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A basic problem in teaching writing is the necessity of having the student come to his class in Freshman English with a solid background of extensive experience in reading. This alone will furnish the student with a foundation or reservoir of verbal proficiency upon which he can draw in making his assignments in E110 both easy for him to do and acceptable to his teacher, but this essential preparation is, unfortunately, beyond the control of the college teacher who has no authority to determine a curriculum for his student's preparation, though he should, ideally, have it. The division between junior high school, high school, and college is an artificial one. The college should set the standards for the high school preparation of the students in the academic program and assign the high school texts at a pre-college level. This would be more efficient than the present system.

Just as there is no text that can make a student able to "think" in one semester, so there is no text which can make him a proficient reader and writer overnight. The best that can be done is to make sure that he has achieved a good foundation in grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and the like--the elements of rhetoric. This is the utilitarian approach to E110 and does serve to help prepare students who are seeking the B.S. for their tasks in writing technical reports, etc. It should not be considered adequate training for those seeking a B.A., however.

Teaching at Interest Level

In some ways we are demanding too much of our students in the Freshman English. We commonly use textbooks--Borzoi College Reader for example--that have a quite general content; they are full of expository articles, none of which are germane to the very specific interests of the large majority of our quite young and possibly immature students. There has been research done on the interest range of the average young person. We lose them before we start if they are confronted solely with material which, while valuable as general information, has been written by mature professional authors on subjects of interest to mature adults, and for that specific audience.

First, we should realize that we are not teaching mature adults. We are trying, or should be trying, to establish rapport with those who are still in the process of finding themselves, and who seek, in the materials they are asked to use, subject matter which will help them in their quest for maturity,

and be sympathetic to them. A study of several texts published for use in courses in Freshman English does not yield any at all which indicate an appropriate orientation towards the age group being taught. To have such a text would be to win half the battle, for it would present neither difficulties to the teacher in his exposition of the material to the class, nor difficulties to the students in relating to it and forming sufficient motivation to put forth good effort in writing papers.

Special Role of Literature in the Curriculum

In choosing texts for our English courses, it would not be out of place to remember that literature, even expository prose, is the one subject in the curriculum that deals with humanity as a general subject (not, as in the social sciences, health, or history, for example, only in specific limited ways.) It is to literature that we go, not only for whatever edification we may receive, but for the fulfillment of deep and personal human needs that are fulfilled in no other part of the college curriculum. Although it seems to have been unrecognized so far, the student has further demands to put upon his college than merely exclusively those which we term the intellectual. The student comes to college with emotional and spiritual needs as well. And it is just those needs, fortuitously, that literature was invented to satisfy! Literature was originally a refuge from the pains of reality, but it offers far more than entertainment: it fills an essential need of man, the need for imagination and faith in things unseen; the mystery and magic of life, that is bound up with our psychological heritage as human beings, and that is best illustrated by the fact that we have dreams when asleep. This is the need for fantasy. Literature also, of course, performs a moral function. Ideally, it shows warm human relationships as more prevalent and more acceptable than their opposites. If we give a student a text that he feels comfortable with, he will surely write with more ease. The text should fit the student; the student should not have to be forced into an unyielding mold to fit the text. The essential elements in any good college reader, should all be available in readings that bear some relation to, or touch at some part on, the student's life. The topics cannot be entirely, coldly, isolated in worlds he has not yet entered because he is not yet prepared to enter them.

Conclusion

A course in composition is, of course, two-pronged: there is the practical side of writing; that is, the mechanics that we must present to the student. The second, and greater, is the spiritual or artistic side. It is this feeling of art that must be part of a composition course. It must be conveyed to the class that writing is an art that has a mystique, or something mystical, about it. Only if a student can reach a certain level of understanding regarding where and how the intuitive can be joined to the intellectual (or conscious), will he or she receive the greatest gift that can be given to him or to her by an educational institution--the ability to unite the two parts of the mind's faculties into a synthesis that will give it the power to function with assurance and success in the course he or she will subsequently undertake. They will have acquired the ability to use the creative power of the unconscious which, through all the centuries of mankind's struggles and sufferings, has, when called to his rescue, again and again made the impossible possible.

A Key to Clarity -

Some Variations on a
Slide-Tape Extravaganza ¹

Kathleen Danaher Parks



Who, me?

What for?

To clear up the mud.

What mud?

And anyway, what does
an English teacher have to
do with clearing it up?

Ask President Carter. He knows where the mud is. It's on the written page. It's the gobbledygook in office memos, apartment leases, insurance policies, in business, university, and government reports. And it's been there a long time.

