

## The Pedagogical Trojan Horse and Its High-Tech Achilles' Heel

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For writing professionals, the grassroots embrace of technology in the late 80's and early 90's was a natural extension of the quest for better writing instruction. After all, technology allowed our students to write to a larger audience, to exchange ideas with a larger pool of peers, to participate in classes that never physically met. This was the perfect electronic textual bath, filled to the brim with textual e-mail, textual commentary, and textual real-time discussions, and many of us believed in those days that technology was the Trojan horse inside which we would infiltrate our stagnating schools and fill them with a new energy for teaching collaboration. Rhetoric, or the study of how to produce meaningful and effective artifacts, would rise to the occasion and find itself in the center of the curriculum.

In those early, insulated days, we argued primarily to other writing teachers about incredible futures where one didn't need to be in the classroom to attend class,

where textbooks were no longer necessary because we would all be self-publishers, where writing instruction would steadily improve, where teachers were excited about teaching again, where graduate students would have a greater say in the direction of the profession. But as we moved into the mid 90's and into greater accountability, our audience also included administrators who heard a very different message. They heard that a teacher could teach larger classes, that writing classrooms didn't need to have a dedicated classroom, and that students and teachers could attend class from off-campus; this meant that a lot of costly overhead could be slashed without harming the mission of writing departments.

These are now days of cost effectiveness on our campuses, and administrators are taking a hard look at the way technology is used in education. It's not a question of whether to use technology in the curriculum—that argument has been waged and won by sheer market forces and the momentum of the technology paradigm shift. It's about how to use this technology effectively in terms of both teaching and budgetary goals. Dedicating writing classrooms with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of computers is a risk, especially since there are no studies "proving" that technology makes better writers. After all, why throw

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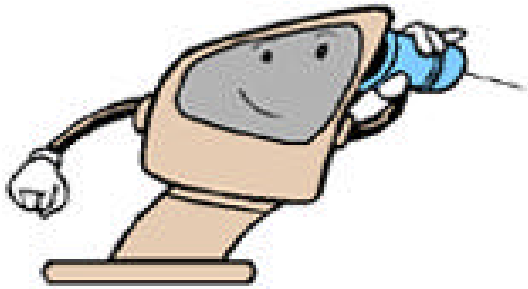
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# *the Best of Teach, Spring 1997:* *using textbooks with diwe*

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Date: Mon, 10 Mar 1997  
From: Frances Heller <NRHELLF@nr.cc.va.us>  
Subject: Textbooks

DIWE has recently become operational here, and I think we are using most of the strategies for learning it that you've mentioned save the just-jumping-in approach. One question we have at this point in the semester when time has come to consider textbooks is what textbooks (for Comp. I in particular) are being using in conjunction with DIWE. Obviously, as always, textbook selection should grow out of specific objectives, philosophies, approaches, but I am wondering whether there are those which work particularly well in this environment and which people swear by and whether the no-textbook approach is common.

Frances Heller  
New River Community College



Date: Mon, 10 Mar 1997  
From: Gordon Grant <Gordon\_Grant@BAYLOR.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Textbooks

I used the St. Martin's Guide (the required text in our program) in our DIWE classroom last semester. I wouldn't recommend this book wholeheartedly, but it worked satisfactorily. I found the early chapters (on personal and experience-based genres) a bit awkward for the more dialogue centered classroom I wanted to create, but the later chapters on persuasion and evaluation worked nicely. I had some great InterChanges on evaluative standards. Also, the invention and response guides in the book are available online as DIWE invent and respond files—or are at least modeled on these modules.

Gordon Grant  
Baylor University

Date: Mon, 10 Mar 1997  
From: Nancy Tucker <ntucker@ibm.net>  
Subject: Re: Textbooks

For me, it doesn't really matter what textbook I use. Daedalus fits everywhere.

Nancy Tucker  
University of Michigan, Flint



Date: Tue, 11 Mar 1997  
From: Jen Shelton <sheltoj@ctrvax.Vanderbilt.Edu>  
Subject: Re: Textbooks

Frances:

I've used Daedalus in classes ranging from basic comp to intro fiction, drama, and poetry, to women's studies. I use the same books with Daedalus that I would have used without it. I'm helping our TAs and faculty start using the program this year, and I remind them, when they ask if they can do what they would do in a non-CAI class, that using any kind of technology shouldn't be about limiting their choices. Instead, it should help them do more effectively what they most want to do pedagogically. I think it's really important to start with what you want to accomplish, pick texts that will help you accomplish that, and then figure out how Daedalus can make your teaching more effective. Instructors here who have done that have been much happier than instructors who start by thinking of the technology as driving the class, largely because starting with technology rather than pedagogy seems to limit instructors' imaginations and cause them to forget what they've worked hard over many years to learn about teaching. Daedalus is just another tool you can use in your classroom. There's no reason for it to drive your text selection.

Jen Shelton  
Vanderbilt University



Date: Tue, 18 Mar 1997  
From: Nancy Barlow <nbarlow@dcccd.edu>  
Subject: Re: Textbooks

Francis,  
At Brookhaven College, instructors in the computer classrooms use the text adopted by the English department. The general feeling is that the Daedalus environment becomes background, and most assignments and learning tools can be adapted to it. It hasn't seemed necessary or particularly useful to pick a text to work with Daedalus; rather, Daedalus works well with almost any text. I tried teaching one semester without a text and found I missed using one. Students still needed the reference points and examples provided by a good book. We did find it useful to prepare a small packet of "how-to" information for instructors using Daedalus and a few similar sheets for students, just to give a few step-by-step instructions. It made those first tries on InterChange and Mail much easier.

Nancy Barlow  
Brookhaven College



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To join TEACH, send the following e-mail message to [listproc@daedalus.com](mailto:listproc@daedalus.com) with the subject line SUB:

Subscribe TEACH <first-name> <last-name>

After subscribing, you can participate by sending messages to [teach@daedalus.com](mailto:teach@daedalus.com)

To temporarily suspend or reactivate your subscription, send either of the following messages to [listproc@daedalus.com](mailto:listproc@daedalus.com) with the subject line SET:

Set TEACH inactive

Set TEACH active

TEACH discussions are archived by month, and are available on the web at

<http://www.daedalus.com/teacharchives/teachtoc.html>

## Using Daedalus InterChange: A Student's Perspective

**H. Jerome Benjamin**  
**Montgomery County Community College**

I am a part-time student at Montgomery County (MD) Community College. As a retired software engineer, I am keeping my computer skills current. I also am combining my understanding of the world from both a current and historical perspective with my search for who I am, where I have been, and where I am going. When I first used InterChange, I found it very demanding. While determining what I wanted to say--or in this case, write--and posting my messages, I had to keep one eye on the discussion in the intermittently scrolling upper screen.

