

HERE AT STONY BROOK, Monday, Dec. 12, 1983

THEME UP AND OUT

Hi, everybody.

"English prose composition is not only a necessary skill but a sensible pursuit as well." That's a quotation from "The Elements of Style," second edition, by E. B. White, the eminent writer and language authority. That's what ~~we will~~ we'll be talking about today: Writing. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

More than 30 years ago, Rudolf Flesch excited American parents and teachers with a book entitled, "Why Johnny Can't Read." ~~suggested~~ suggested The claim ~~is made~~ by the title---that many children do not read well--- was nothing new. Each generation gives the youngsters coming up poor grades in reading and writing. That's happening now. A special presidential commission has proclaimed the nation "at risk" because of its failing public education system. In Houston, the city ~~has~~ decided to test public school teachers to determine their proficiency in the basic skills. What a shock! Ten-thousand teachers, already certified by the state, took the tests; ~~and~~ 62 per cent failed the reading test and nearly half failed the writing exam. Newspaper and magazine editorialists are having a great time with that.

ors are Educational ~~authorities~~ not mindless about the need to improve writing skills. A Writing Center has been active for years at the State University of New York ~~at~~ Stony Brook. The center is a room staffed by several tutors four days and one evening each week. Students with writing needs are encouraged to stop by. an undergradaute Stony Brook requires all students desiring ~~a~~ degree to pass a writing proficiency exam, so the Writing Center can be helpful to them ~~no~~.

MORE

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With us today are three English teachers active in Stony Brook's writing programs. Dr. Peter Elbow is director of writing programs, Dr. Pat Belanoff is assistant director and Victoria Mitchell, who is a doctoral candidate, is a teaching assistant and chairs the proficiency examination committee. Dr. Elbow, you have a theory that claims the only way to learn to write is to start writing...and write and write and write.

~~INTERVIEW~~ Dr. Belanoff, ~~xxxxxx~~ how do you measure success in the Writing Center?

Victoria Mitchell, tell us how the writing proficiency examinations work at Stony Brook.

INTERVIEW: -- Elbow: writing, revising...different skills.
writing without a teacher.
teachers "trickiest audience."
no lecture notes.
writing as therapy, to assist in learning
and growth
poetry exercises (Now, once, And...)
action verb: energy; nouns, adj..pieces
of used up energy
voices: Walker Gibson, Sweet, Tough & Stuffy

28:30

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Coming up are ~~two~~ very special holidays. ~~Our~~ Our annual Christmas program, next week, will take a look at two men named Martin Luther...the 15th Century German theologian and the 20th Century American civil rights activist, Martin Luther King. The following week, a lively panel will ~~consider~~ review events of the year and consider the question, "Did Civilization Advance in 1983?" I hope you'll be with us both weeks. Until then, this is Al Oickle. So long, everybody.

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