Every truth has four corners: as a teacher I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three.

—Confucius

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ideas from the Classroom

The Professional Writer in the Classroom —Heather Wright 2
The Symbolism of Hope—Barbara A. Davis 4
Character Casseroles and Creative Literary Responses —Warren Bowe 4
Owning Poetry by Recreating a Poem —Kristi O'Connell Ekroth 6
Using a Problem-Based Learning Approach to Teach the Novel—Peter Gow 6
The Value of Idea Grids—Kim Ballard 8
Using Favorite Songs as Prompts—Michael Fulton 9
Moral Dilemmas in Young Adult Novels —Linda S. Slusser 10

Focus on Literature

Mirrors to Experience: Photo Essays for Senior English —David Hendrick Slomp 12

Web Resources

Emily Dickinson WebQuest 11
Songs Inspired by Literature 14

Excerpts

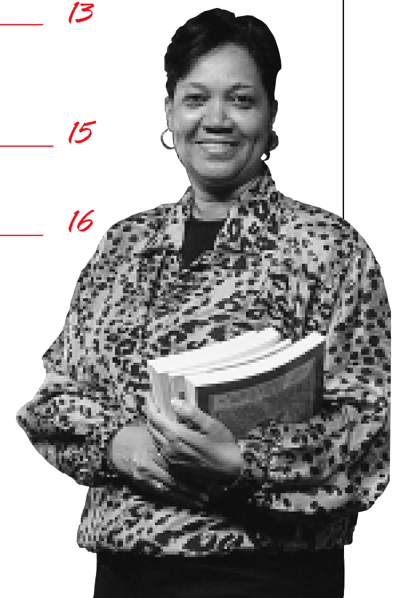
Thinking Out Loud 13

Teacher Talk

Using Quotations 15

Notes 16

You'll find additional new teaching ideas in the Web Extras box on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web site at www.ncte.org/notesplus.



Copyright © 2002 by the National Council of Teachers of English. All rights reserved.

IDEAS FROM THE CLASSROOM

Welcome to a new school year and an issue of *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS* jam-packed with useful activities.

This issue offers strategies for helping students respond to poetry, songs, and literature, explore the ingredients of character, and examine moral dilemmas in young adult novels. We also include two different strategies for using a simple grid as a tool for enriching reading and writing. In addition, a "Focus on Literature" feature describes a successful photo essay assignment that makes literature a truly personal study.

We hope you'll find these ideas helpful, and that you'll continue to send in your own favorite teaching strategies for future issues of *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS*.

The Professional Writer in the Classroom

Wouldn't you love to have a visiting writer come into your classroom to motivate your students or give them the tools to solve a particular writing problem? I certainly would—but for me and most teachers, such an opportunity is infrequent if not impossible.

But there is a way. I brought professional writers into my eleventh-grade classroom in the form of the books they had written—not their novels but their "how-to-write" books.

As a writer myself, I consult these books regularly, but I wasn't sure that they would speak to my students. However, these writers, who addressed their readers as "fellow writers," brought new life and interest to my writing classes. With Nancy Kress, Orson Scott Card, and Stephen King as my writers-in-residence, my writing class had a new reason to focus and wonderful resources for consultation and inspiration.

My first visitor was Nancy Kress, a speculative fiction writer, winner of the Nebula and Hugo Awards and a columnist for *WRITER'S DIGEST MAGAZINE*. Nancy Kress taught my students how to write effective dialogue. In Chapter Two of her book *BEGINNINGS, MIDDLES AND ENDS*, Kress focuses on characterization. She begins by presenting a 12-sentence exchange of dialogue between two people named Louise and Allen.

Kress provides little information except the gender of the characters and the subject of their conversation. Immediately after this, she writes two scenes in which the earlier dialogues are presented "intact," but "supplemented with character's thoughts, appearance, gestures, actions, and reactions" (Kress, p. 45). These two scenes are totally different in mood and intent and the two characters are equally different.

At this time, my students were working on exercises building to the writing of a short story, and dialogue was the topic of the day. I introduced the topic by reading Kress's unattributed dialogue and asking students what pictures it created for them. The students said they were confused. They couldn't tell what was happening: "What are they doing?" "Who are they?" "I don't understand."

Then I told the class I would read them a scene in which the exact dialogue they just heard would appear. The first example was comic in nature and featured a strong female character. While the first example was read the students laughed at the humor and were attentive. When asked at the reading's end, students supplied clear details of the story's setting, the characters' appearances and made good predictions about what was going to happen next.

Then I read the second scene, more threatening in mood and featuring a stronger male character and a frightened female character. While the second example was being read, the students were absolutely silent. Once again the author had created very clear pictures for them to see.

To lead students to find the guidelines for their own assignment, I helped them identify the elements that made the two pieces both effective and unique. The viewpoint character was different; though in both cases female, the personalities of the two women were polar opposites.

How did we know that? In neither instance was she described physically, so we learned about her by what she thought and what she said and did. The other difference between the two scenes was their settings: one, a laundry room, and the other, a living room.

What specific details had been given to make those settings come to life? In both cases the information about the setting came through the eyes of the viewpoint character. From this discussion, the two parameters for the assignment were established.

Then I gave students the following dialogue with which to create their own scenes:

> "You're late. I thought you weren't going to make it."
> "I nearly didn't."
> "Do you have it with you?"
> "Yes."
> "I wish it could be done in a different way."
> "Do you think it will be over soon?"
> "Why? You never worried before!"
> "This time I have more to worry about."

The points of focus for the assignment were to make sure that the setting and the actions of the characters were clear and that the story was told through the eyes

of one viewpoint character. They agreed to follow a "no adverb" guideline (i.e., no use of "happily," "sadly," "angrily," etc.), since the examples I read hadn't used any. They made every effort to show the characters' emotions through the thoughts, actions, and the actual words spoken. Neither of the examples was written in first person but the students were allowed to use this viewpoint if they wished.

As they worked, some students asked if they could change the last two lines to make the endings of their scenes work better. When I read what they had written so far, I could see their point and I agreed that they could make small changes

The students shared their work the next day. They listened attentively, eager to see what unique story each student had created from the same few lines of dialogue.

The situations explored included a drug deal, the smuggling of a Bible into Russia, an assassination attempt, Tiger Woods waiting for a repaired golf club at a critical hole in a tournament, and a harried couple at the birth of their first child.

We stopped once in a while to highlight a student's method of introducing setting, getting inside a viewpoint character, or describing a particular piece of action. Students took leadership in these discussions because they had had to solve the same problems themselves and had been partners in the same process.