President Roosevelt encountered it during his administration. The following is an actual order concerning blackouts. Beneath it is FDR's version:

Such preparations shall be made as will completely obscure all Federal buildings and non Federal buildings occupied by the Federal Government during an air raid for any period of time from visibility by reason of internal or external illumination. Such obscuration may be obtained either by blackout construction or by terminating the illumination. This will of course require that in building areas in which production must continue during a blackout, construction must be provided that internal illumination may continue. Other areas, whether or not occupied by personnel, may be obscured by terminating the illumination.

¹This paper was originally a slide-tape presentation given at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Kansas City, April 1, 1977.

All Federal buildings permanent or temporary must be darkened completely during an air raid, either by turning out the lights or hanging something across the windows.

Carter wants to continue the war that hasn't yet been won--the war for clarity. He's demanded that all government officials sign each document they write and has required that no memo go longer than a page. Carter's working on the government front. And he needs you to help the kids in the classroom - who some day will be writing the memos, the leases, the policies, the reports. The country needs you.

VARIATIONS ON "THE MARINES' SONG"

- 1) From the halls of Penn and Delaware
To the seminars of Berkeley
We will fight our country's battles
In the war for clarity.

- 2) First we fight to write with freedom
Then to keep our message clear
And we're proud to bear the titles
of teachers kids don't fear.

But what do kids have to fear?

They fear the pen and paper, the written word, the confusion surrounding them. They're not sure how to put it all together. And this confusion in the mind leads to the muddy thoughts on paper.

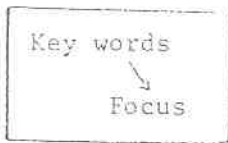
Our job is to teach students how to order the chaos, how to eliminate the mud, how to communicate.

So what can we do right here and now?
How do we perform a miracle on mud?
What's the first thing we need?

We need a formula to dispel the fear. We need a pattern of organization that's simple and graspable.

One way to start is with a basic 1-3-3-3-1 pattern: one opening sentence, three paragraphs of three sentences each, one closing sentence.

Then, to this basic pattern the concept of key words can be added. Key words define, limit, and direct thoughts. They help a student focus, zero in. For example, a student who wants to tell how the Philadelphia Eagles bring dejection into town, must keep the key word, dejection, in mind. This way he is less inclined to talk about the great spirit of the crowd, the old friends he met, and the good time he had with his girlfriend.



Topic sentence:

The Philadelphia Eagles bring dejection into town.

Note:

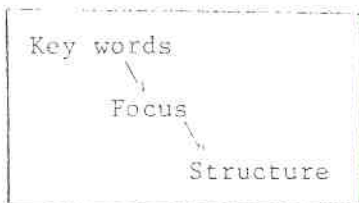
It is important to have the student underline the word to remind him of the focus.

With this sense of focus for his composition, the student can then begin to develop the focus of each paragraph. He may decide to write about the different sensations he had at the game. One possibility then, would be to choose one sense for each paragraph. (The important thing he is that the key word be written in the margin. Students otherwise are inclined to forget just what it was they set out to say.)

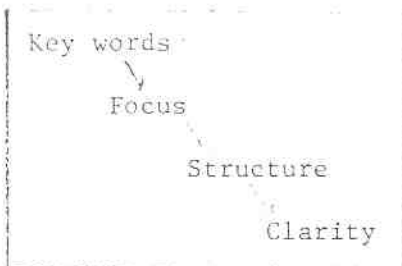
Sample:

	The Philadelphia Eagles bring	1
	<u>dejection</u> into town.	
	I am watching the game end.	
sights -	I see stunned people leave the stadium. I see the dejected Eagles walk slowly to the locker room as the St. Louis Cardinals jump with the joy of victory.	3
	At first I hear only silence.	
sounds -	But then I hear people muttering under their breaths. And I can imagine the cry of the disappointed Eagles.	3
	The odor of garbage lingers.	
smells -	The great smell of hot dogs and popcorn has gone stale. The smell of a perspiring angry crowd leaves the stadium.	3
	It's the fourteen point loss that's so hard to take.	1

With the key words in the margin, the student can then follow the simple procedure sketched above. He can check to see if each sentence in each paragraph relates to its key word, and to see if each paragraph and its corresponding key word relates to the dejection he speaks of in his opening sentence. Though the paragraphs have weaknesses, they are at least focused. And when the student is writing, as each focused paragraph builds upon the other, a stable structure begins to emerge.



The structure is complete and a clear statement is made when the student establishes a stable relationship between his opening and closing sentences.



In contrast, a student who has not followed the rules ends up with an unclear, unfocused statement.

Sample:

When I took my sister to the Eagles game, the little brat wouldn't stop bothering me until it was over.

Just as we arrived, Tom Brookshire, the broadcaster, was announcing the players. We could hear all the boos and hisses of the fans. My sister was listening to another sound - the cry of the popcorn man.

While we were watching the game we could smell the aroma of popcorn and hotdogs. We could also smell the odor of cigarette and cigar smoke. There was also the scent of the crisp November air.

