SEEING A WIDER VIEW OF COMPOSING: DRAWING IN THE COMPOSITION CLASS

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ABSTRACT

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Using the case study research method, I examine the drawings and writings of four first semester composition students in detail to discover how they responded when drawing was included as an integral part of their writing classes. The four students were enrolled in a mid-western community college. All brought with them either high apprehension levels or apathy based on prior difficulties in writing classes but were strong in the visual domain. By investigating their work, I look at a variety of ways they have used drawing in their composing processes, particularly in the areas of invention, discovery of detail and insight, and revision. In varying degrees, drawing has functioned to increase their understanding of their writing processes and thus improved their attitude toward writing.

A general underlying theme of the research is Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory made more specific by juxtaposing it with the work of writers who have studied visual thinking more specifically--Rudolf Arnheim, Robert McKim, Vera John Steiner and Bob Samples, among others. The work of art educator and researcher, Eliott Eisner, education theorist, James Moffett, and artist Frederick Franck are among the writers whose words have laid the foundation for broadening the scope of education to incorporate art into the curriculum, and extending that beyond elementary school into college writing classes.

Evidence from the case studies suggests that after a few simple drawing and writing exercises, some students experience a shift in perspective that they describe in terms like "getting new glasses." Some let their drawings lead them into a deeper engagement with their subject, finding more detail and clearer organization after looking carefully at

some aspect of their subject. Some writers approach composing with a need to wander through several possible paths before determining the final form and content. Thus they let their understanding of the subject grow in a forward/backward wave-like movement described by James Zebroski and Sondra Perl. Some visualize their topics clearly, seeing what they are writing about as if they were "photographs in their minds" and are thus able to refer to those memories in a concrete way when they draw them. Some express their ideas through metaphor as a controlling element.

After considering the ways that drawing seemed to help these students navigate and understand their composing processes, I suggest that integrating drawing into writing classes can offer a means for some students to find the center of gravity of their topics and that it functions as a catalyst to spark their imaginations as they write. Thus incorporating the visual into writing would result in a wider view of the composing processes, which in turn would benefit a broader group of student writers.

To my family, who helped me hold to my vision.

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Prologue

One day, on her way out of class, Mary, a first semester student said, "You'll probably think I'm weird or something if I tell you this, but I feel like I just got a new pair of glasses!" It was only the end of the third week of the fall semester, but already she had expressed the kind of excitement about her writing that I always hope to see. It is the awakening of interest in writing that helps me continue wanting to work with students who have not yet found a way to connect. The student said that she *sees* things differently now than she did before--appreciates them more. She said she had seen a rainbow in her yard the day before and when she looked at it, she really appreciated how beautiful it was. She told me that normally she just would have said, "Oh, look, there's a rainbow" and gone on about her business.

This experience was typical of one or two students each semester following a drawing/writing assignment adapted from Ann E. Berthoff's composition text, *Forming/Thinking/Writing*. I had asked my students to find an object which has some special meaning to them and to both write about it and draw it a combination of at least five different times over a week. By drawing and writing, Mary had discovered an emotional connection with her topic, and that experience carried over to awaken her awareness in other areas of her life. She had come into the class three weeks earlier feeling inadequate in her ability to write, but she had incorporated her writing/drawing experience into other parts of her world. The simple drawing/writing activity seemed to have been a catalyst that made her realize how important the pictures and words she had put together really were to her. That activity was also a catalyst that helped me realize the importance of drawing in the writing process.

Although this was the first student who had described her experience with a metaphor— getting a new pair of glasses—I knew what she meant from my own experience, both with writing poetry and drawing, even in journal writing. Other writing students have experienced this shift in awareness that Ross Parmenter in *The Awakened Eye* (1968) calls *transfigured vision*, describing it as "an experience in which the everyday aspect of a person or a scene is so altered that one feels it looks markedly different than it does under normal circumstances. Yet, paradoxically, as one sees it differently, one gets the impression that one sees it more accurately; it seems not itself, and yet more itself" (36). When I ask students to draw the object or some aspect of the topic about which they are writing, some of them experience a deeper connection with their work than they do when they only write about it, thus resulting in Parmenter's "more accurate" kind of seeing than before.

My background, experiences and some beliefs about drawing and writing

Even though I did not understand the extent to which it was true until well into the study, in a way I feel that I have been preparing for researching the effects of drawing within the writing process in a composition class most of my life. From as early as I can remember, I shifted back and forth between choosing writing or art as a career, and I spent much of my spare time in high school writing and painting. I began my undergraduate years at a small university in Kentucky as an art major and finished with a major in English as well. Although my Masters level work focused on literature, I also took two courses in studio art. I have been teaching writing in college classes off and on for over thirty years, but many of those years included some aspect of art as well. I taught both art and English in high school for three years, and have taught both subjects for

adults on various levels. For several years, I taught Freshman Composition part-time at a community college in the mornings, and then I would change to grubby clothes, run upstairs and teach pottery in the afternoon for the community education department. On my own, I was also drawing, painting, making prints and pottery, keeping journals, writing poetry, and writing professionally--over one hundred and fifty free-lance art reviews for *The Flint Journal*.

When I interviewed for the full-time position at Mott Community College (MCC) in 1989, one of the interviewers asked me if I had integrated my interest in art into the teaching of writing. The question surprised me and wouldn't go away afterwards. At that point, all I could answer honestly was that I had suggested topics related to art for research writing. The question continued to haunt me after I began teaching there full-time, and I began to look for ways to connect my two main interests. Besides composition classes, I was also assigned two sections of Children's Literature. With its emphasis on the connections between pictures and words, I began to see another aspect of this issue.

But even though I have combined art and writing in my life, it has taken me all these years to really explore in depth the connections between these two ways of expression. Until I began thinking about this research, I saw the two modes of expression as parallel but separate, and for the most part, I was aware of them in different ways--different treatments of a subject, even though my creative writing is quite visual and my artwork has clear connections to words. Sometimes I feel as if I paint with words, searching for the specific details which can make those images that I see visible for others, and conversely, I tell stories with my drawings and prints. Picasso has been

quoted as saying, "You can write a picture in words just as you can paint sensations in a poem" (quoted in Root-Bernstein 7).

I was unaware at least on a conscious level of how many other writers also fit this pattern. Michelle and Robert Root-Bernstein list Charles Dickens, Vladimir Nabokov, and Donald Murray among those who have described their visual thinking, and others whose journals include drawings and brush images--D. H. Lawrence, Antoine de St. Exupery, J. R. R. Tolkein, Henry Miller and Charlotte and Emily Bronte (55). Kathleen Hjerter collected and published other writers' art work in *Doubly Gifted: The Author as Visual Artist.*

Through this research, as I have examined the ways writing and drawing were interconnected in the work of these students and as I read the literature on creativity and the role of the visual in thinking, I have come to a better understanding of my own way of seeing. That new understanding caused my teaching to change as well.

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Introduction: Opening Both Eyes and Learning to See In A Drawing Workshop

The first time I personally became aware, like Mary did in my class, of what it means to really *see* was in a three-day intensive drawing workshop in the late 1970s conducted by Frederick Franck, an artist/writer/philosopher/Zen master. On the first day of the class, he took us outside into a carefully tended courtyard at the college to draw with a .05mm 2B mechanical pencil on a large sheet of hard white paper. For my subject, I chose a small branch from a maple tree and followed every little jagged edge as I worked on a larger-than-life drawing.

After a while he came around and peered at my paper thoughtfully, then pointed to one small configuration of lines on my paper and said quietly, "Look at this. You really *saw* it here." It was as if my vision shifted instantaneously and I *saw* that I had seen it there. The leaf sort of shimmered in a clarified air, and I could see it as that particular leaf, in that particular moment, translated into three-dimensions on my two-dimensional paper.

Trying to describe that intensified vision later made me recall the magical images I remembered when, as a child, I looked for the first time through the View Master Santa had brought. I was fascinated by those magnificent views of the Grand Canyon and images of Bambi in the forest, which looked *more* than 3-D. After a few experiments, I realized that the magic only worked when I could keep both my eyes open and focused at the same time, but that more-real-than-life image continued to intrigue me and I remember trying to make my eyes see the real world in the same way.

Franck taught me how. He seemed able to communicate this shifted way of seeing

intuitively somehow, with few words; that workshop changed my artwork, while watching him as a teacher began to change the way I saw my own teaching. Franck described his workshops in a book called *The Awakened Eye* (1979). In many ways, when we went inside to draw the figure, the workshop was like many art classes that I had taken as an undergraduate art major: students were arranged in a large circle behind their easels and the model was placed in the center. As we drew or painted, the teacher would walk around, look at and critique our work.

Franck's departure from this pattern, however, made all the difference. Unlike other teachers, he would spend the first fifteen minutes of every assignment drawing with us, looking at the model carefully for himself before looking at our work. Just as writing teachers who write understand the issues involved with their students' writing better, Franck knew that he could see student work better by drawing himself. Some art teachers speak to every student, pointing out the places where they are going wrong, as English teachers sometimes do in "grading" compositions. Franck, on the other hand, would comment on our drawings only occasionally—looking, and thinking—and only on what was working rather than what was wrong. As he looked at my work, it seemed as if he were helping me re-see my work through his eyes, and I too looked for the good in it. At times it seemed as if it had become possible to look at the figure I was drawing with the same magic of that old View Master.

In that workshop where I was struggling to improve my drawing, at first I drew what I thought Franck wanted me to draw rather than what I saw, rather than really looking. I had to experience what it felt like to *see*--and to have someone point that out to me--in order to know how to do it again on my own. But once I saw it, once I experienced the shift—the View Master 3-D image—I could practice and learn to do it for

myself.

Remembering back to the experience in Franck's workshop eventually helped me begin to understand my students who need to be shown how insight derives from careful looking and seeing. Sometimes I can remember to demonstrate how such insight comes about in their writing; sometimes I can help them realize that they already have it, they just need to awaken to it.

Breaking through and helping students see for themselves is one of my major goals as a composition teacher. Wanting to encourage students to develop this kind of seeing has led me to bring art and writing together in my classes. On occasion, it was as if Frederick Franck with all his patience and understanding of my novice's lack of skills--both in seeing and executing the drawing of what I saw--was hovering just over my shoulder, trying to get me to open my eyes and see the same conditions in my writing students.

Beginning thoughts leading to the research

Perhaps it was Franck's whisperings that finally helped me realize that beginning composition students are probably as limited by their lack of understanding about where to start when asked to write an "essay" as writing teachers might be, if given the assignment to draw a still-life with no drawing instruction. I remembered especially my writing classes in the 70s before the influence of research on the writing process changed my pedagogy, before it had even occurred to me to do any pre-writing exercises, much less asking students to draw. An experiment to test this idea came to me almost in a vision. I could see an empty classroom where a still-life was arranged--a bowl of fruit, a wine bottle, and a loaf of bread on a table under a spotlight. A group of writing teachers came in and were given a handful of charcoal and conte crayons, ebony pencils and kneaded erasers, and a large sheet of gray paper. They were simply told to draw the still life with no other

directions. In my mind's eye I could clearly see those teachers searching back to elementary school days for memories of how to draw, wondering what to do with these tools. Their confusion mirrored the expressions I saw on the faces of some freshman students when I asked them to write an essay for the first time.

At a faculty development meeting in 1995, I asked about a dozen of my colleagues to participate in an experiment. Due to the limits of time, rather than set up a still life of fruit, I placed an ordinary student chair on a table in the middle of the room and asked them to draw it, to describe it, and then to write about it physically and metaphorically, and then to write about how each activity felt to them. As they talked about their reactions to the exercise, they spoke of how their eyes were opened to the connections between the two composing processes, but also to the kind of fear that comes from not understanding the skills required for a task, or from facing the judgment of one's peers. Two of the attending members of the faculty were artists; one of them said she was really intimidated by the drawing exercise at first since everyone knew she also had a degree in art, and her desire to do well inhibited her drawing. At the other extreme, one teacher said he felt totally inept at drawing, and went on to make the connection that this might be how his weaker writing students might feel, facing writing assignments in his class.

In this second case, the drawing functioned to open the teacher's eyes to empathize with the feelings of people whose strengths are in a non-linguistic domain and, perhaps, encouraged him to alter his teaching accordingly. With further instruction, he might have been able to use his writer's observation skills to improve his drawing just as students strong in the visual domain might be helped by seeing the similarities between the skills with which they are already comfortable and those which they are trying to learn.

The interest that was aroused when I discussed this topic with other faculty members after that meeting and at conferences initiated my evangelical advocacy of using drawing to help students write better. It seemed to me that drawing in a writing class could solve many of the problems I had not been able to find an answer for in my teaching career—primarily student boredom and dislike for writing, and fear of it—and the problem that some students do not fare well with the traditionally accepted concept of "the writing process." This experiment with my colleagues was the seed from which the decision to research the effects of drawing in a college writing class ultimately grew.

Once the seed was planted, it was fed and watered by the persistent awareness that my own writing process (and consequently my teaching of writing) had never fit the "expected patterns." Planning first rarely happens for me in my writing. As I write, my thought is spurred by noticing something that is unusual or connected in some way to ideas I have already been working on, and then the idea grows somewhat organically—never in a linear fashion. My exploring the effects of drawing on student writing was analogous to studying how my own composing process differed from others. Although drawing works for some, for others, it is a distraction or an impediment. I wanted to find out more about those students for whom drawing seemed to be a catalyst for writing improvement.

Early experiments with drawing and writing

I occasionally began to ask composition students to draw in class in the early 1990s, long before I had any theoretical reason to do so. In the beginning, I asked them to draw simply because most of them found it enjoyable. Since I loved art and writing equally, it was a way to fuse my two loves, and it seemed to be a good way to engage students in the thought processes from which writing evolved. Anything that spoke of

creativity energized my teaching. But in the beginning, the connections between words and images seemed so obvious to me that I did not try to articulate the theory behind this practice. Using both modes of expression was a natural extension of my own ways of exploring my thoughts and thus I carried it over to my writing classes. I liked being unique and encouraging students to think in different ways, breaking the stereotype of what they expected from the "dreaded" English class. In addition, I was curious about art therapy connections.

More pragmatically however, and more realistically, I observed that when writing students drew, many of them seemed to tap memories that they could write about with more ease than free-writing alone. For example, when they drew maps of their neighborhoods or floor plans of their childhood homes, marking places where significant events had taken place, they seemed to come up with meaningful ideas for personal experience essays more quickly. Drawing seemed to help some of them think about their topics in ways that some found productive, like talking or free-writing did for others. In addition, working in groups to draw a turning point in a short story or the main point of an essay illustrated how one formed images in one's mind from the reading and seemed to provide less threatening ways to encourage analysis. Through group drawings, students became aware of how much detail is necessary to make an image concrete. They also became aware of the function of metaphor by thinking of ways to draw abstract concepts. Working in groups also made drawing less threatening since those who felt inadequate at it could play the role of advisor.

Some of my early ideas came from sources less traditional than textbooks. One important source was J. Ruth Gendler's *Book of Qualities.* She posed such questions as "How would 'Anger' speak?" and "Who would her friends be?" To answer, she drew

gestures of human characteristics to accompany the short character sketches in which she personified the qualities. Having students do similar sketches—in words and lines—offered a fine visual vehicle to accompany the use of definition as a mode of writing.

A second source of ideas was right brain/left brain research, which I heard about first in an interview with Gabriele Rico on New Dimensions Radio (NPR) in 1983 after the publication of *Writing the Natural Way.* She spoke about using the technique of clustering which she developed along with other non-linear pre-writing processes to encourage writers to access their creativity--which Rico calls "the Design Mind" associated with what has been known as the "right brain." In the first edition of *Writing the Natural Way*, Rico established the emphasis that has guided much of the rest of her work to encourage what she calls "natural" writing.

> Clustering is a nonlinear brainstorming process akin to free association. It makes an invisible Design-mind process visible through a nonlinear spilling out of lightning associations that allows patterns to emerge (1983, 28).

From the first time I used it, clustering seemed to me to tap into the same kinds of non-linear thinking processes that drawing did, and to allow for growth and making connections that were less obvious than divisions in an outline, since the writer was not limited in the amount of space available for expanding and connecting ideas. At a National Council for Teachers of English conference, Rico presented an adaptation of this technique that she called "reverse-clustering," in which students/writers are asked to listen to the reading of some text, poem or otherwise, and then respond by writing words around an empty circle. They do not fill in the center of the cluster until after they have seen the details and small parts. Seeing the results that this technique was able to produce in only minutes impressed me and I began to use that in my classes as well. It allows for

leaps of mind like clustering, but working in reverse allows writers to explore widely before focusing on the point that was guiding the discovery.

Some of the drawing ideas I used in the beginning adapted from textbooks. Diana Hacker and Betty Renshaw's *Writing With a Voice: A Rhetoric and Handbook* (1989) was the first text that I used in a first semester composition class that included alternative planning techniques such as clustering and mapping (their version is clustering with the addition of pictures). As I talked with students about these exercises, I gradually began to see ways that connecting drawing with writing is a logical extension of this non-linear invention process.

Nevertheless, drawing remained marginal in my teaching until I read *Forming/Thinking/ Writing* (Berthoff 1988) and *Writing From the Margins* (Hill 1992) around 1994. (See Chapter 1 for more on this.) With those books, I became consciously aware that there were good pedagogical reasons for incorporating drawing into the writing class. And yet, despite the significant connection between the two modes of expression, it seemed harder to articulate the connections within composition theory than I expected. Even though students found it enjoyable, it was sometimes hard to convince them--and other writing teachers--to look at these connections as valuable, as something other than decoration or a pleasant diversion from the "real" work.

In addition, the pleasure factor was suspect, to borrow T. J. Johnson's term. Johnson identifies the enjoyment of writing advocated by some corners of the composition theory world as the cause for some of the more problematic practices within the field such as error hunting. He writes that according to some critics, the pleasure factor is "the paradox that perhaps divides our field at its very heart. The enthusiasm and pleasure, the 'sensational rush,' that colored our profession when it first began to form are, in a very

real sense, unprofessional" (629). Students have also learned to be suspicious about anything that is enjoyable about writing, and about any practice that might lead them to reveal too much about themselves.

Even so, education and composition theorists have written much that I could build on and reexamine to support my decision to explore the effects of including drawing in my composition classes. Plenty of evidence suggests that drawing may add a dimension to writing by reaching more people and giving them ideas for ways to write better. Although I make no claim that this kind of evidence is transferable to other students, in this study I examine in detail how four writers have incorporated drawing into their work.

Nancie Atwell, whose research has been praised for its forward-looking examination of her own practices and for encouraging reform in the language arts curriculum, is an example of the way we react with blinders to anything not-language. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents* (1987) opens with a discussion of Atwell's first difficult encounter in her new position as eighth grade teacher in rural Maine. Jeff, one of her students, was "big, almost sixteen," she wrote, and his reading and writing abilities were the lowest she had ever encountered (5). Jeff would whisper to himself everyday in class as he drew pictures. Then he would go home and write the stories he had drawn. She kept telling him "stop drawing and *get to work*" (7; Italic in the text). Atwell saw drawing, as T. J. Johnson might have pointed out, as being pleasurable, and therefore, not beneficial.

Atwell says that reading "The Child, the Writing Process, and the Role of the Professional" (1975) in which Donald Graves described a seven-year old writer who rehearsed his writing through drawing, opened her to an understanding about Jeff's writing process. She writes:

> Graves's words rang loud in my head for days. Seven-year-old John called up too many images of sixteen-year-old Jeff, images I wanted to forget. Instead, I remembered how I'd done my level best to overlook and overcome all evidence that my helpful structures had served Jeff as constraints. And in Jeff's case, the evidence was blatant—all that talking to himself and all those drawings....
>
> I was lucky Jeff had insisted I let him go his own way. But I'd missed the chance to understand what I was seeing and support what he was doing, to talk with him about his drawing and writing, to learn from him how to help him (8).

Atwell said that Graves's words had made her realize that she had everything so confined and constricted that it allowed no room for student choice, or for real writing (6).

Although Atwell does not follow up on her observation of the connections between drawing and writing for her student, the example did open up for me rich suggestions for research. Students like Jeff (and even professional writers) who need to rehearse their writing in ways other than words do not stop benefiting from that rehearsal just because they grow into adulthood. This need for rehearsal by moving, drawing, talking, or doing some other activity arises not from their weaknesses but because people have different strengths, different ways of thinking. Karen Ernst, a middle school art teacher reassigned to teach writing, has also used the term "rehearsal": "The students were involved in this drawing as a way of seeing. I knew this was a way to open their minds to new possibilities and have them rehearse for upcoming projects...." (Picturing 127). From my experience in Franck's workshop and my View Master memories, I also knew that seeing and expressing are recursive and that each can make the other more intense.

The process of accessing the ideas that generate writing is much more complex than some handbooks imply. Students realize this, saying again and again, "I can't get what is in my mind onto the paper." To extend Rico's clustering and other verbal techniques for accessing "Design Mind" to a non-verbal level beyond clustering, and to

extend beyond Peter Elbow's free-writing, I determined to explore supplemental non-verbal methods of accessing and developing ideas. My previous experience with student drawings, particularly with those who describe their experience as eye-opening, led me to ask what effects incorporating visual exercises into the writing curriculum would have on their writing. By closely examining the work of a few students drawing and writing, I look for answers to that question.

A brief description of the study

I began my research by asking the following question: "What happens when drawing exercises are integrated into the work of a writing class?" Having read much about what others saw as the value of drawing and visual literacy, I had many assumptions about what I expected to find, beginning with Martha Davidson Johnson's assertions that drawing had helped alleviate apprehension in her New York University students. Since writing apprehension clearly is a major cause for freshman students to have problems with writing, I wanted to extend her research by finding ways to apply it with my own students.

The course that provided the material for the beginning of my study was a Composition 101 section that met for three hours each Saturday morning during the fall semester of 1998. Laura, my colleague at MCC, the community college where I have taught for fifteen years, incorporated several drawing activities into her writing curriculum in all four of her classes that semester. I observed most of the sessions of the Saturday class, taking notes on what happened, particularly focusing on the students' responses to the drawing and writing. I interviewed four of Laura's students while they were enrolled in her class and again in subsequent semesters. In addition, I continued to ask my own composition students to draw and write during that fall semester, as well as in subsequent semesters, later adding two of the students from my fall class to this study.

Interviewing the Composition 101 students and examining their work has allowed me to examine what students say about the way drawing affected their composing processes. It seems likely that they are representative of many students who bring with them more visual strengths than verbal. Until this study, I had only observed their writing and drawing from a distance without understanding the deeper implications that drawing has involved in their writing particularly in the composing process. In the beginning, when I selected subjects, I had no real sense of the effects that having visual thinking strengths might have on writers, and so I selected students who exhibited some interest in drawing and in my research rather than a set of specific predetermined characteristics. The major determining factor was whether or not they were willing to take time to talk with me and to let me examine their work. The volunteers represent a range of students.

Questions: the focus of the research

As I talked with and studied the writing and drawings of the students who volunteered to participate in my research, I gradually realized that there was a much larger issue at work, since not all these students were really interested in the drawing exercises. That led me to further questions:

--How does drawing affect the steps in the writing process of those students, e.g., invention, discovery of detail, and revision?

--How does drawing affect their attitudes toward writing?

--How does drawing affect the students' understanding of their writing process?

These questions are the focus of my study.

Other related secondary questions grew out of my reading: How does drawing help students access other ways of knowing? What are the rhetorical effects of drawing on writing? Are there long-term effects on the students' overall progress and carry-over to

other academic work? Those questions turned out to be too large for the scope of this study and will be addressed in the last chapter as implications for future research.

It should be stated early on that drawing in the classes in which my research was conducted was a tool for something larger, a way of looking at writing from a visual as well as verbal perspective. Along with drawing, other non-verbal approaches such as talking and responding to visual images were used to supplement conventional text-centered approaches. Many factors contributed to the final results of the work of these students. As is true of all research situations, the fact that I was there conducting the research, talking with them beyond the ordinary class time about their work, focusing their thinking on it in a metacognitive way that exceeded that of the other students, were factors that played a part in the end results which cannot be measured, but which must be taken into consideration.

Assumptions

In the beginning of the study I was working on the basis of several assumptions. As I worked with the students in this study and those who followed in subsequent semesters, I began to realize first, that attempting to do all this in one study was too much, and second, my preconceived notions kept me from being objective.

Some of my beliefs about writing that were influential include the notion that students who come into a writing class with inhibiting fears will have greater difficulty than those who are more at ease with it, and that giving students a range of choices within helpful guidelines is important. I think that focused free-writing, particularly if it is demonstrated effectively, can be beneficial, and that doodling and other mark-making helps take away the stigma some might feel about ruining clean white paper as they begin. Another assumption is that for some, asking them to write more *words* as an invention

device can be inhibiting, especially if they already lack confidence in their ability with words.

Other assumptions include the concept that being able to observe carefully is crucial to a writer, and that higher order thinking involves making connections based on such observation, and may well include the need to express that meaning in the form of metaphor or other figures of speech. I believe that teaching the importance of revision is very important and that any technique that can get students to think about their writing in different ways can help them find ways to do so. For revision to be effective, it is important for students to be able to talk about their work metacognitively in order to determine what kinds of changes to make in what they have written. In addition, understanding that there is more than one composing process is essential; students need an understanding of their own writing habits and instructors need flexibility in encouraging them to explore the many possibilities.

Terminology

Kimon Nicolaides in the introduction to *The Natural Way to Draw* cautions, "If you have ever tried it, you will realize how difficult it is to speak clearly and concisely of art" (4). Nevertheless, to clarify my use of terms within the following pages, (some of which are admittedly troublesome) I include here a few definitions and observations, first adapted from references and then made specific by my own interpretations and uses. (Unless otherwise indicated, actual definitions are adapted from the *American Heritage College Dictionary.)*

Drawing: the process of inscribing a likeness or image on a surface with a pencil or other marking implement. The term is used here primarily in reference to doing two kinds of tasks for the purpose of exploring images. The first task involves drawing from a model of

some sort, while in the second, one attempts to draw his or her mental images in order to make them concrete. "Drawing" as Nicolaides describes it then is a process, different from "making drawings" or creating works of art (2).

Art: (see Nicolaides above) an elusive term. Most uses of this word in this study refer either to a work deemed to be a "conscious production or arrangement in a manner that affects the sense of beauty, specifically the production of the beautiful in a graphic or plastic medium" or a program of study in which participants intend to learn to create such works.

Visual arts: drawing, painting, print-making, collage, photographs, or other two-dimensional works that have been consciously constructed for some aesthetic purpose.

Artist: For this definition I defer to Rudolf Arnheim who asks (and then answers) . . .

> Does the artist experience world and life differently from the ordinary man [sic]? There is no good reason to think so. He must be deeply concerned with—and impressed by—these experiences. He also must have the wisdom of finding significance in individual occurrences by understanding them as symbols of universal truth. These qualities are indispensable, but they are not limited to artists. The artist's privilege is the capacity to apprehend the nature and meaning of an experience in terms of a given medium and thus make it tangible. The non-artist is left "speechless" by the fruits of his sensitive wisdom. He cannot congeal them in adequate form. He can express *himself*, more or less articulately, but not his experience. In the moments in which a human being is an artist, he finds shape for the bodiless structure of what he has felt" (Arnheim,1974, 163, Italic in the text).

Visualize: "1. To form a mental image of, 2. To make visible."

Imagine: "1. To form a mental picture or image of. 2. To think; conjecture. 3. To have a notion of or about without adequate foundation; fantasy."

Although the first definitions of these last two terms are almost identical, the sense of thinking and fantasy suggested by the word "imagine" gives it the connotation that it refers to something unreal. Imagining is larger and can involve other sensory material, whereas visualizing depends primarily on creating images with the inner eye. Imagining and visualizing feel as if they happen in different parts of my brain; while "visualizing"

occurs in the front part of my head, "imagining" seems to take place in an area behind my ears.

Visual thinking. Another elusive and difficult term, one that has not been sufficiently defined to my way of thinking, although many have tried. Following implications of the research of Sarah Dennis Eldridge and others, visual thinking seems to begin with seeing generalities or the "whole" first, and differentiating parts later, or as Arnheim describes it in reference to the ways children perceive and draw, "Vision as experience differs in two important ways from 'photographic' projection. It does not register the complete set of individual detail contained in the retinal image . . . perception does not start from particulars, which are secondarily processed into abstractions by the intellect, but from generalities . . . with simple, over-all structural features" (1974, 160). The term "visual thinking" as these writers continue to describe it, seems to refer to a way of seeing the world that is somewhat similar to the term "right-brain" thinking used by others.

Left-brain/Right brain research: Since the differentiation in the functions of the two-sides of the brain became a popular topic in the 1960s, writers have applied the theory to both drawing (Betty Edwards, Mona Brookes) and writing (Gabriele Rico). Later researchers have called this dichotomizing the functions of the two halves of the brain an oversimplification and far too limited as an explanation for how the brain works. Some have preferred to think of the split as being a metaphor rather than reality, emphasizing that although various parts of the brain carry out specific functions, the whole brain is necessary for complex thinking processes. There are, however, at least two different kinds of thinking which might be characterized as linear and non-linear; most writers agree that these must be used in conjunction with each other in order for thinking to be effective.

Outline of the Dissertation:

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the pertinent research on the relationship between visual and verbal modes, drawn from the fields of art, psychology, and composition theory. It looks at the role of metaphor in writing and teaching writing, connections

between visual imagery and writing and in creativity, and at drawing as a tool for rehearsal before writing. It examines research on visual thinking and the composing process, providing a theoretical framework for analyzing the work of these case studies.

Chapter 2 describes the design of the research, its setting and context, how participants became part of the study, the nature of the data and the procedure followed in collecting it. It describes the nature and method of the interviews and suggests the themes and frames through which the data will be analyzed.

Chapter 3 describes the two classes in which the students did the drawing/writing activities--the class that I observed and the class I taught. It introduces a general overview of how drawing was introduced in Laura's class, and in mine, showing some of the images students drew to illustrate the exercises. It also includes comments taken from the students' journals and from transcriptions of the classes that were taped, and from my class observation notes and journals.

Chapters 4 and 5 are the heart of the study, presenting in detail the writing and drawing of four students and the processes by which they created them. By examining drafts of the essays and their drawings as they worked on them, and extracting information from the transcriptions of the interviews and their written comments about their essays, I present the story of the way drawing fit into and contributed to their writing processes.

Chapter 6 discusses results suggested by student work presented in chapters 4 and 5, looking at and contextualizing the themes in the work of the four students as a whole, referring back to the literature review for support.

Chapter 7 concludes by summarizing findings and suggesting implications for further research brought to light by this project.

Chapter 1: Seeing The Connections Between the Visual and the Verbal Through Others' Eyes

Three dissertation research projects have laid the foundation for my research: Martha Davidson Johnson's work at New York University, *Drawing in a College Writing Class: A Heuristic Approach to Composing*, (1994) in which she focused primarily on the effects of drawing to reduce writing apprehension; Susan Rich Sheridan's research at the University of Massachusetts on a specific drawing program that she devised to work with dyslexic middle-schoolers, *Drawing/Writing and the New Literacy: Where Verbal Meets Visual (1996)*; the most directly related is Sarah Dennis Eldridge's *Discovery by Design: A Writing Course for Visual Artists* (1990) at Carnegie Mellon University, research based on the belief that Fine Arts students begin composing from a different perspective than verbal thinkers.

Each of these researchers began with overviews that included varying combinations of topics such as the history of writing (pictorial beginnings), multiple intelligences and brain research, and the lack of focus on visual thinking and/or visual literacy in today's education, slanting their overviews to support the narrower area of the individual focuses. Even seen together, this research leaves much more to be investigated concerning the way visual expression intersects with verbal, especially with adults.

In addition to these dissertations, Patricia Dunn's 2001 book, *Talking Sketching Moving: Multiple Literacies in the Teaching of Writing,* provides an important, thorough, and insightful theoretical background for extending our theories of knowing into non-verbal areas. As the title indicates, only the first of these deals with drawing. Since Dunn characterizes her work as "an argument," a "hermeneutical mode of inquiry," rather than a case study, history or report, her work leaves the field open for just such a case study.

My purpose in proposing to conduct this case study to investigate the effects of drawing on writing in a composition class was both broader and less specific than either Johnson's or Sheridan's. I surmised that, if it were true, as Johnson showed, that drawing did help alleviate apprehension and facilitate a shift to right brain thinking, further research might uncover some of the reasons why and how that might be true. Since the reduction of apprehension was essentially the sole conclusion Johnson reached, I wanted to extend that work and see if there were other effects to be discovered. Having little apparent training as an artist, some of the exercises used in Johnson's study were borrowed from Betty Edwards *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. Edwards' exercises were designed to promote a shift to right brain, particularly to demonstrate to students that they could draw, if they learned to make this visual shift.

Sheridan's work was based on a more extensive examination of brain research, the history of language, and brain research. However, her research had a therapeutic aim, which, although admirable, did not seem appropriate or feasible in a one-semester college writing course. Working with middle school students daily throughout an entire year, Sheridan (an art teacher) was able to spend far more time with drawing instruction than a writing class could afford, even if the instructor were trained to do so. She has since done more extensive work with neurological aspects of drawing and young children.

Eldridge's course for Fine Arts students provides a sort of flip-side view of the study I have conducted, building on the assumption that students had previously developed an understanding of their visual thinking abilities and drawing skills. Eldridge (a university English teacher with studio art experience of her own) proposed reading and

writing assignments that would make connections between writing and what they were doing in their art classes in order to improve their writing. She wrote,

> If writing can be seen as a language system that enables them to discover *how* they think and know *what* they intuitively think and know, their desire to write may increase. Most important, if writing can be seen as a language system that also can expand their powers of observation, abstraction, and form manipulation, their attitudes about the importance of writing may change to some degree (30, Italic in the text).

My research is founded on an examination of the possibility of the reverse of these points--that is, writing students may find that *art* is a language that "can expand their powers of observation, abstraction, and form manipulation," and thus change their attitude about writing. Likewise, when asked to draw, those students who come into the composition class already having developed a visual way of knowing may experience the same kinds of results Eldridge hoped for with her art students. The key here may lie in changing the mode of discussion, using an alternate sign system with which metacognitive understanding may come easier.

Eldridge's observation that fine arts students "have more difficulty seeing themselves effectively thinking and composing in expository writing—a logical, verbal language activity—than in their major area of study—an imagistic, visual language activity," leads her to design activities she claims play to their tendency to begin by thinking of the large-picture first and moving to detail later. Having been an artist herself, she assumes that her art students are at least tacitly aware of their visual strengths, and that by choosing to major in the fine arts, they have chosen a field that plays to that strength. However, there are many others who have not recognized the nature of their visual dominance and the way it can serve as a foundation for developing their writing ability. Those who have not had a special writing course designed for them such as

Eldridge's must stumble upon ways to develop from where they are or fail. Laura (my colleague and collaborator in this research) and I could not assume that the students in a generic composition class would have art training to build on, even though we expected to find some students whose thinking was more visual in nature there.

Eldridge's course was designed in a way that she believed would help fine arts students integrate the two ways of thinking described in *The Metaphorical Mind.* In that book, Bob Samples claims that verbal and visual communication are based on "two integrated qualities of mind:

--the ability to see things discretely, sequentially, and logically, and

--our ability to see things holistically, simultaneously, and metaphorically" (1). Eldridge observed that visual arts students "do not often identify with the first quality of mind because it houses rational, predictable, conforming characteristics" (1). Essays by and about artists' work provided the basis for discussions in her course, with the intention of helping art students modify and adapt their understanding of visual composing to form a foundation for understanding composing with words. Interestingly, although Eldridge assumes that art students' visual composing process differs from the way they are instructed in writing classes to compose in text, she does not acknowledge that there are various composing processes for both art and artists as well as there are for writers.

As Patricia Dunn points out in *Talking Sketching Moving: Multiple Literacies in the Teaching of Writing,* composition teachers are not aware of the extent to which we believe in "the primacy of language" as *the* way of knowing. She says we take evidence for its importance from places "that are shaped by, and shape, our beliefs about language and learning," and thus seldom examine "our beliefs about what it means to know" (17).

She cites compositionists such as Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, bell hooks, and Sharon Crowley, among others, who have criticized schools for having "unfairly privileged" written language, but she notes that their critique "never seems to be taken seriously for very long" (18). Beyond that, she agrees with Thomas G. West's assessment of the contributions to society made by mathematicians and scientists who were gifted visual thinkers. Extending his observations, she writes,

> We need the outside-the-box thinking that visual thinkers can do. They might have trouble seeing the intricacies of the part, but they can clearly see the whole. They can synthesize and analyze quickly. They seize a global vision of a system at once, manipulate it, turn it around, and look at it from different perspectives--all inside their heads. They can visualize solutions long before they can explain them easily in words to their colleagues (24).

This outside-the-box thinking is also important for writers.

Multiple ways of knowing research

One of Dunn's major additions to the research into Multiple Intelligences theory is her re-examination of the" lost threads" of thought in the work of such writers as Janet Emig ("Hand, Eye, Brain"), Nancy Martin, James Britton, and Lev Vygotsky who have emphasized nonverbal aspects of composing. However, she focuses an entire chapter on Paulo Freire's "insistence on what he called 'the use of multiple channels of communication,' (1003, 49), which took advantage of different people's aural, spatial, visual, and kinesthetic ways of knowing to help them problematize the 'codifications' in his culture circles (37). She says that for the most part, compositionists have ignored this aspect of Freire's work that focuses on the non-verbal, just as they have ignored others who have called attention to this area of knowing, since it does not fit with their theories.

Researchers who are looking into the theoretical and pedagogical applications required by theories of multiple ways of knowing fall roughly into three areas. First,

psychologist Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory opened the way for the popular movement it has spurred, particularly in the public schools, after he expanded his research on the role of art in human development. Second, several researchers have studied "visual literacy," calling for the need to train students to utilize the vast array of visual media in contemporary society (see particularly McQuade and McQuade's college text *Seeing/Writing,* and the extensive collection of essays edited by Flood, Heath and Lapp). A branch of this research includes an emphasis on the significant role of the visual in applying computer use to the teaching of writing. (See the work of Diana George and John Trimbur, Susan Hilligoss, and Ann Wysocki). These theorists have pointed out the importance of visual design in websites and most new handbooks now include a section on this topic. As a sidelight to their work with computers, George, Hilligoss and Wysocki also presented practical uses of art in college classes in a half -day session as part of 2000 CCCC's focus on "Visualizing Literacy."

A third major area of research into the connections between drawing and writing has focused on children's acquisition of literacy. The importance of drawing in the child's development of writing is undisputed (Harste, Woodward and Burke, Ruth Hubbard, Karen Ernst, Janet Olsen, Ann Dyson, and Mona Brookes and many who followed them). The research into these connections between drawing and writing with young children has been extended into the middle school through the work of Karen Ernst, Janet Olson, Ruth Hubbard and many others. James Moffett, influenced by Rudolf Steiner's psychological perspectives, asserts that art and music should be a central focus of the curriculum, particularly in elementary school. Waldorf schools, which are based on Steiner's work, do place art and music at the center of all their classes, not just

elementary (Richards 1964). In addition, art educators, working through the support of the Getty Foundation, have developed an extensive program they have called "Discipline Based Art Education," to promote understanding of the vital role art plays in education. Miles Myers and Gunther Kress have also explored these connections. Myers' thesis is that the ability to translate between sign systems is crucial to the kinds of literacy required in today's society, which has shifted from the decoding/analytic literacy prevalent up to 1916 to a "critical/translation literacy," Myers' term for what educators call "higher-order thinking skills" (16).

According to Karen Ernst, "Children know instinctively that a picture is a story, that a picture can help them find their voice, and that pictures in combination with writing can help them imagine, create, think, see, wonder, understand, and communicate." Adults, on the other hand, are expected to find voice, to form images, and to create primarily through thought and words.

With these few exceptions, none of these studies have explored in similar depth the connections between the writing and drawing of adults. Even though it is not widely known in the composition field, an estimated 25% of humans are visual thinkers, and another 25% lean more in the direction of visual thinking than verbal. Only 25% are strongly verbal thinkers, and another 25% lean more toward verbal thinking. (McKim, Hobson). For the most part, curriculum design neither acknowledges nor recognizes this difference in thinking styles, even though many scientists, inventors, and other creative thinkers work heavily with visual thought processes. (Shepard, West, Root-Bernstein).

And even though lip-service is given to the arts in public schools, a large number of students have even more serious doubts about their ability to draw than they do about

writing. Many of those who are stronger in visual thinking have not been encouraged to build on this strength in order to improve their writing in the way that Eldridge proposed for her fine arts students. Thus they are doubly handicapped, as opposed to doubly gifted, as Kathleen G. Hjerter called those artist-writers who were strong in both areas.

The research of Patricia Dunn, as well as Howard Gardner and others, implies that students who have strengths other than verbal and logical may need help to understand how the visual and verbal communication processes are similar. Visual thinking students who have not been trained as artists may not have developed this strength. If they find their way to college at all, or if they stay, many may "flounder through" composition classes (as one of the students in my case studies described her first experience in a college writing class). At the very least, it is necessary for these students to discover how to build on their visual thinking strengths. By asking what happens when drawing is included in the writing process, my research is intended to shed some light on this issue.

What is Visual Thinking?

In a complex book-length analysis of writings and interviews with "experienced thinkers," Vera John-Steiner asserts that, "there is a diversity of representational codes or languages of the mind . . . [and] language is but one of several codes (or symbol systems) that constitute human thought" (xvi). She explores the ways people think, through visual, kinesthetic and verbal modes of reflection and expression, and the symbol systems they use. She defines visual thinking as

> . . . the representation of knowledge in the form of structures in motion; it is the study of relationships of these forms and structures; it is the flow of images as pictures, diagrams, explanatory models, orchestrated paintings of immense ideas and simple gestures; it is working with schemes and structures of the mind (109).

Visual thinking allows one to make an image which can represent both the whole and the focused area at once; if this were represented pictorially, the viewer would be able to choose which areas to examine and in what order to examine them. Although it might seem to be connected to the right brain dominance as it has been defined by some brain researchers in the 1980s and '90s, there seems to be a difference in the way visual thinking is viewed by such writers as Rudolf Arnheim, Elliot Eisner and others who have focused on visual thinking rather than brain research. For them, visual thinking is a different way of organizing thought than the forward-moving, linear flow of words on a page, in space, not in time, as Oskar Kokoschka described his way of thinking (John-Steiner 21). Eldridge describes it as moving from the whole to the parts, and says that

> Thinking in pictures, patterns, or models may create or recreate thought in ways that are closer to the complexity of life experiences that occur concomitantly and not in the linear system of verbal thought (21).

Neither John-Steiner nor Eldridge allow for the reality that even though words appear to express thought in a linear fashion because of the nature of their placement on the page, the way most writers arrive at those words is a far-from-linear process. Even reading is not linear in the sense that when one arrives at the end of a paragraph, a chapter, or a book, the cumulative effect of the last-read facts change the reader's understanding and reception of what went before. Thus, reading and writing, like drawing and viewing a picture or visual image, are *recursive* processes, which beginning writers often mistakenly miss, not being privy to the growing process of a piece of writing.

According to John-Steiner, the concept of visual thinking does not imply that the thinker must express herself in pictures but rather that the inner thought process occurs in the form of imagery rather than words, and that all people think visually, even if some do

so more than others. McKim corroborates this point. Furthermore, visual thinking is not limited to a visual form of expression as one might at first think. In addition to the most obvious, the language of art, visual thinkers express themselves in verbal language, in mathematical terms, and in science, among others. Likewise, some artists seem to be equally strong in verbal domains than others, taking their inspiration from words.

John-Steiner believes that "the transformation of their inner image-world into graphic forms is more complex and elusive than is the transformation of inner speech into expressive and poetic language" (27). She cites the view of Gestalt psychologists, Rudolf Arnheim particularly, who considers words as secondary in shaping thought, and says that "concepts are perceptual images and that thought operations are the handling of these images . . . .Visual thinking calls . . . for the ability to see visual shapes as images of the patterns of forces that underlie our existence—the functioning of minds, of bodies or machines, the structure of societies or ideas" (1969, 227; also qtd. in John-Steiner 86). Behaviorists, on the other hand, believe that "thinking takes place primarily through a reliance upon internalized language . . . [Allan Paivio wrote] 'This is one of the classical behaviorist arguments—imagery is subjective and inferential, words are objective and manageable'" (John-Steiner 87).

McKim points out that many people in many occupations as diverse as surgeon, architect, or mechanic think visually. He identifies three kinds of visual thinking—the images that we see, those we imagine, and those that we draw—and talks about the ways they interact.

> Where seeing and drawing overlap, seeing facilitates drawing, while drawing invigorates seeing. Where drawing and imagining overlap, drawing stimulates and expresses imagining, while imagining provides impetus and material for drawing. Where imagining and seeing overlap, imagination directs

> and filters seeing, while seeing, in turn, provides raw material for imagining.... Cycling between perceptual, inner, and graphic images, they continue until the problem is solved (9).

Psychologists Dawna Markova and Dee Coulter have researched the role of visual thinking in creativity. Their theories support each other in that they suggest that creativity emerges from different levels of one's consciousness. Coulter is particularly interested in the "felt sense" of human consciousness and how a physical "gesture" is connected with deep-seated memories.

Markova contends that humans vary widely in the way they perceive the world. All people are affected by visual, kinesthetic and audial input; what differs is the level on which each particular kind of input affects each individual. For example, an individual might access the same memory in three ways: on the conscious level one might respond most readily by accessing a visual picture of the memory, then react to the sounds of the recalled incident on a feeling level, and then on a subconscious level, the person might remember the touch of an arm around one's shoulder. Another person might follow a quite different pattern, recall the touch on a conscious level, the sight on a feeling level, and finally, subconsciously be affected by recalling the sounds associated with the memory (1-48). Markova describes six combinations of "perceptual channel patterns," depending on which state of mind (conscious, subconscious, or unconscious) is affected or activated most deeply by visual, audial, or kinesthetic input.

Dee Coulter, in studies similar to those of Robert and Michelle Root-Bernstein and Vera John-Steiner, has looked at journals of well-known creative people to explain the way creativity grows. As these other writers discovered, visual imagery plays a large role in their work. Coulter cites Einstein who said that he could tell in his physical body

when a realization was beginning; then after it became an image, he could talk about it and write about it, and only after those stages could he create a mathematical formula to express it. This quote seems to corroborate Markova's explanation of one way of accessing creative knowledge.

Both Markova and Coulter suggest that visual imagery is one stage in a complex thinking process, a point that is relevant to this study in that it suggests that different writers will be affected by different kinds of input, and on different levels. Combining these theories with Gardner's multiple intelligence theory has deep implications for the teaching of writing. However, no one has researched the way drawing functions within visual thinking and how it affects the writing process in any specific sense, a factor that supports the need for my study.

Rationale for including drawing in the writing process

As writing teachers, we may assume that everyone approaches writing in approximately the same way as we do, and thus expect that the methods that work for us will also work for our students. The ways we understand and describe the writing process to a large extent determines the ways we teach writing. If free writing has worked to get us past writing blocks, we say, "Just keep writing. When you come to a block, write, 'I can't think of anything to write,'" rather than suggesting that writers might choose to doodle, consciously visualize a situation, or get up and move around for a few minutes.

Similar preconceptions on the part of students keep them thinking that good writing is determined by one's knowledge and control of grammar or spelling, or that academic writing must be "just the facts" as a student told me recently. It is important to examine these preconceptions students bring with them as well as preconceptions of

teachers, preconceptions of how we see ourselves as writers, compared to how others see themselves as writers, particularly those who do not feel at ease with it.

Compositionists may have as much trouble envisioning how one might compose "holistically, simultaneously and metaphorically" as art students do seeing how to write "discretely, sequentially, and logically," to paraphrase and extend Sarah Dennis Eldridge's observations.

In her well-known ethnographic study, *Academic Literacies*, Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater conducts a remarkable study of two writers who do not fit the model of thinking that succeeds best in the academy. Beginning in an English class called "Prose Writing" at the University of New Hampshire, Chiseri-Strater sets out to study the literacy practices of typical upper level undergraduate students. She follows two students, Anna, an art history major and Nick, a former art major, now turned political science major into their other classes and into their personal lives over the span of a year. She learns more than she had originally intended. Although she does not seem to understand its significance until the conclusion of her book, Chiseri-Strater's examination of Anna's and Nick's reading and writing, within the university and in their private lives, also provides a picture of the work of students who follow the visual thinking pattern Eldridge described.

A critical section in Chiseri-Strater's analysis comes when she has observed several sessions of Anna's art history class. Chiseri-Strater reports that

> The complexity of the reading, connecting, and interpreting the various modern art movements dazzles me; there are artistic responses, reactions, and statements against the establishment, against other artists, and sometimes against an artist's earlier work. There is autobiographical information, visual information, and sociopolitical information, which are woven into a rather rough texture of modern art in my mind. As I struggle with this sorting process, I wonder how Anna is doing (64).

But when she had asked Anna about her response to all this material, Anna replied,

> "We just learn it. I mean, we see a painting and she'll describe it and it'll make sense, and you'll remember some of the things she says and some of what you read." Anna says that she allows both art and music to affect her directly. Bestowed with a kind of visual learning, she describes it like remembering a "song or a particular view": when you look at a painting, she says, you get certain feelings and when you see that work again, "you return to those feelings" (62).

As Chiseri-Strater suspects, Anna's method is not likely to work very well, because "the paradox of the art history major seems to be that this visual response finally must be translated into the verbal" (62), and Professor Hall does have "a definite way to read art history" (62). Chiseri-Strater understands Professor Hall's thinking.

When Anna and all the other students in the art history class do poorly on their first exam, Chiseri-Strater first analyzes their papers, agreeing with Hall that they share

> . . . an inability to name the general trends and abstract concepts of modern art, offering instead a list of very specific but sometimes unrelated details. Anna's own comments about the exam indicated that she felt a lack of "control" over the material, that she hadn't "organized" her writing well, and that the subject matter seemed "all grey" to her (68).

Without summary remarks about its conclusions, Chiseri-Strater cites D. Hatch's 1988 *CCC* discussion of "students' writing problems in art history" (67). The title of this presentation may give a clue to the core of the problem: it is called, "Reaching *the general through the specific*: writing and thinking in art history" (202 emphasis mine). If Eldridge's observations are correct, art history students are more likely to look for the *specifics through the general.* Chiseri-Strater observes that

> In her exam, Anna leaned on two previously reliable learning strategies--connecting the artist's work with the artist's life and extensive visual analysis. Neither response was appropriate for an exam that demanded that students use the visual analysis of the paintings and personal details about the artists; life to form generalizations about these painters' contributions to the movement of abstract expressionism . . . . The many critical, visual, and autobiographical details that Anna had gathered now needed to be synthesized into a particular "theory" about artistic innovations and movements (67).

In other words, rather than moving from the general to the specific, she was being required to move from the specific to the general. If Eldridge's observations are carried

over to help explain what Chiseri-Strater has observed, these students may have been floundering because they had not first been given a sense of the whole picture into which the details fit. Professor Hall already had that bigger sense, but expected students to put together the large picture after looking at the myriad of details. Hence Anna's "*felt* a lack of control" (my emphasis) and that she did not have a comfortable way to organize the "grey" material.

After contemplating her observations and her own hunger to hear what students had to say about the art work, which to this point had been absent from the art history class, Chiseri-Strater decided to speak with Professor Hall about the possibility of pedagogical changes. She suggested modeling the kinds of responses she was looking for and encouraging class discussion (69), and although it was not her point, giving those students a view of the large picture within which they could organize their specifics.

This section of her book is an early indication that Chiseri-Strater is noticing a difference in how students like Anna and some professors (and other students) organize their knowledge about the world and how they differ in the treatment of the kind of information a class might present. By the time Chiseri-Strater has noticed similar thought-patterns in Nick's work, she comes to see that non-verbal and personal responses are significant aspects of their "literacy" too, and she discusses the relationship of their out-of-class work to the work they did for their classes.

Although in the conclusion of her study Chiseri-Strater attributes some of Anna and Nick's lack of engagement in their classes inside and outside the Prose Writing class to gender issues, she spends considerable time there reflecting on their "multiple intelligences," or "multilinguality." (These phrases are borrowed from Howard Gardner and Maxine Greene). Chiseri-Strater notes that both Anna and Nick had considerably more to offer than their university classes had utilized. Outside of class, both students had depended on their non-verbal strengths to survive in the university--Anna as a dancer, Nick by drawing and personal writing in his journal--none of which the instructors knew

about. These observations finally come to fruition in the last chapter of *Academic Literacies* in which Chiseri-Strater advocates the importance of including non-verbal modes of exploring and expressing thought in writing and other university classes. My study extends this observation to typical first-year composition classes.

Metaphors for the composing process

Since it is difficult to describe the complexity of the ways of describing how meaning is transmitted, much less agree with each other about it, we often turn to metaphor. We think in metaphor much more than we are aware, according to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who say "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (3). Examining the choice of metalinguistic metaphors used by various writers not only provides insight into the nature of their understanding of the process of writing itself, but by implication, it reveals their theoretical foundations for the teaching of writing. By extension, asking students to explore the nature of their own metaphors for their writing process can give a teacher insight into where those processes can be made more effective.

A variety of metaphors have been created in the past decades to explain the nature of the writing process. For example, in a 1983 essay, Marilyn Goldberg describes the writing process as "Recovering and Discovering Treasures of the Mind." In this metaphor, memory seems to be buried in a physical kind of place, almost requiring hand tools with which students can "search through . . . and choose specific ideas for elaboration in their papers" (39). Because of this metaphorical understanding, Goldberg advocates "intelligent intervention [that] can improve the otherwise automatic and spontaneous operations of the brain. Consciously, educators can mold and shape and strive to perfect the activities of their students' minds" (35). If only it were this easy. Extending this metaphor, teachers of writing become foremen of a robotic excavating crew, in charge of readjusting students' actions until they can perform in the likeness of their masters.

Another familiar metaphor is Michael Reddy's 1979 description of writing as a direct conduit for meaning. In a more recent *CCC* article (September 2001), Philip Eubanks describes the assumption behind Reddy's metaphor: "language *contains* meaning; speakers and writers use linguistic containers to *send* meaning to audiences; and at the end of the line, audiences *remove* the unaltered meaning from its container" (93 emphasis in the text). Again, with this metaphor guiding the way, the teacher's and writer's job can be seen as fairly simple: just gather up some stuff (or excavate it, using Goldberg's metaphor) and put it in the pipeline so people on the other end can receive it, take it out, use it, consume it. There is little room in this very visual metaphor for "writing to learn" or for variety in "the Process of Writing."