Later when several students tackled a creative assignment for *Macbeth*, they used the techniques they explored in this exercise to make their "death row interview" of Macbeth come to life.

An Alternate Approach

A colleague used this same material with her eighth-grade students, but introduced the exercise with drama. The students improvised scenes during which one person sat in a chair and another approached her. By the first words that the new character said, the scene was set and the person in the chair had to respond and be a part of that new scene.

For example, in one scene the first words were "I'm sorry, but the captain has asked that all passengers have their seat belts buckled." In this case, no one announced that the scene was going to be set in an airplane or that one character was a steward and the other a passenger—the audience knew who the two people were and where they were by virtue of the dialogue and the way they moved.

The discussion following the scenes centered on how the students knew what the characters were feeling and where they were, without the characters actually describing their emotions or their setting. This discussion led to the reading of the material as I described above with the emphasis on how the author "showed" rather than "told" when writing the two dialogue scenes.

The students enthusiastically attacked this assignment, knowing they would be sharing their work the next day. Eager to keep their version of the story a secret, they hid their work from their neighbors with their textbooks, and many asked to take their projects home to finish them for the next day.

My colleague and her eighth-grade students were both pleased with the results of this exercise. The students were proud of their work, which ranged in topic from exam cramming to a hijacking scenario, and my colleague said she would definitely use this project again. She said she had been struggling with the idea of "show don't tell" and felt that this project made contact with her students.

Overall, I found that the material conceived by professional writers for use by adult writers worked very well in a school classroom. The text I used was accessible and did not need to be altered for my students.

In later classes, I used Card's technique of map-drawing from *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* as a story starter and King's revision examples from *On Writing*.

Here's a list of these and other titles that you may find useful.

Recommended Resources

Card, Orson Scott. *Characters and Viewpoint*. Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati. 1988

Card, Orson Scott. *Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati. 1990

Gardner, John. *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers*. Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto. 1985

Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones*. Shambhala, Boston. 1986

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird*. Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York. 1995

King, Stephen. *On Writing—A Memoir of the Craft*. Scribner, New York. 2000

Kress, Nancy. *Beginnings, Middles and Ends*. Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati. 1993

I plan to continue referring to professional writing sources to supplement my writing program. They are valuable resources and energizers both for my students and for me.

Heather Wright, St. John's-Kilmarnock School, Breslau, Ontario

The Symbolism of Hope

Helping my fifth-grade students come to grips with the horrors of September 11 was a difficult task. I knew that my students were barraged with images of death and sadness for days on end, and I wanted to provide a meaningful writing experience, one that they could carry with them in hopes of peaceful days to come.

The word "hope" stuck in my mind, and since our language arts curriculum includes teaching literary elements, I decided to delve into the literary element of symbolism.

First I asked students, "What are symbols of hope to you?" Students came up with many responses, and one recurring one was a flower or tree in bud. We decided to ask permission to plant a tree in front of our school to express our sense of hope and help inspire hope in others.

Our request was granted, and we chose a deciduous tree because it loses its leaves in the wintertime and blooms in the springtime. Our principal joined us for a brief ceremony as we planted the tree.

After returning to the classroom that day, I read the poem "The Heart of a Tree" by Henry Cuyler Bunner. This poem is filled with symbolism and is a perfect starting point for writing. I asked students to write journal entries about our own "Tree of Hope" and what it symbolized for them. Students were excited to do this and many volunteered to share their entries.

This assignment was particularly helpful to my students because of the circumstances, but writing on the symbolism of hope could be a valuable assignment for students at any time. After brainstorming a list of symbols for hope, such as a flying bird, a break in the clouds, a ray of sunlight, a thumbs-up sign from a friend, a green shoot emerging through the dirt, etc., students could explore their emotions and responses in a poem or essay and follow-up by finding and sharing published poems and essays that also include the symbolism of hope.

By exploring their own ideas on hope as well as literary examples, students come to understand the concept of symbolism and also learn that writing and reading can be tools for mental health.

Barbara A. Davis, Neptune Middle School, Kissimmee, Florida

Character Casseroles and Creative Literary Responses

Character analyses, themes about themes, and summaries of settings are stock items in the literature teacher's larder. However, unless we take them out of the pantry once in awhile and stir them up a bit to freshen the supply, we can end up with the same stale, bland, entrees year after year.

I stumbled upon my recipe for interesting, concise, meaningful literary responses and analyses in a roundabout way. Thanks to the inspiration of Tom Romano—multigenre guru—I included "recipe" as a possible genre on a list of fifty-four genres that students in my advanced composition class might consider including in their multigenre research papers.

Without any further instruction from me, one student, Gretchen, caught my attention with a recipe for "Golda Meir" that served "millions," had a preparation time of 80 years, and was described as a "Great party item that will amaze your guests!" However, more intriguing than Gretchen's cleverness were the ingredients she used to create Golda and the directions given for her preparation. Ingredients included items such as "altruism," "greatness," "strength," "intelligence," and "iron will." Directions included the instruction to "Mix all ingredients. Let bake for 80 years. Watch as she faces new challenges, achieves perfection, receives great honor from the world."

As I read Gretchen's recipe, I realized that in addition to presenting the reader with some key information about Golda Meir, Gretchen had also written a unique analysis of Golda's character. Gretchen had delivered the essence of Golda to the reader by separating Golda's character into its constituent parts (ingredients) and studying the effect of the ingredients when combined (directions); moreover, she hadn't needed multiple paragraphs or pages to accomplish this feat. In fact, Gretchen's final word count was 70!

Well, quicker than you can say, "Holden Caulfield Souffle," I had an idea for a writing assignment for character analysis that would inspire creativity, teach the value of being concise in one's writing, allow students to deconstruct and reconstruct a character, and provide interesting and humorous reading for the whole class—and all without increasing my paper load.

Here's a recipe for how you might begin your foray into the world of literary cuisine and a sample student recipe: ▶

RECIPE: CHARACTER CASSEROLE

From: The Recipe File of Mr. Bowe, English Chef and Bottle Washer

Ingredients:*

1 heaping cup literary writing pre-read (novels work well for novice cooks)
1 well-rounded character (protagonist or antagonist will do)
2 tablespoons teacher enthusiasm
3 pints student creative juices
1 pinch of risk (on the teacher's part)

Preparation time: 1–2 class periods

*Make substitutions freely; for example, a tasty theme or sumptuous setting can easily replace a well-rounded character.

Preparation Tips:

Prewriting

1. Students select a character from the literary work they are currently devouring.
2. Students list character traits and descriptions as they appear in the novel, short story, biography, etc.
3. Students determine and list events or forces that they believe helped shape the character.
4. Keep teacher instruction to a minimum, giving students time to stew in their own creative juices. Teacher might provide one or two recipe samples or cooking articles from a magazine as inspiration. But best results occur when teacher keeps fingers out of the frosting!