Initially, I was able to keep up reasonably well with the hunt-and-peck typing skills on which I have relied over many years. However, after a while, I lost the ability to keep up with the scrolling upper part. The class of eight people were chatting with one another on a random basis. As it happens, the more people connected during a session, the more the information is scrolled past. Therefore, one constantly would need to scroll the upper part back to a previous place where one last asked or answered a question or made a comment. After a while, a certain amount of pressure builds since one has more difficulty keeping up as more people join the on-line discussion.

From my experience, I believe that the difficulty of keeping up with an InterChange discussion can be reduced by using the procedures of the MOO or chat room where certain rigorous or semi-rigorous rule sets are adopted. Reasonable bounds reduce the randomness of subject matter. In a MOO, where the play is the thing, characters and environment are assigned or agreed upon. A chat room subject matter is often a fairly specific and interest-driven entity, not as constrictive as a MOO. With the eight participants on-line in an InterChange session, I found myself reading all the writings as I scrolled up to the last remembered position in the writing stream. If I did not do that, I would have been limited to communicating with the first person that I met on-line.

In the second session, the class of eight was divided into three groups, each group having read one of three books. I had a single partner and the instructor, and, therefore, was able to keep up with the scrolling upper screen much better with less pressure. We were to write a book report using the on-line discussion as the basis for the report.

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# TEACHER TALK

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## Teacher Response in the Networked Classroom: Introduction & Literature Review

**Ed Flagg**  
The Florida State University  
eflagg@mailers.fsu.edu

A year and a half ago, one of my upper-level students didn't show up for an article and essay class when one of her drafts was due for my response. Instead, she simply e-mailed me her apologies for missing class, and copied and pasted her essay onto the bottom of her e-mail message. I had no problem with responding to this student over e-mail; in fact, that was the first semester I had the job of network administrator for our 38-station Local Area Network (LAN) at FSU, and was looking forward to using the technology in new ways. The software that we use, the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment (DIWE), has a mail module that makes responding to texts electronically quite easy. Students can write their papers at home or in class, mail them in class through DIWE to their teachers and other peer responders, then wait for the responses while they comment on essays mailed to them.

The experience with my student made me curious about the effectiveness of this kind of asynchronous communication, particularly for writing instruction. I looked first to published research on electronic teacher response, but the most recent study I found was from 1996. Researcher Kar-Tin Lee investigated a BBS at the University of Melbourne that had provided computer conferencing capabilities for the previous three years. "Overall, there was a very positive response to the use of electronic communications or computer mediated delivery of courses, provided that a high level of support is available" (Lee). These sentiments are echoed in a study done by Michael Zack in 1995, which showed that electronic mail and computer conferencing in a business class "enabled the instructor to be more accessible and responsive; greater class cohesion developed, and perceived quality of the course and instructor effectiveness increased" (Zack).

In 1993, Marion Harris Fey published findings suggesting that "an electronic environment where readers' responses link feelings to thought and where responses

are shared with ease can lead to more powerful learning for some students than in a traditional classroom" (Fey). And Patricia F. Dickinson found in 1992 that "Using the computer as a writing tool for electronic feedback means that writing teachers can generate more and better text in far less time than if they handwrote detailed comments" (Dickinson).

Perhaps the most important feature of teachers using electronic response is the problem of technology apprehension. Both students and teachers often feel they must be computer literate to work successfully in an electronic environment. Dickinson suggests what appears to be a pedagogical solution to this problem—that is, that students should "write multiple drafts," and teachers should respond "with a lengthy computer-generated comment page of detailed, organized, sensitive commentary; personal feelings and reflections; and clear suggestions and strategies for revision" (Dickinson).

Finally, Susan Brown and Chelley Vician wrote in 1994 that "[t]o successfully use e-mail, or other Computer-Based Communication Tools, as pedagogical tools, instructors should be familiar with the chosen technology, be flexible concerning assignments and course requirements, plan ahead, and open and maintain communication links with the technical support staff."

### The Pilot Project

To evaluate the effectiveness of computer-mediated communication (CMC) at FSU, and to contribute the experiences of our computer writing classes to the existing literature on electronic response, I conducted a study of our computer-assisted writing courses. Using surveys, interviews, and the electronic responses to student texts, I hoped to discover how both students and teachers perceive the value of electronic teacher response. Fourteen teachers and 194 students responded to our surveys, two teachers were interviewed, and three teachers conducted electronic responses to 36 students using the method of response particular to this study. What follows is a brief summary of the typical class practices, a report on the feedback we received from teachers and students, and the conclusions we drew from this study.

### Responding Electronically

After having students mail their drafts to her, a teacher would open the file and begin reading. When the teacher came across the first situation in the writing

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# Student Participation in InterChange Discussions

Ruth J. Kivela

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

I was intrigued by an article in the 1995 Spring edition of *Wings* (3:1) in which Raymond Craig and Steve Witte put forward a taxonomy for describing the participation patterns of twelve native speaking American graduate students who were taking part in networked discussions on DIWE InterChange in response to a number of theoretical readings about language and thought.

After examining the InterChange transcripts for longevity of topical conversational threads, and then tracking the contributions of individual students to them, Craig and Witte came up with three typical forms of interaction used by the students during the InterChange discussions, which they view as participatory strategies. The major characteristics of the three participation strategies are as follows.

*Multiple-focus strategy:* Students in this category tend to be the ones to send messages first. They move quickly back and forth between various conversational threads, they have trouble keeping up with the discussion, and they often are the ones to introduce specific topics that become conversational threads. As the discussion progresses and the number of conversational threads increases, their responses tend to become shorter, and often take the form of simple approval or disapproval comments, or questions which are directed at specific and smaller points of previously posted messages. Because of this, evidence of in-depth and critical thinking diminishes as the discussion progresses, and even though students in this category produce more messages than students in other categories, their messages are less ideationally loaded.

*Single-focus strategy:* These students remain largely focused on one conversational thread at a time, often for the whole discussion session. They send fewer messages, they take longer to post messages initially, and they have trouble keeping up with reading and responding to messages. They tend to send messages to a smaller number of participants, interacting dyadically, triadically, or with small groups of students rather than with the whole class, and they ignore intervening messages not related to their topic of choice. They post longer and more ideationally complex messages that focus on one or two conversational threads.

*Alternating second-order strategy:* These students are multiple-focus participants who abandon this strategy to focus temporarily on a more narrow conversational thread. This strategy is not used by students who prefer the single-focus strategy.