As the game went on we watched the players running, catching, and throwing. The scoreboard showed the score of the game and other games in the league. During the half-time festivities we watched the colorful bands marching up and down the field.

The Eagles lost the game 17-3 to the St. Louis Cardinals.

This student, as he develops the key word of each paragraph, forgets the key word which is supposed to be directing his composition. The first paragraph

on sounds is acceptable. However, in the next two paragraphs, though the student deals with smells and sights, he fails to relate them to his controlling key word. And the student's concluding statement is irrelevant.

This student is perhaps just careless. For if he knows the rules, which are simple enough, he can easily detect his own errors. The basic pattern is one he can easily grasp. He can see it in front of him on one page. And he can clearly see what's expected of him and what, in this case, he has failed to do.

In addition, if the teacher has made it clear that no one can receive a passing grade without following the minimum standards, then the student can go a step further. He can put a grade on his own paper. Since the latter student got one paragraph right, he may be generous and give himself a D. But he knows he can go no higher. And though he has not passed, he does not experience the often accompanying frustration of not knowing why. He knows exactly why. And knowing gives him confidence as well as control.

Giving the student a certain amount of control is a good way of getting past the "he-gave-me" syndrome. No "hard" teacher has given that mysterious D. The grade here is determined by objective rules. And both teacher and student know the criteria.

For class activity student can practice using the criteria in marking each other's papers. And the more they do, the more confidence and knowledge they'll gain.

With a little practice a student can look at this paragraph and quickly detect one major problem.

I learned different styles and patterns in writing. I learned discipline in trying to fit my ideas into these patterns. Discipline is essential to conform to without losing freedom of expression.

The student will probably decide that discipline is the key word and conclude that the first sentence has no place in the paragraph. He may suggest that a separate paragraph be written explaining the different styles and patterns.

A student who is trained to think in terms of key words could look at this next paragraph and immediately realize it is unacceptable.

I learned the basics of good writing. I learned to read beyond the words in a story and to seek some inner meaning. I feel also and probably most important, that I gained confidence that I can indeed write an effective paper.

The student editing this paper may write, "Is this paragraph about the basics of good writing, the inner meaning of stories, or confidence? Your paragraph needs a key word, a focus."

Editing other papers helps student realize what's expected. It makes the job of writing easier for them. And student editing makes your job easier too. First, the papers have initial corrections. Second, the students, as they look for clear statements from their classmates, will look for clear statements from themselves. And a student who's interested in clear writing is a welcome to a hard-working teacher. At least the teacher won't be sitting up late trying to deal with confusion, a dozen different ideas in the same paragraph. But if the confusion is there it must be dealt with. Or else it

multiplies. A simple sentence can grow, as we have seen, into an elaborate production, into absurd and obscure directions on terminating illumination.

Yes, Uncle Sam needs you to teach clarity. Because clarity communicates. Students who learn it will make everyone's life easier.

Just think. Think what things could be like if more people were interested in clarity. You could finish grading papers in half the time. You could sleep or watch Masterpiece Theater instead. You could understand your insurance policy . . . or your mother-in-law. Or you could finish assembling those Christmas toys before dawn.

Aren't you worth it?

BOOK REVIEWS

Jacqueline Berke. Twenty Questions for the Writer, A Rhetoric With Readings, 2nd ed. Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1976. Paper. Pp. 526.

Jacqueline Berke's Twenty Questions for the Writer appears to be the ideal textbook for writing courses. It is self-contained, thus saving the instructor the often frustrating task of correlating a book of readings with a rhetoric book of writing assignments with yet another stylistic guide, and finally, with a manual for writing research papers. The "twenty questions" (one chapter is devoted to each question) are sequentially ordered with assignments in a rising order of complexity, thus making the text flexible and easily adaptable to the instructor's and the student's needs.

Ms. Berke begins with a perceptive discussion ("Writing as a Human Activity") of the necessity for language and, therefore, of writing for social survival in today's world. Stating that "the ability to write clearly, cogently, and persuasively is a basic need in our time," she addresses her remarks to the student of the standard writing course, who by working his way through Twenty Questions should not only gain greater control over his own writing, and therefore, his communicative ability, through constant drill on economy, simplicity, and clarity, but also will discover new insights into the act of writing itself develop critical awareness of other prose pieces. Berke's students will develop the necessary mental, psychological, rhetorical, logical, critical, and grammatical skills which are necessary to produce the superlative writer. (Emphasis should be placed on "mental" and "psychological," for Ms. Berke's underlying concern is with the thinking process which forms the basis of writing.)

The basic assumption of the text as Ms. Berke explains is that of "asking the right questions. By using the question as a probing instrument--turned inward to the mind (a repository of dormant ideas) and outward to the subject matter (a source or date and information)--we are able to make discoveries, ultimately to generate a sharply focused idea. In every case, as we shall see, it is the question, posed and answered, that is at the heart of any single piece of discourse. For what else does the writer do but ask questions and then answer them?"