Writing

Cut the apron strings! Tell students they are to create a recipe that the author might have used to develop the character they have selected. Remind them to baste themselves in creative juices every so often. (If nothing else, you'll get a good groan out of them.)

Revising

Stir. Add ingredients. Check to make sure preparation instructions are clear and in logical order. Stir some more.

Proofreading

Check spelling, abbreviations for measurements, and that preparation instructions are delivered using imperative sentences.

Publication

Recipes should be garnished and seasoned with color, graphics, artwork, etc. appropriate to the literary work.

SAMPLE STUDENT RECIPE

Recipe for Pearl Prynne (*The Scarlet Letter*)

Ingredients:

2 cups Beauty
4 tablespoons Scandal
3 teaspoons Mystery
½ cup Regret
4 pints Scorn (use "Boston" brand)
5 drops Scarlet food coloring

Directions:

Gather all ingredients. Start with Beauty and mix Scandal deep into the middle of it. Beat until mixed. Heat the 3 teaspoons of Mystery until it comes to a boil. Pour into mixture. Next add the ½ cup of Regret (mix until all clumps are smooth). Then the Scorn is stirred throughout. Bake for 9 months. Make sure to set the oven at zero degrees for no added warmth. Then add the attention-grabbing Scarlet coloring. Result: one disgraced baby girl.

Preparation Time: 9 months

Serves: 1 mother

This recipe is but one sample of a veritable buffet of literary morsels that have been served up in my classroom, including "Fly Soup" (*Lord of the Flies*); "Lilliputian Baby Food Pie" (*Gulliver's Travels*); and "Hopeless Stew" (*1984*). Truly, students have had more fun and demonstrated more creativity with this particular writing assignment than any I have assigned in recent years. In fact, several students have told me they have used this idea and format successfully for writing assignments in other classes.

Of course, I have not eliminated more traditional forms of character analysis from the menu in my classes. For example, we still write essays with parenthetical citations that examine the changes in Elie Wiesel and his father in *Night*. However, the character (or setting, or plot, or theme) recipe does call for a bit more creativity than some traditional assignments, while encouraging a well-balanced literary writing diet for students and their teachers.

Book appetit!

Warren Bowe, Chippewa Falls Senior High School, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Owning Poetry by Recreating a Poem

As an English teacher, one of my goals is to help students feel less intimidated about reading, understanding, interpreting, and "owning" poetry.

After handing out a poem—I use Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay"—I have students read it silently. I then explain that poetry is meant to be read aloud. Next, I ask three students to read the poem out loud in turn, so that all students can hear different interpretations. After a brief review of literary terms such as personification, metaphor, simile, and allusion, I assign a two-paragraph summary of the poem that is due the next day.

Because I want students to develop their own interpretations, I tell them that they will not be considered "wrong" as long as they support their ideas with evidence from the poem. I try not to give too many hints about this poem at first.

The next day in class we begin discussing the poem. We read it aloud again, then explore some basics about interpreting a poem and where to begin.

We start with the title, then examine the poem line by line. We look at what is present and not present—words, punctuation, and implications; identify literary devices; and examine the different student interpretations. I challenge the students to support their ideas with evidence from the poem; some refer to their assigned paragraphs. I also ask open-ended questions to encourage the students to find the meanings. With "Nothing Gold Can Stay," students inevitably respond with the day, season, life cycle ideas, and the importance of "gold."

That same day, I state the assignment for students: "Using your talents, understanding, and creativity, you are to recreate this poem in some other form. Your creation is due in five days."

Inevitably, I receive some blank stares. After a moment, I repeat my instructions. I don't overexplain at this point, because I want students to develop their own ideas.

The next day, if students still seem baffled, I offer a few ideas: recreating a poem like "Nothing Gold Can Stay" in another form could include activities as varied as drawing a picture, writing a song, sharing personal stories, creating a collage poster, producing a multimedia project on life cycles, creating a photo essay, or performing an interpretive dance.

I challenge the students to "wow" me with an original idea. I also remind them that, on the assigned date, when they present their projects in class, they must also explain how their projects connect to and expand on the poem.

I have seen some amazing results when the final projects are presented. For instance, two students worked together to express the life cycle theme of the poem by splicing together songs with relevant lyrics and music and adding dance movements.

Another student created a video about Princess Diana, showing her life and her impact on the world. Another student expressed the cyclical theme of the poem by illustrating and explaining the process of car restoration; he addressed the "golden" aspect of the completed car in terms of his hard work and ownership.

Many students have also found ways to share personal stories of "golden" people in their lives, and two students even started a band inspired by this assignment.

Students enjoy this activity, and it allows them to express their creativity and talents and share their interests, while they get close to a poem. This experience in turn helps them feel more comfortable with poetry in general.

Kristi O'Connell Ekroth, Yankton High School, Yankton, South Dakota

Using a Problem-Based Learning Approach to Teach the Novel

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a methodology commonly used in medical and business schools, but it can also be effective as a way to teach the novel. In my tenth-grade English class, PBL allows me to be a facilitator as it puts students in control of their analysis of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Scarlet Letter*.

Problem-Based Learning uses a strict protocol to guide a process of inquiry and analysis around a case study whose elements are presented in stages. Close reading of the case, careful generation of thoughtful questions, and informed speculation are at the center of the methodology, but equally important is the discussion that accompanies the analysis.

Any text, but particularly a novel divided into chapters, can be approached as an unfolding case study of characters responding to a particular set of circumstances. I use PBL to structure each class period as we analyze and discuss the text, chapter by chapter (or group of short chapters).

The protocol I use asks students to consider, in this order, three questions:

1. Based on your reading so far, what do we actually know about the characters, setting, and plot? What evidence has the author presented us that shows what is really going on in this story?
2. What questions does what you have read raise for you? What issues in the characterization, the relationships of characters, the plot, or the dilemmas faced by characters do you want or need to know more about? What questions are you asking yourself based on the reading so far?
3. What do you think may happen? On what issues can you speculate?

What do we know?	What questions do we have?	Speculation? What next?

FIGURE 1. Sample board layout for PBL discussion

At the start of each day's class, I divide my board into three sections (see Fig. 1) and label them with abbreviated versions of these questions. I then ask the class to address Question 1, which is really asking for a demonstration of close and accurate reading. On the first day of a working with a new book, they may—and should—include such obvious facts as the title, author, and date of publication. (By including the title page and table of contents in the opening reading assignment, I make sure that students attend not only to matters of authorship and context but also, in the case of a book like *The Scarlet Letter* whose chapters are titled, to the intentional narrative trajectory to the story.) I also insist that students have their books in front of them and a pen in hand at all times as we do our work.

