

# W I N G S

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## “It’s the End of the World As We Know It . . .”

It’s been nearly seven months since the first edition of *Wings* was printed and sent out to every user/teacher/administrator/computer dreamer the Daedalus Group could identify. We had such a positive response that we eventually ran out of printed copies and had to resort to downloading textfile versions (imagine such a thing!). In fact, we are imaging such things, which is why we soon will have our own internet node in an attempt to bring the global and the local—at least, virtually—together.

The global and the local. The self and the world. The one and the many. The individual and the tribe. In the current postmodern climate, these terms seem endlessly conflicting as we attempt to address the educational needs of an individual student in relation to the needs of a class as a whole or those of a department or institution or even of a nation or the world. Yet, many teachers—especially those interested in networks and connections and the struggles that define any learning process—seem able to find a balance they and their students can live with, even if that balance is only temporary, only situated within the time and space of their classrooms, only because they will it to be so.

The articles and ideas in this edition of *Wings* represent some of the pedagogical and practical difficulties of dealing simultaneously with parts and wholes—difficulties that computerized instruction often constructs and deconstructs. Several contributions are concerned with challenging the often generalized conception of networked computer classrooms as self-contained places for teaching composition to English-speaking, 18-year-old, first-year American college students. These articles ask us to imagine what happens when we change this “typical” teaching context from composition to literature, from general student to English major, from the United States to France. Another piece offers advice on how to teach localized sentence-level revision techniques in classes where teachers are also dedicated to helping students move beyond mere editing and toward a larger-scale attitude about what it means to revise. Two others explode the physical walls of the classroom by offering

students and teachers a kind of virtual connection with other classes, other communications systems, other worlds. They ask us to examine what happens when the often intimate comforts of a local area network suddenly give way to different attitudes and values, different codes of behavior, different perspectives.

For many of us engaged in the challenges of teaching reading and writing in the present educational moment, networked computer classrooms offer tremendous pedagogical possibilities, many of which have yet to be imagined and articulated. What we do know is that our classroom consciousness has been immeasurably raised and expanded. If you’re like me, you may find yourself smiling along with the R. E. M. lyric, “It’s the end of the world as we know it/And I feel fine.”

**Nancy Peterson**  
Editor, *Wings*

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# Focus on . . .

## Daedalus in France: Teaching the Art of the English Essay

For the past academic year, I have been on a vacation of sorts from my normal duties as a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Minnesota, teaching courses in English composition to French university students at Université Paul Valéry in Montpellier, France. The classes I teach use the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE) as an innovative and user-friendly tool for writing instruction. Though DIWE is normally used for somewhat different purposes with students whose native language is English, I have found the program to be wonderfully adaptable to the needs of teachers of ESL, and quite effective at engaging the interest and participation of my students.

### *Writing Classes at UVP*

Courses for English majors at Paul Valéry normally consist of two integral parts: a TD (*travaux dirigés*), or “directed study” class, taught by a professor who lectures to the students for two hours once per week on the required curriculum for that year; and a TP (*travaux pratiques*), or “practical studies” class, taught by an assistant or *lecteur*, which meets for one hour per week. The TP involves group work on supplementary literature chosen by the *lecteur*, who is normally a graduate exchange student from the U. S. (University of Minnesota, University of Texas at Austin, University of Michigan, or University of North Carolina) or Britain (Birmingham or Manchester Universities).

The K2A course (American and British literature for students in their second year of university study) has an imposing book list ranging from *Macbeth* to Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*. Part of the course requirement for the TD is that the student submit three or four papers during the school year on topics selected in advance by the professor. The TP for K2A in many respects resembles a standard English composition course at an American university, where the job of the *lecteur* is to teach students the basics of writing coherent, logical

papers in English. As a *lecteur*, I am concerned, therefore, with teaching many different aspects of writing, from the concept of the paragraph to the correct form for quotations. This task, it must be noted, is one not to be taken lightly, as the stylistic differences in French and English prose, compounded with the students' wide range of competency levels in English, make the already difficult task of teaching writing skills a true challenge for even the most motivated instructor. Students write the first drafts of their papers, submitting them to the faithful *lecteur* (literally, “reader”) for correction. The *lecteur* hands back the papers with suggestions for improving style and coherence, as well as the more technical aspects like spelling and grammar. The students then revise their papers before turning the final draft in to their professors, the idea being that by the time an essay reaches the professor, it should—theoretically at least—have the bugs out.