By asking the "question," Berke has combined and modernized the classical modes of discourse (description, narration, exposition, and argumentation) with the rhetorical divisions of invention, disposition

or arrangement, and style into the following process-oriented twenty questions. The jargon has been up-dated, but the rhetorical forms (see the right hand column) remain.

1. What does X mean?	Definition
2. How can X be described?	Description
3. What are the component parts of X?	Simple analysis
4. How is X made or done?	Process analysis
5. How <u>should</u> X be made or done?	Directional analysis
6. What is the essential function of X?	Functional analysis
7. What are the causes of X?	Causal analysis
8. What are the consequences of X?	Causal analysis
9. What are the types of X?	Classification
10. How does X compare with Y?	Comparison
11. What is the present status of X?	Comparison
12. How can X be interpreted?	Interpretation
13. What are the facts about X?	Reportage
14. How did X happen?	Narration
15. What kind of person is X?	Characterization
16. What is my personal response to X?	Reflection
17. What is my memory of X?	Reminiscence
18. What is the value of X?	Evaluation
19. How can X be summarized?	Summary
20. What case can be made <u>for</u> or <u>against</u> X?	Argumentation

In general, Twenty Questions for the Writer presents a modern approach to the ancient problem of invention. Berke's major concern is an heuristic one, and both her short in-class paragraph assignments and her longer essay assignments at the conclusion of each chapter easily promote student involvement in the art of discovery. For example, "Write a descriptive essay (500 to 750 words) in which you adopt a suitable psychological point of view and maintain this attitude throughout." Illustrations, together with responses to the controversial, thought-provoking reading selections (from classical to contemporary, literary and non-literary sources) carefully lead the student writer through the intricate maze of invention.

The second edition of Twenty Questions for the Writer includes a discussion of language and the importance of words (Chapters 24 and 25), and a comprehensive section of basic grammar review (Chapter 26), entitled "Improving Sentences." The word "improving" is important, and indicates Berke's bias throughout her text. She assumes a sophistication on the part of the students that implies their sentences need revision only for clarity and readability. Thus, though adequately covering a basic grammar review, her major concern is with the revision and rewriting of student sentences. If students are weak in fundamental grammatical principles, Berke's book would have to be supplemented with grammatical exercises from other sources, which is the only major drawback I find with the text. The second edition also includes a section on "Revision and Editing," and a punctuation review.

Though no text is ever perfect, Twenty Questions for the Writer, as a model of a self-contained rhetorical/reader handbook to be used by students with moderate to high levels of writing sophistication, would be an excellent choice. One is very tempted to ask the twenty-first questions: why haven't teachers of composition devised such a method sooner?

Teachers of Freshman English, in attempting to account for the scarcity of good content in student essays, frequently fall back in frustration on the standard complaint that the students "can't think": or, put more accurately, that the thought processes manifested in student writing are trite, careless, or unclear. When confronted, in a "persuasion" theme, with such reasoning as, "Marijuana should be legalized because people use it anyway," the composition instructor is left at something of a loss: the student's problem seems to be at a level more inaccessible than that of mechanical and organizational errors.

Unless some sort of course in logic is established as a pre-requisite for Freshman English, problems of faulty reasoning must be dealt with, at least briefly, in the E-110 class itself. Ray Kytle's little book--Clear Thinking for Composition--offers the freshman student an introduction to logical thinking. At one point in the book, Kytle observes:

One of the things education is all about is learning to question our assumptions. But we obviously can't question them until we train ourselves to recognize them (p. 49).

To stimulate this process of recognition--to shake the student out of his complacent patterns of "thought"--is the primary objective of Kytle's book, and is also, surely, one of the most beneficial services the teacher of whatever discipline can render to his students.

In the first section of the book, Kytle concentrates on "analysis" as the method to be followed in the process of logical thinking. The student is asked to examine his subject from various points of view, to classify these points of view, and thereby recognize the complexity of the subject. The emphasis in this part of the book is on prewriting, and includes a fairly conventional discussion of such things as limiting topics, outlining, and developing precise, "closed" thesis statements. (Kytle expanded this section for the third edition of the book in order to enhance "the descriptive accuracy of the last two words in the title.")

The remainder of the work presents examples of specific blocks to logical thinking, shows how these errors may be recognized, and explores ways of remedying or eliminating them. Kytle examines such dangerous mental impediments as stereotyping, ad hominem argumentation, either-or thinking, faulty causation and false analogies. Emotive language is dealt with at some length: in a discussion reminiscent of the last chapter of Richard M. Weaver's The Ethics of Rhetoric, Kytle points out the inaccuracy of unconcretized abstractions, and the frequent vagueness of highly connotative diction. In addition, this part of the book offers an especially valuable analysis of the distinction between "informed opinion" and "prejudice"--terms which freshmen tend to interchange and misuse.

