

WINGS

A newsletter for users of the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment

Fall 1995

Volume 3, Number 2

DIWE in Uncommon Places, or If People Don't Write for English Teachers, Is It Really Writing?

More and more, I find myself disturbed by the all-too-common belief—held at some point or another by just about everyone I've ever met—that English teachers at all levels of the educational food chain are responsible for whether or not the world becomes a politely civilized place or a writhing blob of selfish human appetites.

Well, okay, maybe not a writhing blob. But you know what I mean. We all recognize the public tendency to insist that English teachers' commitments to the care and practice of literacy education exempt everyone else from having to care and practice it at all. That somehow an English teacher's job is language and everyone else's is something above and beyond it.

Indeed, several of my university colleagues in other disciplines regularly, if good-naturedly, remind me that if I would just deal with my students' "writing problems," then they could assign more reading and not have worry about whether their students write well about contemporary political thought or biology or personal health because they'll just 'naturally' be able to do so. Teaching students to write ably at every turn, they reason, ought to involve a discrete set of skills that, if presented correctly, need only be administered in one intensive dose, much like a polio vaccine.

Unfortunately, many of us who teach writing, regardless of discipline or subject boundaries, know that this is not how "becoming a writer" works. As I have argued in other places, the view that learning to write can be done through generalized techniques not only reinforces the misperception that writing is both a school-bound activity and "can be learned in a brief time, as a skill, like riding a bike" (Patricia Bizzell, *Academic Discourse*, 12), but it makes it even more difficult to contend that people actually learn to write by writing often and in a variety of writing situations for a range of purposes to many different audiences over a lifetime.

The writers in this current edition of *Wings* understand this epistemological truism by the very spirit of experimentation they evoke in their various applications of DIWE. Indeed, this particular *Wings* is devoted to those who use DIWE in uncommon places—at least, uncommon to those of us comfortable with its function and flexibility in writing classrooms. This semester's contributors reinforce the sound pedagogical belief that we become better writers when we have opportunities to write among and for those with whom we have connections and about things we value. Many English teachers know that this ought to and can happen in English classrooms; they also know that it ought to and can happen in other places as well.

Nancy Peterson
Editor, *Wings*

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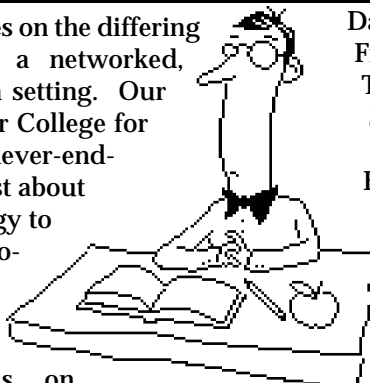
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The Best of Teach, September 1995:

Arguing With Professor Drill N. Practice

This edition of the Best of Teach focuses on the differing functions of a word processor in a networked, collaboratively constructed classroom setting. Our thanks to Edward Cossette of Del Mar College for posting an important and seemingly never-ending query to the TEACH discussion list about the value of using computer technology to "process ideas," as Kate Coffield so eloquently explains, and not just "texts." If you have further insights on or explanations for the significance of the following issues, please join us on teach@daedalus.com.



Date: Tue, 19 Sep 1995
From: Kate Coffield <KATE@auc-acs.eun.eg>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: RE: support for the DIWE wordprocessor

Edward—
Maybe your colleague is confusing DIWE with Daedalus Write. I remember that at least part of our discussion last spring was about the failings of Daedalus Write *as a word processor*, and the consensus was that it was not a "substitute" for Word or Word Perfect due to its limited formatting capabilities.

DIWE was not created to produce "nice-looking documents"; its purpose is to engage the students in the writing process and enable them to explore a topic in a variety of ways in collaboration with teacher and classmates. Daedalus Write was created to be compatible with DIWE and as a "take-home" text editor for students who don't have a high-end word processor. For the format-minded, D-Write documents can always be reformatted in Word or WordPerfect, at least on the Mac.

I believe that Teach is archived. If you look up the archives of last spring's discussion, I bet you'll find plenty of ammunition to use, including what many instructors believe to be important in a "simple" word processor. Meanwhile, perhaps your colleague who so values form over content should design his own course in page layout or DTP....?

Good luck!
Kate Coffield
American University in Cairo
kate@auc-acs.eun.eg

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Date: Tue, 19 Sep 1995
From: Denise Weeks <denise-weeks@mail.utexas.edu>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: RE: support for the DIWE wordprocessor

Edward,
At 08:53 AM 9/19/95 GMT, Kate Coffield wrote:
>Meanwhile, perhaps your colleague who so values form
>over content should design his own course in page layout
>or DTP....?

Good point, and not trivial. You might *really* do such a thing, stressing that there is value in both process and product, and that in your class you'd help students pro-

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Date: Mon, 18 Sep 1995
From: Edward Cossette <Edwcosste@aol.com>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: support for the DIWE wordprocessor

Dear DIWE users:

I need your help in giving me some "ammunition" to thwart one of my more, how shall I put it, "drill and practice" oriented colleagues. The problem is simple: this particular instructor is hell bent on trying to turn our "one hour writing labs" (attached to all sections of freshman and remedial comp.) into WordPerfect (5.1!!!) tutorials. He is incredibly anti-DIWE (although he hasn't taken any time to explore the software . . . in a recent discussion he exclaimed ". . . I don't care about fluency. I want students to be able to produce a nice looking document" . . . no, I'm not kidding, folks.)

While there is no chance he will be successful in his quest to overturn our DIWE-based curriculum, a long "memo battle" [like I don't have better things to do] is surely about to begin and I want to have plenty to fire back with. Last Spring I remember a similar disc. devlp. on "Teach" re DIWE vs. WP and I was hoping to recall some of the things said. (I vaguely remember someone commenting that WordPerfect is a "secretarial" program while DIWE is for developing student writers . . .) Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Best,
Edward Cossette
Del Mar College
Corpus Christi, TX

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Arguing with Prof. D&P, cont'd

duce the text that could later be turned into nice looking documents. Perhaps such a concession—that layout is an important consideration for printed material—would inspire him to concede that multiple writing contexts (InterChange, Mail conferences, and Invent/Respond) facilitate a focus on process. You might also engage your colleague in a discussion on “audience.” For whom does he see his students writing? What kinds of documents, for what audiences, does he value? Who wants or needs his nicely formatted documents? Then describe for him the immediate and responsive audience students write for (and with) in IC and Mail: Describe an assignment that helps make the concept of “audience” tangible and relevant.

I don't remember last year's thread, so maybe I'm repeating old news. I'm sure, too, that others have better one-liners for curmudgeons.