After examining the ideational content of the messages in the discussions, Craig and Witte concluded that the majority of students in their study did not display an adequate knowledge or understanding of the readings, were unable to respond critically to other students' ideas or to reflect critically on the readings, and were unable to sustain in-depth ideational "conversations" about the readings, even though many of these same students had demonstrated in other classes that they could utilise these skills.

For more information about Ruth's research, see her article "Writing on Networked Computers: Effects on ESL Writer Attitudes and Apprehension" in Vol. 6 of the *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching* (1996), pp. 85-92. The *AJELT* is a publication of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's English Language Teaching Unit, edited by Gwendolyn Gong.

Craig and Witte's findings suggest that it is the participation strategies employed by the students which largely dictated the breadth and depth of their contributions to the discussion, although they do not report how many students employ each strategy or discuss the ideational complexity of the contributions of individuals employing each strategy. Based on the characteristics of the three strategies described in the taxonomy, however, the findings suggest that students who employ a single-focus strategy will be more able to respond in depth to topics for discussion, whereas students em-

ploying a multiple-focus strategy will be likely to participate more superficially, even though they post more messages overall.

On the other hand, students who employ an alternating second-order strategy will be in a half-way position: while they are focusing on a single conversational thread, their contributions are likely to be longer and expressed in more depth; while they are employing a multiple-focus strategy, their contributions will be shorter and more superficial. Depending on the aims and objectives of particular lessons or courses, the ramifications of students employing one or more of the strategies described in the taxonomy, in terms of the depth and breadth of their participation in InterChange discussions, are great.

After reading Craig and Witte's article, I began to think about whether or not I could identify similar participation strategies in the InterChange discussions of my own students, and whether or not employment of one or more of the strategies would influence the depth and breadth of the students' discussions. I decided to examine the InterChange discussion transcripts with a

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# THE DAEDALUS HORIZON

*new products, new partnerships*

## *calling all testers*



Daedalus is currently developing a series of new products and services, both to enhance your use of DIWE and to offer new opportunities for Internet connectivity, collaboration, research, and training. Check our website frequently and look for upcoming mailings to provide specific product descriptions, release dates, and pricing/upgrade information.

In the meantime, we welcome your input and participation in the development process. If you would like to be considered as a beta test site for any of our suite of new products and services, please complete an application on our website at <http://www.daedalus.com/>.

## *Daedalus on the Road*



During the 1996-97 school year, Daedalus participated in a number of regional and national conferences, and supported DIWE users who presented on their use of the software in their

classes. These events included Syllabus '96, The League for Innovation in the Community College Conference on Information Technology, the NCTE Fall Conference, TESOL '97, regional ACW conferences, the South-Atlantic MLA Conference, the spring WAC Conference, the CCCC, the Learning the Paradigm Conference, the Auburn University Technology Fair, the Two-Year College English Association-Southeast Conference, the Pathways to Teaching Careers Project Conference, the NISOD/CCLP Conference, and Epiphany workshops around the country.

Are you going to present on Daedalus at an upcoming conference? Have you been asked to conduct software training or to introduce new users to DIWE? Would you like to provide participants information about Daedalus? Contact us at (800) 879-2144 to request Guided Tour disks, back issues of *WINGS*, lists of local users, and folders of print information including teaching tips and articles by other users. We are happy to supply these materials free of charge, but ask that you contact us at least two weeks before your event.

## *DIWE Add-ons*



With the exception of its Invent and Respond prompts, DIWE has traditionally been fairly free of built-in content. The software does include instructor authoring tools such as ClassAssignment and PromptManager, but Daedalus has shied away from including too much content in DIWE that could limit the software's flexibility for courses across the curriculum.

However, to help "jumpstart" classes using DIWE, and to provide examples of how the program can support a variety of curricula, Daedalus will soon release a series of content modules, or "Add-ons." These new sets of materials, prepared by experienced DIWE teachers, will include brainstorming and peer critiquing prompts and activities, sample InterChange and Mail seeds questions, lesson plans, and a teacher's guide. The first of these Add-ons will be for ESL/EFL, with future modules to include those for Business & Technical Communication. Please consult <http://www.daedalus.com/addons/index.html> for information about when the Add-ons will be available, and how you can order them for your site.

## *The Daedalus Group, Inc. and TRO Learning, Inc.*



TRO Learning, Inc., a leading provider of computer-based educational materials, has joined with Daedalus to distribute DIWE in conjunction with their popular PLATO® learning system courseware. With curricula for 5-12 and adult learners, PLATO® can complement the interaction DIWE provides by helping students focus on specific writing skills in self-paced activities. The system can also offer instructors a range of management and evaluation tools. For more information about this new relationship, please contact Daedalus, or contact TRO Learning, Inc. at (800) 869-2000 for the name of your local representative. [PLATO® is a registered trademark of The Roach Organization, Inc.]

valuable computer resources into a curriculum that doesn't use them effectively or properly? This means that institutions that are trying to secure computer facilities have to make two arguments: that computers can and should be used for the writing classroom, and that these labs and human resources will prove to be effective. It also means that institutions that have already established relatively secure grounds for their facilities have to justify their existence all over again.

I believe that we writing instructors have made much of this shift possible by focusing our attention on exciting new technology rather than teaching. Instead of creating our own subversive Trojan horse, we built one that has returned to our midst to ensure that technological writing classes are efficient and cost-effective. We have already seen the results of this "rightsizing": Class workloads are rising with the help of techno-efficiency, and the guidelines that came out of the Wyoming Conference Resolution, which were already being exceeded, are being tossed aside.

The proper response to these phenomena is that teaching writing—critical thinking, collaboration, process, research, and all the other skills involved in creating texts—takes time. It's a labor-intensive job, and using technology to increase class sizes will probably not create better writers, and it certainly won't create better teachers. Technology doesn't change the fact that as long as students come to school not having read or written much, our jobs are going to be labor-intensive. Writing instruction is, at least at some level, about

apprenticeship, whether at the feet of a master (us instructors) or at the eye-level of peers.

As the direction of technology in our classrooms shifts from Local Area Networks to the Internet, it's important to remember that this essential pedagogical apprenticeship, time-consuming and hands-on, remains relatively steady. This focus on the teacher and the student has always been part of The Daedalus Group's software mission, and it continues to be as we develop our Internet-based tools for release later this year. In doing so, we have designed tools that extend the philosophy of the current Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment into the Internet.

Ultimately, that means that what counts is not including features just because they're possible—like duelling cursors, endless columns, comic-book chat rooms, or any of the hundreds of shareware gimmicks that are available for both consumers and software developers. What counts is using the new bandwidth and connectivity to enrich the learning environment. The guidelines are simple, both for Daedalus and for the field of writing. In order to avoid getting cut, a proposed feature must advance our mission of supporting the teacher and the enterprise of teaching and learning—learning languages, learning to think, learning to argue, learning to write.