Having showing the student how to recognize logical fallacies, Kytle presents a formula--a "blockbuster"--which the student may employ to expose and demolish illogical argumentation wherever it occurs: in speech, in the media, and, of course, in the student's own writing. The procedure entails discovering the implied assertion or assumption in the argument, stating this assertion as a generalization, and then concretizing the generalization in order to find an exception. Kytle appreciates the difficulty one

experiences in admitting that one's own long-held or culturally conditioned assumption consists of meaningless abstraction, and devotes two chapters to helping the student to deal with the hackneyed, inert thinking that accompanies the human tendency to resist change and new ideas.

As an introduction to logical analysis, Kytile's book is adequately thorough, yet free from the weightiness and obscurity likely to be associated with a logic text (though Kytile perhaps tries too hard to be "rélevant" in spots). To teachers, the book can be an aid in prompting an awareness among students of the reasoning errors commonly found in freshman compositions. Moreover, it provides a specific terminology for grading papers (rather than the vague "faulty logic"), and a concise reference to which the student can turn for help with his particular problem. For students and teachers alike, Kytile's book should serve as a stimulating tonic to careless, cliché-ridden patterns of thought.

William Collins, University of Delaware

Peter Elbow. Writing Without Teachers. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973. Paper. Pp. 196.

Frank D'Angelo. Process and Thought in Composition. Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1977. Pp. 408.

Writing Without Teachers is one of those "little" writing books. It is divided into five chapters, three on the process of writing and two on considerations of the audience, and an appendix essay on "The Doubting Game and the Believing Game," which was the theoretical basis of his "teacherless writing class." Elbow directs his book to those who have great difficulty with writing and who earnestly desire to improve their writability and identifies himself as one of these people. This implication that "if I can do it, you can do it," and the informality of Elbow's style are two of his book's major strengths.

Elbow is concerned with removing fear and mystery from writing, and his casual style and "autobiographical digressions," in which his own struggles with writing blocks and how he overcame them, help to do this. In addition, his technique of "freewriting" (forcing oneself to write without stopping for given periods of time) in my experience does help students to loosen up and avoid stilted and artificial diction.

Writing Without Teachers also stimulates a rethinking of what Elbow calls the "old, bad" way of learning to write, by which most of us were taught: do all your thinking first, and then make an outline and stick to it. Elbow says that this method of writing inhibits originality and freshness and leads to writing blocks, since it implies that every word must be measured on an invisible scale of worth as it is squeezed out. This portrayal of the writing process can remind those for whom writing is not such a struggle why students hate to write and why they so often produce stale and boring work.

Unfortunately, while Elbow's book is thought-provoking, it is by no means a complete guide to writing. Elbow's chapter on "cooking"--his metaphor for what goes on in the mind during productive composition--is inadequately explained and is more confusing than informative. In addition, while there is plenty of advice here on invention, there is none at all on

organization. Elbow seems to feel that the audience reaction of his teacherless writing class will take care of this aspect of the composition process, although his advice to members of this type of class to just absorb the reactions of others and allow their subconscious minds to provide them with revisions seems more tenuous and mystifying than any standard text I have ever seen.

D'Angelo's book, Process and Thought is much more complete, and, as befits a textbook, is also more authoritative in tone, although it is still quite readable. D'Angelo has obviously taken part in the recent revival of interest in the application of classical rhetoric to the writing class. The book has thirteen chapters; two are on invention, one on arrangement in general, four on rhetorical types, one on the paragraph, three on style (including one on the ancient practice of imitation), one on mechanics, and one on the research paper. D'Angelo suggests that his text be accompanied by a reader and a grammatical handbook. Process and Thought is a judicious balance of practice and theory, and includes many recent innovations and suggestions for the teaching of composition, such as Christensen's generative rhetoric of the sentence. A central emphasis of this text is the close relationship between the logical organization of the mind, invention, and arrangement.

Process and Thought has many strengths. Its ideas are clearly explained, well-integrated, and practical. D'Angelo gives students concrete and specific step-by-step guidance. For the most part, he not only tells them what to do, he shows them how to do it. He uses more student than professional essays as examples, psychologically reinforcing the student by showing him that good writing is achievable by people similar to himself. The chapter on sentence structure, while it must be supplemented by a handbook, is interesting in that it uses graffiti and proverbs to illustrate sentence types. The brevity of most of these makes the structure of the sentence more apparent than the longer sentences usually found in textbooks do.