Good luck.
Denise Weeks
Technical Comm./Electrical & Computer Engineering
UT-Austin

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Date: Tue, 19 Sep 1995
From: Fred Kemp <f.kemp@ttacs1.ttu.edu>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: RE: support for the DIWE wordprocessor

DIWE and a full-fledged word processor, as Kate says, accomplish different things. A teacher who thinks that WordPerfect or MS Word is “superior” to DIWE is simply pedagogically deprived and is indicating that he or she has little understanding of the variety of tasks a class can engage in. We use DIWE a lot at Tech, but most often these days in conjunction with MS Word (especially for technical comm), the World Wide Web and Newsgroups (for the research courses) and internet e-mail (for everybody that likes out of class contact). I suspect that anyone on a mission to stomp out DIWE in favor of WordPerfect is talking more about instructional ideology than software and is troubled more by peer work and group problem-solving than lack of formatting capability.

Fred Kemp
f.kemp@ttu.edu
Texas Tech University

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Date: Tue, 19 Sep 1995
From: StacyM.Clanton <smclanton@sau460.saumag.edu>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: RE: support for the DIWE wordprocessor

In a message concerning “support for the DIWE wordprocessor,” Edward Cossette asked for “help in giving [him] some ‘ammunition’ to thwart one of [his] more . . . ‘drill and practice’ oriented colleagues” who was “hell bent on trying to turn [their] ‘one hour writing labs’ . . . into WordPerfect (5.1!!!) tutorials.” Edward referred to “a similar disc. devlp. on ‘Teach’ re DIWE vs. WP” and said, “I vaguely remember someone commenting that WordPerfect is a ‘secretarial’ program while DIWE is ‘for developing student writers.’” That last statement sounds like something I (and probably many other folks) have said frequently, but if Edward thought it was a good idea, I'll claim it as my own.

What I say frequently is that WP was originally developed (I understand) for legal secretaries, and still—even in version 6.0+—shows signs of that. I point this out even though I, like many other folks who write a great deal, have learned to use WP as a composing tool.

I also like to label DIWE as “text processing software” (and insist that in “text” we read *idea*), while WP is “document processing” software, intended to present pretty printed pages. The key point here, as others have already pointed out, is that DIWE is *not* merely a word processor: InterChange, File Sharing, heuristics, mail, and other features provide a seamless, transparent (to mix metaphors) environment for the sorts of students Edward described to explore the various implications of shared, textually-based ideas, so I hope (as others have pointed out) that Edward is not letting his colleague ignore all that goes on in a writing community that is *not* product specific, and the ways DIWE (the entire system) can support those. [Now that I think about it, I and my colleagues probably need the same reminder.] However, if Edward's colleague is indeed “incredibly anti-DIWE (although he hasn't taken any time to explore the software)” and has proclaimed that he doesn't “care about fluency,” but instead wants “students to be able to produce a nice looking document,” I'm afraid Edward may be fighting a losing battle. Maybe he should urge his colleague to look for a monastery that is still teaching monks how to do illuminated manuscripts.

Stacy M. Clanton
Southern Arkansas U.
Magnolia, AR 71753

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Arguing with Prof. D&P, cont'd

Date: Tue, 19 Sep 1995
From: Jan Gerzema <JGERZEMA@iun.indiana.edu>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: Getting adjuncts to use DIWE

Edward,

Your faculty member has been cloned and is here in northwest Indiana. I empathize. I'd like to tell you I have made some progress, but I haven't. (I did get her out of an IBM lab with Word Perfect and into the Mac Lab with Daedalus, but there she insists on MacWrite Pro.)

My problem is the difficulty of convincing adjunct faculty who are underpaid, overworked, and quite traditional that using DIWE might just be a rewarding experience for them as well as for their students. I have conducted workshops, offered individual sessions, and even taken away a few drill & kill textbooks. I had hoped that seeing many of the full time faculty using Daedalus might spark some interest, but that hasn't worked either...they see us as models who have lots of time to play around with computers. I'd appreciate any success stories from list members who have dealt with this.

Jan Gerzema
University of Indiana

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Date: Wed, 20 Sep 1995
From: John Slatin <jslatin@mail.utexas.edu>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: Re: Getting adjuncts to use DIWE

Jan, I think you've put the problem in a very nice little nutshell: how IS it possible to "persuade" adjunct faculty—overworked, underpaid, tired, and "quite traditional," with no time to spare—to use DIWE or anything else unless they, too, get "lots of time" (or at least *some* time) to "play around with computers"? Is it possible for your dept or university to provide training for them, e.g., paid attendance at training workshops or even a 1-course reduction in teaching load with the understanding that the time be used to learn new teaching methodologies such as DIWE?

The "quite traditional" part is another matter: if the main problem these folks see in student writing is the Dread Error, DIWE simply won't persuade them because that's not what it's about. In which case you might be better off either (a) leaving DIWE out of it for the time being and (again) provide some training for these folks in more contemporary issues in composition theory and practice, or (b) saving your breath for faculty (adjunct or not) who are in a position, intellectually and emotionally, to hear what you have to say.

Good luck!
John Slatin
Department of English
University of Texas at Austin

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Date: Thu, 21 Sep 1995
From: Kate Coffield <KATE@auc-ac.s.eun.eg>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: Re: Getting adjuncts to use DIWE

Jan, John, and everyone—

This isn't just an adjunct problem. Some people (even full-time) simply do not want to bother, when what they're doing [have *always* done?] works just fine, thank you. Nor is it just a DIWE problem. I have seen faculty extremely indignant that word processors "correct" students' spelling without their having to "look it up"; others' main concern is that the proliferation of computers leads to rampant plagiarism. For these folks, something like InterChange is thought of as a "computer game," as is the entire Internet. Now *that's* traditional. Our U has been very supportive of our English Dept.'s C&W efforts, providing hardware for our lab, sending those of us who bother to apply to conferences, workshops, etc. at their expense, giving some of us release-time to coordinate C&W activities and, uh, "persuade" other teachers. But the U can't offer pay or release-time incentives to the "trainees" as well—in our program, it would mean hiring about 15 additional instructors! At some point, the buck stops...

John suggests:

>(a) leaving DIWE out of it for the time being and (again)
>provide some training for these folks in more contempo
>rary issues in composition theory and practice, or (b)
>saving your breath for faculty (adjunct or not) who are in
>a position, intellectually and emotionally, to hear what
>you have to say.

Excellent, logical suggestions, but...

In the case of (a), if we exclude the true technophobes, people who resist DIWE and CAI in general are the same ones who couldn't care less about "contemporary....theory and practice." Reading up on that stuff takes time and effort, too.

Option (b) works great for the interested faculty and *their* students, and this is the approach I've gone for... "l'enfer, c'est les autres". Trouble is, if you're in a "program," there's a perverse pressure for "standardization." You get people arguing that the computer sections get an unfair disadvantage and others maintaining that they get an unfair advantage. You get students clamoring to get out of their non-computer sections and into yours (and does *that* ever annoy the rest of the faculty!). There's all

<http://www.daedalus.com/>

Just point your web browser to <http://www.daedalus.com/> and access links to product information, teaching resources, customer support files, and Daedalus internet resources.

From the Products and Services page, you can look at descriptions of DIWE classrooms and sites or check the database of current Daedalus sites for those near you (or not) with whom you might set up a distance project for your students or pool training resources.