I try hard to stay in my role as a facilitator only, although I may ask for clarification or confirmation of a point. I ask that each contribution be supported by a textual reference, and if an "incorrect" fact is offered, I will hold discussion until the matter is resolved from the text. At this point, I actively discourage any offering that strays into interpretation ("The letter seems like it's a symbol") although I happily accept as part of "what we know" any information that can be supported by direct evidence.

After exhausting this category, we move on to Question 2. Here students are allowed somewhat more free rein in their analysis, and questions can range from the not-so-critical ("What is Daisy's favorite color shirt?") to the truly provocative ("Why does Fitzgerald write so much about body parts like eyes and noses?"). Again, I am primarily the genial facilitator, although I will paraphrase or condense as necessary—and I will sometimes draw lines that connect questions that seem to be related. Here the purpose is to engage students in the text not just as a source of knowledge or a plot but as manifestation of the problems and dilemmas that confront both the characters in the story and the author who has created them. In this stage it is not unusual for students to engage in vigorous discussion as they see questions connecting with one another, and I encourage them to address problems of relationship (e.g., "Does Dimmesdale see what Chillingworth is doing to him?") in the text. I discourage any attempt to answer these questions, although I will, if it does not detract from the discussion, answer questions of fact ("Did Hawthorne ever get married ?") or put in some perspective a critical issue ("How Midwestern was Fitzgerald?"). It is especially important here to abide by the dictum that there is no such thing as a stupid question—I remain as neutral and encouraging as possible. Instead of rejecting a question that seems unproductive, I try to direct more fruitful thinking by requesting clarification or a basis in the text.

Question 3 asks students to use their knowledge of the characters, the central problems of the story, and the plot to speculate on what might occur next. This is where the discussion becomes most active, as everyone has some idea about what could or might happen next. I do ask for some justification of most offerings, so that when a student says, "Chillingworth is going to murder Hester and Dimmesdale," I can tease out the student's understanding of what is going on in the story. As always, it is important for the teacher-facilitator to remain as neutral and open as possible, responding positively to a student's enthusiasm and the quality of support for an idea rather than to how "right" the idea might be. Students who have read ahead can be gently discouraged from giving the plot away.

I give over the last quarter of the class period to free-flowing, interpretive discussion, and it is a rare day when I have to do more than provide some gentle guidance. Since there is no interpretive "party line," students can go anywhere they want—as long as they can support their ideas to me and to their peers (a tougher audience than I am, usually).

What appears to be missing from the Problem-Based Learning methodology is the essence of "classical" English teaching: the structured elucidation of the text, including the identification of symbols and the conventional interpretation of what it all means. This is, to me, the beauty of PBL: it puts students in charge of that elucidation, with the protocol providing the structure. Students quickly discover, by themselves, the points that English teachers love to linger on—*Pearl in the forest, Dr. Eckleburg's eyes.* Instead of directing students to a final and "correct" understanding, PBL allows them to raise issues and draw out important points and, ultimately, to own a text deeply and passionately.

Peter Gow, Beaver Country Day School, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

The Value of Idea Grids

Experienced writers often claim that their writing processes do not follow a lock-step routine but do involve a set of flexible strategies they have gradually learned to control. Informed writing teachers try to honor the complexity of the thinking and writing processes.

Yet often when we try to help developing writers gain control of their writing strategies, our students read our efforts as attempts to force them into a particular procedure that stifles their free-flowing creativity. And when we offer open-ended activities, such as Peter Elbow's freewriting and looping techniques, some students grow impatient with the freedom of those exploration strategies.

I recently developed a technique that has given many students a way to control and motivate their idea exploration. For several semesters now, we have used "idea-grids."

In our first writing assignment, students receive several copies of a full-page, three-column grid, labeled like the one below. Students may use as many grids as they need and should never think that they must limit their ideas to one page of one grid.

BEFORE	TURNING POINT	AFTER

Initially, we use the grid in a "Turning Point" assignment during which students explore and write about a particular time when their life changed in an important way. They select their own audience and decide individually how to cover the "before," "after," and "turning point" aspects of the story in light of their selected purposes and readers.

I encourage students to use the grids to capture potential ideas for their assignment *as those ideas come to them.* Some may first explore their particular turning point by jotting down notes in the middle column.

Some may first detail the impact of the turning point on their life by listing points in the "After" column. Others jump around the grid, jotting down a detail in the "Before" column, putting another in the "Turning Point" column, and then moving back to "Before" to clarify or expand their initial note or into the "After" column with a new thought that just came to mind.

I do not require students to write about each detail in each column, but as they work with the grid, they find that ideas in one column tend to fuel ideas for other columns. Also, it's often true that reviewing the completed grids raises questions about details in one column or another, causing the writer to extend his or her ideas in that column or to explore the point further in a different one.

Other than writing nothing or offering little information, students really cannot complete the grid incorrectly. There is no wrong way to use the grid to surface and explore ideas and details.

The grid process and structure offers students an opportunity to be in control of their idea exploration: *they* decide where and how to start thinking through the ideas they will need for their paper, and *they* decide where and how to move from their chosen beginnings.

While offering a sense of freedom in the exploration process, however, the grids also focus students' idea investigation within the choice of specific beginning and exploration points.

When I determine column headings, I connect them to the assignment and expect students to do the same if they develop their own grids for different assignments. In either case, I either require or strongly encourage students to completely fill at least a one-page grid column per topic. Students who cannot do so may need to realize that they have probably selected topics they may not want to explore or ones they cannot thoroughly deal with at the time of our assignment.

Other Grid Uses for the Turning-Point Assignment

As the class works through the whole assignment, we include group responses to and class discussion of the ideas developing in the grids. We also deal with audience and style. Some students like to use additional grids to think through those concerns, jotting down titles in the upper margin as needed so that they do not confuse their various grids. "Audience," indicates a grid about ways to consider or write for their readers, and "Org. Plan," distinguishes developing or final outlines, etc. Students produce drafts and respond to each other's drafts with the grids close at hand.

Some writers use the grids as outlines, and responders often use them to suggest ideas or details they think writers may want to include in their drafts. Gradually, students revise, proofread, edit, publish, and complete the assignment.

Tips for Creating the Grid

While one can always draw the grid by hand, I use the "insert table" command in a word-processor to create a table of 3 columns and 2 rows. I label each column in the first row and then press <enter> or <return> until the second "row" covers the rest of the page. I usually center the headings for each column. Columns may vary as an assignment dictates. The "landscape" mode of printing can turn the grid sideways as needed. If you want to title the grid, type the title before inserting the table.