Not only is Process and Thought itself very clear and useful, it is supplemented by a Teacher's Manual that is just as clear and useful, containing an essay summarizing various methods of teaching composition and justifying D'Angelo's own, an essay on evaluating student themes, and a 35-page selected bibliography on various aspects of teaching composition, as well as the standard chapter-by-chapter commentary on the text and exercises.

The only deficiency I could discover in this book is relatively minor. In the chapter on imitation, D'Angelo breaks the sentences of his model paragraphs into smaller units to facilitate the reproduction of their structures. I found this confusing until I realized that the only principle behind where he breaks the sentences is the occurrence of commas. This seems rather arbitrary, but does serve its purpose.

D'Angelo's Process and Thought in Composition, then, seems to me to be eminently practical, clear, and applicable to the beginning composition class. Furthermore, its exposition of basic rhetorical principles could make the job of inexperienced composition teachers much easier, since they often do not have much more knowledge of these principles per se than the freshmen they are trying to teach. Elbow's Writing Without Teachers, on the other hand, is not very suitable as a whole for E110, not because it is subversive, as its title suggests, but because it is so impractical. It presupposes that the would-be writer is highly motivated, something which is rarely to be found in Freshman English. In addition, it stipulates that the teacher submits his writings to be criticized by the students, a situation with which few of us would be comfortable, (besides being more work), and which would make grading

even more difficult than it already is. However, I think Elbow's freewriting technique and the emphasis on audience can be useful if properly adapted, and that his book is an interesting reading experience.

Terri Fariss. University of Delaware

Mina P. Shaughnessy. Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. Pp. 310.

During the 1960's, student demonstrators on college campuses across the country demanded more liberated educational policies. For the City University of New York, such liberalization engendered an open admissions policy which radically increased both enrollments and problems for administrators and teachers. Students possessing high school diplomas but lacking minimal writing skills forced composition teachers to reassess their policies and procedures. Shaughnessy draws upon her own teaching of basic writing (what "others might call remedial or developmental writing") at CUNY to provide the teacher of basic writing "with a better inventory of necessary supplies than he is likely to draw up on his own." She categorizes the types of errors most common to the basic writer and suggests methods and strategies for reducing errors and thus enhancing clarity. Shaughnessy's belief--that amidst the basic writer's snarled, often impenetrable prose lie discernible patterns of error--determines the thrust of this pioneering work in a relatively untested field. Just as the teacher must attempt to recognize the "patterns" within which the student's errors fall, he must encourage the student to do likewise. To discover a "system" to one's errors makes their number seem less insurmountable, a genuine plus for both the basic writer and his teacher. Those hoping for surefire remedies or rigidly outlined programs will not find them here. Instead, Shaughnessy offers a sensible and systematic approach to a task which might overwhelm even the most dedicated of teachers.

According to Shaughnessy, basic writers essentially do not allow for the irregularities of the language: "Being wrong is often synonymous with being linguistically consistent or efficient at the points where the language is not." But errors also result from the student's perceptual problems--his tendency to omit vital parts of a sentence because he cannot lace together "the various agreements of number, tense, person and gender." Throughout her prescriptions for alleviating such errors lies the premise that the student can become familiar with grammatical principles only by first understanding language as structure. In short, Shaughnessy rightly argues against the deductive principles of grammar books and handbooks and advocates an inductive process--"isolate the grammatical elements of the sentence from the lexical so that the student experiences the difference." Giving her students a list of acceptable and unacceptable sentences, Shaughnessy asks them "to distinguish by intuition" the differences between them, a process which encourages the student's understanding of "what he has to notice when he is looking at a sentence grammatically."

The teacher must avoid inundating and confusing the basic writer with complex grammatical concepts, but it is seldom easy "to determine how deep

the roots of instruction must go in order for student to cope with /their/ errors." As a basic guideline, Shaughnessy outlines four grammatical concepts which she feels underlie most basic writing students' "misunderstanding about forms" and which must be specifically taught. The sentence, as the most important concept, should be treated as a working structure rather than a collection of words. Exercises in reducing and expanding sentences (somewhat similar to Francis Christensen's "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence") help the student to locate subjects and verbs and to increase his facility with sentences. For dealing with the other three basic grammatical concepts--inflection, tense, and agreement, as well as spelling and vocabulary deficiencies--Shaughnessy again prescribes charts and patterning exercises reminiscent of programmed learning techniques (a fact which she never openly acknowledges).