By clicking on the Teaching Resources page, you can access the archive of the TEACH e-mail discussion list and collected papers and articles on

teaching with DIWE. You can look at on-line copies of past issues of WINGS, consult the DGI bibliography, or check the information on Teaching on DaedalusMOO.

The Customer Support pages now include a variety of problem-solving and troubleshooting tip sheets which can help you figure out what error messages such as "Cannot open CONFIG.REZ" mean and answer frequently asked questions such as "How do I end and print an InterChange session?"

Choosing the Internet Resources page gives you access to the Daedalus FTP server and gopher server as well as DaedalusMOO and FrenchMOO (our virtual reality classrooms).

"Professor Drill N. Practice," cont'd

this political stuff. It's like dividing people into Republicans/Democrats or IBM vs. Mac users. You can't win.

Well, OK, you *can* win, but I think it takes time. You can't force people, you can only sort of *enable* them. I've only been in this a year and a half or so, but I feel a profound sense of accomplishment when attendance at the "All interested in using computers to teach" meeting increases by two or three. I've seen instructors come out of their first InterChange session pouring over the transcripts as if they've reached Nirvana, and this sort of spirit is contagious, at least in the long run. We probably can't fix the problem of people being overworked and underpaid, but maybe we can convince them to be less bored. Eventually?

Kate (who always tries to end on an optimistic note...)
kate@auc-ac.s.eun.eg
American University in Cairo

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Date: Thu, 21 Sep 95
From: Dove Wimbish <tcwimbd@vccscent.bitnet>
To: teach@daedalus.com
Subject: Re: Getting adjuncts to use DIWE

Kate et. al.:

It seems to me that maybe our campus is a little bit backwards, then. At TCC it is the adjuncts who are using DIWE and dragging the full timers to use the lab. We have two or three who, after much convincing, bring their students in 2x a semester, 2 or three who love DIWE (and they are the extroverts of the FT fac) and then most of the adjuncts who just can't get into the lab enough. Adjuncts

are running the English Computer Center, giving the workshops, conducting class solely in the lab, etc. The FT faculty, on the whole, are the ones stuck in their ruts. They are coming around, slowly, but the college has told them they must. The college loves DIWE. The college loves showing off classes using DIWE. And so the faculty must fall in line or miss the boat.

You're right. It's politics. It's too bad the college doesn't give adjuncts incentive pay.

Dove Wimbish
Tidewater Community College

Houston Community College System Receives System-Wide DIWE Grant

Daedalus is proud to announce its grant of a system-wide site license of the full Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment to the Houston Community College System. For its sponsorship of the 1995 League for Innovation in the Community College Conference, and for our continuing relationships with HCCS faculty on several campuses, The Daedalus Group offers the entire System the opportunity to experience DIWE across the curriculum. A formal presentation of the award will take place at the League for Innovation Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, November 5-8, 1995. William Pritchard, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Instructional Computing, will accept the award on behalf of HCCS on Tuesday, November 7, 1995, during the General Session meeting.

TEACHER TALK

Professional Development Across the Disciplines with DIWE

Reading a recent issue of *Wings* on the web, nodding my head at other people's experiences that echo my own and thinking of ways I could adapt some of their assignments, I felt the usual renewal of energy that comes when colleagues share teaching insights. During the 1995-1996 academic year, I have a unique opportunity to spend most of my time in that very activity, talking with my colleagues across the disciplines throughout Virginia about ways that electronic mail and synchronous conferencing can transform their students' learning.

The impact of this transformation of learning was acknowledged by Steven Gilbert at his seminars for the American Association of Higher Education Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtables (Phoenix, July 1995). In particular, he cites the impact that computers and composition pedagogy has had on the instructional use of information technology. This broader view is exactly what led me to take the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment out of the English classroom—where I had been using Mail and InterChange for writing and literature instruction—and put it into the art, biology, anatomy, history, math, philosophy, and chemistry classrooms.

More than a decade as director of a drop-in writing center at Tidewater Community College-Virginia Beach Campus and as a principal in many of the writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives at our three campuses placed me in the fortunate position of collaborating regularly with my colleagues from many disciplines on issues related to teaching and learning. For a number of us, getting together to share ideas about what works in our classrooms was a familiar practice and an important contributor to our willingness to experiment with new approaches to teaching. Susan McLeod describes such "collegial interaction" as significant in building faculty morale in ways that "have a positive affect . . . on student performance" (378).

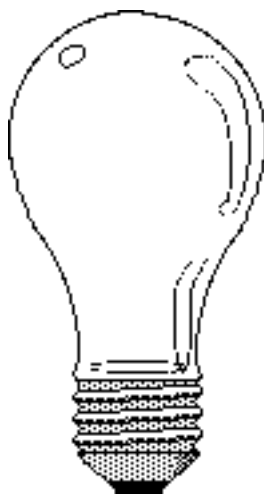
Membership in this informal professional development community motivated me to conduct workshops in teaching and learning strategies as soon as I found out what worked for my own students in a networked computer classroom, emphasizing Daedalus Mail and InterChange as prewriting tools. I began with workshops for other English teachers. Like so many of you, we have

inadequate facilities; and like so many of you, I encourage our twenty-five writing and literature teachers to use our one computer center so that we can demonstrate its value for our students and advocate collectively for more and better facilities. Of course, I create the very bottlenecks of which I complain when too many of us demand the space from 9 to 10 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Convinced that computer-assisted instruction in writing and literature enhances the way my own students learn and unable to restrain myself from cornering my colleagues to demonstrate my findings, I thought, "If this works for writing and literature, it will work for any subject that has communication as a fundamental learning tool." My WAC background told me that every discipline would benefit. Thus began workshops with titles like "Computers for Communication and Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines: Using Word Processing, Electronic Mail, and Real-Time Conferencing To Enhance Learning."

Six curious people came to my first cross-disciplinary computer-communication workshop. But what a wonderful group, including a nursing instructor who has become an enthusiast and leader in instructional technology. She has one of the first web pages at TCC and has developed a variety of ways her students can use the web. An anatomy teacher has created a desktop for her classes; among the menu items is Daedalus. One computer science teacher who has been active in advocating for computers for faculty offices was impressed by the ways InterChange conferencing could be used for instruction.

Among the assignments I model for faculty in these workshops is "Freewriting to Free the Brain." This activity using DIWE Mail introduces electronic mail, which most of our faculty do not have; demonstrates the merit of freewriting as a way to start a class by focusing on a topic; and offers an alternative to the paper journal. Students e-mail entries to their teachers; these are automatically dated and preserved for the teacher to review any time during the term. No more toting stacks of notebooks home, and no more fatuous entries written in the middle of the night the last night of the semester. The teacher can read them at her convenience. Or wait until the middle of the night the last night of the semester. In another Mail activity, pairs exchange questions on educational issues and answer each other's questions. This private mail models a writing-to-learn strategy in which students teach each other by answering focused questions. Teachers who have



never used journal writing before find this approach attractive.