Eubanks' observations about the use and meaning of metalinguistic metaphors for writing are instructive. He notes that "metaphor is not mere decoration but the very essence of much human cognition" (112). The metaphors with which one describes her writing/thinking process describe not just a surface understanding, then, but in fact, the essence of that process.

Any singular metaphor will fit only a portion of writers, only part of the students in any composition class, and if it is to be helpful to describe writing in such terms, one must be honest enough to allow for variety. For some, teachers and students alike, the conduit metaphor may provide a pattern that is safe, understandable, and "prudential" as Eubanks describes it (99). Barbara Tomlinson has categorized over 2,000 writers' metaphors for writing, finding that cooking, mining, hunting, and gardening are predominant. Wendy Bishop writes that, "by looking at these writers' metaphors, we can add linguistic and analogic insights to cognitive research (*Released,* 25).

Such metaphors provide insight into the ways these theorists see their role as writers and teachers of writing. They also have profound implications concerning the practices they advocate in the classroom. For example, when James Moffett says that writers "tap inner speech" which is a moving, vital source of material, he then advocates

the use of talk in the writing classroom. Carolyn Eriksen Hill suggests that writers must "examine the borders" between safety and change, between groups of people, between long-held beliefs and new understandings; hence she promotes activities that uncover and bring disparate topics, beliefs, and people together. When Ann E. Berthoff describes writing as an act of "making meaning," of "forming thinking," she makes room for writers to explore the creativity in the writing process. For theorists who advocate the need for various kinds of shifts, for example, between sign systems (Myers), or from left brain to a right brain process (Rico, Edwards, Brookes) or from one intelligence domain to another (Gardner), they find practices that encourage those shifts. The nature of the described shifts may vary, from Frederick Franck's Zen-like meditative state in which he (and James Moffett) suggest that thought moves between different mental planes, to physical shifts, as in across the *corpus collosum* (left/right brain shift), but more often, on non-physical planes, resulting in varied "eureka" experiences described by many who research the nature of creativity.

Many of these metaphors can be applied equally to the act of making art. While my metaphor for writing involves *seeing* the subject clearly, other compositionists have described what happens when one writes in terms of *feeling, hearing* or *speaking,* and *rehearsing,* analogies which are worth exploring in more detail for what they reveal about what we know about the nature of composing processes.

Further connections between composing studies and visual imagery.

Sondra Perl uses the metaphor of "felt sense" to explain her recursive view of the composing process, a metaphor which helps explain an image of writing that underlies my research. She says, "recursiveness in writing implies that there is a forward-moving action that exists by virtue of a backward-moving action" (in *Writer's Mind,* 44). The most obvious recursive features Perl notes are that the writer first rereads what has been written, and, second, she returns to key words of the topic for reflection. But Perl observes that a third recursive move is harder to document. This "move is not to any

words on the page nor to the topic but to feelings or non-verbalized perceptions that surround the words, or to what the words already present evoke in the writer. The move draws on sense experience . . . [and] occurs inside the writer to what is physically felt" (1979, 45). Out of this non-verbal felt sense, Perl writes, images, words, and concepts emerge (46-47), and one becomes aware of it first by paying attention to the actual physical feelings which accompany the writing then examining the way those feelings can be expressed through images and words to support the concepts at hand.

Arnheim points out that language itself is a set of perceptual shapes--auditory, kinesthetic, visual (229). Words are heard, they are formed with the physical apparatus of the throat and diaphragm, and they are visual marks on paper as well as representations of the images for which they stand. In spite of the fact that the importance of kinesthetic role in composition—feelings—cannot be underestimated, for the purposes of this research it must be left to those who are already working in this field. However, it seems to me that even though Perl does not say so, one can also become aware of that felt sense by expressing it visually. Those who have advocated the use of drawing for expressing this type of self-awareness are art therapists or members of non-academic circles. One such work, *Visual Journaling: Going Deeper Than Words*, by Barbara Ganim and Susan Fox, suggests many prompts to lead writers into ways of becoming aware of one's emotional state by expressing them in colors and shapes. The book offers student work for examples.

Sondra Perl's description of the writing process as "a forward-moving action that exists by virtue of a backward-moving action" (44) is echoed in another movement image. James Zebroski compares psychologist Lev Vygotsky's picture of human development to a "tidal wave." He describes it as ". . . an oscillating, sometimes broken sine wave in which the dips and crests of each developmental zone alternate" (162). Learning is seen as cumulative because of the way we reassess past experiences in light of new ones, so even though there is discontinuity in this progress, according to Zebroski

> . . . each level depends on and is connected with what precedes it and hence there is also a kind of overall continuity. The bigger the dip, the bigger the crest of the developing wave. The model is both progressive and regressive, making a very important place for risk taking and apparent 'failure' and 'backward' development, which nonetheless often foreshadow the reorganization and restructuring of experience and prepare for the developmental leap that follows. Thus, the tidal wave model connects the two apparently opposed notions of progression and regression in development as related aspects of each other" (162).

Most readers have seen Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development in terms of a more stable and permanent image, the scaffold. Just as Patricia Dunn returned to Freire to find visual emphasis, Zebroski's revised view of Vygotsky's thought sees the composing process, like human growth, as a sort of lurching forward and back movement in which we pick up new knowledge and understanding, and in the stretches between experiences, release some of what we had been carrying. In the same way, the writing process must move back and forth between whole and parts, the known and the yet-to-be-discovered.

The role of image in thought and memory

The forward/backward movement in one's unfolding understanding of experience may also be facilitated by moving between the making of textual and visual images, especially when the two modes of expression are considered to be a movement between parts and the whole rather than separate activities. Thus, exploring, rehearsing, and reseeing a piece of writing through both visual images and words can be seen to activate both the holistic and discretely sequential and logical frames of mind described by Eldridge. Text and visuals each can be analyzed separately perhaps, but their impact in a given composition (even if it is composed solely in words or in verbal images) is due in part to the dialogic interplay in that composition. Words and thought evoke images and images evoke words and thought. Or as Rudolf Arnheim expresses it, "Thinking calls for

images, and images contain thought. Therefore, the visual arts are a homeground of visual thinking" (*Visual Thinking,* 254). While Eldridge approached this issue by asking art students to read and write about it, we evoked the opposite response by asking students to draw in relation to their writing.

Thought/language/imagery interface. "Language turns out to be a perceptual medium of sounds or signs which, by itself, can give shape to very few elements of thought. For the rest it has to refer to imagery in some other medium" (Arnheim, *Visual,* 240). In fact, earlier, he had asked whether one actually can think in words (the artist's view of the question), explaining that "Thoughts need shape, and shape must be derived from some medium" (226). He continues, "Language is not indispensable to thought, but it helps. The question is, in what way." He cites the kind of thinking that is done within the structure of music for example. Essentially for Arnheim, words are so limited that they merely aid visual thought, which precedes verbal thought, and is far superior (232).

Words, thoughts, and images also evoke emotions that color and change both their expression and the reader's reception. Demetrus Worley calls this a "visualization-verbalization loop" (in Brand, Graves 135). When one considers the expansion of meaning that results from the juxtaposition of two sets of unlike images or words as in poetry, the extent to which visual images can evoke words and thoughts can be seen as continuing into wide areas.

If there is this interplay between thought, language, and imagery, research into the ways that interplay works in the composing process is essential. Making a drawing of a subject, either after gazing at it deeply enough to penetrate the surface qualities and to feel a deep connection with it, or thinking about it in such detail that a mental visual

image results, we may be able to penetrate the screens that guard our subconscious minds. Visualizing can take both forms--physical and mental. Eric Hobson, a compositionist whose research lies in the area of visual imagery especially as an aspect of writing across the curriculum, writes that

> Much of human cognition is imagistic and impressionistic, more linked to general gestalts than to specific words. Visual images lie at the root of human thought and subsequent communication. This model intuitively makes sense because images would seem to be more compact and efficient storage units than words. Supporting this intuitive leap, Sereno's research into the origins of human language use suggests that visual images serve as the base for a logical reason: the *wiring* in the brain that produces language is built on long-standing visual processing systems put to new use (*ARTiculating* 146-47; Italic in the text).

It follows then, that by tapping into these images, human beings have a richer basis for response. "Metaphor joins dissimilar experiences by finding the image or the symbol that unites them at some deeper emotional level of meaning. Its effect depends upon its capacity for getting past the literal mode of connecting" according to Jerome Bruner (*Knowing* 63). The use of metaphor, visual or verbal, helps both adults and children talk about feelings and ideas that they may have difficulty expressing because first, they have defenses built up around them, and second, their "abstractive powers are not developed enough to enable [them] to conceptualize, name, and interrelate these intangible things" (Moffett *Universe,* 49).

Seeing Connections Between Images and Words

As writing teachers, we are tempted to valorize verbal language as the beginning and the end, the means and the purpose of and for thinking. Even though language is our strongest domain (Gardner), the medium of intelligence that drew us into the field of composition, we still love images. The stories and poems we most value are filled with wonderful images. We love images and illustrations conveyed through verbal text,

images that readers are then expected to envision or imagine for themselves while visual illustrations are kept separate from "real" literature, relegated to such second class print spaces as magazines; likewise when pictures are real "art," they are also separated from the words of the stories they tell having been sent away to museums. And yet, for many it is difficult to conceive of any kind of thought that is not expressed through words, and some even contend that there can be no thought without language to express it (P. Dunn, 16). We forget the close connections between an image drawn in ink in words, and one drawn in ink in line and value, and the way one kind of image depends upon the other.

This sometimes results in a disconnection between the way we understand the relationship of illustration and text. Rather than seeing illustrations as parallel and interfacing, sometimes generative components of a work, they may be viewed as decoration, particularly in education. When one sketches or draws a picture in connection with writing, both the writing and the picture interact and each can be seen more clearly.

Likewise, imagery can aid in the retrieval of memory and experience, a valuable asset to any writer. Allen Paivio's research at the University of Western Ontario's Department of Psychology into the nature of memory embedded in visual images or language led him to theorize that visual images and language working together ("dual coding") are better than either alone, even though specific experiments showed sometimes one, sometimes the other, functioning in superior ways (116-17). It is very difficult to separate the two, especially in experiments, since testing almost by necessity involves words. Paivio writes, "Simply stated, two memory traces are better than one" (in Randhawa and Coffman 116). Further experiments show that "knowledge of the visual world is represented in a system which is distinct from, though interconnected with,

linguistic knowledge" (120). Paivio also asserts, based on his experiments, that "the highest forms of conceptual thinking [which he earlier identifies as creativity and problem-solving] presumably occur in creative works in the arts and sciences" (125).

Etymological connections between visual and verbal composing

Interestingly, the fields of art and writing are connected in many ways, and they share a common vocabulary that expresses those connections when we are paying attention. That many of these words are implied metaphors should not be overlooked. For example, both artists and writers *compose* their work. To *reflect* is to look into a mirror and see the way you look (how you appear) but it also describes the way you look *at*, how you think about something, how you discern the filters through which you view life. To *draw* conclusions is to pull them out, to see them and formulate words and lines that show or *delineate* the edges of what you have seen or understood. To *draw* a blank, on the other hand, means not to be able to think of anything to write—not to be able to pull any meaning out of the situation. Poets and artists, novelists and sculptors--and writers of expository prose--work with *images*, the very stuff of *imagi*-nation. And although we often forget this, our daily language is filled with metaphors, similes, and other images that *render* experience (and not just with a drawing pencil). Writers intermingle this joint language easily. For example, when Vera John-Steiner writes about the *verbal* creative process of Dostoevsky, she expresses it in visual terms: " The novelist shapes his work with an *eye* to the *point of view* of the reader" (italics mine) (114). We *illustrate* events in stories with verbal images, but literally with pictures as well. We talk about *lines* of poetry as well as *lines* in a drawing. We *sketch out* outlines and we write character *sketches.*

In fact, the connections between the words "text" and "texture" imply a sensory response to words. Clarity and focus, two primary goals for student writing, are quite visual, metaphorically. The root of "specific," *spec* means "to see." At their roots, the words "draw" and "draft" are also connected, as in drafting architectural plans.

Even with a subconscious awareness of these metaphoric connections, in composition classes we do not often draw on the connections between drawing and writing to help our students understand writing better. Nor do we stop to wonder how best to meet the needs of students whose composing processes begin with images rather than words. My study asks can drawing in a composition class help meet these needs?

Exercises in seeing and experiencing

"Any composition course should begin," Ann E. Berthoff writes, "with exercises in observation" (*Reclaiming,* 3). She continues,

> The reason for a writer to have a lot of practice in looking is not to gain skill in amassing detail to be deployed in descriptive writing . . .[but because] looking—and looking again—engages the mind, and until that happens, no authentic composing is going to take place. Perception is of *form*, not just particular examples of one or another aspect or surface . . . . Both visual images—percepts—and the "mental" images we call up from memory, or which we invent, are representative of the forms of understanding; thus we say, "I *see* what you *mean*" (3; Italic in the text).

And yet, even though she quotes Gregory Bateson and Rudolf Arnheim, two of the classic authorities on seeing and visual thinking, Berthoff always stops short of suggesting that students/writers might actually make or form *images* on paper rather than merely in their minds as a way of increasing their observational abilities.

Exploring Images as Rehearsal for writing

Many, perhaps most, writing texts admonish students at one time or another, "Show, don't tell," and they speak of the importance of being able to hold in mind the

image that one is writing about in order to express it clearly for the reader. Perhaps the most insistent of these is Peter Elbow's chapter, "Breathing Experience into Words" in *Writing With Power.* In a twelve-page discussion, Elbow explains the importance of *"experiencing"* [italics in the text] the subject that one is writing about, saying, "That's what characterizes a good writer: the ability to see anything" (323). Elbow encourages students to visualize their topic, almost like "hallucinating," and then to talk about it with other students before writing. He asks them to "try to tell images so that others actually see them" (323). He says that if the listener can't see what the writer is telling, the writer is to sit and think quietly until the image becomes clear and then to tell about it again. Elbow contends that when the writer really experiences the situation, the words will come easily, either in talk or on paper. He focuses on oral expression as a precursor to written language as does James Moffett. He compares this kind of experiencing to a person listening to a performance of a piece of music rather than trying to hear it in one's mind while reading the score (325).

After describing this talking game, Elbow describes a warm-up exercise advocated by Kimon Nicolaides, author of the classic drawing text, *The Natural Way to Draw.* In one early exercise, Nicolaides directs students to draw looking only at the contours of their subjects, never at their paper. Elbow notes that this method produces drawings that may not *look* like the subject so much as report the *experience* of really seeing it. Readers inexperienced in drawing might have difficulty understanding what this kind of drawing would look like without having seen or drawn one. Elbow describes a nude he himself had drawn, but he doesn't offer it for the readers to view. He expects them to be able to *envision* his drawing from his words, the same way that all writers

expect readers to see the images evoked by their words, even though he has pointed out how difficult it is to experience music without hearing it. He writes:

> It may be complicated . . . to deal with this distinction between seeing and really seeing, but it's simple enough to notice it on certain occasions: you stand there on the lawn and really see that beech tree and somehow the perception fills you or fully occupies you—the tree is wholly present to you. Or else, you . . . see it, but somehow you don't see it fully, for...some of your energy or attention is elsewhere (*Power,* 324).

Ironically, however, even after presenting an excellent drawing example to illustrate, Elbow never thinks about asking writing students to actually *draw* the object about which they are writing as a means of helping them to experience it more fully. For writers, it seems, the process of envisioning the subject must be done in the mind.

Although in the second edition of *A Community of Writers: A Workshop Course in Writing* (1995) Elbow provides an updated version of this imaging game, the directions in this text remain the same. Students are told, "When you are actually having that actual experience inside your head, open your mouth and say what you are seeing, letting the words take care of themselves" (40). In this version, writers are shown how to take the image they have worked with in this meditative exercise and turn it into a story. The question remains, however: what additional benefit might some students gain from actually drawing their image rather than just thinking about it? How much deeper would Elbow's music listening/experiencing analogy have gone, had he compared reading the musical score and listening to a performance to playing the piece on one's own instrument— breathing life into the music as one breathes into a flute or trumpet? Even if one does not play well, the doing opens another level of understanding and experiencing than passive listening or reading. Likewise, even if one has not had art training, as my research will show, drawing can aid students in their search for detail and understanding.

The place of drawing in the composing process

Most studies of the composing process look at how students move back and forth between generating thought, drafting, rereading and revising and then drafting new material. Citing the familiar studies by Janet Emig, Sondra Perl, Sharon Pianko, and N. I. Sommers from the 70s and 80s, Jennie Nelson notes that most of these studies have been conducted by asking students to write in a specific place, within a given time period, with the researcher carefully controlling much of the situation. Nelson claims that using this protocol analysis research method and other interruption techniques to discover what the writer is thinking about while composing is quite different from the kind of "everyday contexts in which people normally write"(362) and results in analyses different from the way students interpret actual academic writing tasks. My study looks at the composing processes of three students over time in order to understand such differences.

The experiences of Jack Selzer, a writing teacher who researched composing processes of writers outside his field, showed that at least one engineer's composing process was also different from the process Selzer assumed he would find. He discovered that although the engineer's "composing habits are in some ways fairly conventional—he performs distinct planning, arranging, writing, and revising activities" (179), he spent far less effort on revising (only 5%) than expected. Selzer wrote, "he spends up to 80% of his time inventing and arranging!" (180). Composing processes differ widely from the ways some writing texts have led both writing teachers and beginning writers to believe.

Writing teachers place much more emphasis on revising, and are frustrated by freshman writers who do very little of that. Like Selzer, when we assume that these

"planning, arranging, writing, and revising activities" are conventional, we have trouble adjusting our thought to allow for difference.

In a way similar to that of the young woman I described in my introduction who said she felt as if she had found a new pair of glasses, some writers seem to employ a process more like Betty Edwards describes in her discussion of the creative process. In *Drawing on the Artist Within,* Edwards outlines the steps one goes through in thinking to include incubation and processing and the other steps, a sharp moment of illumination (she calls it the "Ah-ha!" moment) occurs, and then insight follows. The writers in my research pool followed this pattern, and as I will show, for several of them, the moment of insight occurred in the form of a visual image.

In the teaching of writing then, the role of the visual--thinking and image alike--has not been researched sufficiently, particularly as it relates to its place in our understanding of the composing process. Just how the writer employs the "whole to part" perspective compared to a (perhaps) more "conventional" parts-to-whole movement, needs more attention and understanding, which this study can extend.

In an editorial in the May1998 issue of *Teaching English in the Two-Year College,* Mark Reynolds asked, "if writing classes became more like studio classes in art, I wonder, would students learn more about how to write?"(100), and advocated more demonstrating and less talking. He described having watched a colleague in the art department painting a still life that he had begun as a demonstration for his class. Reynolds admired the idea that

> Students could see the artist at work; they could see the painting appear before them and have its creator explain each step of the composition; they could ask questions as the artist worked and see the painting evolve before their eyes. If

> the painter made a "mistake," too much red paint outside a charcoal line, the instructor showed the student how to "correct" the problem (99).

Noting that teachers in many other disciplines regularly employ such demonstrations, Reynolds proposes that writing teachers explore the practice of composing on an overhead so students could be privy to their processes, which with interactive computer equipment, is an achievable goal. The writing workshop goes a long way toward emulating a studio art process. To extend Reynolds' suggestion, it could be that following the observation of the writing teacher composing, letting students actually watch an artist compose a painting could increase the students' understanding of the parallels between what writers and what artists do.

Much has been written to support the interconnections between art and literature. Even so, research that studies those connections in the writing of adults is far more limited than it should be, considering the evidence presented by these writers from several disciplines. I turn now to a discussion of the design method with which I have conducted the case studies that comprise the heart of my research.

Chapter 2: How I Looked For Answers

General questions and procedure

The question that began my research was "How does incorporating drawing into the college composition class affect writers and their writing?" Initially I had hoped to determine if would reduce student apprehension regarding writing, particularly for those students for whom visual thinking was a dominant strength, and I wanted to see if it would help them to improve their visualization processes and/or their ability to observe more carefully. Since drawing is not a skill for which many students have had extensive training today, it seemed to me that other emphasis on art work would be necessary as a support; this would include looking at the art work of others. Becoming aware of the interpretation and wide uses of visual material in other ways would enhance their understanding of their own efforts. The act of drawing itself became the representative tool for a way of thinking about teaching writing.

In order to study these questions, I collaborated with Laura, my colleague in the English Department at Mott Community College, to plan a first semester composition class that would incorporate drawing activities into the writing process. As she taught the class, explaining from the first how it would be different from other composition classes, I sat in and observed how the students reacted to the inclusion of drawing into the curriculum. Laura was teaching four sections of English 101 during that fall semester and incorporated the drawing exercises in all of them; I chose to observe the Saturday section for the entire semester for the reason that it fit into my own teaching schedule. After a few weeks, I asked for volunteers to participate in more depth by participating in taped

personal interviews to discuss their responses to the drawing/writing exercises and allowing me to examine their writing and drawings.

As time elapsed between the semester in which original data gathering took place and the follow-up interviews, my experience with other students in subsequent classes deepened my insight into the research I had begun. When I interviewed the six students who had volunteered to participate in the study again in the winter semester 1999, especially the four of them who were enrolled in a 102 class for that semester, their attitudes toward writing in a different class also influenced my perspective. I began to look more deeply into the results than I might have, had I solidified my analysis immediately after collecting this data. Hence, my questions began to move beyond my original questions about apprehension and to focus also on ways doing the drawings and talking about their experiences seemed to expand the way some students could understand their writing processes. I began also to ask if drawing activities affected their understanding of rhetorical issues. This led me to wonder if these activities would improve their ability to talk about their own writing. These questions, then, are the basis for this study:

--How are these students' attitudes toward writing affected by drawing?

--How does drawing fit into their writing processes? (Generating detail? Organization? Effecting insight? Revision? A sense of audience?)

--How does drawing contribute to their understanding of their writing process?

The case study research was chosen because it could provide an in-depth look at the work of particular students, resulting in knowledge that could then be compared to the work of other students with similar characteristics. I originally

believed that focusing the case study on students of another instructor would be beneficial, in that it would allow me to see the effects of such work in the pedagogy of another teacher, although I sometimes felt inhibited by not being able to conduct the discussions the way I would in my own class. In retrospect, I realize that observing another teacher allowed me to develop a degree of what Elliot Eisner calls "perceptivity," a necessary element in this kind of research because as Eisner says, "The qualitative researcher must experience the qualities that pervade a classroom to have a basis for any kind of theoretical interpretation" (1990, 230). It is easier to see what is going on in another class than one's own.

Laura had agreed to incorporate drawing exercises in her classes in the fall of 1998 and invited me to conduct my research there for several reasons. She is also interested in the relationship between drawing and writing and has a deep desire to find new ways to engage students in writing; in addition, she has studied composition theory and understands the importance of teacher-research. She had not asked her students to draw to any degree before this semester. Our friendship helped the collaboration work well, allowing for a continual discussion of the drawing/writing issue outside the class, although it sometimes made it difficult for me to maintain the role of observer. Since the drawing exercises were new to her, Laura sometimes invited my input during class discussions.

Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, whose ethnographic work has heavily influenced my research, points out that an aim of this kind of research is to "combine the view of an insider with that of an outsider" (*Academic Literacies*, 187). Although I maintained an objective seat at the edge of the classroom, by the third class

meeting a few students had begun to see me as an insider, speaking to me about their work in the hall before and after class and during breaks.

While I was observing Laura's class, I continued asking the students in my own first semester writing classes to draw in connection with their writing. Working with similar drawing and writing exercises with my own students helped me to anticipate and understand what happened in Laura's class. The mutual plans and procedures gave us a basis for discussing what was happening in both classes as the semester progressed and allowed us to adjust the plans we had made in light of what came up with these students, increasing my insider-outsider status.

During the last month of the semester, Laura became ill and had to take a sick leave. Since I was familiar with the students and work in this section, I was asked to step in for her, a situation that changed not only the plans she had in mind for the research paper project, but also the trajectory of the data collection. With Laura gone, and Thanksgiving and Christmas looming, they seemed to want to finish the semester as quickly as possible. I did not insist that they focus on drawing with their research projects. Although I filled in as teacher for the last few classes, I had no input into their grades; Laura made those decisions herself.

As my observation of her class progressed, I became more aware of the way students from my own class were reacting to doing similar activities. Two of my students from that semester were particularly engaged in the writing/drawing process, incorporating it into their research projects in ways I had not anticipated. Since it had not been possible to observe observation Laura's students' work on their research papers, after the semester had ended, I decided to include the two

students from my class to add depth to the study, particularly in regard to the research paper. This decision was not implemented until after grades had been reported in order to assure that their grades would not be affected by their participation in my study.

Nature of data

As I observed the Saturday class, I took careful notes on what happened as I saw it. Those observational notes, along with excerpts from student journals, formal writings and drawings, Laura's planning journals, and my own personal journals written during the fall semester of 1998, provide the material that is the core of this study, and is described in chapters three and four.

The decision to include two students from my own composition class required the addition of data from my 101 class; that includes my planning and observation notes. Laura's six planning notebooks and my journal reflections, which include references to our discussions and observations, provide a means of supporting and corroborating my observations of her class. The reflective journals provide opportunity for what Elliot Eisner calls "perceptual differentiation," an important factor since an underlying question about the efficacy of adding the drawings might be construed to revolve around the instructor's familiarity with drawing, or with differences in approach (*Eye,* 234).

Research data includes the following:

1. My detailed class observation notes with sketches of students at work.

2. Drafts of papers and copies of drawings from students from Laura's class. Most of these documents are from the four interviewees, although I have some early materials from six other students from that class.

3. Copies of academic and personal notebooks from the six students whom I interviewed.

4. Journals including drafts of papers and copies of drawings from the two students from my class.

5. Transcriptions of two taped interviews with six students, (four from Laura's class, two from mine) and a third interview with five students (three of Laura's).

6. Transcription of one Saturday class session (it was taped because I could not attend the class for observation).

7. Additional papers from second semester composition classes and work/family related materials for those who did not enroll in 102 right away.

Leading up to the analysis of the data

In the first round of interviews, I got to know the participants in the study individually. At that point as I transcribed the interviews, I was looking primarily to find indications of attitude changes, since my reading had been focused on various shifts—Johnson on relief on writing apprehension, Betty Edwards and Gabriele Rico on left/right brain shifts, and Gunther Kress and Miles Myers on the role code shifting plays in thinking and writing. In those interviews, students did report diminished apprehension levels, but as one dissertation advisor suggested, to attribute that change primarily to the inclusion of drawing would be difficult to demonstrate since many of the other practices in the classes were designed for the same purpose. The nature of the data I had collected was not sufficient to support the conclusion that drawing had contributed to the alleviation of writing apprehension for even many of the students. However, if I had stopped there, the

anecdotal evidence did support the conclusion that most of the students I had interviewed did find the drawing exercises beneficial in a variety of ways.

After reviewing my observation notes again and again, and talking to more students in subsequent classes, I realized further that all students did not share the positive responses my interviewees had reported. I also knew that it would take a different kind of study than the one I was conducting to determine a valid answer to the question of the role of drawing in relieving writing apprehension. It appeared to me that the implications of this study were much larger than my original assumptions and thus I began to broaden my perspective.

At that point I found Vera John-Steiner's study of thinking and creativity in which she examined the notebooks and finished work of over one hundred "experienced and productive thinkers" (17). In addition to reading the works and biographies of these published writers, artists, mathematicians, scientists, and musicians, John-Steiner also conducted extensive interviews with them to explore their awareness of their creative processes. She said she was looking for "the shared dynamics in the various processes of thought while recognizing and exploring developmental cultural and historical differences in the mastery of thinking" (3). Although I did not probe my interviewees' childhood influences as John-Steiner had done, her descriptions of the nature of visual thinking compared to the other "languages of the mind"—verbal thinking, the languages of emotion, and scientific thinking—helped formulate the categories I would use for analyzing my students' work. In addition, John-Steiner's work shed some light on my understanding of my own composing process, especially since at that time I was experiencing difficulty with my academic writing. John-Steiner's research, along with that

of Elliot Eisner, Ulric Neisser, Robert McKim and others (See Chapter 1) corroborated my suspicion that visual thinkers do compose from a different perspective than other writers, and I wanted to see if that were true for these students. I also determined to study what role drawing (and/or visualization) might play in that composing process.

Following John-Steiner's lead, I began to look at the nature of the thinking and learning styles of these students for whom drawing had been beneficial in their writing processes. That led me to refresh my knowledge of earlier research on composing processes beginning with Janet Emig's classic study of the composing process of 12^{th} graders and studies which have followed her work including that of Perl, Pianko, and Selzer (also discussed in Chapter 1). It also led to a study of the role of metaphor in writing and thinking about writing, since I began to notice that the work of these students leaned heavily toward metaphor.

My study extends the research into composing processes into a new direction, however, since past research has studied individuals who were writing in a controlled single setting. They have primarily focused on assessing the role of the different phases of writing such as pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing, and the amount of time spent on each of these stages. The data I had collected lent itself rather to an examination of the writing as it developed over time, to the points where drawings fit within the process of the students in this case study. It also let me examine how the drawing contributed to (or worked in tandem with) the composing and look for evidence of drawing's influence either on students' attitudes toward writing or the writing itself, including linguistic clues as evidence of ways they see themselves as writers, how they see their subject matter, and how they see their audiences. It also allowed me to look for indications that the influence

of drawing on the writing changed as the courses progressed. I do not suggest that these findings would relate to any other than these specific students, nor that they would be transferable to others.

The trajectory that led me to the categories for analysis has thus been lengthy and complex. My personal journals for the three years following the original data collection are filled with pieces of observation, reflection, and realization that seemed to come together like a puzzle parts, and that could not be described as a whole until most of the pieces were assembled.

These then are the major sub-questions through which I explore the larger question of what happens when drawing is integrated into a writing class, issues I explore through the self-reporting of the students and by examining their writing and drawings:

--How are these students' attitudes toward writing affected by drawing?

--How does drawing fit into their writing processes? (Generating detail? Organization? Effecting insight? Revision? A sense of audience?)

--How does drawing contribute to their understanding of their writing process?

In order to analyze the data, I first read and reread their papers and journals, jotting observations in the margins and noting themes. I listened to and transcribed the tapes of the interviews, relating what they had said to what I noticed about their writing; I returned to both their writing and their words frequently over the ensuing months. I organized their words around themes such as their attitudes toward writing, and then around what they said about the specific drawing exercises. I looked at the relationship of the drawing to the writing and vice versa. I analyzed their writing processes, looking for effects of drawing on the stages of their writing.

Based on these close examinations of the students' work and at their characteristics, three major categories began to emerge:

--Evidence of changes in their attitudes toward writing;

--Evidence of increased use of detail, audience awareness, insight, and revision.

--Evidence of changes in and understanding of their composing processes.

How subjects were selected

All students in the Saturday class were given the opportunity to participate in the study and to sign a release form on the second day the class met; ten returned the completed forms. Confidentiality was guaranteed by this agreement (included as Appendix A). Members of the class were assured that the instructor would not know the names of students who volunteered to become part of the study group and thus their decision to participate or not would have no effect on their grade for the course. In addition, their identities would be protected in reporting the research. From the ten who volunteered, one whom I will call Ann, was selected because of her interest in the drawing exercises, and three others, Sharon, Rosa and Hilda, were chosen because they expressed interest and their schedules allowed time for the interviews. I did not know in advance what effects the drawing exercises had on their writing. While deciding the relevance of material for reporting my findings, I determined to refer to the work of Hilda and Rosa only in passing as it was relevant in Chapters 3, 6 and 7. Although Hilda's use of drawing was fascinating, it did not seem to yield significant material for analysis. Rosa, because she was a native Spanish speaker, made quite a different use of drawing in her work, and it seemed that discussing it would lead the direction far afield.

At the end of the semester, after seeing the way the two students from my class, Chuck and Carol, had utilized visual images in their research papers, I asked them if they would consider becoming part of the study. Since grades had already been turned in when they were added, their anonymity was not an issue.

I assured all students that their names would be kept confidential in the reporting of the research. Five of the six students whom I interviewed were female and all ranged in age from twenty-eight to thirty-eight; however, it was not my intention to consider either gender or age as criteria for selection. Chuck and Ann had never attended college, Sharon and Hilda had attended the community college several years earlier without completing a degree, and Carol had been enrolled in a state university for three semesters just after her graduation from high school. Rosa, the sixth, was an ESL student who had already earned a Bachelors Degree in Mexico. Two of the six had not completed the Associates Degree at the time of this writing. Of these six students, I focused on four in the main discussion. Rosa and Hilda's work appears in Chapter 3 as it illustrated what happened in the class, and again in the discussion in Chapter 6.

In my reporting or their work, I have tried to remain as accurate as possible in reproducing the written and spoken words of these students, including underlining, spelling, and grammar. Unless indicated otherwise, emphasis within quotes should be assumed to have been part of the original. I will not call attention to non-standard usages, since much of the work comes from drafts and journal entries that had no correctness requirement. In entries where students edited their work on the page, I have indicated insertions [^ . . . .^] and deletions [-- . . . . --] with these symbols.

Interviews and Interviewing

I interviewed these four of the ten volunteers from Laura's class between the twelfth and fifteenth week of the fall semester of 1998. They gave me their journals at the interview, having formalized them for mid-term evaluation. These journals included drafts and final copies of informal and formal writings, drawings, responses to class work and readings and self-evaluations. All the first-round interviews were conducted in my office, which was near the classroom. The interviews were held after class for the convenience of the students, all of whom worked weekdays and could only come to campus on Saturdays.

I interviewed the two students from my class in January of 1999 after the end of the semester was completed and grades turned in. I collected copies of their work from the previous semester at that time.

General questions for the first interview:

--Describe your attitude toward writing and taking a writing class as you began this semester. What kinds of writing have you done in the past?

--Tell me about previous writing experiences. Were they positive or negative? Explain how you felt about those experiences.

--Describe your attitude and your experiences and background in drawing and art.

--Describe your reaction to the various writing/drawing exercises completed thus far in the semester. (We discussed each exercise separately.)

As we discussed the writing/drawing exercises, I asked questions with the goal of getting students to talk about their writing processes, as well as about the times in the semester when they began to feel at ease. I encouraged them to expand on their written reflections on the connections between their writing and their drawing. Occasionally, as it seemed

appropriate, I encouraged them to notice how their writing related to their lives as well. Each interview lasted between thirty and sixty minutes.

While working as a free-lance art reviewer for the Flint Journal between 1989 and 1994, I interviewed many artists, and in the summer of 1998, I was part of a team of three Mott faculty members who conducted an extensive oral history project sponsored jointly by the college and the U.A.W. Through these experiences, I had developed a conversational method of interviewing which I used when talking with these students.

Interviewees were not given the questions in advance of the interview session and although I held a clear idea of the list of questions I wanted to cover in my mind, I did not insist on following them in order as I might have done had I been reading from a list. I used the questions as a way to find out more about each student and to express interest in their lives. I hoped to gain their confidence by demonstrating that I looked at them as individuals who have interests I would like to learn more about, rather than as specimens.

From my earlier interviewing experience, I had learned that allowing the interviewee to discuss topics outside the list of questions sometimes leads to useful information, so I would follow them when they brought up outside topics. This style of interviewing, while following a generally planned format, was still informal and flexible enough to put the students at ease and allow them to forget that the tape recorder was running. Although I have not been trained as a sociologist or anthropologist, sociologist Douglas Harper's words describe what I tried to do:

> The open-ended interview is an exchange initiated and guided by the researcher in which the subject, one hopes, provides in-depth responses to complex questions....[it] rests on the assumption that the researcher will ask questions that are culturally meaningful to the subject. As most people who have done this kind of research know, it is more easily described than accomplished (144-45).

Second Interview:

During the winter and spring semesters of the 1998-99 school year, I conducted a second interview with the six students. I asked the four who were enrolled in a second semester composition class to bring papers from those and other classes, as well as any drawings or journals they had written. The two who were not enrolled at the college described work and family related drawing/writing connections.

General questions for the Second Interview

--Will you describe the writing in your current semester's classes, particularly your writing class if you are taking one?

--What thoughts have occurred to you concerning the connections between drawing and writing after last semester's classes ended? What do you think triggered them?

--Near the end of the semester, Laura had asked all of you to do a shell drawing and writing, which could be compared to the earlier chair drawing. Will you comment on that process, and on any differences you felt between the first drawing and the last?

--Since our last interview, at the last week of last semester, you completed your research project. Will you describe the process you went through to complete that? Did you use any visual tools either in the discovery and research, or in the presentation of your research? In the revising process? Describe them.

--Over all, would you comment on any ways you see or feel that drawing along with writing has or has not affected your attitude toward writing?

Third Interview

A third interview was conducted with four of the students a little over year later (Mar-August, 2000) and with a fifth student in the fall of 2001. By the time of the third

interviews, my connection with these students had developed to the point that two of them invited me to their homes to talk. The other interviews were conducted in my office as before. One student brought her baby boy, born in the spring of 1999, to the interview.

The third interview was more conversational than the first two because students' experiences in ensuing semesters had been divergent. We reviewed earlier material and I asked questions designed to determine if there was evidence of carry-over from the drawing exercise experience into their lives and further writing.

Rationale for Selection of Collective Case Study Research Method

A collective case study, according to Robert E. Stake, is "an instrumental study extended to several cases" (88). The instrumental case study looks at a particular case

> ...to provide insight into an issue or refinement of a theory....Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest the common characteristic. They may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each having voice. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (88-89).

As a collective case study, my research project does two things: first, it offers an overview of the classes in which writing and drawing were integrated, and second, it focuses on the specific individual cases—the six students whose work is being examined. More specifically, then, it is based on the belief that by investigating and analyzing particular cases, the researcher can make observations concerning the implications of incorporating drawing activities in the writing curriculum.

The interdisciplinary nature of this investigation lends itself to what Valerie J. Janesick calls *interdisciplinary triangulation.* She suggests that by "using other disciplines, such as art, sociology, history, dance, architecture, and anthropology to inform our research processes, we may broaden our understanding of method and substance" (46-

7). Many of my observations about these students come from my personal experience as a practicing artist and the relationship between my art work and my own writing. Art methodology has been used extensively by Elliot Eisner to inform his often-quoted work on qualitative research (see for example *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practices).* Eisner calls triangulation "structural corroboration" which includes data from

> direct observation of classrooms, from interviews with students and teachers (including a teacher's colleagues), from the analysis of materials used (test, textbooks, projects assigned, workbooks, record sheets), and from quantitative information related to the interpretation or evaluation....we look for recurrent behaviors or actions, those theme-like features of a situation that inspire confidence that the events interpreted and appraised are not aberrant or exceptional, but rather characteristic of the situation. They are what Alfred Schuts and Thomas Lackman (1973) call 'typifications" (110).

Laura, the Instructor of the Observed Class

I did not choose Laura as a collaborator in this research randomly. I assumed from the beginning that the attitude toward drawing held by a composition instructor will have significant influence on the ways students react to the inclusion of drawing exercises in the curriculum. I believed that Laura was the best choice for a collaborator in this research because of her dedication as a teacher and her willingness to search for the best ways to reach students, as well as her knowledge of art and composition theory.

Laura has taught composition at MCC since 1987. After earning an MA in English at the University of Michigan, she did further graduate work at University of Southern California in Rhetoric, Linguistics and Literature. She has continued to read widely in composition theory. The work of Peter Elbow has been particularly influential, leading to an emphasis on free-writing, journals, and narrative as a foundation for academic writing, as well as to a belief in the importance of peer groups and teaching

methods of pre-writing and revision. Applying her experience led her to become instrumental in developing the successful basic writing program at the college.

In addition to her general knowledge of art, Laura has completed several drawings and paintings of her own. She practices her belief that writing teachers should write by sharing her own in-class writing with students from time to time, and in this class she also drew along with students and shared her drawings.

The plan for the classes

Although drawing and writing had, to an extent, become a part of my thinking about teaching composition, putting the research plan into motion required considerable rethinking, especially in order for the collaboration with Laura to work out. Laura and I agreed on the following goals for the class:

1. To help students overcome apprehension about writing that they might have brought with them.
2. To help students see the value of writing and how they can use it as a tool for achieving deeper understanding of their lives.
3. To help them understand the connections between free-writing and journals and academic writing.
4. To help students make "the reading/writing connection."
5. To help writers help others re-see their writing so they may learn to read their own writing critically, imagining the responses of readers.
6. To engage students in the research process, guiding them to use and document sources using the MLA format.
7. To encourage and enable students to take responsibility for and control of their own growth as writers.

An unwritten but further agreed upon understanding we shared was that students are more able to achieve these goals if they learn to talk about their own writing metacognitively. To implement the achievement of these writing goals, Laura's students were asked to keep an Academic Notebook for discovery drafts and revisions of two personal essays, exit writings, reading responses, and for responses to feedback from

classmates on their papers. A second personal journal was for exploring non-academic concerns. A self-reflective essay at midterm, a short story and a research paper completed the written assignments. My students were asked to complete specific journal entries around each of five formal writing projects and a research project; these were to be included as part of a portfolio with all the drafts of each formal essay.

When we asked ourselves how drawing might fit into the achievement of these writing goals, we decided to ask students to do two kinds of activities, first, making their own drawings related to their writing, and second, looking at the work of others. In the first category, we selected five correlated drawing and writing activities. The text for the class included two paintings and other images that could be used to discuss the "reading" of art work. A page from *Newsweek* magazine provided an example of the graphic presentation of information and a photograph from another magazine provided the visual prompt for a formal writing. Further, we suggested that they should consider creating visual images (drawings, collages, or found objects) to accompany their formal memory essays and that drawings might be considered as notebook responses to readings. These exercises and the continual emphasis on looking and seeing from a visual thinking perspective were the major differences between this and other composition classes I have taught and observed.

Since Laura did not feel comfortable requiring that all students draw for all assignments, several of the suggestions for drawing were left optional. The initial plans included regular discussions about the connections between drawing and writing and left space for individuals to decide whether or not to draw based on the class work. The

following is a list of assignments, all of which will be described in depth and in context in Chapter 3, with examples of student work to illustrate each assignment.

Drawing/Writing Assignments:

Laura's class	My Class
1. Draw a chair and write about it	1. Draw a chair and write about it
2. Draw an object three times	2. Draw and write about an object six times
3. Draw and write about a sea shell	3. Draw and write about a sea shell
4. Draw a storyboard for essay	4. Draw a map and/or floor plan for essay topic.
5. Draw an educated person	5. Draw a metaphor for thinking/writing process

The visual prompt for Laura's class was the projected image of a strange photograph; a Halloween story assignment was based on this image. I did not include this assignment in my class.

Suggested and Spontaneous Drawings for Laura's Class

1. Peter Elbow exercise drawing (fish drawing)
2. Response to "Blue Collar Worker" essay and others esays
3. Creation of a visual image to go with the memory piece

Suggested and Spontaneous Drawings for my Class

1. Storyboard to analyze an essay read in class.
2. Creation of a visual image to go with the memory piece.
3. Drawing of a map of a childhood area for the memory piece.
4. Visual resources for the research paper.

The first three activities were designed to function as pre-writing and looking exercises, for discovery of ideas, details, and to illustrate the relationships between drawing and writing in the writing process. Looking at works of art and graphics illustrated the connections between reading visual images and reading text; these were also used as thinking and writing prompts. To compare their own writing with that of others, students also were asked to read what some artists and writers have written about their own creative processes. Other drawing exercises were assigned with the purpose of discovering response ideas, and for encouraging planning, revision, and an understanding

of the recursive nature of both art-making and writing. In my class at least two students incorporated visual work into their research, a factor in the decision to include them in these case studies.

Textbook

For a class text, we chose the book, *Developing Writers: A Dialogic Approach*, 2nd ed. by Pamela Gay because it incorporates a theoretical background that reflects our beliefs about writing/teaching. Gay explains her perspective in the preface:

> Writers begin each project by writing about what they already know, and then they proceed from there, through reading, talking, listening, reseeing, and rewriting. They keep searching and examining, looking from one angle, then another, then still another, reconsidering, re-viewing, recreating, and then taking what poet Robert Frost calls "a momentary stay against confusion" in the ongoing conversation. All interpretations are subject to revision or replacement as writers continue to think and rethink and learn. This dialogic approach to writing is dynamic, based not only on students' current interactions with texts and with other students but also on all they've already heard, felt, seen, and read (xvii).

Gay's use of terms like "reseeing," "examining," "looking," "re-viewing," in this introductory passage sets the tone for the rest of the book. She identifies Berthoff, Graves, Elbow, and Macrorie as having the most influence on her work (*Instructor's Manual,* iv).

One of the most important reasons for choosing *Developing Writers* was that it acknowledges the connections between visual and verbal expression, and includes a chapter on reading visual material and two color pictures for study, along with student writings and a discussion of the pictures. The text includes two paintings, one by a college writing student and one by Georgia O'Keefe, both of which can be used to talk about similarities between visual composition and written composition, especially since O'Keefe's verbal description of the "Jimson Weed" and students' verbal responses are

also included. Several other visual works are presented such as advertisements using portraits and other images intended to foster discussion on the rhetorical aspects of print material particularly as it relates to issues in education of minority groups. Charts and clusters illustrate various thought processes and replicas of notebook pages throughout the text illustrate the way other students have responded with "notetaking" and "notemaking."

Two thematic focuses for the semester's writing form the core of the text. They are presented in chapters called "Representing Ourselves: Writing Our Histories," and "Becoming Educated: Defining, Analyzing, & Arguing." In the classes, discussions on these themes focused on different aspects of attaining an education, the differing ways people learn, (Howard Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences) and the role that looking and seeing play in writing, hence in becoming educated.

Setting for the study: Mott Community College

The setting for this study is Mott Community College, an urban institution near downtown Flint, Michigan. The student population in the fall of 1998 was approximately 9,000 students. In addition to the main campus, the college offers classes at two branches and four high schools in neighboring towns and conducts an extensive distance learning program.

One of the major purposes of the college is to serve non-traditional aged students and part-time students. In the fall of 1998, over two-thirds (67%) of the students were non-traditional (age 22 and over) and even more, 69.8%, of the students were taking fewer than twelve credit hours. In addition, 41% received some sort of financial aid; 22% were identified as members of a minority group. Many of the younger students are back

home from larger universities for various reasons. Most of the students are from working class backgrounds. Most work several hours per week themselves; many are single parents who must arrange care for their children in order to attend classes.

Composition classes usually start with an enrollment of twenty-nine, and by mid-term typically drop to twenty-four or fewer. Perhaps as many as one-third of the new applicants test low enough on writing entrance exams to be directed to one of the two developmental English classes. General Education requirements to earn an Associates Degree include at least nine credit hours of WAC courses and W(riting) courses, whose minimum writing requirements have been determined by a college-wide committee.

Like all university and college students, the lives of the people at MCC are complex, but unlike many university students, much of these students' time is spent at places other than the campus. Their commitment to getting a college degree is often murky and confused, compromised as it is by multiple distractions. As is particularly true of the students in my research group, many of the older returning students have finally realized that the way to achieve a greater degree of satisfaction in life is to improve their education. Some are returning because their lives have changed in some way, causing or allowing them to do so. They are often fearful, realizing their need to correct what they view (often rightly so) as weak study habits and inadequate writing backgrounds.

Many of the older students are nervous about being in classes with younger students as well as by returning to an academic world after years of absence; they often feel uncomfortable and out of place. Sometimes even the fact that life conditions have motivated their decision to return to school is not enough to overcome their fear. Many older non-traditional aged students are astounded by the naivete and disengagement of

the young students and sometimes become irritated with them. "Going to school at Mott is not like going away to college," one early-thirties non-traditional student told me recently. Observations the younger students she said, "I expected it to be a lot different than it is. Their attitude is more like high school." She might be equally disillusioned by the maturity level of young university students, but her words are indicative of the attitude of many community college students. This immaturity is not true of all younger students, nor does age guarantee that older students will be more motivated, but that is a general trend, at least in the perceptions of many.

Chapter 3: Inside the Classes: Drawing and Writing to Learn to See

In this chapter I describe the two composition classes in which the six research participants were enrolled. I focus particularly on the aspects of the class work that included drawing and other visual material that was intended to encourage students to make the connections between drawing and writing. Then I place these activities in context so the reader may be able to understand how they were introduced and carried out. I describe the writing and drawing exercises in detail in order to give a context for discussing the students' work in chapter four in chapters four and five.

The sequence of assignments that connected drawing, art, and writing

1. We asked students to observe and draw, completing two exercises--the chair drawing and a self-chosen object. The purpose of this activity was to encourage them to make connections between seeing and observing.

2. We asked them to look at and respond to paintings by other artists, and to read the responses of other writers to works of art, patterns for their own writing.

3. We led them to make a connection between visualization and their own writing, particularly in connection with their personal memories essay. Examples were the cup drawing, responses to "The Blue Collar Worker," and others.

4. Discussing metaphors for and visual representations of the writing process gave them tools with which to discuss their own writing.

5. Creating a storyboard for interpreting and writing an essay incorporated the idea of visual organization of thought.

6. Writing in response to a visual image introduced the concept of art as a prompt for writing, and also as a tool for development of thought.

7. Writing from and in response to their own visual images gave them opportunity to see the generative connections between the two modes of expression.

8. Drawing a sea shell brought the semester full circle, revisiting the kind of exercise done with the chair, and asking them to review their thoughts about the connections between drawing and writing.

9. Students were asked to find a visual or other non-text source of material to support their work on the research paper.

The two classes that provided the case studies for my research were in most ways typical of MCC first semester composition classes. Laura's class, in which four of the research participants were enrolled, met for three hours on Saturdays from 9-12 during the fall semester 1998. Many of the students who were enrolled in this class had chosen it rather than one that met on a weekday because they were working full time. Consequently a slightly higher percentage of these students were non-traditional aged (over 22 by the college's definition of the term) than in the Tuesday-Thursday section; likewise, all the students who volunteered and were selected for the interviews were several years older than the average beginning freshman.

The class I taught, in which the other two research participants were enrolled, met for an hour and a half on Tuesday and Thursday mornings the same semester. As a result of this schedule, my students had a day in between two sets of assignments each week, whereas Laura's students did their second activity after a ten-minute break during a three-hour stretch.

Getting to know each other and introducing the class to the idea of drawing/writing

In order to address the negative attitudes, fears, and mistaken ideas many students bring into a writing class at the community college, both Laura and I believe that creating a friendly atmosphere in the class is important. It helps reluctant and nervous students relax and sets the stage for more success during the semester. Consequently, on the first day we introduced exercises intended to help them to relax and get to know each other and the teacher, activities that let the teacher begin to get a sense of the nature of the class. This included asking the students to talk about the positive and negative

experiences that they had with writing in the past, and about preconceptions and rules about writing they remembered from earlier classes. They participated in name-learning exercises, the discussion of which provided a forum for discussing how one learns things best, including visualization. Discussing these exercises also provided a forum for talking about visual thinking and differences in learning styles, thus introducing the drawing/writing research that would be conducted in conjunction with this class. In both the Saturday and Tuesday-Thursday classes, the importance of visual images in communication today was emphasized, especially its importance in connection with writing.

In addition, we believe that focusing on student work and opinions provides the most effective "content" for the class. Laura's planning notebook includes a copy of an article by Erica Lindemann that describes some of the elements of a "process centered course," in a way that describes Laura's beliefs well:

> The assignments in process-centered courses encourage self-expression and the discovery of self . . .
>
> The teacher . . .does not see himself [sic] as an expert...instead he considers himself a more experienced, confident writer, giving students permission to reflect self-consciously on their composing and providing opportunities for students to explore the self and the world . . .
>
> [These courses] pay considerable attention to invention . . .
>
> The most important text in such a course is student writing . . . . Primarily, students read one another's work, their own creative acts...(293-4).

Laura has developed the skill of adapting and relating what students say and write to the points she has planned to cover in each class. She encourages self-reflection and models that belief by giving the reading of student work status at least equal to the reading of the work of published authors. Thus elements of Lindemann's description of a systems class

appear throughout Laura's pedagogical practices, since she also advocates and works to establish a community of writers.

As homework for the second class, students in both classes were asked to compile a writing time-line that identified their major passages in regards to writing. I also asked my students to include a drawing/art timeline along with the writing history. This provided further insight into students' backgrounds and attitudes toward writing while at the same time, it set them on the road toward self-reflection.

In her syllabus Laura told students, "English 101 is an introductory course in composition which exercises writing and reading skills appropriate to college-level work. In addition, this section of English 101 will encourage students to explore drawing and its connections with writing and reading, but it will not require anyone to do so." I followed her lead in this opinion in my class for the fall semester although in other classes I have required all students to draw on at least some assignments. It seemed to me at that time that this plan would allow those who wanted to include drawings to do so, thus helping to discover its real benefits. In subsequent semesters I have come to believe that some people must be required to try something new or they never will.

Chair drawing exercise (.)

The first drawing/writing activity the students were asked to do (on the first day of Laura's class, the second day of mine) was similar to the chair drawing exercise that I had asked the MCC English faculty to do in a professional development meeting earlier, and which I had used with other composition classes in the ensuing semesters.

The instructor's chair was placed on a table in the center of the room and student chairs were arranged in a large circle around it. Students were asked first to write about

the chair and then to draw it, then to reflect and write on the similarities and differences between the two processes. Finally they were to write about whether drawing or writing was easier for them, thinking about why that might be the case. This activity was used because it works well as an attention-getting device early in the course. A chair is large enough for all twenty-nine members of a class to see at the same time. It seems to it make little difference what object they are given to draw for this first assignment, but the chair works well because it is handy and quickly available, and it has more cultural significance to most students than a traditional still life arrangement might have. Occasionally after writing about the chair, some take the opportunity to vent their frustration about having to sit on such an uncomfortable (and unattractive) piece of furniture, hence adding a note of humor to the discussion.

The primary purpose of the chair drawing exercise was to encourage students to think about the connections between the two processes--drawing and writing--and about their own writing and learning styles. It was intended to help them begin to see that careful observation is a first step in both writing and drawing and that drawing from observation is much more accurate (and easier) than drawing from memory. Some said that when they were looking at the chair, their minds were blank and all they did was try to capture the shapes of the chair. Two or three students wrote in the voice of the chair, letting it complain that too many people are staring at it, that it feels lonely sitting in the middle of the room, and that it feels miserable with people sitting on it all day.

From this activity, students noticed that writing and drawing involve similar kinds of decisions in spite of their differences. For example, with some guidance, they noticed that they had to choose the style, to decide on focus and placement on the paper,

the perspective or point of view from which to observe, and they also had to decide where to begin and end. Another element that came up in discussion was the influence exerted by their beliefs about their skill level--a major factor about how limited or extensive a project they are willing to attempt. This is true in both writing and drawing, they noted. One student commented that when drawing, they didn't have to worry about misspelling or grammar, but in writing, describing the angles, texture, and measurements was more difficult. Although some said they found the chair too difficult an object to draw because of problems of perspective and proportion, since the whole class participated, everyone was at least willing to make an attempt.