*Locke Carter is CEO of the Daedalus Group who, in his spare time, is completing a dissertation about argumentation in hypertext at the University of Texas. Parts of this essay are lifted wholesale from an article in progress called "The Unwitting Trojan Horse: Or, How Our Naive Techno-Utopianism Will Help to Undermine The Wyoming Conference Resolution."*



## new on the daedalus website

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

- updated descriptions of Daedalus training workshops
- registration information for the Summer Institute and Online Writing Seminar
- technical specifications for all platforms of Daedalus software
- information about the software upgrades, including FAQs & documentation
- DIWE user testimonials
- a "Teacher's Bulletin Board" for sharing comments, class tips, websites, etc.
- a tool to search our web resources
- description and pricing of Daedalus Add-ons
- an application to beta test upcoming Daedalus products

# DIWE InterChange: Opening Up Classroom Communications

**Shalin Hai-Jew**  
Bellevue Community College

One of the eternal challenges—especially in this age of educating the “Gen X” post-MTV generation—is to snag and hold students’ attention. As an English instructor at Bellevue Community College in Washington, I’ve had the privilege of using DIWE InterChange in my classes, and have found it both high-tech and student-friendly. InterChange—a closed-environment chat room—serves several functions, especially in student discussions and analyses of professional essays.

First, InterChange is ideal for brainstorming and idea generation. When using InterChange, students think on their feet and overcome inhibitions about self-expression. InterChange helps students share their thoughts, emotions, experiences, and memories in an impromptu environment, and encourages them to suppress the internal critic that can often limit classroom discussions. In InterChange conferences, an idea or thought becomes tangible and “real” when it is translated into electronic hard copy.

Considerations for revision and editing are temporarily set aside as writers enthusiastically wrangle with politics, social issues, theoretical abstractions, others’ experiences, and so on. Students pose and answer questions and bring personal experiences to bear on academic issues. While they often see this as a fun activity, InterChange can actually benefit them by encouraging them to respond to other students’ commentary/questions without being superseded or silenced by their peers. Further, InterChange not only helps students learn to contribute to class discussions (I use InterChange to take roll, so all students must put in their two-cents’ worth), but also helps them understand they are expected to contribute something of substance (when one student piped in here and there, “I agree with everyone!” he received some jibes for his lack of an individualized opinion).

InterChange provides a different and perhaps more immediate means for student communication. They see instantly how others react to their ideas and form a stronger sense of writing for an audience—which is a challenging concept to transmit in the classroom. Ideas must be supported by fact, as the vagueness becomes much more apparent in a purely written environment where the classroom dynamics of personality and bullying which may affect classroom oral discussions are at least downplayed. The electronic environment offers a flatter affective angle, which takes the steam out

of emotional assertions and forces the idea of logical proof for all assertions.

Students thus see the potency of their ideas in a safe environment of peers. In joining this kind of public discourse, writing students discover the potency of their words and ideas as they maintain a conversation with fellow students and authors. A hard copy of the InterChange dialogue is made for students afterwards for review and consideration, so students may see the evolution of their ideas and how competition in the marketplace of ideas can lead to stunning insights. This provides for a recursive approach to dialogue in which a class can double back and examine ideas and evaluations more deeply. There is a sense of adding to history in the printed page, and InterChange indirectly poses the question of whether readers should value a text simply because it is printed.

InterChange also offers the openness and utter freedom of the Internet chat rooms without the totally open world-wide risk-taking of talking to a Joe Blow who might be a Joan Blow or some other incarnation. Students know each other and have a track record of interactions with each other prior to “chatting,” and typically a greater sense of friendliness emerges. “Who is that person under the exit sign?” wrote one male student to a female classmate playfully. During a discussion of James Baldwin’s “Stranger in the Village,” a student adopted a pseudonym—the “Black Phantom”—to pose provocative questions. Another student, upon logging on, pretended to breathe heavily and then typed, “Oops. Wrong chat room.”

Twenty-first century technology doesn’t seem so far removed for students when they use InterChange. For the technologically shy, they learn in class from their peers about the virtues of the scroll bar and blocking text. “Travis, page up,” types one student. Another follows shortly thereafter, “Travis, take the freakin mouse to the top of the scroll bar and click on the blue up arrow till you get the question you want.” For many of the students who aren’t yet on-line, InterChange helps ease them into the high-tech age of information and computers, and introduces them to a local version of the “global village.”

InterChange does take some prep time for all involved. That is, prep time demands a thorough understanding of the text, questions/evaluations development, and a willingness to leap into the fray. Prep time also involves making sure that one has annotated the piece of writing to be discussed, formulated insightful questions and observations, identified related anecdotes to share, and kept one’s “big mouth” in good form. For example, for the “Stranger in the Village” discussion, students approached the story from many angles, such as the whole concept of identifying a

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## websites worth visiting

**<http://www.usu.edu/~usupress/tornow/linkage.htm>**

*This Utah State University Press site includes a description of and excerpts from Austin Community College professor Joan Tornow's new book **Link/Age: Composing in the Online Classroom**, now available from USUP.*

**<http://www.syllabus.com/>**

*The Syllabus site provides information about Syllabus workshops and conferences, including Syllabus '97 at which Daedalus will exhibit and present 4 hands-on workshops in networked classrooms.*

**<http://www.umass.edu/english/resource.html>**

*Founded by Nick Carbone, this site contains vast "Internet Resources for English Teachers," including links to publications, English departments and course materials on the web, references, professional development information, and software publishers.*

**<http://www.smith.edu/facgrants/inetrsrc.htm>**

*Smith College's online resource for grant information includes links to grants organizations, tips for writing effective proposals, and grant-seeking search engines.*

**<http://web.fie.com/cws/sra/resource.htm>**

*The Society of Research Administrators extensive "GrantsWeb" site includes links to international, US government, private, and general grant sources, as well as policy information and federal grant publications.*

**<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~jlynch/Lit/>**

*Users can search this database of online literary resources by keyword, or access links divided by period. General links include those to mailing lists, online course materials, calls for papers, job lists, the OED, and resources for both writing and language instructors.*

**Do you have a favorite website?  
Are your class materials on the web?  
Share those URLs on the  
Daedalus Virtual Bulletin Board:**

**<http://www.daedalus.com/cgi/teacherbb/teacherbb.html>**

where she felt she needed to respond, she would put the number one, "(1)," in parentheses at the exact place in the text that had drawn her attention, scroll down to the bottom of the file, type another "(1)," and indicate her response. When she was satisfied with her comment, she would scroll up to where she had left off and continue reading. At the next place in the text where she felt she needed to comment, she would type "(2)," scroll down, type another "(2)," and make her second comment. Thus, the teacher would leave numbers throughout the text where the student needed to pay more attention, and would key these numbers to specific responses at the end of the text. Then, of course, she would leave an end note, save the file, and mail it back to the student. This procedure may sound cumbersome, and it is, to start. But I myself have done this type of responding with over 30 student papers now, and, like any skill, it gets faster and simpler with practice.

### Teacher Survey Results

Nine of the fourteen teachers surveyed had some experience with electronic response. They cited many advantages to responding electronically, most noticeably the ability to write longer and more detailed messages, sometimes in less time than it would have taken to write legibly in the margins. Even when they took more time to respond electronically, teachers discovered, as one First Year Writing teacher noted, that they would "...write fuller, more detailed responses than in handwritten comments."

Another advantage noted by teachers was the ability to better focus on global issues when responding in the electronic environment. "I'm less likely to be distracted by surface errors," one Teaching Assistant said, "so my comments are focused on global issues." Dr. Ruth Mirtz, the director of First Year Writing at Florida State, perhaps put it best: "...when I respond globally," she wrote, "I can keep the editing pen out of my hand entirely and respond only when I've read the text completely."

While most teachers said they type faster than they write, many mentioned that it often took up to half an hour to respond to the average paper. From my own experience, this time decreases the more you respond electronically, without sacrificing the attention to detail, the increased involvement, or the other advantages that responding in the electronic environment provides.

### Student Surveys

Thirty-nine of 194 student respondents had experience with electronic teacher response. Most remarked

that electronic responses were quicker and easier to read, and that "it's clear where the response is focused in the text." Another student noted that "the advantage of our teacher responding to our papers electronically was that it was a letter—not just a few corrections on paper." All told, four students made a point to tell us that electronic response worked to increase both the quality and quantity of teacher feedback.

Curiously, students felt the lack of face-to-face interaction in peer responding to be both a solution and a problem. One wrote, "An advantage is that you don't have to see the person face-to-face. [I can] just write honestly." "You don't have to look at the person," wrote another. "It's easier to give constructive criticism." The other side of the coin revealed that face-to-face feedback is important. "Talking to me and explaining things to me one on one would have helped me understand." "[It's] less personal, I like to talk to people face-to-face." And one student seemed conflicted, and gave one of my favorite responses: "An advantage [to electronic response]: you don't have to deal with the person in person. Disadvantage: it's not as personal."

In the end, five students told us that it didn't make any difference to them whether the responses to their writing were electronic or handwritten, three noted that electronic responses save paper, and one student mentioned that she liked the lack of appropriation of the text that handwritten comments, by apparent necessity, impose.

### Teacher Interviews

Three teachers (Amy, Jennifer, and myself) spent time responding electronically to 36 student papers. Amy made journal entries while she worked, including, "I think on the first paper I responded more than I would have in writing. I also didn't do any surface error stuff, which I would have if I had been responding to a hard copy. During the second paper I found myself less concerned with details, partly, I think, because I was getting tired of paging up and down, but I forced myself to do it anyway. I think responding in parentheses would be easier. With electronic response, I also tended to share more of my own stories, when they related to the writer's experience—in Trina's paper: my dad having Parkinson's Disease, and in Lindsey's paper: my dad having open heart surgery. In most cases I read the paper once, then re-read while responding." Amy also remarked that she couldn't do more than five electronic responses at a sitting because scrolling up and down so often became annoying to the point of distraction.

Having to scroll down through the text to respond wasn't the only problem. Jennifer noted that she had

*[continued on page 16]*

# Design our next T-shirt

It's been over a year since Stephanie McBride and her students at The George School designed our popular "Teachers of the Daed" long-sleeved T-shirt. Now we're ready for you to help us design our next shirt.

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We'll make our selection on August 15, 1997, and will make the new design available this fall. The winning designer (or design team) will receive 5 free shirts.



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## hai-JEW, continued FROM PG. 8

nation's civility by how it treats its "guests," contemporary and historical racism, the character and personality of the author, the organization of the narrative, writing strategies, personal experiences of being "outsiders," the phenomenon of "public space" and how one affects it through one's appearance, the role of mass media in creating stereotypes about people, and so on. In discussing "Stranger in the Village," the student pseudonym of the "Phantom" first emerged; through this persona, the "Phantom" posted provocative questions and contributed unique insights. The playfulness and mischief of that as yet unidentified student raised the possibility that one day we'll all log on under guises and see where that "freedom" takes us.

The best InterChange sessions occur when the instructor participates with the students to monitor the conversation so that it doesn't veer off into sports, weather, or some inane topic. Writers should respond to each other by name, referring specifically to their ideas, questions, anecdotes, experiences, observations, and evaluations, behavior that the instructor can model. All participants should be encouraged to help answer literary, academic, social, political, legal and other questions that emerge. Just as student writing journals seem to tap into a different and more personal aspect of their lives, InterChange creates a highly-interactive classroom in which learning is collaborative, and opportunities to learn are only a scroll bar away.



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## Benjamin, continued From Pg. 3

I tried to avoid setting specific points as a basis for my part of the on-line conversation in order to allow the discussion to be free flowing and to take us to where it would. This would hopefully provide a fresh basis for my report.

What I discovered upon analyzing these sessions was quite interesting. The more people on the InterChange at the same time, the more ideas can flow, but the more difficult it is to communicate those ideas. One must trek through a large number of messages and then decide how and with whom to communicate. Unless there is a prior agreement, the discussion will take a variety of paths since it is a free flowing discussion, and decisions will be made, such as whether to continue the discussion or find another path.

Considerations such as these take time and energy, and being on InterChange is like being on a moving train. One has a need to keep up with the discussion engine; it's not like a cocktail party conversation since one may respond to a person who has no requirement to communicate back. I also noticed that spelling suffers and that after a while the general writing level degrades. Also, the amount of information transferred at one time by one individual is reduced.

Another thing that I noticed during InterChange sessions is that the power of individual charisma and strong physical presence seems to dissipate somewhat in this environment. This form of communication is very new and is being used with varying degrees of success, and it seems that free-form patterns will continue to emerge until formal rules and procedures are imposed.





congratulations to these  
Daedalus Professional  
Development Award winners

**Carmen Chávez**, Assistant Professor of Spanish at Clemson University, received an award for her presentation "Writing Spanish in an Electronic Classroom: Observations from the Trenches," delivered at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference in Savannah, GA, November 1996.

Carmen's professional interests include Peninsular and Latin American literature, film, and the use of computer and video technology in the teaching of language. She is currently using DIWE to teach Spanish Grammar and Composition in a networked classroom.

**Loretto S. Canfield's** presentation "A Method for Teaching Laboratory Report Writing Skills" won her a Professional Development Award. She delivered her paper at the Annual Conference of the Institute for the Study of Post-Secondary Pedagogy in Lake Mohonk, NY, November 1996.

Loretto, a previous contributor to *WINGS*, is an adjunct instructor of biology at Mount Saint Mary College, and at Dutchess Community College, where she teaches with DIWE in the Allied Health and Biological Sciences Dept. During her eight years at Dutchess Community College, she has helped develop biology courses for majors and non-majors and new academic programs in allied health, and has trained on the use of the networked classroom for student development workshops.

**Peggy Beauvois** received a Daedalus award for her paper "Write to Speak: The Use of LANs and Communications Software in the Teaching of Foreign Languages," delivered at the International Conference on Applied Linguistics in Monterrey, Mexico, September 1996.

A French professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Peggy has written on the connections between written and oral fluency in FL classes using DIWE in "Conversations in Slow Motion Revisited," forthcoming this fall in

the *Canadian Modern Language Review*. Peggy's article "Write to Speak: The Effects of Electronic Communication on the Oral Achievement of Fourth Semester French Students" has also been accepted for publication in the *AAUSC Volume*.

**Lennie Irvin** has won an award for his paper, "The Shared Discourse of the Networked Computer Classroom," delivered at the Conference of College Teachers of English (CCTE) in South Padre Island, TX, April 1997. Lennie is an instructor at San Antonio College, where he teaches first-year and developmental writing.

Lennie is also the editor of "The Mouse and Key: A Newsletter Devoted to Helping Teachers Teach in the Computer Classroom." The July 1996 "Whale" issue included teaching tips and strategies for using DIWE effectively. For more information about the newsletter, contact Lennie at [lirvin@accdvm.accd.edu](mailto:lirvin@accdvm.accd.edu).

**Michael F. Joyanyak** is the recipient of a spring award for his article "Analyzing the Amalgamated Electronic Text: Bringing Cognitive, Social, and Contextual Factors of Individual Language Users into CMC Research," published in the April 1997 issue of *Computers and Composition*. The article is available in its entirety on the Computers and Composition website at [http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ccjrnl/Current\\_Issue/Current\\_Issue.html](http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ccjrnl/Current_Issue/Current_Issue.html).

Michael is an Assistant Professor at the University of Akron, where he teaches writing and advertising courses through the Associate Studies Division of the Community and Technical College. He currently is a Ph.D. candidate at Kent State University, and his dissertation research explores computer-mediated discourse, specifically Daedalus InterChange, in the composition classroom.

For their presentation "Technology and the 'At-Risk' Student: Daedalus in the Developmental Classroom," **Jerry Hamby, Gordon K. Lee, Kathleen Sydnor, and Francisca Vela** from Lee College were jointly awarded a Daedalus grant. They delivered the panel presentation at the League for Innovation in the Community College Conference on Information Technology in Phoenix, AZ, November 1996.

Jerry Hamby teaches English, co-directs the Writing Center, and is a Title III Activity Director at Lee College. In addition to teaching with and presenting on Daedalus, Jerry has presented at the Conference of College Teachers of English, where he won the 1995 Creative Writing Award for his poetry reading, and the National Title III Workshop in 1996. In March he published "Writing as Dialogue: Using Daedalus in the Development Classroom" in the *Newsletter of the Two-Year College English Association*, (25:1).

Gordon Lee teaches English and reading at Lee College. He has presented at both the Southeast Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature and the South Atlantic Modern Language Conference of the College Language Association.

Francisca Vela teaches English and reading at Lee College as well. She earned her B.S. and M.A. from the University of Houston, Clear Lake.

Kathleen Sydnor, who received a B.A. and M.A. from Northeast Louisiana University, and an M.F.A. from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, also teaches English at Lee College.



The Daedalus Professional Award was instituted to support DIWE users in sharing their Daedalus experiences and research in published papers and conference presentations. For application information, please contact Susan Meigs at [susan@daedalus.com](mailto:susan@daedalus.com) or (800) 879-2144 x.21, or refer to our website at <http://www.daedalus.com/>. Applications should be made following publication or presentation, and awards will be granted on the first of February, June, and October.



## *call for contributions*

*Wings* invites you to react and respond to any part of this newsletter. If you have a short (1000-1500 words) response or a longer, more complex contribution (1500-2500 words), please send it in disk form (3.5") in Microsoft Word (vers. 4 - 6) for Macintosh, plain ASCII, or RTF format to:

The Daedalus Group, Inc.  
1106 Clayton Lane, Suite 250W  
Austin, TX 78723  
(800) 879-2144

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 ones.

view to investigating these notions, as well as to testing the Craig and Witte taxonomy further. Would my findings be similar to theirs, or would they prove to be quite different?

In terms of the educational setting, there are some similarities and some differences between the Craig and Witte's study and my own. As in their study, my students were participating in InterChange discussions in response to set readings, with the emphasis of the discussion being on expressing one's ideas as fluently and fully as possible. The readings were about different cultural practices around the world and were highly provocative in nature. The students studied were two classes of undergraduate university students from mixed backgrounds and year levels taking an academic writing course.

There are two major differences between this study and Craig and Witte's study. First, my students were Chinese ESL students, whereas the students in the former study were native English speakers. Second, the configuration for the InterChange discussions differed. In the Craig and Witte study, all of the InterChange discussions were whole class discussions, whereas in my study small group discussions with three to five members took place as well as whole class discussions with fifteen members participating. I studied two whole class discussion transcripts and four small group discussion transcripts in order to categorize students according to the Craig and Witte taxonomy. I also compared the depth and breadth of the students' contributions for the two types of discussions by tracking the number of discussion topics or "conversational threads" and comparing the length and ideational complexity of student messages.

After examining the transcripts, the first important discovery was that even though my students were Chinese ESL students, I was able to identify them as belonging to one of the three participation strategy types by using the descriptors given in the Craig and Witte taxonomy. I found that for the whole class discussion sessions, most students employed the multiple-focus strategy rather than the single-focus strategy. Multiple-focus participants were easy to identify because their messages were short, often only one-line comments or questions, and covered a large number of topics throughout the discussion.