One InterChange component of these workshops asks faculty to identify their concerns about technology's impact on teaching and learning. One teacher wrote, "I tend to believe that students learn best when they are treated as colleagues, and you clearly made the point that their participation through this medium puts them into a professional mode. . . ."

Through my conversations with faculty across campuses, I hear that some resist, feeling that the time investment is too great. However, I have seen through these demonstrations that, if a faculty member has the appropriate technical support, (s)he can be underway in minimal time. From previous experience with teaching word processing, database, and spreadsheet (rather simple programs designed for educators), folks tend to buy into using computers when they see what it will do for them personally (record keeping and the like).

An assessment of the workshop is always the last activity of the three-hour session. I e-mail a request for comments, and participants respond. These messages are not anonymous, but the specifics of most of them suggest that they are reasonably honest.

•"Not only have I found this an exciting means to foster so many aspects of thinking and learning, but today I have had the opportunity to see the positive responses of others. Faculty can use this to the advantage of their students within a short period of time without a huge learning curve."

•"It is clear that many features of this technology take students quickly deeper and deeper into the subject matter. The non-threatening atmosphere is a valuable aspect. Once students are freed from the air of judgment, they can really take off with their thinking and creativity." [This assessment reminds me of my students' evaluations of InterChange discussions in literature courses. Seeing the responses of others to the stories and poems they have read is always identified as a benefit that outweighs the frustrations of network glitches. Students routinely print the InterChange transcripts to use as study guides and as resources for their papers.]

•"The idea of collaborative work on a problem in math has good possibilities in almost all of the courses. Developmental students would be forced to proceed from a step that they might not have used. This would encourage understanding of the method rather than memorizing steps."

Seldom mentioned explicitly but clear to me from the interactions of the participants during the break and after the workshop is the pleasure of collaborating with teachers from other campuses and disciplines. Because I incorporate a face-to-face component in some InterChange activities, teachers have an opportunity to speak as well as

Call for Contributions

Wings invites you to react and respond to any part of this newsletter. If you have a short (800-1000 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 250W
Austin, TX 78723
512-459-0637

or send it via e-mail to wings@daedalus.com

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

write about such issues as community college teaching loads, late registration, and special needs students.

Apparently, the word spread that these workshops were worthwhile. The most recent such workshop at TCC attracted so many people that I had to offer it twice the same day, three hours in the morning and another three in the afternoon. Every computer was taken. Next month I am offering a Stage 2 workshop for teachers across the campuses and across the curriculum who have attended the three-hour introductory workshops; they will develop specific assignments for their own classes.

Alas, teachers leave the workshops with understanding of the possibilities and enthusiasm for ways that they can apply them—but few places to practice them. The very computer lab where the demonstrations take place is overbooked. I already had switched from years of teaching at 8 a.m. to scheduling my own classes at times like 3, 4:30, and 7 p.m. just so I could get into the lab and treat it as an electronic classroom during times of less demand. If my colleagues in science and math and electronics and engineering leave my workshops clamoring for computers, perhaps we can collectively make a change at our college.

In fact, the change is already coming. Now a group of math, social sciences, and English teachers is designing an electronic classroom to be shared by these disciplines. Instead of discipline-specific labs or classrooms, we want appropriately equipped multipurpose rooms for all. We don't intend to compete with essential discipline-specific labs for drafting or radiology instruction; however, we recognize that a multipurpose classroom with computers for all students and the teacher plus a multimedia presentation area can be used by World Civilization at 8 a.m., Introductory Economics at 9 a.m., and African-American

TEACHER TALK, cont'd

Literature at 10 a.m. Lectures and face-to-face discussion are not eliminated from such a setting; diversity of teaching and learning styles, on the other hand, is honored.

Along with instructional applications of DIWE, I decided to try some administrative applications. Businesses throughout the country use both synchronous and asynchronous communication as well as teleconferencing for their work. They hold meetings and brainstorm and solve problems on line. My first such workshop brought together division chairs from our three campuses. They used a full-class InterChange conference to identify issues that concerned them for the coming academic year. Then they worked in small groups to discuss four key issues in four InterChange conferences I created for these sessions. My own division chair helped me identify the topics ahead of time, and I was pleased that we had picked several of the issues that came up in the freewriting at the start of the workshop. Not surprisingly, almost everybody mentioned the budget. Faculty morale, low enrollment, and lack of time to implement good ideas were other key issues. One teacher wrote:

“#1 issue is the budget . . . the uncertainty, the lack of funds to do what is necessary for my division. #2 issue is related; i.e., the lack of funds for hiring adjunct faculty for the year and the impact this will have on the campus enrollment and efficiency.”

After sending their messages, they met face to face to discuss the implications of their discussion. Together they wrote a synthesis or solution as the final posting to their InterChange conference so that their colleagues in other discussion groups would have access to the results. Administrators from three campuses and six academic divisions collaborated in these discussions.

I plan to use a similar approach with one or more committees at the Virginia Community College System office during the next several months. During the 1995-1996 academic year, I am on leave from teaching at TCC to serve as Faculty in Residence for Instructional Technology at the Virginia Community College System, the central administrative offices for our twenty-three colleges and thirty-seven campuses. Although I don't have as many opportunities to do hands-on workshops as I might like, I have done two since August and hope to do at least half a dozen more—again using Daedalus Write, Mail, and InterChange—before my appointment ends in May.

The impulse to share our findings in the community college is often guided by a sense of community, either because such collegiality exists or because we are driven to initiate it. We are not under pressure to publish or do research; we teach fifteen semester hours, leaving little time for those activities. And yet many of us do in fact choose to do research and some of us to publish. For

example, one of our sonography teachers published an article in a sonography journal on using writing for learning in her classes. With Art Young of Clemson University and Dickie Selfe of Michigan Technological University, I am co-editing a forthcoming collection of original works on electronic communication across the curriculum.

Additionally, TCC faculty try to get together from time to time to talk about effective teaching. The Virginia Community College System sponsors biannual peer group meetings for teachers in each field to meet. In these discussions, more and more among us recognize that technology is transforming our world and especially our students and the way we teach or should teach. Electronic communication tools are fundamental to that transformation not only because they are basic technology for the wider world but also because they expand the thinking and learning that occur through reading, writing, and reflecting—activities that are unquestionably fundamental to education across the curriculum.

**Donna Reiss, Associate Professor of English
Tidewater Community College
Virginia Beach Campus
1995-1996 Faculty in Residence
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Virginia Community College System
dreiss@infi.net**

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Using InterChange as a Teachers' Journal

In 1993, we opened the Humanities Computer Center at Anne Arundel Community College as a classroom facility for writing, literature, and speech courses. Ever since, we have noticed that one of the unexpected and exciting side effects has been the creation of a collaborative learning community among the faculty working in the Center. In the spring of 1995, when we started a joint research project on learning in the computer classroom, we decided to keep a collaborative teaching journal using Daedalus InterChange. We kept the dialogue open from January to May, and the six participating teachers, who had varying degrees of experience, contributed between three and twenty-two messages each to the discussion over the course of the semester.

While some messages were short supportive comments responding to another teacher, most were detailed descriptions of class activities or analyses of what seemed successful or unsuccessful about a particular class. The InterChange program provided not only some interesting insights on our research but also a wonderful opportunity to learn from and support each other as we worked on developing pedagogies suitable to the computer classroom.

Our basic focus in the InterChange session was to record observations about how our students learned in a computer environment. Collaboration between students was one theme that developed quickly. For example, Anne noticed during the first session, "an enormous amount of collaboration. Students who knew how to use the computer promptly showed those who didn't how to Open, Close, Save, etc. There was no suggestion on my part that they should do this. The collaboration seemed to develop instantly and spontaneously." Paul made a similar observation: "At our second class session, students were very fast at logging on and opening [Microsoft Word®]. Students who were having trouble were assisted quickly by their neighbors."

A little later in the semester, Marguerite gave a detailed description of how students in her class learned to collaborate. Small groups worked on developing a thesis for a writing assignment using material from a Daedalus discussion and group notes in Word. "I saw them actively going from the Daedalus discussions to the notes in Word. . . . but only one group figured out that if one member used a computer to record the class responses, one could be searching for info in the Daedalus system and one in the Word notes, and they wouldn't get confused switching back and forth."

Another common thread in the discussion was the amount of repetition needed to master computer skills. Becky observed that walking students through an activity was not enough to make them able to do it independently. "They must do it and redo it, with a couple of models and working in pairs for the activity to become a learned skill." Anne agreed with her colleague, saying, ". . . repeating the activity is also necessary. That's why I decided to keep using the notetaking technique for a couple of classes until they really get the hang of the notetaking skill. We need to get a good list of basic computer skills so that we can keep working these skills into many different lessons. . . . They have to keep doing these basic skills over and over."

The InterChange session also showed considerable discussion about the role of the teacher and the independence of students in the computer classroom. Becky commented: "I don't want them [students] looking at me as a fix-it or as an excuse. It's that ownership idea again. They should ask the question: what did I do wrong? Let

me reconstruct my process; that is, do again until I get it to work." Paul recounted a specific technique he used to develop ownership among students. After showing the class how to use the grammar checker in Word, he had students write about using that tool and then discussed the experience with them. "Surprise of surprises! One of the students felt that the grammar checker didn't consider the needs of various audiences and would be too formal for some situations. Several others noticed that *they* and not the checker were the final authority for their work. :) I am most pleased that this exercise gave them a sense of responsibility for their work."

Anne offered another example: "When students were doing a preliminary research exercise with Bookshelf®, some groups figured out how to copy and paste information from Bookshelf into their research document instead of retyping the information. . . . It was a perfect example of students applying the technology on their own." In recounting his experience using InterChange with students, Don also noted how students exerted control over the process: "The avid exchange among the prepared made the shleps realize their sins, and a few resolved to be part of the action next time. Also, two immature comments were handled by other students very well. They simply insisted on thoughtful responses to their comments, pressing for reasonable and mature and honest dialogue—without my having to correct them."

Time management and class preparation were other issues that surfaced repeatedly in the InterChange conversation. When Anne had to step in and teach Cathi's class at the last minute, she was "instantly reminded of how much preparation time I need for the computer classroom. Even though I was using programs I was relatively familiar with—Cardfile and Daedalus BiblioCite—I felt disoriented." Paul noticed that when he did the same assignment with a computer class and a non-computer class, the computer groups "took more time to weigh and consider the problem at hand. . . . As I see it, time in the computer classroom is deeper than it is broad. I must plan for fewer examples, each of which will be covered in more depth, than is standard in the traditional classroom."

DIWE User E-mail Forum

teach@daedalus.com

Don't forget the Daedalus internet electronic mailing list dedicated to the issues associated with teaching with DIWE. Discussions range widely from issues of interface to pedagogy to theory. Join us!

To subscribe, send an electronic mail message to:

sub-teach@daedalus.com

After that, you can participate by sending e-mail to

teach@daedalus.com

TEACHER TALK, cont'd

Besides allowing the six teachers to record observations, the semester-long dialogue also fostered sharing of techniques, strategies, delights and frustrations among the group. When Marguerite recorded that she had used the overhead LCD to take notes in class and found it successful, Don tried it in his class and liked the results also. When Becky explained how she had set up multiple discussion groups using InterChange, Anne tried it for her next literature discussion and was pleased with the results. "I set up three groups: A, C, and N. For A, the question was 'If Antigone is right, then what theme is Sophocles suggesting in the play?' For C, 'If Creon is right ...' For N, 'If neither Antigone nor Creon is right ...' Each student was asked to comment on each question. I thought their insights were very perceptive."

When Cathi expressed concern about disruptive behavior in InterChange and group discussions, Becky and Marguerite both made suggestions about how to deal with it or rethink the idea of "disruptive." "Perhaps," Becky noted, "the disruptive behavior is related to their idea that this is *play.* We want students to play because that can be a major source of learning—finally breaking false or misconceived boundaries, particularly the one of what does the teacher want." Similarly, when Marguerite noticed a lack of participation in InterChange discussions among her students, she used suggestions from others in the group about establishing participation requirements and using subgroups to keep a few people from dominating the discussion.

In short, we found the Daedalus InterChange program a very productive tool for us as teachers. It was a valuable source of information for our research, but, perhaps even more important, it helped us develop as a community of learners. Daedalus allowed us to model the collaborative learning we hope to see in our classrooms. We could have kept our own teacher's journals individually, but using InterChange for a collaborative journal, we gained insight into each other as teachers, learned from each other and enjoyed each other's support even when we couldn't be together face-to-face. Reading through the transcript of our discussion at the end of the semester, we were struck by the energy and enthusiasm we saw in ourselves and by our hope that our work in the computer environment would benefit our students' learning. We liked the collaborative journal so well that we are proposing to continue it for the fall semester.

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Using the Daedalus System in the Sciences

The Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment was introduced to the Dutchess Community College campus just over a year ago. Although roughly half of the English faculty have expressed interest in using the program and have attended orientation and training sessions, science instructors represent the largest group of faculty who have actually used DIWE with their students thus far.

Why?

When English teachers learn how to use the Daedalus program, they often seem daunted; clearly, they struggle to absorb and accept the vision of a networked classroom—particularly a composition class—and all of its potential. Many believe, justifiably, that in order to integrate DIWE fully into their classrooms, they must learn the complexities of the program and devote substantial class time to instructing students in its use.

In contrast, our science faculty have recognized the utility of selected use of Daedalus. In doing so, they have spared their students—and to a lesser degree, themselves—having to learn the DIWE apparatus before course material can be addressed. At the same time, they take advantage of the Daedalus system's support for collaborative, student-centered learning and writing-to-learn instruction. Indeed, the science faculty's use of DIWE provides valuable models for English—and all—teachers who want to ease themselves and their students into a Daedalus environment with focused, one-day activities.

In this article we'll describe several ways in which the Daedalus system has served our science faculty, whose students need no previous knowledge of the program before they visit the computer lab.

Computer Lab Preparation and Setup

Prior to the visits of the science students, our lab assistant created in DIWE a "General Students and Faculty" class to serve occasional users in one-time activities. In the minutes before the computer lab sessions began, she logged computers into DIWE using pen names, which were noted on cards placed at the active terminals. When the students entered the room and sat down, they turned the cards over to preserve anonymity. On the monitor they saw the opened Mail board or InterChange conference screen. On a blackboard were instructions for the few keystrokes they'd need to make in order to write, send, and read Mail messages or InterChange comments. Our students, first-time users of the Daedalus system, had no problems following the few commands and engaged quickly in the tasks of writing and reading.

Writing in a Science, Technology and Society Class

The Daedalus system was used for several lab sessions of Physical Science 105, a course called "Technology and the Future." This course is an introductory-level science, technology and society (STS) course for non-science students. PHS 105 focuses on the evolution of technology and the implications of modern technology for the future. PHS 105 students with minimal computer experience used DIWE in two sessions; in both sessions, humorous pen names provided anonymity, encouraged free expression, and lightened up the class atmosphere.

In the first session, the students used Daedalus Mail for an exercise in technological forecasting ("futurecasting"). The group used a modified version of the Delphi Method, a consensus-building technique in which a panel of experts is asked individually (usually by mailed questionnaires) to respond to a question. Each person is shown the responses of the other panel members, and is then asked to respond again. The Delphi approach is often carried through three rounds of responses, typically producing much greater agreement among the panelists by the third round.

The students were asked to make a series of forecasts about the probability of various events involving modern technology. For example, they were asked their opinion of the likelihood of astronauts visiting the moon again in the next 10 years, or the likelihood that they will be driving electric powered cars or using video-telephones in the next 10 years. Each student typed in a response—an estimate of probability of the particular event and a short statement justifying the prediction—and mailed it to the whole class. Class members read each of the student responses, then were asked again to forecast the probability of the event. Not surprisingly, the range of probability narrowed each time on the second round. The Daedalus session was followed by a discussion of the students' technological forecasts—and the Delphi Method itself—during the next lecture meeting of the class.

The second Daedalus session involved students using InterChange to debate controversial issues concerning the future of technology and society, such as nuclear power, population control, and a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The students all read a short, provocative statement that had previously been input by the instructor, then they used InterChange to express their opinions. Typically, the InterChange dialogue would continue for approximately 10-15 minutes, then the instructor would ask the students to move on to the next issue. The instructor was delighted by the full participation of the students in this exercise, since a number of the students had previously spoken only rarely in class and had previously

seemed reluctant to use technical terms or to express controversial opinions. In particular, students did a surprisingly good job of integrating technical terminology into the on-screen dialogue.

In both the Delphi and the InterChange sessions described above, each exercise was done with two class sections. In a section with only eight students, each student worked alone at a terminal. In a larger section of seventeen students, two students worked together at each terminal. The group working in pairs seemed to benefit from working collaboratively and discussing their ideas briefly before typing in responses.

Instruction in Laboratory Report Writing

The "lab report writing workshop" uses DIWE to give students practice in scientific laboratory report writing. Scientific writing skills are important because they help students apply the scientific method to a problem. Writing the report helps the student use the facts taught during the laboratory exercise to solve the problem. Proper training helps students to use correct style and format in writing a lab report so they can exercise these skills to their best advantage.

The workshop began as a ninety-minute class that students attended voluntarily, outside of regular class time. The success of the workshop has led us to include an expanded version in our required Freshman science seminar courses as well. The voluntary workshop still remains popular.

The session begins with a short talk on lab report writing skills. Students are given a comprehensive handout to accompany the talk. Lab report style and format, along with information on recording bibliographic data, are covered in the handout. The students are then free to listen and participate in the workshop without taking notes.

A short problem is then presented for purposes of hypothesis development and experimentation. Students are shown bubble blowing wands of different shapes and are asked what effect the shape of the wand will have on the shape of the bubble. As a group, the students discuss the hypothesis. To test the hypothesis, a few bubbles are blown and their shapes are recorded. The exercise moves quickly, and is enjoyed by all.

Students now have an hypothesis, data and a conclusion and can practice writing a lab report. Pairs of students, using pen names, work together at computers that were logged on to Daedalus Mail prior to the workshop. The students are asked to write a short materials and methods section for the lab report. Students send their writing to the instructor and the rest of the class. The instructor accesses the work and can add a response and return it almost immediately. Students attending the workshop can read their classmates' entries and the

instructor's responses. Students can then experience many different styles of lab report writing and evaluate the effectiveness of each. If time permits, students may continue to practice by writing the remaining parts of the lab report.

Advantages of Using DIWE in Science

Instruction

Learning on the Daedalus system allows students to practice writing lab reports in a risk-free setting, before actually having to turn in a lab report for a formal grade. This experience can relieve many students' fears about writing lab reports. Honest critique of students' writing can be difficult in a conventional classroom because students often take the criticism personally. Use of DIWE allows the instructor to provide constructive criticism of writing in a much less personal fashion and makes the learning experience more enjoyable for the student. Students are able to benefit from an instructor's feedback on their work almost immediately and without risk.

Use of Daedalus Mail to view other student's writing gives students the opportunity to see many ways of communicating an idea within the structure of a lab report. Students are able to evaluate the effectiveness of each other's efforts whether writing lab reports or using the Daedalus system in other endeavors. In these ways, each student's work enriches the learning experience of the entire group.

Computers that are logged into DIWE under pen names make it easy for students to participate anonymously in the lab report workshop or controversial class discussion. This arrangement allows students to share their work with one another more freely. Even the most reticent students appear to be more willing to participate when their anonymity can be assured through the use of the Daedalus system. We feel that this is why students seem more willing to attempt to use technical terminology than they would in a conventional classroom discussion. Not only does this technique encourage the quiet student to participate, but it empowers all students to practice giving voice to their understanding of the terminology and concepts of science and technology.

What All This Means

Faculty in other disciplines at our school—including those in English—can also design limited, focused writing activities that take advantage of the program's interactivity. In the case of the lab report, the science students worked with a written form common to their discipline. The science, technology and society students used DIWE to practice consensus building through the Delphi Method and to employ scientific terminology to discuss scientific

concepts. Students in other disciplines—assigned specialized reports, process analyses, and observation logs, for example—could similarly benefit from the focused, one- or two-session writing activities and classroom exchange that the Daedalus system makes possible. English and writing teachers not yet fully committed to the networked classroom would find that the program provides a useful environment for imaginative writing exercises in description and summaries, to name just two forms.

At Dutchess Community College, we hope that our science faculty will help show the way for cross-disciplinary, selected use of the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment. Once we can get faculty and students into the DIWE lab, we are confident they will become frequent visitors.

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Dutchess Community College—State University of New York

Teachers of the Daed Unite!

Daedalus T-shirts are now available for committed Daedalus instructors. Show your solidarity and enthusiasm with a high-quality long-sleeved T-shirt in natural off-white, featuring our maze icon in black surrounded by the words "Teachers of the Daed" in brilliant blue. Thanks go to Stephanie McBride at The George School in Newtown, PA for the design. T-shirts may be purchased directly from Daedalus for \$12 (delivered), and are available in sizes M-XL. We have a limited supply available, and are accepting orders by phone (512-459-0637), by fax (512-452-5206), or via e-mail (susan@daedalus.com).



TEACHER TALK, cont'd

Daring to Do DIWE with Middle School Students

Hormones hurled around the room as the gifted and talented middle schoolers rushed to their computer stations to meet Daedalus. The faculty, used to college students who strolled into class as if on a nineteenth century Sunday afternoon Paris promenade, watched with surprise and a tinge of terror. On Monday morning at nine, the end of our week-long writing center experiment seemed centuries away.

Last summer, the Maryland State Department of Education wanted to add Writing Centers to their summer offerings around the state. The previous summer, the Humanities Resource Center at Prince George's Community College had offered a successful Civil War Studies Center for the state in partnership with the Talented and Gifted Program of the Prince George's County schools for students entering the seventh and eighth grades. As Prince George's Writing Department chair, I created a proposal for a Writing Center to offer the same course in a computer classroom that could emphasize writing. If funded, I proposed that we purchase DIWE for our computer classroom, and when funds arrived, we did buy the Integrated Writing Environment. But on that first Monday morning, we, the faculty, were uncertain that DIWE could ever be worth the cost.

The biggest challenge with middle schoolers, gifted or otherwise, is to keep them occupied with positive activities so that they will not be tempted to push buttons or turn knobs or key in destructive commands on the computer. Unlike some college students, they are typically not afraid of the computers and know how to use them. They are not "rodently challenged" like some of the older students who have never been near a computer mouse. Only a few moments of initial instructions got them logged onto the computer and into DIWE with names and passwords like "Tiny Tear," "Rad," "King," and "Elvis." Not once did one of them forget a password.

InterChange was the first activity that we introduced to the students. In retrospect, this was a mistake. The students loved InterChange and enjoyed seeing their messages posted. But I realized that I should have created different conferences before we started so that a few of them could exchange ideas on one topic rather than have the entire class reading and commenting in a random way. When we use InterChange again, I will wait until at least the second day for students to use this activity since it seems to work best with middle schoolers if it's very structured. Nevertheless, we took the transcript of the entire InterChange from the disk, over 300 messages, and displayed it for the parents in our final Saturday morning ceremony, and also gave each student a copy of his or her

comments. Parents could see how their children had significantly contributed to the group conversation.

Our second foray into DIWE was with the word processor Daedalus Write, our mainstay for the week. Most of the assignments required its use. Few of the students had practiced correct keyboarding, so we did not make an issue of using the correct fingers for each key. By the end of the week, however, most of them were improving rapidly because they had written a lot using the word processor without having to spend too much time understanding the commands. The first assignment asked each student to write a diamante poem, a poem in the shape of a diamond using specific parts of speech in each line with the second half of the poem stating the opposite of the first half. The students' main problem was wanting all of the lines to be centered on the screen and not quite understanding how to format. When they saw how easy the formatting was, they were pleased, and wrote interesting poems on two Harriets—Harriet Beecher Stowe and Harriet Tubman. Here's one example of what students produced:

Tubman
Secretive, brave
Journeying, freeing, fleeing
Slavery, freedom, words, action
Observing, feeling, writing
Outspoken, clever
Stowe

The students also worked on three other word processing activities. One composition was to personify an object from the civil war novel, *Across Five Aprils*. They had to imagine what point of view the object would have towards its situation. Some of the objects they chose were a kepi (Civil War soldier's hat), a Confederate flag, a sword, and a fence. As yet another object, one student wrote, "I would lie on the desk and watch the president read thousands and thousands of letters. He would dip me in the ink and I would scratch around on many different pieces of paper." The student continued through a letter that Lincoln received from the book's protagonist and the pen's distress at finding Lincoln had been assassinated.

When the students arrived that first Monday morning, they were paired with another student to interview and about whom to write a character sketch. Using Write, they revised these sketches throughout the week. They also wrote letters as characters in *Across Five Aprils* using Civil War slang that they had found on an Internet adventure into another university's files on the Civil War.

We used the personifications as a basis for an activity with Respond. Although all of the prompt questions were not appropriate for such short papers, most of them helped the students think about what each was trying to convey. The experience of seeing someone else's work and answering specific questions about it also helped the students reexamine their own papers. The finished personifications were especially good, and some of the credit goes to the Daedalus Respond activity.

The letters led to Daedalus Mail. As soon as the students had finished their Civil War letters, they were assigned someone to whom they wanted to send the letter. The recipient then mailed a response to the sender. The letters were very imaginative, and the middle schoolers responded in character to the mail they received. Some of them had an extensive correspondence. Once they had met Daedalus Mail, they wanted to stay with it. Every time they finished a project, they rushed to Mail to see if they had received any messages while they were doing other work. If they had not, they sent some so that they would hear from a classmate. At first their preoccupation with Mail concerned the faculty. We soon realized, however, that the whole class could be talking as loudly as each person wanted, and we would only hear the clicking of the keys.

We also used BiblioCite, but our middle schoolers did not fully appreciate its power since they had not yet had to do serious research. They did find sources on various Civil War topics using the college library computers search, and used those as the data for the BiblioCite exercises.

We found that middle school students can use DIWE as easily as many college students. Daedalus Respond, for example, is a good way to look at other students' work or other writing examples. But DIWE is a powerful way to teach subjects other than writing. A problem with group work in any class is being certain that each student has come prepared and has participated fully in the discussion. By creating InterChange conferences prior to forming groups, a teacher can read what the students have said in their discussions and give credit as necessary without having to guess about participation. One of our students was labeled "talented and gifted learning disabled," and his parents, both Ph.D.s, were concerned that he would lag behind. Ironically, he was one of the best students in the class. With the computer, he was able to talk to his classmates and participate fully. The parents wrote later that the computer experience had been especially positive for him, and that he had even made friends in the class. He and the other students could "talk" with each other on their computers with fewer fears than those present in face-to-face adolescent communication. One must attribute some of this success, and others we experienced with this writing project, to DIWE.

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More TEACHER TALK on p. 15

DIWE: The Next Generation

Sometimes it pays to be patient.

Finally, Daedalus will release the long-awaited Windows™ and revised Macintosh® versions of DIWE to its clients in March of 1996, and to the general public in late spring to allow new customers to make software purchases during the 1995-96 fiscal year. New features include:

Dual Platform Capability

Both versions of DIWE will be dual platform, eliminating the need for separate servers, and making file management easier for students and teachers working on two different platforms.