### *The Problem of Revising in France*

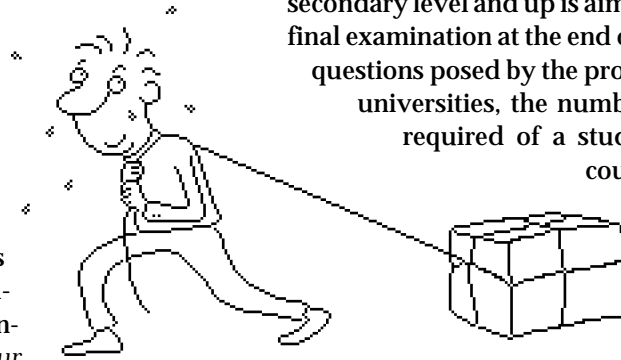
The main problem with this theory is that, in practice, the French educational system is not geared toward the concept of revision or rewriting. Normally, students from primary school onward have only one chance at writing a paper, and most of the work that they do at the secondary level and up is aimed at passing an important final examination at the end of the year on a question or questions posed by the professor. Moreover, at many universities, the number of writing assignments required of a student in any one literature

course is fairly small. Composition classes are offered rarely, if at all, in English departments, and concepts like the computer writing lab are unheard of. Revis-

ing one's work to be resubmitted, therefore, is not a concept that French students have learned, and the idea that a poorly written paper can be transformed into a clear, insightful one seems rather new to them at the outset.

Of course, the benefits of requiring these students to revise their papers are manifold. First and foremost, revision affords them the opportunity to learn progressively—to learn by doing. Teaching them the skills they need to revise their own papers also impresses upon them the idea that their work belongs to them—is, in fact, their own—and that each student has difficulties in writing particular to him- or herself which can, with

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# TEACHER

# TALK

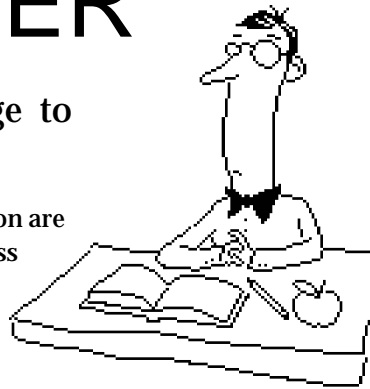
## Using InterChange as a Bridge to the Internet

More and more, instructors of composition are looking to the Internet to give students access to real, diverse, focused audiences, contexts, and experiences outside the writing classroom. And while the Internet does provide a space for students to interact with people all around the world, as well as an opportunity to engage in a wide variety of focused discussions in many intriguing contexts, the Internet can be seen initially as a frightening, crowded, confusing, unwelcoming place. One way to ease students into the wilds of the Internet is through the regular use of the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE) in the composition class.

Many of the Daedalus programs parallel those available on the Internet. Students familiar with the Mail function in DIWE quickly catch on to using the mail function on the Internet, or even NetNews Newsgroups; those who can learn to seek and find files on the DIWE network can easily transfer that experience to seeking and finding information via File Transfer Process (ftp) on the Internet. But what I'd like to focus on here is the complementary relationship between InterChange and the many synchronous communication programs available on the Internet.

Several different synchronous programs are available on the Internet, and their number is growing almost daily it seems. Among these are Multi-User Dimensions/Dungeons (MUDs), Multi-User Shared Hallucinations (MUSHes), Multi-User Shared Environments (MUSEs), MUDs Object Oriented (MOOs), and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). My experience with students navigating the synchronous programs on the Internet as part of a composition class has been primarily with IRC, which is probably closest in format to InterChange.

Students using the DIWE on a regular basis quickly become comfortable with the synchronous conferencing feature, InterChange. They learn to follow the sometimes-disjointed "threads" of conversations, they learn the dynamic of being on task and feel the power/responsibility of going off task (which can be productive, as in a synthesis of several threads, or unproductive, as in "flaming"), and, perhaps most important, they learn to construct their classmates (and themselves) in an envi-



ronment that does not depend on physical cues. This last item, while central to the pedagogical application of InterChange in the classroom, can be problematic in synchronous conferencing programs like IRC on the Internet; for here there are no physical classroom boundaries, no rules. And while a "netiquette" of participation may exist in IRC, it is an expansive one, a changeable one, one unlike any the students have encountered before.

Much like the subconferences in InterChange, IRC is also made up of hundreds of "subconferences," or channels. Students can move freely from one to another, but each channel is populated by different—often violently different—communities, unlike InterChange, which is still made up of the members of the writing class (or anyone with access to that particular InterChange session on that particular LAN). As students participate in the various focused communities (ranging from "Hottub" to "Taiwan" to "Jazz"), they experience an "out of body" phenomenon: even more so than in InterChange, they are no longer using traditional social constructs such as gender, race, apparent economic level, etc., to influence how they react to others. Here, too, students must learn to deal with power relationships within a community, but these are unlike any power relationships they've dealt with before. On IRC, channel members with operator status may "kick out" any participant for any reason they see fit. On some channels, this power is used freely and randomly; on others, a more recognizable code of conduct is in operation. But students won't know this until they've been rudely ousted from a channel or two, and warmly welcomed into others.

