

nents of a good education. Now he reminds us that if those elements are absent, the education will be less effective.

The thought is not needed.

At last we have reached the climactic moment: when we examine what remains of our author's paragraph:

Every subject presents its own pedagogic problems. Yet whatever the topic, teaching always involves the instructor, the student, the material, the method, and the environment, and neglecting any one element will harm the entire process. Too often, however, student interests and needs are given only cursory consideration by faculty.

Before attempting further rewriting, we'd want to examine this paragraph in the context of the material that surrounds it, and afterward we might want to expand some ideas or tighten others. Thus far, though, we've made substantial progress: pruning excess verbiage, sharpening word choice, and clarifying exactly where we're headed and what the reader should expect.

#### B. THE SECOND PARAGRAPH

Here's the next paragraph. Again we suggest that you attempt your own revision, then turn to ours.

This second sample appears in the middle of the essay, when our author weighs problems that he has confronted and also asserts the value of what he as a teacher has tried to accomplish:

As a teacher of mathematics, my belief is that mathematics deserves a place within the liberal arts program, that it is a subject which non-majors should be exposed to. Mathematics is losing its foothold in the liberal arts program over the past decades with the disappearance of core requirements and the unfavorable attitude developed through a host of negative experiences suffered at the hands of academically incompetent lower school teachers. This is occurring at a time when mathematical techniques are becoming commonplace tools in all areas of human inquiry, and where the failure of students

to be properly exposed to mathematics and the physical sciences results in the unhealthy and unreasoned fear born of ignorance which they direct towards the growing influence of technology. The need to dispel these fears which traditionally envelop the discipline is a central portion of the challenge of teaching mathematics on the college level, to dissolve the confusion which has accompanied the attempts to understand its content, and in effect to save mathematics as an integral part of the liberal arts program and the intellectual toolbox of an individual who wishes to consider himself well-educated or cultured in any sense of these terms.

We see familiar problems, but we'll find new ones as well.

Let's consider the first sentence:

As a teacher of mathematics, my belief is that mathematics deserves a place within the liberal arts program, that it is a subject which non-majors should be exposed to.

Immediately we note a dangling element: "my belief" is not a "teacher of mathematics." Our initial response, then, is to change "my belief" to "I believe."

Next we see that the sentence concludes with the preposition "to," and prepositions like "to," "in," "on," or "with" in that spot almost always prove awkward. Therefore we change the phrase to read "to which non-majors should be exposed."

Yet even after those minor adjustments, we are struck by more salient errors.

The author has already identified himself as a teacher of mathematics. Does he need to do so again?

We're also dissatisfied with "I believe." By now we understand that this essay proffers the author's own thoughts, so the modest "I believe" may be cut.

Thus we could begin this way:

Mathematics deserves a place within the liberal arts program.