After doing this chair drawing exercise, students could begin to identify personally with the concepts of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory (1983) when it was introduced briefly. Discussing this theory provided a forum for thinking about why different people are good at different things and choose to work in different fields such as science and anthropology, art and dance. Both those who thought they were not dominant in either visual intelligence or verbal-logical expressed feeling more ease after realizing that they have other strengths on which they can build.

This exercise also led into a discussion of the work of Dunn and Dunn (1978), researchers who studied different learning styles, working to discover how kinesthetic, audial and verbal learning styles are alike and how they differ. The discussion was intended to help students see how building on one's strength in one area can help a person become strong in another.

The chair drawings (Figure 3.1) were done by Laura's students who agreed to participate in the study, but not all of whom were interviewed.

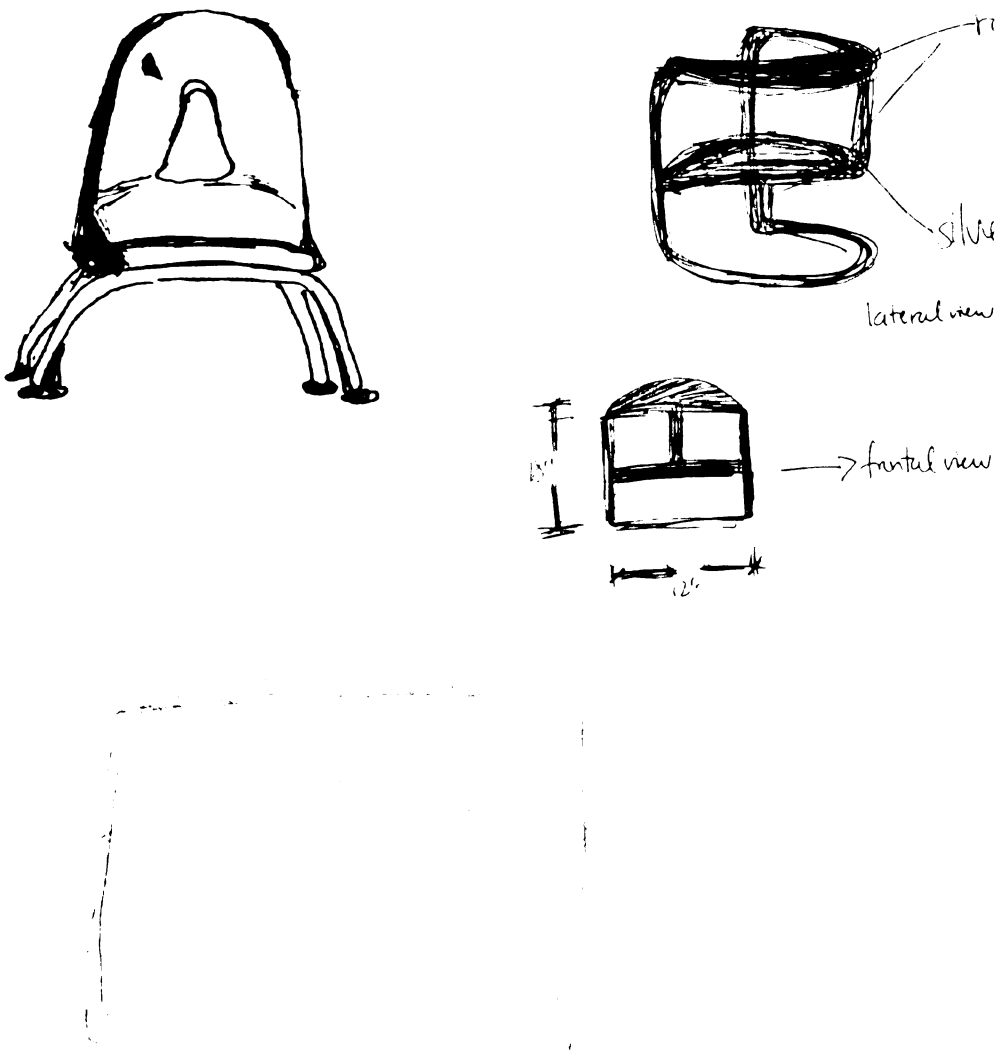


Figure 3.1 Drawings clockwise from top left by Tammy, Rosa, Hilda and Alice. (Student work).

These drawings are examples of the range of skill levels and approaches found in typical composition classes. Most of them were done from a conventional perspective, but Bob always interpreted the drawing assignments with a sense of humor (See Figure 3.2). In the upper right hand corner of his drawing he wrote, "In an ancient religion, Pagans worshiped this chair as their God!" Bob's main written response was descriptive and to

the point; he talked about the materials it was made of--the chrome and "outdated and dirty shade of burgundy." In his self-analysis he commented,

> Both [drawing and writing] were fun, and as bad as both my writing and my visual describing were, I would have to think the drawing conveys more information about the chair. --but, since I can't draw, I guess I would have to say writing about it was easier. --I'm not sure if that's true. Why am I so damn wishy-washy? (Journal September 12, 1998).

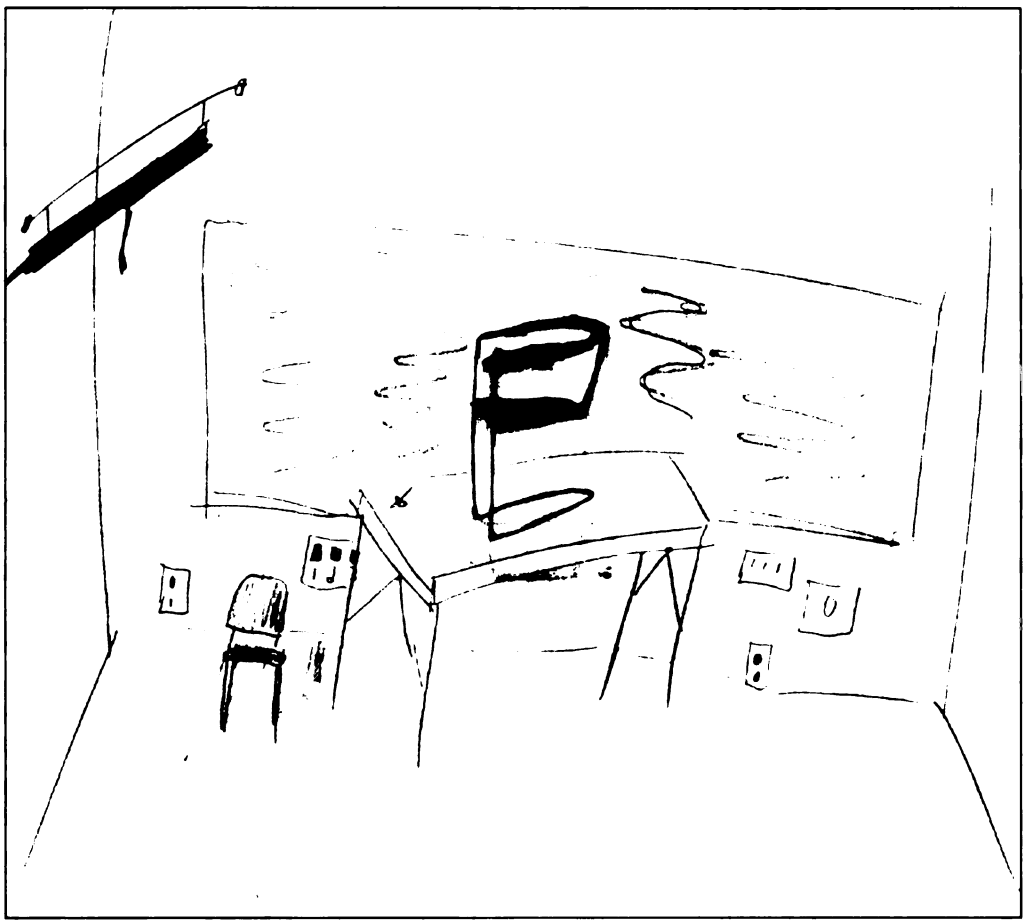


Figure 3.2 Bob's Chair Drawing (Student Work).

Object Drawing

The first out-of-class drawing for the semester was an adaptation of an exercise in Ann E. Berthoff's 1983 text, *Forming/Thinking/Writing.* In that exercise, Berthoff encourages students to realize ways of observing more closely by having them choose an

organic object to carry with them for seven days and to write about it for ten minutes each day, observing changes and recording any other responses that occur to them (8-16). Berthoff did not ask students to draw the object, although in other places in the text and in her other writing, she mentions drawing as a possible response mode. After a similar kind of observation exercise, Berthoff quotes one of her remedial seventh grade students who wrote what she describes as "everything we need to know about composing as a continuum of forming, thinking, and writing." He said, "If you think hard enough while your looking in [sic], you can see what you are thinking" (1981, 40). This also describes what Laura and I intended students to realize as they did these exercises.

I did not require students to choose an organic object to draw and write about, but one that was meaningful to them in some way. I asked them not only to draw the object they chose at least two times but also to write three to five ten-minute focused free-writes about it. To encourage them to look more deeply at their objects, I discussed typical ways of thinking and writing about them such as description, comparison/contrast, persuasion, and narrative, and I also suggested that they could consider fantasy—personifying the object and/or having it speak in a monologue or dialogue. Later I found a similar writing from objects exercise described by Wendy Bishop in *Released into Language*. She calls her activity "Hats and Shoes."

As we discussed this exercise in the classes, a few students said that writing (and drawing) several days in a row had made them look more carefully. This was the main reason for choosing this exercise as a first outside project for the semester. We reasoned that describing a small familiar object is a finite task in a way, one that is less threatening than some larger topic, but it can sometimes suggest many metaphorical interpretations.

A second reason for choosing this exercise was to provide motivation for the students to become engaged with their writing, to find something to write that is meaningful to them, and to examine it carefully enough to find it interesting. Some of them learned that if they didn't choose carefully, they were responsible for their own lack of engagement.

In the rush and confusion of first-day activities, Laura did not ask students to write about their objects. She asked them simply to select an object that had some significance to them and to draw it three times before the next class meeting. In order to adapt this oversight so they would still get the intended point, as they were discussing their drawing experiences on the third day of class, she pointed out and read from their text, Pamela Gay's description of the importance of observation:

> . . . even though we read or interpret things differently because of who we are--because of our unique experiences--we can also read from different viewpoints. We can read as an artist, a scientist, a philosopher, a sociologist, or a feminist for example.
>
> Looking (really looking) goes beyond simply taking in or receiving what you see. Critical reflection requires you to participate in the viewing by engaging in an inner dialogue or conversation that we call thinking--to think and think again, until you can position yourself, holding firm your vision (or version) at least for the moment . . . .
>
> In [this activity] you'll practice sharpening your powers of observation and recording your readings, first of a natural object and then of a painting . . . (Gay 10).

Gay's directions include other possible ways of looking closely --making a scientific study of a natural object, looking at and recording its physical characteristics, reporting on these to the class, and then examining the same object under a magnifying glass. A student's scientific description of a flower is included in the text. This is compared to an artist's observation, illustrated by Georgia O'Keefe's description of her love for Jimson Weed. She said she had "painted it many times. It is a beautiful white trumpet flower with strong veins that hold the flower open and grow longer than the round part of the flower--twisting as they grow off beyond it" (12). Gay asks students to analyze whether

O'Keefe's writing is objective or subjective, and to think in similar ways about their own observations.

Reading these examples let students consider what they might have written about their objects. Laura also read a comment that she had recorded from a student from another class to support her discussions of the exercise with the other three classes. The student wrote, "There comes a point with this drawing technique that I become so involved in looking at the object (all its curves, shadows, textures, dimensions) that everything but the object melts away. I stop hearing background noises, stop thinking distracting thoughts. It's just me, the object, and my pencil. Writing is like that too" (Laura's Notebook, wks. 3-6).

In the hall during the break after these discussions, Ann told me how excited she was about the three drawings of her grandmother's cup that she had done last week. When she showed me her pictures, I wanted to support her enthusiasm and asked for permission to show the drawings to the class. I consulted with Laura, and we decided to make overheads of her drawings to show the others (See Figure 3.3).

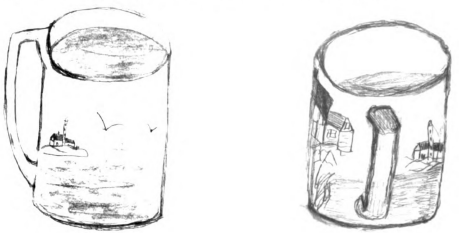


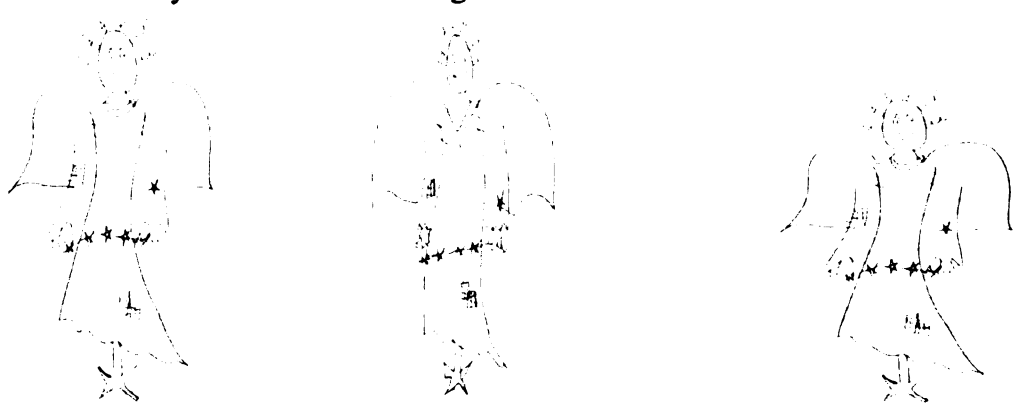
Figure 3.3 Ann's Cups (Student Work)

Ann told the class how drawing the cup had brought back memories of sitting and talking with her grandmother on a number of occasions, and caused her to recall photographs she

had of her. Since Ann had also written about her drawings, with her permission, her two journal responses were read aloud to the class. After students had listed several other ideas or themes that could have been developed into longer writings based on memories the cup evoked, they were more able to carry this understanding over to think about their own objects as a metaphor for some thing, person, or event that was important to them. The discussion inspired some students to look for or create visual images to accompany their own personal essays and provoked further thought about how close observation and journal writing can be a basis for other writing. (See Chapter 4 for a further discussion of this exercise as Ann and Sharon developed it.)

Although this demonstration arose spontaneously from the class work, it parallels Peter Elbow's description of how to use a small object such as a coffee mug in a speaking exercise to "let words grow out of seeing" (1995, 40).

On the other hand, the journal of one of Laura's students included three almost identical drawings of the same object; she did not write about it. They are labeled as to the days they were drawn, but there is no indication that she looked more carefully at the object on the third day than she had on the first, and little indication in her further writing that this exercise had any effect on her writing.



Thursday Friday Saturday

Figure 3.4 Joy's Angel drawings (Student Work)

Looking at Art; Looking at essays

In the chapter of the text called, "Reading and Writing the World and the Word," that deals with how observation of natural objects and other physical realities leads toward deeper reflection, Gay also includes examples of clusters and the dialogic split-page "note-making, note-taking" format. She follows this with a suggestion that students write this kind of response about an abstract painting created by a college art student and one by Georgia O'Keefe, both of which are included in the appendix of the text. Several of the students chose this suggestion for their academic journal responses.

An essay "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker" (Gay 198-200), Lynn Johnson's observation of her work place became the forum for discussing similarities between observing visual images and observing real life. Laura intended that students' responses to this essay would help them develop ideas for the "one-typed page" assignment they were working on. As tools for understanding the essay, Laura demonstrated two visual ways of responding--clustering and looping. She let them tell her words they associated with the word "blue" as she put them into the webbed cluster on the board. Then she demonstrated how to focus on an idea from one free-writing, using in idea from that piece as the starting place for the next (See Elbow, 1995, 45, "From Image to Story").

While students were completing a ten minute focused free-writing about the essay, Laura drew "a seedy bar" where she had once worked and showed it to the class. She explained that the bar was a hangout for Flint factory workers that she had recalled while reading the "Blue Collar Worker" essay. Thus she demonstrated not only how a drawing might be a response to a reading but also how hearing another person's story may evoke memories of personal experiences. Although she encouraged them to draw in response to the essays, she let them choose from among the several options she had presented--clustering, loop writing, and free-writing. The discussion of a second essay, "Photographs of My Parents," from Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood,* further illustrated the importance of careful observation and imagery in a piece of writing.

Memory Essays, my class.

In addition to these cluster and loop writing exercises, and after reading these same essays, another suggestion I made to help my students find topics for their personal experience essays was to draw a map of their childhood home, or another place where they had spent happy times. I demonstrated ways to focus these maps by drawing the neighborhood where I had grown up, the road, the farm complex, and then a floor plan of the house I had lived in as a child. I asked them to jot down words at the edge of the page when some place on the map evoked a particular memory, and then to think about this as a starting place for their personal essays.

Psychologist Ulric Neisser in Cognition and Reality, describes the effectiveness of the "cognitive map" in imagination. He writes,

> Spatial schemata have a powerful hold over our imaginations. To a remarkable extent, they *are* our imaginations . . .
>
> Cognitive maps are often discussed as if they were the mental pictures of the environment that could be examined at leisure by the mind's eye while the mind's owner reclined in his armchair (110 , Italic in the text).

This exercise is an indirect application of this theory, in that it proposes that students/writers make concrete their cognitive maps as a means of accessing the mental images they hold in memory.

Memory Essays, Laura's class.

For the fifth class, students were asked to bring in drafts of the new assignment, an essay based on significant memories, for in-class workshop. After discussion of a Peter Elbow comment, "Stop trying to write well or you never will write well," which Laura had projected on the overhead, the class discussed the qualities of good writing. They placed particular emphasis on keeping the reader's interest and making the reader feel the emotions of the writer, and the importance of good organization.

Building on the discussion of what makes good writing, Laura turned students' attention to the significance of determining one's purpose for writing, listing on the board three names for possible choices a writer might follow. She described them as

1) Expressive: writing in which the writer wants the reader to feel something;

2) Transactional: when the writer wants the reader to learn or know something;

3) Poetic: when the writer wants the reader to appreciate words and ideas.

After thinking back over their current writing, many members of the class decided that the purpose they had been aiming for in their essays was expressive and the others, transactional.

The discussion then moved to a consideration of the essay, "For My Indian Daughter," with the aim of showing how the author, Lewis P. Johnson, used word pictures to support and illustrate his main points. In several brief narrative examples, Johnson chronicles his experiences with prejudice, both acts of prejudice against him and those he had committed against others. Johnson's series of visually clear vignettes begins with the offensive behavior and words of a fat man on the beach which prompted the writing of the essay and then flashes back to his own youth, his army days, and to going to a Boy Scout hosted "pow-wow." It concludes with the contemplative writer deciding that, although he knows that his daughter, like everyone else, must "come through that passage to the place where she sees all people are one," he still longs to be able to protect her from the pain he has experienced.

Storyboard: A means of analyzing the structure of essays, reading and creating

I had mentioned to Laura before her class began that I had drawn a storyboard in my class as a way of analyzing the structure of the Johnson essay. I had quickly sketched a large comic strip-like series of boxes on the board and as students suggested what images should be placed in each, I scribbled figures and images to represent Johnson's vignettes. Looking at this storyboard helped students realize how Johnson had focused on specific examples to illustrate his point rather than resorting to a simple chronological

narrative. When Laura asked me to show her class the technique, I drew a similar storyboard to demonstrate the concept for them as well.

Since fall 1998 was the first semester the storyboard idea for analyzing an essay's structure had occurred to me, I had not yet thought to ask students to draw the structure of their own essays in this way. In fact, it was not until I saw the storyboard Sharon created (see Chapter 4) that I realized how powerful a tool this could be. Instead, I had them work in groups to analyze another essay's structure, "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self," by Alice Walker (in Gay, 39-44) (See Figure 3.5). They thought of more incisive metaphors and symbols for the action than the ones I would have suggested. The intention of this exercise was to help writers realize that not only can they analyze the kinds of detail and organization used by another writer, they can also find specific visual examples to illustrate their own generalizations. In addition, drawing this kind of storyboard can help them think about the organization they might follow in the essay.

Drawing as a means of coming to understand and interpret reading has been advocated by other researchers. Claggett and Brown (*Drawing Your Own Conclusions*) suggest several visual techniques for responding to literature. In *Multiple Voices, Multiple Texts*, after an intensive discussion of Gardner's multiple intelligences theory, Dornan, Matz Rosen, and Wilson advocate a transactional model of teaching based on the principle that

> . . . thinking and inquiry require intensive use of language and active problem posing. The concept behind natural language activities is that students internalize the subject matter through "risk-free . . . opportunities to open up key concepts on their own terms . . . Students construct knowledge for themselves (144).

The methods suggested by these writers for achieving "reciprocal teaching and learning" in which students reconsider and question experience through the use of language could easily be supplemented by drawing. Several opportunities for incorporating the reading of art and other non-verbal approaches are suggested in this text.

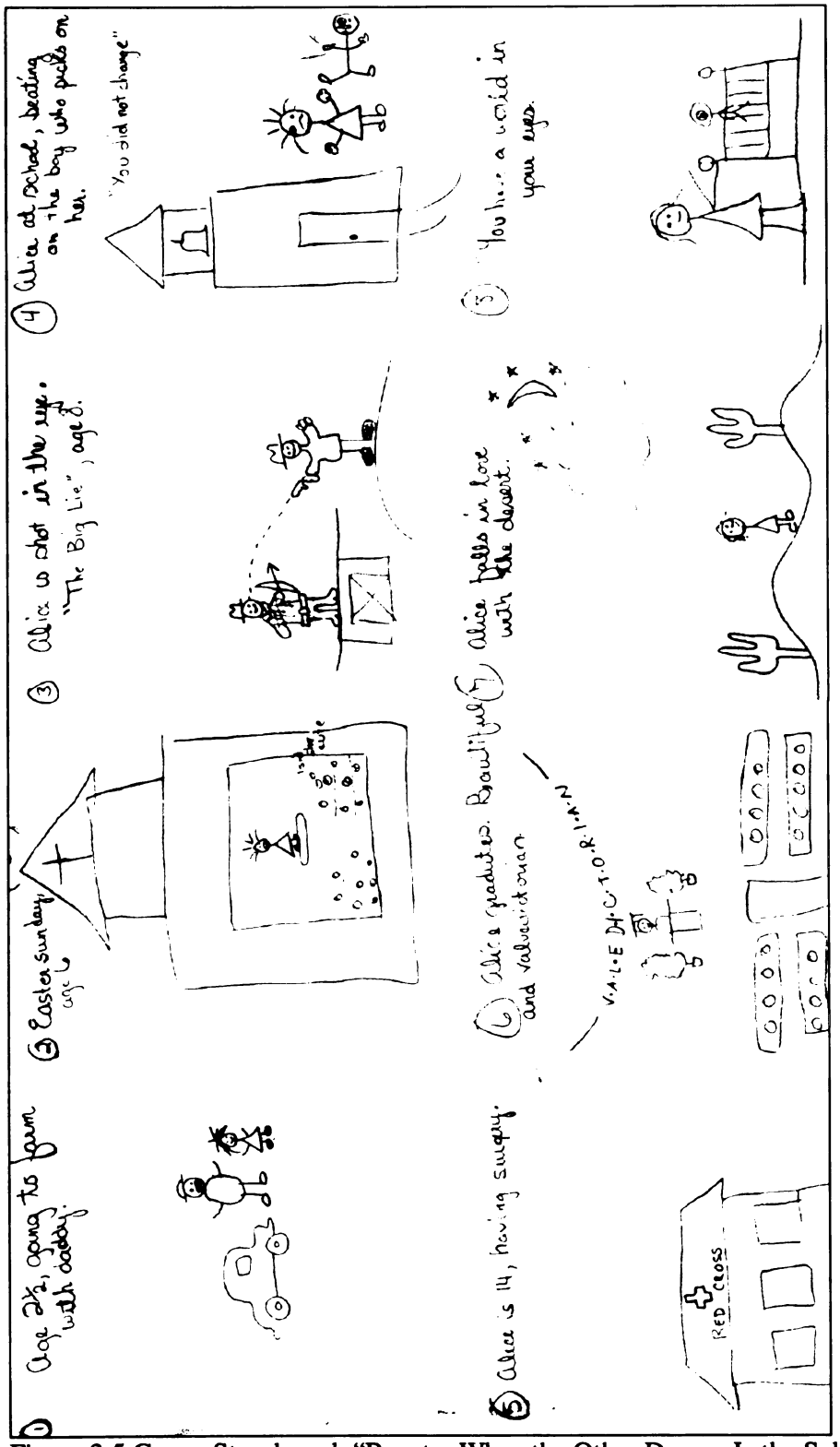


Figure 3.5 Group Storyboard: "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self." Original Size, 17" x22" (Student Work).

Focusing on Detail

In Laura's class, after the storyboard discussion, they reviewed a handout on how to give and receive feedback, and another from Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* (1973). (See in-depth discussion of this essay in Chapter 1.) Then they moved into groups for a class demonstration of peer response and revision. Elbow's talking exercise asks students to choose the smallest object in the essay and to describe it so carefully their partners could see it. After reading Ann's essay about her family's camping trips at a very rustic camp ground, Laura asked them each to circle the object or thing that stood out.

When she asked them to close their eyes and see what comes into their minds, they responded with a series of details: campfire, ground, woods, fish hook, picnic table, dead fish, water, flowers, purple lips, family, artesian well (this last item was Ann's contribution—a detail that she had not included in her paper).

Then Laura said, "Choose the smallest thing. Describe it in speech so as to make the listener see it. Close your eyes. See it. You have to have experienced it. Do not try to see a whole beach or a whole fish bowl. No people, places, stories. Just one small thing. Focus all your energy on seeing it. When you can, tell your partner what you see. Listen: Just listen. Ask your partner what part of the description you could see, hear or smell" (Observation notes, October 10, 1998).

After they had talked for a few minutes, Jay blurted out, "Can we draw it?" Laura told them that was a good idea. As they drew, they asked each other for details.

> Student: Does it have scales?
> Laura: Is drawing helping or hindering your ability to see it? Peter Elbow says, "If your listener can't see...the problem is that *you* don't fully see what you are trying to describe."
> Try it again. Wait: Stop talking. Get the image clear for your self. Concentrate: Where are your eyes most drawn?

While they were drawing, Laura had drawn her own picture of the dead fish, which she showed the class. Then she encouraged a discussion on the pleasures of talking about a dead fish:

> Student A: I had a picture right before (held her hands up, described it.)
> Laura: I resist this too. If you joined with pleasure in talking about a dead fish, are you a rare individual?
> Rosa: I enjoyed it!
> Student B: A dead fish stinks.
> John: I like to fish. I really enjoyed the process.
> Student C: "I didn't have much experience with it.
> Laura: Did words come easily?
> John: Easy.
> Ann: Only basic words. Bulgy, shiny, marble-like.
> Hilda: (laughing) You just did it!
> Ann: Now I've had time. Before I just thought "little black eyes." That wasn't enough. I was thinking too hard. Not letting words come from the pictures.
> Laura: Mary, What was your reaction?
> Mary: Pretty much easy.
> Laura: Did talking make it harder?
> Mary: Easier. I added more to the picture.
> Laura: Her fish or yours?
> Ann: Shining, glistening in the sun.
> Laura: Take a moment to reflect on your own last writing. Is there an object in yours that you can describe more fully in relation to this process?
> Read Ann's piece again. Ask yourself, "What do I see, hear, when I bring that person to mind? Words? Dialogue?"

Just as Peter Elbow had overlooked the possibilities inherent in drawing to make the talking and writing versions of their visualization exercises concrete, Laura and I had at first failed to make the connection between drawing and this exercise until the student helped us see the rich possibilities of incorporating drawing into this activity. Fortunately, the students were perceptive enough to help us out.

Later, in the interview, however, Hilda said what she had not said in class that day. She told me had she found the fish drawing to be "very, very difficult. For one thing, I have a fear of fish . . . I was so traumatized by my fear of fish that I couldn't even think about them. All that I could think of is that they're slimy and I don't want to touch them. They're slimy and nasty. Yeah, that was the hardest one of them all" (Interview,

December 20, 1998). Hilda told me that her father had made her hold fish he had caught when she was a child even though she objected. This incident, which was not apparent in class discussion, reveals that much goes on in a class that the others are not aware of, and also that visual images, even the ones seen in the mind's eye, have great power to tap into emotions.

After this discussion, Laura led them into a further discussion of the ways these objects could work into their essays. She drew a grid on the board, and asked them to provide details that the categories suggested from their own papers:

Scenes	Portrait	Stories	Objects
great uncle's cabin, dock area	elderly lady dying of cancer	a patient having oral surgery	money, pen, dollars
Casino room in day-care center	a gambler	what happened on that day?	cd player Snowboard beach towel

Soon some of the students were thinking of visual pieces related to these specific images to accompany their personal memory essays. At the next class, the author of a snowboarding essay (the one who had suggested drawing the fish) brought in old lift tickets and photographs of himself and his friends on the slopes.

Visual Metaphors for Writing: Mine

Laura had introduced the "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker" essay in order to lead into the discussion on how one becomes educated, a topic that would become a focus for the research papers. Although I intended a similar trajectory, in my class the discussions that resulted from the essay took a different turn. Some of the students in this class were fairly opinionated and rather than staying solely with the topic of "becoming educated," a discussion of the role of money (or lack thereof) followed Linda Lavelle's description of her days in the factory. She said in the essay that she had only intended to work there for a short time, but the money and all the things it could buy convinced her to

extend her stay for nearly seven years before she returned to school. Her description of the shop work included many details of her informal, "non-academic" education, however, and several of the students in my class could identify with that, as had those in the Saturday class. Discussions followed of how greed makes people do things they might not want to, of how some are willing to work hard at some occupation that they really love in spite of small financial gain, and of the failures of today's educational system to instill such values in modern youth. For their first formal essay, I suggested that they develop their response to any of these topics.

As Laura had, I also used these discussions to present the concept of clustering and loop writing, and added my own favorite metaphor for how one can see the structural growth of an essay—a bare tree. As I sketched the tree on the board, I talked about how the trunk represents the main topic with many subtopics branching off leading to more and more tightly focused aspects of the topic, just as the tree limbs get smaller and smaller. I pointed out that the further out on the limb one goes, the more specific and often more interesting the topic becomes. I also suggested that if one goes too far out on a limb and falls off, it is fairly easy to climb back up the trunk again. As students suggested divisions of the topic of "Education," I placed them on the branches.

Students were directed then into five groups based on which aspect of the topic they were interested in and each group drew a tree on a large sheet of paper, working out the divisions suggested by the interest of group members. Each student was then asked to choose one of the divisions and to write a paragraph about it for homework. At the next class meeting, the groups then added transitions and other rhetorical devices to make the paragraphs fit together into a somewhat unified whole. The result was four different essays developed in the groups, demonstrating the making of an essay in a non-threatening way. This exercise led into individual essays by each student on some aspect of the topic "Education."

As they were working on this essay, I asked my students to draw metaphors for their writing and thinking processes. As I introduced the concept, one of the students offered an example that worked well to get them started. She said that her thought processes were a lot like electricity, shooting out in all directions and very difficult to harness. Another described his writing process as walking down a hall with many doors, behind which the ideas were kept; all the doors were rusted shut. After this introduction, they all drew and wrote about their own metaphors for their writing processes.

Students have described their metaphors for writing with varied images, such as angels delivering messages from on high, moving a tray along a cafeteria line where covered pans are filled with interesting things to write about, and chasing ideas through the air with a butterfly net. One student compared her writing process to a river flowing downhill with several "damns" impeding its flow. She wrote, "When I start to write I always have to start over about 3-4 times. My picture illustrates how I start writing and hit a damn then I start over. Finally the last damn is the one that I go with to write the paper" (My journal, Fall, 1998).

As the discussion on metaphor in Chapter 1 suggests, by this exercise I intended to help students examine their attitudes toward writing, and to see how much or how little control they feel they have over their writing and sometimes, what they sense is holding them back. At the same time, by interpreting those metaphors, the teacher can suggest ideas that may help students understand what they are feeling and hence make necessary changes. For example, I suggested a metaphoric WD40 (brainstorming and focused free-writing) to the student who saw himself walking down a hall of rusted-shut doors.

Visual Metaphors for Writing: Laura's Class

Although Laura did not have them draw metaphors for their own writing processes, some students wrote and spoke about their metaphors in their journals. Sharon spontaneously compared her image of a good writer to the Energizer Bunny that just keeps hopping in her early journal.

Throughout the semester, Laura drew images on the board illustrating ways to look at the process of writing visually. One day she drew a series of concentric circles, followed by arrows pointing first towards the center of the circle and then pointing out from the center. She talked about writing from the inside out and then from the outside in. When I asked about the drawing, Laura said it was meant to represent how an essay grows out of free writing and "loop writing": the writer begins by taking broad sweeps around a topic (the outer circles), allowing him or herself "to be written by" the writing, freewriting and then "nutshelling" what he or she has written several times, keeping up this alternating cycle until he or she is led to discover a focus or "center of gravity" in the writing. Having found the "center of gravity" or focus, he or she writes out from that center, which is represented by the arrows pointing out from the center of the circle. Laura said this representation of the process Elbow described stemmed from her reading in *Writing Without Teachers* and *Writing With Power*; however, Elbow refers to this process again, in more philosophical language, in *Everyone Can Write*:

> It is intriguing that freewriting should help me move in these two directions: on the one hand to "indwell" or pour myself *into* my language, thinking, and feeling; yet on the other hand to step outside or at least *notice* and comment on my language, thinking, and feeling. Yet I don't experience this metadiscourse as a distancing or stepping *outside* my language or thinking (134, Italic in the text).

Another day Laura explained the process of writing as a spiral, in which the writer focuses on the topic in a tighter and tighter discussion. Another illustration showed them how to check on the proportion of parts of the essay by drawing squares or rectangles the size of each paragraph. If a block representing the size of one paragraph was considerably larger or smaller than the others, she said, they might want to consider looking for more examples or details for support for the smaller sections. In addition, the emphasis placed on looping and clustering encouraged writers to think in two non-linear ways about the way a piece of writing grows.

Ann also described her writing/thinking process spontaneously in the interview. She said, "When I started drawing the coffee cup, ...a lot of thoughts started *processing through my head,* on memories and things that went along with this coffee cup that I had never thought of before, where it was a simple coffee cup before." She envisioned her thinking as a "procession" of ideas, moving through her brain. Later she used the image of spinning to describe her thought process: "I found that with the loop writing, it would help me with just the basic. . . like a particular word, like coffee cup, and then *just spin off tha* . . . Grandma, where it came from . . . drinking coffee, just simple words. From there I could write on and on " (Interview, December 12, 1998, My emphasis).

Visual Image as Writing Prompt

At this point in the semester Laura returned to the concept of using visual images as a prompt for writing. Since it was Halloween week, she brought in a strange image from *DoubleTake,* a magazine devoted to the integration of words and images. She projected on the screen a black and white photo of a girl with extremely long fingernails, hands held up in front of her face. The action in the photograph was strange and hard to interpret, leaving room for a variety of responses. After they free-wrote about the photograph, Laura listed their phrases and short sentences for a sentence combining exercise. She drew boxes, circles, and arrows to visually connect the words and phrases that were connected by meaning.

Students were asked to write a Halloween Story about children encountering a frightening event, thing, person, putting themselves in the child's place to tell the story. Students responded in a wide range of ways to this prompt. In his journal for the day, Bob associated the image with Monday Night Raw in War, a T.V. wrestling program, and drew his own scary picture of a strange wrestler with fake nails that he named "Stone Cold Scissor Hand" (Bob's Journal, October 31, 1998).

In response to this visual prompt, Sharon wrote a short story called "Halloween Revenge," about two unpopular boys who were surprised and excited to be invited to a

party with the most popular kids at school. The party was to be held at an abandoned house on top of the hill. When they discovered that they were the butt of the popular kids' joke, they quickly set up a scary situation of their own to turn the tables on the others when they came to laugh at them. In the interview later, she said she had recalled a specific image of herself and friends walking across a creek and into the woods on their way home from school. She said that when she had reached a block in her writing, she drew an image of the gate that kept them out of the yard of the old house. First the photograph, then her own drawing, had spurred her to recall images of actual events that she incorporated into the creation of this story.

On the other hand, Hilda spoke of hating this assignment because she does not like scary things. Her story involved children discovering a prosthetic leg on the stairway of a house where they had to go and the terror it inspired in them. In the interview she said the leg image was also from a memory; she could still see in her mind's eye a prosthetic leg that had belonged to her grandmother's deceased husband. Hilda remembered that her grandmother had fastened the leg on the wall for a decoration, although when she asked her mother about it, she discovered that the leg had only been propped against the wall for a while. The photographic image had made Karen recall childhood fears, an experience that she did not like.

> And that picture she showed in class really, really frightened me. So all of a sudden, I remembered back when I was a child....for some reason I didn't like going over to my great-gramma's visiting her.... she lived in this farmhouse. And I'm trying to think of <u>why</u>....and I used to have this nightmare night after night after night, about waking up and going into a house,... you know... that had room after room after room, and never being able to you know get out of there. You know, every time you'd go out of a room, there'd be another room, you know and... I can remember now, she had a wooden leg, hanging on the staircase....

Fleckinstein contends that "the strong emotion evoked by especially vivid mental images may overwhelm the writing processes for underprepared writers. The very act of writing may intensify writers' emotions to the point where they are unable to continue (in Brand

and Graves, 130). It seems, however, that this is not a justification for the use of images so much as a confirmation that imagery is a powerful tool for writers as well as others.

Sea Shell Drawing

In an exercise that is essentially parallel to the drawing of a chair done early in the class, students were large sheets of newsprint and asked to choose a sea shell from a large selection. They were once again instructed to write about the shell, to draw it, and then to write about both processes, deciding which was easier. Laura had them return to their writing after they had drawn it to revise their description.

Students mentioned many different responses, some of which had little to do with the physical activity of either writing or drawing. One said that she didn't like the shell when she was writing about it because the colors and the way it glistens "makes me think of the glistening that you would see on a slug or whatever that would have lived inside it and I think that's gross. Those things make me ill to think of. The drawing shows no glistening, thus no gross slug thoughts" (All the following comments are taken from a transcription of tape of the November 7, 1998 class).

Laura had participated in the drawing/writing exercise too, and she offered to read what she had written:

> Drawing seemed easier because I started to really see the shell--take a closer look at it. I found that while I was writing, I was trying too hard to put my overall vision on the shell into words, sum it up. I did not want to really look and go part by part and look again when I was writing, but when I was drawing, I did want to go part by part and look again, relating the parts to the overall sense and shape of the whole....The relationship of general dimensions and shape with its parts was easier to get across when I was drawing it, harder when writing it.

This comment expresses concisely how the whole-to-part composing process works.

A student read his writing in response to Laura's:

> While drawing, I did find my eye for detail seemed to increase. I suddenly noticed fine lines, a ripple-like quality. I thought of ways to describe it better on

> paper--like saying 'the whole thing looked like it spent its life in a whirlpool,' to help describe its wavy quality . . . Drawing was hard, since I don't draw, but I found it less intimidating to start. I didn't seem to have to search with my mind so much as my eyes, and I drew a spiral and took it from there.

This sense of "searching with eyes"—a familiar skill used by everyone every day—is less intimidating than thinking for this student. But then the "eye for detail" evoked words that even included metaphor ("spent its life in a whirlpool," an image that effectively catches the "wavy quality.")

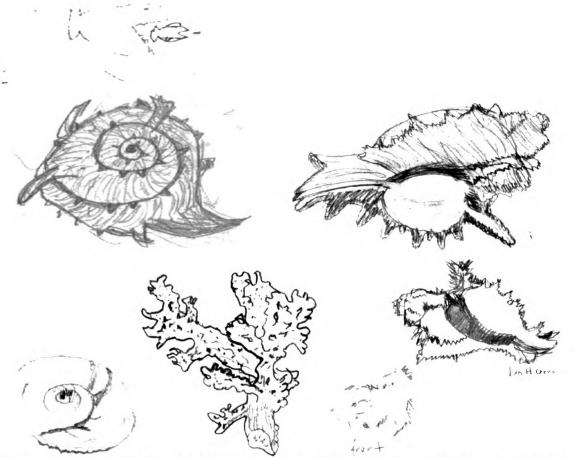


Figure 3.6. Shell drawings (clockwise from top left) by Ben, Ann, Sally, John, and Rosa.. (Student Work).

When Laura showed the class two different drawings by the same artist and asked them to explain how they differed, they noticed that one looked like a free writing, more

like a sketch and the other was more like a finished writing. The person who had drawn them said, "I tried a little harder to get detail." Laura pointed out that they each might notice the difference between the sketch version of their drawings and writings and the revised versions in their own papers. The artist/writer continued,

> I think you would have walked away from it with a little bit better of a picture than the first one, because drawing, kind of forced me to look at the detail closer, rather than the first time I was trying to <u>think</u> about the shell. Now I've looked at it.
>
> I redrew it trying to be more descriptive. . . more shadow, texture. . . . When I wrote about it again, I gave more examples of what it reminded me of instead of trying to describe the shape, more examples of telling the reader so they could have a visual picture.

Some students found that drawing caused them to think recursively about what they had written. One said,

> Well I started drawing it over again, trying to show more detail, and I found myself, when I got done drawing, writing all the stuff that I had found when I was drawing. Sort of a lot more detail, that I couldn't really show in the picture. I found myself drawing more about it.

Unlike the earlier student who had been turned off by envisioning the creature that once inhabited the shell, after drawing both front and back of hers, Sharon said she had wanted to keep it.

Drawing Inferences from words and pictures

To encourage students to consider the kind of thinking they would need to do for the research paper that was the last unit of the semester, Laura told of a discussion she had heard on National Public Radio in which English teachers were asked what were the differences they saw between high school and college research papers. They said that in high school, research writing is for the purpose of telling about knowledge

(summarizing), while in college it is about constructing knowledge (analyzing). Students tell readers something we can't get just from reading what they read—they tell us more. As the focus of the kind of inference process students might use when reading items for their research papers, Laura assigned the short story, "Cathedral," by Raymond Carver. After a considerable discussion of the inferences that can be drawn from this story about a blind man who teaches a seeing man to see, Laura asked students to compare it to the kinds of inferences that could be drawn from the nursery rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty." The rhyme is an amusing but effective document from which to draw inferences, but when placed in juxtaposition with Carver's story, further interesting inferences can be drawn.

Following these inference exercises, Laura offered copies of a randomly selected graph from *U. S. News & World Report.* In groups, students worked to determine what information they could derive from the graph. Laura pointed out that like the story and nursery rhyme, some of the information would come through educated guesses, some is factual, and some is mere assumption. Students were to determine which kind of information was which. In addition, they read an editorial "Convicted Gang Youths Should Not Be Incarcerated" to look for bias both in the article and in their attitudes toward it. The purpose of the exercise was to prepare for evaluating news and periodical articles that they were researching for their papers on various aspects of the topic, "education." Read in conjunction with the graph exercise, students could make some further connections between reading visual images and reading life situations.

As a final activity intended for the purpose of revealing bias in their thinking, Laura asked them to think about what picture comes to mind when they hear the term "he is an educated man." They were asked to free-write about the topic, and then to draw the

image that came to them. This was related to the research papers they were beginning, and opened the way for further discussion on the various aspects of the underlying theme of the semester, "What does it mean to be educated?" The drawings tapped into many of their stereotypical beliefs, exposing them in a gentle way so they could be discussed.

Hilda said this was her favorite of all of the exercises, because, "I think that being able to draw that, and then write about that, I could actually vision this person. What I thought an educated man looked like. I could actually vision him. And it was easy to write about him. It was easy to draw about him." She described the drawing:

> My typical educated man had a white shirt, and the tie, and the suit and the wing-tipped shoes, and the black hair combed over to the side, and he's got his beeper, and he's got . . . his briefcase and he has his . . . cell phone, and let's see. What else did he have? He's got his laptop computer. . . and . . . I don't think I had the laptop in my drawing. And of course he drives the big fancy luxury car. You know, it has to be a Mercedes or a Cadillac, (laugh) . . . or something like that. I think I drew a Cadillac (Interview, December 20, 1998).

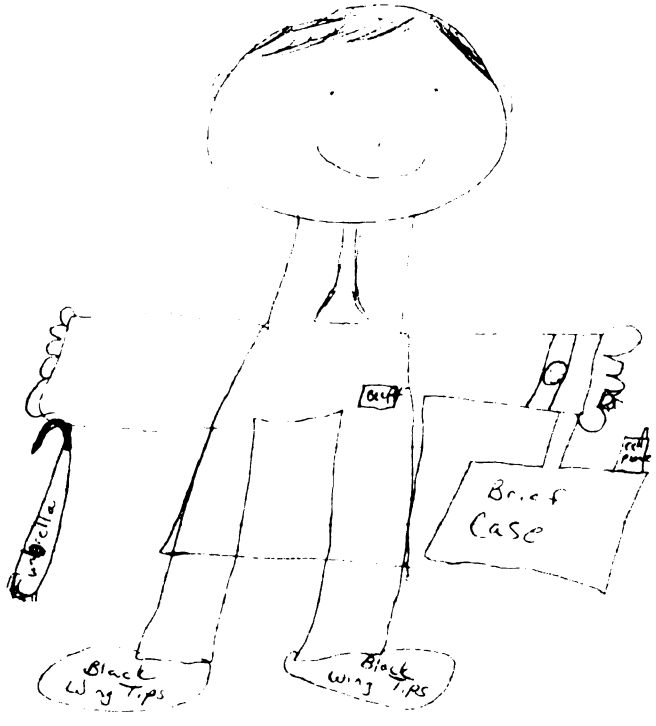


Figure 3. 7 Hilda's Educated man. (Original size 8 ½" x 11") (Student work).

It is interesting to note that she feels a need to label several of the parts, even making sure that both shoes are identified. It is also interesting that she remembered drawing a Cadillac, a part of the image that was obviously only in her mind's eye.

Research Projects

From this point on, Laura's class worked on their research projects under the direction of substitutes since she took a medical leave of absence for the last month and a half. Laura had planned to begin the research by having them work in groups, each of which would select a topic then collect articles in reference to it. Individuals within the groups would then work from the pool of articles to develop papers based on their various interests in the subject. I worked with the class for three of the remaining weeks while a retired MCC English professor covered two others. Even though the students accepted my presence, it was not with the same degree of dedication that they had shown while Laura was there; consequently, , the emphasis on drawing was no longer as significant as it had been. In addition, I was no longer in a position to observe and the focus moved into a new direction. Most of the students became concerned just to get their research papers finished as soon as possible. I was not aware of any particular influence of drawing in their work.

Two students in my class did use drawing and other visual imagery in their research papers, the major reason for including them in the study. I asked them to write their papers using an adaptation of Ken Macrorie's I-Search methods, a research technique that makes it possible to guide students through the processes of research with an understanding of the process itself. It also encourages an awareness of the kind of wider searching that I think is necessary for good writing. These two research projects are described in detail in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Awakening: The Work of Ann and Sharon

Overview

In this chapter, I study the work of two students, Ann and Sharon, who incorporated drawing into their writing in similar ways. I look at influences and interconnections between their writing and drawing in order to build a foundation for studying the work of Sharon in the last part of this chapter, and of Chuck and Carol in Chapter 5.

I begin this discussion by looking at Ann's drawing and writing partly because she was the student whose work contributed heavily to the way Laura's class responded to the drawing exercises, as I reported briefly in Chapter 3. When she demonstrated a positive response to the drawing, discussing her simple and straight-forward work was not threatening to the other students. Her out-spoken enthusiasm was infectious and helped set the tone of the class. Ann's contribution to the class was significant, but in addition, it provides an anchor for and an opening into the discussion of what I found in my investigation of the effects of drawing on student writing. An early question often posed is does drawing work only for those students who have had a lot of experience with it? Ann's work demonstrates that well-developed drawing ability is not a prerequisite for experiencing benefits from drawing within the writing process.

Ann and Sharon shared a considerable amount of apprehension toward writing at the beginning of the class. They differed in their writing abilities at the beginning of the class and in their levels of development through the course; nevertheless it was obvious in their writing and in what they said about it that they had both integrated drawing into their writing in a recursive way. They moved back and forth between the two, using drawing as a tool to inspire their writing, sometimes as they began their work and sometimes to overcome writing blocks or to resolve organizational issues, bringing to mind Zebroski's wave metaphor for describing the writing process.

Both Ann and Sharon work with children and both saw the connections between their own writing and drawing and the drawing of the children with whom they worked, perhaps a contributing factor in their positive response to the drawing, both during the semester they were in the class and following months. Both interjected what Sharon called "doodles" into the margins of their notes and other informal writing, some of which functioned like a rebus in children's puzzles. This may in fact have been the result of their having worked with children for several years.

Ann's Writing and Drawing

The mother of a combined family of four teen-age boys, Ann is a full time paraprofessional, working with elementary-aged autistic children. Fall 1998 was the first semester she had been enrolled in college. It had been nineteen years since she graduated from high school, and consequently she was nervous about her writing ability. When she described her writing time-line in her journal she wrote,

> I am one of those writers whos content is generally short and sweet and to the point. I am very concerned with what others, who are reading what I wrote will think? To sum that up would be to say, Fear of judgement on my intellect (Journal, September 14, 1998).

In another journal entry labeled, "The Fear of Being Ridiculed in Your Writing," she wrote that her fears were based on

> . . . being judged on proper grammar, punctuation, spelling and so on. Yes I do fill this way, I have always avoided getting too "wordie" because of my spelling. I don't want my intellect to be messured at the low end of the scale. Soley on my lack of proper spelling. Or using proper grammer or not using punctuation in the right order, So in avoiding the *task* of writing a personal journal that someone may find, It feels better or ok just to find something eles to do. So what I am trying to say is it wasn't a high priority on my list. Why would any one want to put theirself out on a limb. With the risk of being thought less of (Journal, September 9, 1998; Emphasis in the text).

In our first interview, Ann elaborated further about her attitude toward writing, showing a good sense of humor about her situation, but still admitting her fear in the beginning of the class. She said "I was very afraid of this class because of the writing

issue...afraid of being judged on what I wrote, my content showing my intellectual level or the lack of it, [laughing], or my inability to use the right words or phrases to get my point across. I shied away from writing, even writing letters to family and friends. That's how limited my writing was" (Interview, December 12, 1998). Ann attributed her feelings of inadequacy in part to the fact that her high school did not emphasize writing "as a big issue," the second time within a minute she had used the term "issue" to describe writing--an indication that she did consider it to be important. In contrast to her own high school situation, she pointed out that she thinks writing is being more heavily emphasized today because it seems that her eighth grade son is already at her level.

She laughed when I asked her about her art background, saying that the best way she could put her ability to draw was "stick men." She described her art experience as "just the basic . . . a very minimal amount of drawing" (Interview, December 12, 1998).

Drawing an Object: Learning to See

Ann said that when she began the first out-of-class drawing exercise, she had chosen the coffee cup she had at work, "not thinking no big deal." She described it as "an old coffee cup from a garage sale, used old coffee cup that if it got broke, oh, well, and if it didn't . . . Today that cup is put up, now (laugh). Safe. And I took another cup to work" (Interview, December 12, 1998). She said that she had drawn the pictures after work because it was the most convenient time to do this assignment. It did not take long for her to realize that the exercise was important, however. Drawing the cups had evoked memories of her grandmother:

> When I started drawing the coffee cup...a lot of thoughts started processing through my head on *memories* and things that went along *with* this coffee cup that I had never thought of before, where it was a simple coffee cup before (Interview, December 12, 1998; My emphasis).

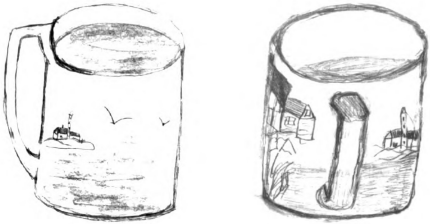


Figure 4.1 Ann's Cup Drawings. (Original size, 4" x 6") (Student work).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Ann's cup drawings were shown to the class on the overhead, and in addition, her two journal responses were read to supplement the other comments Laura made about observing and writing about an object. Ann's journal entries were both spontaneous since Laura had not asked students to write about the object. First

> Subject: Drawing--Ann's Coffee Cup # 1.
>
> When I look at my picture I drew, thoughs enter my mind on events or even other thoughts that entered my mind when I was drawing this picture. This coffee cup is one I use at work. I do not have a cup like this one at home or any other place. No one at work has one like this, I had brought this cup from my house. I recall while drawing this cup that it came from my husband's Grandmother Lilian. Her and I got along quite well. She loved her coffee, and we had alot in common. She is passed away now. But the memories are pleasant ones when I look at this cup. It is the beginning of the day--before any students come in.
>
> My co-workers in the room are busy setting up the classroom. for the days events.
>
> They are very understanding toward me and give me the time to do this drawing. They know this is important to me (my education). Which gives me a felling of being important or what I fell matters. And looking up to the top line of this page want me to refer to them as friends. Co-worker just seems to detached. (Journal, September 18, 1998. Underlining in text).

In this piece of writing Ann was more concerned with her process and her reasons for writing than the object itself. When Laura read it to the class to illustrate the kinds of

journal entries they might choose, students observed that in journal writing, whatever thoughts an exercise provokes are acceptable.

Ann's second entry is labeled, "Subject: Anns Coffee Cup #2."

> When I reflect on this drawing, I can remember felling tired. This one was drawn at the end of the day. Here I am at work drawing my cup. Not doing a very good job. I kept tracing over and over just couldn't get the lines right. I recall taking a sip of this coffee. It was cold, I had poured it earlier in the day. It also reminds me again of Granma Lilian. When she would have bad days and said how tired she was.
>
> Another thing that pops-in my mind,—Judy one of my (co-workers) friends said ("How many times do you have to draw a simple coffee cup.") I replyed 3 but it isn't just a simple coffee cup to me . . . (Journal, September 18, 1998).

At this point in her writing, Ann was not able to express the depths of the connection that she had felt with the object, but her comment that "it isn't just a simple coffee cup to me" shows that she was becoming aware of feelings that had been dormant until she made the drawing.

In her exit writing for the day after the class discussed her drawings and her journal entries, Ann wrote on one side of her split-page journal, "Pictures, collage," and on the other, "I have got so much coming in my head I didn't realize was there. I like the Idea of using photos and such" (Notebook, September 26, 1998).

