heuristics with your students on dittos. If you employ collaborative learning techniques in which peers respond to one another's drafts, try recreating the activity on Daedalus™ Mail where readers can respond to writers in writing. If you wish to privilege student writing by publishing it, allow students to copy their final papers to DIWE through Utilities and spend an hour of class time for classmates to peruse and appreciate one another's writing.

But most important, be like the manager who builds a championship team around the qualities of its star players, like the director who makes a film transcend the performances of any of its individuals. Build your computer-based collaborative writing pedagogy not around InterChange™ only, but by using all the varied tools the Daedalus™ Integrated Writing Environment offers.

Wayne Butler, Asst. Professor
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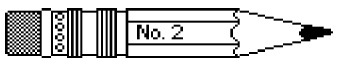

Did You Know . . .

Wings invites you to react and respond to any part of this newsletter. We also encourage you to share your own ideas, insights, tips, ruminations, challenges, correctives, and experiences with other *Wings* readers in future newsletters.

If you have a short (400-600 words) response or a longer,morecomplexcontribution(1000-1500words) that you would like to have considered for publication in *Wings*, please send it along to us. If accepted, we will pay $25 for short pieces and $50 for longer pieces. Send all submissions in disk form (3.5") in Microsoft Word(ver 4 or 5) for Macintosh® or plain ASCII format to:

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Wings also welcomes the opportunity to publish questions about and possible solutions to any and all issues currently influencing our abilities to pursue effective pedagogy and to conduct meaningful research in the arena of computers, language, and learning. Please send such questions and solutions to *Wings*. We'll try to make room for everyone's contribution.