The major portion of Shaughnessy's book treats elemental problems: handwriting and punctuation (even the physical act of writing seems foreign and thus difficult for the basic writer), syntax (the imbalance between mature perceptions and rudimentary skills in writing leads to syntactical traps), and spelling and vocabulary (a "lack of visual acuity with words and letters" gives rise to most spelling errors, and a lack of vocabulary causes the basic writer not to "choose words so much as fall into them"). In her final two chapters, she suggests some broader dimensions for a basic writing program. Despite her emphasis upon "error," Shaughnessy recognizes that an error-free paper does not necessarily make for brilliance, and she advises the basic writing teacher to accept a "territory of tolerable error" in order to look "Beyond the Sentence" (Chapter 7) to the essay itself. The student needs to experience the process of patterning sentences into paragraphs and essays. Sensible but hardly innovative, Shaughnessy's suggested essay assignments presents familiar rhetorical modes, but in the form of statements rather than names: 1) "This is what happened" (narration); 2) "This is the look (sound, smell, or feel) of something" (description); 3) "This is like (or unlike) this" (comparison/contrast); 4) "This (may have, probably, certainly) caused this" (cause and effect); 5) "This is what ought to be done" (problem-solution); 6) "This is what someone said" (summarization); 7) "This is my opinion (or interpretation) of what someone said" (evaluation).

In conclusion, Shaughnessy draws some comparisons between the basic writer and the average freshman writer; and although not the purpose of her work, she indirectly provides guidance for the teaching of composition at most levels of proficiency (or illiteracy). The errors perpetrated by the basic writer, while more pronounced and numerous, are basic to all writers. Seeing the problems typical of the "average" freshman paper (faulty agreements, incorrect tense and word forms, vague pronoun references, misplaced modifiers) at their baser levels, a teacher of ELL0 gains better insight into the causes of such writing problems as well as their "cures." While the basic writer's "rootedness in spoken rather than written language" most distinguishes him, both types of writers have difficulty sustaining or developing a line of thought, and neither type moves easily between abstract and concrete statements. With both groups, therefore, teachers inevitably hope to promote not only writing competence but also intellectual growth. The process accordingly seems slow, the gains often unchartable. Yet Shaughnessy strongly believes in the educability of the basic writer, and the evidence she draws upon (some four thousand freshman essays and her actual experiences) well illustrates and supports her belief.

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTS:

Robert C. Meredith. Writing in Action: A Text for Young Writers. Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1975.

James K. Bell and Adrian A. Cohn. Rhetoric in a Modern Mode with Selected Readings. Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1976.

From across the education spectrum echoes of "Johnny can't write" resound so that today's composition textbook authors must be muse, mentor, and magician all in one. Somehow, the author must formulate a text that can spy into the realm of inspiration, capture a formula guaranteed to magically produce young writers and then present this formula in a palliative manner to the not-so-eager aspiring writer; by consequence, the student will emerge, from the confines of the textual program, a competent writer. Unquestionably the production of competent writers is an elusive goal; yet, undeniably it embodies a realistic need of man in today's modern world. The following two texts have wrestled with the problems of teaching composition to today's teenager and have succeeded in creating a viable program for gaining writing expertise.

According to Robert Meredith in his introduction, "Writing In Action seeks implicitly to formulate and imitate the pattern of expanding consciousness of the teenager." In other words, the student begins by writing about himself, then expands his vision outward. Numerous writing assignments in conjunction with discussion questions are available to enlarge the critical awareness of the student. With the teacher playing a vital role of direction and stimulation, the student is taught to find ideas, limit them to specific purposes, and then write them clearly having the idea of audience appeal in mind.

Keeping this over-all goal in mind, the author in 16 separate chapters addresses himself to the component elements and then types of writing. He begins by a vocabulary study that treats words in their abstract, concrete, and emotive context. The students then proceed to learn and discuss the steps involved in essay writing. Through numerous samples, the student is exposed to the concept of organization within each paragraph to create a coherent, unified essay. Revision is taught both on a sentence level in order to prune the student's natural verbosity; and on the total composition level whereby the student distinguishes the logic, coherence, form, and ultimate purpose of his essay. In short, the student is taught to think, to write, and then to revise.

Under the aegis of types of writing, the student begins by examining himself in order to produce brief autobiographical sketches. Then the student does character studies which attempt to focus on typical characteristics to deepen a person's interest.

Before writing descriptive passages, the student, first, must analyze and evaluate passages that are samples of the four modes of writing: exposition, narration, persuasion, and description. Expository narration is treated with viewpoint, tone, and purpose in mind. The student, once again, expands his writing from mere personal conflicts to ones in a broader realm.

To conclude, this text could be an excellent aid to today's high school teacher who must confront daily the difficult task of teaching writing. The somewhat difficult reading selections from John Updike or James Baldwin, the mass of material to be covered, and the rhetorical vocabulary could be limitations to full utilization of this text by less than highly-motivated, verbally-talented students. Nevertheless, this textbook has many attractive attributes. The teacher's manual provides many supplemental materials, suggestions, and exercises. The student would find the format appealing.

With the accent placed on personal experience and style, the student would not have an overwhelming feeling of helplessness or uselessness. In fact, an excellent diagnostic writing test is available. Through a multiple choice format, a student's appreciation of good writing, style, and emotional appeal is assessed to give direction and purpose in writing assignments. Completion of this text should go a long way to creating a competent writer, alert to life.