Later, in the interviews, she indicated her awareness of the powerful impact the drawing experience had had on her. After describing her memories of the many times she had spent drinking coffee with her grandma, she began to identify her current situation with those memories. She said that as a working mom, going to school, some days

> . . . I feel just overwhelmed and so tired, and I remember Grandma feeling that way, just before she passed away, and she would say, "Oh a fresh cup of coffee would do me good." And just the correlation, and drinking coffee, energizing you to keep you going. Instead that kind of memory kept flowing in. It was just . . .I could just go on and on and on and on (Interview, December 12, 1998).

In addition to tapping into the emotional connections, the drawing had opened her eyes to the rich details of those memories. She said,

> I think I could write a whole book on that coffee cup (laugh). You know, on all the memories that came into effect with it, and how it affects my life in correlation with how it affected Grandma's life. And issues that she had and issues that I have. Dealing with . . . Just on drawing that . . . I could have picked anything, and I find myself, now when I look at an object I look at it differently and when I look at a picture or painting that somebody else did, I can see it's more an expression of feelings, emotions and their interpretation of something (Interview, December 12, 1998 My emphasis).

Here she has gone beyond sentimental attachments to objects she has kept in the past, such as the things her sons made at school. She seems to have gone deeper to a real emotional connection. Seeing the details clearly, perhaps for the first time, led her to make connections. She continued,

> If somebody else was to look at [the cup drawings] they would probably say, "Oh, a coffee cup with scenery, with a lighthouse and water, and blah, blah, blah, you know. Without much experience in drawing you know? (She laughed again.) But when I look at it, or if someone read what I wrote, they would see more than just a coffee cup. So when I look at even art...pictures, paintings and object that are on people's desks, and special things that you see sitting around, then you wonder what is the special meaning or attachment of the object to this person and it kind of intrigues your interest a little bit, to be more—to be aware of what's around your surroundings and how it affects us all emotionally (Interview, December 12, 1998).

Ann's words here remind me of the time Frederick Franck had spoken in my figure drawing workshop years earlier about the way drawing a portrait of a person caused a connection to form between the artist and the model. Franck told us that noticing such small personal details as scars, wrinkles, etc. would make us see the humanness of the model, and if we were paying attention, create an emotional bond. He wrote that he was "so much less fascinated by standardized prettiness than by the infinite variations of the human theme! The fat, the skinny, the flabby and the old are not awful! That which life has marked, wounded, does not repel but moves me (*Awakened*, 83). Ann already had the emotional bond with her grandmother, but the focus on the object that had connected them brought the memories back to her, in a way that opened her eyes to more than just

the object itself. Like my other student who had expressed her new-found vision as "getting new glasses," Ann was learning to see more as a result of her drawing experience.

Applications and Expansion: "Spinning off"

The same day that Ann's cup drawing and journal entry provided a basis for class discussion on the relationship between drawing and writing, Laura introduced the techniques of clustering and looping and using details from the literary essay, "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker" as described in Chapter 3. In her personal journal following this experience, Ann copied Laura's "blue" cluster from the board into her journal, then made her own clustered on "Childhood Memories."

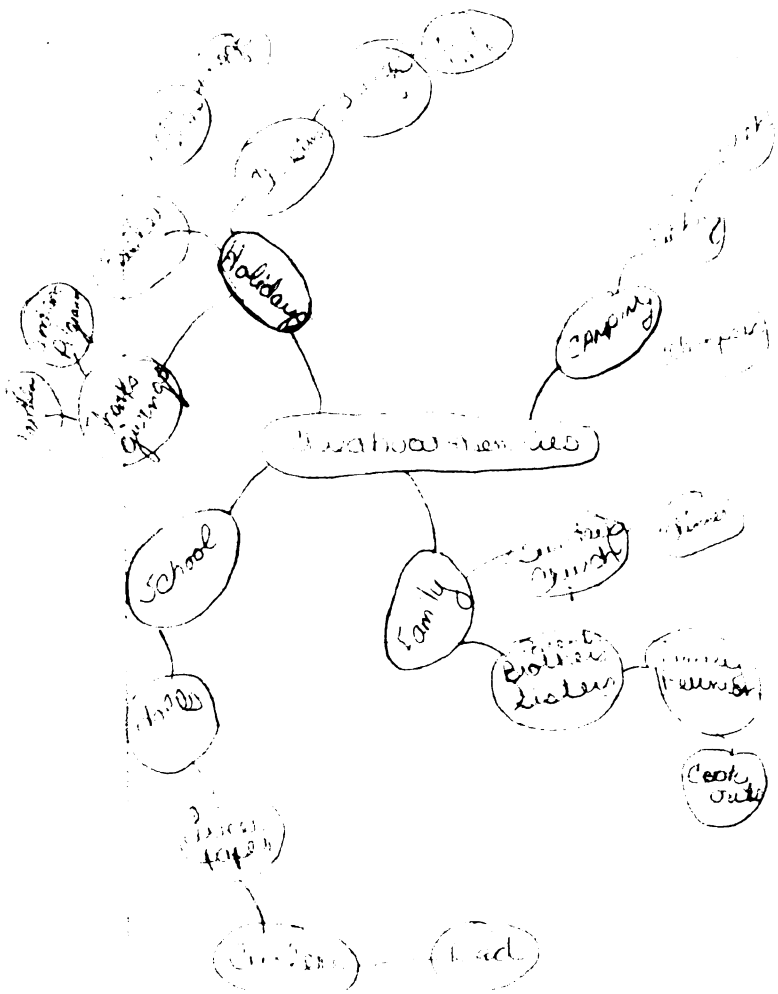


Figure 4.2. Ann's Cluster (September 26, 1998). (Student work).

After doing the cluster, she wrote two entries on memories it had evoked. One was about when her brother nearly died after a construction accident, and the other was about classmates teasing and refusing to play with her after her mother made her wear hair curlers to school because she was going to have her picture taken. She recalled that the principal had stepped in and her father told her it was the other children's loss if they didn't want to play with her.

Although clustering is a thinking process embedded in words, it appears to function as a different sign-system at least for some writers, and thus to help make concrete the leaps of mind and connections between ideas that might be less apparent in an outline. Likewise, looping deliberately encourages writers to make such leaps even while thinking in words.

In the interview, Ann recalled this exercise and used the image of "spinning" to describe the development of her thoughts. She said, "I found that with the loop writing, it would help me with just the basic . . . like a particular word, like coffee cup, and then *just spin off that* . . . Grandma, where it came from . . . drinking coffee, just simple words. From there I could write on and on " (Interview, December 12, 1998; My emphasis).

Another adaptation she had made of the looping/clustering exercise was ingenious, although not exactly what Peter Elbow had intended. In a sense, she was also spinning off the clustering/looping techniques she used in writing to answer problems she experienced in life. She said she gone home and made a chart to plan family meals. She drew a circle for the center loop and labeled it "dinner" and then wrote "days" in the circles of the outer loops. Everyone in the family would pick one day and write what they wanted to eat. From there she said it was easy to add what was needed to make the dinner around each circle, and she laughed, "then some of them actually prepared the meals. Or ordered them"

(Interview, March 17, 1999). Although these were not drawing exercises in the strict sense of the word, Ann seemed to be connecting class work and home life in the same kind of whole view with which she began the draft of the essay in progress. Seeing ways to incorporate all she was learning, she began to expand her perceptions.

She also used this "looping" technique for Christmas and birthdays, letting the loops describe each family member's interests and the gifts they would like with sizes and other pertinent information. Her thirteen-year old son even cut out pictures of a green and white soccer shirt from his favorite catalogue, Paradise Express, and glued them to the chart with specific specifications about size, color and material, and where she could find the order blank. When I asked if any family members objected to the writing assignments, listing their interests and desires on her chart, she replied that they were actually pleased that others were concerned about their interests, and it had improved family communication.

When students brought in their "One-Typed Page" papers for peer response. Ann's paper was actually one long paragraph filling two typed pages (double-spaced, large font, approximately 400 words) titled "What I am good at." The essay consisted of a kind of stream-of-consciousness discussion of her work:

> I have been a sub-paraprofessional (teachers aide) for Genesee Intermediate Schools for the past five years. I have worked with a variety of handicaps and impairments. But I have found I am most comfortable with the autistic population. With the age group of five to twelve years of age. Most do not or will not work with these children because of fear. Most of these children have what we call behaviors, bad behaviors that is. We prefer to call them just behaviors its not so negative. Some of them can and do get very violent to themselves and others. I myself was afraid at first. I didn't like leaving work with bruises scratches or my hair pulled out. But when I watched these children and could see they to were afraid. A lot of these children go into their own little world. Most of them do not like eye contact. And their life gets set to a pattern. If some one or some thing interrupts this pattern, it upsets the whole routine of the day. Not just that moment in some cases it will effect the entire day.

(Although the paragraph continues on, it might be instructive to note that to this point Ann has covered first, a description of autism, then fear others bring to working with them, an acknowledgement that the fear is justified, a suggestion of causes for their reactions. She continues with a description of other typical behavior.

> Some of them have more than Autism they may have other handicaps or impairments also. Quite often you will see them get very flustered. But if I couldn't communicate what I wanted or needed for whatever reason, time and time again I to would get frustrated or even angry. So being compassionate and patient is very important with this job. This job can be very challenging but it also has a lot of rewards. Especially when you have a chance, or they allow you to "go in to their world". By being patient and understanding you will earn trust in small measurers with these children. But the feeling is big in the measure of reward coming back to you. To get them to try a new food or to eat out of a bowl rather than a baggie is great! To have them ask for some thing with out a tantrum. Or even getting some of them to use speech is a neat experience. Trying some thing new such as swinging or going down a slide. Occasionally after several attempts they may realize this is fun and not some thing to be feared. With some there is no speech, so we try communication with basic sign language or even picture boards.

She describes the rewards and good feeling she gets from working with these children, especially when one understands them. Still the paragraph continues.

> There are so many levels of Autism, I have never come across two students that were the same. I have even worked with twins they had a lot of the same quirks or similarities but they to are very different. Working with these children you should set yourself vigilant state around them. But I suppose to be on guard is a good thing no matter what job you have. But it is really important with this job. If you develop an on guard way to approaching this job, it stops a lot of injuries to both students and staff. By redirecting a possible fit or tantrum before it accrues. What I mean by this is you will learn that certain events foods or even people will trigger the "behaviors" with the student you are working with (Journal, September 26, 1998).

Finally she concludes, after describing children with whom she has worked, and then returning to events that will trigger their negative reactions, "behaviors."

Reading this paragraph as a whole allows one to see the leaps of mind Ann is making, leaps which have their own internal logic. Although she will have to separate out the parts in order to compose a sequential essay from this start.

Sarah Dennis Eldridge did not specify in her creation of a writing course for art students exactly how the whole-to-part process looked in writing. If one were to try to envision how this might look, however, this draft with which Ann began her work on her next essay might be considered an example. She begins here with an almost short-hand overview of the topic that will require an opening-up from the center to find the detail to illustrate her points. It is as if she has all of the outside flat-edged puzzle pieces in place, the contour of the description, but all the details are in a jumble yet to be turned over and arranged. In fact, as Ann discovered in the peer response to this essay, she was assuming a knowledge on the part of her audience (if she had even considered audience to be other than herself) that they did not have. This long paragraph reads almost as if Ann is painting a picture of her job, putting in whatever detail that comes to her as she thinks of it. "Behaviors," foods, tantrums, and an understanding of the causes for these behaviors move through the piece almost as motifs in a painting.

After in-class feedback on this draft, combined with the experience of hearing the class respond to her cup drawing/writing and then being introduced to the concept of clustering and looping, Ann reorganized the paper into six more carefully focused paragraphs with some extra detail, especially in regard to defining autism. The second draft was approximately 530 words. Over the next two weeks, she expanded the essay to three pages (narrow margins and small font--approximately 1000 words) including many specific details of the characteristic activities of the children with whom she works. The final draft of the paper is organized into eight paragraphs focused around central ideas that follow each other with some logic, although many of the sentences still need work. In all, in terms of content, this was a remarkable progress in fluency, development and organization for only three weeks.

Drawing: A Way to Find Detail

For the next assignment, an essay based on significant memories, Ann returned to her cluster on memories and wrote about family camping trips in a rustic campground. Her essay recalled swimming with her brothers "until we were purple and blue, with our teeth chattering so hard my mom was afraid our teeth were going to break" (Journal, October 10, 1998). She

described catching fish and cleaning them together at the picnic table. She recalled the smell, the newspapers, the raccoons, and her older brothers "throwing the fish guts at me just to get me to scream and go crying to my mom" (Journal, October 10, 1998). She wrote that the most important aspect of those trips for her was the time they spent together as a family. The essay was a fairly typical and basic camping description, including burnt marshmallows, falling out of the camper, and getting cold in the night.

At this point in her work on this essay, Ann began to feel a concern for writing clearly enough to make sure "the person reading this [would know] what it smelled like, what it felt like, where they could incorporate or almost so they could be there in a sense like I was? That's what I would like to put across, but I wasn't sure how to do that in words" (Interview, December 12, 1998). To work on this, she had gone to Laura before class, she said in the interview, to ask about how she could express the feelings she felt as a child during the camping trips. Laura said Ann had asked her, "How do I express so my reader will feel the way I felt?" She was frustrated because she was becoming aware that words cannot easily communicate exact feelings and emotions, a budding awareness of the way language works.

At Laura's suggestion, Ann offered her essay for the class to discuss as a demonstration of peer response and revision. As an introduction to this exercise, the students read a handout from Peter *Elbow's Writing Without Teachers.* (See the in-depth discussion of this essay in Chapter 1.) After talking about the essay with their partners as Elbow's exercise asks, they were asked to choose the smallest object in the essay and to describe it so carefully their partners could see it. Ann talked about the fish her brothers had thrown at her. When they returned to focused free-writing about the object, Ann had come up with new details to describe it: "Slimy, shinning scales, bulging black eyes, --small marbles.) shades of green spots of black and brown, white pink or cream belly. Rusty brown metal curved" (Journal, October 10, 1998). One student asked if they could draw the fish. Ann drew this image:

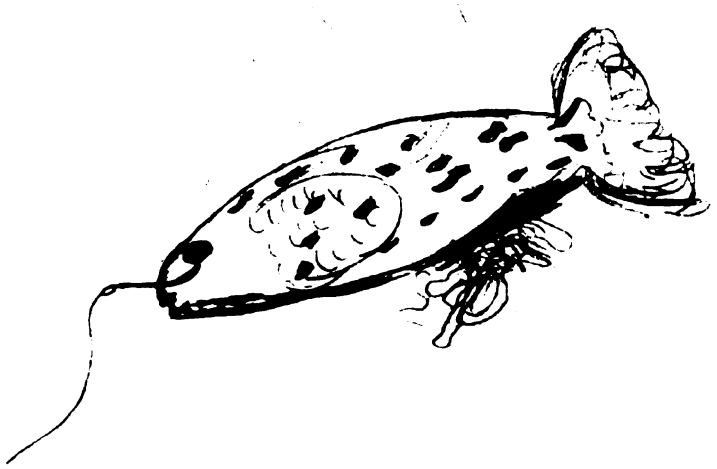


Figure 4.3 Ann's "Dead Fish" (Journal, October 10, 1998). (Student work).

After drawing the fish, she described it:

> Laying in the hot sun, scales are getting slimmie, sun is making the scales shine! Eyes look like glassy small marbles, jet black, sticking out (bulging). The scales are a multitude of green shades from Dark forest green to a pale or light greens, spots not all the same size or shape. They are all over the fish, top bottom, front, back, belly of the fish is pale in color, some of white, cream or pink. The hook stuck through the eye, rusty and brown metal, twisted, dull and bumpy in texture (Journal, October 10, 1998).

Drawing the fish had helped her make her visual image concrete, and that helped her find the words to describe it. The drawing exercise, along with the talking exercise, awakened an awareness of audience as well. When she described writing about the camping experience, she said,

> When it comes to the fish issue, ...if you're an avid fisherman, you know, fish don't stink,...It's *no big deal to them*... But when you're talking about a little girl, and having the guts flung at you then yes, they are disgusting, gross, smelly, disgusting, You know, the odor was just...and I didn't know *how to put in words the feelings* I felt then at seven-eight years old,...to be able to *portray* that to the person reading my paper (Interview, December 12, 1998, my emphasis).

After this class discussion of her essay, Ann stopped me in the hall and said, "Next week I will bring a picture of an artesian well, burned wood, blueberries, dead fish, and wildflowers! My greatest fear has become my most fun! I used to write, 'gone to store, be back soon. Mom.' Now I write, 'I've gone to get _____and by the time you finish

reading this, I'll be back.' My sister wanted me to meet her for lunch [today]. I said, 'I can't. I have English class. I don't even feel good! I didn't think I would stay all hour, and here it is 12:10" (My observation journal, October 10, 1998).

Now that she has had a successful experience incorporating details from her memory into her writing, after drawing she turned to the use of images that she created in her imagination. Inspired by the visual prompt of the photograph of the strange young woman with long fingernails, Ann said she wrote a scary Halloween story about kids going into an old depot. She said first she imagined the kids going to the old depot for their Halloween party, and then added a few more details. She drew a picture of the old building, including "a moon shining through the trees, and then a creaky board thing, and ...[she] made the boards on the front porch of the depot kind of crooked, and missing pieces." She said that as she got more into writing the detail of the story, she would go back and add more detail to the picture. This recursive process would be utilized by the other writers as the semester progressed, one of the most interestingways drawing functioned within the writing process.

During a class discussion of another essay, "Cathedral" by Raymond Carver, Ann responded in her journal with a drawing that seemed to cause her to understand the story in an unusual way. In class she had become involved with the discussion of the essay and the nursery rhyme, extending her thoughts on the meaning of "Humpty Dumpty" in her journal to write about relationships and other significant experiences. She did not indicate what prompted this association, but her logic made everyone think about the broken egg in new ways. She drew a simple picture of Humpty sitting on his wall (See Figure 4.4).

At this point in her journal she also began to include little images, some of which were rebuses, actually substituting symbols for words. She told me in the interview that she also began about this time to include pictures such as flowers on her attendance sheets

at school, in letters to her husband, and on other written materials. She said she had not done that kind of drawing before,

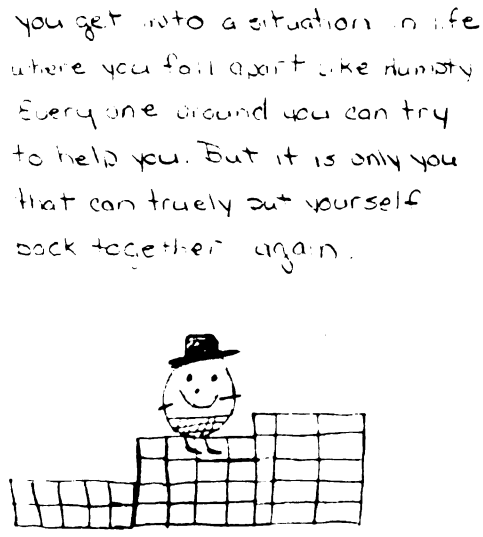


Figure 4.4. Ann's Humpty Dumpty drawing. (Student work).

In addition to the collage she had created to go with her camping essay, Ann said that while working on her research paper on autism, she had made other "visual aids." She had cut pictures out of magazines, one of a spinning top, another of a bicycle in motion, and then rows of the letter "A," all images that relate to the kind of repetitive movements made by her autistic students:

> It kind of brings back the memories of working with each one of these students. It brings a fresher, more precise... on different issues and growth, that I've seen in the students individually *while* I'm writing my paper.
>
> This is something that I've found where a visual aid intrigues me, it expands my . . . my ideas and to help me put it down in a better perspective on paper (Interview December 12, 1998; Ann's emphasis).

When I asked if this was similar to the way she had associated the cup with her Grandmother, she replied that it was, and that the images helped her go back and forth between the image and the writing. She continued, laughing at herself again:

> For me it's opened up a whole new avenue and I've realized that my writing isn't so limited. Where I thought it would be a very limited hard thing to write on. I'm like "Oh, my God. She only wants us to write two to three pages?"

> Because I've got so much I want to write about now (Interview, December 12, 1998).

In a second interview March 17, 1999, Ann described other applications she had made of the drawing/writing connections. Autistic children, she says, often have a concept problem so she and the teacher with whom she works drew pictures of "The Three Little Pigs," one boy's favorite story and then they had him write the words "Pink Pig" under the pictures. Since texture helps as much as the pictures, she said for the pig's houses they cut little bricks from red textured paper, toothpicks and straw for the other two houses and then wrote those words for the different materials beneath each one. The combination of the visual and the tactile helped him get the concept more easily. In fact, Ann said this boy is "tactile defensive." Like other autistic children who don't like touching different textures. He doesn't like touching glue and hand lotion and soaps. However, she said that squirting the glue onto the paper for the pigs' houses has helped him overcome some of his defensiveness.

> He still won't use lotion," she says, "but he does use the hand soap to get the glue off. He's understanding that better. Just how working with drawing, incorporated with painting and textures and all of it, we've got him over one of his little defenses. He would really get upset. Major tears and all (Interview, March 17, 1999).

When I asked her if the idea to use the drawings with the children were her own, she said proudly that they were, and that the other teachers and their aides had worked with the speech department to get them to incorporate these ideas into their activities with the children also. Now that she had realized the effects of drawing on her own writing, she was able to utilize the understanding of kinesthetic and visual languages to which she had alluded in her first draft.

She also reported that she had begun to write down story ideas that she would like to write for her students, and little poems to make them laugh. "I'm too busy to sit down and write a short story, but I've done the brainstorming and the loop-writing. And then I

would spin my ideas off of that." She says that she has to tell her brain to shut down so she can get some sleep now.

Summary:

Ann came into the writing class with the belief that her writing ability was seriously lacking, partly because she had not done much writing since she had graduated from high school several years ago, and partly because she believed the background she had received there was inadequate. She said that all her writing to date was "short and sweet and to the point." Judging by her first drafts and sparse journal entries, her assessment was fairly accurate, although her fear of failure in the class did not immobilize her; instead, she was willing to let herself become engaged with the work and that engagement led her to take pleasure in her writing.

Even though Ann believed that her drawing skills were also undeveloped, the drawings of the cup show sensitivity and careful observation. Her enthusiastic response to the drawing exercises is evidence that she responds well to visual information, and is therefore, most likely quite visual in her thinking.

Although Ann's writing remained in a range I would evaluate as average at the end of the semester, her attitude toward her work, both in school and out, was far above average. A gregarious talker, she was instrumental in exhibiting a positive response to drawing, and helped establish the tone of the class. Ann's participation in the drawing exercises helped her to add far more specific detail in her essays than she had been able to write earlier.

Ann did not develop her writing to the degree that the other students in the study developed theirs, but looking at the way she incorporated the drawing exercises into her work provides a basis for describing and comparing Sharon's work in the next part of this chapter.

Sharon's Writing and Drawing

Sharon is a friendly, sincere, but quiet woman in her late thirties. She was very much a part of all class discussions, but not one to push her ideas on anyone else. She sat near Hilda, her friend from work, near the front of the classroom. Her nervousness was apparent from the first, although she did not let that keep her from achieving success in her writing; in fact, it may have spurred her to work harder at it than some others. Sharon made more drawings during the semester than any of the students whose work I examined, including several drawings in her journals that had not been assigned, a fact that I was not aware of until after she volunteered to join my study and then gave me a copy of her journals after mid-term.

At the time she was enrolled in the composition class Sharon had been working full-time in a Head Start program for fourteen years with children two to five years old. Sharon had enrolled at MCC after graduating from high school in 1976, intending to go into nursing. She dropped out after the first year, however, since working full time in a nursing home and going to school proved too difficult for her. After ten years she moved to the Head Start program, a position that required her to earn a childcare certificate. By fall 1998, the only requirements remaining for her to earn the Associates Degree were Composition I and II and Political Science.

Sharon's Attitude toward Drawing and Writing

Like Ann and many other returning students, not having done much writing for several years was a source of considerable anxiety for Sharon. In the interview after explaining that she had postponed taking the composition classes as long as possible, she laughed and said, "So that should tell you something there about how uncomfortable I felt about writing!" (Interview, December 20). Her discomfort did not stem from a feeling of

antipathy toward writing itself, however, because she said both in her journal and in the interviews that she had enjoyed writing in high school, especially creating stories and keeping a diary. Sharon's worries, like Ann's, included "horrible spelling and handwriting," and concern about what others would think of her writing. She wrote, "I truly wished that I had a teacher in high school to encourage me to continue writing. Who knows, maybe if I had, my dreams of writing children's stories might have come true" (Journal, September 19, 1998).

Her enjoyment of writing stories earlier did not keep her from fearing what she thought would be expected of her in an academic writing class. She said that besides the monthly newsletters she wrote for parents of children in the Head Start program, she had written nothing beyond "shopping lists, reminder notes and schedules" (Journal, September 14). She wrote in her journal after the first class meeting,

> I always felt good writers know exactly what they want to say and how to say it. Never making mistakes, having perfect grammar and beautiful handwriting.
>
> I always felt good writers have words flowing through their mind like their blood flowing through their veins.
>
> I can't picture a good writer being a ordinary person like myself. Someone who works full time, has a family with young children and has several other commitments in the community. My vision of a good writer is someone who has all the time they need living in the country surrounded by nature.
>
> Like the Energizer Bunny, who never runs down, I've always felt a good writer never runs out of creative ideas to write about (Journal, September 15, 1998).

Even though her mistaken image of a writer left her feeling unprepared for college writing, Sharon is already expressing herself clearly, even using two apt metaphors (a good writer has words flowing like blood through veins, and again, a good writer is like the Energizer Bunny). Some of the verbs she has chosen seem to indicate a visual way of approaching the world: "I can't *picture* a good writer as being . . ." "my *vision* of a good writer is . . ." although she refers to feelings in this paragraph three times as well.

Looking back at her attitudes in her mid-term self-evaluation, Sharon wrote,

> I can remember the first Saturday class. I was scared to death. I felt that I was to old and waited to long to continue taking classes at Mott College. I didn't think that I would have time to do the required assignments. I thought that the class would be stressful and I wouldn't enjoy taking it. I was really afraid that I would spend less time with my family if I took a class at Mott and I new this would make me feel guilty (Journal, October 27, 1998).

However, in this mid-term retrospective, she said she "had a confession to make. I never knew that I could be so wrong" (Journal, October 27, 1998). None of these fears materialized. She credited the introduction of different kinds of writing, particularly journal writing, and the encouragement "to explore drawing and its connections with my writings," as well as the help she received in feedback groups with helping her relax and feel comfortable in the class (Journal, October 27, 1998).

From her earliest journal entries, Sharon claimed to enjoy drawing, and to be interested that Laura had suggested it as one mode of response. Even though she had not had extensive art training beyond a high school art class and Art 101(Art Education), at MCC, several years earlier and at one point said she didn't know if the drawing was good or not, she had no inhibiting lack of confidence in her drawing ability.

Her chair drawing in the first exercise showed skill and confidence, judging from the strength of her lines. A close look at the original ink drawing reveals one whited out section at the base indicating that she was able to look again and revise her lines, and the seat is a little skewed due to the difficult angle from which she was viewing it.

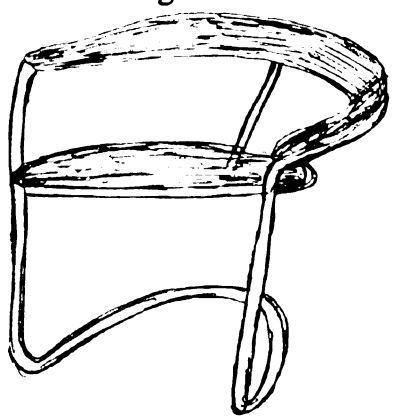


Figure 4.5 Sharon's chair drawing (Student work).

She wrote:

> The chair was made of a chrome frame. The Chome was not polished, had smuges in it. The seat cushion was wide for sitting. The material was a redish color (reminded me of fall!) The back of the chair was open from one side to the other. Just a small (^narrow^) back, same color as the padded cushion. The material was discolored and worn on both ends of the back rest. The material for the cushion and the back rest was made of a cotton material (Journal, September 12, 1998).

In this description that she wrote at the same time she did the drawing, the sentence structure and content are simple, merely useful in recording the details Sharon has perceived. She wrote that it was easier for her to write about the chair than to draw it because she could "use words to describe the color and materials." However, by the time of the interview in December, she remembered it differently and contradicted herself. She said, "I liked [drawing] it. I enjoyed doing it at first and I thought, 'Well, gee, I wish it would have been something else because I never drew a chair before.'" She said that as she was drawing it, she had wished she could have used colored pencils "to add more life to the drawing" (Interview, December 20, 1998).

These end-of-course observations were made from the perspective of having completed all the other drawing/writing exercises. Even though she had completed a long and much more sophisticated personal essay as well as a research paper and other work by this time, Sharon still lacked confidence in her writing. She said, "I have a hard time coming up with words . . . to describe things. A lot of times I look up words in the book [Thesaurus]. As a matter of fact I went out and bought one just for this class . . . I'm not a verbal person, to explain" (Interview, December 20, 1998). What she has accomplished never seems to Sharon to be enough.

Seeing connections between drawing, writing, and reading:

Building on an area of confidence

Sharon spent a considerable amount of energy on the first out-of-class drawing exercise, even though she had not chosen an object that had any emotional significance for

her. She said she had just picked up the first thing that she saw as she sat down and prepared to do her homework--a T. V. remote control. Her first drawing (dated September 13) was done in pencil, but she said she had "splurged and added color" in the second drawing (dated September 14) and she had included even more detail, in the third drawing, also in color (September 15). By choosing to add color to the second and third drawings, Sharon was able to correct the inadequacy she had expressed about having to draw her chair in black and white.

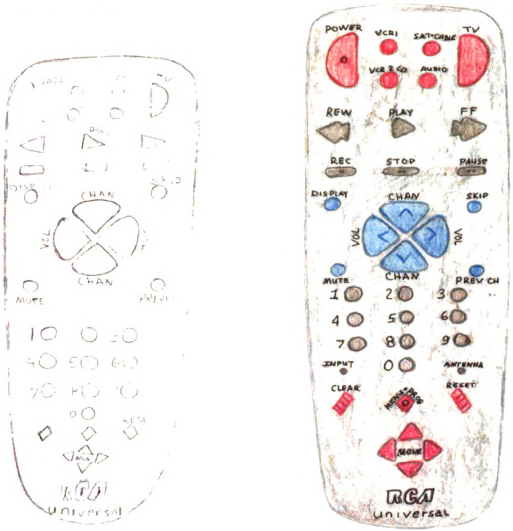


Figure 4.6. Sharon's Remote Control Drawings, September 13 and 15. (Student work).

Each drawing filled a single 8 ½" x 11" page and was so carefully drawn that I asked her if she had traced around the outside of the object to get it to look so much like the

object. She hadn't. Laura had not asked the students to write about these drawings, so Sharon's only recorded thoughts about the exercise come from the interview that was conducted several weeks later. She recalled noticing the similarities between drawing and writing when she did this drawing exercise. She said,

> It's like each line I draw I can see more and it's almost like . . . each time I write, and then I rewrite, I realized there were things I left out and needed to add more to.
>
> And even with my writing I realize that, gee, you know, I was gonna say that but for some reason I didn't say that and then I . . . it's almost like you need to *see* your writing. If you could, if your writing was a picture. . . then you could *see* whether you had all the details in it.
>
> I wish we would have been able to spend more time on it. And to really get into it more, into the drawing, because it seems like the more I did it the more I realized something each time (Interview, December 20, 1998; Sharon's emphasis).

In fact, the observation she has made here about the way being able to look at the drawing helps her to see what is missing is much the same opportunity that a studio art class provides for student artists. Although Sharon did not have a Eureka! sort of reaction to this object drawing like Ann had, she did make connections between revising her written words and drawing the object a second and third time.

Extending the Connections: Drawing/Writing Responses Become an Essay

The process Sharon went through to arrive at the final draft of the essay "My Perfect World" was a complex series of drawings and writings, with each new piece picking up, revealing, and adding connections to what had gone before. Beginning with the first assignment, to write a "One-typed page" paper about "something you do well," Sharon forged her own path through the reading and writing assignments, adding drawing responses to stories from the text and to her own expressive journal writing. She drew these pictures even though Laura had only suggested drawing as one possible ways to respond to readings from the text. None of the other three participants from this class who gave me their journals had drawn responses to any of the readings.

These were emotional and hectic weeks for Sharon, according to journal entries for the week of September 26-October 3. First, she was nervous about having to complete

preparations for her twin daughters to serve as flower girls in a wedding after leaving the class at noon that Saturday; then at the reception that night after the wedding, the heavy smoke caused her to have a severe asthmatic reaction. Some of her journal entries seem to have been done at a time of high stress, such as the late night entry after returning from the wedding reception she had been worrying about. Since it is not logical to think that she would turn to doing homework as a stress reliever, one might assume writing about this topic must have been important to her.

The way the drawings and the journal entries overlap offers interesting material for conjecture. Because the process is complex, I outline it first.

Sept. 15, 16, 20, two journal entries on working at Head Start.
Sept. 19, (in-class) Read and discussed "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker." Attended wedding (twin daughters were flower girls); wrote about it in journal after returning home.
Sept. 20: Drawing of Blue Collar Worker.
Draft of One-typed page, an essay that contrasts her own good fortune working with children with Lavelle's life.
Sept. 21: Journal: Having to drop out of college because of financial issues.
Sept. 22: Journal entry: described the wedding reception, her asthma response
Drew picture of herself inside bubble (what she should have done at wedding). Noticed that she had not included bubble in writing; added that. Noticed that she had not included her lungs in the drawing; added them.
Sept. 26: Journal: Tears of Joy, Tears of Sadness" about conceiving twins.)
Sept. 30: Drawing, response to Lynn Hall's essay "The Questionnaire," about abortion, drugs, etc.
Oct. 3: In-class workshop on "One Typed Page." Began and completed second draft of paper that became "My Perfect World." (Eleven new paragraphs + those from "typed page."
Oct. 10: In-class workshop on three essays from class members, Elbow's "Find the point of gravity" essay, "Slimey fish" exercise.
Drawing of storyboard for essay.
Oct. 12: Third Draft, based on organization found through storyboard drawing. Point of gravity has become "my perfect world." This is the first draft with this title. Much expanded detail; five paragraphs from early essay deleted.
Oct. 17: Final Draft. Eliminates some angry comments from third draft.

"Finger Exercises"

In her study of how Anna and Nick acquired "academic literacies" already cited, Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater described the first paper Anna wrote as "a finger exercise for her

next piece of writing . . . which she carries throughout the semester" (46). This term is also appropriate in the analysis of the development of Sharon's writing. Like the outside work of Chiseri-Strater's student, Anna, and the drawing and journal entries Ann did between revisions of her paper on her work as described in the first part of this chapter, Sharon worked extensively on a paper for several weeks. The three drawings I will discuss, along with their accompanying journal entries, might similarly be viewed as warm-up or "finger exercises" for Sharon's more formal writing about her own job.

After completing two journal entries about working with Head Start students in preparation for her "One-typed-page," Sharon turned to other subjects in her writing. Since their standing assignment was to write a combined total of seven pages a week in the academic and personal journals, Sharon wrote about what was going on in her own life in addition to responding to the readings and writing drafts of her formal paper. During the last hour of the class the day before, group work and prediction exercises had prepared the way for a deep reading of the essay "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker." In brief, the essay describes what Linda Lavelle calls her "informal education," earned while working on the assembly line, a job that she hated for the vulgarity of her co-workers and the difficult conditions under which they had to work. She and all the others were hesitant to leave the job, however, because they earned such a good wages.

After returning from the wedding reception on Saturday evening, September 19, Sharon wrote a page-long entry detailing how distracted she had been that morning in class due to worry about all the flower-girl preparations. Now that it was over, however, she wondered to her journal (almost as if she were talking with a friend) why she does this to herself. All the worry was unnecessary, she conjectured, since she got everyone there on

time, the girls had performed well and "were absolutely beautiful!" and she was "the proud mother of two of the prettiest flower girls ever" (Journal, September 19, 1998).

The next day, Sharon reread "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker" and decided to draw a picture as her response. (See Figure 4.7) She drew Lavelle as a young woman with a hint of a smile, standing in the center of the page clutching a handful of dollar bills. Behind her, the factory building in which Lavelle worked is represented by a brick wall. In a thought-bubble to the right of the woman's head are symbols of all the things she dreamed about doing all the time she continued working at the job she didn't like—a car,

Figure 4.7. "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker." (Orig. 8 ½" x 11") (Student work).

the Vista application, and two text books. Sharon said she had drawn English 101 and Political Science books because those were the classes she was taking classes that semester--two of the last three classes she needed to complete to fulfill her own dreams (Interview, December 20, 1998). Unlike cartoons which have words in the bubble, Sharon uses visual images; this woman thinks in pictures. Another view of the same woman, now drowning in a pool of money, her smile turned downward, fills the lower right half of the page. Interestingly, since there is no line to separate the two scenes, Lavelle seems to be standing beside herself. The smiling fantasy image stands beside the sinking reality. (Journal, September 20, 1998).

This combination of writing/drawing exercises worked out to be a particularly appropriate combination because it led Sharon to complete an extensive essay that likely would have been much less effective without these connections she was making. Just as Chiseri-Strater's Anna revealed in her journals how she had learned to connect what she read with her life(42), Sharon's series of drawing and writing demonstrate the manner in which she is also making personal connections with what she reads.

Reflecting on the life of Linda Lavelle, the blue collar worker seems to have inspired Sharon to go on to write about her own career because on the same day that she drew this picture, Sharon returned to the theme of her job at Head Start. Although she doesn't say it in so many words, she seems to be thinking how her own present life is quite a contrast to Lavelle's. She begins, "I was very fortunate to have wonderful role models when I first started working with young children . . ." In this entry, she describes how these supportive co-workers also encouraged her to complete the Child Development Certificate at MCC, an accomplishment that she said gave her confidence in her teaching ability. She explains the kind of work she does with and for children and how she likes the laughter-

filled environment and the love. She ends this journal entry with a statement of her goals—"to continue her professional growth as a teacher of young children and to try to encourage that of others" (Journal, September 20; also included as part of the One-typed page, September 26, 1998).

In her September 20th entry, Sharon did not mention details of Lavelle's essay but she returned to the topic again the next day.

> I went home after class and re-read the essay "Confession of a Blue Collar Worker" once more. I realize you can't live your dreams until you live through the struggle and gain the knowledge it takes to accomplish your dreams. For most of us this includes putting your dreams on hold until you can financially afford them.
>
> This is exactly what I had to do. I put off my educational dreams because I couldn't afford going to college. However I was very successful completing other dreams I had. It's really depressing to know that money has so much controll over our lives. It's heart breaking to see that some people value money more than themselves and others. Have you ever heard the saying, "Money is the root of all evil"? For some of us, "Money is the root of our dreams." Without money some of us will never have our dreams come true (Journal, September 21, 1998).

Now she is also thinking of her earlier life and particularly what she had learned from the difficulties she had gone through before achieving her own financial security. In this entry, she is in a way extending the earlier response by looking back to her experiences which she identified closely with Lavelle's. In the interview later, Sharon returned to this theme and told me that the picture she had drawn brought back a lot of memories.

> She's just drowning in a pool of money, you know. But it kind of reminded me of *me* because when I first started in, you know, taking classes at Mott in 1976, I was working full time in a nursing home and going to school taking twelve credit hours and I couldn't keep up with the working and taking classes and financially I had to work to be able to take the classes. So I ended up postponing going to school. I ended up dropping out and just working and then the more I worked, the farther I got away from going back to school (Journal, September 21, 1998, Sharon's emphasis).

It is interesting that even though she has drawn the details from the essay, she is writing about herself and about details from her own life. In the drawing Sharon places images and details from the story as she has visualized them, but in addition, she adds details from

her own life—her textbooks. This illustrates her sense of identity with the woman in the story. In addition, the brick wall behind Linda Lavelle in the drawing will show up again in her drawing of her own first workplace, the nursing home. While she is presenting the details of her reading in a visual medium, her mind is free to connect with the ways she identifies her own earlier situation in Lavelle's essay. She feels no need to repeat the same details in the writing, but is free to move on to talk about what the story means to her. Sharon has "made meaning" through her drawing and writing in a way described by Dornan, et. al., "while attaching meaning to what they read and establish a critical stance toward their own learning and toward their culture . . . by lending significance to the information and concepts on the printed page" (164).

The second drawing and the accompanying journal entry that functioned as "finger exercises" for the essay-in-progress were based on Sharon's experience at the wedding three nights earlier. The writing/drawing process through which Sharon examined this experience reveals the way her visual thinking is beginning to affect her writing, how drawing and writing interact to help her achieve an understanding of her situation. On Monday she had drawn and written about Linda Lavelle, the blue collar worker; on Wednesday she was drawing and writing about herself.

In her journal she described the enjoyable evening she had with many friends at the crowded wedding reception; however, she continued,

> Today . . . I'm paying for having such a terrific time. I hate being sick!
>
> No, it's not a hangover from drinking. It's what you might call a smoke hangover. Everytime I'm around a large crowd of smokers I become deathly ill. First my eyes become itchy and watery. My throat feels swollen and sore. I begin coughing. Muscle spasms in my esophagus begin causing me to wheeze with every breath I take. My breathing becomes very rapid with loud wheezing. At this point I become fearful for my life. I'm afraid that each breath I struggle to take may be my last. My doctor has diagnosed this condition, it's called Asthma (Sept 22).

Sharon is still exhausted and sick as she writes this journal entry three days after the reception and says she has been forced to take seven kinds of medication and give herself

breathing treatments every four hours. "One night of pleasure was so very costly," she writes; she has had to take time off work, and responsibilities at home and school are piling up (Journal, September 22, 1998).

After she had written about her physical reaction to the "festive celebration," she drew a picture of herself inside a large bubble, smiling broadly; three large cigarettes and their smoke are prominent around the outside of the bubble (See Figure 4.8). She said that when she read her journal entry again, she noticed that she had not included the bubble, so she added another paragraph.

> At times I feel as tho I should isolate myself from those who smoke. Put myself inside of a large bubble filled with fresh clean air. My lungs would be free, healthier, and happier. I would no longer struggle to breathe. The air would be pure and perfect for breathing just as it should be (Journal, September 22, 1998).

She said when she thought about the bubble, "It was like letting me know in my writing that I felt like I should have been insulated from other people." After that realization, she realized that she had not drawn her lungs in the picture, so she returned again to the drawing to add them. Like the drawing of the blue collar worker that has two images juxtaposed in an unrealistic fashion, this image also has an unrealistic but significant element--the lungs showing through the woman's transparent chest. The ideal world resides in the bubble as it had in the earlier drawing. This time however, many of the descriptive details are in the writing too, especially the harshly real details. She reflected back on this work later in the interview.

> It was like after I read this again, then I realized that my lungs played an important part. I was having problems breathing and... drawing the lungs I think...[made me realize that]... Because if they weren't there, it,... I don't think it [the writing] would be as effective, [or] that you'd know...that it was problems breathing?

To clarify the order in which she did the drawing and writing, I asked her to talk about it again. She said,

I put the bubble first. Before I even . . . and I don't know why I did it. And then after I read it, it was, like, ok. Then I needed to include that in here, about that I felt that I needed to isolate myself *from* . . . you know, that situation.

Okay, It was like I *knew* that, but I go to these things anyway knowing that I have these problems, I shouldn't be there. You know it's kind of like, not fair that I have to isolate myself, and that was the feeling that I got out after drawing the paper.

... It's like I *knew* it. Like it didn't hit me till after I drew the paper that I realize, why do I do this to myself? You know? I should isolate myself from that smoke, because then I wouldn't be sick. I wouldn't be suffering right now missing work (Interview, December 20, 1998; Sharon's emphasis).

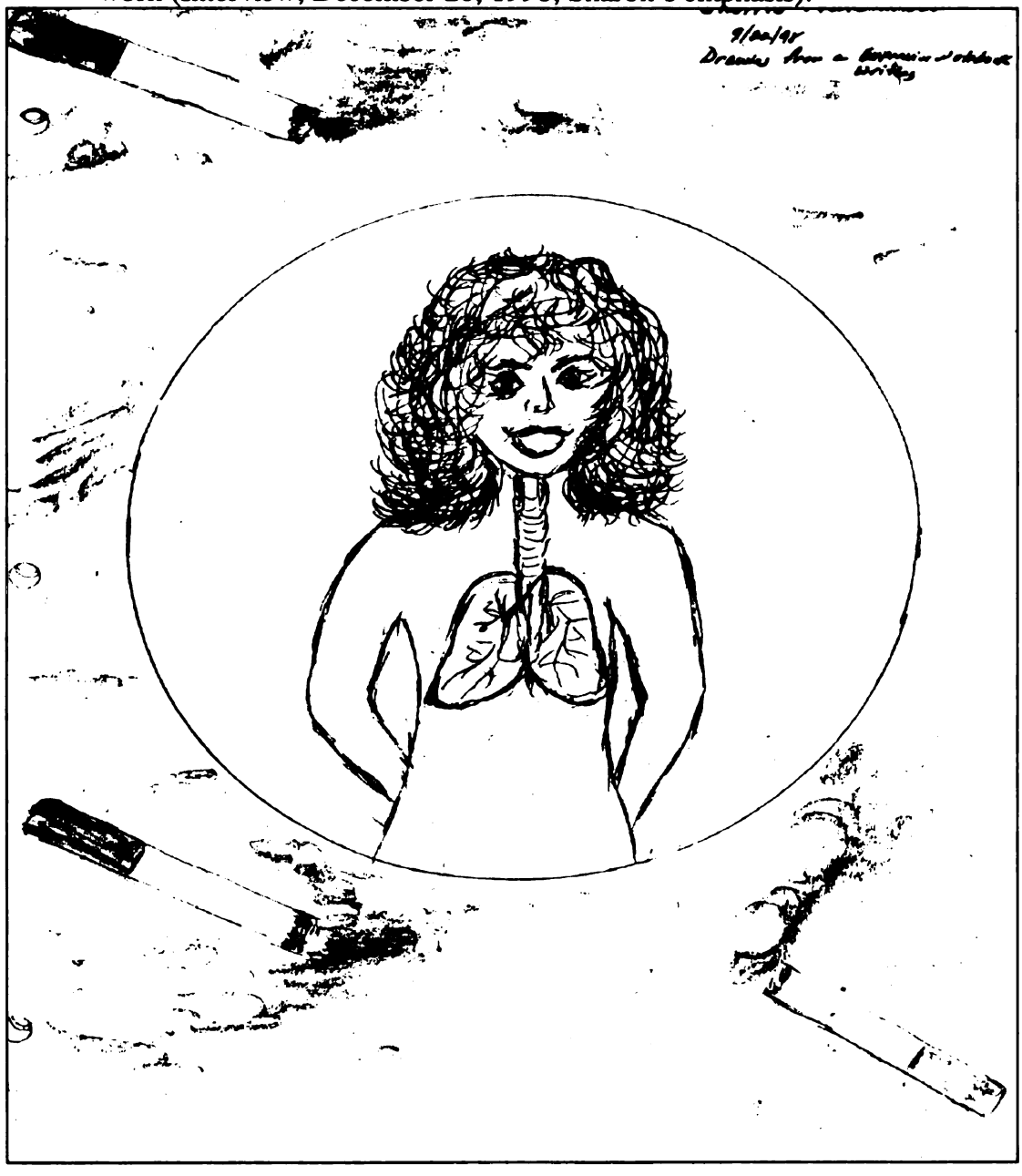


Figure 4.8 Reaction to Smoke-filled wedding reception (Orig. 8 ½" x 11") Student work.

The way the two processes—drawing and writing—seem to be growing together here is clearer, more obvious than in the blue collar worker exercise. In fact, two times in discussing this work, she slipped and referred to "drawing the paper." With this recursive process she moves from a drawn image to the writing, and then back to the drawing again, revising each in terms of the other.

A third drawing/writing exercise added yet another element to Sharon's thought process. This drawing was a response to reading the essay, "The Questionnaire" (in Gay 137-149), identified as an essay written by a student as part of an application to Harvard University. The writer, Lynne Hall, described her dual life as one of the few black students going to an elite girls' prep school on scholarship by day, doing drugs and committing petty larceny by night. The essay includes a fairly explicit account of an abortion Hall had undergone at age sixteen after her boyfriend disappeared upon learning of her pregnancy. Sharon's full-page pencil drawing shows a young black woman dressed in the school uniform with pockets and knee socks as Hall described them in the story. Floating around the image of the young woman in half of an amorphous cloud are symbols for the various activities that were part of Hall's troubled youth. On the left side, the drawing shows symbols from Hall's early life--a hypodermic needle with names of various drugs around it, the earrings she had stolen, the head of Greg, her delinquent boyfriend who had beaten her many times, a burning cigarette labeled both "pot" and "Marijuana." The upper right shows symbols for the latter part of Hall's high school years--the two-family house, an unhappy mother, the $500 she had to pay for the abortion and the pail and white-haired retired doctor that were details Hall included from the abortion scene.

Most of the energy of Sharon's response for this piece seems to have been put into the drawing, since her journal response to the rather lengthy essay is only a half page long, and is little more than a list of items shown in the picture. It ends with the comment, "What strength and determination she had. I have to wonder what she is doing now with her life" (Journal, September 30, 1998). In this case drawing may have substituted for writing

extensively about the story, but in drawing her response, Sharon has built up her repertoire of symbols for story elements. She said in the interview (December, 1998) that she had chosen to draw the picture rather than to just write about it because she enjoys drawing but also because she had related to the story, particularly the part about the abortion. It had reminded her of a friend whose parents were divorced (like the girl in the story), and who had also had an abortion. Here again she identifies with characters in the stories and connects her reading with her own experiences.

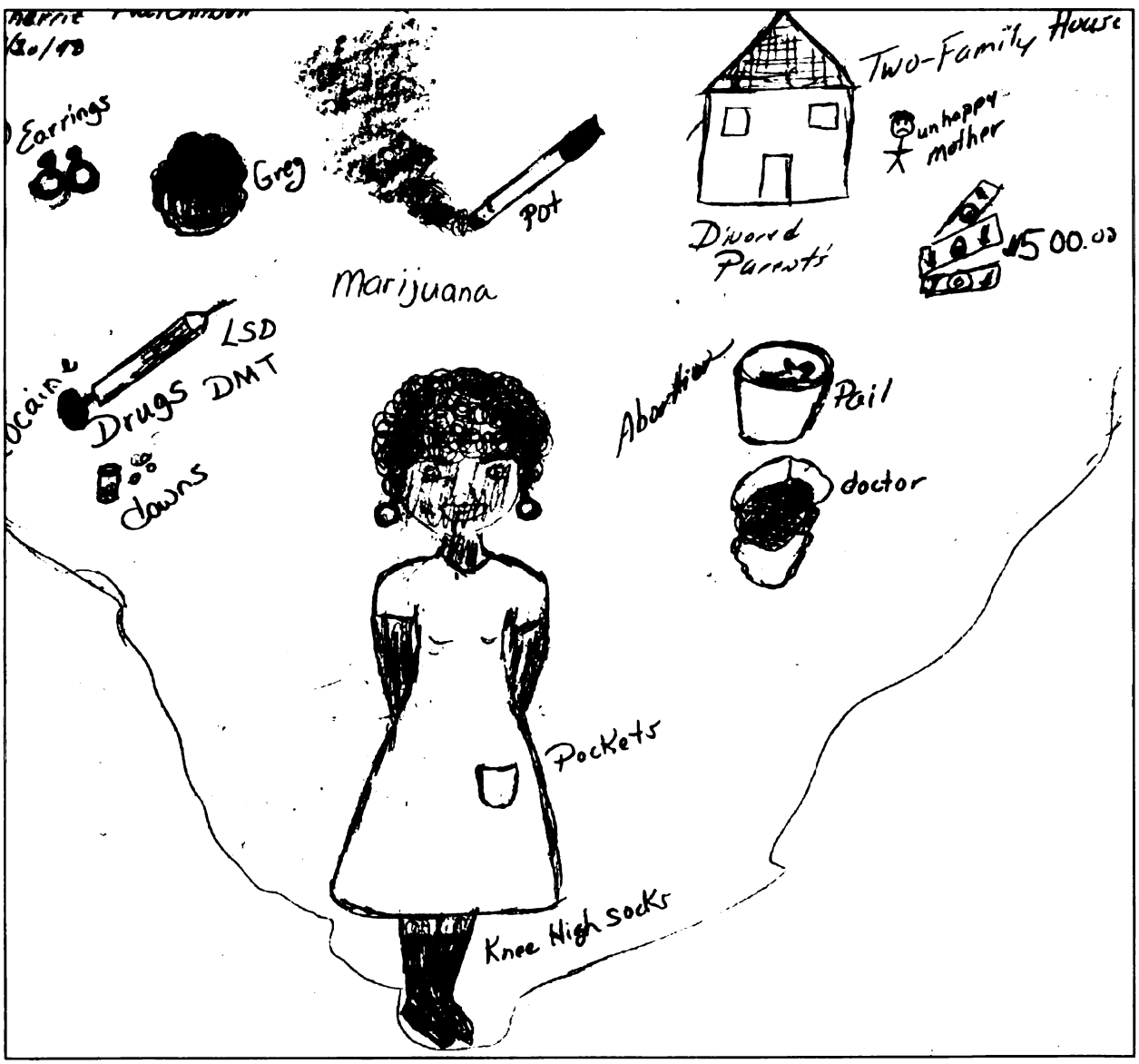


Figure 4.9. "The Questionnaire." Original 8 ½" x 11" (Student work)

The pregnancy topic was already on her mind, for just four days earlier, Sharon had written an entry in her expressive journal labeled "Tears of Joy, Tears of Sadness" (September 26, 1998). In that entry she recalled her thirty-fourth birthday, the day she learned she was pregnant with twins. In the form of a true story teller, she built up the suspense of learning about this happy event by first describing the trauma of the doctor's visit. She described the way undergoing an ultrasound during her appointment brought back painful memories of her own earlier miscarriages and her fear that she would not be able to complete this pregnancy. Her joy overcame her fear when the nurse laughed at her and told her that the only thing wrong was that she was carrying twins.

Seen in juxtaposition, these entries and drawings reveal the importance Sharon places on family and the depth of feeling they evoked, but even more significantly, they reveal the way Sharon's mind is weaving together the reading, the writing, and the drawing. These exercises have honed her skills so she may move into the next stages of the formal essay with more sureness.