While many of the Internet programs like IRC were originally developed as a communications tool, they've since "fallen into the hands" of students, who've turned them into a gaming place. As a result, programs like the MU\*s and IRC are often scenes of "wilding." Participants, who can construct themselves anonymously, push limits, test boundaries. Sometimes this merely means feeling the power of kicking another person off a channel or describing a violent action done virtually. Other times, however, these programs can be used as a means of harassment, and a student new to the net, especially one who has little experience with technology or virtual

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## TEACHER TALK, cont'd

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construction, is at a disadvantage. Students using the DIWE's InterChange on a regular basis will be at a distinct advantage because they become used to the relative boundary-lessness of an InterChange session.

Once students have "surfed the net," InterChange provides a useful forum to reflect on their collective experiences. The similar technology helps them to recall and even mimic instances of play, of power, and of character/context construction on the Internet. In this more friendly medium, the students make discoveries they hadn't noticed while immersed in the rough and ready cyberculture of the Internet. They engage in many of the same activities, but this time, they do so reflexively, examining structures and constraints of socially constructed virtual reality in a safe and familiar place.

**Becky Rickly, Instructor**  
**Ball State University**  
**Muncie, Indiana**

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### Teaching Sentence-Level Awareness on DIWE

From time to time, writing teachers may find themselves worrying about teaching sentence-level writing skills in their writing classes. And students ask, amidst all the effort to focus on global revision, whether they will get any instruction on written expression at the local, sentence level—what they think of, perhaps erroneously, as writing. The Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment offers the writing teacher opportunities to engage the students in sentence-level revision of their own writing during class time. The following is a description of how to set up this exercise.

The most advantageous time for this activity is during revision of a draft towards a final version, but it can work with any samples of student writing from the class. While you are reading drafts, mark problem sentences as you go. Try to choose sentences from a number of students, selecting to cover a variety of writing problems. These can include error problems such as sentence fragments, fused sentences, misused words, punctuation around quotations, source citations, subject/verb agreements, and so on. Stylistic problems such as wordiness, pretentious diction, monotonous and staccato sentence lengths, passive voice, too many prepositional phrases, nuances of diction and sentence structure can also be addressed.

Make sure that your students have loaded the drafts in question onto the network. From there, you can copy and paste the desired sentences into one DIWE Write file.

I would suggest omitting names so your students won't feel conspicuous, but be sure to number the sentences (so you can refer to them in class) and provide ample space in between them to allow students to start the revision from scratch if they want to. When compiled and named, load the sentence revision Write file onto the network for the students to copy to their diskettes in class.

Since many of the sentences don't "belong" to all the students, you may need to encourage them to word-process over the original, moving text when appropriate, deleting, adding text, and so on, or you can have them rewrite underneath the original for easy comparison. I have done both and tend to favor the latter. Perhaps the former method is appropriate nearer the beginning of the term when you want to teach active word processor revision, and the latter is better later on, enabling you and the students to compare revisions more easily.

Once the students have completed the revisions either in class or as homework, have them import their files into Mail. You can create a separate conference ("Sentence") if you wish. Then have the students compare revisions, especially revisions of their own sentences. I devote one class period to this for every essay assignment, and the results have been useful for both the students and me. The students get an opportunity to think about sentence level revision as an unavoidable part of the writing process, and I get to talk occasionally about the importance of sentences and the various choices writers have to make, even at the micro level.

**Albert Rouzie, Asst. Instructor**  
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**Austin, Texas**

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### Conferences Across Classes: Using DIWE Mail to Set Up Inter-Class Conferences

During the summer of 1991, some colleagues and I decided to team-teach a first year composition course in a networked computer classroom at the University of Texas at Austin. The course was based on a grounding in argumentation and on readings from Robert Downs' paperback history of famous texts, *Books That Changed the World* (New American Library, revised edition, 1983). The class focused on how arguments may be made about great ideas, great books, great women and men (though, admittedly, Downs used few women).

To facilitate research projects and collaborative work, we divided each class into five conferences based on readings in the book—each subconference focused on a topic, each intended to develop questions about the

## TEACHER TALK, cont'd

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topics and to generate issues to investigate. The five conferences were: Discoverer/Discoveries (Copernicus, Harvey, Newton); Ethics (Aristotle, Machiavelli, Freud); Human Intervention (Carson, Jenner, Darwin); Publication and Power (Paine, Stowe, Hitler, Carson); and the Individual vs. the State (Plato, Marx, Wollstonecraft, Thoreau). While each writing assignment built on the previous one, each student worked on one author and within one conference. The class culminated with the final writing project, "Complicating an Argument," a documented essay in which the student was to explain how Downs' account of an author's contribution to the world or to intellectual history might be complicated.