An alternate text, which stresses rhetorical terminology and modes of writing with selected reading included, is James K. Bell's and Adrian A. Cohn's Rhetoric in a Modern Mode with Selected Readings. These two professors in their preface state, "ease and strength of writing grow out of arduous phrasing and rephrasing." Furthermore, it is their belief that, "meticulous study of the paragraph, strengthened by methodical practice in writing leads to more acute observation, more lucid reasoning and more direct and forceful expression (p. vii)".

Examples from contemporary writing are presented for their intrinsic quality, rhetorical relevance, and for model writing. In short, sequential procedure is employed to permit the student to realize ultimately the essence of the essay which is unity, development, organization, and continuity.

The content of this text includes chapters on unity in which the student must unify paragraphs by sentences, develop a topic sentence, and limit the subject through sharpening his focus in sample exercises. Secondly, the authors discuss development in the paragraph through inductive and deductive arrangements. Techniques for descriptive detail, factual detail, illustration, and definition are all given through model paragraphs.

Organization of the paragraph is centered on developing a topic sentence, designing the middle to give a climax, and creating an effective conclusion. In this light, paragraphs of classification, comparison, and contrast are written.

Continuity is achieved by emphasizing proper pronoun reference, by repetition of important words, and by transitional expressions.

Assuming that the student has mastered the four component parts of good paragraphing, the authors have the student attack essay skills, which, in essence, are paragraph skills only amplified. Before turning the student loose to write his own essay, the authors present a detailed examination of sample essays from George Orwell and Bill Alkin.

In conclusion, because of the advance nature of the readings and the difficult vocabulary, this text would be of little value to a student with language skills deficiencies; rather, it would be ideally suited to a special writing elective course for advanced and talented students. In fact, the authors claim that all students who have followed their program outlined in the text have met success in their quest to write so as to make discoveries and commitments.

Have these authors found a guaranteed, magical formula to produce concise, purposeful, effective writers? Undoubtedly, the answer can only be "no." Nevertheless, these texts do provide necessary direction, various writing samples, and a myriad of writing exercises which could help disperse the fog which enshrouds both the teaching and learning of composition skills.

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Being able to write an expository paper in clear, concise, standard English makes up one of the goals of educated Americans today. Operations in Modern Grammar and Composition and Procedures in Modern Grammar and Composition by David A. Conlin and George R. Hermann have been used on the ninth and tenth grade for three years in Dover High School. Because I have been teaching both levels of English this year, I have had first hand experience with these two books. However I wanted to write this article with some input from my colleagues using the books so my comments are taken from remarks made by others as well as my own experiences with the texts.

First a comment or two must be made about the philosophy of the texts. The authors have presented their material so "the coverage is traditional but the approach is modern and stimulating." The authors claim their method is inductive; they recognize speech and writing as two different forms of communication; they emphasize the objective signals of language. Finally, they emphasize that their material is presented so that the student will accomplish better expository writing which they handle separately in the second section of each book.

The text books, along with the accompanying work books, give a very thorough evaluation of form class words. The concept and explanation of function words is clear and precise. From talking to teachers with less or no linguistic backgrounds, I found that they comprehended and assimilated the material to this point. The presentation of punctuation and spelling is lacking for the person schooled in traditional grammar. The fault does not lie completely with the authors. In presenting grammar and syntax the authors capitalized on the spoken language as it is used. I must admit that some English teachers still think there is only one "correct" way to speak.

Nevertheless, teaching punctuation from the view-point (an inductive method) of intonation remains too foreign to the English teacher who has been in the classroom for several years without any refresher courses. The authors try very hard, and they do succeed, in showing the connection between stress intonation, and punctuation; but the teacher who has had no formal training in this area finds the similarities hard to accept. He also balks at learning the written symbols and the jargon. The teachers with whom I spoke use only part of this section and usually supplement it with material from handbooks or traditional grammar books. They leave out the section that relates punctuation to the spoken language completely. When one does this, he resorts to a deductive method. He requires students to learn rules that must be applied with exceptions which seem illogical to the student. Consequently, some teachers use the text to more advantage than others. The authors claim that the coverage is traditional but the approach is modern for the first section of both books. The authors further claim their approach is stimulating. I question whether or not any grammar or writing stimulates any but the most motivated student. Learning grammar in order to understand writing better bores the average student; learning to write well challenges even the most highly motivated student. These two books fall short of the authors' stated objectives at this point. This claim is too much for any grammar books I've ever seen.

In my opinion, section two of both books has two problems. They both relate to the teaching of writing. One applies specifically to these books, but the other applies to the teaching of writing in general. The one relating to the text books stems from the traditional presentation of the teaching of writing. While most people won't agree, I don't think it's practical to teach