Grid Potentials for Other Assignments

Grids can be used at all grade levels. I began them in community college classes, but have used them with seventh graders and believe that elementary teachers will also see their value. Grids with various column headings may help focus many assignments. Below I have listed some suggestions that may spark teachers to concoct their own grid-centered lessons.

- *Literary Analysis*—Use the grid, labeled as you want or as students have determined in class discussion, to help students prewrite for a paper or poster about the growth of a character in a story, novel, poem, or play. Students may also explore alternative versions of narratives, or bring closure to open-ended stories.
- *Social Studies*—Have students use the grid to explore and debate the importance and details of historical events. PowerPoint presentations, Web page publications, or posters work well with this assignment, as the grid offers powerful visual outlining/organization possibilities.
- *Science/Technical/Arts*—Chart the stages and impacts of various scientific experiments with grids and have students develop lab or technical reports. Have students determine the steps in a particular process that may lead to instruction writing units for various age groups, procedures, or equipment. Have students develop grids or templates for other types of writing assignments or for job check-off charts.
- *Health/Careers/Business*—Use the grid to help students consider current or historical work-related ethical dilemmas, determining issues and pieces of debates. They may use the grid to help write a journal entry, report, memo, case study, patient chart, self-study of their own health or eating habits, etc., or they may use the grid as they present orally.
- *Math*—With different column labels and numbers and a horizontal rather than vertical page placement, the grid can help students capture steps needed for story problems before they work the problems. It can also help them determine steps for story problems they create or outline flow charts they develop.
- *General*—Ideas from any subject areas above may be used in other content assignments anchored by the grid. The grid can easily be used on a word processor rather than a piece of paper.

Kim Ballard, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Using Favorite Songs as Prompts

Here's a lesson that caught my ninth graders' imagination. I recently had the opportunity to hear some live music and one song in particular, a song called "Invisible" by Robert Medici, caught my ear. The song's chorus is:

> If only I thought that you could see
> What is so plain to me
> Invisible it is
> To all but those who know
> Just how it feels to be
> Invisible like me

As I listened, I found myself thinking about how well my students might relate to this song, which addresses themes that are part and parcel of the teen years—feeling invisible, wanting to be known and at the same time feeling afraid of being known. I decided to turn this into a writing assignment by using this and other songs as writing prompts.

I begin the class by talking about my belief that a good song tells a story. I explain that we are about to listen to a new favorite song of mine and consider what story or stories the song might conjure in our minds. I give the students copies of the lyrics and then play the song through several times. We then brainstorm in our notebooks about what the song's story might be. I play the song another time and prompt them with questions: What events might take place in your story? Who might the character(s) in this story be? Tell me a little about them.

After some silent time for students to get all of their thoughts down, we discuss our brainstorming. After we listen to and compliment one another, I give these directions to the students: We are going to use this song as a guide for writing a story. It might be a great way to start by underlining your favorite lines of the song. You might use the lyrics as the philosophies/feelings of your character or as the building blocks in your character's life story. You may want to be the main character, make a friend or family member the main character, or create a whole new person.

The writing that resulted was easily some of the most successful for my struggling students. It was also interesting witnessing my students, who are mostly Limp Bizkit or Eminem fans, moan and groan the first few times I played this folk-rock song, and then later *ask* to listen to Medici's music during our workshop days.

As a continuation of this lesson (or as a possible precursor) you may want to let your students choose their own songs. When I do this, I ask students to bring in the lyrics to a favorite song, one that they feel they particularly relate to. Students may write out the lyrics, photocopy them, or print them off a Web site. If a song contains language that

may be questionable to other members of the class, students are to remove the questionable words or cover them up so as not to offend anyone. Students then follow the same steps as in the previous assignment, and we share the final results with the whole class.

This assignment is popular with my students. Apart from helping them learn about character and story development, it helps them to listen more carefully to their favorite songs and think about what stories they are telling.

Michael Fulton, Staples High School, Westport, Connecticut

A longer version of this article appears online in THE QUARTERLY OF THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT *at http://nwp.edgateway.net/cs/nwpp/view/nwpr/148. The full lyrics to "Invisible" are available as part of that online article, as well as in audio form at http://www.mp3.com/medici.*

Moral Dilemmas in Young Adult Novels

After attending a workshop summarizing the best young adult books of 1998, I read a dozen titles that sounded potentially interesting for my junior American Literature students. From those titles I chose six wonderfully written novels whose protagonists each faced a moral dilemma, and then I put together an experimental unit with three goals: to give students an enjoyable reading experience with greater peer interaction and support; to try some of the "freeing" elements of Harvey Daniels's literature circles; and to use both creative and analytic assessment to measure students' understandings.

Call for Classroom Solutions

Do you have ideas for getting organized, managing the workload, improving your classroom environment, or coaxing the best from your students?

Send your tips for creative coping to classroomsolutions@ncte.org and they might be selected to appear in CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS or on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page. Submissions should be under 500 words and may be edited for clarity and format.

Students chose the following novels and formed groups based on their selections:

- *CALIFORNIA BLUE* by David Klass (199 pages)—John Rodgers discovers the last of a rare species of butterfly in the woods he loves. Can he take a stand to save this tiny creature if it means closing the lumber mills that provide a livelihood for most of the community, including his own family?
- *HEROES* by Robert Cormier (135 pages)—Frances Cassavant survives WWII but returns home without a face. Will he survive his promise to himself to take revenge on a former friend whose betrayal has haunted Frances?
- *RULES OF THE ROAD* by Joan Bauer (201 pages)—a cross-country trip chauffeuring the elderly president of the shoe company she'd been working for seems like an adventure to new driver Jenna Boller. But will Jenna be able to return to her own family problems with some of the courage she witnesses on her journey?
- *WHIRLIGIG* by Paul Fleishman (133 pages)—While using his car in a suicide attempt, Brent Bishop kills another innocent teenager. Will Brent find a purpose for life in fulfilling a request of the victim's mother?

I also offered for consideration *LETTERS TO JULIA* by Barbara Holmes (312 pages) and *PAINTING THE BLACK* by Carl Deuker (248 pages), but the longer lengths affected students' choices.

We devoted three weeks to the novels' study. Preparation prior to reading included time to discuss the unit syllabus, time to agree within groups on the number of pages to be read for each discussion date, and time to practice (as a class) applying Daniels's role sheets to Bette Greene's story "An Ordinary Woman." ("An Ordinary Woman" appears in *SIXTEEN: SHORT STORIES BY OUTSTANDING WRITERS FOR YOUNG ADULTS*, edited by Donald R. Gallo, pp. 125–130.) Next, a guest psychologist prompted thinking about some factors influencing moral decisions, such as fears, duty, rules, relationships, and conscience. Then, the reading began.

