

**FROM SCENARIO TO PLAY:  
PLAYWRITING AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL**

BY

Donna Leah Nentwig

A Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Education  
Department of Humanities  
and Social Sciences  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
September, 1990



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service    Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-71819-6

Canada

FROM SCENARIO TO PLAY:  
PLAYWRITING AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

BY

DONNA LEAH NENTWIG

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

© 1990

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this thesis, to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

Abstract

Although there is a tremendous amount of educational literature dealing with the process of writing, little attention has been paid to the process involved in writing a play. The study attempted to investigate this relatively unexplored area of writing, with the focus being primarily on the scenario phase and its importance in the writing of an effective play.

The study involved two classes of grade nine students who were involved in a playwriting unit during a three-week period. The focus was essentially on the use of a scenario, or outline, during the playwriting process. In order to determine its importance, the students were asked five questions, in the form of a survey, after the unit had been completed.

Information obtained from the survey, was recorded, analyzed and interpreted. Recommendations were then made, based on the survey results, student and teacher journals, and on recorded observations.

The result is a detailed description of the unit and the study, followed by suggestions for implementation and invitations for future research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Chapter One</b>	
<b>I General Introduction</b>	
A. Background.....	1
B. Purpose of the Study.....	11
C. General Information.....	11
D. Research Questions.....	13
E. Definition of Terms.....	15
F. Basic Assumptions.....	16
G. Limitations of the Study.....	17
<b>II Methodology</b>	
A. Discussion of the Method.....	19
B. Student Survey.....	21
C. Sources of Information.....	22
<b>III A Synopsis of the Related Literature .....</b>	<b>26</b>
 <b>Chapter Two</b>	
<b>I The Playwriting Unit</b>	
A. Background information.....	31
B. The Scenario or Outline Phase.....	35
<b>II The Writing Process</b>	
A. Student Journals.....	39
B. Student Journal Entries - Sample Excerpts.....	41
C. Classroom Realities - Teacher Journal Entries.....	45

## Chapter Three

Page

### Student Survey Responses - 9A

Question One.....	58
Question Two.....	66
Question Three.....	71
Question Four.....	77
Question Five.....	81

## Chapter Four

### Student Survey Responses - 9C

Question One.....	86
Question Two.....	92
Question Three.....	98
Question Four.....	103
Question Five.....	107

## Chapter Five

### I Discussion of Emerging Patterns

Question One.....	112
Question Two.....	114
Question Three.....	115
Question Four.....	117
Question Five.....	118

### II Relevance of Data to the Research Questions ..... 120

### III Relevance of Data to O'Farrell's Report ..... 125

### IV Implications of the Research..... 130

	Page
<b>Chapter Six</b>	
I <b>Reflections on the Research</b> .....	132
II <b>Significance of the Research</b> .....	133
III <b>Implications for Teachers</b> .....	133
IV <b>Problems with the Playwriting Unit</b> .....	134
V <b>General Recommendations</b> .....	141

## References

## Appendices

- A.    Student Booklet
- B.    Student Survey

## Chapter One

### I General Introduction

#### A. Background

The process of writing has fascinated educators for many years. During the last decade, a great deal of literature has become available to assist the classroom teacher in encouraging students to become more effective writers. Much of the literature has been supported by current educational research, and many teachers are now applying research-based methodologies in the teaching of writing.

However, there has been little attention paid to the process involved in the writing of plays. Although at both the middle years and secondary levels, drama is encouraged as an important component of the integrated English language arts curricula, few details have been provided to assist in the actual process or necessary phases required in an ideal playwriting course, or unit.

For example, Manitoba Department of Education (1982), English Language Arts Middle Years suggests on page 46 that "Drama, in the educational field, is concerned with experience, expression and communication. Its primary focus is upon the growth and development of the individual, through the

understanding of himself in relationships with other people - . . .". Further to this, "Drama more than any other single art represents an integration of all the processes of self-expression."

It would seem logical to include, in the document, the fundamental steps required to ensure that these "processes of self-expression" are indeed addressed, enhanced and encouraged. It would also seem logical that one of the "major processes of self-expression" - creative writing - would be explored in the document and applied to the playwriting process.

Disappointingly, this is not done. Rather, what follows is a very basic, skeletal outline of "The Drama Program and Enabling Procedures".

Most of the elements mentioned in the drama section of the curriculum do not require the use of scripted materials (e.g. "mime", "improvisation", "oral interpretation", "characterization" and "impromptu dramatization".)

What is stated regarding "scripted materials" is very general, and contains little procedural information. On page 55, there is some information regarding "pupil-planned plays". This section deals with characters, suspense, theme, "framework

(beginning, middle, end)", number and order of scenes, "what needs to be said", and "the necessary non-verbal action".

It continues with the following:

"It is not always necessary to write a script. If a script is written, a committee may work out the dialogue for the first scene. This then can be presented to the class for suggestions, and rewritten."

This information is good, but certainly it is far from complete. It alludes to a process or to a procedure, but is again, incomplete and somewhat vague.

In keeping with this concern, the secondary curriculum: English Language Arts Grades 9-12 (Manitoba Education, 1987) states clearly in the "Objectives for the Student" under the sub-heading "Writing" (p. 9), that "students should be able to:

- . write honestly about personal experiences, opinions, and concerns as a means of growth in self-perception and self-understanding;
- . write on various kinds of topics for various purposes and audiences in a planned, organized manner;
- . understand the importance of the underlying principles of clear, logical thinking in organizing and developing ideas;
- . write experimentally and imaginatively;
- . discuss their reactions to the ideas, approaches, and underlying assumptions in each other's writing;
- . evaluate their own writing performance."

The document also places emphasis on the "two aspects or layers" of language activities: the "cognitive or thinking abilities", and the "mode

specific abilities that are unique to the language mode being used by the language user." (p. 31).

The guide continues to state on page 32 that "Because the English program is made up of six inter-related areas (reading, writing, listening, speaking, language study and literature study) all based on the same cognitive skills, the teacher of English has a responsibility to teach all six areas. . . . the teacher cannot be assured that automatic transfer between modes will take place."

There is a danger that unless there is careful focus, organized procedure and consistent planning, this "transfer between modes" will not occur.

In the "Grade Nine" section of the document, teachers are encouraged to involve students in "script-writing" as a "Group Activity", and "explore varying relationships of content to vehicle to situation", through "Reading and writing using such various forms as: dialogues, scenes, playscripts." (p. 47)

Unfortunately, other than for generalizations regarding the concept of "exploration of literature in grade nine . . .", and a brief outline regarding "action", "character(s)", "setting", and "theme",

specific information is not included; especially in reference to effective procedures that might be applied to the construction of well-written plays.

One final document, Drama 105, 205, 305 Curriculum Guidelines (Manitoba Education, 1989), does address the concept of the script. On page 36, a "Detailed Collective" is described; it is presented as "a plan for an end-of-term project which might be considered at any level." The unit would "provide a structured approach to a performance that may be shared by an audience". Included in the unit is information for the student ("Student Introduction to Assignment"), wherein specific student instruction is provided in a clear, concise fashion. Later, specific assignments are detailed:

Assignment #1 deals with Character: "Talk About Your Character" (Character's Name", "Occupation", "What Character Wants", "Characteristics of Personality").  
(p. 38)

Assignment #2 deals with "Play Scenario", wherein the students ". . . decide on the story, or the action of the play." Students ". . . need to know what the characters do (and say) very roughly and generally, where they say it and when."

This "scenario" would include the following elements:

1. "Setting or Locale"
2. "Action"
3. "Audience Participation"
4. "Control Character"

(p. 39)

Students are then provided with hints that will assist them in the creative process.

Assignment #3 deals with "Individual Group Member's Story Version of Play-in-Progress".

It is here that each individual begins to write his/her own version of the ideas that have, until now, been dealt with in smaller groups.

At this point in the "Collective Unit", "The Story Gets on Its Feet" - the "Initial Script" begins to take form. (p. 40)

Later, in the description of the "Collective Unit", other issues are addressed; issues that are important in beginning to develop an ideal playwriting unit.

The document continues to describe, on page 41, "Group Evaluation of First Run-Through", "Costume" and "Dress Rehearsals" (p. 42), "Lighting Design", (p. 43), "Properties", "Sound" and so forth.

This section addresses issues that are crucial to the success of a playwriting unit at the secondary level. Also, it provides a valuable starting point for secondary drama teachers, but it represents only a beginning. Teachers require more information and more assistance than what is represented here. Drama teachers would, most certainly, be required to turn to other sources. Unfortunately, beyond this sample unit in the curriculum guide, there is little information available to assist teachers in planning a unit or course in playwriting.

Similar conclusions have been reached by Lawrence O'Farrell, Associate Professor, Queen's University. In 1988, O'Farrell published a research report entitled "Teaching the Playwright's Art".

In the abstract which precedes the actual report, O'Farrell summarizes some fundamental concerns which motivated him to conduct the study.

He states that although "drama students, particularly those at the senior high school level" are required by their school jurisdictions to "explore the playwright's art", ". . . little guidance was offered to teachers as to how such a course, or unit of study, should be taught".

O'Farrell "attempted to redress this oversight by two principal methods." He first of all conducted a review of the related literature. Most literature, he discovered, was the product of non-playwrights or literary critics who essentially analyzed, in a traditional fashion, famous plays by master playwrights. He also discovered quite obvious philosophical disagreement in basic ideas regarding the creation and structure of a good play.

Secondly, O'Farrell surveyed practising playwrights in order to gain first hand information and opinions from individuals actively involved in the art of playwriting. The responses to the survey were compiled and analyzed. "The result of these responses

was a comprehensive picture of an ideal playwriting course, or unit."

O'Farrell's survey, which involved ten questions pertaining directly to the process of writing plays, attempted to dispel ambiguities and discrepancies that existed in the literature. As a result of the responses to the survey, he was able to obtain valuable insights that could be readily tested and applied in the secondary classroom.

Some of these insights are reviewed in the abstract when he further suggests that:

"Students would be advised to acquire experience in acting and theatre production."

"Students would also be encouraged to see, read, and discuss a wide variety of plays."

"The course would be centered on the students' own writing experience."

". . . students would be encouraged to develop individual approaches to writing."

"The preparation of a scenario and character description would generally precede the writing of dialogue but flexibility would be encouraged here, also."

"Rewriting scenes or entire plays would be regarded as a natural part of the process and not a sign of failure."

"The teacher would be responsible for creating a positive, non-judgmental atmosphere in the classroom and for promoting the students individual creativity."

It is quite clear that as O'Farrell states ". . . there is a pressing need for a study which will provide guidance to secondary teachers who are charged with introducing the art of playwriting." Further to this, O'Farrell's "study has the potential to become a keystone in the development of curriculum units and in the design of future research projects on this topic." (p. 6)

O'Farrell raises questions, answers some, but does not answer others. He raises crucial issues and concerns, dispels some, but others remain to be dealt with in other studies by other researchers:

"This analysis (of the survey or questionnaire) is primarily intended to provide hypotheses for further study." (p. 14)

Although O'Farrell has done considerable work in the area, there remain gaps and ambiguities. More "fine tuning" is required in certain areas. This is especially apparent after reading the analysis of the responses and the general recommendations.

More research is required in many areas, to determine if secondary students do indeed mirror the views of practising playwrights.

Are the opinions of these playwrights valid in a secondary classroom? Is the resultant "ideal playwriting course, or unit " valid in a secondary classroom? Is it truly "ideal"? Such questions can be answered only when teachers become researchers in their own classrooms.

B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not scenarios assist students at the grade IX level in writing plays.

This objective is based on Question Five of the O'Farrell survey or opinionnaire of "information and opinions solicited from practising playwrights".:

"Should the student write a scenario before beginning to write the dialogue?"

C. General Information

At the time of the study, I was the English Language Arts Department Head and "Critical Thinking" teacher coordinator in Spring Valley.

The study involved two grade nine classes of heterogeneously grouped students at Spring Valley Junior High, St. James-Assiniboia School Division #2, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Spring Valley is a small junior high school with a population of 150 students. The school is 17 years old and is located in an average, middle-class area.

The two classes involved in the study were the two classes assigned to me for English Language Arts for the 1989/90 school year. The study involved all of the students in each class (45 students in total), and it was part of their course of studies in English during the latter part of third term. The entire project took two weeks.

Drama has been an important part of my English program at Spring Valley for the last nine years. It serves as an effective method in the integration of the complex skills involved in the teaching of English Language Arts. Integration, or teaching skills together, can be readily achieved through consistent, well-planned lessons that reflect and explore basic themes being studied in literature; these themes may then be applied in a creative drama or writing class.

Drama, because it is concerned with the development of the whole person, and because it is directly interrelated with all aspects of the integrated language arts program, is an ideal method for teaching numerous academic skills and for motivating adolescent learners.

Drama, as a teaching/learning tool that uses process-oriented, logically-structured strategies and activities, will certainly enrich traditional, academic skills and encourage positive social interaction.

The above is the conceptual background upon which the following study was based.

D. Research Questions

The study focused on the following questions:

1. Do students feel that scenarios help them "think about their story" and "think the problem through"?
2. Do students feel that it makes a difference to the quality of their writing when they develop a scenario before they begin writing a play?

3. Do students develop their own unique methods of writing?

In O'Farrell's "Analysis of Responses", on page 71 of the report, he summarizes that "A substantial majority of respondents agreed that the student should write a scenario before beginning to write the dialogue".

Some playwrights further suggested that ". . . the scenario should be allowed to change in the course of writing dialogue and that each student should be encouraged to develop his or her own personal way of working." In conclusion, ". . . most were uncompromising in their recommendation of this procedure, using such terms as "absolutely", "without question" and "absolute must"?

Whether this will be the opinion of the grade nine students, and whether or not the scenario is an indispensable playwriting tool for these students, will be addressed in this document.

E. Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study, the term "scenario" is defined as an outline of a play, opera, or the like, indicating scenes, characters, etc.; an outline for any proposed planned series of events, real or imagined.

The above definition, taken from Webster's New World Dictionary Second College Edition (1986), was chosen because of its relative simplicity, and because it reflects the content and direction of the project.

Other sources repeated similar information, but tended not to be as concise. The term "scenario" was clearly explained in the "Student Booklet", along with the following terms:

1. Playwright - person who writes the play.
2. Play/Script - terms are basically the same, and were used interchangeably in the study.
3. The following literary elements were used throughout the school year in the study of literature and in the writing of short stories. The terms were reviewed and redefined for clarity.

Definition of these terms were taken from the school division's core curriculum.

Literary/Dramatic Elements

- a. Theme
- b. Plot
- c. Inciting Incident
- d. Rising Action
- e. Climax
- f. Dénouement or Final Resolution of Conflict
- g. Conflict
- h. Character
- i. Dialogue
- j. Setting
- k. Atmosphere
- l. Mood
- m. Tone
- n. Tension

F. Basic Assumptions

According to O'Farrell, while some practising playwrights believe that the development of a scenario is fundamental to the process of writing a play, others do not.

It is O'Farrell's belief that the opinions of these individuals are "significant" in structuring playwriting courses.

This study was based on certain assumptions adapted from the O'Farrell study, specifically:

1. ". . . that the writing process and educational opinions of practising playwrights can provide a significant resource for teachers and students of the playwright's art". (p. 4)
2. that ". . . anyone can tell a dramatic story and that playwrights can learn a great deal through acting and improvised dramas." (p. 144)
3. that students have seen, heard and read "a wide variety of plays in many styles; they have analyzed and discussed these, and have been encouraged to apply these lessons (themes) to their own work.
4. that students understand the basic elements of drama (literary elements), and understand how these elements operate in a script.
5. that students' own experiences will shape, to a large extent, the development of the plot and the basic elements of the story.

G. Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the teaching of the playwriting process; i.e., how plays are constructed in terms of initial planning and organization. It also examined the role of the outline or scenario.

The study did not attempt to synthesize existing theory, nor did it attempt to defend or reject traditional (critical) analysis of good or poor playwriting.

The study was limited to grade nine students who had only recently been exposed to the playwright's craft and who had rather narrow life experiences as opposed to the more mature, practising playwrights.

The study was limited to the planning and writing processes. It did not concern itself with the rehearsal process, nor did it concern itself with any sort of assessment of the final play manuscript or script.

## II Methodology

### A. Discussion of the Method

The O'Farrell report incorporated two major components. The first was a search of the related literature in order "to determine the priorities and methods which have been proposed for the education of aspiring and developing playwrights." (p. 6-7) The second component was the "survey of practising playwrights, in which respondents (were) invited to help resolve some of the issues raised by the related literature . . .". (p. 7)

Similarly, this study focused on the concept of the scenario (or outline), and its relative importance to grade nine students involved in the playwriting process.

Secondly, this study surveyed the students involved in the process in order to determine the relative importance of the scenario-writing phase in the creation of a play at the grade nine level.

The survey questions were based on the three "Research Questions" advanced earlier in this document. The students responded, in writing, at the end of the project.

The questions were of an open-ended nature, thus prohibiting a formal, statistical analysis. However, the questionnaire was "designed in keeping with a

descriptive survey method of research" (O'Farrell, p. 8), and the analysis is of a qualitative, rather than a quantitative nature.

The responses to the survey were analyzed, each question was addressed separately and in turn. All responses were recorded carefully. Each unique point of view was recorded and dealt with accordingly. Actual language used by the students has been conveyed as accurately as possible.

The data from the two classes were kept separate throughout the analysis, and the results have been recorded in two separate chapters.

The final chapter of the thesis suggests the implications and the possible ramifications of the study. The chapter will also advance specific recommendations for future playwriting units. These recommendations are based essentially on the survey responses, classroom observation and ideas extracted from the related literature.

B. Student Survey

Survey Questions

1. Do you feel that a scenario, or some kind of outline, helps you to focus your thoughts regarding any of the following literary elements: plot, theme, character or conflict?

If so, how?

If so, why?

2. Do you think that it makes a difference to the quality of your work when you write a scenario or outline before you write a play?

Why/Why not?

3. After you have written a scenario, do you find that you change it as you write the play?

\* \* \*

If so, where do you tend to make your changes?

To what extent do you make changes?

\* \* \*

If not, why do you feel that you do not make any changes?

4. Do you think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful?

Describe what works best for you.

5. Reflecting on your writing is important while writing a play.

How does your journal assist you in this regard?

C. Sources of Information (Data)

Every student involved in the study was provided with a "Student Booklet". Each booklet contained everything required for the study, including any and all notes, ideas, fragments of dialogue, rough drafts, etc.; students were instructed that nothing was to be discarded.

Included in the booklet were the following materials:

1. Student Preparatory Exercises

a) Definition of Terms:

Playwright

Playwriting

Scenario

b) Elements of Drama (I)

Theme

Plot

Inciting Incident

Rising Action

Climax

Dénouement

c) Elements of Drama (II)

Conflict

Character

Dialogue

Setting

Atmosphere/Mood

Tone

Tension

Information was supplied by the teacher in some instances; in others, the students provided the information themselves.

Students were expected to work in collaborative groups for some assignments; for others, they were required to work independently.

Collaborative groups were established prior to the commencement of the study.

Collaborative groups were structured by the teacher, and were of a heterogeneous nature.