All of this seemed to work well together. But one of my co-teachers proposed one additional project that really facilitated the generation of ideas. In the DIWE Mail program, we set up topic conferences as well as class conferences. Each instructor was in charge of one topic, and we each put an introductory message about the topic and possible issues on the DIWE system. Students from all four sections of the class were asked to participate in their topic conferences.

Obviously, linking each classroom both temporally and spatially allowed collaboration and discussion to extend across classroom and class section boundaries, furthering research possibilities. More interestingly, many students became genuinely involved in their topics, proposing additional issues and arguing their points with other classes and other instructors. Some continued their discussions in relation to contemporary issues. The Human Intervention conference, for example, discussed medical ethics in relation to the case of a family producing a child to donate bone marrow to a sick sibling. The Individual vs. the State group argued about flag-burning. In addition to generating ideas and working towards larger research projects, the students also began participating in a larger democratic context where the information at stake became more than class material but food for debate and discussion. Ultimately, students learned that doing research involves a kind of positioning that asks them to figure out what they believe by playing out other positions and adjusting to new perspectives that exist out in the world. Clearly, using Mail in a networked computer classroom invited them to contend with a much broader range of voices and positions than a traditional classroom usually allows.

**Ed Madden, Asst. Instructor**  
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**Austin, Texas**

## Have You Heard . . .

### **The Tenth COMPUTERS & WRITING CONFERENCE**

**Hosted by the University of Missouri  
Columbia, MO  
May 20-23, 1994**

**THEME:  
The Global Web  
of Writing Technologies**

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### **TIGHT TRAVEL BUDGET?**

#### **ELECTRONIC ACCESS**

The program for this year's conference will emphasize the role of the wide-area academic networks in writing education. And electronic access will, we hope, make attending the event possible for people who for some reason cannot travel to Columbia. It seems only appropriate that conferences—especially those that are concerned with computers and computer networks—should employ the reach of the Internet in order to give more people access to the conversation. Just because you can't be in Missouri from May 20-23, 1993, doesn't mean you can't attend C&W94 via the Internet (at a reduced fee). We also hope to have adequate access to a multiple user environment (MediaMOO, probably, or Internet Relay Chat) for conference activities. In addition, we hope to have an electronic forum similar to the one offered by the University of Michigan at C&W1993. It was a great success, and we plan to continue the practice. Although the technical details have not yet been nailed down, we expect to make available a similar bulletin-board-type conferencing system that will allow participants to read presentation summaries and discuss the issues they raise well in advance of the May 20-23 gathering in Columbia.

#### **QUESTIONS**

Send questions or any other correspondence to: Eric Crump at LCERIC@mizzou1.bitnet or LCERIC@mizzou1.missouri.edu. Please include somewhere in the subject line: CWC94.



# jumping off

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## Teaching Literature Collaboratively in a DIWE Classroom: Variations on a Theme

In the Spring of 1993, I discovered the IBM computer classroom at Texas Tech University was vacant during the same hour that I was teaching a section of the sophomore level Masterpieces of Literature. After my many successful experiences teaching writing in the computer classrooms at Tech, I wanted to try my hand at running a literature section on computers, so I quickly requested and received permission from the Director of Writing to teach in the available computer classroom. My biggest initial concern was the student-to-computer ratio: Sophomore level literature surveys generally have 30-40 students, and Tech's IBM computer classroom only has 23 computers. Because I had already encountered this problem during the summer when I had taken my literature students to the computer classroom for occasional InterChange sessions, I decided to repeat my summer school solution by pairing up students into permanent computer partners to see what happened. I explained to each pair that they were responsible for both partners' work for everything except their research papers. This would include collaborative in-class mid-term and final exams.

### *Daily Procedures on InterChange*

Our most common daily procedure in the computer classroom involved daily InterChange sessions to explore issues raised by each day's readings. This is how it worked. I divided the class into individual discussion groups; with 26 students, there were generally 4-5 discussion groups of 5-6 students each. Every day, I posted one discussion question in InterChange for each group; these questions were always related to reading assignments. To make it simple, I constructed these groups by grouping computers rather than individuals (each computer in the classroom has a number on the top of the monitor); I either wrote these numbers on the classroom

chalkboard or on a Roll Call screen in Mail. The student pairs joined their assigned groups in an InterChange session and discussed the day's question with other group members. After 45 minutes, the members of each group (about 5-6 students) hovered around one computer; as one member typed, the others summarized the discussion for that day's piece of literature. When each group had sent its summary—about 500 words—to the rest of the class in Mail, all class members downloaded these summaries to their personal disks so that everyone in the class had the same information about the readings. My position during the InterChange conversations was as moderator. I popped in and out of the groups and posed further questions or directed the discussion in a way that might seem more interesting, depending on what each group was pursuing in response to the discussion question.