Four discussion days were scheduled, always preceded by an in-class reading period. On discussion days each group member assumed responsibility for one role in the literature circle, successively completing a role sheet as Discussion Director, Literary Luminary, Illustrator, or Connector.

These roles and guide sheets were taken from *LITERATURE CIRCLES: VOICES AND CHOICE IN THE STUDENT-CENTERED CLASSROOM* by Harvey Daniels, pp. 77–80. The Discussion Director raises questions for the group's consideration and serves

as leader for the day. The Literary Luminary calls attention to particular passages that seem worthwhile. The Illustrator shares some kind of drawing or graphic that represents an idea or feeling conveyed by the day's reading. The Connector looks for tie-ins to the novel from life or other writings. (More information on Daniels's literature circles is available at http://www.literaturecircles.com/.)

In addition, group members took turns making notes on the day's discussion, summarizing their focus, the conclusions reached, the predictions suggested, and the elements they most liked or disliked at that point in their reading.

When students had finished reading and discussing the novel, they worked on two individual assessments out of class while completing two group assessments during class.

The first individual assessment asked for responses to two questions.

1. (Required) Briefly describe the dilemma confronting the main character in your novel. Next, evaluate how the character dealt with this dilemma. Finally, explain why, in your opinion, he/she is or is not a "moral"person.
2. (Choose one) (a) Copy a provocative/interesting important/enjoyable passage and comment on its significance. (b) Explain why you would or would not like to have a particular character as a friend. How would he/she fit in at our school? (c) Examine the values of a character you like or dislike. For example, rank things that matter to him/her from most to least important. (d) What real-life people, events, or issues are you reminded of by the characters, events, or issues in the novel? Explain.

The second individual assessment presented a choice among nine creative extensions. I adapted my activities from "Fifty Alternatives to the Book Report" by Diana Mitchell, which appeared in the "Teaching Ideas" column of *English Journal* (January 1998, pp. 92–95). For example, students could assemble a scrapbook for the protagonist or recommend five movies the character should see and explain why.

While working in groups, students wrote a poem about their protagonist, using a first-person point of view. I suggested either a "Then and Now" poem, in which they compared a younger self with a current self, or an "I Am" poem. (Several models for "I Am" poems can be found through a Web search. One example is available at http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/poetry3.html.) Students also developed a Values Shield, using pictures to highlight the character's long range goal, likes, dislikes, accomplishments, and symbolic animal. (Again, these activities were borrowed. I apologize, but I no longer remember if the sources for these specific ideas were colleagues, workshops, or journals.)

After sharing these products with the whole class, the culminating assessment was a full class discussion based on the following comparison questions:

1. What kind of challenges did the characters encounter? (Easy? Hard? Resolvable?) Emotional? Intellectual? About relationships?)
2. Did any characters change or "grow up" over the course of the book? (Did others support them? Did they have to become more self-reliant?)
3. What did the authors seem to be saying about growing up? Do you agree?
4. How were the characters' relationships with family and friends presented? Were these relationships realistic, in your opinion?
5. What characteristics of your protagonist made him seem weak? strong? Explain.
6. Did any of the characters display courage? Describe that courage and your reactions to it.
7. How did your character cope with his/her problem?
8. How did you evaluate characters in your novel in terms of their "morality"?
9. In your novel, what issues were raised that are relevant today?
10. What did you learn (or think the author tried to teach) about people? society? life?

Although I obviously exercised a good bit of control in planning the direction of the unit and in putting together materials for it, once the reading started, students operated quite independently within their groups. I was pleased by how well the groups functioned in discussion and by the depth of insights generated by the "Illustrator" role. Students assembled strong details to support their character interpretations in the poems, shields, and extension activities. And at the end of the three weeks, I was happy with students' positive evaluations of their novels and of their participation in the unit.

Linda S. Slusser, North Ridgeville High School, North Ridgeville, Ohio

Emily Dickinsen WebQuest

I found an Emily Dickinson Webquest at http://www.madison.k12.ky.us/district/projects/WebQuest/Emily/emily.htm

It looks very good and prompts students to complete a writing assignment.

Elizabeth Charif
encharif@hotmail.com

Focus on Literature

Mirrors to Experience: Photo Essays for Senior English

For my fifth birthday my parents took me to the Pacific National Exhibition in Toronto, Ontario. Of all the attractions I visited that day, the one I most vividly remember is the House of Mirrors. Walking through the mirrored halls, I was amazed at how many permutations of my original image there were—thin and tall, short and obese, tapered, fragmented.

The memory of that experience eventually informed my teaching: Last year I had the opportunity to plan a new Senior English literature course, and chose to develop it using the controlling metaphor of literature serving as a mirror in which we see both ourselves and our society—what we could be, how we have been, and perhaps even, how we should be. At the heart of this metaphor is the idea that the study of literature is a personal study which, to be effective, must have an impact on the individual pursuing it.

My course assignments were designed to encourage my students to use the literary works we were studying as tools for examining themselves and their society. One major assignment from this course was a photo essay assignment that I had developed as part of our investigation of Aldous Huxley's *A Brave New World*. When studying this novel we paid attention to both the Industrial and Scientific revolutions and their effects on society.

Within this context we considered Huxley's portrayal of revolution gone amuck—industrialization no longer serving society, but society being manipulated to serve industry. Huxley's novel paints a graphic and disturbing picture of industrial society at its worst. Using this novel as a mirror in which we reflected on North American industrial society at the turn of the millennium, students concluded that much has changed since Huxley originally published his novel. Reading it today, we are unlikely to be as shocked by its contents or of the society portrayed within in it as were members of the original audience for whom it was written.

Our photo essay was developed as an extension of this discussion. It was titled "Your Brave New World: Life at Its Best, Life at its Worst." Students were to put themselves in Huxley's shoes and ask, "When I consider life and society at its best and worst, what do I see?" After considering the answer to this question my students were required to think of creative ways in which to visually portray their responses.

Before I set my students loose to attack this assignment, however, we discussed the themes of the novel. Students were encouraged to think about how variations on those themes could be expressed in their own photo essays. I then distributed the checklist below, which describes the criteria they needed to fulfill in order to successfully complete their photo essays.