Steps toward a formal essay: discovering content by working through chaos

After the October 3rd class, much of which was devoted to a group feedback session, Sharon returned to her journal/one-typed-page essay and carried it several steps further.

> Answering a want add from the journal [*Flint Journal*] led me here exactly one week and one day after my high school graduation. The surroundings on the outside were beautiful with freshly mowed green grass and landscaped flower gardens in full bloom. No matter how hard the housekeeping staff used industrial cleaners and air fresheners, the odor of urine, feces and Bengay filled the air inside. It was a home filled mostly with elderly. Some using walkers, some in wheel chairs, others confined to bed (Journal, October 3, 1998).

From the seed-writing she had begun on the second day of class, fed by the ideas she gleaned from the subsequent drawing/writing exercises, the essay had assumed the shape t would become her major piece of writing for the first half of the semester.

This paragraph introduces the big picture—the whole view, including several aspects of the topic she would develop in much more detail in the next draft. This is quite similar to Ann's first draft, which wandered through several aspects of the topic before settling into a more structured essay.

The major impetus for the direction her development took was the questions asked by students in her peer group in class. They were particularly interested to know more about where she worked and what she gained from it, points she had considered putting in the first draft but left out fearing it would make the paper too long, as she said in her journal response to that experience (Journal, October 3).

Laura's emphasis to this point had been to encourage students to explore widely in their memories by free-writing, drawing, and talking in order to find what they had to say. For the next step, she presented the concept of the Writer's Workshop, using papers from students in the class as examples. After they had spent time giving and receiving feedback on their papers in small groups, as a follow up, Laura assigned a selection from Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* for homework for the week. The selection tells writers they should free-write until they find the center of gravity in the writing, presenting the idea that they must be willing to give up control in order to find it. Elbow describes two paradoxical models of writing, the common one that preaches control, and the developmental model that preaches lack of control. In the first, the writer is told to "think first, make up my mind what I really mean, figure out ahead of time where I am going, have a plan, an outline, don't dither, don't be ambiguous, be stern with myself, don't let things get out of hand" (32). The other model says it is okay not to know what you want to say ahead of time, and that in fact, a writer should "let things get out of hand, let things wander and digress. Though this approach makes for initial panic" Elbow claims that the overall experience with it is increased control (32-33). Elbow continues,

> The turning point in the whole cycle of growing is the emergence of a focus or a theme. It is also the most mysterious and difficult kind of cognitive event to

> analyze. It is the moment when what was chaos is now seen as having a center of gravity. There is a shape where a moment ago there was none (35).

Sharon indicates that she has a beginning awareness of this process in her response to Elbow's words, which she has copied in her journal. She wrote that she can relate to the first model of writing because that "was exactly what I was taught. First the idea, know what you're going to write, follow an outline, have control of your writing." She commented, "I hope that I will be able to let myself do this—not worry, let myself wander. I realize that if I can, I will grow in my writing, but I also realize that this is going to take time" (Journal, October 6, 1998). Even though she expressed some concern that she could follow the new model, in fact, she had already been doing so in the exercises just described.

The drafts of the essay she had been working toward had wandered by now to approximately 1400 words--nine handwritten pages. These were added to the six paragraphs from the typed page essay. She had added eight new paragraphs about her five years at the nursing home before finally leaving to work with children. Three more new paragraphs provided details about daily life at Head Start. Although she was attempting to respond to the essay in the way she thought her classmates were asking her to, the essay is still somewhat disunified. This is how they went:

Paragraphs one and two described getting the job at the nursing home and being forced to drop out of school. Paragraph three described her protected growing up years, concluding, "I was raised in a world of misbelief." The fourth paragraph described being "an eye witness" to the abuse of elderly patients, while in the fifth Sharon spoke about her nurse's assistant training. In paragraph six, she provided graphic detail about her embarrassment when she had to bathe an eighty-seven-year-old man who had messed himself, the first nude male she had ever seen. The seventh and eighth paragraphs talked about dealing with death every day. That, along with witnessing the passing of a patient she had become attached to, brought her to the realization that she wanted to change jobs.

After a transitional paragraph, she described the different districts where she has worked during her thirteen years with Head Start, then focused in detail on a typical day at school, the kind of activities she provides for the children, and the feeling of love and rewards she gets from this work.

The last paragraphs, twelve through seventeen, are actually the same five paragraphs from the "One-Typed Page" essay discussed earlier. Because these new and old drafts with two quite different focuses are simply welded together with no real transition, no logical order, Sharon is still unsatisfied with the essay. She wrote in her self-evaluation after another in-class workshop that in the first draft she felt she hadn't made her readers experience what she had experienced, but "I just wrote." She said she did feel she had made the readers experience what she was feeling in the second draft in some parts, but she was still not happy with it. She wrote, "I do hope to achieve this with my 3rd draft" (Journal, October 3, 1998).

More drawing and writing connections: Finding a point of gravity

The next in-class exercises led Sharon into two new phases in preparation for the third draft of this essay. After Laura led them through an extensive discussion of "What Makes Writing Good," the students did the Peter Elbow listening/talking "slimey fish" exercise described earlier in which students worked together to create oral verbal pictures for their listeners as practice for writing. The third influence for the day was the introduction of the storyboard technique for analyzing an essay or a story described in Chapter 3.

Although Laura had not required her to do so, Sharon decided to make a drawing to go with the essay, saying that after seeing the demonstration, she thought she would "like to give it a try" and that she "wanted to try drawing in a different way" (Journal, October18, 1998). Her storyboard is drawn in colored pencil on both the front and back of an 8 1/2" x 11" white page divided into six sections per side. Each section is numbered in

the lower left corner (See Figure 4.10-11. Sharon described in the interview what the drawings represented to her. She said that she had

> . . . just kind of wanted to do a story of my experience . . . . I just kind of went back and from memory...[drew] what the nursing home looked like, that it was beautifully landscaped, it was so beautiful on the outside. So I tried to draw, you know the flowers, and how pretty it was on the outside. But on the inside things that, you know, you saw. But it was hard to put in the drawing, like the odor,... so you couldn't draw the odor (Interview, December 20, 1998).

The first frame of the storyboard does suggest the beauty of the nursing home; its windows are lined with cozy yellow curtains, and landscapers have lined the sidewalk with flowers and planted more flowers in a circle around the tree nearby.

In the second frame, none of the interior of the building is shown, not even a line to represent the floor. Instead, the inside of the home is represented by an elderly person lying in a hospital bed, another with a walker, and an empty wheelchair. There is no color in this frame. She has accomplished what she said she wanted in this new opening, "to create a picture in the mind of the reader" (Journal, October 3, 1998), and now she can pause to fill in the background information in the third frame. Here she includes a newspaper with a help wanted ad circled in red, situated between images of a graduation cap and dollar bills and coins. These again are just floating images, chosen to symbolize the situation, just as she had in the drawing for "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker."

At this point it becomes apparent that Sharon's storyboard is not moving chronologically but following a pattern similar to Johnson's essay, "For My Indian Daughter" which had been used in class to demonstrate the storyboard concept. Johnson moved freely between past and present to pick up the images that could best portray his growing awareness and understanding of prejudice. Like Johnson, Sharon focuses on

remembered images and symbols that represent the significant points she wants to make, ranging over time as needed.

The fourth image is the most important one, and most symbolic, the drawing that gave her the focus and the title for the final version of the essay. In this frame, Sharon shows a mother, father, and little girl, all holding hands inside a red-outlined heart superimposed over planet Earth. She described it. "This is like where I was raised in a world, you know, with my, I had both parents and it was like the perfect little world, my parents kind of sheltered me. I never seen, I never *seen* these things. Never knew they existed and then my first job was to work there" (Interview, December 20, 1998).

Frames five and six show what Sharon had never seen—a nurse she described as "just horrible" holding a restraining jacket, and the old man who had messed himself and whom she had to bathe her first day on the job.

Not yet finished with the nursing home part of the story, Sharon has flipped the paper over and continued on the back. The middle ground of the seventh frame shows a gurney with a dead body being wheeled out to the hearse in the background; the foreground shows a grave. She said, "It got to be like death was just nothing at the nursing home. I mean, it was common. I mean, it happened everyday. Just like you went in every morning and you brush your teeth, there was always someone dying" (Interview December 20, 1998). An art psychologist would point out that images facing left as they do in this frame represent looking toward the past.

In the eighth frame Sharon focuses on a specific death. In the lower right half , she pictures herself sitting, facing the viewer, tears streaming. She has just witnessed the death of an old woman who shown on the bed behind her, her last breath visibly escaping her lips. Sharon had difficulty finding words to describe this event. "I can still hear her taking

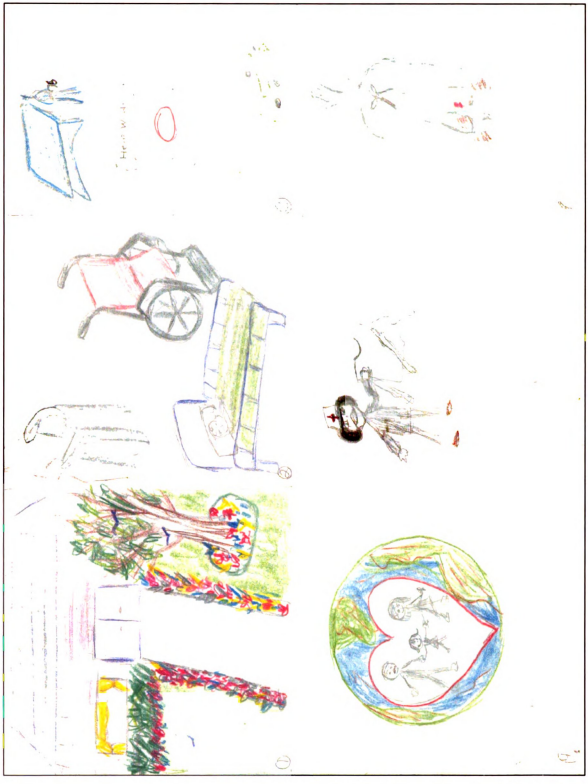


Figure 4.10 Sharon's Storyboard, side one. Original 8 ½" x 11" (Student work).

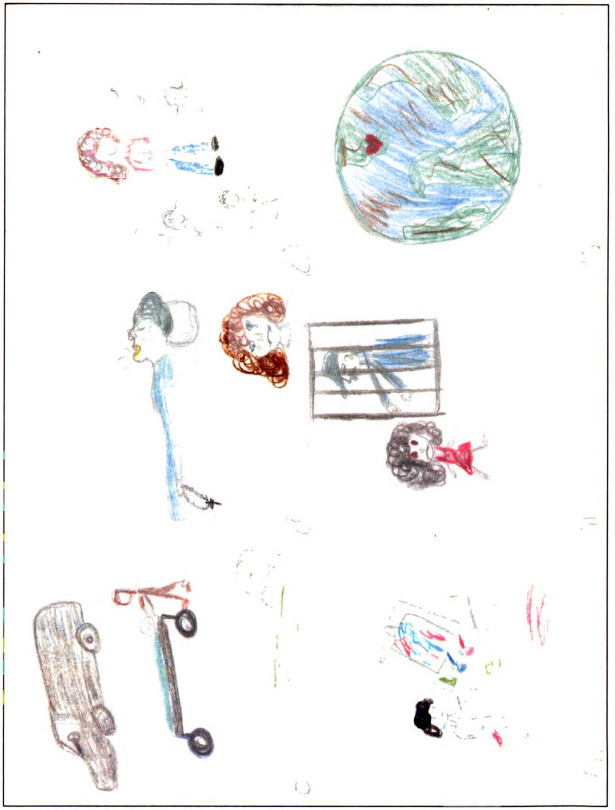


Figure 4.11 Sharon's Storyboard, side two. Original 8 ½" x 11" (Student work).

her last breath and . . . [it sounded like]. 'Uhcchh . . .' It was like this, 'uhcchh.' It was hard to describe the sound in the drawing. In the writing I could . . . And it got to be, I had written in that, you know, it got to be I had written in that, you know, it was a normal thing. It was just so, you go in, you clean them up, they take them out, like picking up their dinner tray" (Interview, December 20,1998).

The eleventh frame depicts a little girl with long black hair and large brown eyes, a frightened look on her face, standing near a jail with a man reaching out for her. She said,

> This is, I got attached to a little girl. And I've known her for about three years now and this is when,... I had written in there about her being sexually abused in the paper and... how the father is behind the bars here and the little girl...(pause). This is real hard for me right now . . . But anyway now it's going to affect her for the rest of her life (Interview, December 20, 1998).

In the final frame, the red heart is solid, quite small in the distance, yet still superimposed over the image of the earth. Sharon said,

> This is the world that is not so perfect anymore, that little heart. That little heart's not there. It's like I've grown up and I realize that even working with...you know I kind of ran away from working with the elderly people that I enjoyed. I really enjoyed doing that. I felt good about what I was doing, but I felt like I couldn't take seeing them suffering and dying anymore. So I went to work with younger children where I still see the same pain and suffering. You know? (Interview, December 1998).

When she described this scene for the first time in her paper, she used short, choppy sentences that reflect the agitation she is feeling:

> When I walked in her room the odor of death was present. She laid in her bed in complete stillness, only to hear her gasping for her breath. Her condition had been this way for several weeks. She had the figure of a skeleton. Her skin had a yellowish tint, but almost transparent. Her long white hair was twisted in a bun and placed on top of her head. Her mouth was partially open, her eyes closed. Her rosary was placed in her hand. I found myself sitting next to her bed. On her night stand sat her bible. I picked up her bible. I remembered exactly where I opened it to, Psalms 23. I began to read to her. Before I had finished reading, I noticed Mary's breathing was slightly different. I new something was wrong. At that moment I stopped reading. Her eyes open, looking at me. I held her hand. It was very cold. Her rosary fell to her side. She gasped for air, then her eyes

> closed. I heard her take her last breath. The room felt very cold. My eyes were filled with tears (Third draft of Essay, October 12, 1998).

It is almost as if the sentences get shorter along with the woman's breath and by the end of the paragraph, a careful reader's chest may be feeling constricted. Someone suggested during the group feedback that she combine some of these sentences into more complex expressions, advice that she followed in the third draft with some loss of immediacy. She has a very clear mental image of the scene and is able to convey that.

Revising by drawing: Finding Order.

In the draft she wrote following the drawing of the storyboard Sharon followed the pattern laid out there section by section. She determined the important steps in her progression in the drawing—she has "drawn the essay"—and now she is able to organize visually, applying in reverse what she had said about the earlier chair drawing exercise: "If you could draw your paper, you could see what is missing" (Interview, December, 1998). She could also see now what she had included in the draft that did not fit and so she eliminated it.

Thus, in the third draft, the jumbled introductory paragraph has been separated into three new paragraphs, each corresponding to one of the first three frames of the storyboard. The original sentences have been maintained but rearranged and the imagery is expanded. This leaves room for an opening that describes the nursing home in more specific detail.

> The brick building on the outside was beautifully landscaped with colorful flower gardens in full bloom. The scent of freshly mowed green grass was in the air. I could hear the birds singing in the trees, and the laughter from the children playing in the yard across the street. The presence of life was everywhere.
>
> On the inside I found myself surrounded by the odor of urine, feces, and Bengay. No matter how hard the housekeeping staff used industrial cleaner and air fresheners the odor still lingered. I heard cries for help from some, saw the pain and suffering and the loneliness from others. It was a nursing home where mostly

> elderly live. Some using walkers, some in wheel chairs, others sick and confined to bed.

The first point in the essay is now a powerful visual image of the outside of the building, described in detail. Then a powerful sound and smell impression overwhelms us when we move inside with her to encounter the odors of body waste, air fresheners and industrial cleaners. The want ad sentence that had begun the second draft is now the anchor for the third paragraph, where she quickly describes having to drop out of college to begin her "informal education."

By the time she has drawn the image described in the fourth paragraph, Sharon has come to realize where the point of gravity in this essay resides. Rather than finding that point by writing as Elbow suggested, however, Sharon has found it through her drawing. It is the perfect world image that she came to through the drawing. In the heart shape superimposed over an image of planet earth, the term "world of misbelief" in the second draft (described earlier) is transformed into the metaphor that will become the title of the final draft. Now she ends that paragraph, "I was never around any kind of violence or abuse. I was raised in a perfect world." She adeptly repeats that perfect world image in the next paragraph as a transition into the description of her years working in the home, the years that shattered the image. She writes, "It wasn't long after working at the nursing home, I realized the perfect world I was raised in no longer exists." The first half of the essay ends by focusing on the pivotal image of the old woman's death.

Besides the strengthened and expanded imagery of the beginning paragraphs, another influence the storyboard drawing had on the third draft was that she eliminated the last four paragraphs, the remnants of the earlier "One-Typed Page" essay. These were replaced by the story of the little girl to whom she had become attached, one who had

been abused by her father. She wrote a very harsh and graphic description of the punishment she thought should be meted out to the man and the mother who allowed it should be given. After feedback from her classmates, she decided to soften the ending of that paragraph.

The final draft, all nine pages rewritten completely by hand, leaves out the harsh punishment she would advocate and emphasizes her prayerful concern for the little girl. Other than those changes, this version contains only minor changes from the third draft. Looking at her own storyboard and reflecting on the essay and her life, Sharon told me,

> It's like I've grown up and I realize that even working with...you know I kind of ran away from working with the elderly people that I enjoyed. I really enjoyed doing that. I felt good about what I was doing but I felt like I couldn't take seeing them suffering and dying anymore. So I went to work with younger children where I still see the same pain and suffering (Interview, December 20, 1998).

When I asked her when she had realized these parallels, she responded, "That was after I drew it . . . that's when it clicked!"

Although even this final version of the essay "My Perfect World" could still use tightening and focus, particularly in the structure of some sentences, it has come a long way from the hesitant stops and starts and scattered paragraphs with which it began, in part due to the drawing she did along with her writing.

Extending understanding of the connections between drawing and writing

Not only was Sharon able to make the verbal/visual connections in her own writing process, she went on to connect that with her observations of her own students. In the interview just after she commented on the way she had made the connection that working at Head Start involved painful situations similar to the nursing home, she said that she had

noticed the way drawing and art activities help her young students who cannot yet write express themselves.

> They'll draw a picture and then we ask them to tell us about their picture and it's funny, because then they'll tell, I notice particularly this one little girl that my story was about. She drew a picture and then she would tell me about it, then after she'd tell me, she'd always go back and she'd draw more on her paper, add more to it, and I see that a lot with other children (Interview, December 20, 1998).

This is almost an exact description of what Sharon had done in both the wedding reception drawing/writing exercise and in developing this formal essay.

As a result of her own emerging writing/drawing connections, Sharon is more aware of the connections between drawing and writing in children's emergent literacy. She is able to make concrete the connection that "drawing might trigger things that they tell" her. She said the teachers will often write down what the children say about their drawings, especially for the younger students whose drawings are mostly scribbles. She also noticed that the pressure of the pencil or the crayon or the marker on the paper frequently matched their emotions.

> If they're angry . . . some of them . . . it's so, it's more wilder on the paper and darker. And this one child I have uses *black* markers all the time. And it's always when he uses the black marker, it's always something negative that he tells me about it, you know? Which I found really interesting (Interview, December 20, 1998; Italic mine, to indicate Sharon's emphasis).

Not only has she come to see how her drawing helps her envision her own thoughts, she can connect that to her work with children. Cathy Malchodi describes many such pictures drawn by depressed and angry children in *Breaking the Silence: Art Therapy with Children From Violent Homes* (see particularly, pp. 32-33). Because of her careful observation of children she worked with, Sharon was able to draw such conclusions on her own (See also Harste, Woodward and Burke).

In our second interview, Sharon described how working with drawings in her own writing had changed her emphasis on art while working with the children in the months following the semester of her composition class, and she was more careful to help them write down their stories, encouraging them to include more details and questioning them to help them bring out their stories more fully. She said she had begun including more of their drawing and writing in the portfolios she sent home and in interpreting them for the parents (Interview, March 22, 1999).

Drawings as "Triggers"

In her journal writing following the writing of this essay, Sharon became more clearly conscious of the connections between drawing and writing. For the next exercise, the seashell drawing, Sharon drew both a front and a back view. Her description of the shell is adequate and clear, but she admits that she wished she could have used colored pencils for the drawing. She said it was hard describing the texture of the shell in words, but easier to talk about its color.

Figure 4.12. Sharon's Sea Shell Drawings

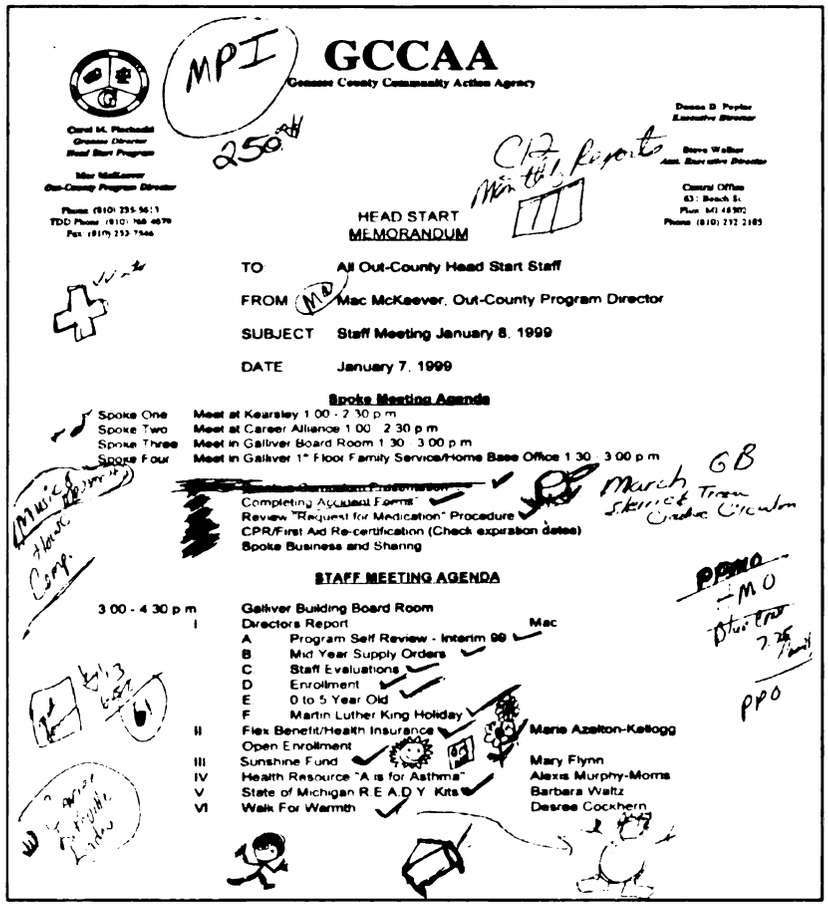
When she reflected back on the in-class shell-drawing exercise in the interview, Sharon made another observation about her experience that I had not considered in advance. She said that she doodles in class (and in meetings at work) and that when she looks at those doodles some time later, they trigger her memory. For example, this happened the day she was trying to remember what they had done in class so she could do

her exit writing. She said she had liked the shell she had drawn so much that she had not wanted to give it back to Laura when the exercise was finished so she "just kind of doodled the shell on [her] paper." She continued,

> So when I went back, it kind of triggered to remember that... So I just made a little exit writing on the activity that we did and what I got out of it...and how when I drew my shell, not only did I draw the front but I drew the other side of it so, if you turned around, I mean there's two ways of looking at things? so even like, in your papers? that you write there's always maybe two ways of doing it? (Interview, December 1998).

She had realized one of the purposes we had in mind when we asked them to do this drawing, but in addition, she identified a trait that is peculiar to some visual thinkers. Eric Hobson described a similar situation in ARTiculating. When his teacher complained that he was daydreaming during class rather than taking good notes, he had tried to make regular outlines and proper verbal notations. Hobson said that it had been so difficult for him to try to capture what the teacher said in words that he couldn't remember any of the class when he looked back at those notes later. However, when he had looked back at doodles from earlier classes, he could remember the lecture more clearly.

Sharon also said she that she will often doodle while taking notes for other classes or when she takes a break from writing. When I asked what her mind was doing while she was doodling, she said she wondered if she was reflecting back on what she was reading. She said that looking at the doodle later reminds her of something that happened in class or of the material she was reading. Sharon also showed me several examples of notes she had taken at meetings at work. She described what each of the symbols meant to her. The drawings appear to function as a personal short-hand that is faster and more efficient than notes (Interview, March 22, 1999). These doodles work in quite a similar way to Ann's rebus drawings and pictures she interjects in letters and other documents.



GCCAA

Genesee County Community Action Agency

HEAD START
MEMORANDUM

TO All Out-County Head Start Staff

FROM Mac McKeever, Out-County Program Director

SUBJECT Staff Meeting January 8, 1999

DATE January 7, 1999

Spoke Meeting Agenda

Spoke One Meet at Kearsley 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Spoke Two Meet at Career Alliance 1:00 2:30 p.m.
Spoke Three Meet in Gallver Board Room 1:30 3:00 p.m.
Spoke Four Meet in Gallver 1st Floor Family Service/Home Base Office 1:30 3:00 p.m.

Completing Accident Forms
Review "Request for Medication" Procedure
CPR/First Aid Re-certification (Check expiration dates)
Spoke Business and Sharing

STAFF MEETING AGENDA

3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Gallver Building Board Room

I Directors Report — Mac
A Program Self Review - Interim 99
B Mid Year Supply Orders
C Staff Evaluations
D Enrollment
E 0 to 5 Year Old
F Martin Luther King Holiday
II Flex Benefit/Health Insurance — Marie Azalton-Kellogg
Open Enrollment
III Sunshine Fund — Mary Flynn
IV Health Resource "A is for Asthma" — Alexis Murphy-Morris
V State of Michigan R.E.A.D.Y. Kits — Barbara Waltz
VI Walk For Warmth — Desree Cockhern

Figure 4.13. Sharon's notes from staff meeting Orig. 8 ½" x 11" (Student work).

Research Project:

Sharon gathered twenty articles from the internet and journals on the research topic her group chose to explore. In effect, this was another chaos-generating process for Sharon. With the end of the semester looming, however, perhaps influenced by her experience organizing the personal memory paper, she focused more quickly on what she wanted to write about. She said she did not draw in connection to this paper.

Summary

Sharon had not told me of her drawings in relation to the readings that she had included in her journal until well after the mid-point of the semester, and after she had volunteered to become part of my study. Nor had I seen the storyboard that was so significant in the final version of her "My Perfect World" essay. If she had not volunteered to become part of the study, I might not have known of her work. In fact, I did not realize

the inter-relatedness of the reading/response drawings and her own essay until long after the first interview. Her decision to complete these drawings was entirely for her own purposes, because, as she said of the storyboard, she wanted to try drawing a new way. This implies that she has effectively integrated the concept of drawing and writing.

In her work, Sharon had used drawing in ways similar to Ann's, but she did them in far more detail and in greater quantity. One major difference between the two was that Sharon's insight did not come in the beginning instantaneously--there was no eye-opening cup drawing in her journal--but a steady growth in the interwoven drawings and writings. She told me in the last interview, she had always "doodled" a sketch of some sort to get her past blocks in her writing (Interview, November 16, 2001). She made her visual thinking concrete in her drawing, and even sometimes seemed to think in a more obviously organized fashion when drawing. This was true even though her drawing skills remained largely untrained.

Chapter 5. Learning to See: The Work of Chuck and Carol

Chuck and Carol were the two students from my own class whose interest in the role drawing played in their writing inspired me to ask them to participate in my study. Like Ann in Laura's class, Chuck's willingness to draw and talk about it in class helped create a positive reaction among the other students. Chuck came into the class seeing himself as an artist with little interest in or need for writing. He was there because the class was required. Being asked to draw surprised him and awakened his interest in writing when he realized early on that he could develop this new communicating skill as he had drawing and painting. He saw writing as an effective way to explore his likes and dislikes, and to work through his reactions to the new situation he had encountered in his life. Once he had discovered this possibility, he rushed forward to develop that ability, filling page after page in his journal as he searched for the same kind of perfection in writing that he already had achieved in his art work.

Carol, on the other hand, was quite uncertain of anything to do with writing in the beginning of the semester, and proceeded more slowly and deliberately. Even though she was beset by doubts about her writing skills, she was aware of her clearly visualized memories and held strong beliefs that she was able to articulate in conversation. She spoke of her memories as "photographs in my mind" and was able to access those images to support the concepts she wanted to develop in her writing. Carol's awakening to the power of writing to enable her to find meaning by connecting her memories to her current life were less dramatic than Chuck's, but her willingness to keep looking at those memories helped her realize the strength of her own mind. She discovered that she could now stand on her own as a writer without depending on outside help for content, and consequently the editing issues no longer inhibited her.

The most interesting aspect of both Chuck's and Carol's writing process was the way they searched for meaning that satisfied their own needs and expectations, which in both cases went beyond what was asked of them. Both seized upon the organizing

technique of creating extended metaphors to expand their understanding of their subjects after completing several pages of focused free-writing. These metaphors arose from images that just seemed to "pop into their minds," to echo Chuck's words, as they wrote.

In this chapter, I focus in detail upon the composing processes through which Chuck and Carol developed their essays, particularly looking at the way their visualizing abilities led them to make metaphors. The metaphors let them convey a larger meaning than they had achieved to that point, or perhaps a more complex set of insights, than they were able to develop through a more traditional expository essay.

Chuck

A tall, husky man in his late thirties, gentle and sensitive, who looks as if he would feel more comfortable in the woods than in the almost-too-small desks of a typical classroom, Chuck became a leader in the class from the first day. His quiet but droll sense of humor allowed him to express views that might have been annoying to the younger students without it. He seemed to see himself as a sort of father figure for the younger students, willingly helping them with their papers in group sessions, and on occasion, dispensing advice. As the class progressed, he expressed astonishment that many of them did not seem to care about excelling and that they didn't want to learn to write better. In class he frequently interjected comments and observations that would take the discussions to a more interesting level than they might have otherwise. Most of these were his real beliefs; some were for the sake of making the members of the class think, and sometimes to tease.

Like Ann, Chuck possessed excellent oral communication skills. He had begun working in auto body shops even before he graduated from high school in 1977. In 1996, after twenty-four years of auto body bumping and painting, designing and executing custom jobs, at which he had excelled, his shoulder rotator cuffs and bilateral tendons were so damaged that he had to give up that work. To prepare for a new career, he had

enrolled at MCC in fall 1998 to learn more about photography and to earn an Associates Degree.

He sees himself as a sensitive man, acknowledging that he cries over the "touching things" his sons do (Interview, January 20, 1998), and expressing his appreciation for the support of his "beautiful wife of nineteen years." His demeanor is unassuming; even speaking of his success in his career and in his MCC Photography class, he appears comfortable acknowledging his strengths.

Attitudes and Aptitudes for Writing and Drawing

At the beginning of the composition class, Chuck's attitude toward writing might be described as apathetic or unsure rather than apprehensive. He said that he had signed up for the class simply because it was required. In his journal he described his memories of elementary school writing as "foggy," and said that having been out of school since 1977 "has left me drawing a blank. . . Remembering any specific writing assignment is just reaching for the stars, nothing comes to mind" (Journal, September 10, 1998). In high school, Chuck said that although he had taken the required classes, he could remember nothing specific about writing, and "like most students I probably did just [what] was asked and no more." He said he felt about writing the same way he thought most teenagers did—"It was a pain in the butt. It was something you had to do to pass class" (Interview, January 20, 1999).

Chuck expressed some self-consciousness at becoming a college student, admitting that his two teen-aged sons had teased him about getting his homework finished before he could watch TV. He said he did not know he liked to write before his experiences in the composition class, having done very little of it in his life. Nor did he know that he liked reading because since high school, he had read only hunting and automotive magazines.

On the other hand, even though his memories of writing were vague, he had a deep love for drawing and did recall specific artistic activities from high school art classes. He knew this was his strength and was willing to claim it. It was this strength that he had

already developed which he was able to tap into in order to extend his writing to a new level.

Describing how he felt in an early journal entry Chuck wrote, "My drawing has always gotten me the most recognition. Drawing was just a gift from God I guess. I have artistic abilities many don't" (Journal, September 11, 1998). Later, he told me

> Since I was in grade school, I don't know why, I've always had an artistic ability and I used to do projects for the art teachers, drawing and stuff. I can look at anything and draw it. Any picture, I'm not real good at people's faces, but cartoons, animals, anything. I can draw just by looking at it. In classes I would doodle. I drew the tee-shirts with the big four wheel drive trucks with the fire and smoke coming out of them and the monster hanging out of it with a shifter and...so I used to draw them all the time. I don't know why that interested me. I just started doing it when I was young and probably being in school, just having to do projects and stuff. I just like to draw (Interview, January 20, 1998).

He attributed his success at painting designs on cars by the time he was nineteen to this talent. He said he could just look at a car's paint color and know what color tint to add to the base paint in order to match it; he could lay out flame designs on the sides of cars freehand, or cut a piece of metal to fit an area that needed to be replaced just by looking at it. His ability to visualize was already well developed and he was already aware of his strength in that area. In this way Chuck had a different kind of visual thinking ability than Ann and Sharon, a different language skill that gave him confidence on which he could build to develop his language skill.

Unsure of his writing ability, on the other hand, he described the writing he had done as "zero" even though he said he had written letters to his congressman after becoming frustrated with news about "anti-stuff" or political votes on second amendment rights. He said, "I would get very intense in my thinking and I'll write—three, four, six, eight pages—of how I feel on the subjects—how I feel my rights are being attacked," but he said he had never mailed the letters. He also mentioned having written one story about

hunting just so he could remember it; he said it had been published in a hunting magazine (Interview, January 20, 1999). Having spent his life to that point doing physical activities rather than writing or reading, he was unsure how to go about putting words together on paper. Chuck's description of his writing as "zero" is puzzling in light of these pieces, but in the beginning of the class, he clearly did not feel that writing was his strength. Nevertheless, he approached the class with the same enthusiasm with which he met all his challenges.

Chuck's journals are a masterpiece of organization. He gave me two full black one-inch three-ring binders containing all his writing carefully organized with the work for the different essays separated by tab dividers. He kept his daily class notes and directions for assignments a thin spiral notebook. In the first three-ring binder, many journal entries and multiple drafts of the essays along with his drawings are arranged chronologically from the newest in front to the earliest in the back. The other notebook contains the extensive materials and drafts for the research project. The care with which these notebooks are assembled could be interpreted as an indication of Chuck's pride in his work, his striving for perfection.

Chuck's early work in the class:

Chuck's work during the first three weeks of class, writing about and drawing the chair and his journal discussions on the importance of education and money provide a baseline against which to measure his later writing. He wrote over a hundred pages of notes in his journal during the first three weeks in response to class discussions, readings from the text, and drafts for assigned essays.

The first in-class drawing/writing exercise, the chair drawing, gave Chuck a chance to feel good about his work and demonstrate his ability. His chair drawing was careful and precise:

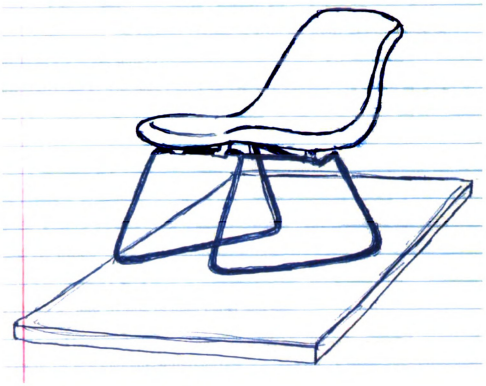


Figure 5.1 Chuck's chair drawing. (Student work).

To describe the chair he simply listed characteristics he had noticed about it:

1) A plastic frame for a person to rest.
2) Man made materials for man's comfort.
3) Bright color, and shiny metal, to appeal to the eye.
4) A gadget to make life easier and more comfortable.
5) A place for some people to get lazy in.

His observations show a certain decisiveness and a hint of humor. But having drawn the chair clearly, he seems to have felt no need to describe it in any specific terms. In the third part of the assignment, comparing the writing and drawing processes, he spoke of his feelings of insecurity with writing. He wrote that he found the drawing much easier, because of his "natural ability," that "makes me feel much more confident in the project. The writing I may have put too much thought into. I'm just not sure about my ability to

write" (Journal, September 10, 1998). Even though he claimed to be unsure, he was already looking beyond the mere surface appearance of the chair, commenting on its larger significance and use. This particular chair did not offer much comfort, nor did it invite anyone to become lazy in it. These comments indicate either that he was making connections with the symbolic nature of the subject or with the irony of the choice of classroom furniture as a still-life subject.

In his Writing/Drawing Timeline Chuck wrote, "I hope to learn in this class, how to explain what draws me to the outdoors and why I hunt. It is something that I have never been able to explain in words or on paper. Nor have I read it anywhere" (Journal, September 10, 1998). He also compiled a list of concepts gleaned from the readings in the text's discussion of how both scientific and artistic observation are similar to the kind needed for writing. He wrote,

> 1) They want you to look back at your writing;
> 2) Many things go into writing besides paper and ink.
> 3) Communicating, research, observing, comparing.
> 4) Your mind and how each person views something will [make people] evaluate writings, pictures, and thoughts differently.
> 5) A writing is a description on paper, maybe of what you see, feel, or hear
> (Journal, September 10, 1998).

In this response to these chapters, Chuck uses verbs that suggest he is aware of the visual nature of writing. This early response suggests that he may already be beginning to understand that one can "write" a picture in ways similar to the drawing with which he is already comfortable.

Even though he was tentative in his written presentation of his ideas at first, Chuck's observation abilities were well developed when he came into the class. This is demonstrated further by the discovery draft of his first short, informal essay, an objective observation of a favorite place. The few revisions indicate that he is beginning to search for clarity. He wrote,

> The ground is covered with leaves and sand. The trees shadows keep it (^forest floor^) cool and protected from the weather. Wind has the leaves shaking

> the branches on the large beech trees. Stacks of firewood cover the wall next to the entrance (^of the cabin^). The curtains are closed to stop the viewers. Weather has discolored the treated wood on the porch. Shingles are a mix of browns and golds. Dead branches and sticks lay among the shingles. The tan siding is new but covered with cobwebs and dirt. Smoke rolls out of the chimney, telling of the warmth inside. Logs are stacked to make a break wall, to hold the dirt up from the large hill to the east of the cabin. Ridges and valleys stretch the length of the property. Dead trees lay like a box of dropped toothpicks on the forest floor. Other than the breeze, the (-quiet-) forest is still (-, except for wildlife foraging for breakfast-). Occasionally you catch the movement of squirrels and deer, foraging for a meal. Crows circle and call to each other as they plan the daily routes in search of food. Turkeys dust themselves in the freshly planted alfalfa field. At night, the nocturnal animals have a vast playground. When the time is up we must return to reality, home (Journal, September 10, 1998).

A clear visual image emerges from this description, first focusing on the larger landscape, then on the cabin within it. It is almost as if he is drawing the scene in words. Most of the sentences are simple with straight-forward subject-verb construction; two figures of speech, one simile (trees lay like toothpicks) and a personification (animal's playground) are included. The description of the cabin is mixed in with the sentences about the forest. He seems to view cabin and forest as a part of a whole scene.

When Chuck revised this essay one day later, however, he separated the sentences describing the cabin from those about the wooded area and moved them into a second paragraph. Now that he was looking at each image separately, he added a few details. In the first paragraph, "the sun bakes the open land . . ." and the wind, slightly more active, "comes through in a brisk breeze only to sway the large beech in harmony" (Journal, September 11, 1998). The crows "circle and call, planning their strategy for the day." The second paragraph focuses on the cabin, showing the roof and siding a bit more clearly: "fallen sticks and leaves collect on the tan and black shaded shingles. Wicker colored siding has cobwebs and moths clinging to it."

The language in these descriptions is passive and tentative, yet still capable of capturing the image that seems clear in Chuck's mind's eye, revealing that he had observed this scene carefully. His eye for detail is similar to Sharon's memory of working in the nursing home, clearly envisioned, even after over a decade.

Drawing and writing about an object: More early writing and drawing

The object that Chuck chose to draw and write about was a 1998 Little League Championship trophy his twelve-year old son had earned the previous summer.

Chuck's assignment notebook lists ideas for writing about the object I had given them, ideas intended to help them expand beyond their familiar ways of looking at things:

1) describe it objectively
2) change the point of view of observer
3) have the object talk
4) give it a personality, a name perhaps
5) tell how it feels about its situation
6) give its history
7) compare it to others like it (culture, class, etc.)

(Journal, September 12, 1998)

Although I had only asked for a combination of five drawing and writing responses, Chuck wrote three entries about the trophy, drew it three times, and then wrote about it four more times.

In the first paragraph, he explores writing idea possibilities, ranging through the different perspectives. Interestingly, he has opened many of the themes he will return to later in the semester in his writing.

> Just a small symbol of the hard work that went into gaining this prize. It sits on the shelf, begging for attention [--Sometimes that attention is not received for years, sometimes days.--]. The dust collects as the days pass, not knowing what memories it will bring, and when. The shiny finish is a symbol of excellence, to the people that receive them. Letters and numbers etched in the gold, remind you of what and when.
>
> Its not about winning the prize, it's about being a winner. Pride, mental disapline, and dedication, make a winner. You must achieve team work and skill to be at the top. To be a winner, you must also learn to lose. Luck is also included in being a winner. Sometimes its better to be lucky than good.
>
> The prize is one of my son's trophies. Both of my sons have many. (Journal, September15, 1998).

This first paragraph seems to be written from the point of view of a father trying to look at the trophy through the boy's eyes, but in the second paragraph, Chuck is looking through his own eyes, remembering the fatherly messages he tried to impart to his son. The last

line shifts yet again as he speaks to the reader in a matter-of-fact tone. Memories, excellence, being a winner, pride, mental discipline, teamwork, skill, learning to lose, luck--in only three-quarters of a page, Chuck has looked beyond the surface description of the object to what it symbolizes for him. This could be seen as a first move toward the kind of abstraction he will continue in the next papers.

After this paragraph, he has skipped three lines and added an observation of the symbolic significance of the trophy:

> The shiny finish is a mere coating, to resemble the excellence it took to achieve top honors (Journal, September 15, 1998).

A second half-page writing repeats some of the lines from the first writing but again includes mixed perspectives.

> As a reminder to the hard work dedicated by many, a symbol of excellence. The trophy sits on the shelf begging for attention. It's not from being alone, for it is surrounded by many. Dust collects, as the days pass, only to dull the shiny gold finish. Letters and numbers are gathered to tell you what and when. A small reminder of the years, spent teaching my children. Knowing the time was spent with my family, everyday possible (Journal, September 15,1998).

Here, after a fairly objective third person description, he has added the theme that is even more important to him, time spent with his family.

A third writing is also less than one-half page long, but this time he has included his first drawing of the trophy at the bottom of the page (See Figure 5.2)

> As a reminder, it sits. Waiting to be picked up. It holds the memories of many days of scorching sun. Many hours of practice, endless weeks of games. People dedicate, and donate to make it all happen. (Hard work from a twelve year old boy earned this and many others).The gold coating shines as a symbol of excellence, maybe to reflect the memories. When it gets handled after time, it reminds you of the many games. Top honors, is its symbol (September 15,1998).

The point of view here is primarily third person, with a musing tone. The fragmented sentence structure reveals a searching observer, thinking not only of the actual object, but more about the memories it represents and helps him recall-- the hours of practice and effort that went into winning the trophy, both on the part of adult and the players. In this

drawing, the man is much smaller in proportion to the base on which it stands than in the other two drawings. This is likely due to the fact that he started drawing at the bottom of the page and ran out of space since the words already filled the top half.

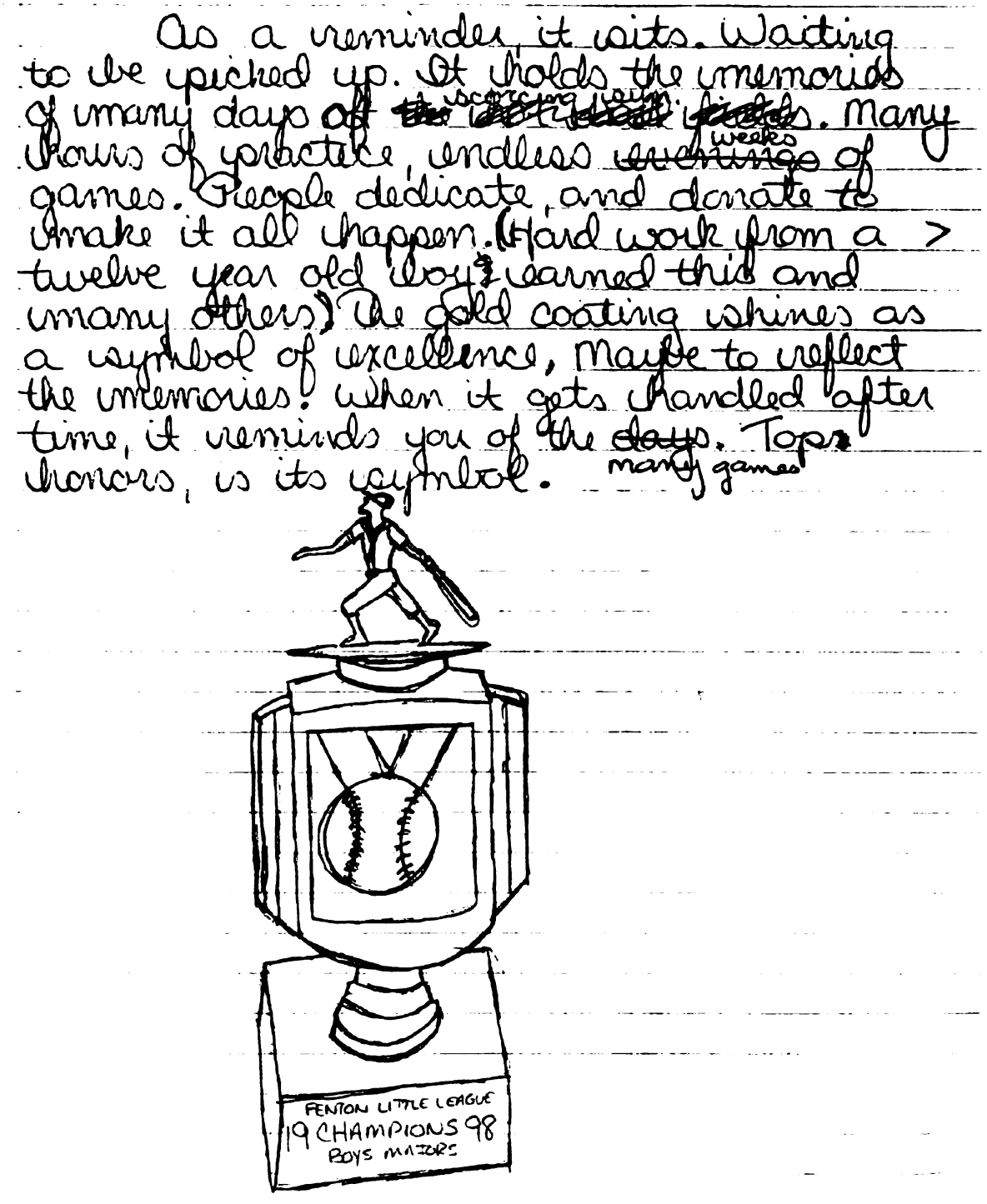
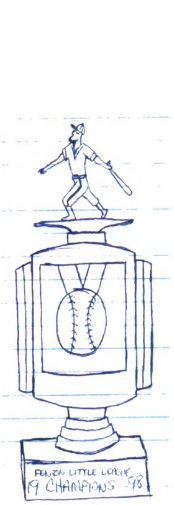


Figure 5.2 Chuck's First Trophy Drawing (Student work).

The total size of the second drawing is almost exactly the same, (Figure 5A.3) but here, with the image centered in the middle of the page, the ball player is larger in proportion to the base. The drawing takes up only about half the available space on the page. Here he has corrected the perspective of the base, too much of which shows in the first drawing, making the trophy appear to be broken in the middle. In the drawing light pencil marks



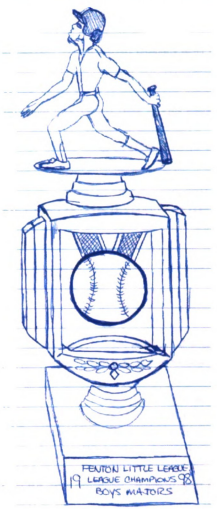


Figure 5.3 Trophy drawing 2 Figure 5.4 Trophy drawing 3 (Student work)

(The ratio of the proportions is the same as in the original)

remain, showing that he sketched the image first before inking it, even considering letting the man's head protrude over the words before settling for making his image smaller. In the second drawing, the image is seen at eye level rather than from above as the first drawing had been. Having worked out the problems of perspective, Chuck seems to have

executed the drawing directly in ink. Although the ball player is still smaller proportionately than in the third drawing, it isn't because words are resting on his head.

The third drawing (Figure 5.4) is also done without apparent preliminary pencil sketching. The base is placed about three inches from the bottom of the page, almost exactly the same place it occupied in the second drawing. This time, however, the image fills about two-thirds of the page and includes more specific detail—texture on the bat, the player's hat, the ribbon from which the baseball hangs, and a floral design and more detail on the base of the trophy. The right side of the mid-section is inaccurate, and he has returned to the slightly tipped perspective of the base similar to that in the first drawing, elements that might have been corrected, had he been working in pencil first. However, the baseball player in this drawing has grown almost twice as tall since his revisions have brought him closer to drawing the proportions accurately. His revisions of the writing from this point on will clarify his words in a similar fashion.

After completing these drawings, Chuck reorganized and expanded his writing about the trophy in a fourth draft

> As a reminder it sits, waiting to be picked up. The gold coating shines as a symbol of excellence. Willing to hold the memories until it is looked at again, maybe tomorrow, maybe next year.
>
> Reminders of the sweat, hard work and dedication by many. Being on top, at least on this day of achievement. Although the trophy does not stand alone, it is lonely to tell it's story. Occassionaly getting peared at, but getting handled is seldom. Many trophies and metals surrounding, with memories and stories to tell.
>
> Hours of practice, miles driven, and money funded to get the kids where they need to be. Tops on my list are my wife and children. Rarely will I miss even a practice, believing my time spent with them is growing shorter as the years pass. Thankful to God, my family is healthy and gifted.
>
> Giving my son's the opportunity is all that can be done. They are the ones that make the most of it. Working hard to be the best, and help others.
>
> Soon hopefully, the memories will be brought up again, not leaving the trophy too long for the dust to settle (Journal, September 16, 1998).

After writing this piece, Chuck seems to have been satisfied with the revision of the first three writings and then looked for new ideas to develop further.

Up to this point, Chuck has focused on meaning and implications of the object he is drawing. It is as if he has seen the details but translated them into something more, looking at "the big picture," so to speak. After having written all these pieces and having drawn the object three times, he finally comes back to an objective description of it—he looks again at the details, and creates a more-detailed word-picture.

> It stands about twelve inches tall, with a marble base. The frame is about four inches wide and shaped kind of like a picture frame. Inside the frame like center is a baseball, apparently hanging from a ribbon. On top sits a statue of a baseball player. Other than the marble base, and the white baseball, the trophy is entirely coated with a shiny gold material. On the base is a flat gold emblem with the team league place and date etched into it. The trophy was won by my son, Robert. The team won 16 games and lost 1. My wife and I sponsored the team in my younger brothers company name (Journal, September 16,1998).

Then in the next writing he returns to metaphoric musing, this time in first person, assuming the voice of the trophy. First it muses, "I'm not sure why they put me high on this pedistal, probably to make the recieptiant feel on top." The trophy recalls the boy's hard work that it represents and concludes, "Sometimes I feel like a record book, with no pages. As I sit here surrounded by my brothers and sisters, we all have our own story." Finally the trophy compares the dust on its back to a clock, "letting me know how long its been," and describes older trophies that have been pushed to the back of the shelf when new ones are added. It concludes, "As a unit we represent a lot of time, dedicated by the parents and children that have given so much" (Journal, September 16,1998).

These seven writings repeat several ideas in different contexts, as Chuck searches for things to say and ways to look at the images through words. It seems as if he were able to organize the words more easily after doing the three drawings, although the drawing and writing remain separate modes of expression with little overlap. But even though the

observation is easier for him to express and refine in visual terms, he is groping for a larger sense of how to express more than what can be seen on the surface.

Looking at these drawings and writings side by side suggests that Chuck is using the same revision techniques in his writing that he used in drawing the images. As an artist, once the image is down, he begins again, refining the lines as the image grows. Unconsciously applying to writing what he has internalized from his experiences with studio art, he refines his writing by beginning again, incorporating some of the old lines that he felt had worked in a new context into his new descriptions. Seeing the way Chuck works here, one might recall the way Edgar Degas worked with his paintings of the ballet dancers, sometimes tracing patterns from paintings that he liked and then putting them onto new canvases. Unlike Ann's epiphany with her cup drawing, Chuck's work on this exercise is more deliberate. He gradually sees more clearly and then revises, working with words and images concurrently. Chuck revises as a result of seeing the need for more detail in a way similar to Sharon's desire for more detail for color in her drawings.

Exploring visual metaphors for writing

To help writers find their way deeper into their topics, I demonstrated two exercises as part of the discussion of the essay, "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker." The loop writing technique encouraged them to read back over a focused free-writing to find a point of interest, and then to begin a second focused-writing on that aspect of the topic. In the second I drew a tree on the board to make a visual illustration of the way a topic could expand organically, letting the trunk represent the larger topic, and the branches forking left, right and above, to stand for different aspects of the topic. I pointed out that as the branches became smaller they represent focusing more tightly on the topic. This tree image lets the reader see where the parts fit into the whole all at once, in the

same way that a painting stops time. In the "reading" of a painting or other work of art, there is no linear entry point, no beginning, middle and end. The story just is, whole, stopped forever like the lovers chasing around the wall of the Grecian Urn. When looking at the parts of the tree, one can focus here or there, but the organic structure remains in place.