### *Student Response*

The results of this class have been more than I could hope for. The students demonstrated that they read the text often because they were afraid not to read and suffer the wrath of their partner; as one student said, "Working on the computer forces you to keep up with the reading." They also read with more depth, and they discussed each work more elaborately than in any literature class that I have taught in the last eight years. Even though one person did the typing, the other students took on the responsibility of looking up specifics in the text. They actually started quoting the text (correctly, for the most part) without me asking them to do so. They also felt that the discussion in InterChange sessions kept them more focused than in a traditional classroom where they might get bored "with oral discussions and start thinking about something else" (a student quote). The obvious problem of one student "carrying the load" always exists in any interactive learning classroom, but it seems to happen on a much smaller scale in the computer classroom than one would expect. A few students said that they "slipped by" a couple of times, but they then had to endure being chastised in public by their partners (the partners some-



## jumping off, cont'd

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times posted little quips in Mail about those who didn't read the assigned text). The students were also more comfortable about "voicing" an opinion as part of a partnership because the "audience" didn't know exactly whose idea it was—a kind of safety in numbers, even if the number is only two. In addition, students had no qualms about disagreeing with each other either. I assume, again, this is due to class numbers: one feels less intimidated by the criticisms of others if the condemnation is shared. The fear of "saying something wrong," as one student put it, rarely exists in a collaborative learning computer-based classroom.

The students took strong stands on their topics of discussion. They were willing—often very willing—to argue their point and to use the text to back up their arguments. They seemed to take a great deal of pride in being very emphatic about their ideas. What often happens in a traditional classroom is that a few people will engage in a disagreement over the text, but if the disagreeing parties have to stop and look up something, the discussion slows down and then the teacher either asks others for their opinions or changes the topic. Students in the computer classroom were focused on their subject and were willing to argue their points. I think this is because they see their words on the InterChange screen with their names attached to the comments, and this gives them a sense of accomplishment so that they lose their inhibitions about going public with their ideas. I, as moderator (and as teacher), commended good comments on the screen. Because of the geography of the classroom, I could spot check the computer pairs and discern if someone was not contributing to the discussion. After the first few weeks, I found this problem almost non-existent.

### *Some Problems with Teaching Literature on Computers*

There are some limits to teaching in the computer-based classroom on a collaborative basis: the obvious slippage when one student carries the other, or when one student carries the load when a partner is absent; the possible disagreement between partners about an interpretation of the text; the reduced opportunity for verbal interchange between students; and, sometimes, the complete lack of the need for a teacher. There were many times when I felt that I didn't exist in the room; the discussions would carry themselves, and the students would be so involved in what was being discussed that

I think they resented my interference when I called time or reminded them of other work that had to be accomplished within the hour and twenty minutes of the class.

In fact, the major limitation that I found was time. There was a great deal of text put into the computers through InterChange sessions and Mail. Finding enough time for the students to read all the summaries was sometimes difficult. They were required to download the summaries to their disks, but we never seemed to find time to discuss the previous day's summaries. The next time I teach in the computer-based classroom, I will allow for this, even if it means cutting down on the number of literary works we are able to study.

### *Conclusions*

Overall, the positive aspects outweighed the negative. It was a great deal of hard work: preparing class activities, reading volumes of computer-generated text, and moving around in InterChange discussions. I would, however, not hesitate to teach another collaborative learning literature class in either the IBM or the Macintosh computer classroom.

**Dean Fontenot, Instructor**  
**Texas Tech University**  
**Lubbock, Texas**

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Since 1990, I have taught composition and technical writing using the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE). Working with the software, I have had the opportunity and the motivation to rethink my teaching methods and goals for the writing classroom. I no longer spend class time "talking" to the students about writing, revising, and editing. Instead, I design activities that require the students to learn writing, revising, and editing through doing. As I experimented with DIWE in composition and technical writing classrooms, I continued to think about using the system to "teach" literature through writing.

Because of my experience with text sharing in the networked composition classroom, I adapted a couple of collaborative learning techniques to a literature class I taught last spring in a traditional classroom. I created a kind of InterChange session by having students write four to five lines in response to a prompt about some aspect of the literature. The students would then pass the

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## jumping off, cont'd

sheet to the person behind them. We would repeat this process until every person in a row (usually 5-6 people) had read and written a response to what the person or persons in front of him or her had said. We also engaged in text sharing by reading and responding to the students' individual reading response logs. Frequently, students would write, "I enjoyed reading your comments about X. I had not thought of X in that way." When I was assigned two sophomore level literature classes this fall, I decided that I would teach them in the DIWE classroom. Dean Fontenot, a colleague of mine, had taught a literature course in the DOS classroom during the Spring 1993 semester; inspired by her success and my belief in the active rather than the passive classroom, I decided to try it during the Fall 1993 semester.