PHOTO ESSAY CHECKLIST/ MARKING GUIDE

Development of Theme

- ☐ Theme is meaningfully connected to our readings
- ☐ Theme is clearly established
- ☐ All photographs are related to the theme
- ☐ The photo essay considers the theme from multiple perspectives
- ☐ Photographs explore the theme both concretely and in an abstract manner
- ☐ Each photo is purposefully selected, not taken merely for the sake of convenience
- ☐ A majority of the photos are staged
- ☐ Atmosphere and background are purposefully chosen or constructed

Presentation

- ☐ Presentation of photos enhances the exploration of theme
- ☐ Presentation of the photos effectively develops the theme's duality
- ☐ Photos are presented in an interesting and provocative manner

Write-Up

- ☐ Write-up explains why the theme was chosen, and connects this theme to the artist's (your) life experiences.
- ☐ Write-up on the photo essay effectively explains what choices the artist made in completing the photo essay.
- ☐ Write-up explains why each photo was selected for inclusion in the photo essay.
- ☐ Write-up explains the choices that were made in setting up each photograph.
- ☐ Write-up explains what choices the artist made in designing the presentation of the photo-essay.

I also presented the students with an exemplar photo essay I created, designed around the themes of solitude and community. In my exemplar I tried to use pairings of opposing photographs to develop the duality of the theme. However, as I developed my exemplar, I discovered that there was a weakness to my original design: It allowed too much for a simplistic, mundane approach to completing the assignment. Without putting much thought into their photo essays students could simply complete the assignment by taking a series of photo-

EXCERPTS

Thinking Out Loud

This excerpt is taken from Chapter 5 of *Sandra Cisneros in the Classroom: "Do not forget to reach"* by Carol Jago (NCTE, 2002).

Despite all my best efforts at engagement, some students remained resistant to reading *The House on Mango Street*. Though their eyes were passing over the lines of text, they seemed to be taking in little and barely responding. Taking a cue from my elementary school colleagues, I tried the strategy of "think-alouds" to demonstrate for these readers what it is that I do in my head as I read. I chose the vignette "Gil's Furniture Bought & Sold" and read it aloud, including commentary and questions that represented my internal dialogue.

In the following paragraph, Cisneros's words appear in normal typeface, and my commentary is in italics. Whenever you model a think-aloud for students, it is important to include an example of connecting the text to your own experience, as well as an example of either readjusting or confirming an early assumption.

> **There is a junk store. An old man owns it.** *I can just picture this. The guy is probably bent over and dusty.* **We bought a used refrigerator from him once, and Carlos sold a box of magazines for a dollar.** *Strange place if the guy deals in both used refrigerators and old magazines. It's probably a mess.* **The store is small with just a dirty window for light.** *Kinda spooky.* **He doesn't turn the lights on unless you got money to buy things with, so in the dark we look and see all kinds of things, me and Nenny.** *Yeh, just like I thought! Maybe these kids see things that aren't really there.* **Tables with their feet upside-down and rows and rows of refrigerators with round corners** *I remember those from when I was a kid in Chicago* **and couches that spin dust in the air when you punch them** *Yep, just like I thought—dusty* **and a hundred T.V.'s that don't work probably. Everything is on top of everything so the whole store has skinny aisles** *funny way to describe aisles, I usually only think of people as skinny* **to walk through. You can get lost easy.** Lost in your imagination, too. (19)

I then ask students to work with a partner doing the same thing out loud for the rest of the story, alternating paragraphs. We then talk about what they noticed happening as they read in this manner. It begins to dawn on students that "reading" really means "thinking." For some this is an epiphany.

To order *Sandra Cisneros in the Classroom: "Do not forget to reach,"* visit the Online Bookstore at http://bookstore.ncte.org/ or call the NCTE Customer Service Department at 1-877-369-6283. Stock number 42311. Price: $16.95 [nonmember]; $12.95 [member].

graphs that concretely represent the theme. (For example if students had chosen my themes of solitude and community they could merely have completed the assignment by taking pictures of people in groups and alone.)

Because of this, I revised the photo essay's criteria to include the requirement that students include photographs that develop the theme using both concrete and abstract images. They would now be expected to think more in terms of symbolism to complete the assignment. For example, using the same themes as discussed above, students could take a picture of a lone red light perched on the top of a radio tower against a clear black sky to symbolize the feelings of bleakness that can accompany a life of solitude.

Before beginning the assignment I also discussed with my students some basic photography concepts—camera angle, foreground, background, depth of field, and the symbolism inherent in choice of color. I asked students to keep these considerations in mind as they attempted to stage their shots. *Life* and other photo magazines are helpful resources to provide examples during this discussion.

Students were also asked to think of a creative means for presenting their photo essays, and to keep in mind that their means of presentation should enhance their exploration of the theme. The shape and format of their photo essay should in some way reflect the content of the photo essay. Students' responses to this aspect of the assignment greatly improved the quality of their photo essays.

In my assessment of this assignment, I wanted to assess the quality and the presentation of the photos but more importantly, I wanted to measure the quality of the thinking that went into developing the response. In order to do this, I required students to complete a written explanation of the choices that went into developing the photo essay. Students were expected to discuss why they chose their themes and how those themes were connected to their life experiences; they were expected to discuss the choices that went

into selecting and setting up each of the shots in the photo essay; what choices went into developing the presentation of the photo essay; and why they chose each of the photos that ended up in their essay.

Once the assignment was thoroughly discussed and explained, I gave each of my students a role of film—200 ISP with 24 exposures. They were required to use a minimum of 12 of these exposures for their photo essay. From this point on I offered little direct guidance to my students, preferring to let them pursue their ideas, and knowing that the more I interfered, no matter how well intentioned, the less the photo essay would be the student's and the more it would be mine.

With very few exceptions, the results of this assignment pleased me exceptionally. My students responded to this assignment with rare vigor and intensity. Additionally, I was impressed with the range and quality of thinking displayed in my students' collection of photo essays. Students explored, among others, the themes of genuine happiness vs. induced happiness, rural life vs. urban living, individuality vs. conformism, and capitalist exploitation vs. compassionate socialism.

The most unique essay was presented in two brown paper bags. Both bags were stuffed full with strips of paper. In the first bag, which represented society as a collection of isolated individuals, the student hid her pictures within the folds of the paper strips. These pictures represented the idea of isolation: a little girl sitting, forlorn, hands under her chin, staring toward a cloudy, bleak, horizon; a bird caged; a lone, decaying poplar tree in a field of dead grass. It took me several minutes to sort through the strips of paper to find these pictures; her medium emphasizing her message. In her second bag, which represented society working together, she attached her pictures along a wool thread. To find these pictures all I needed to do was pull this string. These images included a herd of buffalo standing shoulder to shoulder facing the camera, a stand of frost-encrusted poplar trees in the early morning light, and a dog and a cat cuddling together on a pillow.