Chuck included his own drawing of this tree in his notes:

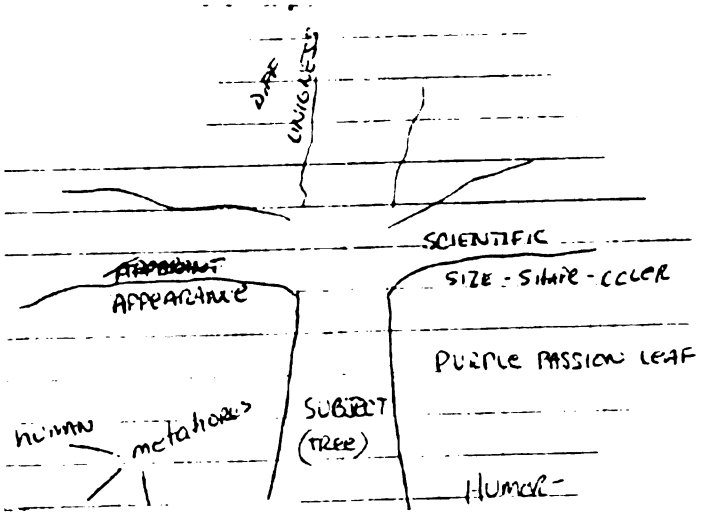


Figure 5.5. Chuck's tree, illustrating the expansion of topics.(Student work_

Alongside the tree, he also wrote that there were several "visual things--screens to look at things through." These included mood, educational background, life experience—cultural or traditional background—and gender. These notes indicate that Chuck is beginning to see the connections between different ways of looking at things and different ways of writing about topics, whether the subject is an object, a life experience such as his time spent in the woods, or essays he has read in the text. He is especially beginning to extend his tendency to look for the metaphoric connections--the idea that an image is more than a simple physical thing. He would return to this idea in the second interview discussing his love for photography that developed in his next semesters at the college.

My purpose in demonstrating the looping and tree-branching metaphors was to use a visual tool to break free in yet another way from the confining linearity of outlines. When a heated class discussion of the relationship between money and work grew out of the looping exercises and their readings of the "Blue Collar Worker" essay, I suggested that the students work in groups to analyze it using this tree metaphor as a tool. I gave each group an 11" x 18" sheet of paper and asked them to brainstorm and draw their own trees as they focused and narrowed their individual reactions to the discussion. Each student was then asked to take some segment of the group topic and expand it into his or her own personal essay.

After including the loop-writing and the tree metaphor his journal, Chuck explored several related angles or branches of the topic of money/greed, entries that led to a second informal essay. The first set of three writings briefly but powerfully describe the hypothetical murder of a young man who sold drugs to satisfy his greed for money. Chuck wrote that the young man was killed because he "unknowingly chose another dealer's territory. Blood is a high price to pay for taking another dealers customers" (Journal, no date).

A second version of this piece begins, "The authorities remove the lifeless carcus from the sidewalk. The red stain remains as a reminder to the next person to work the street." The next day someone else has taken over because greed has led him into this same drug business. By the third version, the blood has begun "to stain the concrete like tomato juice on a white shirt. Puddles of blood begin to flow together benieth the young man's body" (Journal, no date). After a few more such details, he ends with a moral: "The green paper called money possesses powers like nothing else. Why do people feel life is about filling their pockets with currency, the wealthy American Dream."

The next journal entry explores a new aspect of the topic, what others will do to get money. He moves further into metaphor. "Some may call it the 'money tree,'" Chuck writes. "Many will sacrifice their life to reach the top of the tree, where the money clings by the millions. The tree supported primarily by the root of evil." (Journal, no date). This last sentence is marked with a large star in the margins, indicating that while rereading these fifteen pages of free-writing, he has identified a visual image that interests him, the one he will return to for the key to the final version of the essay.

The next half-page entry titled "The American Dream," thankfully moves away from the dead man's "carcus" to focus on another visual image, a mailbox full of gimmicks and phony advertisements, sweepstakes letters, all the trappings of advertisers' attempts to get people to spend their money in foolish ways.

The next entry is an overview in which he analyzes the divisions he has covered in a page long topic outline for the essay:

Money: Influence it has on you

What people will do for it

What money can't buy (Journal, No date).

This done, he devotes another page to each of these categories. New material here includes his musings on his former boss's discovery that the wealth he accrued from fifty-five auto dealerships couldn't buy back the health of his wife, paralyzed in a car accident while on the way to his office to confront him about his infidelity.

Having discovered the emerging pattern with the money tree image, the next journal entry returns to themes from the earlier explorations. Beginning with a paragraph on the stuffed mailbox, Chuck moves to a second paragraph on the "Million Dollar Sweepstakes Winner," then to a final paragraph listing all the things people will do for

money—murder, prostitution and theft. The next journal entry is a typed revision of all this. On a roll now, he picks up the visual image of the "money tree," associates it with "climbing the ladder of success," and combines it with the other ideas to carry the essay through four more paragraphs.

> Figuring what, and how to climb the ladder of success, is measured on the money tree. The branches are covered with expensive cars, huge houses, boats, planes, and jewelry surrounding the leaves. To get the tree to grow faster, maybe a shady business deal, or a large dope shipment delivered, would add some length to the branches. The fertilizer is the greed that builds in the growers mind as the branches spread out, and get thicker. . . Ants and rodents start to gather around the tree,. . . (Journal, no date).

The second paragraph of the formal essay looks at consequences, the loss of the little saplings that "have been transplanted to another forest," and time can't bring them back. In the third paragraph, the leaves turn brown and everything crumbles; finally the conclusion states the moral: "Sometimes dreams should stay just that, dreams. To most, life is spent chasing a dream or goal and while in pursuit, don't get to live life. Everyone has their own tree to grow and their own method of fertilizing, but no one should cut someone else's tree down for fertilizer" (Journal, no date).

Granted, this extended metaphor has some problems; although fairly easy to visualize, it would be very hard (even clumsy) to draw. Perhaps if Chuck had tried drawing it on paper rather than visualizing it mentally, it would have been tighter. However, as it is, the significance of the circuitous development of this essay lies in two areas. First, it shows the kind of visual thinking that Chuck has easily tapped into and, second, it shows how he moves through a topic. As he had done with the trophy writings, Chuck looks for the larger significance of the subject, its symbolic meaning, and then searches many details to explain it in words. Having a sense of the larger topic, he moves deliberately to find the details that fill in the concept.

Another interesting note is how the tree image used as a metaphor for developing topics I had introduced in his class the day before has metamorphosed. Perhaps it is

stretching too far to assume a connection between Chuck's "money tree" and the tree I had drawn on the board; the tree's reappearance is an interesting coincidence at least. The visual tool used to explain how to develop a topic seems to have been transformed into the actual visual content of his essay, taking on new life in the way that metaphors seem to do best.

By being willing to write through several stages to this metaphor, Chuck has also discovered a pattern of composing that he will follow in the rest of the papers in the semester, the same pattern he used in revising his object drawings. After choosing the general area of the topic he will write about, he writes page after page by hand until he hits on an idea he likes, usually a metaphor of a strong visual nature, and then he revises that into the formal draft. This pattern is quite similar to Sharon's method of developing her essays.

The process of composing as it relates to drawing

Chuck followed the same composing pattern for the next out-of-class paper, one which he called "Going to College." In a burst of writing energy in which he wrote over twenty-five handwritten pages, it seems that a depth of feelings that had been locked in until this time came bursting out all at once. Dated September 28, only three weeks into the semester, the first three and a half page description begins, "I never thought I'd be in college writing a paper on going to college. Never in my life time did I even consider college." He recounts further autobiographical details, talking about having begun working at the body shop at age fifteen then moving to Plymouth to escape his abusive mother the day after graduation. After having worked his way to an annual salary of over $70,000 with no higher education, Chuck is still skeptical of the benefits of going to college.

> College to me means schooling, homework, papers, and studying. Some of the things we learn will not be used in everyday life, probably, but it helps you open your mind, use your mind, and possibly open up avenues you didn't know were there. College is in many ways just piece of paper that says you paid your dues and did the time, passed the classes and graduated. Hopefully my college Degree will give me the knowledge necessary for the career I've choosen.

> Schooling or college, makes you get up every morning, get there and hopefully accomplish something. Going to College is the opportunity for me to move on in life with a new career. . . . College means when I get done with it I'll be the only one in my family with a degree (Journal, September 28, 1998).

In the next section he talks about having been forced out of his twenty-three year job and his difficulties with the company that refused to pay disability. Then he returns to further conjecture on the value of college.

> College is a way to learn something new for me. I did not pick a career because of the money you could make in the field, but because its something I enjoy. No one in my immediate family has ever gone to college (Journal, September 28, 1998).

After describing how an uncle finished medical school while working at GM, Chuck recalls his father and grandfather who were both "work-aholics." He writes that his wife is very proud of him for coming to school, although he doesn't really understand why. He ends this piece with a reference to the fact that his sons harass him about doing his homework and admits, "I feel out of place in class because of my age, but I try to think there is students much older than myself here." It is apparent in this writing that he still has remnants of his high school attitude toward writing, and that he has signed up for this writing class because it was required and he has to "pay his dues" and "do his time."

Following the pattern of composing he had discovered in the earlier essay, Chuck begins again, opening the second version of this essay with the same words: "I never. . . " However, rather than repeating more of his earlier sentences, he opens the paragraph up and adds detail from inside. He describes his mother's early marriage and giving birth to three sons before she was nineteen (Chuck is the oldest), her traditional role staying home while his father worked too much, and his mother's youth spent with a mother who raged until she was taken to "an insane asylum and treated with shock treatment" (Journal, September 28, 1998). His mother's father had also worked too much, first at the garage he owned but also doing construction work. Chuck writes about going at the age of ten with his four siblings to live with his grandparents for a while after his own father left; a

whole page describes the abuse he and the others were subjected to there. Beginning to work at the body shop at age fifteen gave him a way out. This new version of his essay is five pages long, mostly details that were not included in the first version.

The third draft again begins with the "I never thought . . . " sentence. This time he repeats and condenses some of the autobiographical information and continues the story. He tells about asking his boss to tell his mother he didn't need him during the afternoons of football practice. Then he relates more details about moving to Plymouth where he learned even more about painting custom designs on cars. This third version brings the reader up to the present time, telling of the pain Chuck had experienced during his last two years of work before getting the diagnosis that his shoulders had been damaged and would no longer hold up to auto body work. He ends page eight by saying,

> At age 39, starting College and your career is going to be quite a challenge, but I think I'm up to it. I'm enjoying the classes so far and look forward to school. I hope to maybe take some more Journalism or writing classes because I enjoy writing. I'm not so sure how good or bad I am, but it really opens up your mind. *Writing is like painting in some ways*; it is a way to express yourself.
>
> Many things in my life were negative, but I feel very fortunate. My wife and children stand behind me 100%, that's motivation enough for me (Journal, September 28, 1998; My Italic).

Although the phrase, "writing is like painting in some ways" does not have a star beside it as the key image in the earlier journal had, these last paragraphs have brought him to the discovery of the metaphor he wants to develop into the larger piece, again a visual image that has grown out of his past experience and his writing about that. He sees the connection in his mind's eye, even if he hasn't yet drawn it.

When Chuck talked about the writing of this piece in the interview, he described the way the writing process worked for him in detail.

> I wrote twenty-five pages and to me it was about recollections of your childhood and stuff or memories from your childhood and after twenty-five pages it was just monotonous, boring. You know, I thought who wants to read about my childhood—who cares? It doesn't mean anything to them . . . And I just kept free writing and then I . . . it just clicked that I, my life is like a picture and you make the choices and the colors. Something in my free writing towards the end, I read

> that clicked and I wrote and I just wrote a sentence . . . that you're . . . it's something like "you're a picture of life" or "you paint the picture of life," something like that (Interview, January 22, 1998).

Like Ann, Chuck has reached an epiphany of sorts here. He then proceeds to write several pages in a process reminiscent of Elbow's "Loop Writing" that I had introduced to the class earlier. In this process the writer keeps up an alternating cycle of free writing, reading the free writing and "nutshelling" what it says to him in one sentence, then free writing again from that sentence to begin the cycle anew until he finds the "center of gravity" of all that he has written.

> I probably write . . . two or three drafts because I would think of things and I'd be in the middle of . . . When I'm writing my mind is working so fast, not that I'm smart. But my mind is going on and the more I think of . . . the more new things pop in from those things that I'm thinking of and I'm writing and I'll stop and I'll think. I have something interesting and I'll write a sentence or paragraph over here that popped in and then I can go back and I can get back and what I was writing .
>
> Because I already have half of it, or some of it down, and sometimes I'll forget what I was writing about too. And then if . . . I'd forget about maybe what I was going to say there or what I was thinking and then just the ideas come from others . . . the ideas that you really think about.
>
> But when I leave class, I'm in . . . my mind is thinking the whole time for the half hour and for the next two hours, how *to view things about writing* and I mean I have to wake my self up sometimes driving home. Thinking you better watch what you're doing, you're going to get into an accident. Because I'm thinking about writing stuff that you told us in class and I just get in a zone and I could sit down and write. My lab jumps on me and pokes me and tells me "I got to go outside," and I'm like, "Just a minute!" . . . I don't know (Interview, January, 1999; My Italic)

By the time he talked about his composing process in this way after the end of the semester, Chuck was able to articulate it clearly. He had written four papers in this way, one a rather long one that involved extensive research.

The third set of writings on the subject of returning to college is less sequential than the earlier two sets. In it he picks up and adapts the simile, "writing is like painting" and begins, "As you age and mature, the brush of life paints a different picture in your mind." This draft comes out to be thirteen pages of loosely connected thoughts, some of

which expand on sentences from the earlier pieces, but others that dig deeper into his feelings. When he describes the time the doctor told him he could no longer work, his struggle to put it into words shows in the number of marked out lines and insertions. After a half page, most of which he later rejected he wrote,

> I felt useless as a father, not being able to provide for my wife and kids. As my mind raced in many directions, the tears ran down my cheeks. How could I spend twenty three years doing a job that I loved and worked so hard at to earn the reputation as being the best. [Here he includes several lines about painting limos and Rolls Royces for celebrities.] Years of pride into my work, I only gave the best of myself. All this to be ripped away (Journal, September 28, 1998).

Three drafts have not only brought him to an extended metaphor that is no longer boring to him, but the writing has also led him to begin to explore his feelings more deeply. After several more paragraphs, he writes,

> My classes are interesting to me. It has sparked an interest in writing, the challenge of viewing things differently. Writing opens up my mind, and my perspective on some things. It seems to me writing is like painting a picture with words. You visualize the person, the place, and the happenings in the writing (Journal, September 28, 1998).

This is quite a different voice than the one that questioned the value of college only twenty pages and a few hours earlier. Although he doesn't say so, one might assume that he is beginning to realize that his attitude has changed. He writes that, although he didn't feel scared to start college, he did feel uncomfortable and thought he might be given the nickname "Grandpa." When this occurs to him, he shifts point of view, and taking on a parental sort of role, he begins to talk in second person to the younger students in the class. He expresses his disbelief at their casual attitudes, at their lack of interest, and he tells them (in his journal at least) that they are wasting their own time as well as that of the instructor. He clearly does not understand their lack of engagement in the task at hand, even though he has yet to really make this task (the writing) his own.

Five more pages race through description similar to that he has already written, retesting it in different contexts as he did earlier. He explores two other metaphors besides the painting one: "As life throws you the curves, you can either watch the ball go by, or

swing the bat and take a chance." And again, "The clock will not return the minutes it takes from us . . . . If we are to be successful we must race the clock of mother nature." But after each time he explores a new image, he returns to the painting metaphor. He concludes the draft with this comment:

> No where have I ever seen or heard of life being fair to all. Not all will have a pretty picture, the pallette allready had colors on it for some, others had their picture painted for them. Sometimes we don't get the choice of backgrounds for they are painted by our parents most times before we are born. It is up to everyone, to pick the bright pretty colors for their future or continue adding to the drab, ugly background that has been handed to them (Journal, no date).

This is the clarification of the image he had been searching for.

Chuck said that after he had written these twenty-nine pages on the topic "Going to College," he remembered that the assignment included making a drawing or collage on the topic. He created a collage drawing for his visual representation of the essay:

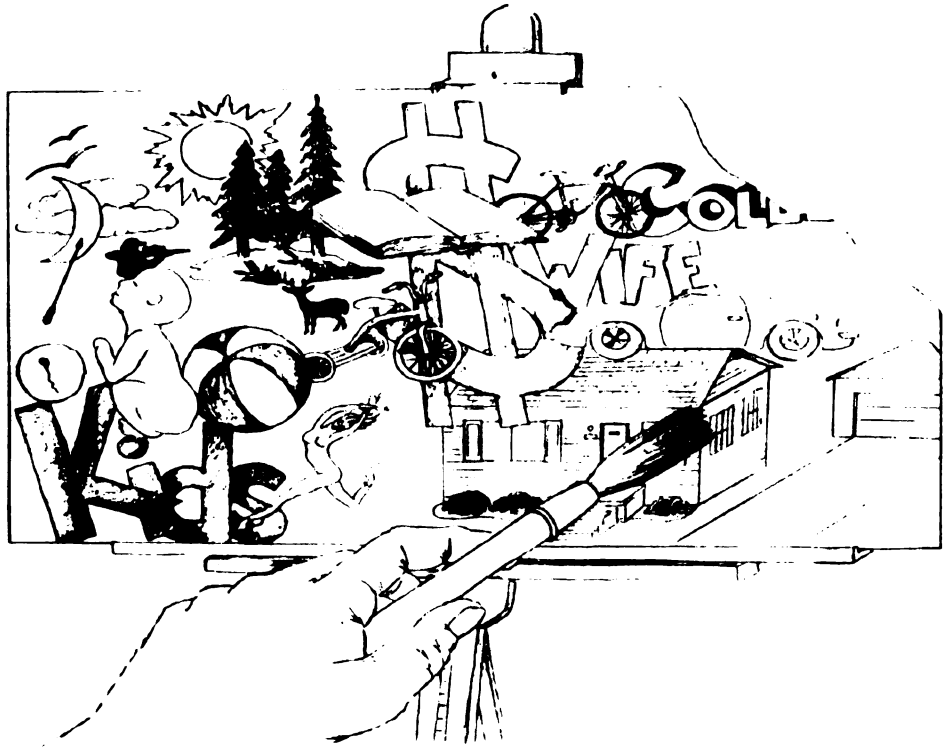


Figure 5.5 Chuck's "Life is a Painting" Drawing. (Student work)

The original drawing is 14" x 18", drawn in pencil on white paper. The image shows a hand holding a brush, painting a canvas that sits on an artist's easel. The largest symbol in the drawing is the dollar sign, placed prominently in the middle of the collage.

A chunk of the lower right section of this $ symbol is broken away, and an open book and a tricycle are superimposed over it, symbolizing that the importance of money has been diminished. Just to the right a bicycle faces the right side of the canvas. The upper left side of the drawing includes symbols for nature--a hunter aims at a ten-point buck, an arrow points at the moon, birds fly above the clouds, and tall pine trees stand stately in the distance against the sun. The lower left includes symbols for family--fertilization of the egg, a nearly full-term fetus, a beach ball, and a wildly free nude female figure prancing from the center toward the left of the drawing. The lower right shows a house, garage and driveway with a fading image of a car sort of floating over the roof of the house. Since the car is not in the driveway, it could be interpreted to represent his former career rather than transportation.

Three words are woven into the collage, "Kids," in the lower left, and "wife" along with a portion of the word "college," in the upper right. The corner of this part of the canvas is missing, along with the last four letters in the word "college," leaving just enough letters to identify it. This could symbolize the idea that painting this part of his life is just beginning.

The subject matter of the essay, "Going to College," now made visual, appears to be clear: Chuck is aware that he is in control of his reactions and his destiny. At this point, although he is becoming conscious of the powerful way his visual imagery is contributing to his writing, the image first materialized in his mind's eye and the two modes of expression seem still to be separate.

Perhaps because of his confidence in drawing, however, comfort with using image-metaphors, the complex imagery and composition of this drawing did not take five or six attempts to come together into a well-organized piece as had the written version. The first paragraph of the earlier drafts had begun, with variations:

> As you age and mature, the brush of life paints a different picture in your mind. The strokes are much smoother now. You realize your elders tried to paint the picture for you as a youth, but you already knew all about art!

Although he was expressing his thoughts about the subject metaphorically in the writing, the final form of the essay did not come together until after he had made the drawing. The final version of his essay begins,

> As you age and mature, the brush of life paints new pictures in your mind. *The strokes have changed, and the picture comes together better.* Your experience has filled the picture in, the picture that your elders tried to paint for you. When you are young, you think you already know all about art. As time passes, you begin to see your parent's picture, and why they painted it with the colors they chose. They were probably the same colors their parents chose" (October 15, 1998; My emphasis).

The control of the brush has shifted from others to his experience. In a most telling detail, now that he has drawn the picture, he writes, "the *picture* comes together better."

Chuck continues describing his past life as if it were a masterpiece, created through "top notch work, regardless of the price on the job," including painting Rolls Royce automobiles belonging to Aretha Franklin, Tommy Hearns, and others. In this new version, he describes the day when the doctor told him that auto bodywork was finished metaphorically: "My picture smeared like never before. For months the picture laid in the dirt, while I tried to regain the grip on my brush. It did not seem so easy to reach now; the bristles were worn and out of place." This is an effective change. The metaphor "smeared paint," replaces the earlier draft's description of the doctor's words as "hitting like a freight train," to carry out his new vision, indicating greater awareness, not just of cohesiveness in writing, but also of cohesiveness in the fabric of his life.

Again the point of view has switched, and it is no longer *life* painting the picture, but it is Chuck, himself, even if he has dropped his brush. He goes on to compare his return to school to "picking up a new brush," and using new colors he has never seen before, ones that *he* chooses, unlike the ones his parents had chosen for him. He concludes that "With any luck at all, [my new painting] will be as majestic as my last" (Draft, October 15, 1998.) By the time he had conceptualized in metaphor his reaction to this situation for the past several months, he had apparently come to terms with it.

The two metaphors Chuck drew for his thinking/writing process were an accurate description of his composing process in these essays and showed his awareness of it. In the first he drew a curving road:

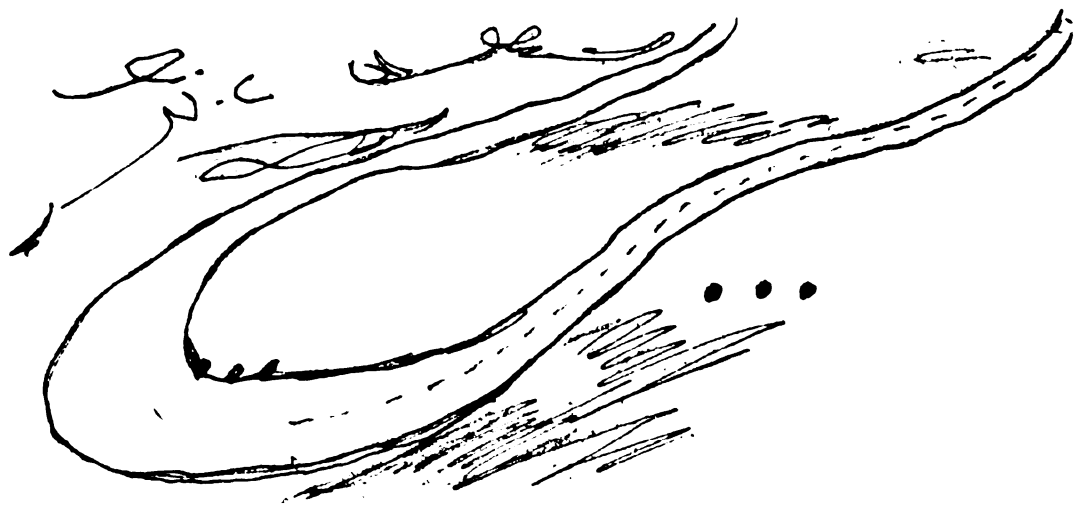


Figure 5.6. Chuck's first metaphor for his thinking/writing process. (Student work).

He wrote:

> As my mind works, endlessly heading down the road. The road is continuous in length with some curves in place. Most of the curves are placed there by itself, running over and over the yellow lines. Wondering if the process department is in gear, or stuck in neutral. My mind chooses not to coast down the hills, but to race down the hills. My interest in the road has been sparked by many (Journal, October 1, 1998).

On another page he drew his brain with legs and a large writing arm, its hand holding a pen, obviously a picture of Chuck's own left hand (See Figure 5.7). (Chuck is right-handed.) He described it clearly.

> As my brain walks its miles of experiences my pen records the visual images in words. My pen tries to write quickly to keep up with the marching brain. The thoughts run through and new thoughts and images arrive behind the first.

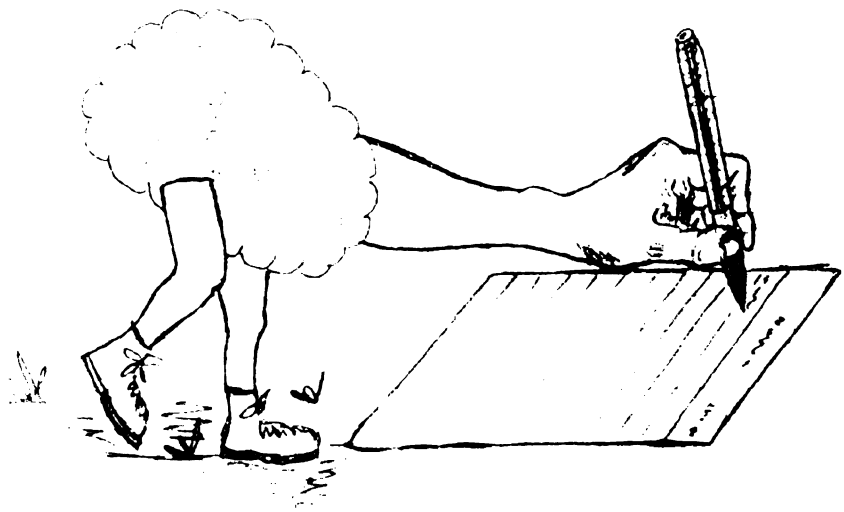


Figure 5A.7 Chuck's second metaphor for his thinking/writing process.

In the interview Chuck said he had drawn a brain with running legs coming out of it because his mind just keeps going on and on, and he can't write fast enough to keep up with it. This is reminiscent of Ann's comment that she had to tell her brain to shut off now, so she could get some sleep. In the interview when Chuck described the way he composed as ideas "popping in mind," "going," and "clicking," this image seems quite appropriate. He described his mind "racing," when he wrote about the news he received in the doctor's office, for example, and a number of other times in his writing and later in the interviews.

Personal Memories Essay

The personal memories essay began with the assignment for students to draw a floor plan of a house where they had lived when they were younger, labeling places where memories occurred as they were drawing. This assignment is described in more detail in Chapter 3. Chuck was very precise about his drawing, as he usually was, and even shared some of the stories in class to inspire other students to recall their own youthful escapades (See Figure 5.8).

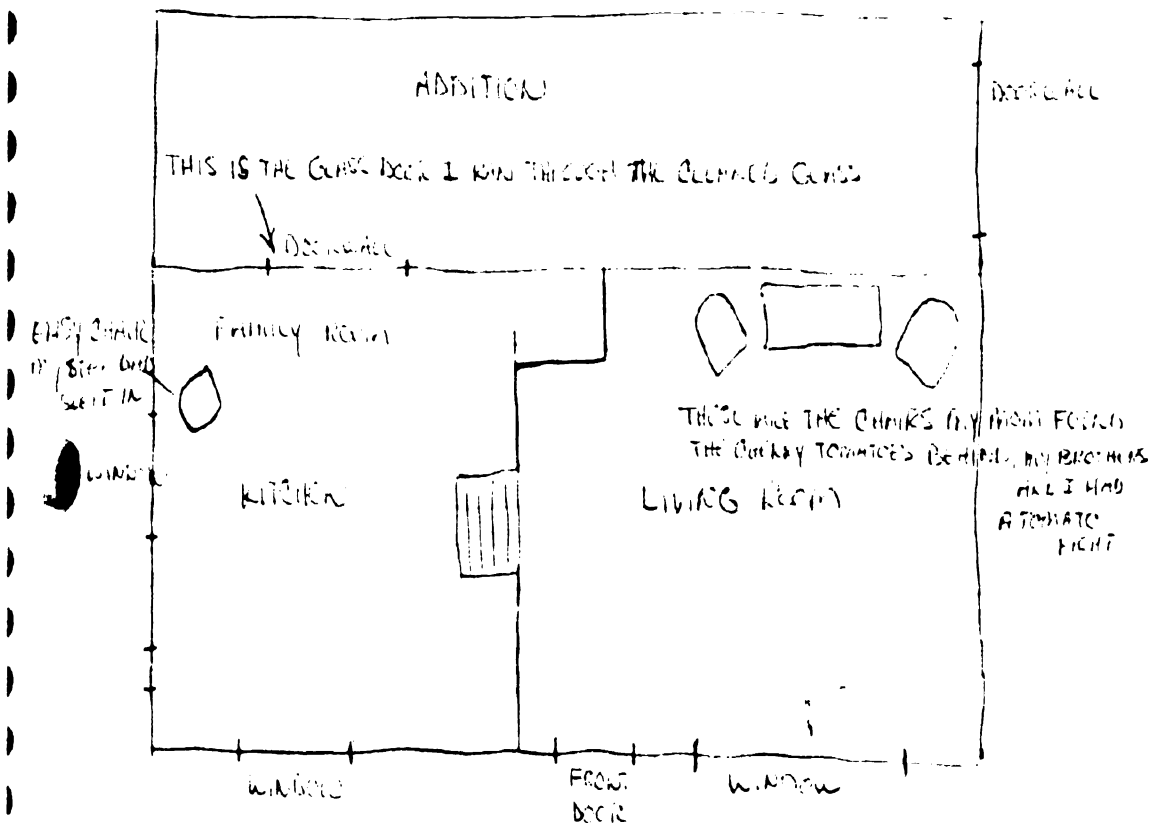


Figure 5.8. Chuck's map of his house when he was young. (Student work).

Chuck's first entry was about the time he ran through a glass door, but then he turned to another series of writings that became an essay he titled "The Hurricane." It was about his mother's temper and the difficulties of his childhood. He drew her as a black spiraling swirl in his journal and named her "Hurricane Rita," the daughter of "Typhoon Grandma" (See Figure 5.9). In this essay, he picks up and expands some details from the September 28 journal entry, describing himself and his four younger brothers as "five little islands floating in the storm." He was becoming more aware of the way metaphors kept occurring in his work and he described this awareness in the interview

> It seems like when I'm writing, my writing comes out visual like metaphors, and I don't know. I think that part of my artistic ability is in writing. Because I think artistic ability, ones that are natural not taught cause, I don't remember learning anything in art other . . . they say do a project. Well I could draw anything they could show me without taking any classes or circle figures.

And I did learn how to shade and stuff like that properly or better. But, I think artistic abilities is a . . . is in your eyes, it's in your mind, it's in your hand, and you have a natural balance to look at pictures or objects or scenes and know when what you're seeing is balanced or off balance or out of place. And I think that has a lot to do with writing

When I look at things and I want to write or I'm writing I can look at an object and after starting that class, I could look at an object and describe it in writing. I can look at an object and maybe describe, maybe how it feels, not only to the touch but inner feelings. And what I see in my eyes I write with my pen. (Interview, May 14, 1999).

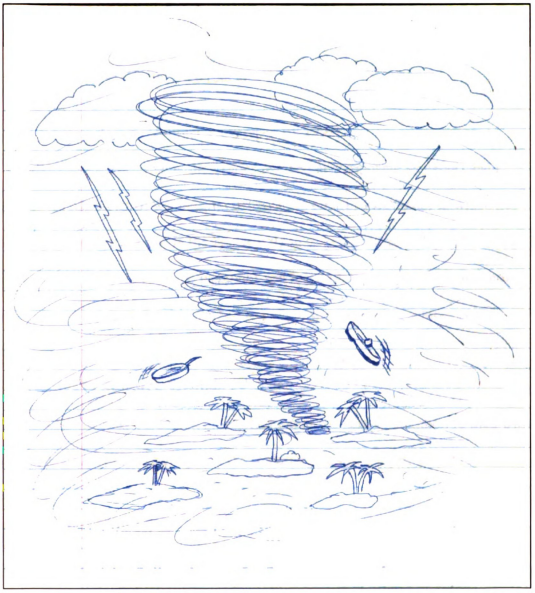


Figure 5.9 Chuck's visual metaphor for his mother. (Student work).

The extended metaphor works less effectively in the Hurricane Rita essay than the in previous one, but a few weeks later, he carried the writing a step further, adapted it to a shorter and more focused form and made a poem from it, completely on his own volition.

Forgotten Memories

The black clouds that passed years ago,
Can be brought back if I
Search long and hard.
The clouds can only be reviewed, by choice,
A choice, that plays with fear
Few times will I search for the darkness of my past
Embarrassing to tell, and much harder to forget
For some of my kin, the clouds will never leave
The down pour has washed the ruts in,
Ruts too deep to fill.
For me, they are forgotten memories.
(Journal, November 19, 1998)

Another extensive journal writing series resulted in composing an essay called "The Hunter." In this series of writings, he struggled to control a metaphor in which he compared sitting above the forest in the hunter's stand to being above a ship's deck. We worked together to straighten out the metaphor and focus on the rich detail he was now including in his writing. In it, he also worked to gain further control of sentences and revision.

Visual Metaphors in Research Writing:

Since Ken Macrorie's I-Search paper encourages the kind of attention to their own process that I had encouraged throughout the semester, I adapted it and asked my students to follow its basic steps. Essentially the I-Search paper incorporates into their final report a narrative account of the paths students follow in their research. The first part of the paper is thus about their writing process as they search for a question for which they want to find an answer and analyze what they already know about the subject and

predict the places they might find new information. The body of the paper includes an account of the actual discovery information. Thus the writer develops the paper in waves of understanding, looking backward and forward to fold in new information as it is discovered. This format for research fit well into Chuck's way of writing.

An avid hunter, he began by wanting to investigate the history of the white tail deer in this country, particularly being interested in controversies concerning the D. N. R. and deer management. He spent considerable time researching internet sites for information on the origin of deer hunting regulations; his research journal contains nineteen pages of handwritten notes on this subject, plus another fifteen downloaded from those sites.

He wrote that when he stumbled across an article about a deer poaching ring in Florida, he realized that all his dates and historical events were "BORING." Nothing had changed much since 1954. But the one thing he was not prepared for was reading the "many pages of recorded massacres of deer populations by many settlers before the market hunting was stopped." After all this, he said, "The most important or irritating question that came to mind was, 'how in the hell am I going to make my research paper interesting to the reader?'" (Journal, December 1, 1998).

As he became more and more sickened from reading the "horror stories and dirty deeds done by man," the other question that kept coming to him was "What possesses man to kill and steal from man, for a piece of paper called money?" As he thought about this, he said,

> BAM . . . an idea slapped me up side the head. Off I went into my own little world. I retrieved my atlas and opened it to the map of the U. S. I went back to the data I'd collected from the books. My computer searched for people that existed during those times. I compiled the backgrounds of the people and crossed the places with the dates. I mapped out the locations on the atlas that the people

> inhabited. Marking my map planned my research route . . . Excitement filled my chest, I felt this was a great breakthrough . . ." (first draft of research paper proposal, Journal, December 4, 1998).

Chuck drew a picture of himself on his trusty steed, (See Figure 5.10) and printed up a map on which he marked a trail from Michigan across the country (Figure 5.11). His paper then literally became an I-Search. After an ordinary introduction set in one type font, he changed the font to indicate a change of time: he wrote that he had fallen asleep over the "magical white information box," (the computer screen) where the OLE Indian Chief (his instructor), had led him and he found himself transformed into a cowboy. His horse was tied to the doorknob of the library, and his spurs clicked on the tile floor.

Figure 5.10 Chuck, the Cowboy Researcher (Student Work).

Thus visualized, Chuck's search became metaphorically real for him; he wrote that after packing his books into his saddlebag, he mounted his horse (named Mott) and headed off for the nearest saloon before leaving for his trip. In his words, as he moseyed across the

trail he had marked on his Encarta map, he incorporated the information he found along the way.

North America (central)

Figure 5.11 The map of Chuck's I-Search travels. Encarta map plus student work.

> A gentleman with a handle-bar mustache and gray eyebrows that looked like cotton. . . informed me of the methods to weed through the piles of literature that lined the shelves . . . [and introduced him to] sixteen educated gentlemen that had compiled years of research on the bound collection of papers (the encyclopedia).

Then he saw three ladies and a "Madam" leaning over the banister. The Madam led him upstairs for more services (the stacks area of the library), and after a (hypothetical) bath and shot of smooth whiskey, he headed off to the 1850s to talk with Blackfoot Indian tribe members. He observed a group of Frenchmen who had just killed a herd of elk for pleasure,

and then met John Mortimer Murphy, a book author, who provided him with a significant body of information he had compiled on market hunters.

This cowpoke's trail took him to encounters with Lewis and Clark, Navaho Indians, the Chisholm Trail, Dodge City and Miss Kitty's Saloon. And then it led him back to Michigan to find the deer herd in the lower peninsula nearly extinct by 1870, due to food requirements of logging camps. He joined up with folks on his trail to fight to collect information and to get legislation passed to protect the herds. Just after he was hired as the first Game Warden in the State of Michigan (1887), someone shook him and told him to wake up, the class is almost over. He switches the type font back to New Century Schoolbook, and he rubs his backside, sore from the long weeks in the saddle (or perhaps from sitting in front of a computer).

Visualizing his research as a journey allowed Chuck to organize a wide variety of material into a humorous and comprehensive commentary on the questions he had set out to discover. His questions about why man is overcome with greed and with lack of respect for the natural world, and why some feel they have a right to violate others remain unanswered, but even this OLE Indian chief who has little interest in hunting regulations or its history was able to read this research paper with pleasure, thanks to his metaphoric thinking. His delight in his own work was heart-warming.

Subsequent Semesters

Since the comp class in the fall of 1998, Chuck has completed English 102 and several photography classes, along with other required courses, maintaining a 4.0 average. Even with this successful grade in his second semester composition class, however, he described his experience in that class as painful. He was not able to incorporate his ideas into metaphors as freely as he had in 101, although the same meandering composing process still worked for him. He said when he was researching for a definition paper topic, planning to write about freedom, he looked in the dictionary and at the Bill of Rights and the Constitution because

> . . . I wanted to know what I was talking about. And I got into all of it and it was like, "Geez, I just could not...there was just so much there...I do a lot of free-writing and like I said, I'll be free-writing and I'll stop and I'll go over and write two sentences, and something else came in. And I'll have paragraphs and stuff all over and twenty pages of free-writing and then I'll start looking through it and cross out stuff. You know, "that's stupid. I wrote that three times" (Interview, May 1, 1999).

He then realized that a great deal of irony revolves around any sense of freedom in today's world, and so he narrowed his paper to that subject. He said he had done no drawing in relationship to any of the papers, and the instructor discouraged him when he wrote two versions of one paper, one a typical expository essay, and the second, another version worked out in metaphor. He said the instructor had said to him, "What, are you crazy, writing two papers on the same topic?" and she would only read one of them.

Summary

As he worked through ideas for the first essay in his journal, Chuck discovered a composing process that worked for him—free-writing about the topic until he discovered an image or metaphor around which to order the final essay. When he employed this same composing process in the second essay, he rapidly moved from a lack of engagement to a personal involvement with the topic he had chosen. He described this engagement in terms reminiscent of Csikszentmihalyi 's "Flow." In one way his recursive writing process was reminiscent of that wave-like movement described by Zebroski, but it built to a point of sudden awareness, an overpowering image, that he then used as a guiding contour for his essay. In part, I suggest that this was the result of his attempt to express deep feelings through a visual metaphor, first expressed in words, then organized through a complex drawing, which then led to an organized revision that developed the extended metaphor in a sophisticated essay.

As he followed this pattern through three essays, the connections between drawing and writing became clearer to him, a fact he acknowledged in the interviews and self-reflective journal entries. This opened the way for him to find a humorous guiding

metaphor for the I-search paper at the end of class, a metaphor that evolved from a drawing of himself as a cowboy riding across a map of the United States.

By contrast, in his second semester writing class, when the instructor not only failed to encourage his enthusiasm for extensive exploration of the topic, but actively discouraged it, he felt less successful and was almost listless as he described his disappointment. When the instructor refused to read the metaphoric paper that he turned in to accompany the expository essay, he continued to write, but with far less engagement. He did no drawing in that class, and described it as "lecture" that put him to sleep. He also found it difficult to get into the "zone" on his own in that class. Nevertheless, in a third interview a year later, he described a continued interest in writing, particularly in relation to his photography.

Chuck enrolled in the Introduction to Children's Literature class I taught in the fall of 1999. He told me the novels assigned for that class were the first he had read. He incorporated drawing into several of his class projects; some of it had become editorial in nature as the portrait of the instructor, no longer pictured as an OLE Indian chief, will show (See Figure 5.12).

When Chuck came to the last interview August 8, 2000, he brought in his portfolio of drawings he had completed in his studio art classes at the college; not surprisingly, he had made remarkable progress. His self-taught drawing skills had now been developed to the same perfection of his other work. He was aware of the differences in these new drawings and those he had done in the composition class. He also showed me many nature photos from around Michigan and from a recent trip to the Appalachian Mountains. One of his photographs had been selected for publication in a nationally recognized book, *College Photography 2000* which he also brought in. He was particularly proud of a series

of photos he had taken of a store mannequin with a chipped nose and other scratches and abrasions. He said when he saw these marks after developing the photo, he thought, "Wow, I could do a series of photographs of mannequins and write a book about them! Those scratches all tell a story." He spoke at length about the way the images he sees through the camera lens make him want to write. He attributes much of the change in the way he looks at the world to having done the drawing and writing exercises in the first-semester composition class, although there were obviously many other influences, not the least of which was his own motivation.

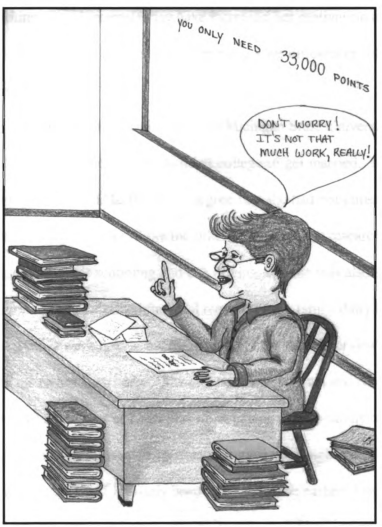


Figure 5.12. Chuck's Children's Literature Project (Student work)

Carol

Carol's dominant characteristics are a quiet sincerity and honest self-searching. In her mid-thirties, she had only recently decided to return to college to earn a bachelor's degree and elementary teaching certificate. At the time she was enrolled in the composition class I taught, she was also working as a bus driver in her home school district. She said that her involvement in education through working with the children on her bus route and as a parent of three elementary aged children, had whetted her desire to become a teacher herself. She also had a strong interest in home schooling, a topic that appeared in her later writing. These interests may have increased her motivation to become a better writer, and to absorb information on learning style differences related to the use of drawing in the composition class.

After attending Western Michigan University and Michigan State University for two and a half years just after high school, Carol had left college to get married. Now that her children were in school, she planned to finish the degree that she had not considered herself prepared for seventeen years earlier. Like the other students in my research pool, she was quite busy. In addition to her schooling and bus driving job, she was also beginning to assume responsibility for the computerized financial records of the family dairy farm.

Our first two interviews were held in my office, but for the third interview (May 24, 2000), Carol invited me to her farm home. She and her husband own and run a large dairy farm about thirty miles southwest of Flint, part of an extended four-family operation. Since the farm setting plays heavily in her writing, this visit gave me insight into the background of her life and essays that I had only been able to assume earlier. The farm is co-operatively run with other members of her husband's family; they raise and milk dairy cattle on 2,000 acres, half of which they own, half they rent). After our interview, Carol

gave me a tour of the farm's rolling fields; I saw the huge machinery with which they raise cattle feed for their own use and to sell, the buildings where the machinery was stored, and the barns and lot where three hundred cows waited to be milked.

When we talked during this last interview, we sat at an island in Carol's kitchen. The cupboard doors all around were papered with 26 8 1/2" x 11" papers printed with large letters of the alphabet, visual practice for her first grade son. Carol's eleven-year old daughter was practicing piano in another room. We had to pause once for Carol to accept money from a Girl Scout in her troop from cookie sales, and again when her son called on the walkie-talkie asking her to send his brother on a golf-cart like tractor to give him a ride back to the house from a distant field.

Attitudes and Aptitudes for Writing and Drawing:

Carol's confidence in her writing was low at the beginning of the semester although she said she wasn't afraid of the class because she "felt a pushing force to advance [her] writing skills" (Interview, January 30, 1999). She said she did not think of it as a "torture," even though she had always viewed writing that way in the past.

Like Chuck, Carol had not taken earlier writing classes seriously. Being the youngest of six children, Carol said she had always let her mother, an English teacher in the same high school she had attended, proofread and correct her papers for her. She admitted that she had used her mother as a crutch because she believed her mother would be embarrassed if Carol turned in poorly written papers. Since she already felt inadequate with her writing, depending on her mother's editing left Carol even more deeply concerned that she didn't know how to write. She had actually taken a composition class during her earlier two years of college, but she said it was

> . . . basically a writing grammar and I floundered through that because I wasn't serious about it. I didn't go there to learn it. I went there because I was required; you took English class because it was required. And I don't think it taught me anything really either, just sort of suffered through it and I did what was asked to be done and I didn't take it seriously. I needed to learn this stuff, you know.
>
> "Okay," they would say, "you put a comma between these two words because of this." So I would follow it. I would imitate it but I wouldn't learn it. Now I'm to the point where I know I gotta learn that. I'd rely on my mom to proof read it for me and she'd get frustrated with me enough where she'd just put the commas where they'd go (Interview, May 16, 1999).

Carol said her goal for this semester was to begin to feel more confident in her own writing abilities and that even if she had tested out of the class, she would have taken the class again anyway because now she was determined to learn what she thought she had missed. Like Ann, Sharon and Chuck and many beginning writers, Carol mistakenly considered grammar, spelling and handwriting the crucial elements in college writing success. Although her attention to her spelling definitely needed work, she had good ideas and the ability to tap into them, and it may have been carelessness in the hurry of getting drafts on paper that resulted in her spelling errors.

According to Carol, most of her art experience was in the area of crafts, but like Sharon and Ann, she was aware of the value of art in elementary education, having taken a class in art education at Western Michigan University. She said she didn't remember drawing much but doing stained glass was one of her current hobbies. Although Carol's drawing abilities were untrained, her ability to visualize was strong, and she did not express anxiety or apprehension concerning that at the beginning. Having recently acquired a digital camera, Carol used photography to supplement drawing for this class, appropriately so since she had described her memories as being "like photographs in my mind" (Interview, January 30, 1999). She had thought about and developed her ability to visualize her memories and subjects for writing in detail, as the discussion of her work that follows will show. As a substitute teacher in a third grade class, she had observed the children's love for drawing and commented that she wanted to make sure they were not stifled as she felt she had been.

Beginning to see connections between drawing and writing: Early Exercises

When asked to draw and write about the chair, Carol first wrote one short descriptive paragraph, then revised her words by marking through some and adding others. Then she skipped two lines and copied the new version. (See Figure 5.13)

The chair is sitting on a metal desk. It is made of plastic and has metal legs. The chair seat is curved for comfort. The legs are all one piece of metal rod. The rod is a shine silver color.

The chair is setting on a metal desk It is made of a royal blue preformed plastic. The seat is curved for comfort. The legs are made from one metal rod, a shine silver in color. The legs are boxy in shape. The chair appears to be able to stack many chairs ontop of each other.

When I was writing I was trying to give my reader a mental picture of the chair. Trying to give all the details needed. After drawing it other views or parts came to mind to help me to see more aspects.

Figure 5.13 Carol's Chair Drawing and Writing (Student work)

The chair is sitting on a metal desk. It is made of (^preformed^) plastic and has metal legs. The chair seat is curved for comfort. (^and is royal blue^.)

The legs are all one piece of metal rod. The rod is a shine silver color.

Carol's revision:

The chair is setting on a metal desk. It is made of a royal blue pre-formed plastic. The seat is curved for comfort. The legs are made from one metal rod, shine silver in color. The legs are boxy in shape. The chair appears to be able to stack many chairs on top of each other.

Then she drew an image of the chair, approximately 1 1/2" x 2", in almost the center of the page, and below that added,

> When I was writing I was trying to give my reade[r] a mental picture of the chair. Trying to give all the details needed. After drawing it other views or parts came to mind helping to see more aspects (Journal, September 10, 1998).

The size of Carol's drawing might make one wonder about her confidence about her drawing ability. In fact, compared to Chuck's drawing, one might not recognize them as the same chair. Nevertheless, she expressed little apprehension about her drawing ability, and lack of training did not impede her from achieving beneficial results from the exercise, according to her interview comments. In addition, she says that the drawing in conjunction with the writing have made her more aware of how her audience will form a "mental picture" based on her words.

On the back of the page she associated the chair with important personal memories evoked by drawing and writing about it. Just as Chuck had sounded out themes to which he would return in his later writings, she connected this school chair metaphorically to deep feelings about her family--the subject of most of her writing during the semester:

> I have a rocking chair in my home that is very important to our family. We may not realize its importance now, but as the kids grow older we will.
>
> The chair is a rocking chair. Every morning I rock my kids until they wake up. We talk about the day ahead or the night before. The time gives us a special time to reflect. The chair is just an assigned place, but we are drawn to it (Journal, September 10, 1998).

When she discussed the first drawing/writing exercise with me later, Carol indicated that she had begun at that early point to see how these two modes of expression could be complementary, how drawing made her look more carefully, and made her aware

of the audience for her writing. She recalled that when I asked them to do the exercise, she had written her description of the chair first,

> . . . and then after I was drawing it I would realize that if a person's just reading it, and can't really see the chair and realize that the leg's bent in one continuous pattern and not three or four or five different pieces of material, unless you wrote it . . . so it made you see different areas that you need to expand in your writing, or the person's not going to see the whole picture.
>
> And then also, you turned the chair and we saw it at a different angle and so that would change our whole perspective of even our writing, and so it kind of does open up (Interview, January 30, 1999).

The careful looking and the audience awareness she began to develop with this early exercise stayed with her throughout the course. It was apparent in the degree to which she was willing to keep on looking and writing and in other comments she made about the writing process during the semester.

Carol wavered in her choice of an object to write about and draw for the second exercise. Her first two journal entries were essentially drafts in which she was searching for something to write. The first entry was a description of a lazy boy chair sitting in her living room, a topic she abandoned and then turned to her small son's farm hat.

> This farm hat is very special to my son. He is only four but he already knows the difference between hats. To me a hat is a hat. There are hats all over this house, in the basement, in the bedrooms, in the laundry room, maybe even in the bathroom. Some hats are dirty, some are clean, some have character and others don't but they are still just a hat. Brad, on the other hand, wears a special hat, each time he leaves the house. Don't even try to give him a different hat, than the one he wants. He will say things like, "That's my farming hat!" or "Grandpa gave me that one." Maybe even, "I don't want to get that one dirty." (I never knew of anything that stayed clean on that four year old!) This hat has a farm scene on the front, and Brad loves the farm. Maybe he hopes that people will see how special farming is, because he trys to keep this hat clean ((Journal, September 13, 1998).

Carol then returned to a physical description of the living room before returning to the hat once again.

First she drew it.

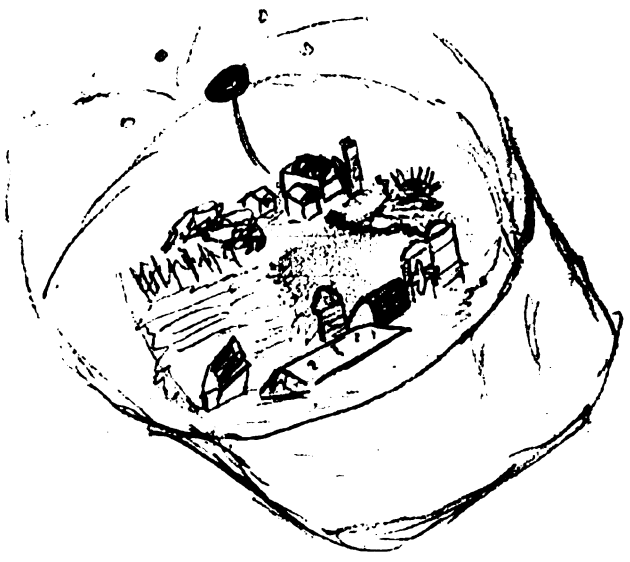


Figure 5.14. Carol's Farm Hat Drawing. Original 4" x 4" (Student work)

This drawing was larger than the chair drawing and also more detailed. Then by the time of her fourth journal writing, she is able to describe it more clearly. Likewise the writing was more engaged, perhaps naturally so, since this was a topic of her own choice with which she had some deep connections. Drawing seems to have caused her to sharpen her look at the hat.

> The farming hat is black with a beautiful embroidered farm scene and a brim the color of grass. On the back, Farm Credit is sewed, in the same color green as the brim. In the farm scene, it is set up so there seems to have depth. The farm, in the bottom of the scene, is larger and clearer. The barns, only show the roof and part of the ends. The silos, are very tall and wide, one has a Farm Credit logo. Then behind the barns are several fields in different shades of green and sewed in opposite directions to give the effect of hills. A dirt road starts from one of the silo in the foreground and lead back to another farm. This farm also has three barns but are a smaller scale so to appear far away. The sun seems to be just peering over the side of the horizon (Journal September 14, 1998).

This is a more focused and detailed view of the hat than the first two writings, clear enough that one can visualize it, perhaps even draw a reasonable facsimile without looking at her drawing or the hat itself.

Even though Carol said in the interview that she felt these first writings were "so basic and so dry," just description, she was aware of her audience as she wrote and drew, and compared her response to the in-class chair drawing exercise.

> I would look at the drawing, and then I would look at the hat, and I'd look at what I wrote, and I would still see things that I had missed, to actually show what the person I'm thinking of, what I see, like if they read it, they're not going to see it (Interview, January 30, 1999).

In fact, this awareness of audience initiated by these early exercises seemed to follow her through the semester, as the following pages will show. Carol's fourth and fifth writings had more life when she let the hat speak for itself, and she expressed more satisfaction with what she had said:

> Hi,
>
> My name is Farm Credit, my friends call me FC. I got my name because it is sewn on my back-side. My first name fits me because I have a picture of a farm on my front side, and mostly farmers or farmer sons wear me. They usually don't take me to the farm, I'm saved for going to town. That's ok by me, I see what happens to hats that go to the farm. When they come back, if they come back, they are dirty, dirty, dirty. I'm not sure what happens at the farm, but it doesn't look like fun.
>
> A little boy named Brad has claimed me as his hat. I'm really an adult hat but his dad showed him how to put the sizer in the back, so I won't fall off. So far Brad has been pretty good to me, I only have a couple smudges of dirt. Brad and I like to play hide and seek, I always hide. Brad's mom doesn't like to play, as much as Brad and I do. She thinks if Brad finds Blight Oil (another hat) the game is over, no way man. The rules state, if he starts looking for me, he can't quit until he finds me. If she played it with Eric, would she quit when she found Brad, I don't think so.
>
> It feels so good when Brad puts me on, and says with a grin, "I'm going to be a farmer just like my Dad!" I can tell, he will grow up and be a honest hard working farmer and I will help. My name also stands for a lending institution, they will always be there for Brad, even after I go to the farm and never come back.