Several reasons for students using this strategy can be postulated. First, this strategy may have been best suited to some students' own individual learning style. Second, a larger number of messages are generated in whole group discussions than in small group discussions, so a wider number of topics are available to

choose from in the first place. Third, judging from many of the short one-line comments made during the discussion, many students felt pressured to keep up with messages posted and to respond to as many as possible. Which of these, or which combination of these factors, caused students to employ a multiple-focus strategy in the whole class discussions is difficult to say without further investigation; nevertheless, the number of participants using this strategy in whole class discussions is marked.

In contrast, for the small group discussion sessions, most of the students used the single-focus strategy. Their messages were concentrated on just a few topics and were characterized by well-developed, good-sized paragraphs with ideas that were developed in some depth. In small group discussions, students seem to relax and concentrate on fewer topics because they do not have to keep up with the large number of messages that are posted in whole class discussions. Because there is less pressure, they can focus on developing their ideas more fully on just a few topic areas that interest them. This is a particularly pertinent point to make about the subjects in this study because, as ESL students, they have more difficulty keeping up with messages than native speaking students do, in part because of the former's slower and less developed language abilities. For ESL students—and perhaps even for some native English speaking students—whole

*[continued on page 20]*

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## A Gathering of Teachers

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The Daedalus Writing Seminar for Summer 1997 is a free, online training and writing workshop which will focus on teaching writing, reading, and communication to students learning English as a Second Language, and on teaching business, technical, and professional communications to students at college and high-school levels. The seminar runs from June 23 through August 8 and will rely on e-mail, FTP, and WWW for communication among the teachers.

The Daedalus Group will sponsor this free, online gathering of teachers who have taught with DIWE. The 7-week seminar which will focus on helping those familiar with the program's modules develop teaching resources for their classes. To discuss how to obtain academic credit for participation, check the seminar web page (listed below) or send email Traci Gardner at [traci@daedalus.com](mailto:traci@daedalus.com).

Participants will choose a specific topic and develop a collection of lesson resources such as ClassAssignments and discussion questions for Mail and InterChange sessions. An ESL teacher might choose to work on a collection focusing on "English Only" laws in the United States. A business writing teacher might develop a collection for writing résumés.

Teachers will share plans and resources with one another, creating a community of support or on-line writing group. Participants will also receive group and one-to-one interaction with experienced Daedalus teachers and mentors. The seminar will function somewhat like a graduate-level independent study. Teachers are not expected to "know it all" in order to participate. Rather, the Seminar will include instruction and support to help teachers construct and polish teaching resources, giving them a headstart on their classes for the 1997-98 school year.

For additional details on the seminar's goals, agenda, and the technical requirements, **please visit**

[HTTP://WWW.DAEDALUS.COM/ADDONS/SEMINAR.HTML](http://www.daedalus.com/addons/seminar.html)

**before applying.**

To apply, e-mail [seminar@daedalus.com](mailto:seminar@daedalus.com) with your name, classes you typically teach, your school's name, and details on your experience using DIWE. Also please include information on your interests in ESL or business/technical writing, and the topic(s) you might consider in your collection if you're selected to participate. The deadline for applications is June 18, but space is limited, so apply early. Participants will receive registration confirmation and additional details by June 20.

Send your questions about this and future online seminars to [traci@daedalus.com](mailto:traci@daedalus.com).

*NOTE: This first seminar is free to participants. There may be a small fee for future seminars.*

trouble because she couldn't take in the whole text on the screen, which you can when you have the essay written on paper. But these two technological problems can be easily worked out, as I'll share with you later.

I was more taken with our experiences doing the actual responding. All three of us wrote more because we found it easier to type than to handwrite, and because there were none of the space limitations that usually restrict our marginal comments. "I'm more likely to respond better—ask specific content questions—and write longer, better end notes," Jennifer said. We all found that we wrote faster, more complete responses, that we wrote much more than in our handwritten responses, and that we felt our responses improved in terms of both quantity and quality. Specifically, we wrote more about global content issues, voice issues, and language and local level issues; we shared more of our personal experiences that paralleled experiences the writers were sharing with us; and we provided fuller explanations of how and why we gave the responses we did. We value all of these as outcomes, and believe that they worked to nurture young writers to write better. The three of us wrote fewer surface-level comments, but I found that if we put a marker (two asterisks) at every place that needed surface-level attention, we could direct the writer to investigate the problem individually.

Given our experiences responding electronically, and those of our students who received the computer-mediated feedback, Amy, Jennifer, and I would use electronic response again.

#### Overall Implications

Based on our study, two overall implications for the electronic writing and responding environment seem clear. First, the virtual classroom, where all drafts, process papers, community building activities, and other assignments are shared exclusively through e-mail, seems well suited to process writing instruction. The issue of student accountability, though, makes me think that the virtual classroom is ill-suited for required classes, where the issue of accountability would be difficult, if not impossible, to manage. However, the completely virtual classroom seems to be very well suited for something along the lines of graduate-level writing classes, where the motivation to perform is not imposed on students, but rather springs from them.

Second, while it's clear that required First Year Writing classes are not ready for complete virtuality, they do benefit by having a networked classroom, where software like DIWE, with its Mail and InterChange functions, is used.

#### Conclusions

Responding electronically has the easily-realized potential of making fuller, richer, more complete responses in less time. As with any method of responding, you have to get used to the details and tools of the medium, and without question, you have to be familiar with the technology. While we've seen nothing to suggest that electronic response is suitable to replace other response techniques altogether, we do feel strongly that it is a valuable tool, that like handwritten responses, conferencing, and workshopping, increases our ability to reach a broader spectrum of students.

As for response techniques, our method of response can be modified to eliminate the scrolling problem by opening two windows at once, one the student text, the other, a response file. Then instead of scrolling from the text to where you can comment, you simply click the mouse button on the response window and begin typing. Ultimately, I think if software companies can find a way to incorporate hypertext in the Mail feature of classroom software, we would be closer to an ideal electronic response environment, where responses would be embedded in the student text without changing anything but the color of the text that has been responded to, and where comments and the very words the comments refer to are on the screen at the same time.

I believe that if a strong process-writing pedagogy is in place, we are ready to include this type of response in our panoply of teaching tools. I look forward to our roaring into the 21st century with thoughts about student texts flying from our fingertips into the ether and ultimately onto their documents—but I may be a bit hasty. As one first year writer said in her survey, "I still would rather all my papers could be written freehand. I don't know about this computer stuff...."

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Daedalus training & information services announces

## *THE DAEDALUS SUMMER INSTITUTE*

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The Daedalus Summer Institute, scheduled for August 1-2, 1997, in Austin, Texas, will offer educators from all skill levels two days of hands-on training on Daedalus software and network technologies. The Institute will be held at the Holiday Inn North West and New Horizons Computer Learning Center, and will be led by members of The Daedalus Group, pioneers in the field of technology and education, and developers of the award-winning Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment.