Students were either directed to work in these groups, or encouraged to do so when it appeared necessary or advantageous to the writing process.

Students were encouraged to keep a daily journal. In doing so, they recorded general feelings and responses regarding the playwriting process.

2. Student Organizational Assignments

a) Constructing the Scenario

Theme or Objective - Why

Setting - Where/When

Character - Who

Plot Outline - What Happens

Conflict

Mood

Tone

Tension

Students were encouraged to improvise, or to experiment with dialogue and scenes to determine whether or not the ideas were appropriate or credible. This was done in a collaborative session - either small or large group.

The Student Booklets were collected each day and stored in the classroom. Some students preferred to take their booklets home, as they felt they worked better at home.

Exercises and assignments were monitored consistently. Specific exercises and assignments were collected by the teacher at pre-determined times.

The "Student Booklet" - including the journal - was extremely important to the study, as the student stored all miscellaneous notes, thoughts and ideas, rough drafts, pictures, diagrams and anything else that they found helpful during the creative writing phase.

### 3. Student Plays

The plays were read informally by the students in collaborative groups when they felt it was necessary or when they felt they needed the added assistance.

The teacher monitored the progress in much the same way. Upon completion, each play was read and evaluated by the teacher.

### III A Synopsis of the Related Literature

After analyzing the responses to question five ("Should the student write a scenario before beginning to write the dialogue?"), O'Farrell includes the following points under the sub-heading "Implications for the School Program". (p. 77)

"It is clear from responses to this question that students should be encouraged to write scenarios before beginning to write . . . ", but qualifies the statement by adding, "at least some of the times".

He goes on to state: "The nature of the required scenario can vary from a loose plan to a detailed treatment of the plot. But the importance of knowing the basic structure and direction of the piece is strongly recommended."

Again, however, he cautions: ". . . there is a chance that such a plan could stifle the creative process if it is applied inflexibly." At this point he carefully advises that students ". . . be advised to regard the scenario as a useful, but flexible guide and not as written in stone". He further adds that "students should be (also) encouraged to begin writing dialogue without concern for the ultimate dialogue".

Clearly though, O'Farrell places emphasis on the concept that writing is unique and personal, and that every teacher and every student is unique.

In the concluding portion of this section, he states:

"The use (or non-use) of a scenario is evidently a very personal matter and teachers should help each student identify an approach that works well for him or her."

"The search for individual ways of working should be encouraged by the school program."

William Archer, in Playmaking a manual of craftsmanship, strongly supports the use of scenario (or "skeleton") when he states on page 54: if the playwright ". . . is able to dispense with a scenario on paper, it can only be because his mind is so clear, and so retentive of its own ideas, as to enable him to carry in his head, always ready for reference, a more or less detailed scheme. Go-as-you-please composition may be possible for the novelist, . . . ; but in a dramatic structure of any considerable extent, proportion, balance, . . . a scenario is almost as indispensable to the dramatist as a set of plans to an architect."

Further to this, he concludes by saying: ". . . the typical modern play is a . . . closely-knit organism, in which every word has to be weighed far more carefully than it was by playwrights who stood near to the days of improvisation and could indulge in "the large utterance of the early gods'." (p. 56)

Like O'Farrell, he also warns about inflexibility and casting the scenario "in stone":

". . . it would seem to be an unfavourable sign when a drama presents itself at an early stage with a fixed and unalterable outline. The result may be a powerful, logical, well-knit piece of work; but the breath of life will scarcely be in it."

In conclusion, Archer advises on page 58, that the scenario or "scheme, should not then, . . . become so hard and fast as to allow his characters no elbow room for such manifestations of spontaneity".

Such "schemes", scenarios or "skeletons" are not unlike the process involved in writing for the screen and for television. For example, Eugene Vale, the author of The technique of screen and television writing, quotes Maurice

Maeterlinek, "a man whose creations earned him a Nobel Prize . . .": "To have ideas is paradise - to work them out is hell."

He then proceeds to explain, very carefully and clearly, the process involved in writing a screenplay. Vale subdivides the process into individual, concise "stepping stones". On pages 257 and 258 he summarizes the phases: "outline" (about 6 pages), "treatment" (about 30 pages), "continuity" (about 60-100 pages), and "screenplay" (about 130 pages).

Once again, we are presented with the concept of an outline.

On page 259, Vale clarifies the role of the outline in the writing of a screenplay:

The outline states the salient facts of the forthcoming screenplay. It need not yet contain all the facts; but those that are given should suffice to describe a full and complete story, without holes or creaky developments. Some of the missing elements may be inserted later, provided their absence raises no crucial questions; other facts may be altered in the subsequent development. But the importance of the primary layout cannot be overestimated.

Generally speaking, the literature favours the use of some sort of outline, skeleton or initial layout. The "scenario", as it will be called in this study, seems to be the vehicle necessary to focus the playwright's creative thinking processes.

As Vale concludes on p. 259:

"The ground you stand on will decisively predestine the building you have in mind."

## Chapter Two

### I The Playwriting Unit

#### A. Background Information

The playwriting unit officially began on Monday, May 14, and was the final academic unit of the school year. Students reviewed their fifteen-page booklets and folders on Monday morning - 9A at 9:00 a.m., and 9C at 9:30 a.m.

During the first week, specific classes were set aside for the playwriting unit, while other classes were devoted to literature study. Students in 9A were in the process of completing The Tempest, while the students in 9C were finishing up A Midsummer Night's Dream. This was a deliberate strategy designed to assist the students in preparing for their own plays.

On Tuesday, 9A and 9C each had two English Language Arts classes. During these classes, the "Elements of Drama I and II (pages 3, 4 and 5 of the "Student Booklets") were discussed in relation to the Shakespearean play that each group was studying. Students used their booklets and jotted down notes throughout the discussion periods. Students began to see the elements as structural concepts that are crucial in the design of a successful play.

Students were then encouraged, through discussion, to relate the concepts to other literary works that they had studied earlier during the course of the year. Specific short stories were cited, and examples drawn from them to illustrate the thirteen "Elements of Drama". Then the students were instructed to conduct the same type of analysis based on novels they had studied, or books they had read for book reports this year.

The final phase of the discussion invited them to relate the elements to their own writing; first to the short stories they had written during the first term, then to the short scenes they had written for creative drama classes during third term.

This process required two full forty minute periods of class time, but the students required this pre-writing review. Although they had studied the concepts throughout the year and had demonstrated in unit testing that they understood them, they required additional teaching to ensure that they could relate the concepts to their own thinking, planning and writing.

On Wednesday morning, the students were grouped heterogeneously according to the "Jigsaw Method" - a Cooperative Learning Technique.

The students in each class were divided into five "general groups" consisting of four members in each. Unfortunately, in both classes, there were more than twenty students. Consequently, some groups had five members. There was really no problem, as the students were accustomed to working in cooperative groups, and to splitting up the tasks while in these groups.

Each person in the general group was assigned a number and a task.

For example, in 9A, general group "one" would consist of:

person one, who would prepare, and become an "expert" on, "theme" and "plot".

person two, who would prepare, and become an "expert" on, "inciting incident", "rising action", "climax, and "dénouement".

person three, who would prepare and become an "expert" on, "conflict", and "character".

person four, who would prepare and become an "expert" on, "setting", "atmosphere or mood", and "tone".

Not only would they be required to explain the elements fully, they would also have to illustrate them with examples from works studied or from their own writing.

The next phase was for the students to begin working in their "expert groups": all number one's would work together cooperatively, all number two's, all number three's, and all number four's. In the expert groups, the students would collaborate and design a "mini lesson" to take back to the members of the general groups. It was the duty of each expert to provide members (of his/her general group) with the necessary information that would ensure all members with a thorough understanding and appreciation of each concept.

Students required two full classes to complete their "mini lessons"; for that reason, on Thursday, both 9A and 9C were each given two periods to complete the assignment.

On Friday, there were several loose ends to tie up and many organizational matters to attend to. Students were then ready to work in their general groups when classes re-convened on Tuesday, May 22 (Monday was "Victoria Day").

Students in both classes worked in their general groups for one entire period and part of another. (This part of the assignment took approximately one hour - each period is forty minutes.)

When students were satisfied that they had successfully completed both sections ("Elements of Drama I and II"), it was time to move on to the "Scenario or Outline" (p. 6) of the "Student Booklet".

B. The Scenario or Outline Phase

Both groups of students, by the time they were ready to begin the playwriting unit, had essentially completed the basic requirements of the Grade Nine English Language Arts course. They had met for English Language Arts eleven times during each six-day cycle, and had "lived through" approximately twenty-nine, six-day cycles. They were ready for a psychological break, they were ready for something a little different;

especially in view of the fact that they still had final exams to write. This unit then, was "icing on the cake," and a pleasant way to finish off an otherwise very hectic year.

The students were familiar with outlining strategies. During the course of the school year, they had been exposed to a wide variety of writing experiences. Outlining, or pre-writing organizational strategies, was seen as being extremely important. In the past, the students had used whatever was necessary, whenever it was necessary. They had written one short story, two book reports, several essays, miscellaneous poems, numerous short compositions and character analyses, two research papers and several smaller, miscellaneous assignments. For all of their major writing assignments, they were expected to create an outline ahead of time; in some cases, the outline was to be submitted with the first and/or final draft.

Thus the students were not walking into their project "cold". They all had had some experience in outlining, and in many cases they had developed some kind of method that usually worked. This however, was a little different. They were being asked to use a specific outline model (or scenario), they would have to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of their own

writing, and then their thoughts and opinions would be used as part of an educational research project. This was all rather intimidating for some of them.

During the afternoon of Tuesday, May 22, the students officially began to plot out their outlines - some begrudgingly, others with great zest. They had been told about it several weeks earlier. As a result, many students had a very clear idea of what they were going to do; some even had their scenarios finished and were ready to begin writing the dialogue.

For the purposes of the study, May 22 was considered Day One of the unit because this marked the first day of preparatory writing for the actual play. Day One was also the last day that all of the students worked together on the same task, at the same time and in the same place. From this point on, and for ten school days after, the students worked virtually independently. They were allowed a great deal of flexibility in that they could conference with other students in the class or with the teacher whenever it was necessary. Also, they were not required to work on the scenarios or plays during every language arts period. Some periods were devoted to other course work that had to be completed before the exam review cycle began (June 12). During designated playwriting time,

students were given the freedom to decide what it was that they wished to do. Some students spent most of these designated periods simply planning and organizing because they were doing the actual writing at home. They said they wrote at home either because they had a computer and all their "stuff" was at home, or because they found it easier to write at home.

It was interesting to see how many students found it better when they moved away from their regular locations in the lecture theatre. Some explained in their journals that they could not be creative in their regular seats. Some students wrote their plays in the library, while others wrote them on the floor in the theatre.

During the introductory lesson on the scenario phase, students were told that this phase "is often necessary in the writing of a play or script, and that the "scenario phase may also assist the playwright" in developing a play. They were also told that everyone was expected to attempt a scenario. However, if it did not help them, they were required to explain why, and then they were required to describe what did help. They were informed that all of these factors were extremely important to the study, and that their full cooperation was expected in this regard.

## II The Writing Process

### A. Student Journals

"It's hard to get ideas, but once you have an idea, you shouldn't really want to stop writing for fear the flow (of ideas) would stop and you might forget these ideas."

"I like to write in one sitting and edit in another, although I didn't do that this time."

"When I read over my play, I made some changes (in order) to clear up some details. About the process, I get an idea and write it down."

"Parts of my play are 'bulky'. I'm not sure what to do - add or delete. Some parts just don't sound right."

"When you recopy something, it's hard to get the 'big picture'. I still don't want to delete any details, but I will probably have to. I don't know what parts to omit though."

- A student (9A)

Once the students began writing their first drafts, it became increasingly more difficult to monitor their progress and to observe the process. There was a constant stream of students requiring assistance, advice, or encouragement. For the teacher, the classes literally "flew by"; then there was the task of interpreting all of the observational notes and recording them as daily journal entries. Because it was such an extremely busy time and very difficult to write highly-detailed notes, it helped considerably to refer back to the Student's Journals. Their journals

became exceptionally important in the study; much more important than originally believed.

The writing classes were designed for that purpose - to write. Quite often the students spent the whole class working on their plays; consequently, they would not have enough time to write in their journals. This was frustrating for many of them because they had begun to see the benefits of their journals and were really beginning to enjoy using them. Soon, they either began to ask to take their folders home, or they asked if they could have time allotted in class just to work in their journals. These students had begun to depend on their journals for something more than storage space. They were starting to use their journals in the way that they had used their scenarios, as important tools in their writing. As the journal took on a more prominent role, a definite pattern began to emerge in both classes. Students who had relied heavily on their scenarios at the beginning of the unit, were now using their journals for many of the same reasons - for organization, for focus, for reference and for valuable insights. Ultimately, for some, the journal became a place to express important thoughts and feelings regarding the playwriting process.

A journal simply gives me a place to put (my) thoughts, so that I may focus on my play . . . The journal is important to my concentration, and without it I'm sure I would have found things very difficult.

- A student (9A)

B. Student Journal Entries - Sample Excerpts

May 25 - I got into my characters and thought about their feelings and reactions.

I asked some friends to read my dialogue up to (the point) where I had finished. It helped me . . . in that I got more than one idea.

- A student (9A)

May 25 - I feel that I have to focus on my characters more so that I can inform the audience (as to) who they really are, and the . . . different emotions they have.

- A student (9A)

May 22 - I brainstormed and thought of about 3 ideas for 1) a scary tragedy 2) a comedy 3) a scary, mysterious play. I chose #3.

May 23 - I wrote the characters, setting and part of the plot.

May 24 - I wrote the rest of the plot and the theme, and thought about what could happen between my characters.

May 25 - Today I began my play. I wrote the characters and the scene and the first few lines. To find the last names of my characters, I opened a telephone book to a random page, closed my eyes, and pointed. (I did this at home).

May 30 - I changed the names of my characters (except for the wife, Debbie). I also changed the scene, then I decided to start over because my characters weren't anything like what I had planned. I went over what would happen in the next few acts in my mind, and decided that my (new character) scenario wasn't as

good as I thought it would be. In fact, the scene I started has more potential interest than the one I had originally planned. I kept it, and continued writing.

June 2nd- I wrote the second scene. I had some trouble trying to describe Mark's room (scene 3), which was supposed to be strange and eerie, so I asked my dad (who sells electronic things), to tell me what kind of lighting was really eerie. He suggested a black light. Then I went and looked through all our books, and found some on the occult and other psychic things. I was also worried that maybe scene 2 drags on too long.

June 3rd- I finished scene 3.

June 4th- I can't work tonight, so I have to really do alot in class. I'm starting scene 4. I had a bit of trouble deciding if I should end the scene after just 5 lines when Ian and Mark leave the kitchen and go to Mark's room, or if I should just let them leave without stopping the scene. I decided not to stop it.

- A student (9C)

Tuesday

May 22/90- I just started my scenario today. The idea of my play first came to me. The scenario is working well so far. I believe the scenario will help me because I find it difficult to complete my ideas. I could have a wonderful idea and end up writing only a paragraph. This forces me to organize my thoughts.

Wednesday

May 23/90- I completed my scenario today. I have organized all of my ideas and now must put it into play format.

Thursday

May 24/90- I proofread and checked my scenario. No major changes were necessary, only minor spelling errors and word changes.

Friday

May 25/90- I completed other English work and did not work on my scenario.

Monday

May 28/90- I worked on writing the basic form of the play in point form. I did this to completely lay out my ideas.

Tuesday

May 29/90- After receiving approval from Ms. Nentwig, I began work on my play. I wrote out my list of characters and roles and the beginning narration of the play.

Wednesday

May 30/90- In the morning class I updated my personal journal and began working on my play again. I worked in the Library and found it much easier to work in a smaller, quieter environment such as the conference room.

Thursday

May 31/90- Today I wrote a brief outline of my character and what I wanted to do with my play.

Tuesday

June 5/90- I did the bulk of my play today. I really used the two classes given. I have written much more than I expected. I can now see the scenario working.

- A student (9A)

- May 22 - Most of the class was spent going over the elements of drama and discussing the procedure of the whole drama project and what we have to do. I then decided what I was going to do.
- May 23 - Started to fit everything together in my mind, and wrote down a few points.
- May 24 - Wrote my scenario down. While I was writing, I found myself unable to finish. I could not think of an ending. So I began to write, just write, not neatly or organized . . .
- May 25 - Today I started to fit my play together and began to write my dialogue. When I started to write, I could tell what was going to happen next. I can now figure out an ending.
- May 26 - (Weekend) I wrote out more dialogue for my play. I found myself writing something down and then I would change my mind and scratch

out the whole scene. Then I would start all over again.

- May 28 - Wrote more dialogue.
- May 30 - Wrote down more scenes. I found that writing the climax of the play is much easier than anything else. What usually would take two days to write, only took me fifty minutes. Also, throughout the whole project I can not sit in my regular spot. I have to move to another seat.
- May 31 - Today I took my pile of paper which was a mess, and wrote out the play. This helped me because I felt organized in what I was doing.
- June 4 - I decided to add a prologue and an epilogue to my play. The play was not structured and needed them.
- June 5 - By writing a prologue and epilogue, it helped me structure my play. Since I am a strong expository writer, it took me away from the play format.

I recopied my first draft.

- A student (9C)

### Comments

This student is highly organized and efficient; her attention to detail was remarkable throughout the unit. She arrived on day one with great quantities of notes to use in her scenario and in her first draft. Consequently, she was ready to write her play well before many of the others had completed a good, working outline.

Unfortunately, she became rather frustrated midway through her first draft. She felt that the plot was

too loose and that things simply were not coming together that well. After discussing the role of the prologue (introductory lines by one of the principal characters) and the epilogue (further comment, interpretation of information by one of the principal characters), she determined that these devices were required in her play.

She spent an evening incorporating both into her play. The result was an effective, well-written, three-act play. Most importantly, she was pleased with the results.

C. Classroom Realities - Teacher Journal Entries

The following represents teacher journal entries based on observational notes, classroom discussion, student comments, and student journal entries.

The entries reflect an immediacy, an on-the-spot flavour, that is indicative of this type of writing. It is beneficial to include this section, as it reflects many thoughts and feelings presented earlier in the chapter. Furthermore, it brings together numerous components of the entire two-week period.

"I feel it's inspiring to hear Ms. Nentwig's journal. It helps me to focus . . ."

Tuesday, May 22

9A (Period 7), 2:10 - 2:50

Class was nervous, hesitant about the assignment.

Some found scenario just not working, some could not think of anything. Some were "off and running"; could not wait to start. Went to library to begin during the morning class.

Wednesday, May 23

9A (Period 1), 8:50 - 9:30

Class seemed much more relaxed. Students were more open in comments about actual process. Many discussing the role/use of scenario.

General comments indicated that many started with a fairly detailed scenario, but either scrapped it completely or changed it considerably. Some redid theirs after having been exposed to the pitfalls of unfocused thinking in the creation of a scenario.

Some seemed to want to write a story first as they didn't really understand the structure/form of the play. Once we "talked and walked through" the model and indicated stage directions accordingly, the script began to emerge. One girl seemed to want to order plot events in the margin as she thought and as she wrote.

Two students indicated they were having problems conceptualizing; thus the actual playwriting was literally impossible. I encouraged them to brainstorm and just start writing - either start writing a scenario or just write some kind of stuff! Eventually what happened was the play began to emerge from the "stuff".

9C (Period 2), 9:30 - 10:10

Generally students were well prepared and got down to work quickly and efficiently. Many had made numerous notes ahead of time, but found few helpful.

Two students intuitively developed their own scenario models as mine "didn't work" for them. (These students tend to be independent, creative thinkers.)

Interestingly, many students moved out of their regular seats and ended up working in their own space in the lecture theatre. Some worked individually, some with one partner (two groups), some in small, semi-cooperative groups - without being asked or told.

These students are starting to think about their (creative) thinking and the phenomena of their own unique creativity. It is fascinating.

For example . . .

"If you sit in the same spot everyday, you can't be creative."

"You are very much affected by your atmosphere."

"I have to imagine the scene - almost like seeing my play performed."

"I can never really see the people's faces (though); I am more interested in visualizing the motivation and the (resultant) events."

One student was helped when I drew a picture. It helped "set the stage" for his writing, helped him focus on an objective and on credible motivation for his characters.

Thursday, May 24

9A (Period 1), 8:50 - 9:30

Most students worked through the entire class on their scenarios and/or scripts.

Some are highly - motivated and are writing well beyond the one-act play. They do not seem concerned about the hard work involved in editing and redrafting. They just seem to love to write. It's almost like they have a story to tell and this is an ideal time to write it. Some of them have indicated that they would like to take a crack at writing a novel. Some of them have taken their ideas for their plays from novels that they have considered but have never written. One student is particularly fond of navy battles and reads a great deal in this area. He had problems focusing on one main idea. He had several ideas for a feature length screenplay, but was having trouble focusing on one major setting, on a simple conflict and on relatively few characters. Characterization and motivation seemed particularly difficult. After some discussion and clarification, the student went away fully prepared to write.

Another student in the class is an avid reader of fantasy novels, and his creative writing reflects this interest. His writing is rich in imagery, symbolism, adventure and intrigue. Again, his greatest fear is not being able to finish before the end of the school year. He is focused, but refuses to be talked into a one-act play. His could easily become a "made-for-television mini-series".

Other students in the class are reaching back into their own life experiences and memories. Consequently, an interesting "tapestry" of sorts is being woven in this class. Some of these students have had incredible life experiences in their relatively short lives. Their ability to recreate their experiences is impressive.

(One student has finished.)

9C (Period 7), 2:10 - 2:50

This class is generally well-prepared, motivated and extremely serious. My most common expression with this group is "just do it!" They are great thinkers (I am not being facetious.) They weigh, consider and debate extensively, intensely, before writing - almost painstakingly. They have become more and more reflective during their creative processing.

They worked right from the beginning of the class to the end - without interruption. I have learned a great deal from them. They are so enthusiastic in sharing their thoughts and concerns.

Both classes have a surprisingly mature views of the world; I am impressed.

Conference writing used in conjunction with critical thinking skills in a dramatic/theatrical genre could be almost a purifying experience - a catharsis - for some of these kids.

Some are still developing their own models. One student constantly refers to her character outline: "That's all I ever do when I write."

Another stated: "I couldn't put the stuff down on paper" (especially the scenario model given the class); "I just started writing. I could verbalize my ideas, but couldn't write them in the scenario". I just seemed "to know what I wanted to do" right from the start. I didn't need the scenario.

Others just started writing a story, and the script began to emerge from the writing.

Others commented on the need for a certain atmosphere to write a certain kind of story . . . it motivates the "flow of the inner self".

(Another student finished today.)

9C (Period 1), 8:50 - 9:30, Friday, May 25

9A (Period 2), 9:30 - 10:10, Friday, May 25

Generally, both classes were "winding down", both appeared tired and had problems starting (9C), and keeping up the momentum (9A).

The biggest problem, in both classes, seems to be in the whole area of stage directions or something to hold the whole thing together.

Some are so steeped in writing stories that they can't seem to break away from the story genre - lots of description sprinkled throughout the dialogue. What I did is I took one finished script and edited the stage directions. I showed students in both classes how to eliminate unnecessary directions and information, thereby creating a much tighter piece of writing. The students really appreciated this, especially when I took the finished script, made the necessary changes, then photocopied it - changes and all - and gave some of them copies. They found it really helpful to see how relatively simple it is to eliminate unnecessary dialogue and description

simply by ending a scene and starting a new one. As I told them - "leave something to the audience's imagination". This concept is quite often the "bottom line" in truly exciting drama.

Even though it is Friday and we are all tired, it was a good day. I feel I am getting to know some of them so well. Too bad it's almost the end of the school year.

I am most impressed with some students in both classes. Their thoroughness is incredible and their insights remarkable. Some are really reaching into themselves to create very beautiful stories

Monday, May 28

9A (Period 3), 10:10 - 10:50

This was probably one of the best classes I have seen in my teaching career - certainly the best in terms of this project.

As I told the students at the end of the class, it was almost as though I could feel the thinking going on. I would say that the students in 9A have reached a new level of awareness, a new level of consciousness. They are truly actively involved in their learning and are beginning to reflect on their critical and creative thinking. Although there was evidence of this last Thursday, today's class was even more noteworthy in this regard.

One student who has been absent, but who has managed to work ahead independently at home, had the following comments to make:

"I know what I want to do, but not what I want to say."

"I think a scenario would work better for a short story."

"Scenarios are written; plays are more active, and should just happen."

"The scenario (model) is not helping me."

While on the other hand, another (talented) writer in the class had the following observation:

"I can't really write until I write a scenario or outline" (creative writing). Especially in planning the plot of a creative piece.

In expository writing/essay writing, he does not feel the need to write detailed outlines (yet his expository writing is extraordinarily focused and effective).

He further stated that in creative writing, he must plan a detailed scenario as "this is a very different kind of writing for me."

In reading over his detailed plans and logical notes, I see a superior play developing - perhaps publishable? It will be very interesting to see what this student ends up writing.

His plot involves, in a sensitive and mature way, the last, sad days and subsequent death of a disenchanted, elderly man.

I have learned so much from these two students. I see myself becoming a learner; my role as teacher is changing . . . I am now a part of this exciting learning experience, and I am now seeing the importance of self-reflection and self-analysis. I am seeing the students in a far different way than I did last September. This self-reflective, dialectical process has affected me as well as the students.

Interestingly, I have been reading my journal to my students at the beginning of our writing sessions (May 24/May 28). I feel that my sharing helps them to understand the process of self-reflection and analysis; it provides a catalyst in the whole idea of metacognition. It seems to help them to take the process more seriously, to understand their own creative thinking, and to understand themselves.

A last note in this evolutionary process was an interesting, somewhat transitional insight from another student in the class:

"I don't think that the scenario really helped me that much; I don't need it."

"What really seems to be helping me is the journal!"

There's a lot more to be said about self-reflection . . . !

9C (Period 5), 12:50 - 1:30

The class did very little. Their work today seemed "piece meal" and a classic example of tokenism: "Let's give her what we think she wants". I spent most of my time seeing if they were on task and monitoring their behavior.

Many of them could not settle down long enough to determine if they had any problems or questions. Those who did ask for assistance, did so openly and went away with a focused concept.

Others who were further along only required suggestions and help in specific areas to simplify certain scenes and clarify general plot development.

And then there were the few who wanted to be left alone - they are 'way ahead of everyone else.

It will be interesting to look at their folders to see what they've come up with so far.

In conclusion, the Magic that I saw in 9A this a.m. just wasn't happening in 9C this afternoon - too bad.

Wednesday, May 30

9A (Period 1), 8:50 - 9:30

I found that I had to clarify my expectations regarding the journal.

Yesterday, 9A worked for only part of the class on general writing. Consequently, some students did not have an opportunity (or take the opportunity) to work on their plays.

Although I didn't teach 9C yesterday (I don't see them on day 2), I had the chance to check their writing folders. Generally, I found they had copious quantities of notes and miscellaneous stuff for their plays, but their journal entries were not as complete as I had hoped. It is for this reason that I clarified with the other class the function of the journal.

I made it clear to 9A (and I will do the same with 9C) that the journal basically has a triple role; *i.e.* it acts as a description of what occurred in the classroom (the "what" part); it serves as a rationale because it justifies what occurred (the "why" part); and it serves as an analysis because it examines process (the "how" part). I have found that some students extended it even further to an evaluative level. Not only are they evaluating what they did during the previous class, they are evaluating as they plan future sections of their plays.

This morning, again, there is that sense of dedication and motivation that I witnessed on Monday morning. They are working well. Again, I am impressed with their willingness.

I will take their playwriting folders in next period this morning (10:50). It will be interesting to see what they've written so far.

I notice this morning most students working individually; however, a group of three is functioning semi-collaboratively.

I also see students referring to atlases for factual background information. One student has spent a major portion of the class checking through the dictionary; I'm not sure why! (I'll ask.)

This class will have 20 minutes next period to finish up, then I'll take them into The Tempest.

9C (Period 2), 9:30 - 10:30

As I suggested, I did clarify my position re Journals.

Students worked for 15 minutes on journal entries that they had not done.

They seemed to be quite serious, although some needed prodding. Most are really "into" what they're doing.

Some are questioning written scenarios. If a scenario is an outline, then why can't they have it in their head, they argue. I respond, "why not, indeed!"

A handful in this class is reflecting and evaluating. I believe that I will see more of this later today.

9A (Period 3), 10:10 - 10:50

One student who has finished is having problems entitling her play. I think we will have to brainstorm and try to resolve this one.

### Comments

This is an example where the students can really help one another. Rather than simply putting down something, or anything, for a title, the student shared her problem with several people in the class. Within two minutes, she had a wonderful title. Interestingly, it was suggested by a student who had been, initially, most "reluctant" to be involved in the playwriting unit. Further to this, it was a title that I had considered for her play, but had never verbalized to anyone in the class.

Thursday, May 31

9C (Period 4), 10:50 - 11:30

Students in this class, although somewhat behind the other group, managed to get a great deal done during the class. Most worked very well independently. Those who did not work alone, worked in small groups, or with one other person to share ideas and/or to get help. I find that I am constantly busy talking to students about their writing. Normally in a forty minute class I speak to and conference with about six or eight students.

Most students in 9C are approximately half way through their plays. Four students have finished writing their first draft. Many feel that they will finish tomorrow. I am hoping that all students will finish by Tuesday, June 5.

The first drafts have been quite good. Mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure) have been generally fairly good. Ideas have been interesting. Students at this level seem to be more comfortable relating to their own personal experiences. Consequently, many plays are quite "real" and fascinating to read.

It is time to teach a lesson on form with these kids. I have not been that impressed with the way that they have organized and set up their plays; however, this problem is easily fixed. Their ideas are good; they are highly motivated and they are writing honestly. What else could I possibly want? Organizational structure, form, etc. can be taught, ideas can not.

I see a need for further work on stage directions - in terms of format and structure.

For example, many students have telephone conversations occurring in their plays and are not sure how to include them.

Other students have their characters thinking aloud - almost talking to themselves. Consequently, I had to talk about soliloquies or asides, and how soliloquies are handled, from a technical standpoint, in the professional theatre.

I worked quite closely with seven students today during this class. Generally, it was a good, solid working class.

9A (Period 5), 12:50 - 1:30

This class seemed tired today. They couldn't seem to focus until I moved them, or until I spoke to them about their not working.

Some wanted to work outside. Normally this is a good idea when kids are "really into" what they are doing. Unfortunately, they really weren't - at least most of them weren't - and so many accomplished very little. (Interestingly, some commented on this in their journals.)

One student, for example, has done very little actual writing. The reason is - no ideas, etc., etc., etc. I will observe this student carefully on Friday, check the work in the writing folder, and make some decisions at that point.

This class will work completely independently tomorrow. There will be no opportunity to collaborate at all - with me or anyone else.

Everyone (including me) seemed to need a break today. This kind of project is intense, to say the least. Genuine reflection and analysis is very hard work!

Friday, June 1

Definitely we will wrap this project up by next Tuesday. The next big thing will be editing the rest of the finished plays.

I have left out sample scripts for them to look at. This, I hope, will assist them in their final drafts.

I am currently working on The Tempest with 9A and A Midsummer Night's Dream with 9C. I think this has been helpful. As we analyze Shakespeare's plays, many students begin to analyze their own plays using many of the same techniques of summarizing, interpreting, evaluating, and hypothesizing that we use in literary analysis.

Monday, June 4

9C (Period 4), 10:50 - 11:30

Most students are finishing up their first drafts.

I am taking in all folders.

i.e. first drafts and scenarios; journal entries and literary terms - tomorrow.

I reviewed my marking system with both classes. Unfortunately, 9A did not have class time to write today.

Marks will be allotted as follows:

- I Journal entries  
Literary terms  
(10 marks)
- II Scenarios  
First Drafts  
Final Drafts  
(25 marks)  
(Using St. James-Assiniboia Marking Guide)

The unit will be formally completed at 3:30 tomorrow (Tuesday, June 5).

The unit will have taken exactly two weeks: Tuesday, May 22 - Tuesday, June 5.  
(10 school days)

Extra time will be required by students (later this week) to finish up first drafts of longer plays, or for students who have been absent.

Final drafts are to be submitted on Thursday. Students requiring extra time may take until Monday, June 11 (however, no class time will be provided).

On Monday, June 11, students will respond to the survey questions. I have set aside two, forty minute periods for this purpose.

9A - 8:50 - 9:30  
2:50 - 3:30

9C - 1:30 - 2:50

### Special Notes

- I Regarding the final drafts, students are to submit handwritten drafts or typed drafts on standard 8 1/2" x 11".

Students are to follow proper procedures in general organization and layout. Final drafts are to be error free, and must follow a recognized play format.

Students must include an academic title page, and the plays must be in a folder.

- II Use of prologue/epilogue

One student in 9C is employing both in her play, as she feels that it would be ambiguous without them.

Another student is experiencing problems in writing his plot (continuity, credibility). One other student suggested that he incorporate an epilogue in his play and perhaps a prologue as well.

- III Some students did not include a list of the characters involved in their plays ("Cast of Characters") in the first draft. I reviewed the importance of including this in the first and (certainly) in the final drafts. It helps me considerably when reading a script for the first time.

Generally things are progressing well. The students are working hard to complete the work on time.

Tuesday, June 5

p. 3 - 9A (Period 3), 10:10 - 10:50

p. 5 - 9C (Period 5), 12:50 - 1:20 - Short Class-Staff Meeting

There was a decided urgency today as students tried to complete their first drafts and organize all of their journal materials. The students worked hard today. Although most students will finish their final drafts for next Monday (June 11), some will not. I have had to make changes/modifications as we work through this unit. As I planned the unit, it all seemed so smooth

and easy. Even after imagining "worst-case scenarios", certain kinds of problems, etc., etc. I could never have been prepared for the actual events that transpired each day during the course of the unit.

I can see that even more structure is required by novice writers:

- More definite information is needed re first drafts, especially in format, organization of dialogue, setting (scene) directions, and stage (director's) directions.

However, some students didn't need any of this; they seemed to do their own research and came up with excellent models on their own.

- More specific information is needed in the sample play that I included in their package of materials. I will ask permission of some students to use their plays as samples for future playwriting units. Some students are writing better "stuff" than what I could possibly find in books.
- Samples of student work (superior work), as opposed to professional, published plays. Students seemed a "tad" intimidated by professional plays. They seemed to feel better about asking one another and/or me for help. We truly have been working as a team. I have to disagree with O'Farrell's suggestions re the use of professional works. They have their place, of course, in the classroom, but I question any sort of sustained use of such (materials). It does not seem in keeping with this process/collaborative approach to keep sending them back to professional playwrights when they are stuck. I would rather build a bank of superior works written by other students and tell them refer to them when they need help. It seems to me that we are defeating our purpose when we have been encouraging our students to write, to reflect, and to write again; when we have been encouraging them to create and to develop their own literary works. Then, when they need help, we give them published plays by professional playwrights. Students must read and learn from the writing of their peers before we can expect them to benefit from the work of professional playwrights.

Professional writing certainly has its place, but all too often it is over emphasized and frightens our truly talented, but novice writers.

Wednesday, June 6

I don't see 9C on day 2. 9A students used this class to continue working. My role today basically was one of slave driver or babysitter. Our Grade Nine "Farewell" dinner and dance is on Friday. Students who have finished first drafts (and there are many who have), were allowed to assist in completing decorations for the gala evening.

I was left with only five industrious students. I learned a great deal more about these people. (It seems that this one-on-one interaction in a conference writing mode is highly motivating and highly entertaining too!)

Thursday, June 9

As Farewell looms closer, so does my final deadline for all outstanding first drafts. All students except for one in 9A and two in 9C have finished the first draft phase. I am nearly blind from reading plays, (but I am impressed with what I read).

Friday, June 8 - 11:30

Some use their writing as a chance to live out their dreams, their fantasies.

One student has written a beautiful scene wherein she is the principal character. The scene involves her engagement to the young man she is now seeing.

(How many times have kids imagined such scenes?) She has written it all down and is getting credit for it! She is coming to terms with a lot of realities. Perhaps she will see, as her play concludes, that it may not be all that wonderful.

Friday, June 8 - 3:30 (Last Entry)

Again, I truly believe that every single one of these kids has a story to tell and this is his/her chance to tell it.

Today one of my students told me that she finished her play last night and shared it with her dying grandfather. Shortly after having read it, he died in his hospital bed. He had been her principal character. He had promised her when she started the play that he would wait until she finished writing it. He kept his promise.

There is a lot to be said about writing as a catharsis - as a purifying agent of the soul. I have always believed this to be true. Some of my students also believe this.

Many of them have learned a great deal from this experience; it seems to have made them appreciate the beauty of writing, of thinking and of reflecting on writing and thinking. I hope they never lose it.

## Chapter Three

### Student Survey Responses - 9A

#### NOTE TO READER:

The following survey responses have been included in this document as they were first written by the students. The responses appear here in their unedited, original form.

#### Question One

Do you feel that a scenario, or some kind of outline, helps you to focus your thoughts regarding any of the following literary elements: plot, theme, character or conflict?

If so, how?

If so, why?

#### "Yes" Responses

1. Yes, I think that a scenario definately did help me with all the literary elements. It helped me with the plot, by giving me an idea as to what will happen in the play, which I afterwards added on to. It also really helped with the characters and what their personalities would be like.
2. Yes, I believe that the scenario helped me organize my thoughts. It gave me an outline or structure to build on, then when I had finished the scenario, I just added in the details and converted it to stage directions and dialogue. However, I find it difficult to write a play because my mind tends to think of a story in a sentenced format. The scenario helped my very much in this aspect by creating an outline, which is something that I also use when writing a story.
3. Yes, I do feel some kind of outline or scenario helped me to focus on my thoughts because this way you get to think and plan what your plot, theme, character and conflict are going to be, instead of letting new ideas come to mind as your writing.  
  
Also, when you done your scenario your in a sense done your play because all you have left is the putting together of your ideas in story/dialoge form.
4. Yes, I feel that a scenario helped me a great deal. it helped me organize my thoughts and ideas. It was easy to fall back on and made it easier to write my play.

5. I felt that the scenario really did help me in writing my play. It helped me to focus my thinking and where I wanted my setting to take place.
6. A scenario does help me focus my thoughts. It helps me start the writing process without second thoughts. Even though I did change the scenario while I was writing my play, it gave me an outline, the bases of writing the play.
7. I feel that a scenario helps me to focus my thoughts because it helps to picture an idea. It is easier because you know what your topic is and you can clearly think of the order of events. If you are writing a scenario it gives you a head start. But if I did not write a scenario, it would take me time to imagine the plot, setting, theme, characters and plot.
8. I feel that the scenario lets you go back and focus your thoughts every time you can not remember a certain aspect of a character you can go back to your scenario.  
  
I feel that a scenario lets you plan the story the way you wanted it to be. It helps you focus on setting, plot, theme, characterization, and conflict.
9. I feel that the scenario helps me in my writing of plays and stories. I believe that it helps me in many ways. It helps me to organize and plot out my idea. The scenario enables me to write more; stay on topic; and write what I had set out to write.
10. Yes, I feel that writing a scenario helped me alot. It helped me organize my thoughts and feeling towards the story in what I was going to write. The plot was easier to figure out. Everything fell into place. My scenario was completely different from how my story turned out but if I needed ideas, I just looked at my scenario.
11. Yes I feel that scenarios help because they keep you on the right track and they help you focus your ideas and how they help you focus they make you concentrate on your ideas, and organized myself better.
12. I believe that the scenario did help me. The plot was organized so that I didn't have to go back and change anything. In the story I wrote, I had troubles making everything in a logical order. The theme had not helped in the scenario because later on in the first draft, I change it. The personality of the characters and the characters themselves did not change in how I was going to have them. It helped me, by not having to think of new personalities. The conflict was very much the same, it had no change then in the end of the final draft.
13. Yes, I feel that a scenario helps me focus my thoughts on theme, setting & characters. It helped by making me think before I could write. It also helped me sort out what I thought

about. Although the outline helped me at the beginning, it frustrated me later. I knew I had to think of a scenario first before I had to write my play. The thought of having to think everything out first scared me, probably because I thought I had to do each question separately. (i.e. first think of theme, then setting, etc. in order.) I thought I had to think each question & come up with an answer not thinking of a whole play & then fill in the scenario. After thinking of a whole play, basically from the beginning to end, the scenario helped me. I guess I usually do a brief scenario in my head (not on paper) but I think of the same concepts & then write my play. The scenario I think of in my head is a lot less detailed than the one I did for this play. I think this scenario helped me expand my ideas before I wrote my play so I knew almost exactly what to write in my play. It did this because I had to write down almost in detail what to write.

The next time I write a play, I would rather be told to get an idea than be told to write a scenario; however, the (phases) in the scenario did help.

Basically the thought of having to write a scenario scared me because I never had to write one before, so I tried to take one phase at a time.

Next time I think I will use a scenario because it did help to organize my thinking and also now I know how to use them.

14. Yes, for me the scenario did help. For other people it might not have worked, but for me it did. The scenario helped because at first I had no idea what I was going to write about, and as I went along with each question, more ideas kept coming to me. Why. It helped me was because of the questions for example if it asked you characters you would just have to make up a few names. For setting, just think up a place.

#### Comments

The students who believed that the scenario phase did help them in focusing their thoughts cited many similar explanations. Students alluded to both plot and character more frequently than to theme and conflict. Although some discussed conflict and theme, it was superficial and almost

in passing. One stated, "The conflict was very much the same . . . no change in the final draft."

The majority discussed the sequence of events (plot), and the characters and their personalities. One suggested that the scenario helps you "remember a certain aspect of the character." Another student went on to suggest that it "helped me to focus on my thoughts . . . you get to think and plan what your plot, theme, character and conflict are going to be . . ." Further to this, another respondent explained that the outline assisted him in staying on topic; he wrote what he "had set out to write". Students suggested that the scenario "made it easier" and that it helped them "start the writing process without second thoughts".

Students also were aware that the scenario was designed to help, not hinder. For example, one person claimed that it "cuts down on distractions", while another stated it gave him a "head start"; others claimed the scenario was a time saver which made the whole process much easier.

However, respondent #13 initially saw the scenario as rather frightening. After wrestling with her thoughts for some time, she could see the benefits of the scenario; however, there remained some doubt in her final comments:

The next time I write a play, I would rather be told to get an idea than to be told to write a scenario; however , . . . the scenario did help."

"Next time I think I will use a scenario . . . "

Her lack of experience in writing plays is the major reason for her hesitation. More experience in playwriting would alleviate her anxiety regarding the use of a scenario.

Most would agree that writing a good scenario is the hardest part of writing a play, because "all you have left is the putting together of your ideas in story/dialogue form."

#### "No" Responses

1. I don't feel that an outline of any kind helps because when I write, I already know what the plot, theme, character and conflict are going to be about. For the play I just wrote, I was trying to come up with an original plot and make the storyline believable. While I was doing that, another play was building in my mind. So when I started writing all the ideas were in my head and I write most of it in one shot.
2. No. I feel that when writing, it is best just to think things through carefully, act it out in my mind, and from there I get it down on paper. Writing a scenario, to me, is a waste of time and thought. Without knowing it, you can easily lose your train of thought and could take precious time to get back on track. For me, writing is a fast-paced, high-speed thing that I like to get down on paper as quickly as possible. Changes can come with editing.
3. No, I don't believe using a scenario helps in the writing of my play. I prefer to work everything out in my mind.

4. No, I don't think the scenario helped me "focus my thoughts". The only thing I found the scenario useful for was reference. When I am ready to write anything I always have a story planned out all the scenario did for me was give me a place to write down the information I already had planned out. So, when I used the scenario it was strickly for reference.
5. No, I feel it is easier to just write instead of organizing it first.
6. No. I had to write my play first because I didn't know what would happen and I don't like planing what I'm going to write - I might write off topic.

#### Comments

Interestingly, four out of the six respondents were most definite about not needing to plan on paper because all of the ideas were in their minds, and they preferred it that way.

One stated, ". . . when I started writing, all the ideas were in my head", while another echoed, "I prefer to work everything out in my minds".

Another student emphasized that ". . . you can lose your train of thought" if you write a scenario.

Essentially, these students had developed a mental scenario which is a perfectly valid organizational technique. These students had a definite premise for a script, but did not have the time to write an outline. They

certainly did have an outline, and an effective one at that, as each of the four wrote successful, focused plays.

The student who emphasized that ". . . it is easier to just write" is a good writer. Her play was based on a recent personal experience and she wanted to write the play quickly while everything was fresh in her mind.

The final respondent who doesn't "like planning . . . (because) I might write off topic", wrote a play based, again, on a recent personal experience. She was relatively successful and quite focused in her writing.

#### Undecided - Question One

1. I feel that the outline helps in my writing, but only to a certain extent. It helps me in that I can look at it as sort of guid to what I'm suppose to write next. But sometimes as I write I have new ideas to incorporate into the plot and then the "outline" becomes obsolete.
2. When I am writing a play or any piece of writing I like to use some form of scenario. This play however was from my own experiences so my scenario was in my head. The scenario that I used was basically a sequential one. I needed to get down the order of the plot so I could relate my characters to it. This stage helped me write in a distinct order. The scenario provided was helpful because, it made me think about how I wanted the play to progress, and the actions of my characters.

#### Comments

The first respondent had written a rather lengthy short story and then began to write a one-act play based on an

idea that had emerged from the story. Essentially he used some of the events from the story as a type of outline. He then added to and deleted from his outline. Unfortunately, he never finished his play; his heart seemed to be in his original short story. He was more interested in expanding his original short story into a short novel. He felt he would like to adapt it into a screenplay next year, and then perhaps approach a publisher.

The second respondent used a type of outline or scenario, but not in the true sense of the word. He tended to use a mental scenario, however it was not detailed because he was writing about a recent experience. This student would probably use a stricter scenario form in another similar playwriting project.

## Question Two

Do you think that it makes a difference to the quality of your work when you write a scenario or outline before you write a play?

### "Yes" Responses

1. Yes, I think that it makes a difference to the quality of the work when you write a scenario because without a scenario you are writing from nothing and you have no base to work from.
2. I definitely would say that the scenario helped me. It organized all my ideas into a sequences of events which was easily put down on paper. I think if I were writing this as a story, I wouldn't have had to make an outline, but since I had to write the play in such an unfamiliar format, it helped to have my ideas on paper in the proper order so that I would not forget or mix them up.
3. As I said in the previous answer it did help me alot in fact by having this scenario, it gave me more of an incentive to finish my play early. I will continue in the future to use this method of the scenario.
4. Yes, I think that a scenario makes a difference to the quality of my work because I had records to keep looking at, and I had pieces that fit perfectly together with other pieces. Without the scenario, especially the journal, all my ideas would be a big blur in my mind.
5. I think that it makes a difference in the quality of your work when you write a scenario. It helped me to focus my thinking more, and made my play more interesting for students to read.
6. Yes, I believe that scenario does make a difference in the quality of work I do, in the way I donot repeat my-self during the play or skip from one day to another. It keeps me focused on my ideas and what I am writing.
7. I think it makes a difference to the quality of work if writing a scenario or outline before you write a play. Writing a scenario fills your head with ideas and thus it easier to write a play. When writing a scenario, you can focus and picture the way the plot will be, the theme, the characters and the conflict.
8. I think it helps strengthen all the literary elements for the play. For example, in my journal said: "I have been noticing how characters evolve, first it is just a mass that takes up space, then they get emotions, then body shape, then voices, then faces"

I believe without a scenario I would not be able to notice this.

9. I feel that the scenario makes a difference to the quality of my work. I've seen it make a difference in the length and the quality of my work.
10. Yes, I can honestly say that the scenario made a world of difference in the quality of my work. I think this is because I knew what I wanted to do so I wrote it down. I did know what I wanted to say so my words were not jumbled up or confusing to read.
11. I believe that the scenario made the play in a logical order than in a big pile of wax. Everything was right in front of me and if I did any changes I could look back at the scenario then at the whole play to see what happened in the past of the play.
12. Yes it did help the quality of my work. I had to write down in detail what my play was about, it saved me from getting many ideas later since I had a whole outline. If I hadn't written a scenario I would have crossed out and changed alot more. The scenario made the quality of my first draft better.
13. It might make a difference in your play because it makes you think out your play more, so your sure of what your writing. Also so the ending wont fall an not make sence. In other cases you might already have an idea that would be great and works out perfectly. It all depends on the person and their ideas.
14. Yes, because when you write a play you know what you want.
15. It probably would have made a difference on my play because I don't think mine is very well written. I based my play on my worst fear and what I would have gone through if it did happen. If I wrote a more complete outline, it might have turned out better.

#### Comments

The respondents were unanimous in that they felt that a writer needs a "base" so that everything "fits" better. Thoughts and ideas are focused; there is little or no confusion on the part of the playwright during the actual playwriting process. Furthermore, the process becomes easier and the play better because s/he can constantly refer

back to the scenario. This avoids repetition and improves the quality of the first draft.

The scenario assisted one respondent in particular because he had never written a play before; consequently, he relied heavily on it.

One student suggested that it helped assist in the development of credible characters, while another explained it provided her with the incentive to finish writing early.

One respondent stated that it helped her create a better ending, while another respondent reiterated, "Without the scenario, especially the journal, all my ideas would be a big blur in my mind".

In closing, one student reviewed her play by stating: "if I wrote a more complete outline, (my play) might have turned out better.

#### "No" Responses

1. No, I feel that using the scenario was just a hinderance I can do without. It slows me down and throughs me off track. There are too many editing phases to worry about. There just isn't the time for me to use one when it has no bearing on the quality of my work.
2. No, I don't think that the scenario made a difference in the quality of my work because I kept on changing my mind on the idea anyway.

3. No, not necessarily, for this play I think the quality of work would have been virtually the same. I think there is no difference from when I go through the scenario process and from when I just start at the playwriting phase.
4. No I don't think it really makes a difference to the quality of your work because it doesn't really matter if you write a scenario, your ideas get focused in your mind and if your ideas are there they're there and if they're not they're not.
5. No, the quality of the work is what you write; not how you write it. I found it didn't help to "focus" my thoughts.
6. I don't feel that it makes a difference to the qualities of my writing as a I find it doesn't make a significant difference.

#### Comments

Basically, respondent #5 summed up the opinions of the others. "It is what you write, not how you write it". Respondent #4 expanded on this by saying, ". . . if your ideas are there, they're there, and if they're not, they're not."

Generally the respondents prefer to plan in their heads, not on paper. They all had very definite ideas regarding their stories and had even more definite ideas regarding how they would tell them.

#### Undecided - Question Two

My quality of work is dictated by how organized my thoughts are. The scenario helped me organize my thoughts so my work turned out more the way I wanted it to. If I had been writing on a totally fictional group of characters and ideas, my play would not have been helped by a scenario. My characters had elements of all people in them, therefore my writing was just writing down what they would do or say. Some parts of the scenario really served no purpose as part of my writing.

Comments

This student remains unconvinced regarding the value of a scenario simply because he has only written one play, and it was a very short play based on a recent personal experience. Although he stated that he would not be helped by a scenario if he were "writing on a totally fictional group of characters", it is very possible that he would be unsuccessful if he did not use some sort of outlining method.

Question Three

After you have written a scenario, do you find that you change it as you write the play?

\* \* \*

If so, where do you tend to make your changes?

To what extent do you make changes?

\* \* \*

If not, why do you feel that you do not make any changes?

"Yes" Responses

1. After writing the scenario I did find that I changed the storyline alot as I wrote the play, to the extent where it definately wasn't even the same story at all. I tended to make changes in the main part of the play be adding on things to make it more interesting.
2. The only change that I made was that my two characters Mary, and Roman didn't really fall in love as much as I wanted them to, I didn't want to make my play drag on and bore my readers, so I decided to keep it short and sweet.
3. Yes, I found that after writing a scenario I changed some of it as I wrote my play. I found that the majority of the changes were in character and the plot. I don't usually make major changes because I like to stick to my original idea.
4. After I written a scenario, I find that I do change it as I write my play. I tended to make slight changes in my setting.
5. During the writing of my play, I had changed some of the content. The conflict was harsher than that I had put in my scenario. The ending, I had also changed, I feel that the ending of my play was stronger than that of my scenario.
6. Yes, I did change my play a great deal. I made my changes in the plot and the resolution. My ending needed a little work but I think I managed okay. I made some very drastic changes because I figured, if your going to write something that happened I might as well give it a suitable ending.
7. Yes, I change my scenario quite a bite while I write my play. I tend to make the changes mostly in conflict. I did change some characters as well, but not the characters themselves, their personality mostly, the way thay acted with the other characters.

I feel that my changes were very important. They mostly changed the whole concept of the play. For instance, I made the conflict in the play between Isabella and Jack go so far they got a divorce. Where in my scenario I didn't even have them fighting. I also changed their personality. In my scenario I had Isabella as the "good" parent and Jack as the father that yelled at his child because she forgot where her jacket was.

On the other hand, the play did not even have Jack arguing at Brandy. He was the "good" parent and Isabella was the smoker who didn't care about her child leading them into divorce.

The other major change I had was Casandra, the coach of Brandy. I had her in my scenario as just a coach, in the play, Brandy's father (Jack) fell in love with her and got married (to her). This making the play more into a soap opera. I also changed the ending of the play. Originally it was supposed to end with Brandy quitting gymnastics due to family problems. Now it ends that Brandy goes to her highest standards.

8. Yes definitely. When you write a scenario you definitely don't have all of the details in and as you begin to write your play new ideas may come to you. Also you may realize that something doesn't make sense or something would make more sense a different way. Usually the change is small. You could add a different character, or change a scene. On the other hand you could end up totally changing your play. You may keep the settings, characters and conflict but then change the theme.
9. The only part I changed was that two of the characters in my play took supposed suicide pills; that point wasn't put in my plot. It did change the ending because I had started before I got the idea of them taking pills. It changed the climax & made it more interesting.
10. When I tried to write my scenario I had absolutely no idea what I was going to do. I changed everything but the theme. The plot is clearly different to what I was almost going to complete. Only one character that I originally created still exists and the one scene that the play was going to take place in, is no longer in my play.
11. I found that from a day-to-day basis I wanted to change the direction of my play. One day I wanted to say something strong and forceful in the play. The next day I wanted to be subtle. This could change many things in the scenario. (Tone, tension, atmosphere)
12. Yes, I feel that you change it as you write your play. I make my changes at the end, and there not all long but there different.
13. Yes, after I wrote the scenario I changed my mind many times. I made the changes in the area of plot, setting and characters.

14. Whenever I write something, practically everytime the finished product is, totally different in comparison to the original idea. I feel this is because I think of more creative ways of going at a problem. The more I write the more I think of how I could do a better ending. I make any changes throughout the play (or whatever the case may be). The longer the writing the more changes and more of a better finished product.
15. When I did write the scenario, I felt that everything I wrote I changed. Characters changed, setting changed and the mood changed. the only thing that didn't change was the plot. I enjoy writing my characters around my plot, not into it. Ideas also change your feelings toward the play wich, without change, can run your play quickly into the ground, the playwright loses interest, and the play is over before it is started.

#### Comments

Six respondents changed "everything" or "changed the whole concept of the play". One suggested that he changed "a great deal"; another said "alot". The other "Yes" responses were much stronger: "I changed the whole concept of the play" and "I changed everything, but the theme, from my scenario".

Six students made slight changes in their plays as they wrote. The changes tended to involve small events in the plot. One student changed the major climax so that the ending would be stronger. Another changed the ending for the same reason.

One student made many changes in three major areas: plot, setting and character.

Finally, one student was indecisive - "from a day-to-day basis I wanted to change the direction of my play." This student was writing about an intensely emotional personal experience. Her feelings of sadness and frustration as a result of this experience, led to obvious mood inconsistencies.

### "No" Responses

1. I do not make changes to the scenario, but I do change the play. I add details, little things begin to change, so I have to "adjust" the play to accept these changes. Also, I sometimes have revelations or thoughts that just pop into my mind. I will often make changes to incorporate these ideas into my play. The extent that I change things depends on the idea. If I get a really incredible idea that could alter the whole course of my play and better it a great deal, I will make whatever and however many changes are necessary.
2. After I have written a scenario, I do not change it as I write the play. I feel that a scenario is for a person to follow. If you do make changes there was no real use for the scenario, since your writing a different play.
3. After writing a scenario, I find that I make very little changes it the story/play. When changes are made, they are made by simply adding a small character or scene to "bring the play together". The reason that I do not make many changes is because of the completeness of my scenario.

### Comments

Although the three students stated that they did not make changes, two really did make minor changes. These two students had written extremely clear and concise scenarios and then had painstakingly incorporated their scenario points into their plays. Although there were some changes,

they were of little consequence. Both students wrote exceptional plays.

The third student wrote an excellent scenario, but had problems with his play in terms of the support and development of the major theme. It simply was not a good play.

#### Undecided - Question Three

1. In my rough or first draft, the play followed the scenario to the last detail. But in the final draft, I changed the ending, so it didn't look so stupid. Instead of two brothers fighting over a princess, I changed it to a brother saving the other and the one that saved the other, died in the process in doing so.
2. No I didn't do a scenario, but while writing I did some changes. I had too many characters so I cut some out.
3. When you make a scenario before your play you have to speculate its sequence of events. I cannot do this with my writing. I find if I try to stick to a certain course in my writing, it becomes stale. If I write as I want to, my play becomes something to express my thoughts and ideas in. My scenario changed dramatically in parts, but stayed the same in others. For example my conflict had an extra (dimension to the) external, while my plot stayed completely the same.
4. I find that I tend to make my changes as I go along and re-read what I have written. I mostly tend to make my changes in sentence structure.

I find that I only make small changes such as re wording a sentence or some times in paragraph. No significant changes to the plot outline.

Comments

Respondents two, three and four did not write a true scenario, but what they used as an outline or "scenario" did change.

Respondent number one wrote an extraordinarily detailed scenario and an epic-length play. He followed the scenario faithfully, but the changes he made were quite necessary.

Change is a necessary component of the evolutionary nature of writing.

#### Question Four

Do you think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful?

Describe what works best for you.

#### "Yes" Responses

1. I believe webbing is very helpful for me. It does not tell the whole play. It is simply a outline for the play to be based on. I feel that a scenario holds you from changing anything in the play.
2. I found that there was something better for me than the scenario. I decided to write a story about the play first. This made writing the play easier because then I could more easily express what was happening in the story through the words of the characters. This helped me in writing my play alot.
3. Yes. Just write the play. What ever you left out change it so it will fit.
4. What works best for me is the term "just do it". I found I wouldn't jumble things up so much.
5. Yes. I think that writing a story then a play would be helpful. A story can give you hidden details like how the light catches a character's eyes and so on. In my play when I see it acted out in my mind, the characters have so many facial expressions that another reader won't see. So if I write a story to go along with my play, it would make it easier to understand.
6. What works best for me is just to write the play freehand with nothing to follow or refer back to.
7. I haven't tried anything other than an outline or scenario so, I could just guess that it would have the same purpose as the scenario. I think it would just be used strickly for reference. What works best for me is to just write, I usually can get a finished product that would be just as good if not better then the one done with the aid of the scenario.
8. Like I have stated above, I enjoy getting right into my work without inhibiting myself with extra writing. The only thing I do use is a character list so that I do not loose track of names. Sometimes place lists came in handy. Where someone saw something, what time they saw it, so my play follows through without interruption. But most of the time, (save those two of course) I do not use any extra writing to help me along.

### Comments

Two students wrote stories first, then began to script them. It was interesting to see them develop their own preparatory method.

One student used "webbing" to prepare for the actual writing of the play. Interestingly, she refers to this as an "outline" which she said she did not find "restrictive".

Four respondents found that they just wanted to sit down and "do it". They had a clear picture of their story and did not want to waste time developing a clumsy or contrived outline.

One conceded that he uses a "character list" and (sometimes) a "place list". These elements were important phases of the original scenario model provided to the class.

### "No" Responses

1. No, I think the scenario idea really helped me, and hopefully it showed up in my play.
2. No, I think a scenario best helps me focus on my topic.
3. No, I don't think something else is more helpful than a scenario, so long as the scenario is flexible. If it were a rigid format where the playwright was forced to put their ideas down in a specific way, I think this would take away the freedom of expressing your thoughts on paper. This could result in ideas not coming across cognitively or being forgotten.

4. I don't think that writing something other than a scenario would be more helpful for me. I found that a scenario works best for me.
5. I feel that the scenario is the best method for me to use when writing a play. It helped me to focus on all the major concepts before I started writing my play.
6. The scenario had worked best because it helped me to focus on the sequence of events. The scenario gives me more ideas and thoughts for my play. I find it very effective to write a scenario.
7. I think the scenario was helpful enough for me. I find if you write too much on a play it gets boring after a while. So I think if I was going to give advice to someone I'd say, "write as much as you feel comfortable with".
8. No, the scenario works best for me. It helps me plan out my play better.
9. To me, I don't think anything other than a scenario would help. It helped me organize & plan very well. Any other plan might only confuse me, but I don't know for sure because I haven't tried them.
10. No, scenarios are fine they make you think about your actions, thoughts and ideas.
11. I believe that if I am going to write an outline of some sort, I would be more inclined to write a scenario than anything else.  
I have tried other methods, but I find a plot outline works the best.
12. I believe an outline could have done as much as the scenario. The outline is how I like to format things or events in the play.
13. The only other thing beside a scenario that might help me in my writing would be a brief character or plot outline. This is quite similar to a scenario but the outline is a lower-scaled version.

### Comments

Twelve of the thirteen citations indicated a very positive response to the value of the scenario. The students found that the scenario really helped in focusing

and planning. One respondent cautioned that although the scenario is helpful, it must be "flexible". "If it were a rigid format . . . this would take away the freedom of expressing your thoughts on paper."

One student explained that "nothing would work better, but I don't know for sure because I haven't tried them". On the other hand, another student stated that he had "tried others", but would be "inclined to write a scenario than anything else".

#### Undecided - Question Four

Yes, I believe a simple plot summary or sequence of events is very beneficial to writing. If I have a simple, logical sequence of events (I) do not get as confused. The scenario was very beneficial to me although my (method) worked just as well. My scenario consisted of a flow chart . . . This was simple and seemed logical to me.

#### Comments

This student tried the scenario as well as his own method. It was interesting to see him experiment with both, rather than to reject something new simply because it was unfamiliar and rather intimidating at the time.

### Question Five

Reflecting on your writing is important while writing a play.

How does your journal assist you in this regard?

### "Yes" Responses

1. The journal was extremely helpful to me because it stored my ideas and steps that I took the process of the actual making of my play. The journal helped me to remember the order of the days I used more effectively.
2. My journal kept me up to date on my personal feelings about writing the play. e.g. what was difficult, easy.  
  
I knew where I had finished off the day before and what I had to do the next. The journal also kept my teacher, Ms. Nentwig, up to date on what I had done. I think if I was to write another play, I would keep a journal.
3. My journal helped me if and when I got of track. If I was distracted by something and I lost my train of thought I could refer back to my journal. My journal was also a way to show what really happened and not what I thought would be appropriate to say. In his way my journal helped keep my mind on track resulting in a better performance.
4. When writing a play, I have many thoughts going through my head. A journal simply gives me a place to put these thoughts, so that I may focus on my play itself. The journal is important to my concentration, and without it I'm sure I would have found things very difficult. While writing my play, I used my journal a great deal and I believe it greatly assisted me.
5. My journal helped me a great deal in writing my play. It helped me reflect, because most of my ideas were on personal experiences and feelings. I jotted down my mood, in almost every entry. I found that my mood and feelings greatly effected my writing. I found the journal to be the most important part of my scenario.
6. My journal helped me alot. If I forgot what I did the day before. I looked in my journal, and it told me what my daily work had been.
7. The journal helped me to "see" what I did overal. I might have just writen some of my play during class, but writing like that can be all on one idea. The journal helped me sum up, know what I have done & what I have to do. It left me organized & ready to finish, whatever I was doing, at another time.

8. My journal assisted me greatly because it helped me reflect on what I had already written. It showed me when I wrote my "best work" on the play, and what mood I was in when I wrote it.
9. The journal helped in that if you wish to look back and see something you've already included in the play and you know the date you did it, you can simply look back to that days entry.
10. My journal affects me in a big way that I need to think about my scenario or my play.
11. The journal assists me by where the characters in the story are coming from. Like Lord Coon, he is much in the likeness of my father - always wanting me to do something, NOW.

Princess Sylvia, she is in the image of a friend in this class, but I would rather not to say more.

Sir Winsurick is like me a caring brother who does his best for his brother (and who shows) good judgement and skill.

Sir Ulyses is a brother I would like to have than (name), my original brother.

Then at last, Sir Oreg is in the image of (name), he (Sir Oreg) and (name) are always looking for adventure. (Name) and Sir Oreg just like to have fun with life and forget death itself. Like the sayings, "You've got only one life and it shouldn't be wasted" and "you're only young once".

### Comments

The students who found the journal to be helpful mentioned that they used it for storing information, for a quick reference to help them remember what had transpired in the past, and for assistance in focusing and keeping them "on track" with their character development.

Some used their journals as a place to record their feelings and thoughts. Three students agreed that the

journal was beneficial in encouraging them to reflect on their writing and on their "moods".

"It showed me when I wrote my 'best work' on the play, and what mood I was in when I wrote it."

One student viewed the journal as an integral part of the scenario, and used her journal throughout the entire playwriting process.

"I found the journal to be the most important part of my scenario."

#### "No" Responses

1. During my writing of the play, I did not find it helpful to use my journal. I continued my project from where I left off the last time.
2. I did not find my journal at all important while writing my play.
3. I felt that keeping a journal didn't really help me. I make alot of mental notes, but it was hard for me to get my ideas down on paper.
4. The journal does not help me because it was compulsory and the journal didn't help me to think of more ideas. I think it was a waste of time to write in my journal.
5. I don't believe reflecting is important while writing a play. The journal did not help me, personally, in any regard.
6. When writing in my journal, I found that I didn't want to bother with it because I already know how I feel about something. If we weren't getting marked on it, I wouldn't have done it.
7. While writing the play, the journal just doesn't come into the picture. In helping writing the play, it effectively does nothing to help the process along.

Comments

The seven students who responded negatively to the use of the journal failed to see any intrinsic value in the journal and could see no personal or academic advantages in using it while writing a play. These students kept a journal simply because it was a compulsory phase in the unit.

Undecided - Question Five

1. I feel that the journal doesn't help me anymore than it was meant to. A journal is a record of daily occurrences and it would only assist me by telling me what I did at a certain time. The journal would also tell me what thinking stage I'm at at each development phase (beginning, middle, and end).
2. My journal did not help me to much. One way it did help me was to realize the days I felt tired and the days I did quite a bit of writing. Overall though it did not help me to much.
3. In my journal I just included the steps that I did each day, as I did my scenario and play. So, for me, the journal didn't help at all. If some people were to add what they were writing about in detail, then I think that the journal would assist them.  
  
Otherwise for me, the journal did not help. I guess that maybe I wrote the journal incorrectly, or it just doesn't help.
4. I feel that a journal does assist me as I write but it does not provide any significant help other than the date in which I wrote certain information in my writing assignment.

Comments

Essentially these students could not see philosophical or emotional benefits regarding the use of the journal in

the writing process. The students used their journals as a reference or as a record of past events - really nothing more. They were unable to expand their journals into their thinking and writing processes.

## Chapter Four

### Student Survey Responses - 9C

#### NOTE TO READER:

The following survey responses have been included in this document as they were first written by the students. The responses appear here in their unedited, original form.

#### Question One

Do you feel that a scenario, or some kind of outline, helps you to focus your thoughts regarding any of the following literary elements: plot, theme, character or conflict?

If so, how?

If so, why?

#### "Yes" Responses

1. It helps to set a basic foundation for the play. The author (playwright) can refer back to their (scenario) notes to help him/her out.
2. Yes, I find that by building a basic outline, such as the setting characters, and plot. When I begin writing I know exactly what to write, and I can write with ease and a clear mind, not a whole bunch of jumbled thoughts.
3. Yes, I think it does help me organize my thoughts. It helps because I write down in an outline form things about the setting, plot, theme, characters and conflict. When I write my play and I am having trouble, I just look back at the outline.
4. Yes, it helps focus on the important ideas of the structure of your play. It helps by not writing incorrect information in improper areas.
5. Yes, I believe that the scenario helped when it came to the setting and character description, but not when it came to the conflict and plot.

The scenario for the setting helped to get my ideas straight so it was then easier to write my play.

6. Yes, the outline helps to focus on the literary elements. It helped my thoughts to be clear and focused on what I am trying to say, do or get a point across.
7. Yes I do feel that an outline focusus my thoughts because, when, or before I start writing, I want to make something up, very creatively. Some people may not use a scenario or an outline, but that's what works best for me.
8. I feel that the scenario helped me to focus my thoughts regarding the elements theme, plot, and character. The scenario was a thing I could look back on. When I was confused, I felt that it was a better approach to writing. I usually just write anything and keep going back and changing the sequence of events but it was easier with a scenario.
9. The scenerio helped me to an extent. I used it to sort out my ideas, but when it came to writing my play with the scenerio it was difficult keeping the same ideas.
10. Yes, I think it helps me to focus my thoughts regarding the plot. It makes the plot have more sense, and alot more focus. I think this is because the scenario helps me to remember everything I was planning on writing. It keeps me on track. It also helps my characters. Doing a brief character sketch before I begin helps me to keep my character's actions, and ways of doing things consistent. It didn't help the theme or conflict.
11. Yes, I do think that a scenario helps me by helping me figure out what my plot is going to be about or any theme or conflict. It also helps me to organize my work better than if I don't use an outline of some sort. It helps to figure who my characters are and what there role is in my writing.
12. A scenario helps me to decide what the setting will be and how detailed I want to make it. Once the setting is finished it is easy to start writing the play. Ideas start flowing in my mind like an avalanche.
13. I feel that a scenario helps me focus my thoughts because in an outline/scenario, I can describe my characters, plot, theme, and conflict. That way, when I'm writing my play, I have a basic idea of what I want to write about.
14. I felt that the scenario did help me in the outline of my play. It helped me organize my thoughts into a logical thinking order instead of a shuffled mess of thoughts. The scenario helped me with all of the literary elements. It helped me sort them out.
15. Yes, I feel that the scenario helps me to focus my thoughts. By writing down my ideas in plot and character, I will always have them there so I won't forget. During the writing process, I can

then make changes where I feel necessary. By creating my characters beforehand, I can get to know them better, and feel more comfortable using them in the plot. By writing a plot outline, you can decide the order in which you want events to occur. However, I feel that theme and conflict are two elements which develop during the writing process. While you write the play and get "into it", these elements appear.

16. Yes, I feel that a scenario helps you focus your thoughts regarding theme and conflict. I do not think it helps you regarding plot. When I was writing my play I found that having a general theme written down on paper was very helpful; although, most of my scenario was in my head. It was not helpful to have the plot written out on paper. In fact it confused me. I kept on wanting to go back to my original plan when my play was not heading in that direction. Most of my outline was done in my head. If somebody asked me how my play was going to end I would say "I don't know, haven't gotten that far yet".

#### Comments

The great majority of students (sixteen) in this class found the scenario helpful in focusing their thoughts.

One student stated that "it provided a basic foundation". Four students explained that it was indispensable in organizing, planning and sorting out ideas for future reference and clarity. One student found it helpful for focusing on setting or for the initial writing phase, while two others found it particularly beneficial for "keeping on track" regarding plot and characterization. Both of these students did not find it helpful regarding theme and conflict.

Respondent number sixteen, although positive in her answer to this question, was somewhat hesitant regarding the use of the scenario - for plot especially. Her plot scenario existed largely in her head; however, she did do considerable planning on paper and found it advantageous.

"No" Responses

1. No, I felt it did not because I couldn't put what I was thinking down on paper. I went through the process of writing the scenario but I couldn't really put down what I was feeling. The only way to express what I wanted to write about, was to just write the play.
2. No I didn't feel a scenario helped me, because it was too detailed it made me confused. I also felt I would lose my imagination while planning my play in such detail.
3. No, I do not feel that a scenario helped me to focus my thoughts regarding any of the literary elements because I already knew what I wanted to happen in my play before I wrote my scenario. My thoughts, I felt, were already focused. The scenario really didn't help me a lot. It didn't really help me to focus my thoughts.
4. No I do not feel using a scenario helps me to focus my thoughts and ideas. I feel this way because when I use a scenario I cannot change my ideas. I lose much of my creativity because I feel confined to the ideas on the paper.
5. No I felt the scenario jumbled my thoughts. It made me think it through to carefully and made me think more and more until it ruined my original idea. I would not recommend a scenario to most people because all of us do not plan things that carefully. I feel though that the some areas were disregarded or changed it could help out such as losing theme. Writing the theme seemed to lose you ideas for plot, character and conflict by making a person having to alter the play to often to help put a good theme into it. The theme did end up what I think as a waste of time. Although plot and conflict were good ideas but still I felt as though they were not overly needed. If I were to disregard one it would be the plot because the more and more you think about trying to keep your original plot a person strayed farther and farther away from writing an easy to follow plot. Two good points about the scenario were that the conflict and characters this did allow a person to make up characters to

fit the conflict and the conflict did help to build the excitement in the mind to write a successful play.

Comments

The first four students who did not find the scenario helpful wrote quite good plays without a scenario.

The first student wrote an exceptional play and although she wrote a detailed scenario, did not use it for reference while she wrote her play. She had an idea for a play and therefore spent an entire weekend writing it.

Respondents two, three and four wrote excellent plays as well. They too wrote scenarios, or parts, because they felt that they had to as part of the assignment. Initially, all three were held back by thinking they had to write a meticulous outline. When they found out that it was not necessary, they progressed quickly.

The last student cited, although he would never admit it, would have benefitted considerably by doing some advance planning. He tended to blame the "childish" scenario for his first "failure"; however, his second attempt was not any better, and he really had difficulty finding a "scapegoat". He was unwilling to put the necessary effort into the project, and so was not successful.

Undecided - Question One

1. I did not really write a scenario so no I did not find it helpful. My form of scenario was 1) a character outline 2) a few ideas which I jotted down half way through my play 3) talking to people.
2. The outline on character helped my to focus my thoughts because any time I had written something about a character, I had to look back and make sure that the character had a certain item. This would make sure that I had written that the character had this item within the brackets before the character used it. The other literary elements did not help because I had known what was going to happen in the play before I had written it.

Comments

Both students developed their own organizational models which proved quite successful.

The second student wrote an extraordinary fantasy play set in a mediaeval world - complete with dragons and archaic English. He developed his own scenario model to accommodate all of his highly-complex characters.

## Question Two

Do you think that it makes a difference to the quality of your work when you write a scenario or outline before you write a play?

### "Yes" Responses

1. I do think it helps to use an outline because the play is more organized.
2. Yes because by writing an outline you can put things in proper order, and you do not make as many mistakes. Because you are more clearly focused.
3. Yes, it helps you realize how your information is to be placed on the piece of play writing. It helps you from start to end on the entire story.
4. Yes, from writing a scenario my thoughts and ideas in my play were complete and also saved me time from not writing unnecessary sentences and lines.
5. I think it makes a difference in the quality of my work. It helped me organize my thoughts and ideas about what I want to write before I write it.
6. Yes, writing an outline makes a difference in my writing because it keeps me on topic and organizes me better; although, I sometimes don't follow it e.g. - my play I used my scenario for the characters and the theme. The rest of it was done while writing.
7. Yes, I think it does affect the quality of work when you write a scenario or outline because you have to know what you are going to write before you write it. However, in some cases it does not affect your writing. This occurs when you are going to write about something you have recently done; whether it be in real life or when role-playing.
8. Yes, I do think it makes a difference because from some of my past writings I've done I didn't use an outline of any sort and I didn't really like my writing. But this time I used one and I think that my quality of work is a lot better than usual, an outline or scenario helps out a lot better than not using one.
9. Yes, it does make a difference in the quality when you write an outline. The outline makes you brainstorm and really think before you write.
10. I feel that when you use a scenario before you begin writing, your rough draft is much more organized, and the events fall into order much more easily. You find yourself making fewer

changes, and fewer mistakes. You don't keep starting over again, and trying to find ways to end your play.

11. Yes I do feel that writing a scenario affects the quality of the play in a negative way. I think that when you are confined to your ideas previously on paper you tend to twist your words around the ideas. i.e. you force your words to fit the ideas, all other ideas/options in the play you tend to unconsciously throw away because you have the outline.

### Comments

Coincidentally, the class was split on this question, with eleven positive and eleven negative responses.

Ten of the students believe that the scenario has a positive effect on the quality of student play writing in that it helps to create a more organized, more focused and ordered "placement" of events - from start to finish. One student referred to the scenario as a "time saver", while another believed that it assisted her by keeping her on topic, and that it organized her in character and theme development.

One student felt that her rough draft was more organized, and that events fell into order more easily. She felt that she made fewer changes and fewer errors, and that the ending was easier to conceive.

Respondent number eight summarized the majority of the students by saying: ". . . I think that my quality of work

is alot better than usual, an outline or scenario helps out a lot better than not using one."

The final positive citation was written by a student who felt that the scenario made a difference to the quality of the writing, "but in a negative way". Because of the wording, her response was placed in this section; however, negative citations dealing with the same concept will be discussed in the next section. Her major point is well expressed in that with a strictly detailed scenario there is the tendency "to twist your words around the (original) ideas." New "ideas/options in the play you tend to unconsciously throw away because you have the outline."

#### "No" Responses

1. No, because if you know what you want to write about, you just write. I don't like to be too organized or my play won't flow smoothly, and my quality of work won't reach its potential.
2. No, because if it is up there in your head and you know what you are going to do. Why write in an outline? Just write your play.
3. No, I don't think it matters when you write a scenario, there I think would be no difference at all. The harder you think, the more thoughts you'll have and I think the more thoughts, then the better (for the play). So I don't think it will make a difference to the quantity of your work.
4. No, because I still do a final draft. It may, however, make the quality of my rough draft better.
5. No I don't feel it makes a difference to the quality of my work. It really depends on the writer; but for me I found it slows me dow and makes writing less enjoying; and writing should be enjoying.
6. This question really depends on the person. For me it did not.

When I write, I never use a scenario. I think about my ideas and they come right out on paper. I tried writing a scenario, but it did not help me; it did not affect the quality of my work.

7. No, I do not think that it makes a difference to the quality of my work when I write a scenario because I felt this play I wrote was the same quality as other things I have written without using scenarios.
8. Writing a scenario before writing a play did not help me very much. I found that I spent too much time trying to think of things for my scenario and helping other people than writing my play.
9. I don't believe that a scenario/outline has an effect on the quality of your play. Many people are spontaneous and write very good plays without outlines/scenario.
10. No, because most people do not like to have things quite as planned out as what was forced upon us. I feel that if all the questions that were given to us were a little more vague and did not make us think about our original idea so much that it ruined the idea. This got a person frustrated and angry that they could not write quite as good of an idea as they originally had. So I feel as though the quality of the work was unchanged if not hampered a little by this scenario.
11. No, I do not think it makes a difference in the quality of your work when you write a scenario before you write a play. I feel (and did) that the next line of your play comes the minute you are writing it, and that the scenario has no effect on the quality, of any kind, of creative writing.

### Comments

Five students believe that if you have an idea or if you know what to do then just do it: just write your play. If the writer is too organized then the ideas won't "flow". Furthermore, they believe that people are spontaneous and don't need an outline or scenario; thoughts are of the greatest importance, so just "think and the ideas come out on paper".

One person further explained that the scenario slowed her down and thus stifled her enjoyment. Another student strongly declared that the scenario was frustrating and that it "hampered" the creativity.

One student did admit that it assisted in the first draft, but not in the final draft.

In closing, the final remark reiterated the essential idea commonly held by this group:

"I feel that the next line of your play comes the minute you are writing it, and that the scenario has no effect on the quality, of any kind, of creative writing."

#### Undecided - Question Two

Yes, and No. It helps in the way that you keep the personality and attitude of the characters complete. But the attitude and mood should come generally, naturally while your writing, because your attitudes may change while you are deep in thought or as other ideas, and changes are made in the play.

#### Comments

The student who wrote this response has experienced several problems in her writing this year. The preparatory work that she did in terms of outlining had a positive

effect on the quality of her play; she wrote an interesting, focused script.

Question Three

After you have written a scenario, do you find that you change it as you write the play?

\* \* \*

If so, where do you tend to make your changes?

To what extent do you make changes?

\* \* \*

If not, why do you feel that you do not make any changes?

"Yes" Responses

1. Yes, I ended up changing many parts of my scenario. Basically, I changed a description of a character, added a character and sometimes changed the setting
2. Yes, a bit.  
  
Characters and plot change. The changes are not drastic, but they polish up the play.  
  
If there are too many changes you may disorient yourself and become confused.
3. After I wrote the scenario and began writing my play I found I didn't make changes till the end of the play, the conclusion. I made minor changes to the ending.
4. In the names of the characters and the basic setting.  
  
I just change characters names around. Also after the setting by having the story take place in a different part of a city. I also offer more of an explanation of why the character is where he/she is.
5. In some essence I change it. But just because a new attitude, or outlook has changed, for me looking at my play. I tend to make my changes with personality of the characters. When you write a scenario it is easy to think of characters but when you read it over in the play sometimes you can think of better attitudes for different situations.
6. Yes, I changed my scenario quite a bit - although I kept the main idea. The characters, their roles, and the scenes were changed. Everytime I worked on my play I made a change here, or there.

7. Yes, after I have written a scenario, I find that I change it as I write the play. I found myself making minor changes in the plot. However, I always seem to make changes when re-writing a play/story because I am always getting new ideas, and always want to improve my writing.
8. Yes I do change my mental outline as I write my play. I visualize the scenes and actions as I write, and if I discover a better turn for the play I definitely will use it. I will make my changes throughout the whole play. I will even change my entire plot if needed.
9. When I have written a scenario I do tend to change it. I tend to change it where most of the action is taking place. When I change my scenario I don't change it too much or it will ruin the story.
10. Yes, I did change my scenario. I changed the ending of my play. All I did was add more on to make it longer.
11. Yes, I changed what I wrote. I made my changes in my characters, plot and some setting. I made my characters change after I finished my play. My setting, I changed slightly to make it clearer where it was set in. My plot I changed slightly from my scenario because I didn't like the way I had written it down so I just changed it and wrote in a different direction.
12. Although I try not to, I do tend to change the actions of my characters. But if, after re-reading, I notice these changes are too much, then I re-write the play. The changes aren't very noticeable, usually.
13. After I have written a scenario, I found that I did change it as I wrote the play. I tended to make changes basically in the sequence in which events took place. These changes weren't to drastic.
14. Yes, after I have written a play I change it. Most of my changes are made in the plot. This is something out of my journal which proves that point; "I found myself writing something down and then I would change my mind and scratch out the whole scene. Then I would start all over again".
15. As I said in number one I use a character outline. Although it is not a scenario I did change it as I went along. In fact I changed my whole play. The second time around writing my play I did not use a character outline. I chose to discuss my play with a playwright. This helped me much more than either of my previous ideas. So I did change my scenario a great deal. I changed my format and my ideas.
16. I did not use the scenario method, instead I wrote a short story. In my short story I found I shortened it and made many

changes when writing the play. I found if I included all the information that was in my short story into my play, the play dragged out and would become uninteresting. I also ran into the problem of only having one person in a scene so I would have to fill that gap by adding someone else in.

### Comments

A significant majority made changes in their original planning. Most respondents (thirteen) indicated that the changes were minor and served only to aid in clarity, in plot sequence or in character behavior:

". . . things change (naturally) when you start writing."

"Everytime I worked on my play I made a change . . ."

"I always seem to make changes when re-writing . . . because I am always getting new ideas . . ."

One student was rather conservative and refused to ruin his play by making any changes beyond setting.

Another student, who had adapted a short story into a one-act play, was forced to make several changes. She deleted a great deal of information that did not seem to fit the adaptation.

One student indicated that she would "even change my entire plot if needed".

Another student did: "In fact I changed my whole play".

### "No" Responses

1. I did not make any changes because I felt that my first idea didn't need any altering.
2. No, I didn't make any changes because I felt that what I had written on my scenario was good enough for my writing.
3. No, I don't find that I change the scenario because I feel that the writer should stick with what he or she had originally started. Also, if you know what you are going to write beforehand, and if you like what you are writing, you should never have to change your originally planned outline.
4. No, I found I actually made only one change, which was an incorrect character behavior. Other than that it was not changed throughout the writing of the play.
5. I don't change my play from my outline because I think very hard about writing my scenario and write down my exact ideas of my play.

### Comments

The five students argued that because they had put a great deal of effort and thought into the initial planning, it was not necessary to change anything. Rather those students carefully developed their original outlines into well-written first drafts.

Except for the student who wrote the fifth response, each student completed a final draft.

All of these students tried hard to make their scenarios work for them and they were successful. They developed excellent scenarios, and very good plays.

Undecided - Question Three

1. I totally disregarded the scenario after once ruing a successful idea. It was though I feel originally funny not something that had to be thought out so much but my original idea was broken down so much from what I feel as though was an over all childish scenario. I made this statement because I feel as though the younger grades such as 6-8 could have used it to develop their ideas but at our age I feel as though it hindered some because it is easier to write a first draft then go through it and change it.
2. I wrote the majority of my scenario after I wrote my play so I couldn't really have changed anything. Because of this, I feel that I have failed in the purpose of the assignment.

Comments

Both of these students did not put much thought or effort into the pre-writing or writing phases of this project.

Student number two best describes the results of the project (for both of them) when he states, ". . . I feel that I have failed in the purpose of the assignment".

#### Question Four

Do you think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful?

Describe what works best for you.

#### "Yes" Responses

1. I don't believe that the scenario helped me with the plot and conflict by writing down the descriptions and details of my characters and setting in a "point form" style helped me organize my thoughts.
2. I tend to use a web format. I prefer it because when I look back on my writing I know exactly what stage I am at writing my play. I don't forget important points or phases.
3. Yes I used the method of short story. I felt this was useful because it helped me organize, but yet I could let my imagination run wild with out the stiffness and detail of a scenario.
4. I think that writing a general theme and conflict is helpful. It keeps your play from falling apart, yet lets you write whatever you want creatively (not holding you down because of the scenario you wrote before.
5. As I said before, I have 3 ways in which I prefer to write: 1) character outline, 2) writing down a few ideas, 3) discussing my idea with other people.  
  
The most helpful was number 3. Doing this brought my ideas into focus.
6. What works best for me is the right enviroment and inspiration. Not a planning guide for how to write a play.
7. Yes I think that using other than a scenario is more helpful. I feel that having all your ideas on paper confines you to those thoughts. I much prefer to not use an outline at all. I give myself a basic idea and keep it in my head. From there I just think of scenes, visualize them and write them down. This way I feel very free to let my imagination mold my play.
8. I think that planning in my mind works better than writing on paper because I don't write enough to keep up with the changes in my mind.
9. Like I said in number two, if you know what you are going to say, just write it. The thing that works best for me is to just write.

10. Yes, I just start writing the first thing that comes to mind. If it doesn't work out, just scratch it out. Don't worry about it.

### Comments

Even though these students did not feel that the scenario was helpful, what they described (in most cases) was an outline of sorts.

One student used the term "point form style", another "writing of general theme and conflict" and one other a "short story". All of these methods serve as an organizational or outlining method.

Three others suggested mental planning - knowing it in your mind; "if you know, then do it".

"I just start writing. Don't worry about it."

### "No" Responses

1. No, I have never used an outline before and after writing the scenario for the play I found that it is easier and more organized. I will continue to use some type of outline.
2. No, writing a short outline (scenario) works best for me. An outline gives me some ideas, and organizes my thoughts.
3. No, I found that the scenario worked well for me, and I found myself much more organized; although, I didn't follow it completely.
4. When I write, I usually only use a scenario because it is much easier to use and also much easier to understand.

5. No, I do not think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful because I haven't really tried any other methods besides this scenario.
6. The scenario did work the best for me even though the final product was not a good quality. The scenario helped me to overcome the first and hardest obstacle in writing a play i.e. thinking of an idea.
7. By writing a basic outline describing characters and the setting I find it much easier to write a story knowing ahead of time what the character looks and talks like, where s/he lives and why they live there.
8. I used both a scenerio and a home made outline. I just listed the sequence of events for my play in numerical order.
9. Though the scenario did help in some ways, I think that an outline should only include the characters and their descriptions along with the plot. However, if you are basing your play on something you have already done, I think that only the characters and their descriptions are needed. If the play is not on something you have done (experienced), the plot should cover the theme, conflict and setting.
10. The idea of what works best for me is to write a scenario, then a story line, and then a play from the story.
11. I think that writing a scenario works best for me because it helped me a lot on writing my play. It helped organize my thoughts out better than not writing a scenario.
12. No, the scenario worked very well for me. I wrote my play quickly and made few mistakes because of it.

### Comments

The general consensus of this group was that it was very helpful and the only way to go. Most citations indicated that the scenario was particularly helpful for character development and sequence of events.

One student indicated that he did not think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful because he had not really tried any other methods.

One student used the scenario and her own "home made" outline. Her "home made" outline was really an extension of the model.

One student indicated that she would continue to use this strategy in the future.

#### Undecided - Question Four

For stories I sometimes use a rough outline. I'm not exactly sure (what works best for a play). Using the scenario, I was successful in finishing my play. When writing stories, I sometimes just want to write down what pops into my head.

#### Comments

This student did use a variation of the scenario model. His scenario was not as complete or detailed as the assigned model, however he was successful in using his modified version.

### Question Five

Reflecting on your writing is important while writing a play.

How does your journal assist you in this regard?

### "Yes" Responses

1. My journal keeps me up to date with what has to be done in whatever class, and helps me remember important points that I can use in the play.
2. My journal assisted me by, when I wrote and I looked back I could understand more about my play than I really knew. It also gave me more thoughts - deep thoughts - on how I could improve.
3. Looking back at my journal helps keep my last "work day" ideas focused on where to continue on. It helps thing of where to start on from and what ideas have yet to be stated.
4. The journal assisted me in telling me what I did the day before, and helping me continue from where I had left off.
5. The journal does help you to keep on task because when it comes time to write in it and you don't have anything to say you probably didn't do very much work that class. The journal also helps you to remember what you did last class without having to read your whole play. This really helps if you have a long play.
6. My journal assisted me in this regard by helping me keep on task and make sure my play gets done on time. If I did nothing during class, I'd have nothing to write in my journal. This would remind me next class that I need to work harder.
7. Writing a journal helps me to see my mistakes, and also my "stupid" ideas. It reminded me what I was doing the previous day and how I could fix my play.
8. The journal helps to organize your play better and think about your writing. It then helps to plan the exact wording of the play at a later date.
9. A journal assists me by keeping track of my thoughts the day before. If I have a problem with the play, I can go over the routes I took yesterday and try to find new options so I can finish my play. Also it is a place to jot down small things that I would add into my play or edit from my play.
10. Writing a journal helps me out more with my writing to help me write down what I feel and to organize my thoughts better.

11. The journal assists or helps by clearly stating the information I completed in that particular class on time. It assists me by helping me remember the idea, things, done in a previous class. Things I noted as important in my journal are times - if I worked faster and long in the morning or afternoon, and moods - if I was happy or mad.
12. Writing a journal was extremely helpful. It kept your creative mind in motion. Later, when looking back at your journal, you can evaluate the processes which you went through.
13. My journal gave me a chance to reflect on my work and it gave me a chance to see how much I had accomplished.
14. A journal records how you feel and what you think about the process of your play. That way you can look back on your information.
15. My journal assisted me by keeping track of my thoughts. If I ran into a problem I could go to my journal to look for other options or where I went wrong. My journal was a place I could jot down things that would or could help me in the future writing of my play.
16. My journal helped me to keep a record on how much I achieved each day. It was a help to me because I found that If I wrote too much in one day, when I read it over the next, I didn't like it. It helped me keep a pace and stick to it so I wouldn't have to work twice as hard.
17. Since I don't like sharing my work with others until it is finished, I found myself writing what I would be saying to others, in my journal. Usually I just sit and think and reflect on my writing, instead of keeping a journal. I found myself doing this also.
18. I feel the most successful part of this unit was the journal though. It allowed me though to talk to myself and to criticize or praise my progress. It helped me organize my thoughts to an extent so that I could still write a successful play. I would highly recommend a journal to be included in this unit because it helped out lots of people.
19. My journal helped me sort out my feelings toward playwriting. I could be as frank as I wanted to be and I could just let everything just come out without criticism. One line that I still wonder about is "When ever somebody reads it they say, 'Wow, did you write that?' and sometimes I wonder myself."
20. The journal that day opened up a box of feelings and thoughts that I will probably never be able to close.

Comments

Perhaps the most surprising (and pleasant) result of the Student Survey was 9C's response to Question Five. Twenty out of twenty-three students responded positively to the question, whereas eleven out of twenty-two (50%) did so in the other class.

Most of the students in 9C enjoyed using the journal and found it to be quite beneficial.

On an obvious level, students stated that the journal assisted them in remembering previous day's work, and in keeping them on task and up-to-date. Students felt that it provided them with a daily record; this established continuity and made it easier for them to think and to organize their plays. The journal also assisted them in their self-editing - it helped some of them see their errors; as well, it assisted them in the sorting out of their thoughts and feelings.

On a more sophisticated level, three students explained that the journal helped them to reflect on their progress, on their creativity, and on the whole process of writing their plays.

One student used the journal much the same way that many students used their partners or small groups - to share ideas and thoughts. Her journal became a silent partner; there is a certain sense of security in this type of collaboration

"I found myself writing what I would be saying to others, in my journal."

In closing, the student who up until now, could find nothing good to say about the scenario phase, did have some positive comments about the use of the journal.

He was particularly generous when he commented, "I feel the most successful part of the unit was the journal . . . I would highly recommend a journal to be included in this unit because it helped lots of people."

#### "No" Responses

1. I didn't think my journal helped me at all. I never really knew what to write in it, because it felt weird keeping a record of what I did, taking the time to write down something that I could remember perfectly.
2. My journal didn't assist me at all because I didn't use it.

Comments

The first student is a talented writer who succeeded in writing one of the best plays and (ironically) one of the more complete and informative journals.

The second student did not complete his play or keep a journal. He did not receive a passing grade.

Undecided - Question Five

When it came to writing my play, my journal did not help me, but I believe it would've if my play was more complex. The journal would help me remember ideas and thoughts I had for writing the play (therefore organize my thoughts).

Comments

This student should have kept a journal despite the fact that it was not a long or a complex play. She is an excellent writer, but tends to waste class time and not finish assignments on time. She did not complete her first draft; rather, she submitted a poorly-done final draft - a day late.

## Chapter Five

### I Emerging Patterns

The following is a general discussion of the obvious patterns emerging from the responses to the Student Survey.

Each question will be discussed in turn. Generalizations developing from each question will apply to 9A and 9C as a combined group.

1. Do you feel that a scenario, or some kind of outline, helps you to focus your thoughts regarding any of the following literary elements: plot, theme, character or conflict?  
If so, how?  
If so, why?

	9A	9C
Yes	14	16
No	06	05
Undecided	<u>02</u>	<u>02</u>
	22	23

Students generally need a scenario or some type of outline to follow. The students who said they did not, talked about outlines in their minds, or organizing and planning their thoughts in their heads and not on paper. This too is an application of the scenario;

perhaps not as common, but still a valid organizational tool.

Students who were largely undecided or uncertain tended to use some sort of organizational tool that they had worked out for themselves. In some cases they used "watered down" versions of the scenario model that had been provided for them.

Then there were those who "just wrote" without any initial planning or consideration. However, they did plan as they wrote. The few students who could not seem to integrate the scenario into the pre-writing phase used "margin notes"; i.e. they jotted down ideas, reminders and any other miscellaneous items, in the margins. This method worked best for those who just wanted to get on with it. It also alleviated their guilt for not doing a detailed, well-considered scenario.

Scenarios should be integrated into an "ideal playwriting unit", but students who wish to modify the model that they are given, should be allowed the flexibility to do so. Students who chose not to do any sort of scenario should be required to write a rationale in defence of their decision, along with the

description of the organizational methods that worked for them.

2. Do you think that it makes a difference to the quality of your work when you write a scenario or outline before you write a play?

	9A	9C
Yes	15	11
No	06	11
Undecided	<u>01</u>	<u>01</u>
	22	23

Although the students in 9C were split regarding this question, the negative respondents indicated that they still had used some sort of organizational device.

Those who argued about spontaneity and the need to express one's self freely without controls and so on, still did do some advanced planning. The seven students who argued in this vein all used rather sophisticated organizational tools, but not necessarily those suggested for this project.

The four students who felt that the scenario killed their enthusiasm, and who were therefore frustrated and angry as a result, were students who did not understand the intent of the scenario. They were

clearly told right from the beginning of the project that they were not required to use it in the writing of the play. They were to try it - they were to give it a good, honest effort. However, if it just was not helping them, they could modify it in any way to suit their needs, but were to be prepared to defend their decision and to submit what did work. Unfortunately, some students submitted meaningless scenarios that had no bearing whatsoever on their plays - simply to get "a mark". This, of course, defeats the entire purpose of the scenario.

3. After you have written a scenario, do you find that you change it as you write the play?

\* \* \*

If so, where do you tend to make your changes?

To what extent do you make changes?

\* \* \*

If not, why do you feel that you do not make any changes?

	9A	9C
Yes	15	16
No	03	05
Undecided	<u>04</u>	<u>02</u>
	22	23

It is virtually impossible to write anything without changing something. Even though eight students replied that they did not change the scenario as they wrote the play, they had made minor changes that they were not including in the survey response. However, because of the nature and wording of their responses they had to be categorized as "no" responses. The six who were categorized as "undecided" all talked about having made some changes somewhere.

The citations indicated a definite pattern: the changes were largely in plot and characterization.

Plot alterations largely involved changes in sequence of events, or in the nature or type of events. Character changes involved name changes, minor personality or mood changes, and in some instances, role changes.

Those who had well-planned scenarios (either on paper or in their heads), tended to make fewer major changes. Their initial planning was so focused - "crystal clear" - that major changes were not even considered.

Scenarios, or any kind of outline, are never "cut in stone". Student writers must be cognizant of this fact.

4. Do you think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful?

Describe what works best for you.

	9A	9C
Yes	08	10
No	13	12
Undecided	<u>01</u>	<u>01</u>
	22	23

This is definitely a pivotal concept in the entire question of the use of a scenario, and relates back to the fundamental question: What exactly is a "scenario"? A scenario, for the purpose of this unit, was described to the students as "an outline or synopsis of the plot of a drama . . .". The word "synopsis" is described in Webster's New World Dictionary as a "general review", a "condensation" and a "summary". Students who chose to "web", draft "flow charts", summarize "short stories", list character descriptors, etc., were creating their own "summaries" their own "condensations", their own "synopses", their own outlines - their own personal scenarios. Simply

because they did not follow the suggested model, is not to say that they did not use a scenario; they merely created their own.

The "undecided" students simply did not feel that they had the experience to make a judgement.

Essentially they all did some type of outlining. Some were simply more detailed and in keeping with the suggested model. Also, the majority were on paper.

5. Reflecting on your writing is important while writing a play.

How does your journal assist you in this regard?

	9A	9C
Yes	11	20
No	07	02
Undecided	<u>04</u>	<u>01</u>
	22	23

The greatest surprise of the study (and certainly a departure from the major hypothesis) is the concept of the journal and its role in the process of writing.

Initially, the journal was designed as an organizational tool; a tool designed to provide quick

reference and to make the writing process easier and more efficient. As time went on, however, the journal became increasingly more important: it became not only a place to store information, but also a place to "sort out" feelings and thoughts; a place to reflect on, and consider the process involved in writing a play.

To some, it became quite personal. To these people, writing a journal entry was not a chore - it was a pleasure.

The seven students in 9A who did not feel it assisted them were students who had extremely clear ideas for their plays and who also did not use the suggested scenario model, or students who used the journal merely as an organizational tool.

Of the two students in 9C who also felt this way, one did not use the journal at all. The other student wrote exceptional journal entries, but admitted that it was of little or no value in the actual writing of the play.

Journals, when used in a non-threatening, non-judgemental way, can be extraordinarily beneficial - almost indispensable in writing a play.

## II Relevance of Data to the Research Questions

### Research Question One

"Do students feel that scenarios help them 'think about their story' and 'think the problem through'?"

The underlined question deals with the student perspective; the perspective being examined in this study. It is important, though, to consider the teacher's perspective regarding this concept because the two could be quite different.

Generally students do feel that scenarios help them "think about their story", especially if it is a completely fictitious one, and one not based on their own experience or on something that they have seen or read. Those who disagreed either had a clear mental outline or picture, or just sat down and wrote.

On the other hand, there were those students who saw the playwriting assignment much the same way as a scientist or mathematician would see a "problem". They began to "think the problem through - analytically and logically - using a detailed, focused scenario that became an extremely valuable tool during the writing period. These students were aware of this fact and said so in their survey responses.

From a teacher's perspective, scenarios do help students a great deal, and should always be used in this type of assignment. Suggestions regarding structure and design of the scenario will be discussed later in Chapter Six.

Students who are adamant about not incorporating a scenario should be asked to defend their opinion formally, either orally or in writing. They should also be required to provide a valid description of their organizational methods.

#### Research Question Two

"Do students feel that it makes a difference to the quality of their writing when they develop a scenario before they begin writing a play?"

Most students who followed the scenario model felt that it had a positive effect on the quality of their writing. Only one student stated that she felt that it had a "negative effect" on the quality of the work. This student had written one play earlier during the year and had been quite successful without using a scenario. Her play, though, was an adaptation of a short story that she had written, and much of her planning had been done prior to beginning the story.

When she was required to begin this project, she immediately had concerns about the scenario simply because it was foreign to her. She did attempt a scenario, but had numerous problems developing and applying it.

The other twenty-five students who responded positively to this question were unanimous in their praise of the scenario. Two students compared their plays to past writing they had done where they had not used a scenario. They were convinced that their work this time was superior, because of the scenario. One student, who rejected the scenario right from the beginning, stated that she should have used one because her play was really not that good.

Many students who wrote "no" responses to this question had not followed the scenario model completely. Students who had followed it, but who ultimately were forced to reject it, criticized it for being a time-waster, a "hindrance" and a frustration. One student did concede that it may have made the first draft better. For some, if they had put more effort into developing a good workable scenario, they would undoubtedly have found that it improved their work.

Research Question Three

"Do students develop their own unique methods of writing?"

Eighteen students involved in the study felt that other (organizational) methods, rather than the scenario, were more helpful.

The following is a list of the methods that were mentioned by the respondents:

1. Point-form Style (brainstorming)
2. Webbing
3. Short Story
4. General Written Descriptions
5. Character Outlines/Lists
6. Place (Setting) Lists
7. Discussion/Collaboration
8. Mental Outlining/Mental Images
- 9 Spontaneous Writing (with little advanced planning)

These are all valid organizational strategies, but if used incorrectly can be most ineffective. In an "ideal" playwriting unit, students would be encouraged to identify the method with which they feel most comfortable, and with assistance from the teacher, they would expand and develop it to accommodate their ideas.

Students must be focused in their thinking, and must be organized in their strategies in order to write a successful play.

### III Relevance of Data to the O'Farrell Report

The following is a reaction to major issues raised by O'Farrell in the abstract which precedes his actual report. In the abstract, O'Farrell summarizes some fundamental concerns which motivated the initial study.

"Students would be advised to acquire experience in acting and theatre production."

#### Reaction

In having this type of experience, students would find it easier to visualize the play as a play, not as a story. Most students have written several stories by the time they reach grade nine, but often have never written a play. Exposing them to the craft of acting through creative drama is highly motivational and beneficial. Having them involved in minor and major theatrical productions throughout the year is extremely helpful in the execution of a successful play.

"Students would also be encouraged to see, read and discuss a wide variety of plays."

### Reaction

Most students at the grade nine level have watched dozens of movies and hundreds of television shows. Unfortunately, most have seen no more than two live theatre performances. Thus, it is important for these students not only to read and discuss a variety of plays in an academic environment, but it is even more important for them to see at least one theatre performance before beginning a playwriting unit. Students involved in this study did not have this opportunity. If they had had such an opportunity, some of them perhaps would have been more motivated to write a better scenario. Perhaps too, they would have had a clearer understanding of the importance of composing a detailed scenario before beginning to write the actual play.

"The course would be centered on the students' own writing experience."

### Reaction

This is an absolute must. A writing course or unit is successful when the students feel that they are successful and that they have learned something. Individual needs must be met; this is best done through

sharing, discussion, and reflection - the three major components of an effective writing course.

"... students would be encouraged to develop individual approaches to writing."

### Reaction

This concept was most obvious in the student responses to question four. Students who were not helped by the scenario must be given additional assistance in their initial planning, especially in writing longer plays. These students must be encouraged to think independently as there is no right way to write!

"The preparation of a scenario and character description would generally precede the writing of dialogue but flexibility would be encouraged here, also."

### Reaction

Again, as stated earlier in the chapter, a word of caution is necessary. The "flexibility" should extend only to students who have a definite idea, and who are able to articulate it clearly and completely.

Otherwise there is the tendency among some students to do the least amount of work. Accountability must be built in to all preparatory models that the students incorporate.

"Rewriting scenes or entire plays would be regarded as a natural part of the process and not a sign of failure."

### Reaction

Writing is messy, and good writing is hard work. Students must be encouraged to settle for the best at all times. To achieve superior quality, revisions are a necessary part of the writing process, and students must appreciate this.

"The teacher would be responsible for creating a positive, non-judgemental atmosphere in the classroom and for promoting the students individual creativity."

The role of the teacher is constantly changing and developing in this type of learning/writing environment. No longer is the teacher seen as the "know-it-all"; rather, s/he is seen as the facilitator, the arbitrator, the coordinator, the motivator and most importantly, the learner.

Together, students and teacher begin to collaborate, discuss, analyze and create. Thus, together they create a "positive, non-judgmental atmosphere"; a setting wherein everyone can be successful.

The concept of the changing role of the teacher is further advanced in current educational literature that promotes improving and extending student thinking. For example in Teaching for thinking. theories strategies and activities for the classroom (Raths et al, 1986), the authors state on page 165: "Where opportunities for thinking are provided, where there is acceptance and discussion of students ideas, where students are supported and liked, thinking is encouraged. In the teachers' interaction with students, there is an absence of authoritarianism, an encouraging of students to think more deeply, to reflect on their ideas, to consider alternatives. There is a prizing of students and their ideas."

#### IV Implications of the Research

The following is a summary of the major points expressed by Professor O'Farrell in Chapter III - Question Five ("Should the student write a scenario before beginning to write the dialogue?") - under the sub-heading: "Implications for the School Program".

(p. 89)

1. ". . . students should be encouraged to write scenarios before beginning to write dialogue, at least some of the time.
2. "The nature of the required scenario can vary from a loose plan to a detailed treatment of the plot."
3. ". . . knowing the basic structure and direction of the piece is strongly recommended."
4. ". . . the scenario (is) a useful but flexible guide and (is not) . . . written in stone."
5. ". . . from time to time, students should be encouraged to begin writing without concern for the ultimate outcome."
6. "The use (or non-use) of a scenario is evidently a very personal matter."
7. ". . . teachers should help each student identify an approach which works well for him or her."
8. ". . . each writer may prefer to use different approaches when working on different plays."
9. "The search for individual ways of working should be encouraged by the school program."

The preceding are entirely in keeping with the results of the study and in agreement with the opinions of this researcher.

\* \* \* \* \*

The scenario should be viewed as a "map or guide", not as a rigid, unalterable plan. It should be allowed to change wherever and whenever possible, and it should be able to accommodate the writing styles of all of the students in the class.

## Chapter Six

### I Reflections on the Research

Despite the fact that this study involved a relatively small sample of students, the results are in keeping with the major conclusions as presented by O'Farrell in his research report.

The following excerpts, from the report, represent a brief summary and concur with the results of the study conducted at Spring Valley:

1. ". . . the scenario should be seen as a map or guide, rather than a fixed plan." (p. 85)
2. "Students should . . . be advised to regard the scenario as a useful but flexible guide and not as written in stone." (p. 89)
3. ". . . the scenario should be allowed to change in the course of writing dialogue . . ." (p. 83)
4. ". . . each student should be encouraged to write his or her own personal way of working." (p. 83)
5. ". . . if the student really knows what he/she is writing about . . ., he/she can begin writing scenes as scenes but I don't recommend it for the student." (p. 89)
6. "The nature of the required scenario can vary from a loose plan to a detailed treatment of the plot." (p. 89)
7. ". . . knowing the basic structure and direction of the piece is strongly recommended." (p. 89)
8. ". . . from time to time, students should be encouraged to begin writing dialogue without concern for the ultimate outcome." (p. 89)

Although there truly are no absolutes, there are certainly some common sense guidelines and structuring devices that must be built in to a playwriting unit - especially at the grade nine level.

Keith Johnstone believes that "anyone can tell a dramatic story". This is certainly a true statement. However, the scenario (or some sort of organizational outline method) assists a person in telling the story just a little better.

## II Significance of the Research

The research conducted at Spring Valley is significant because it deals with secondary students rather than with adults who are professional, practising playwrights. The study was designed to analyze student thinking and student processing, then draw some conclusions regarding future program planning. All too often, this is not done by the educators who design curricula.

## III Implications for Teachers

Interestingly, the role of the teacher changed significantly during the course of the study. As soon

as students began writing their plays, they began to approach the teacher, and each other, for assistance, encouragement, advice and support. Over time, a true collaborative network developed in the classroom; a network characterized by mutual respect and trust. The teacher was no longer the expert; rather, she had become a member of the learning team.

As students learned to consider other points of view, and as they learned to reflect critically on their own thoughts and writing, their writing took on greater maturity.

#### IV Problems with the Playwriting Unit

The unit was a success in that with the exception of two students in 9C, all of the other forty-three students completed a first draft, and many went on to complete well-written final drafts. Incidentally, some were chosen to be used next year for creative drama classes and perhaps for theatrical performance.

In spite of the obvious success of the unit, there were areas of concern and problems that must be addressed in designing future, similar units.

The following is a brief discussion of the major problems inherent in the unit. The problem will first be identified, then followed by a brief analysis. Suggestions for improvement or change will be included as a final entry for each.

### Time

Time was a great problem. Because the unit was scheduled near the end of the school year, students were quite limited in the amount of time they could spend in redrafting. Some finished a polished final draft - with time to spare, while others barely finished their first drafts.

Also, traditionally at this time of year, there are numerous interruptions and student absences for extra-curricular activities. This was a major problem during the week spent on "Student Preparatory Exercises" ("Student Booklet" - pages 3, 4 and 5). Students were expected to work together in cooperative learning groups and then submit the assignments on the pre-determined due dates. It was a great idea, but it did not work. Many students were absent during that week and many groups were disrupted as a result. Consequently, some groups had to be combined. Also,

some students were simply forced to copy, verbatim, much of the information from another group member. Therefore, the original attempt to encourage collaboration and discussion was lost.

The two-week writing period (May 22 - June 5) that followed the preparatory work (May 14 - 18), was not long enough for some students. Fearing that they would never complete a decent final draft, several students spent a great deal of time, at home, on their plays. Six students ran out of time and were unable to complete a final draft. Five students completed a final draft after the absolute final deadline (June 12 - 11:30). Consequently, their assessment had to be based on their first drafts.

By the end of the two-week writing period, the students were tired and ready for summer holidays. Also, there was a great deal of tension as students anticipated their forthcoming final exams.

#### Student Preparatory Exercises

The design of this section of the unit requires major changes. Some students, despite the fact that there was a great deal of advance discussion and

thorough teaching, still could not see how these terms, (or definitions of these terms), would help them write a better play. They were right; the definitions would not, but understanding how these concepts operate in published fiction, just might. Some accepted this, others could not.

In a future, similar unit, one recommendation would be to combine some and eliminate others. For example, students could be required to compose an expository piece of writing on each of the following concepts.

1. Theme
2. Plot (including climax, conflict, setting and mood)
3. Conflict

The writing would be directed toward playwriting, but could relate to short stories or novels, if appropriate.

The other elements (inciting incident, rising action, dénouement, dialogue, tone and tension) would be eliminated completely in terms of any sort of written assignment, but would be reviewed in pre-writing lessons.

### The Scenario Outline

In order to accommodate those students who create mental outlines (outlines in their heads), or those who just want to write (freely and without restraint), two models would be provided.

The first model would be a modified version of the existing one ("Student Booklet" p. 6), and the second would consist of the following two sections: section one - a character and plot list, section two - miscellaneous notes/planning. Also, space would not be provided in the booklet for these scenarios. Rather, students would use their own paper and would write what they felt was required.

Scenarios and all miscellaneous notes would be stored in their writing folders for future reference.

### Student Journals

The role of the journal would be expanded. Students would clearly understand the complex role of the journal long before beginning their plays. The basic problem with the journals in this unit was that some students either did not have time to use them

properly, or did not understand how to use them effectively.

It would be made very clear to the students that the journal has a multi-faceted role, and is to be used as:

- a description of what transpired (the "what" part).
- a rationale of why it transpired (the "why" part).
- an analysis of the process (the "how" part).

Perhaps some students may move to:

- an evaluation of what did occur, and of what should occur later.

Journal entries, like the scenarios and other notes, would not be included in the "Student Booklet". Rather, they would be written by the students on their own paper, and stored in their folders along with everything else. Students would be responsible for keeping their journals organized and up-to-date.

It is recommended that the journals be collected and read by the teacher on a regular basis.

Student Booklets - Final Sections

The students generally paid little attention to the final sections of the booklet:

"Some Hints in Writing a Play" (p. 11)

"Basic Elements of the Plot" (p. 12, 13)

"Play Format" (p. 13, 14)

Hints for students should be provided when and if they need them; otherwise, students tend to ignore this type of information.

"Basic Elements of the Plot" could easily be reviewed in their preparatory expository writing assignments before they start working on their plays.

"Play Format" was the area that the students found the most difficult in this project. The information on pages 13 and 14 should be strongly emphasized. Students should also have access to several, well-written plays - preferably plays written by students their own age.

Considerable attention must be paid to the format of the play because plays are completely different, in general form and structure, to other types of literature.

## V General Recommendations

Any English language arts course without a playwriting unit is incomplete. Playwriting is a unique motivational "hook" for even the most reluctant student. It is also a singular method to reinforce and extend the basic strands (reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing) of an integrated English language arts classroom - especially if students have the chance to perform their plays. Playwriting also develops higher level thinking skills, and encourages and promotes positive social interaction.

Playwriting should not be a component of a secondary drama program only, but should be included in transactional writing courses at the senior years level, and in general English courses.

An Ideal Playwriting unit

It is recommended that an ideal or effective, well-structured playwriting course or unit would accommodate the following:

1. Students would have been exposed to a wide variety of plays prior to beginning the unit - both published plays and plays written by other students.
2. Students would have a basic introduction to general theatre skills, and would have been involved in some forms of creative drama during the year.
3. Students would understand the structural idiosyncrasies of plays and how they differ from short stories.
4. Students would be, or would have been, involved in putting on plays, especially their own plays.
5. Students would be encouraged to meet and work with a playwright.

6. Students would be provided with an opportunity to view a live theatre production or a movie that would assist them in writing their plays (or screenplays).
7. Students would be encouraged to develop a scenario, or some kind of outline, before embarking on writing a play. They would be allowed to change their scenarios during the writing phase.
8. Students would be encouraged to base their plot on personal life experiences and their characters on real people whom they know.
9. Students would be allowed the freedom to develop their own unique styles of writing a play, and to make any changes that they feel are necessary during the writing phase.
10. Students would be invited to collaborate with one another, and with the teacher, as often as possible.
11. Students would be expected to keep a journal throughout the entire writing period, to assist

them in the process of self-reflection and analysis.

12. Students would be encouraged to improvise and read scenes, in order to test out the dialogue before scripting it.
13. Students would be encouraged to perform their plays, or parts of their plays.

#### Recommendations for Developing a Unit

The following are recommendations for an effective, well-structured playwriting unit at the secondary level:

1. Students should have read a variety of plays prior to beginning the unit. Plays should consist of published plays by professional playwrights, and plays written by other students. It is recommended that students read and improvise with plays written by students their own age first, and that they progress to more complex, published plays. In doing so, students learn to appreciate their own unique literature - the literature of their class. Further to this, they begin to have

confidence in their own writing and thus can appreciate more readily intricacies and complexities of more sophisticated literature.

2. Students should have a basic introduction to general theatre skills and how they relate to the written script. Students should also be involved in an active creative drama program that encourages group interaction and collaboration, higher level thinking and creativity, and as well, spontaneous improvisation.
3. Students should have a clear understanding of the structural idiosyncrasies of plays. Also, they should clearly understand how a play differs from a short story. Consequently, students will find the process of writing a play relatively simple.
4. Students should be involved in putting on plays (especially student plays) prior to beginning the unit. Practical theatre experience is extremely beneficial for students who are involved in writing a play.

5. Students should be provided with an opportunity to view a professional live theatre production. Also, if possible, students should have the opportunity to talk to a practising playwright and/or a professional actor. Seeing the professional side of playwriting can be the motivational "hook" for some student playwrights.
6. Students should be encouraged to develop a scenario, or some kind of outline, before beginning to write a play. Students should also be allowed to change their scenarios whenever they feel it is necessary - during the first draft phase especially.
7. Reluctant students should be encouraged to base their plot on personal life experiences, and their characters on real people whom they know. More confident students should be encouraged to step beyond real-life experience and experiment with fantasy, science fiction, adventure, etc. These students should be provided with a positive environment that stimulates creativity and independent thinking.
8. Students should be allowed the freedom to develop their own unique styles of writing. Also,

students should be taught to consider, objectively and logically, what works for them, and what does not. Self-analysis and self-reflection should be encouraged, by the teacher, consistently throughout the entire writing period.

9. During the writing period, students must collaborate with one another, and with the teacher, as often as possible. Positive group interaction is of utmost importance to the success of such a unit.
10. Students would be required to keep some sort of journal during the course of the unit. The journal can be an indispensable aid - if used properly. Journal writing can greatly assist students, and teachers, in the areas of self-reflection and analysis.
11. Students should be encouraged to read and to improvise their scenes - whenever necessary - to test out the dialogue before scripting it. Improvisation is a valuable tool; it helps students visualize their plays from a theatrical perspective, and it is also a great motivator.

12. Students should be provided with a chance to perform their plays. Initially, they should perform for other students; later, more successful plays should be performed for larger audiences outside of the school environment.
13. Students should be involved in the evaluation of the written script, and in the evaluation of any subsequent performances.

#### Final Comments

Lawrence O'Farrell has raised many crucial questions in his report, and has provided several potentially provocative hypotheses.

This study has confirmed some of the conclusions arising out of his research, but new questions have emerged. For example, what is the most effective role for the teacher to play and how does this role change during the student playwriting process?

Recent educational literature supports the concept of teacher as learner - the new evolutionary role of the teacher. For example, Robert J. Sternberg states, ". . . we must acknowledge our own need for development

and create an atmosphere in the classroom that allows us to be comfortable with this fact. Moreover, we must not feel threatened by this somewhat unusual role. There is no better way to learn than to teach and both we and our students must accept us in our dual role as learner and teacher".

Also, how important is self-reflection in the playwriting process, and what is the most effective means of encouraging self-reflection in the writing class? Journal writing proved to be one method of encouraging self-reflection, but are there other techniques that could be employed with greater effectiveness?

Self-reflection and "metacognition" go hand-in-hand. This relationship was recognized by Arthur L. Costa in the following way:

Metacognition is our ability to know what we don't know. It occurs in the cerebral cortex and is thought by some neurologists to be uniquely human.

Metacognition is our ability to plan a strategy for producing what information is needed, to be conscious of our own steps and strategies during the act of problem solving, and to reflect on and evaluate the productivity of our own language.

Current educational literature promotes the virtues of metacognition and self-reflection. Scenarios and journals, if used consistently, seem to be excellent vehicles whereby these cognitive processes may be nurtured in the secondary English Language Arts classroom.

"The romantic image of creativity is that it bubbles up or blossoms out spontaneously. But . . . a lot of creativity comes about because that's what a person is trying to do."

- David Perkins

Hopefully, other educators will see the importance of further clarification and will continue with their own research in related areas. Also, it is hoped that this research report will motivate classroom teachers to implement some of the ideas and experiment with some of the recommendations.

It is further hoped that future investigation into the interesting area of playwriting will lead to more effective teaching methods, and ultimately lead to refinement and extension of existing secondary curricula.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Student Booklet**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ROOM \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SPRING VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

"From Scenario to Play:

Playwriting at the Secondary Level"

Special Study - Grade Nine

Student Booklet

Note to Student:

This study is important and will combine many aspects of the English Language Arts program. The study will also assist me in the completion of my master's degree in drama education from the University of Manitoba, and I appreciate your full cooperation in the project.

During the course of the study, emphasis will be placed on writing skills, creative thinking skills, academic skills and group interaction skills.

The study will be limited to the teaching of the playwriting process; i.e., how plays are constructed in terms of initial planning and organization. It will also examine the role of the outline or scenario in the playwriting process.

The Study Description

The project will involve all of the students in this class. Students may work in small groups, when appropriate, but each student will plan and write his/her own play.

If students are willing to do so, some plays may be presented in an informal performance. However, this is not a required part of the study as only the writing process is being examined. Students will also receive a grade for their completed play; this too is independent of the study.

To summarize, the study is limited to the planning and writing processes. It will not concern itself with the rehearsal process, nor will it concern itself with any sort of assessment of the final play manuscript.

### Groups

Students will be grouped in order to work through the "Student Preparatory Exercise" and "Student Organizational Assignments". Exercises and assignments will be completed in small groups, and will then be discussed in the large group. In the large group, more specific information will be provided by the teacher if, and when, required.

Students will be encouraged to keep a daily journal. Students will record brief, general feelings regarding the playwriting process.

Student booklets will be collected each day; exercises, assignments and journal entries will be monitored regularly at specific, pre-determined times.

### Student Plays

When necessary, the plays will be read informally by the students in their groups or when students feel that they need assistance from one another.

I will constantly monitor the development of the plays, and I will offer assistance when required.

Upon completion of the study, I will read and evaluate all of the plays.

### Student Survey

Upon completion of the study, each student will be required to respond to an important "Student Survey".

The Process

1. Student Preparatory Exercises

A. Definition of Terms

In your group, please familiarize yourself with the following terms, as they will be used throughout the study:

1. Playwright - person who writes the play.
2. Play/Script - the manuscript or written form.  
("Play"/"Script" mean basically the same thing, and will be used interchangeably.)
3. Scenario - "an outline of a play, opera, or the like, indicating scenes, characters, etc.; an outline for any proposed planned series of events, real or imagined."

(Webster's New World Dictionary Second College Edition, 1986)

B. Elements of Drama (I)

In your group, review the following concepts.

Write a definition for each, based on your discussions.

Be prepared to share your definitions in the large group discussion period.:

1. Theme -

---

---

---

---

2. Plot -

---

---

---

---

3. Inciting Incident -

---

---

4. Rising Action -

---

---

---

---

5. Climax -

---

---

6. Dénouement -

---

---

---

---

C. Elements of Drama (II)

Follow the same instructions as they apply to Part B.

1. Conflict -

---

---

---

---

2. Character -

---

---

---

---

3. Dialogue -

---

---

4. Setting -

---

---

5. Atmosphere or Mood -

---

---

---

---

6. Tone -

---

---

---

---

7. Tension -

---

---

D. Student Organizational Assignments

The Scenario or Outline

There is a certain phase that is often necessary in the writing of a play or a script.

This is called the "scenario" or outline phase.

In the scenario, special attention may be paid to the initial idea(s), and to the basic or main idea (theme) and to the plan of action or sequence of events (plot).

The scenario phase may also assist the playwright in determining the role of the major character(s) and the significance of the conflict in relation to the character(s).

Construct a scenario for your play using the following as a guide.

1. Theme or Objective of your Play (Why).

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Setting of your play (Where/When).  
(May include mood, tone, tension.)

---

---

---

---

---

3. Characters in your play (Who).  
(Include characters' names, roles and brief descriptions.)

---

---

---

---

---











observe and compare, classify and organize ideas throughout the writing process. Finally, good writers must constantly hypothesize regarding possible outcomes of the conflict that they have imagined in the first place.

4. Writing an effective play depends on how well group members communicate and work together. A successful play depends a great deal on positive, mature students who are always honest and respectful of one another.

## H. Basic Elements of the Plot

### 1. Conflict

- (a) Conflict is the basic ingredient of the play; effective conflict creates effective suspense.
- (b) Four Types of Conflict: Man vs Man, Man vs Society, Man vs Nature, and Man vs Himself.
- (c) Identify a situation that contains a conflict, identify it, and hypothesize regarding the possible consequences of the conflict.

e.g. buying clothing

conflict

consequence(s)

e.g. waiting for a bus

conflict

consequence(s)

- (d) Conflict  
+  
Consequence

Suspense\*

\*Suspense in the action must be interesting and intense enough to keep the audience involved.

- (e) Inspiration for conflict in a short play can come from "anywhere and anything".

Often the best plays are very simple, and based on events that the writers have actually experienced.

2. Characterization

- (a) "Creating interesting, believable characters lies at the center of successful playwriting."
- (b) Good writers must know their characters very well, and should analyze them well.
- (c) Types of characters:
  - static
  - dynamic
- (d) Each character must be believable, and each character must be an individual.

3. Complications/Rising Action

Complications must be credible or believable and must connect to the play.

4. Resolution/Dénouement

- (a) Resolution is not really an ending; it resolves conflict, it does not end it.
- (b) A good resolution answers all questions from the beginning part of the play and satisfactorily resolves or solves the basic conflict.

5. Play Length

It is expected that most students will write a one-act play of approximately four type-written pages.

I. Play Format

- 1. There are several play formats. The following model is simple and easy to follow.

This model is a sample only and does not have to be used.

Students who do not wish to use this model are expected to follow a recognized format.

- 2. Please note the following:

- (a) The playwright's name should appear on page one of the manuscript, followed by the title of the play and the list of characters.
- (b) Under the list of characters should be a description of the scene (setting) followed by the dialogue.

- (c) The dialogue is introduced by the name of the person speaking, followed by a colon(:).
- (d) Quotation marks are not required. Stage directions are placed within brackets ( ). Always use the present tense in stage directions and in miscellaneous instructions.
- (e) Generally, at the end of a scene, some description is required, but this is not always true.

At the beginning of each new scene, a description of the scene is required if there has been a major change in setting.

- (f) Remember, every play is different and every playwright is unique. Use the model that best suits your needs and start writing!

Ms. D. Nentwig  
English Language Arts  
Department Head  
Spring Valley Jr. High  
1990

Monique Denton

## Inner Circles

List of Characters:

Mrs. Carter, Senior  
Noela Carter  
James Carter  
Mr. Blackmore  
Andy  
Marie

Scene: The drawing room of the mansion of Mrs. Carter, Sr. during the final days of autumn. The room, although splendid and expensively furnished, is deceptively oppressive. All doors into the room are closed. The room is rather dark.

Mrs. Carter dozes by the fire. Abruptly, someone knocks at the door and startles her into consciousness.

Voice (outside): Mrs. Carter! Mrs. Carter! Are you there? Oh please, are you there?

Mrs. Carter: etc., etc.

Ms. D. Nentwig  
1990

**APPENDIX B**  
**Student Survey**

SPRING VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

"From Scenario to Play:

Playwriting at the Secondary Level"

Special Study - Grade Nine

Student Survey

Note to Student:

Students are advised that the following survey is not part of the playwriting unit. Any student has the right to choose not to participate. Students not participating will not be penalized in any way.

Based on your recent study of the playwriting process, please answer the following questions as completely and as accurately as possible.

Use your playwriting folder to assist you in answering the questions. Please refer to your journal entries, your scenarios or to any other miscellaneous notes that may be stored in your folder.

Take as much time as you need, as your opinions and thoughts regarding the process of writing a play are extremely important.

Please respond to all of the questions on the paper provided.

Survey Questions

1. Do you feel that a scenario, or some kind of outline, helps you to focus your thoughts regarding any of the following literary elements: plot, theme, character or conflict?

If so, how?

If so, why?

2. Do you think that it makes a difference to the quality of your work when you write a scenario or outline before you write a play?

Why/Why not?

3. After you have written a scenario, do you find that you change it as you write the play?

\* \* \*

If so, where do you tend to make your changes?

To what extent do you make changes?

\* \* \*

If not, why do you feel that you do not make any changes?

4. Do you think that writing something other than a scenario is more helpful?

Describe what works best for you.

5. Reflecting on your writing is important while writing a play.

How does your journal assist you in this regard?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Ms. D. Nentwig  
English Language Arts  
Department Head  
Spring Valley Junior High  
June 1990

## REFERENCES

- Anthony, Geraldine. (Ed.). (1978). Stage voices. Toronto: Doubleday.
- Archer, William. (1912). A manual of craftsmanship. New York: Dodd Mead and Company.
- Barton, Robert, Booth, David, Buckley, Agnes & Moore, William. (1969). Nobody in the Cast. Don Mills: Longman Canada Ltd.
- Bolton, Gavin. (1986). Selected writings. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Bolton, Gavin. (1979) Towards a theory of drama. Burnt Mill, Hartou, Essex: Longman Group Ltd.
- Booth, David W. & Lundy, Charles J. (1985). Improvisation learning through drama. Don Mills: Academic Press.
- Borg, Walter R. & Galt, Meredith Damien. (1979). Educational research An introduction (3rd ed.). New York: Longman Inc.
- Brandt, Ronald S. (1986, May). On creativity and thinking skills: a conversation with David Perkins. Educational Leadership, pp. 12-18.
- Costa, Arthur L. (1984, November). Mediating the metacognitive. Educational Leadership, pp. 43-48.
- Courtney, Richard. (1980). The dramatic curriculum. New York: Drama Books Specialists.
- Dewey, John. (1979). Art as experience. New York: Paragon Books, pub. G.P. Putman's Sons.
- Dewey, John. (1966). Democracy and education. New York: The Free Press Macmillan Pub. Co., Inc.

Dodd, Nigel & Hickson, Winifred. (Eds.). Drama and theatre in education. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Drama 105, 205, 305. Curriculum Guidelines. (1989).  
Manitoba Education.

Eisner, Elliot W. (1979). The educational imagination.  
New York: Macmillan.

English Language Arts Grade 9-12. (1987). Manitoba  
Education.

English Language Arts Middle Years. (1982). Manitoba  
Dept. of Education.

Egri, Lajos. (1960). The art of dramatic writing. New  
York: Simon and Schuster.

Fairhead, Wayne & Vine, Elaine. (1987). Remove the  
blindfold Teacher guide. Book 1. Toronto: Oxford  
University Press, Canada.

Gay, L.R. (1981). Educational research competencies for  
analysis and application (2nd ed.) Columbus: Charles  
E. Merrill Publishing Company.

Johnson, David W., Johnson, Roger T. & Johnson Holubec,  
Edythe. (1986). Circles of learning: Cooperation in  
the classroom (Rev. ed.). Edina: Interaction Book Co.

Johnstone, Keith. (1979). Impro: Improvisation and the  
theatre. London: Faber and Faber.

Judy, Susan & Judy, Stephen. (1982). Putting on a play A  
Guide to writing and producing neighborhood drama. New  
York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Kemp, David. (1972). A different drummer An ideas book  
for drama. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd..

Kline, Peter. (1970). The theatre student playwriting. New York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc.

Lundy, Charles J. & Booth, David W. (1983). Interpretation Working With scripts. Don Mills: Academic Press.

Moore, Sonia. (1965). The Stanislavski system The professional training of an actor. New York: Penguin Books.

Mueller, Lavonne & Reynolds, Jerry D. (1982). Creative writing. Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited.

Norton, James H. & Gretton, Francis. (1972). Writing incredibly short plays, poems, stories. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

O'Neill, Cecilly, Lambert, Alan, Linnell, Rosemary & Warr-Wood, Janet. (1976). Drama guidelines. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Osborne, Ken. (1984). Middle Years Source - Book: Suggestions for the Education of Early Adolescents. Province of Manitoba, Department of Education.

Raths, Louis E., Wasserman, Selma, Jonas Arthur & Rothstein, Arnold. (1986). Teaching for thinking Theories, strategies and activities for the classroom. New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University.

Siks, Geraldine Brain. (1983). Drama with children (2nd ed.). New York: Harper and Row, pub.

Sternberg, Robert J. (1985, November). Teaching critical thinking, part 1: Are we making critical mistakes? Phi Delta Kappan, pp. 1984-198.

Sternberg, Robert J. (1987, February). Teaching critical thinking: Eight easy ways to fail before you begin. Phi Delta Kappan, pp. 456-459.