TCP/IP Protocol for Distance Access

No longer limited to the LAN, the new DIWE will also run on a TCP/IP protocol ("client-server" protocol) for possible off-site access of DIWE.

WYSIWYG and Word Processor Compatibility

DIWE will offer basic WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) text editing and more formatting features for Write, and compatibility with external word processors.

File/Group Management for Portfolio Building

Students will be able to view and sort files they've turned in to the network by Name, Date, or Type of File. DIWE will also offer an integrated Portfolio Manager to help students create, and to assist teachers in tracking and evaluating, portfolios.

Improved Text Sharing/Group Formation

Users will have greater opportunities to share documents and form groups, both locally and across the Internet.

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For more information and live demonstrations of the new DIWE, visit the Daedalus booths at the following conferences:

- The League for Innovation in the Community College (November 5-7, 1995)
- The Conference on College Composition and Communication (March 27-30, 1996)
- The TESOL Conference (March 27-30, 1996)
- The American Association for Higher Education Conference (March 17-19, 1996)
- The Computers and Writing Conference (May 30-June 2, 1996)

We're sure you have many questions about this new upgrade, so please don't hesitate to contact Susan Meigs at susan@daedalus.com OR (800) 879-2144 x.21 for additional information.

TEACHER TALK, cont'd

“For a Good Time, Join *Our* Conference”

A colleague in my department recently chided me for saying that I didn't know how to teach composition anymore without the computer—and specifically without InterChange. I can scarcely imagine his reaction if I had told him that it was becoming nearly as unimaginable for me to teach “literature” and other non-composition courses without the use of InterChange.

One such course at Ball State, officially entitled Honors Symposium in Global Studies, takes the class (freshmen through seniors) through a study of non-Western culture via the novel. The very instant I was assigned the course, I knew that InterChange would be one of my chief tools for students' exploration of cultural issues. I introduced InterChange the first week of the semester, and scheduled class in the computer lab once every other week.

The response from students was generally supportive of InterChange at first, although a number objected to the length of time allotted: each class session is 75 minutes long. Taking the students' suggestion, I changed the computer lab format to 20-25 minutes of some introductory activity—either excerpts from a video on the culture we were studying at that time, or oral discussion in small groups—followed by 50 minutes of InterChange. (Thankfully, our central lab in Ball State's English Department had recently been rearranged to allow for plenty of movement in an “open classroom” set-up.) The result was a solid consensus from the class in favor of InterChange.

Even more valuable, however, were the results when I later allowed students to create their own sub-conferences. Up to this point (mid-semester), I had been creating all sub-conferences and providing all initial prompts in each one—from three to seven sub-conferences per class period.

At the beginning of one class, though, I asked students to get into their regular groups and, based on a particular passage of Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*, create at least one sub-conference, possibly two. I also asked that at least one of the group's four or five members remain in the sub-conference at any time (on a rotating basis with the other group members) to help direct that particular discussion and respond to others' comments. I did absolutely nothing to help prompt or guide discussion in any direction beyond the initial assignment of passages from the book.

Students reacted at first to the responsibility a bit shakily, and I was myself unsure if their sub-conference topics and prompts were going to hit upon cultural/textual features that I considered indispensable. One group, for

instance, based their sub-conference on rather minor color symbolism that didn't relate to our study of cultural ideals.

But then other sub-conferences starting appear in the conference list. DISCRIM [Discrimination] asked participants to consider the fact that “[t]he Authors speak throughout the autobiographical section of how her family and people never supported her or women in general. Compare and or contrast this with the warrior woman's family and village and their support of her.” NONAME asked, “How, in the first section, does fear play a role in the lives of the narrator and the aunt? What can this be attributed to (for instance, in terms of sexual roles)?” NONAME2 posed the question, “How does community and ancestral heritage play a role in Chinese culture? How does this compare to Chinese-American culture?”

Other sub-conferences asked participants to comment on the effect that the legend of White Tigers has on the narrator; our society's attitudes toward ghosts, in contrast to one female character's response to them; the meaning of the narrator's statement that “America has been full of machines and ghosts”; as well as several other equally perspicacious ideas about the book.

In short, while I would have forced students to simply be respondents to the cultural elements I considered noteworthy, they were able to play a more active role by taking the first step of deciding which cultural elements were worthy of further discussion. And even the sub-conference that initially left me a bit worried eventually yielded comments like this:

Everyone has been discussing the color red as a symbol of joy and happiness. I think that might be right, but part of me thinks that the color red also stands for the war and the bloodshed. That is what warriors do, kill one another, and the lady is training to be a warrior; so, she must become accustomed to the sight of blood, "red."

I joined in on all conversations, but students were completely in charge of all discussions, without anyone running back to me as “the authority” on the subject. (And to answer the inevitable question, yes, I did encounter more “flaming” than had appeared in sub-conferences that I had instigated in other InterChange sessions. But with these particular students, all honors students who were normally responsible and on-task almost to a fault, I found the “looser” discussion atmosphere a healthy sign.)

Students did, in fact, liven discussion up a bit by trying to woo others over from other sub-conferences when their own seemed less than lively:

This is a really great conference, but the one that will really show you how exciting the book is is GHOST. Try that one for a good time.

Only 15 more minutes, kids! You better hurry up and join SHAMAN before it's too late!!

Gee, I heard that GHOST subconference is really cool. If you write in it, you too can be popular.

"For a Good Time," cont'd

What I was really seeing in these comments was students' willingness to take responsibility for the health of their group's own conference(s), and in ways that never would have occurred to me. Students let me know, to my unexpected satisfaction, that they didn't need me, and that Honors Symposium in Global Studies is another course I can't imagine teaching without InterChange (a fact I don't plan on sharing with *everyone* in my department).

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**Congratulations to Two Winners
of the Daedalus Professional
Development Award**

Peggy Beauvois
&
Beth Ann Secrist

Margaret (Peggy) Beauvois and Beth Ann Secrist at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, are the first recipients of the Daedalus Professional Development Grant for their conference presentation "High-Tech, High Touch: From Discussion to Composition in the Networked Classroom" presented at the Networking Symposium of the National Foreign Language Resource Center in Honolulu in July of 1995. Peggy and Beth demonstrated the software, and shared how it creates a "strong sense of community in the classroom, promotes a dynamic environment for discussion and writing, and develops critical thinking skills."

Beth is the Director of the Language Resource Center and a Lecturer in Italian. Her presentations include: "The Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment: More than networked computer discussion" at ACTFL '94

(American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages); and "Love for Sale: Selling the Telenovela to International Markets" at MIFLC '94 (Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference).

Peggy is the Coordinator / Supervisor of the University's French Language Program, and is currently a visiting professor at the Université Paul Valéry in Montpellier, France. Her area of research is computer-assisted classroom discussion using networked computers. She also does teacher training in Cooperative Learning, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, and the integration of video into the foreign language curriculum in such programs as the semi-immersion method French in Action.

Congratulations to Peggy and Beth!



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