### *Course Description*

The course I am teaching emphasizes the masterpieces of literature, and I have assigned *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Othello*, and *Paradise Lost*. Most literature teachers might question the relatively sparse number of texts, but there is method to my madness. Having for years watched students read Cliff Notes in the halls as they waited for their classes to begin, I have long since stopped assigning a work a week. I would rather students really read five texts than skim fifteen.

In addition to the literature texts, I require students to purchase E. V. Roberts' *Writing Themes About Literature*, 7th ed., because it provides explanations of literary terms and concepts as well as sample essays. Using this book, students acquire the vocabulary necessary for analyzing literature as well as the form and structure (i. e., a clear, argumentative thesis statement in the introduction and clear topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph) that many literature professors have in their heads and expect to see in student papers. Since my course is simply an introduction to studying literature, I take comfort in the fact that other professors will teach them to apply various critical approaches such as deconstruction, feminist theory, or Marxism to a text.

### *A Potential Problem: Not Enough Computers*

A major problem I had to confront was insufficient computers. Literature classes at my university are set at 35 students, but the Macintosh classroom at Texas Tech only has 20 computers. Rather than ask the department

chair to cap the class at 20 students and risk being denied permission to teach the class with computers, I kept my mouth shut and put two students to a computer as Dean Fontenot had done in the IBM computer classroom. Though the classroom is small and two people sitting at a computer is a tight fit, I told the students to play like they were part of a submarine crew. Presently, 31 students in one class and 35 in another have elected to stay in spite of the crowded, frequently hot conditions.

### *Theory and Methodology*

The course is grounded in a modified version of collaborative learning theory. While I do not ask students to reach consensus, I encourage them to build individual and group knowledge about the texts through writing about them in reading response logs outside of class and in Main and Group InterChange sessions in class.

- *Reading Response Logs* - Students read literature and write about it beginning the first week. Rather than assign the complete work, I divide the text into manageable sections which I ask the students to read. For example, I divided *Beowulf* into four sections, and we worked on a section each of four class periods. At the same time, I introduce a concept such as character or setting from the Roberts book. As they read a section of a work, I ask the students to discuss character as it appears in the section, or to apply Roberts' comments about an author's use of setting to a specific passage. Or I may ask them to define hero and then write about a contemporary example as we read about *Beowulf*. At the beginning of a class period, students read each other's logs and send messages to each other through DIWE Mail concerning the ideas in the entries. One objective of the reading response log is to encourage students to compose on the computer so that they can discover the ease with which they can generate and revise text as they write. Another objective is to demonstrate to them the physical length of a page of typed text so they can begin to see how quickly they can generate a single page.

In the first five weeks, students will have written nine logs, frequently consisting of 1 1/2 to 2 pages in length. I read these, putting checks on the texts and frequently writing short, positive comments in the margins. I may also note errors and problems, asking them to come and

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## FOCUS ON . . . cont'd

practice, be minimized or even eliminated. My personal goal in teaching the class is to instill in my students some key concepts about writing which will be familiar to anyone who has taught a course in composition—namely,

- that coherent writing, with the notable exceptions of some literary geniuses, happens in stages. Take, for example, Gustave Flaubert, who worked agonizingly and painstakingly over successive drafts of his novels to find just the right word, the right expression—and who would have benefited so from a computer;

- that writing takes preparation and thought, and the amount and kind of preparation may differ with the intended audience;

- that writing can and does improve with practice;

- that, practically speaking, there are conventions of punctuation, editing, and citation which are essential to effective communication.

### *Teaching Writing with DIWE to French English Majors*

Students enrolled in the K2A TP's have two options: the standard classroom, where students do written grammar exercises and handwrite their essays; or the computer option, which integrates their instruction with the DIWE network. Université Paul Valéry has the only English department in France with computer-assisted English composition courses to aid the students in learning the basics of English composition, at the same time teaching them much-needed computer skills, which few of them have at this stage of their education. This program, founded by Jean Vaché, professor of English at UPV, has used the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment since 1990 to teach UPV's English majors.

Many of the advantages of the DIWE classroom are no doubt apparent to many of you reading this, so I won't go into all of them. However, it is important to note that the electronic classroom has facilitated my students' progress in ways particular to an ESL class. One especially nice feature of DIWE which helps the students to develop their own ideas is the InterChange sessions we have on short literary texts which I choose ahead of time. InterChange is probably the single most helpful aspect of the Daedalus system, in that it vastly improves relations in the classroom by creating a non-threatening and supportive forum for the exchange of ideas, which seems to greatly improve both the students' morale and their willingness to participate. The students can scroll up and down to read at their own pace, asking the meanings of unfamiliar English words and expressions. In this way,

everyone's English improves; the students even correct one another's grammar, which alleviates my task as a grammar instructor and allows me to concentrate more on guiding the conversation along a productive path. Additionally, by using InterChange to discuss these texts, the students are able to have a record of particularly interesting class discussions for their own use.

