

Composition Instruction Reviewed

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Academic Affairs Editor

Writing Excellence Encouraged at UO

This is the second article concerned with written English and English composition. Thursday's Emerald carried an article discussing standards for instruction in composition suggested by Albert R. Kitzhaber, University professor of English. —Ed.

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution last year asking that each department or school at the University encourage a good quality of writing from students.

The need for clear and accurate writing is being recognized in academic circles. While this improvement must be carried beyond the basic freshman composition course, the quality of composition courses must be improved and maintained if the quality of all written English is expected to improve.

The resolution shows awareness of the problem on the part of the faculty and that they realize that we should improve and maintain the quality of writing," said Frederick Candelaria, director of English composition at the University.

Improving Quality

Thursday's Emerald article outlined suggestions by Albert R. Kitzhaber, professor of English at the University, for improving the quality of the basic composition courses. Kitzhaber's book, "Themes, Theories, and Therapy,"

written before he came to the University, offers criticisms and suggestions for teaching composition throughout the nation, and is not concerned with the University in particular.

"The University of Oregon has enjoyed a distinctly favorable and envious position among English departments," commented Candelaria. "We can teach composition without pretending to try to teach an introductory literature course. Other schools in the country must teach rhetoric while also offering instruction in particular literary works."

He said that a representative of the College Entrance Examination Board who had visited the campus recently, had been surprised at the type of composition courses offered here.

Small Classes Suggested

One of Kitzhaber's suggestions was that classes should be small with the ideal situation being an individual tutorial program. Other suggestions were for a reasonably small individual teaching load for instructors, for adequate means of exempting qualified students from composition classes, and for uniform methods of instruction and grading.

Apparently composition courses at the University meet many of these criteria.

Candelaria said that sections are not abnormally large, with about 25 students enrolled in each class. Honors College composition classes are conducted as individual tutorial classes. The individual teaching load is graduated according to the instructor's experience and other duties. A graduate assistant will usually have one section while an instructor may teach one or two composition classes and a literature discussion group.

Opportunity for Waiving

The program for exempting unusually qualified students from part or all of the composition program seems "very adequate" to Candelaria. Entering students are rated on the basis of their CEEB test scores. Those with high verbal scores are allowed to take an essay examination. From the results of this examination they are often allowed to waive one or more terms of composition.

The quality of writing among entering students seems to be improving. Writing 50 is a course designed to help students "who have an insufficient command of grammar to write with tolerable correctness," according to the University freshman composition instructors manual. Candelaria said that enrollment in this course has declined during the last few years.

Standards for instruction and for grading in the various sections of composition classes are planned departmentally. The English

department issues a manual to all instructors outlining policies for both instruction standards and class procedures.

Training Period

Now class instructors are given a training period. During this time they submit marked themes to Candelaria for suggestions in their grading procedure. Members of a committee of teachers also visit the new instructor to observe his classroom procedure.

Candelaria has found students more interested in taking advanced writing courses. Enrollment in courses such as creative writing and short story writing has increased during the last few years.

Kitzhaber finds that pictorial and oral communication is increasing today. He said that this factor may be partially responsible for the quality of written expression among most Americans today. Lucien Marquis, associate professor of political science and director of the Honors College, disagreed. He pointed out that the millions of paperback books purchased each year must indi-

'Rightest' Prof. Blasts Demos At YR Meet

"Unemployment and Two Ways to Deal with It" was the topic of George Christy, assistant professor of finance, when he addressed the University Young Republican Club Thursday night. A self-described member of the "Far Right," he questioned steps toward solution adopted by the present administration.

The major problem of unemployment today is "bottlenecks" in three main areas of low unemployment — teaching, health and medicine, and professional and technical services, Christy said.

The present efforts of the Federal Government to solve the unemployment problem by "shot-gun aggregative measures" such as budget deficits cannot solve the problem, he said.

Asked if government action in specific areas such as medical scholarships might improve the situation, Christy said present programs in this area are sufficient for the dedicated individual. He questioned the idea that the problem could be solved by encouraging people who were less dedicated to face the rigors of medical education.

Christy said he felt the best line of action for the government would be to encourage individual initiative by "staying out of the individual's way."

Eulogy . . .

(Continued from page 2)

If we really love this country, if we truly love justice and mercy; if we fervently want to make this nation better for those who are to follow us, we can at least abjure the hatred that consumes people, the false accusations that divide us and the bitterness that begets violence.

