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Choice By Default: The Political Economy
of Developmental Writing Textbooks

presented by

Daniel Fraizer

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Doctorate degree in Philosophy

Major professor

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**CHOICE BY DEFAULT: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING TEXTBOOKS**

Volume I

By

Daniel Fraizer

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1993

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ABSTRACT

CHOICE BY DEFAULT: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING TEXTBOOKS

By

Daniel Fraizer

Teaching students to write has been investigated in many different ways, but the textbooks used to teach writing in what has been called remedial, compensatory, or developmental writing and English classrooms have been infrequently researched from a critical perspective. This project examines some of the most often used textbooks currently in use according to survey data in order to understand how they define and model "process" or "skill" based approaches to instruction and to analyze the language used by authors to talk about "good" writing in order to assess the treatment of race, class, and gender.

Although the central research question of this project is to assess the content of these textbooks, the influences of particular contexts are also explored, including their use and value within existing developmental education programs, the ideological and economic circumstances of their production, and the historical underpinnings of various institutional developments.

The first phase of this project was to survey over 300 developmental education programs in the United States to determine which textbooks were being used and under what circumstances. These surveys were followed up with

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selective teacher interviews. The second phase of the project was to select some of the most often cited textbooks and to critically examine their content. This analysis was followed by interviews with editors and other publishing representatives.

The findings of this study reveal a range of concerns and interests of the various participants. Teachers' assessments of what is to be valued varies primarily according to their perception of students' needs. Editors' assessments of the content of textbooks is affected by their perception of teachers' preferences. Researchers and scholars tend to privilege their own ability to influence teachers and publishers by raising their "awareness" about the quality of many textbooks. What all participants share is a confidence in some form of institutional authority. This confidence is based on the assumption that the commodified textbook will improve the teaching of writing.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks first to Diane Brunner, whose guidance and support in this and other endeavors has allowed me to see my way through many "processes," writing and otherwise.

I also want to thank Victor Paananen and Geneva Smitherman for their encouragement and intellectual guidance, and Kitty Geissler for her support and incisive comments on earlier drafts.

I also want to thank the teachers and editors who patiently and thoughtfully responded to often difficult questions. Though they remain anonymous here, this project would not have been complete without them.

Thanks also to my family for their unwavering belief that I was doing something of value, especially my father, Thomas Fraizer, who urged me on when I thought I might never return to school.

Finally, thanks to Susan Joel, a companion for life and source of inspiration, encouragement, assistance, and advice.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

I first began using textbooks to teach in 1979. I was working as a teaching assistant in an "alternative" school for "emotionally and behaviorally disturbed" adolescents in St. Louis. In order to "graduate" from high school, these students had to pass the G.E.D., or general educational development tests, first designed after World War II for returning G.I.s who never graduated from high school but were able to attend college on the G.I. bill as a reward for their service. Long after the World War II G.I.s had graduated, the G.E.D. tests continued to serve the purpose of providing the "equivalent" of a high school diploma for those who didn't graduate on time. Receiving the G.E.D. depended on passing five tests that covered math, science, social studies, reading, and writing. Instruction was mandated by the content of each test. No one wanted to learn anything that was not going to be "on the test," and a handful of publishers printed books with many, many practice questions at different "levels" of ability. I became adept at determining when students were ready to take on these practice questions, and then helping them to analyze and interpret their meaning, first at the school in St. Louis,

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then at a series of "basic skills" or "basic education" programs in Massachusetts and Michigan. Sometimes students passed the tests; sometimes not. Sometimes they would try again; many times they just disappeared. Just as the work was starting to haunt me, I made the transition to teaching writing courses at the local community college. When I taught students to write, there were usually no tests, just the writing to contend with, which was often a window on what made my students most human. This work was more emotionally rewarding.

Although teaching students to write led me to feel better about what I was doing to earn a living, I again began to wonder to what purpose my teaching was directed. Teaching was something I knew I could do, and I saw the teaching profession as an opportunity to "do good" in the world. But I began to question the good I was doing.

This project is a personal attempt to make sense of the circumstances that affected much of the teaching I did for ten years. It is also an attempt to critically examine the use of textbooks to teach the traditionally disenfranchised to write. I am certain that I taught my G.E.D. and community college students nothing about writing through the use of commercially prepared textbooks, but this project is an attempt to understand if others do use textbooks successfully, how they are used, what is actually taught, and what success means. Understanding these questions means

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being able to tolerate a great deal of discontinuity and contradiction -- different techniques may be matched to similar objectives, while similar techniques may be meant to lead to different results. Teaching techniques and philosophies can seem like tangled pathways leading to many different destinations. Sometimes they may run parallel to one another, while at other times they may diverge. My objective is not to untangle the whole mess, but to examine it from different angles in order to understand it better.

I have struggled with the issue of textbooks and writing, not as a disconnected observer feigning detachment and objectivity, but as a participant personally involved in the subject under investigation. My perspective throughout this project is a self-consciously critical one, meaning I am primarily intent on questioning traditionally-accepted ideas about the purpose and intent of education and the textbooks used to facilitate that education. The acknowledgement of my perspective is consistent with Lather's view that adopting a "post-positivism" paradigm means being open about one's ideological bias and not attempting to conceal that bias through an "objective" assessment of data. To that end, I have attempted to raise questions that I believe are most fundamental to the articulation of a critical perspective, including those which raise historical, ideological, and institutional/economic issues. My goal is to critically

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examine many different contexts, some "nested" institutionally, such as developmental education within community colleges, others historically, such as the examination of current teaching practices in relation to the history of the teaching of writing. Still others "work" in relation to their place in the scheme of the common goal of teaching writing to disenfranchised students, such as the relationship between teachers who use textbooks and publishers who create and sell them. My analysis/criticism is not meant to build a case for the elimination of the teaching of writing to developmental students, as some would advocate, but to foster change -- real change -- which can only occur as a response to a thorough understanding of what is at stake when teachers teach writing in these situations.

I begin with several assumptions about the nature of education in the United States which I believe are pertinent to an investigation of any facet of developmental education. First, I agree with Bastian *et al.* that today's schools do not function in ways radically different from the past, although important changes have occurred in school populations, in the duration of schooling, and in the social and economic contexts schools operate within (35). I believe far too much attention has been directed towards schools (of all kinds) and what they should do, and far too little attention has been paid to their role *vis a vis* the larger social conditions that structure that role. More

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I also agree with Bastian et al. that one of the contemporary myths of education is that

we face an economic imperative to adopt 'get tough' prescriptions and competitive standards...based on the assumption that declining school performance is a major factor in declining economic performance [and that] the 'restoration' of high standards and discipline will help restore economic productivity, competitive advantage, and job creation (39).

If the causal relationship between increased education levels and economic growth was as direct as some claim, the period of growth after World War II would be unabated.

Although a highly trained workforce would be more qualified for high-tech, high paying jobs, most forecasts show that the majority of jobs in the future will be in the low paying service sector. Training more people for a limited number of highly skilled jobs represents a false promise to those who believe education is the answer to the betterment of their lives.