Here Carol is beginning to get the idea that breaking out of the expected mold brings more exciting results. She injects her own quiet humor, and doing so, captures what might be the boyish character of a farm hat. She achieves a larger picture of the importance of the hat and boy to each other and to herself and interjects something of her own personality into her writing.

In the third interview at her home, two years after Carol wrote this description, she showed me a quilt her mother had made and recalled the drawing of the hat. Her comment indicated how much of an impression drawing and writing about this simple farm hat had made on her.

> There's Brad's blanket, but there's not much left there to see. I was thinking that would make an interesting story. You had us pick out an object to write about it . . . I picked a hat with a farm scene on it, and it kind of became animated.
>
> But I was thinking about his blanket, how it started out to be a really nice baby quilt, and now it is in shreds, and he can't give it up. He's given it up for two or three weeks at a time, and it's completely disappeared, and he doesn't even wonder about it, but his dad will sneak it out and put it on his bed . . .
>
> Because his dad doesn't want his baby to give up his blanket (Interview, May 24, 2000).

Like Chuck, Carol is seeing stories in objects, stories of the way objects and people and time interact. Noticing the character of the hat in the monologue above laid the foundation for noticing other such details.

Metaphor for Writing

In a reflective piece written the last week of the class, Carol wrote that she thought we were getting into "Physcolige" when I asked them "to try to picture an object or an activity that related to their writing skills" (Journal, December 17, 1998), her description of drawing and describing a metaphor for the way she understands her writing. She had actually drawn two different images in her journal. The first is a stained glass project (See Figure 5B.3).

Carol labeled this page "My Thought Process For Writing" with the subtitle, "Stain glass/ it is a puzzel!" First she drew a one-inch square, scribbled that out, and then drew another slightly larger which she also scribbled out. Finally, to the right of the center of the page, she drew a third square about four inches wide with a stained glass butterfly

image inside it. To the left of these images she listed different ways the project could be looked at—"different colors, make more seams, or less seams, can you add something."

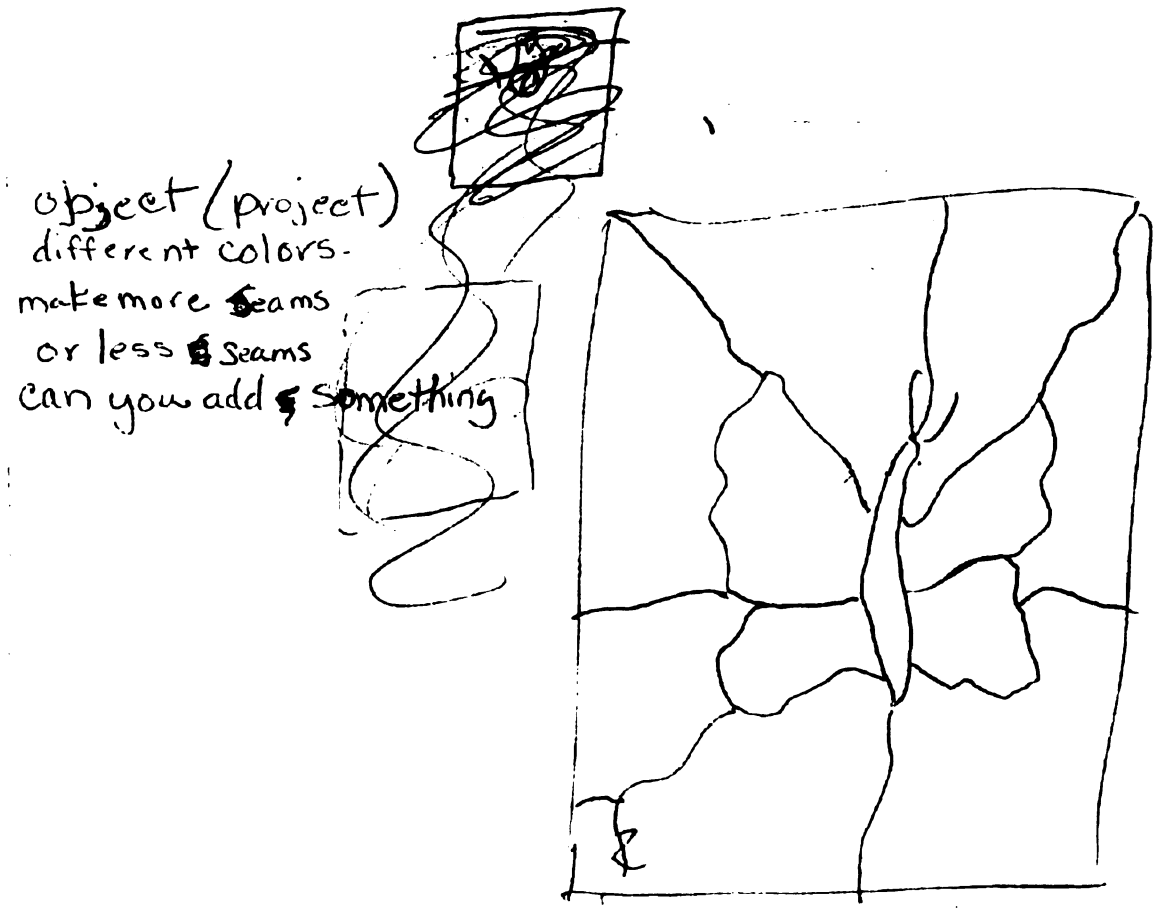


Figure 5.15. Carol's first metaphor for her thinking/writing process (Student work)

Below it she wrote,

> I try to let my mind free-write --[^}different angles^] come up with ideas first. Yet the rules are always in the back of my mind. You don't have to have the frame in the beginning, but in the end everything needs to fit together and in a frame. (Journal, October 1, 1998).

This is an apt description of Carol's writing process. She seemed to have a general idea of where the "frame" or big picture of the essay was going—the main point she wanted to present—but the colors, the number of seams, and the details were to be discovered in the making of the piece. Her description also indicates her awareness of one of the inhibiting

factors in her writing: "The rules are always in the back of my mind." As she said on several occasions, rules of grammar and spelling have been her nemesis for many years. The other metaphor Carol drew to represent her writing process was a double view of a woman sweeping the kitchen floor (See Figure 5.16).

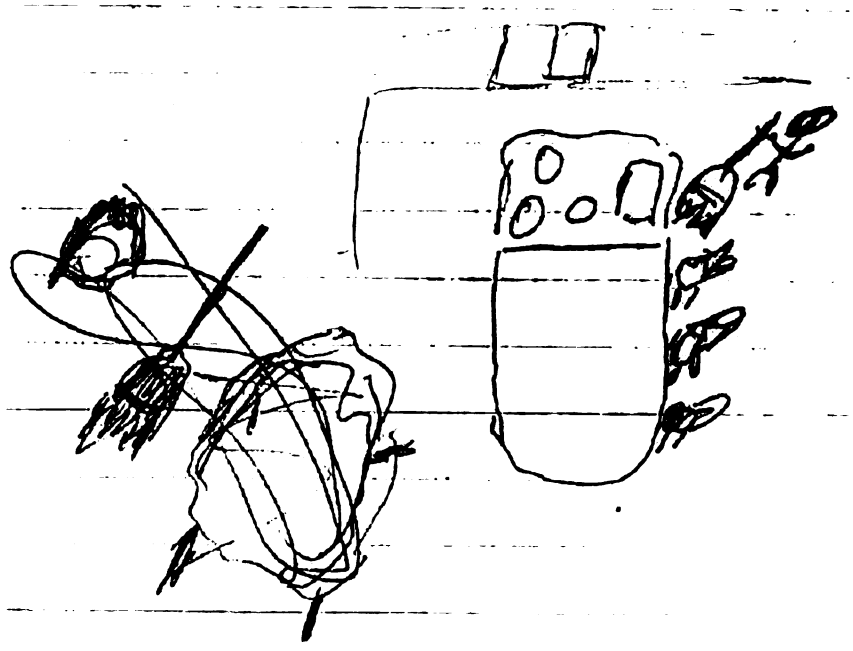


Figure 5.16. Carol's second metaphor for her writing/thinking process (Student work)

The first image she drew on the left side of the paper of a person sweeping the floor is almost a gesture drawing, seen from a common side-view perspective, but it is scribbled out in such a way that the sweeper appears to be in a real hurry. The broom is too short to reach the floor. The other half of the page shows a bird's eye view of a smaller stick-figure which we assume to be a woman. The figure stands with arms raised beside a kitchen island, wielding a broom two times as big as she is. All these early exercises follow the same process Carol uses for the rest of her writing. She is willing to try out different points of view before deciding which to keep.

In her written description of the sweeping image, Carol extended the metaphor somewhat further than she had the stained glass metaphor, saying that sweeping the kitchen floor is a task that she doesn't like but it needs to be done.

> Sometimes it is like a dirty floor that needs to be sweep. Sometime (--you I miss the important spots--) only concentrate on the high traffic areas and I miss the corners. (^Don't look under the table^) If I give my self the permission to take the time I search for all the partically and I get a bigger pile (Journal, October 1, 1998).

By the end of the semester when she looked back at this exercise once again in her self-analysis paper, she was able to express it more fully and it was more consciously connected to her writing process.

> Some days I follow my routine and I'm very careful to get every spec of dirt. As I scoop up the pile I look around to see if I missed anything. Some times I'm surprised to find a small treasure in the corner I overlooked, or something important in my pile. Other days I may intend to just sweep up a mess, leaving the rest for later, and finding myself sweeping the whole kitchen. Most of the time I have to follow a routine, or it takes me longer in the end. I never know what might be in my pile, or hiding in the corner (Journal, December 17, 1998).

As metaphors have a way of doing, the way this image captured her indecision, or the multiple ways of seeing, which led her to do two metaphor drawings, each revised right on the page, was itself indicative of Carol's awareness of her writing/thinking process that was developing at an early stage in the class. Students become their own "Physocoligists," to recall her own words about the experience. Her journal was filled with pages of paragraphs where she had tried out several ways to develop the ideas she was working on, sweeping here and there as she searched through many ideas and ways of approaching her subject in the drafts of her papers.

In fact, in this drawn metaphor for her writing process, it is almost as if Carol had inadvertently identified her major problem in writing—she didn't yet understand how her routine could work for her. In the process of writing to discover, she often found herself "sweeping" widely for ways to approach a topic before deciding on one, and hence, not feeling satisfied with the first output. Although some students would find this process too disturbing to deal with, it worked for her, as the results of her writing in the class will show. If she had just settled for her first little "pile" of words and ideas in the essays she wrote during the rest of the semester, her writing would have been much less satisfying to

her, and the small corner treasures which she expected to find would have been overlooked. Even though I had indicated to her that her early drafts were sufficient, she continued until she was satisfied for herself. Now that she had come back to college with the intention of correcting her writing problems, she was willing to sweep carefully with a sharp eye for detail.

First Writing: Learning to form her own metaphors through writing

Although drawing was not part of Carol's process in the first formal paper, it seems there was a connection between the drawing/writing she had been doing and the visualization and metaphorization practice she had been doing in the chair and hat exercises and in the metaphor for her writing process. She said that by doing the chair and object drawings she had seen that there was more than one way to look at any topic. She began to search, to sweep more widely here, for those ways.

This could be interpreted to mean that she is employing "the kind [of image] that we *imagine* in our mind's eye, as when we dream" as McKim described it (8, My emphasis) rather than needing a physical image on paper. It seems apparent that for Carol, this "imagining" kind of imaging is interactive with her writing. And to apply McKim's observations further, just as seeing, drawing, and imagining overlap to facilitate and invigorate each other, imagining as clearly as Carol has done "provides impetus and material for" writing as well as drawing (8-9). Although drawing activates imagining in a different way than imagining *in one's head*, so to speak, there is a strong correlation. McKim's observation that "cycling between perceptual, inner, and graphic images, [visual thinkers] continue until the problem is solved" (9) also describes the way Carol has developed this essay.

Creation of a metaphor in writing

Like Chuck, who in his first essay had described living his life as painting a picture, Carol also looked for a way to incorporate her own experience into a metaphor with which to describe her beliefs. It took an equally round about way for her to get there.

Both Chuck's and Carol's first formal writings grew out of the class discussions about the essay, "Confessions of a Blue Collar Worker." When the class had worked in groups to draw a tree and to write out the different aspects of their topics on its branches (see Chapter 3), Carol's group had explored the relationship between education and money. In her journal Carol picked up the theme of the aspect of education revolving around the need for discipline, which, along with religious faith, were the factors she believed would lead children to succeed in "formal education" rather than turning to the factories or the streets and the "informal education" they would receive there.

Carol's journal includes eight pages of discovery writing, all dated September 24. A ninth page includes a cluster focusing on the topic of "discipline." After completing these free-writing explorations, she extracted the main ideas from these entries and narrowed her comments into a one-typed page essay.

However, even though she had achieved a competent initial draft of a conventional formal essay, she did not stop her search here. She wrote another focused free-write entry on the same topic, then looked up the word "discipline" in a dictionary and in a Biblical concordance. She quoted the Bible verses in her journal and then responded to them before moving on to write several more pages discussing her beliefs about discipline. In several different ways, she explored the idea that parents should support the authorities as well as the child when an issue comes up; they should be consistent, avoid empty threats, and make sure the punishment fits the "crime." She emphasized her belief that parents should always believe in their children even when carefully examining the stories they tell and not necessarily accepting them.

As Sharon had done, Carol took a break from her writing on discipline before completing her final version for her essay to respond to another aspect of the topics covered in class discussions—money. After quoting another student's comment that "a farmer would not go out and feed his cows or harvest his fields if he wasn't going to get paid" (Journal, September 28, 1998), she responded strongly. This statement had struck a

nerve, since Carol knew exactly how many times the farmers in her family *had* fed and harvested, not knowing what the financial reward would be, or even if there would be any. She concluded that the farmers continue to get up at 4 a.m. to milk and to do all the other chores "because they believe it is a honorable job and they love working with the land. Not for money" (Journal, September 28, 1998), This entry was followed by an extensive financial account tallying what it typically costs to run their farm operation. The total figures she cites for a year's operation run to nearly one million dollars, leaving the reader to wonder how there could be any profit from the enterprise. The last words on this page are "Is it worth it." There is no question mark included.

By October 8th Carol had completed a new version of the essay on discipline, provoked by a deeply imprinted memory. She began the essay on a totally new note.

> I Hate <u>You</u>!! You Don't Love Me!! You love Eric more than you love me! My daughter shouted this at me. I had spanked her for climbing into her brother's crib. I stood there listening to her. Every word stabbed into my heart. I failed her! (Journal, October 8, 1998).

With this new and striking opening, Carol's conflict about disciplining her children is made visual in a decisive way. The rest of the essay remains in an expository mode, as she discusses the guilt she felt about this scene and her self-doubts and then segues into an analysis of several aspects of discipline. She concludes that we all need limits. Both her own conflicts and the contents of the essay are resolved with another visual image: the mother and daughter sitting together in the rocking chair. This is also a reference back to her earlier writing in the chair-drawing exercise. Love and discipline are combined in this symbol of their mutual understanding.

The two versions of this essay show that Carol has mastered the form of an academic essay, but even with the striking new introduction, it is still a fairly typical essay and Carol is not satisfied with it. She continues writing, and after another intermediate draft, completes an extended metaphor that creates a specific image for the reader, extending the understanding she had achieved from the writing:

> Mom, I Hate You! You don't Love Me! Every parent hears these statements, and they wonder if they are raising their child to be a successful adult.
>
> Making bread is a lot like raising children. Putting the ingredients together for bread is really quite easy for most, yet some have a harder time. Raising them properly can be hard. After you mix everything up, you end up with a ball. In the beginning you may need help getting the right texture. Sometimes it can be too slimy or too dry. So much depends on these first moments. You may need some expert help here.
>
> The first time you hold it, you may say, "What do I do now! How will I ever be able to raise this right?" Everyone has an opinion. Some may be, you can't spoil it now, give it lots of attention, knead it over and over, put it on a schedule, and don't handle it too much. You need to do what works for you.
>
> After you let it rise a little, it may be too big for its pan. The book says to punch it down, and form it into the shape you want. This may be hard to do; it looks like you could bake it right now. But, it's not the right shape and the book says the texture will be tough, if it doesn't rise properly. So you punch it down. You feel so aggressive, so harsh, yet you believe the book is right. Then you shape it, put it in the pan and you let it rise again. This method gives it limits, if you don't, no telling where it will end up.
>
> Now you are ready to send it off to the fire, for the real test. Can it stand the heat? Will it fail? Some may be done right on time; many will need more time or they will burn up. A few may not have made it this far. You ask yourself, what did I do wrong? Where is my perfect loaf?
>
> Many things affect your bread that you cannot control. For example, the flour is heavier, is the yeast fresh, the humidity in the air, the temperature of the room, did someone else knead it when you weren't looking, the oven didn't regulate the heat and the list goes on. A successful loaf of bread doesn't just happen. You need to be aware of outside influences. Maybe just, maybe, it might not look just like the picture but it is a good loaf of bread. What is a successful loaf of bread? (Draft, no date).

This meandering writing process—free-writing, revising, incorporating images, and then writing again—has served as a "finger exercise" for Carol just as Sharon's writings had. She discovers meaning through her willingness to be comfortable with reworking, re-looking, revising, until she is satisfied with her final product. She has stretched her thinking in the same way that Sharon's writing/drawing response exercises had done. She had not drawn this image, but she had created it in her minds' eye. Although Carol had not made a line drawing of a woman baking the bread on her paper, she has certainly drawn her in words. (In fact, even though it works well enough as a written metaphor, an actual drawing of this metaphor might be too strange.) Thinking in images does not always

express in the language of art, as Perkins, McKim, and others have noted, and yet the tendency to think in images may be sparked by the encouragement to draw.

Looked at together, in writing these two quite different essays on discipline, Carol has discovered a way to think that she will carry further, and even more successfully, in her next essay.

Exercising and refining her writing process: Sweeping dust from the images in her mind

Carol had been struck by my comments from Ann Berthoff that writers must learn to be comfortable with chaos (*Making*, 39). To extend Berthoff's exercise described earlier, I had pointed out to my classes on several occasions that a writer must learn to be comfortable with chaos, and that drawing is another way to tap into the chaos and organize it. The manner in which Carol generated and then found her way through her own writing chaos by finding a controlling metaphor in the essay just discussed illustrates the manner in which some writers seem to work best. It often varies from the expected if allowed to do so and yields interesting results.

The prompt that I suggested for the next writing assignment, a personal memories essay, was to draw a map of the area where they lived as a child and then to draw the floor plan of an early childhood home. Carol drew the suggested map and floor plans as assigned, but after having written more than ten pages about it in her journal, she was still not satisfied with her work. Carol wrote, "I believe that I only have a few happy memories of my childhood because I have blocked out many bad ones" (Journal, no date). Those memories included the death of one of five siblings and divorce of her parents when she was eleven.

Because this kind of home life is not uncommon for MCC students, I have learned to suggest that they may choose to draw and write about any place about which they have memories they want to explore. Instead of writing about the family and the unhappy memories evoked by the maps she drew, Carol chose to write about going up north to a cabin in the woods in winter. Her first journal entry is called "Memories."

I remember driving to the cabin sometimes, at night or day. When ever we turn down lovers lane the excitement would build. The road was beautiful day or night. At night we would help dad watch for deer. When there would be sparkles of light out in the wood we knew there were deer. Dad would (--drive slow but still so--) slow down when we would spot a deer. (-When we-) The road would curve and hilly new snow no tracks. (-When a-) At the cabin.—The cabin seemed so cold and empty. . .

(three lines of blank space intervene between this paragraph and the ones to follow.)

Aunt Sue and Uncle Glen are in their mid-seventies never had any kids, never threw anything out (^own cows^) Keep their finance separate. Even household purchases. Chairs were either his or hers. All the kids always tried to go upstairs in the big room—The big room had tons of stuff. Every newspaper every mag gifts from wedding—gifts from 25th anivers. Letter with silver certificate. Old clothes. Aunt Sue was a retired teacher. Uncle Glen—retired carpenter. They would tell us stories and we loved to listen.

Life slowed down when we were at the cabin mom and dad had time to do stuff with us. We would play card games snowmobiling, sledding. We would hike out in the woods alone" (Journal, no date).

This entry was followed by a cluster that extended these ideas into several directions (See Figure 5.17). The next entries include a series of meandering thoughts.

I wish my kids would (^ be able to ^) experience the cabin—getting water—out house, bath behind screen—get dressed—wood stove.

I remember our lives ran a fast pace when I was a kid. Now mine seems to be running (--out--)a very fast pace.

My cousin and I would always look for a beaver dam—played at the creek—today you worry more about kids—freedom.

I always felt going to the cabin was just for fun. But now I understand it to be a connecting time for the family to bring us together for 3 or 4 days instead of 1/2 hr. Seeing what is important in life. Not the girl Scout meeting or the Soccer practice or the Deacon meeting. It's important to slow down and see each other enjoy each other.

Not if the house is clean or we all have new clothes. What is important is that we feel important to each other. Kids feel important when you take time for them. Do something with them" (Journal, no date).

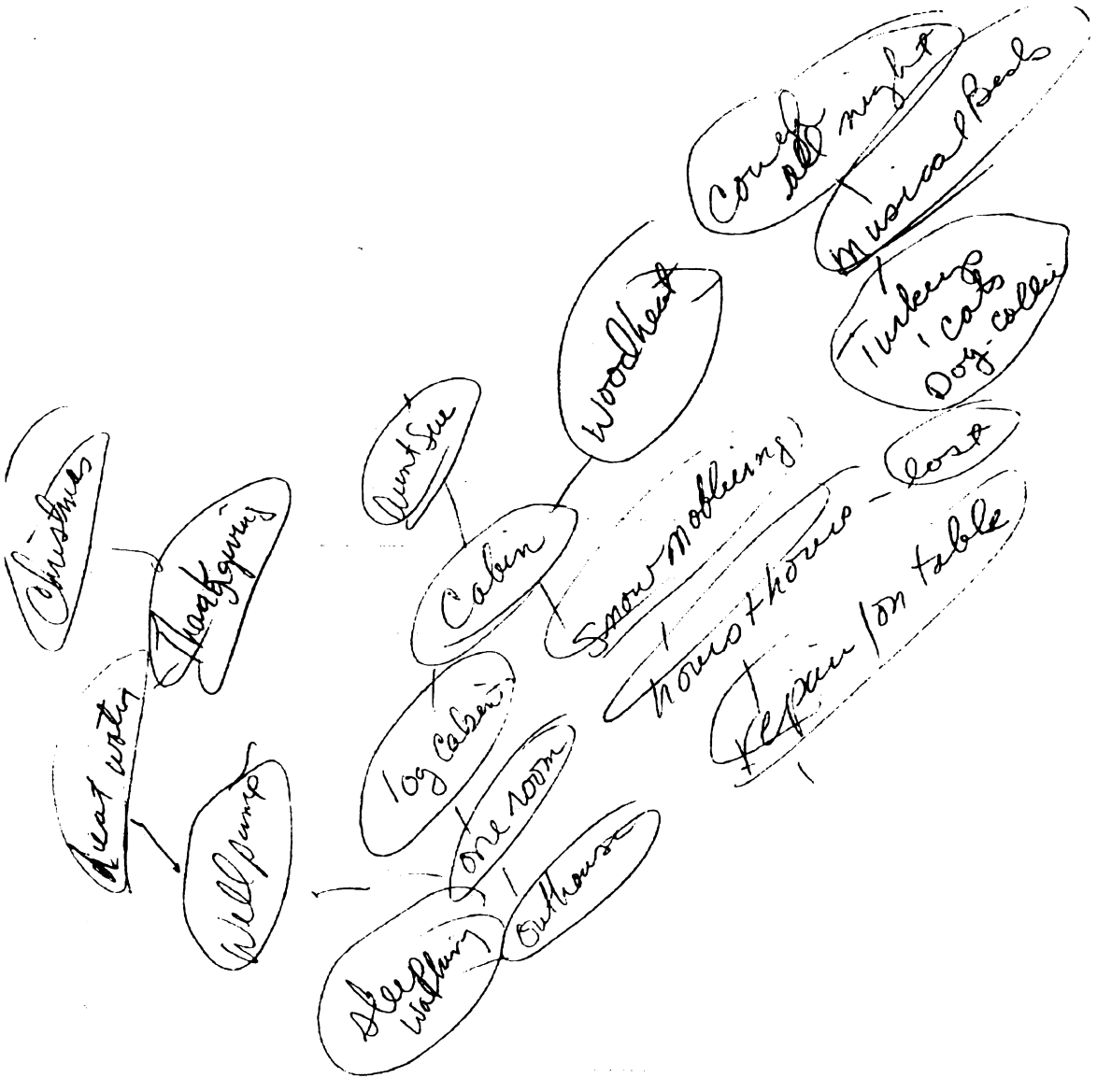


Figure 5.17. Carol's cluster on the log cabin. (Student work)

In the next entry, she looks deeper into her memories, recollecting the hours at the cabin that her father spent teaching her to drive the snowmobile and how her Uncle Glen had let the kids feed the turkeys that he loved to cook when they came. "Now," she writes, "I take my kids, there is (--no cabin--) no Uncle Glen or Aunt Sue, cats or dogs. We slow down—go for walks, snowmobiles. Go to favorite spots. Have fun with them. We get involved with their fun—teach them things about our group.

"Family is important."

These are indelible memories, pictures in her mind, as she describes them. She told me,

> I kept recalling pictures that we had of the cabin, Photographs and my own memories. You have your own pictures in your memories. After you write what you're thinking of your memories, then you can drift in your mind and picture that again and try to get that picture in your words, and see if there is something you're missing (Interview, January 30, 1998).

I borrow the term "indelible moments" from Tom Romano, author of several works on multigenre writing, who described their importance in our memory, in our creation of who we are. He says that

> Perception is all.
> Ways of seeing.
> Ways of knowing
> Ways of learning.
> Sometimes I see the world through poetry: a bit of cadenced language suddenly saying itself in my head, an indelible image ever sharp, a surprising metaphor with extensions following close behind.
> Sometimes I see the world through prose: a description that holds in place an unforgettable scene, a pointed story that clarifies experience (*Passion*, 109).

And in another place Romano talks about "Bright, indelible moments . . . When we render them, we show what our subject values, we show what lasts, what has positive meaning that buoys those characters through life." These moments, along with inanimate objects and places, shape us and "become identified with who we are, what we value. We recall people from our past complete with that crucial thing that was so characteristic of them." In her journal writing, Carol is reviving those indelible images, memories that have helped form who she is, sharpening their image in her mind's eye, and beginning to realize their importance.

After the free-writing cited above, Carol turns to memories of things she did with her mom, the fun of decorating the Christmas tree with homemade decorations. Only now that she has done these things for herself does she realize how much effort her mother put into them. She began, "Now being the mom—I . . ." then she crossed out "the mom" and turned to memories of the last trip she had made with her own children.

Jeff and I took the kids up. I had to pack all the clothes all the food and all the stuff for the kids to do up there—make sure they had all the warm clothes. Boots, hats, slippers.

I never knew it was so much work.

After snowmobiling all day—having a campfire for lunch-roasting hot dogs we come back to the cabin. Then we have time to play cards and games, make Christmas ornaments (Journal, no date).

Although the next entry repeats some of the details already cited, she refines the image, letting it come clearer, and still writing for herself.

On another page she seems to be floundering in her attempt to find something to write. First, "Mom"—scratched out, then "I sit there..." six lines drawn through it with a flourish. On a line of its own,

My daughter is playing the (^ practicing^) the piano.

I'm [at] work on the farm books.
Phone rings. Girls Scouts.
Brad inquires "Are we going up north?"
"Yes I'm on the phone we'll talk later."

He runs thru House yelling, "We are going, up north we are going up north."

Hang up the phone pull records req. from the phone call. Go back to the comp (computer) for farm books. Eric wants to (^work on^) sew halloween customs. (--Maybe later--) I encourage him we will do it soon, but we are going up north tomorrow. There are many things to do yet. I instruct him to go get enough clothes for 3 days. And pack toys and books. I return to the comp. Realizing it is close to suppertime. Tomorrow comes (--and we are--) the truck is packed with all of our needs. The snow is starting to fall.

As we get closer to the cabin the excitement builds. Memory lane—snow—deer—cabin.—House—is dark and old. We haul in all of our stuff. Turn the heat up.—Brad wants to unload the snowm. Now. Michelle wants to play a game. Eric wants to go into the big room. "Let Dad and I get things settled first." Brad and Eric fight over a toy. Michelle is mad because she is bored. (--De jouv.—scribbled out so well it's almost unreadable—[Deja vous]). I have become my mom" (Journal, no date).

Here in this last paragraph Carol has found the guiding images for her piece—memories of the tree-lined road, the cabin itself, and herself in the role of her mom. She begins next entry with dialogue.

"Dad what is a memory lane?"

"Well it is a place (--you c--) or a thing that can bring back memories from your past." (--Like--)

"Dad is that what it's like for you, when we go to Hoxyville?"

"Yes, just like that!"

As she continues, the writing is still halting, with several scratched out and revised sentences, but now the writing has turned from the preparations for the trip she was struggling with the day before to her own childhood memories. She recalls arriving at the cabin with five inches of fresh snow that hadn't been tracked up yet, the car lights shining through the tunnel of snow-covered trees, and slowing to watch a startled deer as they passed. In this and the next entries she works out just how she wants to describe the tree-lined road, first called " Lover's Lane" and then "Memory Lane"; she told me both terms had been used to describe it. Gradually she sharpens the image changing "the log cabin sitting in the middle of a field of snow" to "The log cabin (--looked--) (^like a bear in hibernation^). So cold and uninviting. (--There were no paths--) The 3' snow surrounding it had not been touched, (--about 3' deep.--). The windows all dark & (--cold with--) frosty. The chimney stood tall and . . .

Here she breaks off and begins again, as the image becomes clearer in her mind's eye. She rewrites these sentences, clarifying them as she goes, adding minor details and a simile.

> The one-room log cabin appeared to be asleep just like a bear in hibernation. It looked so cold, dark, and uninviting. The three-fit deep snow that surrounded it had been untouched. The curtains all shut tight...etc."

Now she is able to continue almost unimpeded through a page and a half handwritten description of the activities of getting settled in for the visit.

After a half-page about the idiosyncrasies of Uncle Glen and Aunt Sue and Thanksgiving at their house she writes, "The log cabin, the turkey, the cats, the Aunt and Uncle are all long gone." A one-line space breaks the flow and her thoughts are momentarily back in the present. She writes, "As we turn into the tunnel, I state, 'This is

my memory lane.'" Then she is back in the past, describing sleep-walking to the out house with her sister following, playing cards on the same table where they ate and where her father repaired the snowmobile engine. This slipping back and forth from present to past will become more distinct and finally suggest the form for the final version of the essay.

Two more hand-written pages follow in which she muses about how as a child she couldn't understand her mother's stress, and about her own current feelings of guilt and stress. Finally she recalls how her mother "would always take a deep breath and let it out slow when we would pull out of the driveway," and someone would ask, "You ok Mom?" Although she doesn't say it in so many words just yet, it is becoming clearer that Carol's understanding is getting deeper now that she has written these pages.

This journal writing was completed just before mid-term, but the final version had not yet been finished. In her self-assessment at mid-term, Carol wrote:

> My Point: I'm trying to reflect on the time I realized I became <u>my mom</u> (Double underlines in the text). How important it is to take a vested interest in your children. How our daily lives, rituals and jobs can overtake our lives! Our interest in our children needs to be valid, not pretend. When families take the time to be together and play together. This is a step.
>
> I have not accomplished this yet. (^ I spent hours trying to write.)—I came to that steel door, rusted shut and no tool would open it.^) I have 10 pages of free writing. I just can't put it together" (Journal, October 22, 1998).

The steel door image is a reference to one student's comment in the class about his metaphor for his writing process who had said all the doors to his writing mind were rusted shut. When I asked the student who had drawn that metaphor what writing tools would be the equivalent of WD40 for a writer, free-writing and drawing were two of the tools the class suggested. Carol's reference to that metaphor, several class meetings afterward, is another example of her internalization of the discussions about visual imagery in the class.

Four days later Carol turned in a typed draft of this piece that alternated the present time and the past in a smooth way that kept the reader wondering which was then and which was now, but clearly seeing the parallels and the nostalgia. This version has

details that had not yet appeared in the exploratory journal writing, and the parts are re-ordered quite effectively.

> Visiting with Uncle Glen and Aunt Sue is always an adventure. They are in their seventies and show many signs of aging. Aunt Sue meets us at the door. She has a dirty old shoestring tied around her head like a headband. Her yellowish white hair doesn't warrant it, so we ask her why (Draft, October 29, 1998).

In the interview later, as she was reflecting on the connections between the early drawings of the chair and the hat, she implied that recalling doing those drawings made her see what she had missed in the writing of this essay too. She said that she would think of different memories as she drew the old cabin. Drawing the scrawny cats made her think of Lucky, and then the other picture made her remember the shining deer eyes; trying to draw the snow with black and white pencils made her think how it looked like a bear (See Figures 5.18 and 5.19).

She wrote,

> I kept recalling pictures that we had of the cabin, photographs and my own memories. You have your own pictures in your memories. After you write or draw what you're thinking of your memories, then you can drift in your mind and picture that again and try to get that picture in your words, and see if there is something you're missing, like the shoestring in her hair. You know, it's always been there, and I looked back and I thought about it, her white yellowish hair stood out, and it's like if I didn't write that and be a little more descriptive of it, the white yellowish hair, then you could just picture some lady with gray hair with a yellow shoe string in her hair. But that's not how I pictured it.
>
> It made me try to look at the pictures in my mind or the actual pictures. I recalled what they actually looked like. [Be]cause you had seen them so often. It's not like you actually saw that setting but you saw the picture. And sometimes that's what memories are, is pictures that you see over and over again (Interview, May 24, 2000).

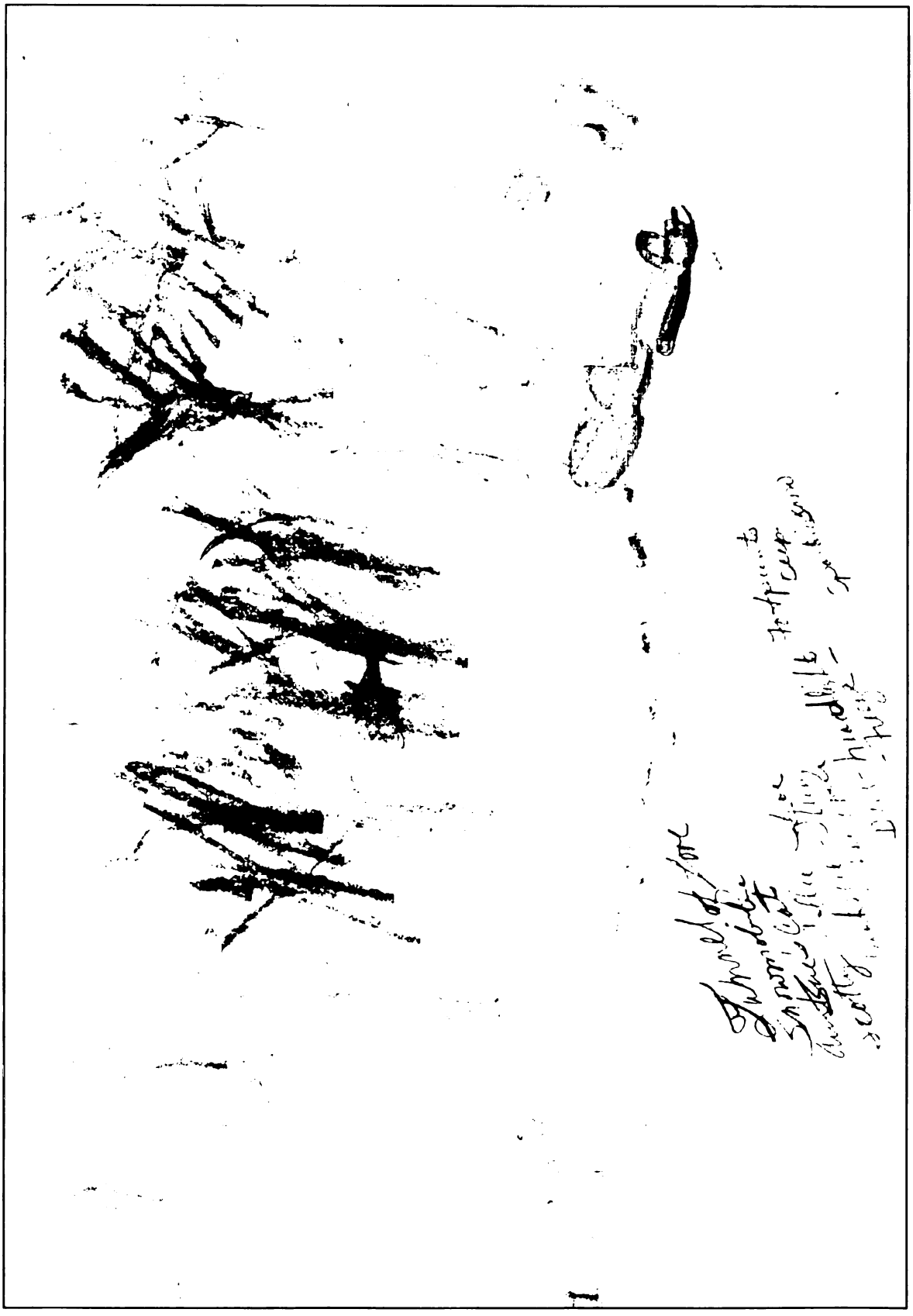


Figure 5.18. Carol's "Tunnel of Love" drawing. (Student work).

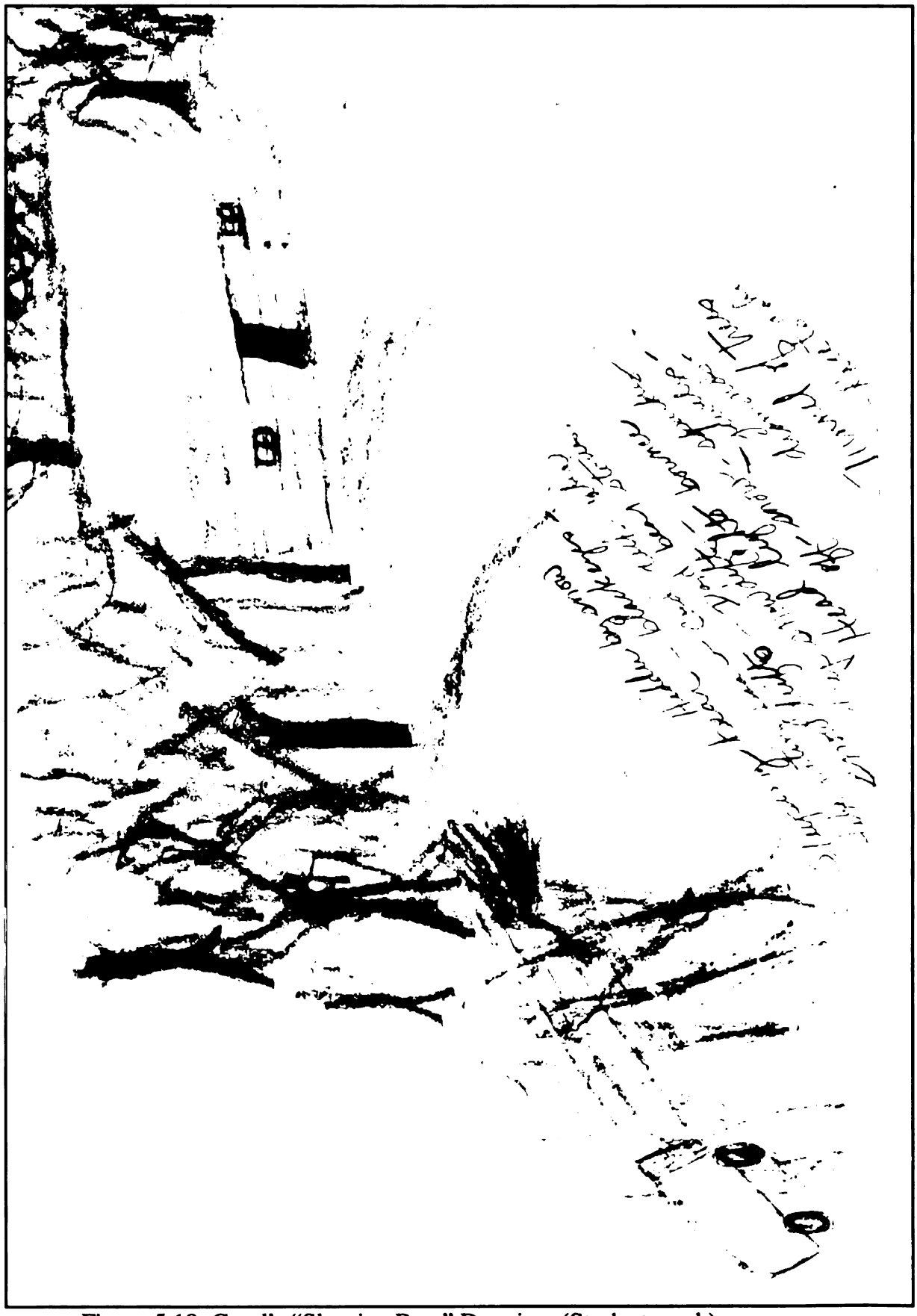


Figure 5.19. Carol's "Sleeping Bear" Drawing (Student work).

When I went to Carol's home for this final interview, she showed me a framed photo on her living room wall showing the cabin as it looks now. Although the original log cabin has changed, not only did Carol keep the visual image of these happy memories in her mind's eye, she had a framed version of its replacement on her wall for a constant reminder.

> Yeah, I pictured them and as I was trying to write it . . . like you said, I kept bouncing them off . . . but you know I remember the picture of Uncle Glenn feeding the turkeys, and I don't think that ever came in to the paper. And in that same picture you saw the cats around the house—she had so many cats and all that. And I could picture the old log cabin that we stayed in, which is not there anymore. But their house that they originally lived in was in it. But the kids still like to walk over to where the cabin was and just talk about it (Interview, May 24, 2000).

When I asked her about my memory of how frustrated she was in the process of writing that paper, she said,

> You just told us to keep free-flow writing, which I would do and then, I would just reread it and parts of it just would just not flow with the rest of it . . . But eventually it just seemed to take me in the direction that I was kind of going towards. Like I would get on the tangent of the snowmobiles, and things like that, well, if you're talking about driving there, and all of a sudden you are talking about snowmobiling, then whatever, the snowmobiles are breaking down, that would be a totally different story.
>
> You know the turkey hunters staying at the cabin, and they would never get a turkey, and Uncle Glen would feed them at 6:00 at night and they would walk right in front of the hunters' cabin, and you know, you just . . . I would get it written down, but yeah, that could have been another part of the paper. But [some of the details] just didn't seem to fit into what I wanted right then.
>
> If I had wanted to write a really long paper, I could have written a really long paper, which you would have liked (Interview, May 24, 2000).

<u>Visual images as a catalyst for the research project</u>

Carol chose the topic of "Disappearing Farmlands" for her I-Search paper. Capitalizing on her experience with the family's dairy farming enterprise, Carol picked an issue that was important to her for a research topic. She had attended a conference recently at which this topic was a primary focus. At the conference she had learned that

240 acres of Michigan farmland are lost each day to development, and yet she had not actually been able to visualize the real impact of that message until she drew a map. The idea to draw a map was inspired by the childhood home map prompt I had suggested for the previous personal memories writing.

For this map, she first drew the roads and farms that had existed ten years ago in the area where the family farm is. In those days, houses were two or three miles apart. Next she took a different colored pen and added the houses that had been built on land carved out of these farms five years ago. Finally, with a third pen, she added all the new houses that have invaded those farms today. This multi-layered map gave her a visual concept of just what those figures from the state agriculture department really meant. It was a totally different use of the mapping concept than I could have ever imagined—just as Ann's use of the looping/clustering exercise was an extension of the textbook version.

Carol had stumbled upon the map as a research tool, but in addition, with this map she has discovered for herself a tool that has been used for centuries. In his discussion of the way "sign shifting" is not just recoding or substitution, Miles Myers refers to a map of a section of London drawn by John Snow in 1854. The map used dots to show the number of cholera deaths and their proximity to water pumps, a visual device that functioned as Snow's actual medium of thought (189). Carol included a landscape view of a typical farm scene as a beginning point of her paper and then showed an actual view of her farm home, she said, because she wanted to give the reader a sense of the "family type setting" that would be lost with the farmland that was disappearing.

> If the small-time farmer can't have his land to sustain his farm, then it's going to be overturned to more industrial farming, and so you're not going to have the homey farm atmosphere. Where people enjoy driving around on Sunday, to see those older homes, older barns, and older farms, because that creates serenity for them in their hectic life.
>
> So another picture was a landscape, possibly like an aerial photo showing the different fields. And the vast size of the fields, and how it's going to be hard to, once it's gone, you can't really replace it. Once you set them all in the field, you're not going to get the field back (Interview, January 30, 1999).

Figure 5.13. Carol's Farm Home (Photo taken by student)

This digital camera photo of her farm and the nearby outbuildings that Carol gave her research a personal touch that matched the kinds of references to her family's experiences she had incorporated into the paper. Since the goal of the paper was I-Search, recent events that had affected her family were logically included in the paper. She started by talking about the response of real estate searchers to the death of a neighbor from whom they had been renting acreage. The writing in this paper was fairly typical research writing, but photography and the personal examples moved it into a more meaningful level because she included them. In addition, these personal references give readers a sense of the immediacy of this topic to Carol and her family, an important element of the paper since encroachment of houses threaten their access to farm land to rent to supplement their own farm. Not having enough land then threatens their ability to support the four families who make up the farm corporation.

A third digital image showed a John Deere 9500 eight-row combine behind a tractor that towers over the man standing beside it. Carol explained that cutting a one to five acre plot for a home and yard out of the edge of a field creates a much larger loss to the farmer due to increased difficulty in maneuvering. She said that the huge machine

takes up to eighty feet to turn around, a fact that is easier to envision after seeing the size of the tractor and combine in proportion to the farmer. This picture thus serves very well to illustrate one of the main points of the paper, the size of the machinery they must use:

Figure 5.14 Tractor and Combine on Carol's Farm (Photo taken by student)

She said the reason she decided to use these pictures was thinking again about the audience, both of her paper, and of the beautiful scenery of the farm landscape:

> Some people that might be reading this might not be agricultural-minded to realize how big these are. Or just stating the facts in the research paper, they are only measurements, and to actually see a man standing, something can dwarf him gives you more of the visual aspect. This has helped me to realize too, more the impact it has when you lose acreage. I think, "Well, that's just three acres" (Interview, January 30, 1999).

In her final self-evaluation, an end of the semester self-analysis paper, Carol's sense of humor comes through, and her words summarize much of what a viewer might see when looking at her progress. She wrote:

> Encouraging drawing and writing has opened up my mind. I have learned to use my senses together. This gives my writing more depth, and confidence that I can use it in any class. Maybe in math class when the teacher wants to know how I came up with an answer. I will draw a picture showing five frogs dividing a

> pizza into five pieces, and all getting a fair share. The possibilities are endless....Picturing my writing method helps meto see the process I need to go through, instead of wondering around lost, confused, and unsure where I'm going" (Journal Dec. 17, 1998).

Carol described the effects of the carry-over from this experience in her second semester 102 class, and to her family's school work as well. In addition to the drawn letters hanging on her kitchen cabinets for her first-grade son, she told me that she used "visuals" in other papers, and also that she had encouraged her nine-year old son, Eric, to include digital images in a paper based on an interview with a senior citizen for his language arts class. Carol helped him to take a picture of the man's first tractor and then included a scanned image of the man when he was about eight or nine playing with a large bicycle tire by rolling it along with a stick. This picture was contrasted with Eric playing with his Gameboy. Again, aware of the audience for Eric's paper, Carol said that the teacher liked "the visual."

> If he just wrote in there, you know, that Louie Hedge played with tires and sticks, and at his age, Eric is more into electronic toys, whatever, I don't think it makes as much an impact as an old photo, that's been yellowed with age, you know, because you see the different styles in the clothes and everything else like that that makes you think more of the change in society (Interview, May 24, 2000).

Carol described the way she had included both the metaphor concept and her photographs in the research paper for her second semester Composition 102 class as well. The second research project involved an examination of the value of home schooling. She began by comparing educating children to gardening, entitling her paper, "How do your flowers grow?"

> I started out, some gardens you can tend to and you can put fertilizer on it and it will grow. And then some flowers will just grow wild, you know, and so in a sense I compared that to home schooling. Even some home schoolers can be very vigilant and very strict with their kids, and everything like that, and meticulous, and some of their gardens can just grow wild.

> So in a sense you draw that picture in you mind too. So . . . it's like, not using a visual, but using your imagination. And then there's other pictures I used, like of the schoolroom homeschoolers, doing different things (Interview, May 24, 2000).

Carol included pictures of home schooling activities in that paper, one a photo of the students dissecting a snake and another of a group doing a civil war enactment. She spoke of how she thought these visual images would affect the reader of the paper.

> In a sense, when somebody says home schooling, you might just close your mind, and say, "Well those are the kids who just stay at home . . . and their parents teach them and that's that. Well, you have the same situation . . . with using the gardens it opens your mind about, well, maybe there is different ways in the homeschooling. Kind of a visual in your mind that opens your thinking a little (Interview, May 24, 2000).

She said that this gardening image "just popped into her mind" after she had written much of the body of her paper, and then she went back to rewrite the beginning. This pattern of composing is similar to that Chuck used in several of his essays, and the term she used to describe it ("popped in") is also the same.

This gardening image also worked as a support for her decision not to come down on the side of home schooling or against it. She said, "Just because some people don't do it, doesn't mean it's not for any body and that's where I think I went with it, you know, because it's . . . lots of people garden. You've got people who say, you know, you can't have a wildflower garden, you know?" (Interview, May 24, 2000). Thinking in terms of her extended metaphor, as well as thinking of what might be the best way to convince her reader, Carol knows that those who choose to grow wildflowers will do so and aren't likely to be changed by a dogmatic decree against them, and that a good presentation of information is the best way to convince. She has consciously left her readers to decide what kind of schooling-gardens they like best, which ones work most effectively for their own purposes.

Carol also said that while she was substitute teaching with elementary students, she had noticed the emphasis on pictures such as the collages of children's book author and illustrator, Eric Carle, in their books and the crafts they were encouraged to do in relationship to their reading. She told me that after reading a chapter from a scary story to the third graders, she had them draw characters that they might use in their own stories. She said they really came up with some neat characters when she suggested that they draw her as an ant and the principal as a green blob. She had them do a story web, considering what problems their characters might encounter and solutions and all that. She said that one of her E. I. students wrote a page and a half all on his own which really surprised her. She reflected that she thought older students would enjoy such work as well. Like Sharon and Ann, Carol's applications of the drawing exercises to her work with children in the classroom indicate that she has recognized the value of the work beyond her own writing and puts it into practice.

Summary

Carol's final gardening metaphor and her decision to leave the reader to decide how to view her claims show that by the end of her second semester of writing, she was confident enough about her writing to let it stand as it was presented, trusting that her readers would respect what she had written. From the early days in the class when she looked for someone else to proof-read everything she wrote, she had become much more confident. The theoretical perspective that says that when writers have something to say that they think is important they will find effective ways to say it seems to be particularly appropriate in reference to Carol's work. The main reason she had not learned "proper grammar" in the past was lack of interest in writing; tapping in to the images in her mind,

her indelible memories, which she saw as files of mental photographs, helped her find the engagement that she needed to find an appropriate way to write about them.

Carol's imagery is filled with scenes from her life, scenes that demonstrate the strong feelings she has for her home, her family, and their well-being. Working with these images, both in words and in drawn lines, has helped her expand her writing ability to match her ability to visualize.

Chapter 6: Waves of Meaning Emerging Through Drawing and Writing

When I began formulating the questions that guided this study, I had only a bundle of speculations gleaned from my own drawing and writing experiences, from reading such works as those described in Chapter 1, and from my casual observation of the way students responded to early requests that they draw. The case study research method has allowed me to examine in detail the way drawing functioned in the work of these students and to pull together themes and patterns that have emerged from exploring the connections between drawing and writing in a composition class.

Although I began my research believing that my major question had to do with extending the research on relieving writing apprehension, I realized that there was much more involved in this work than how students *felt* about writing, however important that issue might be. It took much longer for me to realize that it was not possible for me to try to apply the intriguing issues raised by Vera John-Steiner and Howard Gardner in order to try to answer the question of *why* these students wrote the way they did. Thus the most significant questions that arose as my understanding of the students' work gathered energy were the questions focused on what students *did* with drawing and how that affected their writing. I noticed that as they gained more understanding of their writing processes and thus had more control of them, their apprehension diminished, a concomitant result of the work rather than the goal. Drawing presented an analogous means of talking about writing that resonated with the thinking of the case study participants, allowing them to see their work in a new light.

In this chapter then, I look back over the work of four of the writers in my study using the lenses of composition theory, art, and psychology to search for and contextualize the answers to the questions I posed in the beginning: In what ways have students used drawing as they wrote? How has it affected the way they understand and are able to talk about their writing processes? How has it helped them satisfy their growing sense of what

makes good writing? In sum, what meanings emerge from the results I have presented in Chapters 4 and 5?

Waves of Understanding

One of my assumptions as I began this research was that visual thinkers were the ones most likely to make good use of drawing in the composition class, and that their composing processes were different from those expected by most instructors and outlined by most textbooks. That this was not a logical assumption came to me only after much reading and attempting without success to define what is meant by the term "visual thinking," nor was it feasible to try to determine how theirs differs from common composing processes. Even if I could determine who the visual thinkers were, the variety of ways those students write who seem to exhibit visual thinking characteristics listed by writers on the subject demonstrated that there is no single composing process in this group any more than in the world at large.