Though the students' essay topics are given to them in advance by the professor, and therefore they are not required to generate topic ideas on their own, the sets of Invent heuristics help them to begin thinking about their essays as a dialogue between a writer and a reader. Thus, students who seem to have always considered the essay as little more than another sort of exam become more aware that they are writing for a particular audience, and begin to realize the importance of anticipating the reactions and preoccupations of their intended reader. The questions asked by Invent teach them to ask themselves questions when they write, and help them to organize their thoughts into topics and sub-topics in a more "anglophone" tradition of writing. These prewriting exercises also help students to begin right away to organize their thoughts in English; as anyone who has studied a foreign language knows, one runs the risk of producing a largely incomprehensible paper when organizing in one language and writing in another.

[continued on page 11]

### *Did You Know . . .*

*Wings* invites you to react and respond to any part of this newsletter. If you have a short (400-600 words) response or a longer, more complex contribution (1000-1500 words), please send it in disk form (3.5") in Microsoft Word (ver 4 or 5) for Macintosh or plain ASCII format to:

The Daedalus Group, Inc.  
1106 Clayton Lane, Suite 280W  
Austin, TX 78723  
512-459-0637 or 512-452-5206 (fax)  
or send it via e-mail to [wings@daedalus.com](mailto:wings@daedalus.com)

If we accept your submission, we will pay \$25 for short pieces and \$50 for longer pieces.



## jumping off, cont'd

see me if I'm especially concerned. I do not put a grade on these logs; rather, I give them credit for doing the work. If the log is especially good, I may put a check-plus on it. My intent is to make writing a positive rather than a punitive experience. The logs, which are evaluated on quantity more than quality, constitute 30% of their final grade. Based on what I observed last semester, students become more fluent the more they write, and with frequent writing, they tend to make fewer errors in usage and mechanics.

• *InterChange Sessions* - I am still exploring the most effective way to use the Main and Group InterChange conferences. I frequently put 3-4 people into a Group InterChange session to discuss first the who, what, when, and where of a particular passage. Then I may ask them to discuss the psychological state of a character (Sir Gawain, for example, in the bedroom scenes) or the existence of a symbol and its meaning in a particular passage. I later compact these into a single document with the material organized sequentially. During the subsequent class period, the students read and comment on the entire document. The students clearly see the worth of these documents when they ask if they can save the entire InterChange document to their own disks for future reference—my intention exactly. So far, the students have been making thoughtful, perceptive, original comments about some aspects of the literature. My hope is that by learning to read closely a portion of the text, to understand what they read, and then to write a meaningful comment about it, students can read, understand, and write about the whole text as well as other texts.

In creating a response for InterChange sessions, two students work together, discussing the prompt, examining their portion of the text, and then formulating their comment. Because I think that keying information into the computer involves a valuable cognitive process, I require students to take turns at the keyboard, regardless of the fact that one student may be a better, faster typist than the other. Half way through a class period, I signal the students to switch. I also watch the pairs to see that they are indeed discussing the work together, that one person is not doing all the thinking and writing. With sixteen or seventeen pairs, three to four computers remain free, and if I find a person not contributing, I move that person to an individual computer.

• *Individual Essays* - In addition to collaboratively writing about literature, each student will also write two essays. I require the students to prepare their essays so

that we can read them in DIWE Write. Some students use the Write program on their own disks; others use Microsoft® Word on Macintoshes or IBM machines. When students use a word processor other than DIWE Write, they have to learn how to save Microsoft Word documents as text and how to transfer texts from IBM to Macintosh computers into Write. It's complicated sometimes, but it's important that students understand that computers, like teachers, have different approaches to text format. When the drafts are due, half of the class will use "Turn in a Document" to put their essay on-line. The pairs will then go to DIWE Respond and use "Local Revision" prompts to critique the first partner's draft. The next class period, the second half will enter their papers for critiquing.

This process takes time, and even though we read only five literary works, the schedule is tight. Nevertheless, if I tell my students that writing about literature is important, and if I tell them that the writing process is important, then I am obliged to teach them how to use that process to write about literature.

### *Conclusions*

Teaching literature in a networked computer classroom, though similar, is different from teaching composition in a networked computer classroom. In the composition classroom, the focus is primarily on developing, generating, critiquing, and revising student texts. In the literature class, students work first with another text, reading and understanding something other than what they already know; then they must articulate their response to that text.

So far, I am finding that this way of teaching literature requires more time to "cover the material" than does lecturing to a group of students who take notes about what I have read, understood, digested, and interpreted for them. This method also requires me to think of my end objective for each class so that I design activities that use the time most effectively. Nevertheless, this process causes the students to actually engage with literature, with the ideas, and with their own texts as they read, respond, and articulate their responses on screen. Since I'm a literary critic, a writing teacher, and a networked computer classroom advocate, these are not bad objectives to accomplish in a single semester.