Is it too much to hope that the martyrdom of our beloved President might even soften the hearts of those who would themselves recoil from assassination, but who do not shrink from spreading the venom which kindles thoughts of it in others?

Our nation is bereaved. The whole world is poorer because of his loss. But we can all be better Americans because John Fitzgerald Kennedy has passed our way; because he has been our chosen leader at a time in history when his character, his vision and his quiet courage have enabled him to chart for us a safe course through the shoals of treacherous seas that encompass the world.

And now that he is relieved of the almost super human burdens we imposed on him, may he rest in peace.

cate that Americans still have plenty of contact with the written word.

Jargon Used

Kitzhaber said that writers in many professions become so engrossed in their particular jargon that they lose sight of the qualities of good communication. Scholars in the social sciences and in education produced a great deal of bad writing, Kitzhaber commented.

Marquis cited C. Wright Mills, a noted sociologist who said, in his book "The Sociological Imagination," "A turgid and polysyllabic prose does seem to prevail in the social sciences . . . Is this peculiar language due to the fact that profound and subtle issues, concepts, and methods are being discussed?" Mills says this is not so.

"The academic man in America

today is trying to establish personal status in the complex closing of the ranks on the part of the mediocre, who understandably wish to exclude those who win the attention of intelligent people, academic and otherwise," says Mills.

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The Lighter Side of College

By Jim Speer

Have you ever asked yourself the question, what am I really good at, that is, what am I better at than most other people. Well, this question popped into my head about five years ago and unfortunately has stayed with me ever since. Oh yes, I've tried my hand at a million and one things. I was going to be a great painter once. I went to an artists supply store in the Bay Area (the one that Walter Keene had bought oils and brushes at for a long time) and placed my order. "I want everything that it takes to paint a superior picture," I said to a very concerned young girl that peered sympathetically over a pair of horn rimmed glasses. After several minutes of deep concentration, she raced about the store grabbing enough articles off the shelves to supply a whole art studio. By the time she was through, I had fifty dollars of quite superior equipment for what I thought was to be a quite superior painting. And with my cumbersome bundle clutched tightly under my arm, I skipped home, the whole time envisioning my final product. A sheer masterpiece.

After several days of splattering paints on poor defenseless canvases, a brilliant idea came to me. I wasn't making much progress. Instead of trying to paint realistic objects, why didn't I follow the path of such greats as Dali and Picasso and produce an abstract. What a stroke of genius! I set my mind to it. I had only two tubes of paint out of the twenty that I started with. First I smeared on the red, up and down like the stalks of giant flowers. Then I scratched in what was to be the stems in dark green. The buds were last. I dabbed both the red and the green on a piece of tissue paper and jabbed creatively at the canvas. When the painting was done, I sat back and took it in in all of its glory, well, what was supposed to be glory. Needless to say, when I showed it to my friends, no one could tell what it was. One said that it looked sort of like an explosion, and another said he thought it was a fire of some sort. I stopped painting.

My next attempt was at writing. Living in the San Francisco area had its advantages. There was reported to be a large colony of writers in the North Beach area, and I, now with pencil and pad in hand, set out to find them. I wanted to be on the in, so I asked some of my friends what they knew about the writers of San Francisco. One friend told me that he had heard that either Lawrence Ferlingetti or Kenneth Rexroth had died in a gutter of acute alcoholism. This was my in. I was to be a sympathetic patron of the arts who had come to pay my condolences. I marched down Columbus Avenue about five days later and into the City Lights Book Store. This was my chance. A man with a light brown beard stood behind the counter, one hand resting on the cash register and the other holding a book. He looked like as likely a prospect as any. "Excuse me," I said, "but I understand that either Lawrence Ferlingetti or Kenneth Rexroth died a short while ago of acute alcoholism, and that they found him in a gutter. Could you tell me which one it was?" The man with the beard looked at me for a number of seconds, and then slapping the book down on the counter with an awful bang said, "My name is Lawrence Ferlingetti, and Kenneth Rexroth is in the next room. Now, young man, I'm really not sure which one of us is dead so why don't you go ask him." As I backed out the door I was trying to think of another hobby to take up.

A week after arriving at Oregon, I found what I was really good at, and with very good reason. I eat Dairy Queens now for a hobby. In fact, this is something that everybody could be good at if he tried. If you go down to 13th and Hilyard for a Dairy Queen, I'm sure you'll find that you could be good at eating them too.

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