In the decades since Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory opened the eyes of educators to the importance of taking into account the varieties of ways people think and learn researchers have found multiple ways of improving pedagogical approaches accordingly. Nevertheless, Gardner's identification of "spatial intelligence" as one of his original seven domains of intelligence is not a sufficiently focused category to explain visual thinking as I interpret it from reading McKim, John-Steiner, Arnheim and others. Tests for Gardner's spatial intelligence involve such activities as mentally rotating two-dimensional drawings of intricately shaped blocks, quite a different task than integrating writing and drawing or connecting mental images in one's writing. This is not the kind of competency being investigated in my study, and it is not the kind that Perkins and Root-Bernstein cite in their studies of visual thinking. Likewise, tests to determine where one fits within the visual/verbal/audial schema for learning styles have been reported to be far less reliable than one could hope in determining visual learning styles because of their dependence on self-reporting items.

Thus the issue of the role visual thinking plays in writing, a major focus of my early observations, gradually diminished and I have come to believe that the ways these students compose are the result of something other than a difficult-to-define thinking process that is characteristic of a percentage of the population. That visual thinking exists is indisputable, but that it has a cause and effect relationship with the way one writes is far less certain. Researchers looking through other lenses at the results reported in Chapters 4 and 5, feminists, basic writing or learning style researchers for example, might interpret the practices of these students as the result of quite different circumstances.

Even those whose major focus is visual thinking agree that there are different kinds of visual images--those we see, those we imagine, and those we draw (McKim, 9). It follows then that individual thinkers could vary in their dependence on one or more of these kinds of images just as they vary in other traits. They might also vary in the ways they employ the three kinds of images on different occasions. This appeared to be particularly true with the students in this study.

Ann, at least in the beginning of the class, related most directly to the images she saw, gradually letting that experience affect the images she imagined. Chuck and Carol, at the beginning of the semester, depended most heavily on the images they imagined, letting drawing be a separate but parallel mode of expressing them. This too, gradually changed through the course of the semester. Sharon let drawing and imagining interact in her work, drawing as she examined the assigned reading, and drawing again in relationship to her own essays. Rosa, the native Spanish speaking student, said she thought and learned almost 100% through images; Hilda seemed to be relatively unconscious of the role of images in her life until her individual uses of them were pointed out to her.

One might think that people who are strong in the visual thinking domain would be able to express that strength in art. Betty Edwards wrote that drawing was the skill needed to develop visual thinking just as writing and reading are the skills needed for verbal thinking. However, it is clear from looking at the number of people who consider

themselves visual thinkers but non-artists that a well-developed drawing skill is neither required for, nor an indicator of, visual thinking. Nor does drawing ability translate easily into writing ability, even when the connections are made clear to the drawer. Some great writers have also been excellent artists, and vice versa, but there is no corollary between the two skills. Chuck and Rosa were competent in their drawing skills when they entered the class; Sharon and Carol said they liked to draw, but they had not been trained. Ann exhibited latent but undeveloped drawing talent, and Hilda's drawing appeared to have been the least developed of the six. The degree that they had developed their skills had little correlation with their writing, although the fact that five of them expressed no apprehension toward drawing made it easier for them to incorporate it into their work.

Drawing in Composing Processes

Simplistic views of writing in the past have implied that there is a proper composing process and that those who follow another method are somehow missing the mark. A series of studies on composing beginning in the 1970s with Janet Emig's "The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders" and followed by Jack Selzer's "The Composing Processes of an Engineer," Sondra Perl's "The Composing Processes of Unskilled Writers," and others, have made clear the existence of a variety of composing processes. They have also contributed important understanding of the ways people write. On the other hand, these same studies might lend themselves to the misinterpretation that all twelfth graders, all engineers, or all unskilled writers, in effect, all members of some group such as the ones I have described compose in ways similar to each other.

I do not mean to imply with this study that all writers whose strengths lie in the visual area think or compose in one way, or that these results are universally applicable. I propose simply that examining their work can open our understanding of composing processes even wider than the studies cited above, and that such an examination suggests ways to talk about and reflect upon writing (our own and that of our students), and thus perhaps widens our view of teaching and writing.

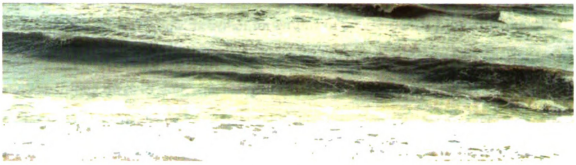
In her 1979 study of the composing process of unskilled writers, Perl noticed that the writers she had observed seemed to accrue details a few at a time, halt to reassess these details, and then gather more. Thus she concluded that composing does not occur in a straightforward, linear fashion. She described the progress of these writers as

> . . . one of accumulating discrete bits down on the paper and then working from those bits to reflect upon, structure, and then further develop what one means to say. It can be thought of as a kind of "retrospective structuring"; movement forward occurs only after one has reached back, which in turn occurs only after one has some sense of where one wants to go. Both aspects, the reaching back and the sensing forward, have a clarifying effect ("Unskilled," 433).

Perl determined that this forward/backward movement is problematic for unskilled writers when they let the kind of editing they do (mainly error hunting) intrude on their thinking and writing rhythms. In other articles based on this study and others conducted afterwards, Perl extended the observation that grew out of her work with unskilled writers. She has suggested that the "recursive" nature of the writing process includes looking back at the words one has already written, but it also includes accessing other ways of knowing such as body knowledge, to which she has given the name "felt sense," applying the work of Eugene Gendlin to composition theory. My study extends that sense of recursiveness another step to show that drawing can play a vital role in the composing process of some writers, as the work of the students in my research has demonstrated.

Reflecting on this idea of recursiveness in the composing processes that keeps appearing in descriptions of writing, I realized that the image of a wave in the ocean could function as a metaphor for the writing of these case study participants. In part this image comes from James Zebroski 's interpretation of Vygotsky's "tidal wave" image for human development (see the discussion in Chapter 1). To borrow Zebroski's language, it seems that composing, either in writing or in images, mirrors life in that "each level [of understanding] depends on and is connected with what precedes it and hence there is also a kind of overall continuity. The bigger the dip, the bigger the crest of the developing wave" (162). Using the wave metaphor for composing can illustrate the manner in which

these students have developed their essays, first exerting a forward movement, then swirling backwards to regain composure, and surging ahead once again. This pattern is repeated again and again until the essay flattens itself out in a visible pattern on the paper.



The wave metaphor can be seen as a symbol of the whole-to-part aspect of visual thinking that Eldridge, Arnheim, McKim, and Patricia Dunn have described. Each wave is a whole before it bursts open into thousands of bubbles and droplets as it reaches its peak; the metaphor is an image of the way a piece of writing opens from a core concept to expand and reveal the detail already contained in its body. The different kinds of shifting between various dichotomies suggested by the work of Rico, Bruner, Moffett, and Berthoff can also be compared to the movement of waves. The alternation of the smooth resting stages of the water contrasted with its powerful surging can be an emblem of the push and pull between extensive and reflexive modes (Perl, 425), between the specific and the general (Moffett and others), or between right and left brain thinking (Rico, Edwards).

Beyond being an image of recursiveness and the wave-within-the-sea part/whole interaction, the wave metaphor can also function in a more practical way. If one considers how the physical characteristics of water resemble aspects of writing, the image can be extended at length. The sea is the source of food and of treasures which wash onto the beach and of physical pleasures, swimming, boating, and surfing; by analogy, writing can be all these as well. The sea, like writing, is an image of the vastness of possibility as well as all its dangers. The presence of sharks, riptides along with the sheer strength of the energy of moving water, to mention only a few of the dangers, bring to mind the

difficulties involved in writing--the necessity of focusing, of maintaining a safe position. The wave metaphor can also suggest the ease with which one can become overwhelmed by the excitement and fearfulness of tapping into the subconscious mind. And the perils of lacking sufficient skill or the fear of exposing oneself are always present.

The wave isn't a new metaphor for writing of course. James Moffett wrote, "So much of the dullness, awkwardness, shallowness, and opacity that teachers object to in student writing owes to skimming along in the froth instead of plunging into the current" ("Meditation," 140). Ursula K. LeGuin entitled her handbook for creative writers *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussions on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew*, and Jeff Knorr and Tim Schell used the image in another creative writing text, *Mooring Against the Tide: Writing Fiction and Poetry.* Metaphorically speaking, if one sees the relationship of the human to the wave as powerlessness, as in Hokusai's painting of "The Great Wave" hovering and waiting to smash the tiny boat beneath it, or in the paintings of Winslow Homer such as "The Fog," writing can be a fearsome activity.

A metaphor of the composing process such as this one, presented to student writers and compared to the metaphors they have internalized already, allows them to adjust their position in relationship to the writing. The act of drawing has served as a sort of anchor within the great forward moving sea of thought for the writers in my study.

When Sondra Perl described the composing process of the unskilled writers whom she studied as "tangled," she followed her conclusion with the advice that "what he [sic] needs are teachers who can interpret that process for him, who can see through the tangles in the process just as he sees meaning beneath the tangles in his prose, and who can intervene in such a way that untangling his composing process leads him to create better prose" (1987, 429). Although I would not interpret the composing processes of these students in my study as "tangled" in the sense that Perl observed, they certainly did not follow a linear kind of logic to make their points. When students can see that what appears to be tangled about their writing has its own kind of logic by comparing their composing

processes to the ways that artists compose, they achieve a new way of understanding and talking about those processes. Following the trail of Carol's meandering path toward her realization "I am my mother," her thought process appears tangled. She really didn't need intervention so much as permission to wander through her mental images until they shimmered into a whole. When students can see that what appears to be tangled about their writing processes has its own kind of logic, a non-sequential logic perhaps, but one that works when they learn how to be comfortable with it, they can use it more effectively in their writing.

Writing From Whole to Part and Back Again

From an early moment in the writing process, Carol, Chuck, and Sharon all seemed to hold in their minds a sense of the whole concept that they wanted to convey in the essays on which they were working. They had a view of the sea, so to speak, but the small waves—the details and the trajectory the final version would take—were only to be discovered in the process of the writing. As their thoughts gathered into the successive waves within the larger ocean of thought, they were able to make that forward movement that took them closer to realizing the pattern of the whole. Their initial sense of the whole with which they had begun could not be expressed in words early in the writing, but as the energy gathered and rushed forward, it brought to the surface much that had been hidden from them before. Often the element that helped them regain their perspective in the forward rush of ideas was an image, discovered when they stopped to draw a storyboard or the image of a fish or a log cabin, or to break their lines of words into organic clusters. Any such shift of symbol system serves to change the mode of thought (Kress, Myers); drawing, imagining, clustering, and looping served as a means of breaking up the large body of water, the mass of topic sentences lumped together that often made up their first drafts, into their component parts.

Three of these students (Sharon, Chuck and Carol) appear almost to need to wander through their writing as if in a labyrinth or to allow themselves to be tossed around

by the waves of thought for a while before finally catching a toe-hold in the sand, or before coming upon an image or some sort of realization to use as a peg from which to hang the organization of their writing. This pattern follows Peter Elbow's observation that the writer must find the point of gravity in his or her writing and then go back to revise as discussed in relationship to Sharon's work in Chapter 4.

The writer writes from the outside in, and then from the inside out, according to Elbow. This suggests other spiraling images such as labyrinths and sea shells as metaphors for composing. Shells are like waves in that their centers are tightly compressed, and like writing, as they accrue more and more strength, more detail and support, more protection, they open up completely. As we look at them in their completed solid forms however, we look from the outside in and their lines revolve back in upon themselves.

In his first essay, Chuck moved from a compressed kernel of a concept, a concern with why human beings are greedy, then opened up to an exploration of a number of seemingly unrelated details—drug dealing, the research on animal population control, and so forth—to illustrate that concept. Carol looked first at the core problem of lost farmland, and only after some personal observation (and drawing) broadened and then narrowed her discussion to her own experience. After writing about the details of her life, she then returned to the large problem once again. Ann's first draft of her essay on her work with autistic children was an excellent example of embedding the strands of the whole concept in one paragraph. Being reminded in her peer group of the way her cup drawing had opened a myriad of detail, and realizing from their questions that not all of her readers shared the kind of knowledge she had, Ann opened the essay and expanded it.

Each of these writers worked in ways similar to Laura's description of her shell drawing/writing experience. Using her experience to illustrate the ways writing and drawing and thinking worked for her, Laura said, "While I was writing, I was trying too hard to put my overall vision of the shell into words, sum it up. I did not want to really look and go part by part and look again when I was writing, but when I was drawing, I did

want to go part by part and look again, relating the parts to the overall sense and shape of the whole" (My observation notes, November 7, 1998). The implications of this tendency to need to work on several parts of the entire piece concurrently rather than sequentially or part by part are interesting and it is easier for me to understand when I compare writing to working on a canvas or a drawing. Most artists move constantly as they are working, from a close position to a distant one in order to be able to see both views, the detail and the whole. Some artists even work with mirrors in order to make this shift instantaneously.

Although it perhaps is a far too over-simplified comparison, much of what psychologist Rudolf Arnheim investigates in *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, is the relationship of whole-to-part (66, 180, 428). One might interpret his analysis of the perception of a visual image as understanding a "gestalt" of an experience. A person recognizes a familiar figure from a distance based on the whole demeanor of his or her walk, the gesture of the head, or a few outstanding features (34). The image, as in a photograph or drawing or painting, captures the whole picture, and it is the task of the writer/artist to explore and gather together the details that will communicate the gesture of the experience. Carol's memories seemed almost like those gestalts when she described them as "as photographs in her mind." She was able to look at them and reproduce them in drawing as well as in her written description of her family's trips to a cabin up north. She held the image/experience whole in her memory but it took several tries to get her words to come together into a coherent retelling of those memories, especially since they had been overlaid with new experiences that had, in a sense, supplanted them. At that point she realized that she was now the mother on the trips.

This is also an example of the phenomenon about which Gabriele Rico writes:

> In the translation of images into words, the eye, scanning the whole, connects us to the affect-link, in turn, connects us to story, to discovery, to growth . . . Learning depends on both continuity and change. Learning is a mixing of the novel; [sic] and the known, to bring the unknown in line with the familiar and the previous learning in line with the challenge of the new (*Recreations 118).*

Shifting back and forth from image to word helped Carol and several of the other writers bring the old in line (literally) with their new understanding.

Focusing on the Metacognitive

The metacognitive benefits that derive from adding drawing to the composition class seem to me to be the most valuable of all the outcomes and those most clearly connected to drawing in the work of these students. Inability to step back and look at one's own writing critically (as an artist steps back from the canvas) paralyzes students, making it impossible for them to *see* what it takes to improve. A major factor contributing to the lack of success in writing of many students is the misunderstanding of what makes good writing and a major complaint is that "I don't know how to get what is in my head onto the paper." In this section I describe ways drawing helped students to step back and look at their writing with a critical eye, acquiring as they did so an understanding of what is involved in their own writing processes. Drawing has functioned for some of them as a key to the discovery of detail in particular, and to a way of opening up a topic to find the supporting material they need with which to develop it.

Many college students come into a freshman writing class fearfully concerned that their skills are not adequate, citing their poor handwriting, grammar, and spelling as the culprits for their inability to write. This misplaced fear is undoubtedly one of the major causes for the widespread dislike for writing and for antipathy toward composition classes. Thinking that what they have to do is to try to figure out what the teacher wants so they can give it to him or her, specifically translating that into the question of how many words they have to write, the real cause of their writing problems eludes them. Students are then puzzled to have their papers returned with mediocre grades when they worked so hard on them and thought they were writing what the teacher wanted them to write. They conclude that there must be some magic but incomprehensible formula for creating what the English teacher wants, and if they could only discover it, if they could learn where to put the commas, they would do better in writing classes. For some students, drawing

opened a way to talk about what made good writing, especially in terms of organization and detail. It seems that using words to talk about words mixes messages while using visual images to illustrate what happens with writing keeps the metacognitive separate from the writing itself.

In "Visual Imagery Training and College Writing Students," Demetrice A. Worley observes that

> Words, in effect, get in the way of seeing. Part of the problem is that our students are trained to think of writing primarily in analytical terms. Integrating holistic and verbal activities allows students to open the window, temporarily bypass words for images, and then return to them with a fullness and immediacy not experienced before (139).

Worley suggests a specific pattern of training including mainly talking and observing photographs to help students learn to visualize. It takes only one further step to realize the value of actually doing one's own drawing to incorporate the act of imaging into the writing process.

Another misconception students bring with them is that some occupations will require little or no writing, or at least not the kind an English teacher wants them to do. The concept that writing is connected to thinking, and that people in non-writing occupations not only have to think, they often have to write clearly too, remains foreign to them. For various reasons, verbal intelligences seem not to be the strength of the students who ask why they have to take a writing class, and using words to try to convince them does not work well. However, when their conception of the connections between thinking, drawing, and writing are extended, when they are shown the parallels between other ways of knowing through drawing, and through a discussion of the multiple intelligences, it is sometimes easier to help them see the value of writing in their own chosen fields.

The students in my research pool were not adamantly opposed to taking a writing class, but they were all less than enthusiastic about it in the beginning. When they began to gain a metacognitive understanding of writing, in part by seeing that writing is similar to other modes of expression such as drawing, their focus turned from a concern with

correctness toward discovery of what they wanted to say. When they drew, they realized that the ability to see an image in one's mind or on paper was instrumental in their being able to write about it and when they had something they wanted to write, the rest fell into place. In several instances, drawing helped the writers focus on *what* they wanted to say rather than *how* to say it, at least from a grammatical perspective. Sharon said on several different occasions that each time she drew something she could see more clearly what to write. She said, "if writing was a picture, then you could *see* if you had all the details." On another occasion she said that after she *drew the paper*, she could see what to write. Chuck credited drawing with encouraging him to write in metaphor, and that in turn helped him move into a "zone" in which his mind moved so fast that he couldn't keep up with it.

Imagery and drawing also helped students see themselves as writers communicating with other people. Sharon said in the beginning that she could not imagine that a good writer was anything at all like her. After thinking about his process of writing, Chuck was able to put his image for the way his mind worked on paper first in visual images (a brain with large feet to carry it forward at a rapid pace) and then in words. Carol worried so much about her grammar that she had difficulty putting words on paper at first, and Ann expressed a similar concern. However, when they drew the images they were writing about, they began to understand ways that words helped their audience *see* what they were trying to say in a way they had not been able to before doing the exercise.

Focusing on Shifting Between Sign Systems

Another aspect of the metacognitive effects of drawing is the role that sign-shifting plays in a writer's ability to look at his or her writing from a different perspective. Thus the investigations of the effects of switching sign systems in problem-solving exercises carried out by Miles Myers and Gunther Kress provide another provocative lens through which to examine the way drawing seems to function as a tool for some writers. Kress contends that translating between media or modes of communication results in different kinds of

knowledge, different aspects of meaning (38-39). He says that humans constantly use more than one mode in every act of meaning making, a factor that he calls "synaesthesia." He also speaks of the multiplicity of ways in which children make meaning, and the multiplicity of modes, means, materials which they employ in doing so" (96) He writes,

> Children act multimodally, both in the things they use, the objects they make; and in their engagement of their bodies: there is no separation of body and mind. The differing modes and materials which they employ offer differing potentials for the making of meaning; and therefore offer different affective, cognitive and conceptual possibilities (97).

Kress goes on to observe that children's use of multiple modes of expressing also allows them to "treat print, which is too often seen as a unidimensional medium, as multimodal, as a complex semiotic system; and it is this disposition, which makes it possible for them to make inroads into the great complexity of alphabetic writing (97). To extend Kress's point, when writers are encouraged as adults to employ multiple modes, they too can realize ways to enter the complexity of this semiotic system. While educators allow for this multiple way into print for children, the assumption that adult learners are aware of and can compensate for having left this multimodality behind may keep teachers from pointing out other modes for making meaning to adult writers. This leaves those writers believing that their lack of understanding of the "great complexity of alphabetic writing" is the result of some flaw in their own ability.

When the writers I have studied here shifted to alternate sign systems, they began to think multimodally not only in their writing but also in their own workplaces. In fact, as she began to see the value of drawing in her own writing, Ann saw the significance of using multiple approaches with her autistic children and noticed the progress they made as a result of incorporating visual exercises in their curriculum. Looking through the lens of the alternate sign system also let students see that it was content, not grammar alone, that was the real issue in writing.

Myers writes that "sign shifting always produces new ways of knowing (170). The categories of signs he discusses include oral and kinesthetic signs, visual signs, and "silent

signs," alphabetic and numeric signs. But even shifting within a sign system such as from a map to a model, or from a ballad to a drama, for example, produces new knowledge, and often also has political and social significance. When students are encouraged to make such shifts, as this study has shown, new knowledge is produced in their writing. When Carol drew a map of the area around her family farm, her understanding of the significance of the loss of farmland changed considerably. When Ann drew her grandmother's coffee cup, her understanding of that simple object took on a far greater emotional significance. Chuck's drawing of himself riding a horse across a map of the United States brought his research paper to life in a visual way. Sharon drew her understanding of her reading and writing as often as she wrote about it and the complex interplay between these two modes functioned to expand meaning in a third area.

One further example from Myers that is particularly appropriate to this study is his use of a chair to explain the role of differing sign systems in understanding a simple concept. His words shine a new light on the chair drawing exercise students performed in the classes. Myers writes,

> Sitting on a chair and visualizing a chair are different *levels of understanding* the unchanging *concept* chair, and these different *levels of understanding,* sitting and visualizing, are, of course, two different *sign systems* for talking about a *concept.* Each *sign system* is, of course, distinctive in the sense that each *sign system* is silent about some matters related to the *concept* and exuberant about others (171, Italic in the text).

Myers does not go the next step to point out that drawing a chair and writing about a chair are still other *sign systems;* likewise, each of those sign systems is silent about some matters, particularly as students utilize them, and each is exuberant in other matters. In fact, for some students, (Ann, Sharon, and Hilda and many others) drawing as a sign system is a way to see more clearly what is there. For others, it is a sign system that evokes memories, metaphor, story, feelings, and so on. Some students become exuberant about some matters themselves when they draw—Ann's cup drawing, Sharon's shell, for

example. For Chuck, the move of shifting from drawing, the sign system he already had mastered, allowed him to respond exuberantly in the less familiar sign system of language.

Basing his observations on the work of several other researchers including D. Allan Allport, Howard Gardner, and Ray Jackendoff, Myers writes that "different sign systems are significantly different ways of knowing" and that each frame of mind "operates according to its own rules and exhibits its own processes" (173). In fact, Myers cites Jackendoff's research which contends that music, language and visuals have "innate, separate, universal grammar" and they are "not necessarily conversant internally" (173). In the early stages of his drawing and writing, Chuck employed the two sign systems quite separately, and only after several weeks of going back and forth between them, did the sign systems begin to "converse" in his work. Sharon, on the other hand, was aware of the conversant nature of her drawing/writing at an early stage.

Another aspect of Myers' research that provides a lens for the interpretation of the work of the students in my study is his explanation of how the conduit metaphor conflicts with students' understanding due to the conflict between sign systems that it evokes. Students know from their body knowledge, according to Myers, that "writing is *the delivery* of information from one place (the speaker or writer) to another (the listener or reader" (183, italic in the text) rather than an interaction between two containers of information (writer and reader). This explanation that body knowledge metaphors are not helpful in understanding the writing process carries over to help interpret the metaphors students in my study have used for their writing processes. Drawing their metaphors allows the student to access their underlying concepts concerning how writing works and gives them tools with which to talk about it. It also gives the instructor a means of assessing and then addressing the needs revealed by the metaphors, problems which students might not otherwise have understood. When their metaphors work out of conflicting sign systems, in other words, as does the conduit metaphor, instructors can more readily find solutions for working with them.

Betty Edwards' research into the stages of creativity provides one further lens through which to examine the role drawing played in the thinking and writing of these students. She describes the "five stages of creativity": after the first insight, one experiences saturation and incubation before arriving at a moment of illumination, the "Ah-ha!" moment that clarifies meaning, and results in the stage of verification (*Artist Within, 4).* This view of the pattern of creativity also helps to explain the composing process of at least three of these students. The early writing of Chuck, Carol and Sharon all demonstrated these stages, and in each case, the "Ah-ha!" they experienced was accompanied by or provoked by an image that just "came to them" as they were writing. After this realization point, the writing fell into place quickly.

For Ann, in both the cup drawing activity and the fish exercise, the illumination came after drawing and/or talking rather than after writing, but then it resulted in her finding more detail for her essay. In her beginning writing, she had little conscious control over her thought process. The "Ah-ha!" experience was necessary early on to move her into the other stages, especially saturation and incubation. Sharon worked out her thinking by drawing it in the beginning. The notes from her staff meeting show that for her, doodles and words are almost interchangeable.

Chuck and Carol worked out their images in their heads as they wrote. Drawing for them was fine, but it was a parallel way of expressing ideas, especially in the first part of the semester. Drawing said much the same thing as the writing, but it said it in a different way, with a different sign system. The final form of Chuck's research paper was inspired by an image he found on the internet and another that he had drawn, supplemented by richly imagined details of the history about which he was writing. By the time of the third interview, however, Chuck was being inspired by images that already existed; things he *saw* led him to stories that he then wanted to write. In the past, looking at images had led him to want to take photographs or to make a drawing. Likewise, as the course progressed, the images Carol drew and photographed interacted with and helped

develop her ideas. In the major paper she wrote toward the end of the course, drawing was the key to a major understanding.

Hilda, to the end, was very much a word person. When she did draw, she began to find it enjoyable, but she didn't trust her ability. Rosa was the opposite of Hilda in this aspect. She said in so many words, "I could draw you pictures all day. I do not want to learn the words for them!" Nevertheless, she was learning the words as she wrote, and her confidence in the drawing appeared to make the writing easier.

Summary

For some people, drawing is as much a thinking process as writing, and although often it is not attached to words, it is capable of evoking words, especially for those who can be comfortable with it. The experience some students describe when drawing is reminiscent of James Moffett's observations about the role meditation can play in writing by quieting the inner voice's chatter long enough to let thoughts emerge in a conscious written form. Students have noticed that their thoughts become quiet while they are drawing, and they are able just to observe. That opens the way for more in depth response to the topic.

It also allows them to step back and look at their writing from a distance, using an alternate symbol system as a comparison, and thus get a clearer sense of the nature of their composing processes and ways to talk about it.

The work of the students in these case studies demonstrates a few of the possible effects of encouraging students to draw as they write. By the nature of the case study methodology however, these observations leave out the work of the many other students in the classes who were less enthusiastic in their drawing (and in their writing), those who had come to class with considerable drawing apprehension and did not like to draw. The examination of the role drawing in a composition class plays for those students leaves the field open for extensive further study, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Students and Teachers Seeing a Wider View of Composition

In the introduction and literature review, I cited references from many sources, both within the field of English and outside, that suggested that including drawing activities in a writing class can benefit writers, particularly those for whom a visual kind of intelligence is dominant. Some have identified visual thinking as one of the most useful tools for problem solving (McKim, Root-Bernstein, Perkins) and others have characterized the creative process in terms that would allow for the easy extension from the non-verbal to the verbal (Edwards, Atwell, Ernst). For example, one might consider using drawing as a "rehearsal" for writing in addition to the techniques traditionally proposed for that purpose in a writing class--talking and free-writing. The works I have cited have also suggested that the role of metaphor in writing can be explored effectively in drawing as a supplement to the making of metaphor in words, and that metaphor can also help writers and teachers gain a metacognitive understanding of their own composing processes.

To investigate these claims, I have examined the role that drawing played in the writing processes and work of several students in a first semester composition class. Beginning with their responses to the early "seeing" exercises, I have followed their growth along their varied paths, and to varied conclusions, but the evidence from my study shows that encouraging some students to draw facilitates their writing. It helps them find the center of gravity for their essays (Elbow), and it helps them find detail and settle on an order.

Those students whose work I have examined expressed little or no apprehension toward art work, even if they had no formal training in that field. They seemed to have dominant strength in the visual domain, and that led them to the results that came out of the further analyses. When they were allowed and encouraged to let their visualizing lead them in the writing, they were willing to take risks, especially in the structure and content of their essays, that they had not been able to envision when they first came into the class.

One conclusion that echoes throughout the discussion of the work of these writers is that communication involves far more than words in print and consequently, composition studies misses a significant opportunity by not finding a means of tapping into the other strengths that writing students, beginners and advanced alike, bring with them. Educating the whole adult is as important as educating the whole child. Thus, a corollary conclusion is that the paucity of art training for today's students handicaps them in many ways, including understanding the rhetorical aspects of all kinds of communication methods and the contribution that visual imagery can make to their writing and other subjects. Elliot Eisner, Rudolf Arnheim, Robert McKim, Gabriele Rico, Betty Edwards, Mona Brookes, Ruth Hubbard, Janet Olson, Karen Ernst, Gunther Kress, Miles Myers, and a long list of others, have documented the value of art in general education curriculum. Their extensive research in several disciplines—art education, psychology, elementary education and composition theory and with students of all ages—has proven that art and visual literacy are vital aspects of a whole education.

The students for whom drawing worked in this study had already developed their visualizing abilities to a certain extent, and they were thus able to make use of the encouragement given in these classes. The fact that drawing contributed to their success, especially to their engagement with their writing, might indicate a rich untapped vein of strength in many other students, if they were given any kind of aesthetic training in early years, or if they were taught very basic drawing skills. Drawing may very well be helpful to all writers, but its importance for students like those in this study is apparent.

Across the curriculum, however, educators themselves have not been educated to recognize the value of visual literacy and visual thinking. Outside the field of science, drawing is not a valued "academic" tool in most disciplines. The lack of art education in the background of many writing teachers particularly handicaps their ability to see ways to integrate the two disciplines. This results in reticence on the part of some teachers to assign drawing exercises because they feel unprepared to do it, even though the students

might feel no such aversion. This lack of teacher preparation will continue to present difficulties in implementing the findings of my study.

In the conclusion of *Academic Literacies* when Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater asked why and how the experiences of the two students in her study were "those of silence and emptiness with respect to literacy and learning," she realized that both Nick and Anna "are highly visual students, using a learning style that is often rewarded in elementary schooling but is sharply severed in higher education" (151). She noted that

> Nick and Anna's ability to respond in images, through sketches, photographs, sculpture, or painting remained latent talents, unmined resources. Anna did include photographs in her paper on ecofeminism and Nick did generate a computer drawing for his collaborative paper for Prose Writing, but such visual responses are marginalized in most college classrooms. And in another course . . . when Anna had the option of creating a program for a play instead of writing a paper, her instructor graded her down because she didn't include sufficient verbal explanation. Thus even when other forms of response are invited into our classrooms, we expect the written counterpart as well (151).

Particularly by looking at the personal drawings Sharon completed and investigating the behind-the-scenes activities of students like those in my study, clues can be discovered concerning the ways drawing and other non-verbal activities can help overcome the deadening "silence and emptiness with respect to literacy and learning" that is prevalent in our own classes.

Chiseri-Strater also noticed that Nick's sketches in his journal often had more to say than his written responses to the assigned materials, but his professors never saw them. She had documented considerable evidence of Nick's and Anna's well-developed "multiple literacies," but these literacies "were difficult to uncover, because so much of their visible energy was devoted to the public rendering of ideas, . . . 'doing papers'" (151). Chiseri-Strater attributed much of Nick's and Anna's lack of investment in their writing to this kind of activity

In my study, by creating a situation in two classes in which community college students could utilize their non-verbal talents, I have responded to Chiseri-Strater's

critique and extended it. Valorizing the work of the students in my study also affirms, as Chiseri-Strater asked educators to do, the importance of "rethink[ing] the narrow way that literacy is defined in higher education" (150). Although as a whole, Chiseri-Strater does not place a heavy emphasis on asking teachers to encourage students to develop alternate literacies, she says enough to make a significant point. She writes, "By expanding ways for students to share their learning, we may begin to challenge the academy's overemphasis on verbal understanding and propositional knowledge" (165). By demonstrating that drawing can contribute to the improvement of writing, this study does in fact de-emphasize the almost sole dependence on verbal understanding that is prevalent in composition, and thus my study has supported and added more evidence for Chiseri-Strater's conclusion.

A further implication of these findings is that writing teachers can better understand how to meet the needs of a variety of students with differing strengths and learning styles by gaining an understanding of how others think and compose. They can also help those who are apprehensive or apathetic toward writing overcome their fears and dislikes by helping them engage more fully in their own writing processes by including non-verbal activities.

An important factor in implementing this suggestion, however, is that just tacking a drawing exercise onto a writing exercise is not sufficient. Students may view a drawing exercise as just another hoop to jump through if it is not a direct out-growth of the assignment, designed to promote interaction between drawing and writing, or it may become just a decoration for the final presentation when the writing project is done. My daughter just completed an assignment in a tenth grade language arts class to write and illustrate a six-page poem about racism using rhymed couplets. She was given a small blank booklet made by stapling three sheets of typing paper together in which to place the poem/illustrations. Since she is a highly visual in her thinking and also an excellent writer, one might think she would be delighted by this combined project. However, since she was not in control of any aspect of the project, the topic, the medium, or any of its parameters,

this became a busywork assignment into which she found little personal entry. Illustrating a story after it is finished is not the same as letting the art process inform the writing and the writing inform the art work.

In real-class-life, of course, there is no way to keep whatever assignment we make from being a hoop-jumping exercise for some, or whatever carefully theorized lesson from back-firing in the way a few students perceive it. Knowing how to jump through hoops allows students to remain comfortable even in familiar settings, but they are especially likely to look for such comfort when they find themselves in unfamiliar settings. Art activities, however well-thought out, are not necessarily enough to change a writing assignment into something a student values. Frederick Franck has found that art students often do not value their *drawing* assignments; he described his antipathy to the way trained art students have learned to "manipulate a dictionary of forms" rather than actually looking at the particular subject they are drawing. Any technique—free-writing, clustering or any other—no matter how carefully thought-out, can be almost worthless in the hands of an uncaring student, as every writing teacher has undoubtedly discovered.

And yet, the experience of the students in my study supports the conclusions that drawing can be valuable to writers in several ways. A major benefit is that drawing gives students a way of looking at their writing from a removed perspective and thus helps them deal with the metacognitive aspects of writing more effectively. Comparing the composing of text to the composing of visual images bypasses the confusion that can result in using words to speak metacognitively about words. The work of these students has shown that drawing is a way to talk about revision and creativity, both crucial elements of writing, and that it is also an important element in the ability of students to make and understand metaphors—another important element of all writing, not just poetry as some might believe. Drawing is a way to illuminate the process of making metaphors, bringing to the conscious mind a communication skill that all speakers use unconsciously everyday.

Practically speaking, drawing is a good tool for helping students learn to observe more closely. Integrating drawing with other visual modes (photography or collage in particular) could engage students who are insecure about their drawing abilities. Integrating drawing with visual literacy activities designed to help them learn to "read" visual presentations of material can help students make the reading/writing connection.

Although the conclusions reported here are based on a small sample and the case study evidence does not purport to be transferable, these students share characteristics with many other students I have known through the last several years. Every semester since the fall of 1998 I have invited many class-wide conversations about their reactions to drawing in conjunction with writing. Students in those classes have reported experiences as wide as one might expect--from total inhibiting dislike of drawing and lack of confidence in their drawing ability, to indifference, to gushing enthusiasm. As the students in my study show, this variety of attitudes toward the writing/drawing activities does not have a cause and effect relationships to their actual skill. The attitudes are more likely due to variety in thinking styles and domains of intelligence.

Implications for Future Studies

The conclusions of this study are based for the most part on the effects of drawing and writing with students who are already comfortable with visual thinking and perhaps dominant in spatial intelligence and visual learning styles. The most obvious question it has not answered is what are the effects of drawing on the writing of those who are not dominant in these areas? This study has opened many other questions of this kind, and leaves open many possible areas of research.

If I could integrate what I have learned by doing this investigation and then conduct it again, there are several ways I might change the study. Within the design as it was carried out, I would prefer to require all students to draw on more of the assignments, rather than leaving as much of the drawing to their choice as we did. At the beginning of the semester, I would have all students answer a fairly specific questionnaire designed to

ascertain their attitudes toward writing and drawing coming into the class, as well as to have them examine what they know about their own learning styles. With this questionnaire, I could take more control of the selection of participants, and selections could be made earlier in the course, thus having a more specific set of data in mind at that earlier date. I would do more interviewing during the semester than I did, several shorter interviews rather than one long one. A major change I would make would be that the instructor of the class I was observing would not become ill and go on leave for the last month of the semester.

If I were to change the design of the research, the two most obvious ways would be to go deeper or to go wider. Narrowing the number of subjects under study would allow me to go into even more depth in examining their work, and to focus more attention on the subsequent semester's work, data which I collected but which I did not focus on to any extent in this study. I would have them write more about their process of completing each essay, at least once after each writing assignment is completed, and if possible, I would record interviews in which they would talk about each composition after each assignment as well. This increased emphasis on examining the role drawing could play in students'understanding of the importance of self-awareness in writing.

If I were to do a wider study, I would include several drawing/writing projects in the course work, but focus the bulk of the study on the response of the entire class to one or two of the projects. This kind of study would require more carefully drawn parameters for the projects and more specific instructions to assure some similarity in the results. This type of study would require a somewhat different method for collecting and organizing the data, since it would involve at least some quantitative analysis of the results.

Other Implications for Research:

A significant amount of research has been conducted investigating connections between drawing and writing with elementary students and several researchers have extended that through middle school. A number of handbooks offer suggestions for

activities to use with K-12 students, some of which could be adapted for college classes. A text focusing on Seeing and Writing (McQuade and McQuade) is an exhaustive example of ways writing could be centered around looking at the visual images created by others. But as for research on the effects of making one's own visual images, especially for adults, very little collected evidence exists. And research that examines the theory underlying the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of a particular drawing activity is significantly missing.

An ideal setting for investigating the extent to which drawing and writing interconnect would be a linked class, taught by an art teacher and a writing teacher who have coordinated their projects to maximize awareness of those connections. Linda Shohet and Catherine Bates conducted just such a linking at the Dawson College Literacy Centre in Quebec, although there was no researcher/investigator there to record the results or to interview students. Thus the results published by the Literacy Centre included only the drawings and writings created by the participants and thus left the reader to interpret the effects without having the context of the class or the responses of the participants. Without this information or notes on the prompts and the kind of instruction that went with the activities, it is difficult to come up with a real understanding of how the drawing and writing worked together.

In such a linked class, far more specific connections between drawing and writing could be made by the instructors, especially since the improvement of drawing skill and writing skill would be simultaneous goals of the class. The skills could then be developed side by side. For example, students could examine the effects of the perspective used to make a drawing and to write an essay or story, asking such questions as: Where is writer/ artist/ reader/ viewer in relation to the images or words on the paper? What effects do perspective shifts have in writing or in drawing? By considering the composing process of an artist, writers could make observations about similarities in their own work, particularly in the area of revision. In addition, they could consider for themselves the effects of incorporating drawing into the writing while the work is in progress. This could be a

particularly appropriate element in a student's analysis of the organization of the paper, especially using a storyboard exercise.

Stylistic issues would come up when comparing drawing and writing, including such issues as abstraction and realism, elaborate or sparse renderings, and the focus--how close or distant from the work is the writer or artist? What is the effect of the particular choices of images chosen to draw, compared to the writing? How does one represent abstractions in either words or images?

In addition, in a linked course, more evidence of effects of drawing on students' attitudes toward their writing could be collected, effects such as enthusiasm for the work and their engagement in it and the value they place on the outcome of their efforts. Considerations could also include such issues as how and why students choose the topics they do, and how that is related to their own assessment of their skill levels. The effects of the choice of the mode of presentation could be examined in a class in which students were doing similar explorations in both drawing and writing. For example, negative space/positive space drawings (or any other combination of color/black and white, shadow/line, etc.) could be created in conjunction with writing comparison/contrast papers. A collage could be created in conjunction with many types of writing from a simple thesis/support piece to analysis, cause and effect, etc. The effects of using humor and irony in argument could be examined by looking at political cartoons and comic strips. Many different schools of drawing/painting could be used to illustrate changing writing styles and genres through different centuries.

Another research topic suggested by one area of my study would be to test the way one's metaphor for the writing process relates to how one teaches. A study could ask many teachers, local and nationally known, to draw their metaphors and then compare those metaphors to the teachers' professed theoretical stances.

My study dealt with non-traditional aged students. To extend beyond that limitation, research could be conducted to investigate the relationship of drawing to the

writing of eighteen-year old college students. This also suggests the need for a study to determine whether there is a connection between success or failure in a predominantly word-oriented academic setting for those whose strengths are of a visual nature. Is the rate of dropping out of college higher for those whose dominant intelligences are other than verbal and mathematical-logical? Is that rate related to the choice not to enroll in college at all? Is it related to lack of success or apprehension in writing classes? The implications of the role drawing might play in basic writing classes are extensive; this suggests another rich vein of research possibilities.

It is typical for one or two students in each class to have great difficulty drawing the image as well as difficulty in writing about it. A rich area of research possibility lies in asking if there are connections between drawing/writing ability that might indicate or be ways of identifying learning disabilities, or suggesting solutions for them. Other research possibilities include looking at the function of visual imagery with those who have learning disabilities. The work of Temple Grandin, a high functioning autistic university professor who has written extensively about the effects of autism on his perception, mentioned in passing in the literature review, suggests that a study of visual imagery with autistic persons would lend valuable insight into that condition. Even more needs to be done regarding visual imagery and dyslexia as well.

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Elliot Eisner observed that "When we come to understand that thinking is not mediated solely by language and that intelligence is not exhausted by tasks employing word and number, we are more likely . . . to provide more diversified and equitable programs in our schools. Such programs can help those whom our curriculum now neglects to find a place in the educational sun" (*Eye,* 245). Along with a number of other researchers, Eisner has called on the educational community for several decades to expand its understanding of the meaning of literacy. Exploring the role of drawing and the other

arts in writing classes is an important area that could make significant contributions to that larger understanding.

The implications of my study for composition pedagogy, as I have suggested from the beginning, lie mainly in the area of widening our view of the composing process, as writing teachers, to include those writers whose strengths lie outside the realm of verbal and mathematic logic that schools have traditionally been designed to reach. No one method for teaching writing works for all students, and I do not suggest that the inclusion of drawing in the writing curriculum will solve all problems. Based on the evidence presented here, however, drawing can be seen to work as a catalyst in the thinking and writing of some students. It has encouraged them to think critically, in ways that they might not have come up with had they not been encouraged to explore widely and to use alternate sign systems, to use Myers' terminology. Any technique that can do that, whether it be drawing, dance, music, or movement, offers the possibility of opening writing to some who have found it to be, in a sense, a foreign language.

Another significant implication for teaching writing that my study suggests is that when we look very carefully at the process through which student writers move in the creation of their work, we begin to see them as individuals with important meaning to discover. When we look carefully, we have the possibility of seeing them, at least on occasion, through a View Master that can separate each individual from the background of the many who sit in the classrooms alongside them. Acknowledging that there are many different ways students compose, we can thus open to a wider variety of techniques in order to better encourage their different styles. This is especially important when working with students whose composing processes are quite different from our own.

Unlike the part-time instructor who refused to read the second version of Chuck's essay in his 102 class, even with the heavy load of reading that instructors carry, when we become aware of the variety of composing styles and the role drawing might play for some, we can recognize the importance of assuring students who need to explore widely,

to rehearse or to do "finger exercises" before focusing, that they are not abnormal. We can help them discover through their own processes the kind of structure and form they need for academic writing. On the other hand, by encouraging such exploration of all students, we can also help those who prefer the safety of in-the-box thinking break free of constraints that impede their ability to write what *they* want to say rather than trying to please others. Drawing can play a part in both directions.

There were many other students in these classes whose work would offer other insights; except for these words one of them wrote in his self-evaluation at mid-term, I will save them for another study. After describing the way he had learned to "take the small parts of what I have been through as a fire-fighter . . . and piece them all together to give the reader an overall picture about my story," he wrote, "I have not been to sure about anything that I have written before being worth reading to anyone else (because I mainly wrote to get a good grade in school and gave the teachers what I thought they wanted to read.) In this writing when I finally read it, it was very self satisfying to me because I accomplished everything that I [underlined twice] set out to do with this work" (Observation notebook, October 31, 1998).

It is too easy to lose sight of the reasons we do what we do in composition classes. We owe it to ourselves and to our students to keep our focus clear and steady by continuing to look for new ways of reaching students where they are. If drawing can encourage even a few students in each class to open to the wider possibilities of writing, it is a worthwhile addition to our classes.

Epilogue: Seeing at the Seashore

As I began to consciously search for ways to include drawings in my journal, my understanding of my own writing process expanded in surprising ways. Just as was true of my students' work, other influences played a part too, of course, since no composing occurs in a vacuum. Beginning to practice what I preached in my classes has presented the most beneficial insight to me as a researcher over the years I worked at this project.

I had long been aware of the fact that the visual images that I carried in my mind's eye influenced my writing, but the act of putting those images on paper, and in photographs, broke meaning loose in my writing in new ways. These were not divorced from the influence of physical activity and life experiences, however, as the excerpts from my journals below will show.

When I participated in a session at the NCTE conference several years ago where author/teacher Gabriele Rico demonstrated her "re-creations" exercise, I realized that all writing and art work, perhaps all teaching as well, is an act of re-creating similar to the one she proposes. Rico encourages writers to let go of judgmental responses to poetry and free their own creativity by an "inverse clustering" process that results in a re-creation of the patterns already established by another writer or artist. In my classes following this experience, I encouraged students to respond to poetry this way and found the beginnings of several new poems of my own as I wrote along with them.

In thinking about all this, it occurred to me that what I do everyday in my teaching and in my writing is much the same kind of re-creation, that every meaning-making thing we do is an act of recreation, in the many senses of that word. When I talk about a story in class, I re-create it with my students. When I play a game or work a puzzle, I imitate the patterns of life. When I do any number of other simple acts such as walk on the beach and

pick up a seashell, I re-create its story in my mind, or I make a poem about it, paint or draw its fascinating curves, or create a metaphor for some aspect of my life. Metaphor of this sort can draw together and re-create the past, the present, and the future in a remarkable way. Let me try to explain...

Pictures (either photographs, drawings, or paintings) allow time to be viewed in a non-linear way. Everything can happen at once in a painting (or on the walls of a Grecian Urn) because the artist has chosen a particular moment of time to freeze--even though it took time to construct the image and it takes time to "read" it. It is the same with a story, its action frozen between the lines of words that march neatly across the page in careful order. But in every story, in order for it to be a story--to re-create meaning--there must be a tension, a push and pull, thought and counter-thought, conflict and resolution, not only within the story, but also between the reader and the words. By interacting with and re-creating the meaning in paintings from the past, we make it possible for the Italian Baroque or the French Impressionists to live today; photographs in my album keep my children eternally young. Creating--story and art--allows me to make sense of fleeting time and of the experiences that unfold in it. Words and art allow me to be a re-creator in the spiritual sense as well as the secular.

Like dreams that circle back on themselves, words and art can embody far more within their patterns than could possibly exist within the time-frame they claim to represent. When I re-create my moments through writing or art, I impress a pattern on the chaotic passing of time. Reading a book or looking at a picture, I re-create someone else's creation for my own understanding; in a sense, I re-see what that other person has seen. Any moment in time is a vortex through which all past moments must squeeze to become

all possible future moments. The story and the painting become that vortex, as do simple journal reflections.

Attempting to capture experiences on paper is a binding act, not unlike the word play of sorcerers in times past. Magic. Perhaps it is necessary to feel in one's heart the result of the binding in order not to be tempted to do that to others. To feel the too-small-skin that requires a violent bursting forth in order that the crumpled wet wings may unfold and stretch and become strong. Or like the small creatures that exude in perfect increments the substance that becomes seashells, we encase ourselves in words and images to protect our too-vulnerable flesh and bones. Are these works of our hands, pages from a journal, broken shells lying strewn upon the sand?

****

On the beach in the early morning, I meet a woman walking with her black lab. His nose is covered with sand. The woman tells me, "He has no idea how silly he looks!" We laugh together for a moment and then move on in our opposite directions.

As I walk where they have been, I see the dog's footprints circling here and there, crossing and re-crossing those of his owner. He feels no need to walk in a straight line. If he sniffs the path of some other dog, he examines it carefully; if something else smells more interesting over there, he's off to check it out. Sometimes I feel like that dog, dashing here and there, never able to stick to anything for the long run; today though, I think perhaps I should reconsider my self-doubt. There is some advantage to wide exploration. The dog never makes his decisions on the basis of whether it will make someone happy (or to avoid making someone sad).

* * * * * *

The beach is littered with empty shells. The ones I pick up are small, seldom perfect like the ones I see in the stores. They no longer house life. They are skeletons, a cemetery actually, here on this beach. Interestingly enough, we do not view shells morbidly, but rather hang them and glue them and store them in boxes. We carve and polish them and wear them on chains around our necks. We admire their wonderful spirals, their iridescence, their remarkable strength. We recreate, in effect, the meaning of the empty shell. This one reminded me of the waves in which it used to live.

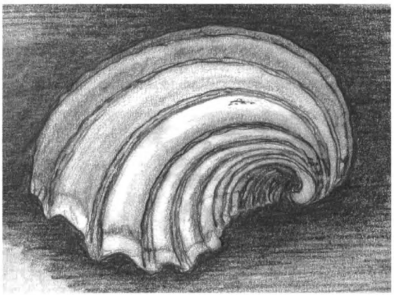

Figure 8.1 Shell drawing, Wilma Romatz

Tiny birds in a flock dart back and forth at the edge of the water, snatching their breakfast. I am amazed at their facility to avoid the powerful force of the crashing waves, the salt and spray, to survive on its leavings. I pick up a shining white shell, folded open against the red sand. At first I think this one is perfect, but on closer inspection I see two small holes in identical spots on the two halves. Some mollusks, I learn later, can bore a hole in a shell in less time than a dremel tool.

Picking through shells strewn over the sand, I am aware once again how inevitable change is, and that living and dying are inseparable. Even when we freeze a moment in a photograph or on a page, it immediately begins to change because even as it passes into memory, it becomes laden with other experiences, a sliver of a move toward a new understanding.

****

Waves fascinate me. They knock me over if I resist them. They lead me into an altered state as I meditate. Numerous artists and photographers have captured the image of dancing foam, and Walter Crane, the influential children's book illustrator of the nineteenth century, even turned the tips of the waves into the heads of galloping horses.

Figure 8.2 Waves in the ocean. Photo by Wilma Romatz

Labyrinths also intrigue me. Another day on the beach, I spend several hours constructing one of my own, kicking, dragging, and scraping the sand with my bare feet until furrows form the ancient pattern come down to us from the age of myth. After walking the paved circles on the floor of Chartres Cathedral, placed there to allow those unable to go on crusades to make a symbolic pilgrimage to the Holy Land, I see much of life as such a sacred meandering journey. According to Layne Redmond, author of *When the Drummers Were Women,* moving into the center of a labyrinth represents "a descent into the unconscious structure of the mind, in search of wisdom and enlightenment." To enter the labyrinth, Redmond writes, is to experience a ritual death, to face the beast and the goddess both at its center. To return is to wind out again, bearing the wisdom attained at the center, a process of evolution and rebirth.

Figure 8.3. Labyrinth by the sea. Photo by Wilma Romatz

Not long after the labyrinth is finished, a woman and her child stop and walk it with me. An hour later, the tide comes in and nibbles at its edge.

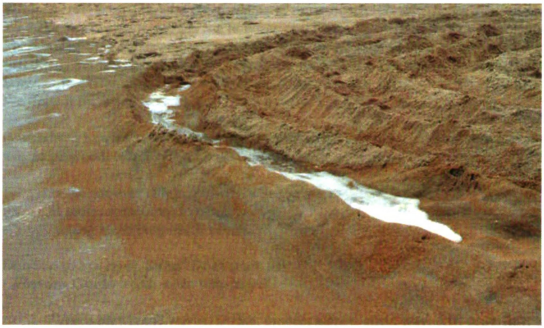

Figure 8.4. Labyrinth beginning to wash away. Photo by Wilma Romatz

By morning, no sign remains that it ever was there at all.

The way through a story or an essay is also a ritual. We write our rituals. Or perhaps, for some, writing is a ritual. (The words do share sounds after all, even if the Indo-European root of "ritual" **ar,** is shared with the words "reason" and "art," while English is the only western Indo-European language which takes its word for "to write" from **wreid** meaning "to cut, scratch, tear, and sketch an outline," according to *the American Heritage Dictionary*.) The meandering history of words also influences my thought.

****

I wander into a reverie of wordplay on the beach.

Wave/lave, labor/ waves of labor (childbirth), laboratory, labia, labyrinth.
Waves took the labyrinth, one level at a time as it lay on the beach.

It left without waving goodbye.
I could not save it, but I did savor it, sitting quietly with my camera to capture its image for posterity.
Labor/lover, Lave, love. Land lubber. Flubber. Scrubber. Three men in a tub. Beelzebub.
Work as enfolding, unfolding the meaning of experience.
To make an offering to the sea is a holy act; the Tibetan sand painters offered their work (the labor of their hands and hearts) to the river. Holy water washes away sin. Makes us sanctified. Turns to blood? Blimey. Bless me. Believe me. Let me be. Let<>Leave.
Soul work, exemplified by the work of the hands, allowed to return to the great mystery.
We draw it forth and we let it go. Draw a wave. Let it leave.

(I wonder if Lewis Carroll did this kind of stuff in his journals, or if nonsense was just his way to play with words? Did Lewis Care-all the time? Yuk, yuk.)

Is the sea ever silly? Or always so serious?
It seems sometimes to be
seeing something inside of me.

Don't be so sea-rious, Sirius! Don't scare us!
(What are Words-worth when they play?)

Words play in the waves, Dance, prance, glance, slant, stay, day, pray, flay, fly free, see, sense, immense, scent, sound, flounder, sounder, (she's a rounder!) pelican, fly, sky high, sigh, sign, sing, seethe, settle, snail, shell, flounce, crash, flash, splash, hash, clash, mash, gnash, slash, bound, ground, mound, round, abound, wound, wound, found, around, sound.

The words re-create themselves in order:

The Sands of Time

The dry sands dance furiously
Flinging against bare skin.
I lean into stinging wind.
Salty grains cling to every pore.
In peaks of crashing gray waves
white foam dances defiantly
splashes the air
laughs, ducks under
then smashes hard sand
with a rush toward a moment's smooth rest.

Opposed to fixed form
waves thin then huddle briefly in footprints
soften and steal their edges
sucking them back into the great
mystery of the whole.

After drawing this picture in words and capturing it with my camera, I realize that the image of waves in the ocean becomes only a metaphor for life, but also a metaphor for writing, "the composing process." The words and meaning shuffle themselves within my mind and I re-create from that perspective. In Sunday's paper I read a cartoon in which a little boy who has just completed his sandcastle is on his hands and knees at the edge of the ocean, begging the waves to go back, please.

Why write? Why draw or paint or dance or play a musical instrument? Why care about teaching others to draw and write and read? Because by doing so, we participate in our own creation and become whole.

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