I discovered, when discussing the assignment with my students, that they appreciated the assignment because it enabled them to connect their personal experiences with their academic studies while pushing them to think in new ways about the course' literature. One student's reflection of the photo essay assignment is as follows:

> "When I first learned that I was to make a photo essay exploring what I thought to be the best and worst in life, I was apprehensive and reluctant. I was unfamiliar with this type of response to literature and found the topic daunting. As my photo essay began to materialize, however, I discovered that I was enjoying myself and that it was taking me down roads I had never dared to travel before. Then, when I began my write-up for the essay, I saw my own work in a different light than I had before, and the write-up wrote itself for the most part. [Looking back,] I see this assignment as a fun, creative learning tool which pushed me to think further than my comfort zone."

I picked up idea for a possible follow-up to this photo essay assignment at a recent English Language Arts Council (ELAC) conference in Banff, Alberta. At a session titled "Our Real World: A Photo Essay," M. Neely and S. Scheewe presented a photo essay assignment that they had developed for their English classes.

While I simply required that my students hand in their photo essays and their written explanations, which were later posted on the walls in the school hallway, Neely and Scheewe had students set up their photo essays in the school library where a group of outside evaluators circulated throughout the room assessing the student's photo essays. After a set length of time the evaluators conferred together, came to a consensus, and presented their comments to the students.

This would not be an essential step, but I believe my students would enjoy this aspect of the assignment. They are quite proud of their photo essays, and I expect that they would relish the opportunity to share their ideas, perspectives, and accomplishments with an audience other than their teacher.

I displayed my students' photo essays along the hallways of our school, creating in the process a new hall of mirrors. As I walked down this hallway I was pleased, and amazed at how one class, one novel, one assignment, could generate such a range of images and reflect such a variation of experiences.

David Hendrik Slomp, Covenant Canadian Reformed School, Neerlandia, Alberta

Songs Inspired by Literature

The Songs Inspired by Literature Project (SIBL) is working to raise funds for adult literacy programs through the sales of a benefit CD. Bruce Springsteen's "Ghost of Tom Joad," inspired by *The Grapes of Wrath*, and Suzanne Vega's "Calypso," inspired by *The Odyssey*, are among the songs included.

For more information about SIBL and the benefit CD, visit http://www.siblproject.org/.

TEACHER TALK

Using Quotations to Start the Year

Each year before the beginning of school I plaster the entire space above the blackboard on the front wall with quotes printed in a variety of font styles and on a variety of bright colors of paper. I collect these all year long for the following year, and once they're up, I leave them all year long. Usually it takes over 100 to fill up the entire space.

I try always to include, among the quotes about reading and writing and living well, some humorous quotes as well as some that might give courage to a student who's going through a rough time. And I use authors from Plato to Miss Piggy and Dr. Seuss.

What has totally surprised me is the students' reaction to my quotes. Before school starts on the first day, they come into my room to see what I've got up there this time. And believe it or not, some of them have copied all of my quotes into their binders throughout the course of the year and carried them around with them.

If I want the kids to do a journal-writing assignment based on a thought-provoking quote, I just look overhead, chose one, and go with it.

Phyllis George
coenglish@mindspring.com

When you mentioned the space above the blackboard, it reminded me of something I like to do. I reserve a long wall bulletin board, divided into sections by class period, for marked student papers. When a writing assignment is graded, it is posted on the bulletin board for a couple of weeks, then it moves into the portfolio binder for safekeeping. (Students have the option to mark an assignment "Do not post" if they don't want it on the board, but almost everyone likes this informal publishing.)

At the beginning of the year, I put a royal blue construction paper sign above the board that says "Hall of Fame." Whenever a truly excellent piece of writing is submitted, whether a formal essay, an essay test, a short story, an abstract, or whatever, I mount it on blue paper and put it in the Hall of Fame for all to view and admire. By the end of the year, I usually have 12 to 15 of these on display.

Monica Bomengen
mbomengen@hotmail.com

NOTES

2002 Banned Books Week

The 2002 Banned Books Week, sponsored by the American Library Association and other organizations, will take place September 21–28. This year's theme is "Let Freedom Read: Read a Banned Book." The purpose of the week is to highlight the value of freedom of expression and the right to read. For more information, visit http://www.ala.org/bbooks/.

Censorship Problem?

NCTE offers advice, helpful documents, and other support at no cost to K–12 teachers, schools, and districts that are forced with challenges to literary works, films and videos, or teaching methods. Leave a message at 800-369-6283, ext. 3848, or call Charles Suhor, NCTE/SLATE Field Representative, directly at 334-280-4758. You can also report a censorship incident via NCTE's Censorship Web site at http://www.ncte.org/censorship.

Poetry Festival

The 2002 Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival will be held September 19–22 at Waterloo Village, Stanhope, New Jersey. The festival will feature readings and conversations with over 100 poets, including Amiri Baraka, Robert Bly, Billy Collins, Robert Hass, Brenda Hillman, Edward Hirsch, Stanley Kunitz, Li-Young Lee, Taha Muhammad Ali, Naomi Shihab Nye, Grace Paley, and Robert Pinsky. For more information, visit http://www.grdodge.org/poetry/.

Student Travel

Explorica, an educational travel company, is hosting tours for students, teachers, and parents to destinations such as Australia, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Portugal, and Turkey. For more information, visit http://www.explorica.com/

Short Story Competition

The Trollope Society is holding a short story competition that focuses on the works of Anthony Trollope. The competition is open to secondary students of all countries from the ages of fifteen to nineteen, and the deadline for entering is January 15, 2003. The winning author will receive $1,400 and his or her piece will be published in the Society's journal, *TROLLOPIANA*. For more information, visit http://www.trollopestoryprize.org/

Intergenerational Materials and Essay Contest

The national "Something to Remember Me By" Legacy Project offers free activity kits, materials, teaching ideas, and an intergenerational essay contest for students 8–18 years old who collaborate with an older adult. For more information, visit http://www.somethingtoremembermeby.org or call (800) 772-7765.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election

The National Student/Parent Mock Election, the nation's largest voter education program, will partner with AOL to facilitate expanded online voting for the November 1, 2002, Mock Election. Free curriculum materials for all grade levels, including a teacher's guide and background information on the candidates, will be available through AOL's Goverment Guide Web resource at http://www.governmentguide.com and on the National Student/Parent Mock Election Web site at http://www.nationalmockelection.com. There is no charge to participate.

Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due

Michael Sullivan, author of "The Connections Concept" in the April 2002 *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS*, would like to add that the college professor he mentions in his article is Brian White of Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan.