


CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR EDITOR:

I concur with Mr. Leddy's assertion in the latest issue of the journal that often the most memorable teachers we have are the great lecturers. To his comment that he cannot remember any professor from his past who focused on "active learning," I ask, "what were the goals for the course?"

For those of us teaching composition to first year students, active learning is the only way to go. Students cannot learn to write while listening to me speak. Involvement with their own writing from the very beginning is the key to higher comfort levels and with that comes proficiency. When one considers the level of writing produced in freshman courses, it becomes obvious that practice is important. Most students at this level have not been exposed to having their writing (kindly) critiqued and then having this writing improve, draft by draft as they understand that anything worth doing is worth doing right. This takes much time on task—for the professor as well as the student—but I know of no better approach to becoming a clear and readable writer.

Will my students remember me fondly for my talent at the podium? No, I think not. But what I do want them to remember is that the quality of their work improved under my direction and with my assistance and even more, I hope they hold onto a piece of writing that makes them feel proud and allows them to feel that they have, indeed, joined the community of writers and thinkers who mean to make their mark in today's world.

I hope they will share that piece of writing with their family and friends and say, "Look, I wrote this." 

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