**Lady Falls Brown, Instructor  
Texas Tech University  
Lubbock, Texas**

## Three Universities Announce New Alliance

Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, the world center for education and research in deafness, along with George Mason University in Fairfax, VA and Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, announce the formation of the Alliance for Computers and Writing.

The three universities recognize the importance of computers not only for writing itself, but for *learning how to write*. Yet, taking into account the effort required to computerize the writing classroom, they saw the need for an Alliance among teachers to help in this effort. The Alliance for Computers and Writing will include teachers at all levels of education, K-12 and college, and will also be a partnership between these teachers and industry—publishers and computer companies.

Taking the lead in the Alliance is Gallaudet University and Dr. Trent Batson, a professor at Gallaudet, who will serve as Director of the Alliance for Computers and Writing. Co-Directors are Dr. Fred Kemp of Texas Tech and Dr. John O'Connor of George Mason. The Alliance will consist of a number of regional alliances throughout the United States that are just now being formed.

The goal of the Alliance is to advance the use of computers to teach writing. To do this, the Alliance hopes to create a number of local partnerships as well as a national organization. One of the first regional alliances to be created is the Mid-Atlantic Alliance for Computers and Writing which is having its first conference at George Mason University on Nov. 6, 1993. The national Alliance will “open its doors” for business on January 1, 1994.

The Alliance will be supported, in part, by corporate donations and dues. The very first corporate donor is The Daedalus Group, Inc., of Austin, TX, producers of the award-winning Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment, which has enjoyed great success as a network-based teaching environment. With the generous donation from Daedalus, the Alliance should be able to meet the January 1 deadline for beginning operations.

Gallaudet University has taken the lead in forming the Alliance because it recognizes the equalizing power of computers to allow greater access to knowledge and communication for deaf people.

For more information, contact Trent Batson at 202-651-5494 or [twbtson@gallua.gallaudet.edu](mailto:twbtson@gallua.gallaudet.edu).

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### FOCUS ON . . . cont'd

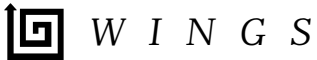
On a more practical level, when writing their papers, students find that features like the spell check save them a lot of time leafing through dictionaries searching for words with elusive spellings—of which there is no shortage in English. They are also pleased by the neater, more professional appearance of their papers; as the year progresses, the students become increasingly more interested in their papers as finished products, which shows a heightened recognition of their audience, and suggests that they are more aware of their capacity to change and mold their papers into the shape of their ideas.

#### *The Future of DIWE and ESL*

My first experience using the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment has been a productive one, and I hope to continue the trend next year, focusing more on the concept of the English essay as an art which can be

developed through practice. Though I feel that I have gotten a great deal out of DIWE, I have many ideas for future ESL classes. The Concordance feature in Write, for example, can be used as an encouragement to improve students' English vocabulary. For example, I plan to offer a prize to my students next year for the highest level of “unique word” improvement at the end of the year. It is my hope that the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment can one day be used more widely in English departments in foreign countries, and eventually be adapted for use in foreign language classrooms in the U.S.

**Kristine Butler, Lectrice  
University of Minnesota /  
Université Paul Valéry, France**



W I N G S

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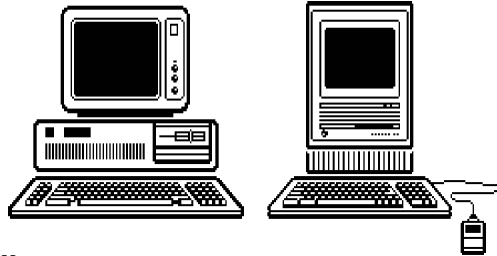
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## Daedalus on the Internet

I'm happy to announce that we finally have our own internet access. We expect to use this new capacity to improve our technical support and to serve the community in several ways.

- E-mail. We can now receive submissions to the newsletter, handle technical notes, and send out information about our software via e-mail. We also intend to set up user groups to provide support for teachers using our software.

- ftp (file transfer protocol). You can download the newsletter, bibliographies, articles, and demonstration copies of our software via anonymous ftp. And our sites will also have individual user accounts which will allow you to download program upgrades and bug fixes instantly.



- Telnet. We will be setting up some sort of virtual space (a MUD or a MOO, most likely), which may be used for user group meetings, experimental classrooms, and software review sessions.

Feel free to drop us a line at [wings@daedalus.com](mailto:wings@daedalus.com) to let us know how the connection is working. In addition to using our 800 phone number, you can also send technical questions to [mac-tech@daedalus.com](mailto:mac-tech@daedalus.com) or [dos-tech@daedalus.com](mailto:dos-tech@daedalus.com).

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