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### *registration:*

**To register, complete the form on the back of this sheet, clip, and return to:**

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**Confirmations** for the Summer Institute will be mailed to all registered participants by July 2, 1997. Those who need to purchase airline tickets should confirm their registration with Daedalus Services before purchasing them. Requests for **refunds** must be submitted in writing, must be accompanied by the registration receipt, and must be received at least 21 days prior to the event (by 11 July).

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## *daedalus supports colorado grant project*

As part of a federal grant to help students in sparsely-populated Southern Colorado prepare to enter college and the workforce, Trinidad State Junior College has joined with nine area middle and high schools to purchase a district license of the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment and four days of Daedalus training workshops. Schools participating with TSJC in the project include Hoehne Public School, Sierra Grande High School, Sangre de Cristo School, Aguilar High School, Kim High School, Branson School, Primero High School, Walsenburg Middle School, and John Mall High School.

The K-12 Linkage Project began two years ago when TSJC secured a \$20,000 grant to help teachers at small, rural high schools throughout south-central Colorado better address the state's revised "Content Standards," and thereby ease students' transition from high school to college or a career. Encouraged by the success of initial efforts, TSJC applied for and received additional funding of \$50,000 for each of the following two years. Administrators later brought in Candi Bowen to "take hold [of the project] and do something with the money."

Bowen learned about DIWE from University of Southern Colorado professor Will Hochman during her search for "anything [they could] use that would engage students in the writing process." Hochman strongly recommended the use of DIWE to supplement the activities Bowen had already devised for the K-12 Project. Bowen was encouraged by Hochman to push for the adoption of DIWE at TSJC, and thereby to provide another "link" between the students' high school and college experiences. "Will uses Daedalus at USC, so not only do students now have a [software] link built into their high schools to TSJC, but to USC as well," Bowen said.

Teachers from the 10 participating schools had already attended events designed to introduce them to tools and techniques that foster the development of writing and critical thinking skills; these included a workshop on creating Writing Centers at their schools, an Introduction to the Electronic Classroom, for which Will Hochman was a co-presenter, and CCCC and NCTE-sponsored conferences. To help them prepare to implement DIWE in their classes this fall, however, TSJC arranged training workshops through Daedalus Services.

The first of two 2-day workshops took place at the end of May, and was led by veteran Daedalus trainer Lynnea Chapman-King. Participants experienced DIWE from the perspectives of teacher and student, visited the World Wide Web, explored the Daedalus MOO, and discussed how these tools could be incorporated into their classes. Participants represented a variety of disciplines and levels of computer skills, and included four students who will become peer tutors for the Writing Center that Sierra Grande High School is creating.

Bowen reported that the workshop generated considerable excitement among the participants, many of whom are eager to put their new knowledge to use. In fact, administrators at TSJC are now discussing plans for a new Writing Across the Curriculum program which would take advantage of DIWE's adaptability to varied disciplines.

Funding for the K-12 Linkage Project has been approved through the fall of 1998, at which time Bowen may apply for additional funding or pursue one of several other grant projects.



*unable to attend the Daedalus summer Institute?  
ask us about other training options*

In the past nine months, Daedalus Services has held regional training workshops in Kentucky, California, and Texas, and has conducted on-site workshops for over 20 schools including the University of Georgia, Kean College, Saginaw Valley State University, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, St. Mary's Dominican High School, Jackson State Community College, Oklahoma State University, Houston Community College, Aquinas High School, New River Community College, Olivet Nazare University, Universidad de Monterrey, South Texas Community College, Mesa State College, Wytheville Community College, Trinidad State Junior College, and the Fashion Institute of Technology.

If your site has recently invested in DIWE, or is even considering a purchase, you might benefit from some hands-on training from a Daedalus consultant.

With workshops ranging from 2 hours to 2 days, Daedalus Services can work with you to provide the appropriate level and quantity of training for your site.

To learn more about particular workshops, what takes place in them, and when you might schedule them, please consult the Services section of our website at <http://www.daedalus.com/services/index.html>, or contact Services directly at [services@daedalus.com](mailto:services@daedalus.com) or (806) 785-1968.

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## kivela, continued from pg. 14

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class discussions can prove to be a panicky experience, especially if the class size is large.

Only a small number of students could be identified as alternating single-order strategy participants in the whole class discussions, with very few being identified in the small group discussions. These students sent short multiple-focus type messages as a means of picking up on several conversational threads. Once they focused on a topic, their messages resembled single-focus strategy participants' messages closely. These students had the advantage of expressing their ideas in depth while at the same time exploring a wider range of topics than the single-focus participants, but they did not sustain the topic of "conversation" to the same extent as the single-focus participants.

To sum up, I discovered that the number of topics discussed and the ideational complexity of the messages are related to the strategy employed by the students, and the type of InterChange configuration used. On the one hand, students who used a multiple-focus strategy posted more messages about more topics, but they tended to be shorter and more superficial. Students who used a single-focus strategy, however, tended to stick to a few topics, write longer messages, and express their ideas in more depth. In addition, they demonstrated a knowledge of the readings in their discussions and were able to sustain and develop their ideas more fully than the multiple-focus strategy participants did. Thus, the character of the two types of discussion sessions is quite distinct.

Certain important pedagogical implications arise from these findings. When using InterChange discussions for teaching and learning, if the aims and objec-

tives of a particular course or lesson are to get students to explore and express their ideas fully and in depth, then it would be prudent for teachers to use a small group configuration for the discussions. However, as a method for brainstorming and exchanging a wide range of information and ideas on which students don't have to elaborate at a particular stage of a course or lesson, the whole class discussion is by far the superior configuration. In addition, teachers of ESL students also need to be aware that many students have trouble keeping up with messages in whole class discussions, and that the pressure that this creates can prevent them from participating to the fullest extent. I have surveyed my students about which type of InterChange discussion they prefer (Kivela, 1996), and the vast majority have reported that they prefer small group discussions because of the problems associated with whole class discussions that I have previously discussed.

Of course, a far greater number of transcripts needs to be analysed before the suppositions put forward in this article can be tested further and perhaps confirmed or modified by the experiences of other teachers using InterChange for topic discussions. Teachers could examine the discussion transcripts of their classes, first, to identify the participation strategies used by their students in whole class discussions and small group discussions and, second, to determine which strategies in which type of InterChange discussions are best employed to achieve particular pedagogical goals. It is hoped that in this way InterChange can be exploited to its fullest potential as a teaching and learning tool rather than as just a technological innovation of uncertain and sometimes nebulous educational value.