If more education represents false hopes for many, what then should be the role of education in general and developmental education in particular, and what place does teaching writing have in defining that role? Economically, many are coming to realize that the enhancement of "intellectual as well as vocational flexibility -- a position firmly taken by the National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, among others" (Bastian et

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al. 41) represents the wisest approach to helping people to prepare for an uncertain future. Intellectual flexibility, or the ability to think critically, develop general skills, and successfully interact with others, is as useful to helping students to understand and change the way things are now as it is to helping them to prepare for the future.

Educators of all kinds need to help students to experience what they should learn, to do meaningful things now, not use their education as "practice" for "real" life. Redefining education (including developmental education) not as "preparation" for something else but as an activity that is important now may help to do more than prepare students for the future -- it may also help them to define that future.

But what is it that students should learn? It is clear that what counts as knowledge, as well as literacy, is always changing. This project seeks to understand how textbooks have responded to changing ideas about what it means to write well and what it means to teach others to write well. This project also means to challenge the utility of the textbook, in most of the forms discussed here, to the kind of educational values I have discussed. I believe helping students to understand and change the material conditions of their lives should be accomplished so as to facilitate economic and social justice and the valuing of diverse forms of expression and knowledge. Only then will schools begin to be better situated within the larger

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social structure of which they are a part, and not imagined as the panacea or cause of all social problems. Only then will teachers and students better understand what it is they are trying to do.

The following are several significant terms frequently used throughout my discussion and their corresponding definitions.

Developmental writing: Clowes (5) notes that the term developmental education...emerged...as part of efforts to merge the activities of academic and student affairs personnel to support student learning. The mood of the 1970s was congenial to the development of programs that stressed the value and worth of each individual, saw individual differences not as negatives but as unique possibilities, and focussed upon the notion of continuing growth and change for the individual. These growth oriented programs contrast with the more static remedial and compensatory programs, designed to bring students "up" to an arbitrary performance level.

"Developmental" writing then focusses on "continuing growth and change" for the writer. These writers are also referred to as "basic" writers:

"Basic" writers are those who are least well prepared for college. They may be defined in absolute terms, by features of their writing, or in relative terms, by their placement in a given schools' freshman composition sequence, but, either way, their salient characteristic is their "outlandishness"- their appearance to many teachers and themselves as the students who are most alien in the college community (Bizzell, 1986, 294).

Textbooks As Commodities: Apple writes that "...the world of the book has not been cut off from the world of commerce. Books are not only cultural artifacts. They are economic commodities as well" (1991, 5). This project

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Ideology: Althusser draws on Marx and Destutt de Tracy to define ideology as "the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man [sic] or social group" (1971, 149). Williams went on to criticize ideology as "a nickname for kinds of thinking which neglected or ignored the material social process of which 'consciousness' was a part" (1977, 58).

Cultural Capital: Bourdieu describes the educational system as responsible for "the distribution of instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" and cultural capital as "the cultural heritage...considered as being the undivided property of the whole society...that really belongs to those endowed with the means of appropriating it for themselves" (1973, 73).

Hegemonic Apparatus: According to Gramsci, hegemony is distinct from "rule" or "domination" and is used to

designate an historical phase in which a given group moves beyond a position of corporate existence and defense of its economic position and aspires to a position of leadership in the political and social arena (1971, xiv).

Williams describes hegemony as

both a 'whole social process' in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology,' in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest" (1977, 108).

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"Hegemonic apparatus" is thus used here to signify those structures which enable hegemonic relations to develop.

Political Economy: According to the Penguin Dictionary of Sociology,

Much of the theoretical groundwork of the separate disciplines of contemporary social science was established by eighteenth and nineteenth century writers whose primary interest lay in the production of wealth in relation to the activities of the state. The theoretical heritage of political economy embraces the concepts of social class, labour value, the division of labour, and moral sentiments (73).

In this project, "political economy" will be a means of understanding those influences upon the creation and production of textbooks associated with both political and economic forms of power.

Chapter Two describes the general research methodology and investigative techniques used in this project, and the results of a survey administered to over 300 community college developmental programs (See Appendix C for a copy of this survey). This survey sought to understand which commercial textbooks were being used and under what conditions. Chapter Three is an historical overview of the development of community colleges in this country in this century and the ongoing criticism of this relatively recent institution. Chapter Four is an historical overview of the creation and criticism of developmental education programs as they evolved from remedial or compensatory efforts. Chapter Five is an historical overview of the teaching of writing in this country in this century as it was associated

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with the newly legitimized discipline of English studies. Chapter Six is a summary of ten interviews completed with teachers selected from survey data who talk about their use of textbooks and developmental education in general (See Appendix D for selective transcripts of these interviews). Chapter Seven is a review of some of the most important criticism of textbooks in general and recent critiques of developmental writing textbooks. Chapter Eight is my content analysis of fourteen of the most popular developmental writing textbooks now in use, according to survey data. Chapter Nine is an overview of current influences and trends in the publishing industry, with an emphasis on textbook publishing, and includes a summary of interviews completed with editors and publishing representatives from publishing companies which produce some of the most popular developmental writing textbooks. Chapter Ten is a summary of what I see as some of the most dominant ideological influences and behavioral practices that shape the relationships among the various participants who create and use textbooks. Chapter Eleven is a summary of my findings and my recommendations for improving the teaching of writing and de-commodifying the use of the textbook.

Only very recently have ideas about what constitutes knowledge and who benefits from the production of knowledge been given the attention they deserve. I believe the

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relationship between different forms of knowledge and language use will be one of the most exciting areas of inquiry and practice in the future. The outcome of that struggle has not yet been determined, not even by the textbook publishers.

Here's to the next ten years.

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Chapter II

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND FINDINGS

Michael Apple has suggested that "while the text dominates curricula at the elementary, secondary, and even college levels, very little critical attention has been paid to the ideological, political, and economic sources of its production, distribution, and reception" (1991, 24).

This project seeks to explore the nature and role of developmental writing textbooks from critical, historical, economic, and ideological perspectives. By examining the content of developmental writing texts in conjunction with their conditions/relations of use and production, I hope to be able to provide some insight into the ways many textbooks attempt to teach underprepared college students to write.

In order to do this, I will be addressing four inter-related issues. The first is what books are most popular and why. The second issue concerns how teachers select certain texts for their programs and the conditions and contexts of their use. The third seeks to understand the content of some of the most often named writing texts, and the fourth concerns the circumstances of production of many textbooks.

Research Methods

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Research Methodology

These questions will be examined with the goal of generating "middle range" and "grounded" theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It has been suggested that the grounded theory process leads to the development of middle range theories that emerge from the collection of and interaction with data. Such theories are especially useful at explaining how various parts of the world 'work' so that those affected can understand and make decisions as to whether and how action should be taken" (Joel 1992, 87). Grounded theory is thus dependent on the immediate research data for its existence, in contrast to theories generated by other positivist research. The objective of this research is not "positivist" in the sense of seeking to prove or disprove existing theories. Rather, grounded theory allows for a more wide ranging exploration of the research data by rejecting the pursuit of predetermined areas of inquiry. The research strategy employed in this project makes use of four methodologies. They include the collection and analysis of open-ended survey data, interview data, content analysis of textbook data, and historical and economic data. While positivist research depends heavily on the application of deductive reasoning based in formulaic assumptions of predetermined validity and reliability, grounded theory makes no such claims to the description of some larger "truth". Instead, grounded theory "allows for the

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recognition that human and social life are varied and complex, resulting in inexact fits with existing metatheory or substantive theoretical precepts" (Glaser and Strauss, 46).

Therefore, this research makes no claim to describing what is going on in "most" developmental writing programs, nor does it pretend to give a "complete" picture of the educational publishing industry. It *does* attempt to examine selected texts, selected programs, and the beliefs of selected publishers and teachers in order to understand some part of a larger "truth".

In order to focus the examination of historical, political, economic, and ideological conditions of textbook use, this research will also be facilitated within the framework of critical social science (Fay, 1987). This framework "is based on a belief that the dominant social forces of society shape people's understanding of themselves and society in ways that obscure how the existing social order fails to serve their interests" (Joel, 1992, 86). My intention is to describe and expose these dominant social forces, whether they be historical, political, economic, or ideological, as they affect the educators, publishers, and textbooks I will examine.

Data Collection

My research began by surveying developmental education programs within the 330 member North Central Association of

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Community Colleges, an accrediting organization of schools in a fifteen-state region stretching from Michigan west to North Dakota and south to New Mexico. Community colleges were selected because they have historically been the site of developmental programs more often than four year colleges or universities. The survey asked respondents to list titles, authors, publishers, and dates of publication of textbooks used to provide developmental reading and writing instruction in their programs. The survey also asked respondents to indicate whether the books were used for reading or writing instruction. More than 100 respondents named a total of sixty-three (63) different publishers (see Appendix A for a list of all publishers mentioned at least once in survey responses and the number of texts named by respondents by publisher). The large number of publishers is a bit misleading, since some of the books named in the surveys may be older, even out-of-print books, and the publishing industry has undergone many changes (i.e., mergers and acquisitions) in the last ten years (see Chapter Nine). Nevertheless, a large number of books were named by respondents. A total of 270 books or book series included 153 books used for reading instruction, 104 books used for writing instruction, 21 reading or basic skills series, 11 software programs used for writing instruction, and 5 software programs used for reading instruction.

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In order to better understand how the 104 writing textbooks were chosen and why, additional survey questions asked respondents a variety of questions pertaining to their value and conditions of use. From these surveys, three categories of respondents emerge as distinctly different in their philosophical beliefs and values concerning the teaching of writing. The first group are those valuing a more traditional, grammar and skill based orientation to teaching writing. The second group include those who value teaching the writing process, including invention strategies and the production of whole pieces of writing over micro analysis of sentence structure and grammatical concepts. The third group include those who seemingly represent a middle ground through their endorsement of both "the writing process" and "traditional" grammar instruction. On the basis of these three emergent categories, ten respondents were selected from the third category for interviews lasting from 30 minutes to one hour. These respondents were chosen because of the seeming philosophical contradictions present in their survey responses. Given the widely recognized philosophical disagreement that continues to exist between these two pedagogical philosophies (traditional or "current-traditional" vs. "process"), one question that emerges is how such conflicting value systems might be reconciled by these teachers in their classroom practices and their textbook selection.

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With a better understanding of what programs and teachers value in textbooks, and how books are used, the next phase of this research seeks to examine some of the most popular and widely used textbooks themselves (according to survey data) and to relate these findings to previous research done on developmental writing textbooks, to the comments of the program personnel and teachers who named these texts, and to economic and political conditions of their use.

Lastly, in order to better understand the circumstances and conditions of the *production* of these most popular textbooks, I examine the political economy of the educational publishing industry in general, with profiles of publishers who appear to be successful marketing writing texts to developmental programs. Interviews were conducted with representatives of these publishing houses (mostly book editors) in order to better understand the construction and popularity of selected texts from the point of view of their creation as well as their use, and to speculate as to the future of both the textbook in general and the developmental writing textbook in particular.

Survey Data: Textbooks

Although the survey information cannot provide a definitive account of who is publishing what at the present time, or even which books are being used most often (since listing of books does not necessarily indicate their use), several

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points may be made. The first is that a small number of publishers produce most of the commercial texts that line the shelves of many developmental education programs. Only five publishers -- McGraw-Hill, Houghton-Mifflin, Prentice Hall, and the now merged Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and Holt, Rinehart, and Winston -- published fifteen or more developmental textbooks listed by respondents. In total, fifteen publishers have at least five titles named, seven of those have at least ten titles named, and only five of these fifteen publishers have at least fifteen titles named (see Figure 1). At least two other matters may be addressed here. The first concerns the issue of publication date. By requesting date of publication, a picture of texts being used over time emerges. Although the most common date of publication of the texts named is 1991 (a very recent publication date given that the survey was administered in the Spring of 1992), this majority of 1991 titles or editions is less than the total number of titles with publication dates of 1987 or older. In fact, the total number of titles with publication dates of 1990, 1991, or 1992 (96) is less than the 125 titles with publication dates of 1988 or older (see Figure 2).

Change from old textbooks to new ones seems to be a steady but measured process of adopting new books but also retaining some old books. The question of why or under what conditions teachers change from one book to another is also

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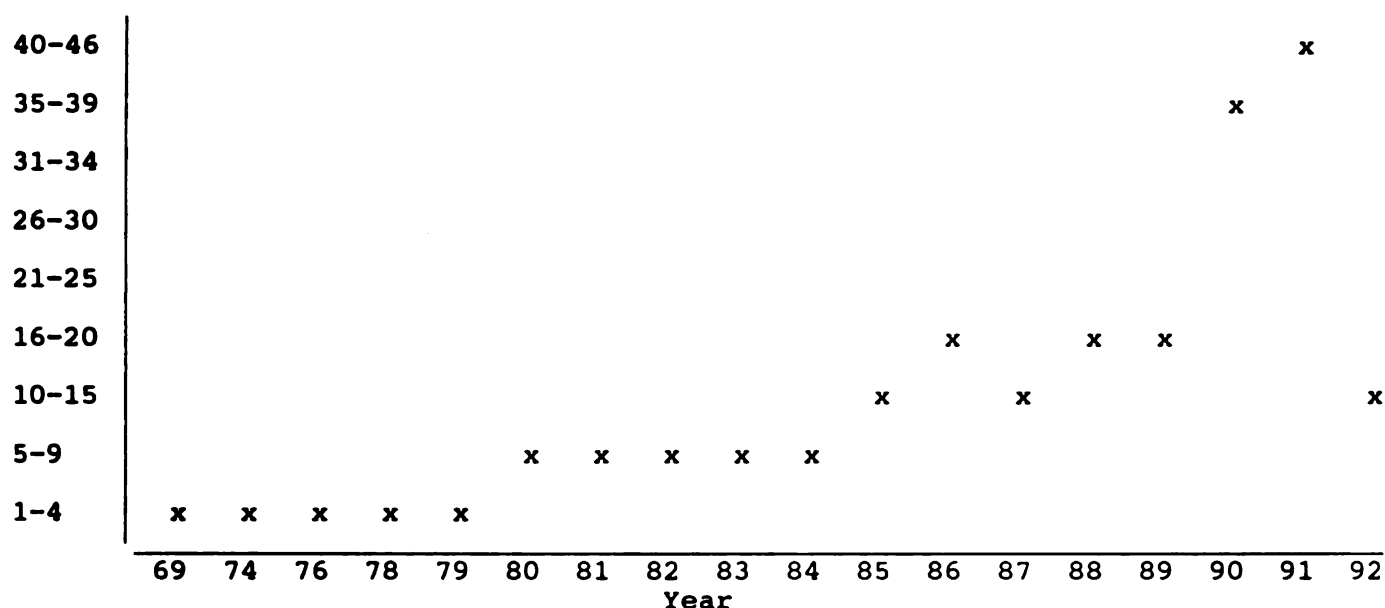
Number of Titles Named According to Publisher

<u>15 or more</u>	<u>10-14</u>	<u>5-9</u>
McGraw-Hill	McGraw-Hill	McGraw-Hill
Houghton Mifflin	Houghton Mifflin	Houghton Mifflin
Prentice Hall	Prentice Hall	Prentice Hall
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich	Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich	Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
Holt, Rinehart, Winston	Holt, Rinehart, Winston	Holt, Rinehart, Winston
	HarperCollins	HarperCollins
	Steck Vaughn	Steck Vaughn
	Contemporary	Contemporary
	Scott Foresman	Scott Foresman
		MacMillan
		D.C. Heath
		St. Martin
		Jamestown
		New Readers Press
		National Publishers
		Townsend

addressed by survey question number 7, but it is important to note here that although there is a clear desire to improve upon the content of textbooks used by acquiring new titles or updated editions, this process is probably a careful and calculated one, affected by a number of factors (see question 7).

The next issue concerns software materials as texts. At least 14 of the 63 publishers named were listed because of the software programs they produced and sold to developmental programs. According to the surveys, companies who specialized in software materials did not seem to sell "regular" or print texts. Publication dates of software tended to be concentrated in the mid '80s, tapering off

Figure 2
Number of Titles Cited By Year¹



towards the end of the decade. One possible explanation is that computer software production was still a specialty production process not familiar to the mainstream publishers in the mid '80s. Although the major educational publishers may have become more involved in software production in the '90s, the high cost to developmental programs of acquiring not just the software but also the computers to run them may mean that under certain circumstances acquisition of materials by developmental programs is a slow process of first buying computers and initial software programs, then later updating to new programs. Print materials are probably more "fluid" to developmental programs than are

¹Missing years indicate that no texts were named by survey respondents for those years.

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computer materials, and their continued dominance as primary instructional materials is the reason I am focusing on print materials in this project. However, the popularity of computer-assisted instruction in developmental education has clearly increased over the last decade (see Lewis 1990; Finnegan and Sinatra 1991).

The Survey Questions

In order to begin to understand why certain texts are used by program personnel, how they are used, and what is important to teachers when they choose a text, the survey also included ten questions that spoke to the circumstances under which a text is chosen, the desired or important factors in choosing a text, the strengths of texts currently in use, the uses to be made of texts in programs, the amount of class time spent using texts, and the degree and quality of satisfaction program personnel have with the texts they currently use (see Appendix C for a copy of the complete survey).

The wide variety of responses at times points to an "untidy compromise" of seemingly contradictory values and objectives. However, all of the responses were characterized by a concern for meeting both student and program needs (which sometimes seemed hard to separate). Apparent contradictions seemed to be the result of a range of differing means by which different educators attempt to meet student needs, as well as differing ideas about what

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constitutes a "need." For example, one program or teacher may depend heavily on a textbook, while another employs the textbook in supplementary ways. Both may be attempting to meet the students' "need" to become "better" writers, but one teacher may privilege "correctness" while the other privileges insight, comfort using academic forms of expression, or a variety of other factors.

My attempt in this survey was not to generalize about what "most" or "many" programs are doing or not doing, nor was I intent on pointing out seeming contradictions in the responses of particular individuals, though at times they seemed apparent. What I wished to explore are the contexts of use of basic writing textbooks. By examining these contexts, I also hoped to be able to begin to explore the relations between those who create and those who use the books as a way to critically examine whose "needs" are being met.

What follows is a summation of individual responses to questions and a discussion of categories of values and procedures that emerge from these responses.

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Question Two²

Please describe here any instructor or departmentally produced texts, such as coursepacks or other materials.

According to the study done by Bullock, Madden, and Mallery (1990) of developmental reading programs, a wide variety of instructional texts/materials are used. Their study shows that although commercial materials are used most often, other materials, including "self-produced" or program produced materials, "programmed materials" such as reading machines or computer-assisted instruction, and fiction/non-fiction books, are also used often (41-42). "Self-produced" materials were a close second in the Bullock *et al.* study to commercially-prepared textbooks. This raises the question of what sorts of instructor/program-produced materials are being used and why.

Question Two reveals that a wide variety of materials are being used by a small number of respondents to supplement commercial textbooks. The most frequently named type of material was the coursepack (see Figure 3). Coursepacks might include graded writing assignments, such as "activities for discovering ideas," procedures for soliciting peer responses, instructions for self-evaluation procedures, or chapters from college-level courses taught on campus. Also named were materials culled from magazines and/or newspapers (called "textsets" by one respondent), ESL

²Question One asked respondents to list books.

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(English as a Second Language) packets, journal writing activities, one writing skills student handbook compiled by a writing instructor and copied by the college, and a variety of materials meant to supplement commercial

Figure 3

**Types and Extent of Instructor or
Departmentally-Produced Materials**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Course packets that included a variety of materials	8
Individual instructor handouts	7
Newspaper/magazine materials	4
Print materials to assist computer instruction	3
"Reading units" based from textbooks	2
"Custom published" texts (within department)	2
Instruction sheet for word processing	1
Lab manual	1
ESL packets	1
Writing skills student handbook	1
Handout/manual of technical	1
Reading for auto/diesel mechanics	1

materials, such as reading units based on textbooks, instruction sheets, lab manuals, or materials used to assist computer instruction. There were also two instances of "custom published texts" or books written and edited by faculty members which included discussion of rhetoric, examples of essays, exercises, course objectives, grading guidelines, and handouts used by previous instructors.

The frequency of stated uses of departmentally-produced materials was small. Many respondents did not respond at all. Although these data do not necessarily question the

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results of the study by Bullock et al., it does raise the question of how important teachers and others perceive departmentally-produced texts to be in relation to commercial texts, and whether these materials are more often valued in reading rather than writing instruction.

Question Three

Briefly describe the decision making process involved (who chooses/creates the text(s)). For example, were books chosen by committee, by individual instructors (please note full or part-time), or by entire programs?

Apple (1982, 1988) discusses the way teachers in public schools often experience "contradictory class location" in the sense that they sometimes identify with the petit-bourgeoisie who believe they have control in the workplace, or with blue collar workers, who are more overtly controlled by others in the workplace. Teachers, Apple argues, are less susceptible to overt control (do this because I say so) or even bureaucratic control (because they tend to create their own classroom environments), but they may be susceptible to "the encoding of technical control into the very basis of the curricular form itself" (1982, 149). This "technical control" takes the form of the "commodified culture," or the sale of educational products to schools. Because schools represent a lucrative market, Apple argues that it makes good business sense for publishers and others to market educational "packages" that contribute to de-

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skilling of teachers by creating an educational "system" defined and orchestrated by someone other than the teacher. The teacher, under these conditions, becomes one who implements the ideas and plans of those who purchased these ready-made curricula, rather than a "professional" in control of producing and determining what is taught.

Because curricula in developmental education is perhaps more "individualized" than any other (for reasons discussed later) it is also extremely susceptible to standardized instructional packaging that reduces the teacher's skills to those of a manager of a text system (what Apple calls "deskilling" 1982, 71). This may be the outcome in those programs using a "series" of books, such as those published for basic skills or GED programs (see, for example, the Contemporary Series pre-GED and GED books), or for computerized instructional programs. In the case of computers, Tanner (1988) describes computerized instructional materials as "geared predominantly to established-convergent learning situations, in which all action-relevant aspects of the system are specifiable and predictable" whereas textbooks or books in general "serve as pedagogical vehicles not only for *established* learning, but for *emergent* learning situations through which the student can explore problems and issues in open-ended ways (129).

This survey question sought to understand the nature of the text selection process in developmental programs, who

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has control over text selection, and to what degree (see question 9 for consideration of how much class time is influenced by this decision). The results show a great variety of decision making processes at work.

By far the most common method of textbook selection is through choices made by full-time faculty members, either as individuals or in committee. However, other participants in the selection process include part-time faculty, administrative personnel or representatives of administrative viewpoints, and other staff members. These groups are privileged to various degrees in different combinations, but can be grouped according to three broad decision making groups: those who are primarily full-time participants; those who are primarily administrative representatives; and those representing a variety of participants signifying program-wide involvement that includes part-time faculty.

Primarily Full-time Participants

This category includes the aforementioned full-time faculty in committee or as individuals (22 responses), programs "who poll adjuncts for their opinion" (1 response), full-time instructors "who consult part-time instructors (1 response), full-time faculty "with input from part-time faculty" (1 response), and by "program coordinator in conference with full-time faculty" (1 response; 26 total responses).

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Primarily Administrative Participants

This category includes individuals appointed by the dean (1 response), coordinator of program with feedback from full-time and part-time faculty (6 responses), "core college adopted text supplemented by instructors within budget limits" (1 response), text used by parent institution and written by professor at said institution (1 response), chair of independent study who also determines course content (1 response), lead teacher with discussion of needs by all teachers (1 response), individual instructors who recommend choices that the department considers before making the final decision (1 response), and program chair in consultation with part-timers "working full-time load" (1 response; 13 total responses).

Program-wide Involvement

This category consists of committees who include part-time faculty (while excluding full-time faculty from following their recommendations) (1 response), individual instructors teaching their own course (15 responses), instructors with input from learning center staff (2 responses), "entire program" through evaluation forms (2 responses), committee of part-time faculty with no full-time faculty in program (2 responses), entire program, including both full and part-time faculty (1 response), committee that includes both full and part-time instructors (1 response), by "faculty consensus" (1 response), by volunteer committee of faculty

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members (1 response), and by student support services staff but approved by curriculum committee (1 response; 27 total responses).

Summary

While it may be unreasonable to conclude that many developmental instructors are under the influence of the "technical control" Apple describes, the results from this question indicate a great deal of concern over formulating a fixed and often hierarchical model or plan to be used in text selection. This may indicate that text selection is recognized as being at least *potentially* a method of controlling instruction, because those with the most institutional power tend to be privileged in the formalized selection process. These results may also indicate methods by which the most powerful program participants *resist* those texts that represent the sort of "commodified culture" developed through publisher control and influence in the sale of their products. Finally, these results suggest more complex relations, not simply between programs and publishers, but between publishers and selected members of programs, *and* between individuals *within* programs who mediate the program-publisher relationship.

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Question Four

What factors are important to you and/or others in choosing a writing text?

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- o approaches to teaching writing/composition (describe approach)
- o publisher
- o price
- o other (please specify)

This question was aimed at beginning to understand why teachers and others select certain texts, or what they look for when they are considering alternatives. A great number of factors were named as important to the respondents. Some respondents interpreted this question in terms of specific textual features, while others responded in terms of specific program values that the texts should reflect or model. In many cases, the distinction between program values and textual features was blurred. For example, a respondent might indicate an "individualized approach with instructor controlled testing" as an important factor, but this might describe either text or programmatic approaches to instruction. In a sense, all respondents assumed either implicitly or explicitly that the text would serve the goals of the program, and that the process of text selection is a means of advancing program objectives.

Responses are categorized here according to four broad areas of concern. They are: (1) grammar or usage concerns;

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(2) modeling/instruction of writing process; (3) text format features; and (4) program or student needs.

Grammar Concerns

"Grammar" was one of the most often used words to describe factors important to respondents. At times, grammar was used as a sort of catch-all category that emphasized close analysis of words and sentences. In this context, grammar would include vocabulary and spelling study, punctuation drill, study of parts of speech or sentence patterns, "conventions" of writing or some combination, such as "error recognition in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics." While some respondents used the term "grammar" to refer to the above specifics, others simply named them. At least 15 respondents used the term "grammar," while others named "punctuation" (4 responses), "spelling" (4), "paragraph-to-essay instruction" (13), "sentences" (9), "basic skills" (2), or "error recognition in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics" (3).

There was also a very distinct segment of respondents who seemed sensitive to concerns of those critical of grammar-only values. There was a clear attempt made by several respondents to place equal emphasis on "grammar" concerns and writing "practice." One respondent spoke of the "integration" of writing and grammar, while another stated that "Our approach is mostly a grammar approach, but our students do a lot of writing in class." The concern for

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many in this group seemed to be the application of grammatical rules and stylistic models to the students' own writing in successively more "sophisticated" or "complex" ways. For example, the same respondent who said students do a lot of writing in class also said, "I want a basic, very basic, logical approach to paragraph organization."

Modeling/Instruction of Writing Process

"Writing As a Process" was discussed as often as "grammar" by respondents in this survey. At least 15 respondents explicitly emphasized "writing as a process" as a fundamentally important factor in choosing a writing text. This may signify an important shift in writing values (away from Fogarty and Young's "current-traditional" paradigm) or it may simply be another way of talking about what it is programs do. Once the writing "process" becomes interpreted by large numbers of people in a wide variety of ways, the idea that a significant shift in values has occurred becomes less tenable, because "process" may be being addressed in superficial ways that continue to primarily privilege the final written product, not the process one uses to create that product. However, several respondents seemed very much aware of the potential vagaries of talking about writing as a process. One respondent declared himself to be interested only in a "true" process approach, one that required REAL WRITING, not worksheets, grammar drills, etc. but brainstorming, outlining, rough draft, etc." Other

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descriptions of the writing process included the psychological (an emphasis on "metacognitive strategies of invention"), the developmental (for example, moving from "expressive to transactional writing"), or the difficult to categorize responses, such as "planning composition using the writing process" or using the "guided writing approach." Several respondents expressed interest in texts that emphasized "both process and product," which may reflect a concern for integrating opposing viewpoints and resolving conflict, or it may indicate that some respondents do not see "process" and "product" as oppositional instructional philosophies.

Text Format Features

This category is limited to the ways in which textual material is presented. Several respondents expressed the desire for "clarity" (3 responses) or "clearly presented material" (3 responses). For some, one key to this clarity was "appropriate reading level" (4 responses) or "low reading level" (2 responses). For others, it meant that the material was "well organized," (3 responses) through, for example, "easy reference" sections. Respondents also valued "lots of practice exercises" (2 responses) or the opportunity to "practice skills" or experience "guided practice" (2 responses). Others valued a "workbook" approach (2 responses) which might include perforated pages or even "peer editing sheets." The way material was

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Program or Student Needs

Although grammar, writing as process, and text format may all be seen as attempts to meet the needs of programs and/or students, some statements by respondents indicated a concern for what the student would "get out of" the text, or factors relating to interest level, while others emphasized concern for matching text content to program structure. For example, respondents looked for "interesting topics" (2 responses), "variety," and "adult-oriented" material, but they might also value "flexibility" (3 responses), opportunities for "critical thinking or writing" (2 responses), "preparation for higher level essays" (1 response), "preparing students to write the G.E.D. essay" (2 responses), an "independent study approach geared to work in a learning lab" (1 response) or simply "matching the goals of the curriculum" (1 response).

Summary

The responses to this survey question suggest that the overriding concern of all respondents is to select texts that help programs to serve students by assisting them to become better writers. However, respondents differed in their assessment of how students become better writers, sometimes in very different ways. Respondents also differed

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in terms of what textbook features (not just philosophies) are most important. Discrepancies arose between specific text features and specific instructional philosophies. For example, respondents who stressed a "grammar" approach to teaching writing did not necessarily value test questions at the end of the chapter or an index at the end of the book any more or less than those who favored a "process" approach.

Respondents also often favored middle ground or compromise positions that understood "process" and "grammar" approaches differently than those who defined these concepts as oppositional and adversarial in nature. Many respondents seemed to prefer to see these two approaches or value systems as complementary rather than adversarial. Rather than conflicting with one another, they seemed to be seen as two sides of the same coin, meeting more than one need of students in these classes.

Question Five

What factors are important to you in choosing a reading text?

- o specific learning objectives, such as learning modes of discourse or conventions of academic writing (please name these objectives)
- o approaches to teaching reading (describe approach)
- o publisher
- o price
- o other (please specify)

Although the purpose of this project in general is to better understand developmental writing texts, it would be

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reductionist to focus on these texts or writing instruction itself to the exclusion of reading texts/instruction. The inter-related nature of writing and reading is now becoming more widely recognized and appreciated, due in part to reading/writing work done by Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986); or philosophically-grounded notions of "triadicity" focusing on the role of interpretation in the production of meaning, as explained by Berthoff (1984, 169) (see also Greene 1992; Bos 1991; or Rousculp and Maring 1992).

By examining and understanding the values and concerns expressed by respondents towards developmental *reading* texts, the values of respondents concerning developmental *writing* texts can be more fully contextualized and understood. In other words, do reading textbook concerns parallel, contradict, or complement writing textbook concerns? Responses are organized according to three categories or areas of concern. The first includes *reading behavior* objectives, including interpreting or interacting with material in certain ways. The second is an understanding of the attainment of specific reading abilities that facilitate college success, or *study skills*; and the third focuses on the continuing concern over text *format* features as discussed above.

Reading Behavior Objectives

Many respondents expressed a concern that students be able to do certain things or interpret reading material in

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certain ways. For example, respondents named "vocabulary" (12 responses) and finding the "main idea" (8 responses) more often than any other concern. This was expressed in terms of "deriving meaning from context" and learning "vocabulary in context," while "main idea" work was often placed in opposition to "finding details." Respondents spoke of the importance of recognizing "paragraph patterns," developing "modes and skills within a 'holistic' approach," increasing "efficiency" of reading, developing "inferential" reading skills, developing speed at reading, and teaching students to "preview" material. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of this data is that much of the language used to describe these behavioral objectives is the same language used by textbooks themselves (see Chapter VII). Why do teachers and others speak of helping students to find the main idea of a reading passage? Besides adopting the language of the text, the answer may be that finding the main idea becomes an organizational device for sorting the material into more or less important information. However, if reading instruction becomes a process of guessing what the teacher or the text has determined to be the main idea, a specific organizational and meaning making strategy may be forced upon students. Although all readers need to organize their readings of texts in order to interpret them, how and why certain strategies are privileged over others becomes an important

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question. In the same way that writing instruction privileges the creation of the topic sentence or the thesis sentence, reading instruction parallels these objectives, but uses different language to describe them. Writers create theses, while readers look for the main idea. Writers add support to arguments; readers look for supporting details. Writers edit their writing by using different words and exploring the meaning of what they have already written; readers learn vocabulary and derive meaning "in context." What writing and reading behavioral objectives share is an expectation that students create (or reproduce) meaning. Responses to questions four and five shared a concern that students create that meaning by using language as a way of responding to a text.

Study Skills

Respondents also spoke of more focussed behavioral objectives that facilitated academic success in general. These included "study skills strategies" such as SQ3R, a method of "critical reading," developing listening or notetaking skills, test taking skills, preparing for the GED, techniques for memory, and opportunities to apply study skill strategies. Study skills concerns were also reflected in the listing of several books designed specifically to enhance college success (see, for example, *How to Study in College*, published by Houghton-Mifflin or *Doing Well in College*, published by McGraw-Hill). The move from reading

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and writing objectives to "study skills" objectives suggests that for some programs, reading and writing goals may be defined in narrow and functional ways.

Format Features

Respondents tended to be more specific about desired text features in books used for reading instruction than those used for writing instruction. There was much concern that texts be "user friendly" and that publishers have a "high quality reputation." More specifically, some respondents desired "specific questions geared to skill building charts" (3 responses), "skill weaknesses identified through reading passages in the text" (1 response), and the ability of the text to aid in "self assessment" of the student through "in the book practices with answers in the back" and "immediate feedback" (2 responses). Respondents explained that "students need structure and a sense of progress" as well as "sensitivity to the student reader" and material that is "interesting to adults."

Summary

While concerns over reading text features and the means by which students make meaning through reading are similar to the concerns of those choosing writing texts, there is less of a sense of controversy in terms of how students become better readers. Respondents generally expected readers to be able to do certain things when they read, mostly receive

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the meaning as it was intended to be received by the author of the text. While there was some indication that respondents hoped students might interact critically with reading material (as in SQ3R), reading for the vast majority of respondents meant distilling information in order to accurately reflect the author's intended meaning. This functional view of the reading process was evident in the often mechanical and highly structured activities valued by some respondents, from "drills and timed readings" to the careful "monitoring" of comprehension. Reading instruction was seen by respondents in terms of "correctness" much more often than writing instruction, with the implication that a "correct" reading thus becomes a means of access to other bodies of knowledge (especially in the "study skills" texts). "Correct" writing, by contrast, was more often defined in terms of grammar/usage, a less prestigious means of representing existing knowledge, and rarely seen as gaining access to other knowledge.

Question Six: What Uses are Made of the Books?

- o course is organized around book
- o to create writing assignments
- o as student reference materials
- o book supplements course
- o for students to read and study
- o to suggest class activities
- o other (explain)

Responses to this question often revealed the fit between course or program structure and textbook content. Perhaps the most significant finding is that fully half of the

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respondents stated that the course was organized around the book. In other words, the content of as many as one-half of the developmental programs surveyed may be determined largely by textbook publishers. There are several factors that may contribute to an understanding of this. One is the historical nature of writing and rhetoric instruction.

Robert Connors (1986) describes three contributors leading to the creation of rhetoric textbooks in the 19th century: the presence of rhetorical texts that reduced rhetoric to drill and skill, the weakness and ignorance of untrained teachers, and the increasing power of the newly-technologized publishing industry (183). Of these, the need for textbooks that essentially taught the course for unprepared teachers was the most significant. In the early to mid-19th century, there was an explosive growth of small colleges in this country that led to the need for new instructors. Since many colleges were forced to hire those with little training, a rigid drill and skill model served these teachers well by defining the curriculum for them. One hundred years later (1930), the new teacher was still lacking in rhetorical or pedagogical training because rhetoric had been transformed by composition, but no research was being done to legitimize composition as a body of knowledge. Textbook companies, then as now, stepped in to provide assistance to the teacher whose real interests were in other areas.

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If writing instruction has been historically de-skilled by textbook publishers at the college level, due to a combination of economic and scholarly factors, it is perhaps doubly de-skilled in developmental education. Although developmental education has become more institutionalized and legitimized in the last twenty years (see Chapter Four), it is still often the case that these teaching assignments are lacking in prestige and sometimes filled by those whose real interest is in "literature," where academic rank and tenure have historically been more common (see Bullock, et. al. 32 and Susan Miller, 1989, 89).

Finally, the often transitory tenure of developmental students³ and the "individualized curriculum" so important to many developmental educators mean that in many situations the book *is* the teacher until the real teacher has time to work with the student. This is supported by the large number of respondents who stated that the textbooks are also used "for students to read and study" (see Figure 4). Of all of the options, the least cited were "book supplements course" and "to suggest class activities."

³One interviewee said as many as half of developmental students drop out every term.

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Figure 4

Uses Made of Textbooks

<u>Textbook Uses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Course is organized around book	43
To create writing assignments	33
As student reference materials	30
Book supplements course	23
For students to read and study	41
To suggest class activities	26

These results suggest that much of the writing instruction related to book content in these programs may be solitary, perhaps even isolated, study work. This is also supported by some of the "other" comments:

We individualize much of the material for students because they have greatly varying reading and writing levels and goals. We are also a lab rather than a conventional classroom, as instructors assist students' self-instruction.

or

"this is an adult learning center where many of the courses are self-taught."

If a "de-skilled" view of developmental reading and writing instruction describes a publisher-driven, mechanical operation of plugging students into pre-determined instructional formats, many people involved in running the programs would probably disagree. Where some would see a rigid pre-determined format, others would see choices. Teachers and others see textbooks as the servant, not the master, as evidenced by the following comments:

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- o "the book has to fit specific course objectives"
- o "the book is a major part of the coursework but is never all of it"
- o [use of the book] "depends on the course"
- o [the book must] "establish attitudes, principles about writing, such as yes you can do it, organization, etc."

Question Seven: How Often Do You Change Books?

This question directs attention towards the power of program personnel to control their programs through choice of textbooks. By far, the majority of respondents changed books every 2-5 years, often coinciding with the publication of a new edition. If change is the result of the publication of a new edition, this raises the question of whether programs would adopt new texts at these intervals if new editions were published at different intervals. One interviewee commented that "they come out with a new edition every three years anyway, but they could be more current than that." Does the publication cycle serve the needs of programs to update their course material or does it serve the economic needs of the business cycle in the publishing industry?⁴ Whatever the case may be, it is clear that respondents see this decision as their own to make in terms of personal and program needs. The following summarizes comments that reflect program concerns:

⁴see Chapter IX

We change texts when:

- o book doesn't fulfill purpose or edition changes to one we don't want
- o when our objectives change
- o we find new ones we like
- o our needs change
- o another book is found to fit our needs
- o teachers get sick of using book

Also important, but to a lesser degree, were students'

needs:

We change texts when:

- o we find materials that make it easier for students to learn
- o something better appears at lower (reading) levels
- o student expectations change

Question Eight

How Much Class Time is Spent Using Texts?

This question addresses the relationship between textbooks and course content from the perspective of use of classroom time, another form of choice teachers and others make. Teachers may make use of the textbook during classtime in various ways, from large group discussion of readings that serve as rhetorical models, class discussion of exercises, or group implementation of suggested "process" activities to individual or small group work with these same activities. Respondents most often indicated that textbooks were used **40-59% of the time**. The fewest responses were from those who indicated that the texts were used very little (less than 20%) or a great deal (80-100%). This suggests that the textbook exerts a moderate influence on classroom activity

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in most classrooms, but does not monopolize the quality of interaction that goes on between teachers and students. For most respondents, at least half of the classroom time is spent doing things that have nothing to do with textbook work. For many teachers, this may be time that students use to write, or to discuss their own writing, or to discuss other materials, such as readings from newspapers or magazines. It may also be a time teachers use to speak with students about their writing (conferencing). However, if textbook content controls about half of the class time in most developmental writing programs, and if half of the respondents use the textbook to organize the course itself (question 6), a significant amount of the curriculum in these programs is being defined either directly or indirectly by textbook content.

Question Nine

What Do You See as the Strengths of the Books You Currently Use?

The final four questions in this survey asked respondents to make value judgments about textbooks, relate those judgments to program values, and discuss their feelings in general about the textbooks they use. This question seeks to understand what publishers and writers of textbooks are doing that respondents value most. Although many textbook traits were valued by respondents, most may be located within one of three categories. These categories are

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Activity-Related Concerns

More than any other valued characteristic of textbooks, respondents repeatedly praised books for the kinds of activities they offered to students. Very often these activities took the form of "lots of meaningful exercises" but the word "activities" was also often used, as in "student-related activities," "process activities," "editing activities," or implied in "immediate application of strategies." Respondents valued their writing textbooks most for the things they would help students to *do*, as opposed to "understand" or "know." These data point to what others have recognized as a significant difference between writing courses in general compared to academic "content" courses --that writing courses are behaviorally-outcome based, that is, students are expected to perform in a certain way at the end of the class, as opposed to assimilating a body of knowledge, as in traditional academic courses. In the teaching of writing (and reading as it is taught as a "skill") the writing performance becomes proof that a body of knowledge has been assimilated, and the activities or process one goes through becomes the means by which that performance is eventually facilitated.

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Student Accessibility/Usability

Closely related to activity concerns were more general responses that indicated great concern for helping students to understand and use textbooks easily. Respondents praised books for being "simple and easy for students to understand," for "explaining concepts well," for "sensitivity to reading level," and "ease of directions," for being "well organized," and "down to earth," for "speaking to the student as an adult learner," for "not being intimidating," and for being "attractive with good illustrations." Also important were opportunities for students to "self-test" with "answers in the back." Organizational and surface features were important to both those who valued a great deal of structure as well as those who did not, although the latter often complained that the best books (those that emphasized the writing process instead of workbook type formats) were often too difficult for students to read.

Teacher or Program Usability/Flexibility

Many responses interpreted value not in terms of what students "got out of" a particular text, but in terms of the ways texts could be used in a variety of situations with a variety of teachers who might have different values or approaches to teaching. Also important was the way the textbook fit into the overall program and supported other activities and objectives. So respondents praised books

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with "a good teacher's manual," "good instructor materials," "pre- and post-testing" (instructor controlled), and texts that allowed instructors to "teach in the approach they feel they are strongest." Respondents also favored texts that "matched or followed objectives of the program," emphasized "an individual approach" that allowed for the "flexibility of being used independently," and texts that had corresponding or supplemental software programs or "support materials" such as audiocassettes or video.

Summary

Respondents discussed the strengths of the books they used primarily in terms of **efficiency** or ease of use and **positive outcomes**, which were in turn defined in terms of teacher and student satisfaction with the student's progress through the material and the course itself. Although pedagogical values were sometimes implicit in respondents' comments (as in the preference of one respondent for "an emphasis on writing, not skill, drill, kill"), teaching methodologies were more often assumed to be value-neutral or not relevant to a discussion of book "strengths." To most respondents, strong textbooks helped programs to help students to do what they had to do in the least frustrating way possible. Textbooks were strong if they helped programs to serve students to be better writers, but no respondents praised books for helping students to come to a better understanding of what

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Question Ten

Are You Satisfied With the Books You Currently Use? Why or Why Not?

Responses to this question were more complex than simple yes or no answers. While more than half of all respondents were generally satisfied with the textbooks in use in their programs, nearly all of those who expressed satisfaction did so in the form of qualified endorsements. The most common response was "Yes, for now" or "Yes, but always looking for something better." Other respondents were much more specific. For example:

- o Yes, moderately, reviewed 27 books to find interesting material at low levels, still not happy with my choice, thinking of writing my own.
- o Yes, moderately satisfied - developmental course is only 6 weeks long - texts don't lend themselves to a short program.
- o Yes, but looking for basic writing book with grammar review that also introduces essay writing.
- o Yes, but too technical for beginning students.
- o Yes, but would like more editing, revision, grammar and mechanics.
- o Yes, with continued evaluation and pilot programs for new materials.

Other responses praised books for their effects on students, such as "Students find them usable and are learning from them," "students are making good progress," or "students seem to understand and like it." Yet other responses

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addressed the content of the books, as in "textbooks offer variety, challenge, uniqueness," text is "easy to follow, provides individual instruction," or texts are "action-oriented."

Those who responded that they were not satisfied with the textbooks they currently use were dissatisfied for a variety of reasons, but mostly due to an over-emphasis on "work sheet drill" focusing on grammar/sentence analysis, or because explanation or instructions were insufficient, confusing, or "too technical," or because they did not meet the needs of students with different learning styles. A minority of respondents complained that texts "didn't take advantage of recent [composition] theories," or "were too skills oriented [with] not enough critical thinking.

Responses to this question were often characterized by a general malaise and even resignation about the present quality of textbooks. Two comments are especially noteworthy: the respondent who answered that she/he was "not completely [satisfied] but then I have never found a developmental text that is just what I want" and the respondent who said "No one is satisfied with writing texts." These comments raise a number of questions, most generally the question of why dissatisfaction with writing textbooks is so commonly and fatalistically accepted. Part of the reason may lie with the nature and context of the tasks these textbooks are meant to facilitate. Students in

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developmental education are under a great deal of pressure to make rapid progress and teachers are under pressure to move students into regular programs. In a less than ideal educational climate, the tendency is to search for materials that work to facilitate objectives and work fast. An added benefit is if those materials engage students without the added assistance of the teacher or tutor. This in turn puts pressure on textbook publishers to be all things to all people. Since we do not live in a country where educational objectives in higher education are, as yet, standardized, it is inevitable that any given textbook will not do enough of something and too much of something else for any given program or student. Additionally, what counts as knowledge in developmental education and the teaching of writing, as well as in any given classroom, is, like all knowledge, constantly but slowly changing, so that at any given time a broad continuum of program personnel and students will hold a wide range of beliefs about what is of value in terms of teaching methodologies. Those values may in turn be connected to basic ideological beliefs about what counts as knowledge at all, which may be defined and negotiated within the context of a particular rhetorical situation.

The result is that publishers are forced to anticipate future rhetorical situations and to publish books for those segments of the market who are either most influential or most broadly defined in order to maximize their profits. If

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publishers can publish books that at least *seem* to represent the values of the programs that most often end up buying the books, then some program dissatisfaction with texts may be an accepted cost of doing business.

Question Eleven

How Well Do the Objectives of the Books Match the Objectives of Your Program?

The purpose of this question was to understand the relationship between how people feel about the textbooks they use in their programs in relation to what they are trying to accomplish in their programs. Two conclusions are noteworthy. The first is that by a 9 to 1 margin, respondents believed that the objectives of books closely match the objectives of programs. The most typical response was "yes, they closely match, or I wouldn't have chosen them, but they (the textbooks) could be better."⁵ For most respondents, the "match" between program and textbook objectives was more alike than different, even if respondents showed significant dissatisfaction with texts. This may be the result of two factors. First, program personnel devote a significant investment of both time and money to text selection. To suggest that books don't match program objectives would suggest that program personnel were delinquent in their responsibility to choose good texts. A

⁵"Better" here seemed defined in terms of matching program, not publisher goals.

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significant amount of time is often invested because the teachers and others assume textbooks will teach. As one respondent noted, "*Something* is moving students up the ladder -- it must be the text." As is clear from the responses to other questions, program personnel often see themselves as more *in control* of instructional materials than *controlled by* textbook material, primarily because of their ability to freely choose from a variety of texts and publishers. Choice becomes a means of evaluating individual competence, since book choice, unlike classroom activities, is conspicuous and easily determined. People may be labeled quickly as choosing well or choosing poorly.

Secondly, writing instruction is now characterized by two broadly conceived instructional philosophies that are widely perceived as oppositional in value (i.e., grammar or product approaches versus process or activity approaches), to the extent that many respondents may be negotiating conflict by defining their own positions as compromise pedagogies. As complex pedagogical arguments become reduced to a debate between one technique or another, it becomes easier for respondents to locate themselves and their textbooks in both over simplified categories in order to effectively "cover all bases." Respondents may see their programs and their texts as basically "process" oriented, but still be dissatisfied with the way students are inadequately prepared to produce "correct" writing.

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Those who believe program and text objectives are compatible stand in contrast to a small minority who expressed dissatisfaction with the match between text and program objectives. Of those who stated that book objectives did not very closely match program objectives, almost all talked about their own growth as individual programs moving away from the kind of approach the text was using. The following is a sampling of these responses:

- o "The methods I'm using are getting further away from the text."
- o "The writing text focuses too much on grammar, sentence analysis. It leaves little room or time for writing instruction."
- o "The Troyka text doesn't work with portfolios; it's too "mode-based" and doesn't make use of recent theories."

The sense in these responses is that publishers and authors of textbooks are not keeping up with individual educators' professional growth; that they need to move faster to keep up with changes in the profession that are the result of new research and/or instructional methodologies.

Survey Summary

This survey suggests to me that textbooks in general and developmental writing textbooks in particular are the potential site of several different kinds of conflict. There is the possible conflict between those involved in administering and those involved in teaching in developmental programs. The needs of an administrative,

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departmental standard, for example, may not meet the needs of teachers for whom standardization is antithetical to serving student "needs." Conflict may also develop between program personnel and publishers when program needs are defined more narrowly or precisely than the need by publishers to produce a product with broad appeal. Understanding the nature of these conflicts is an important factor in understanding both the content of these textbooks and their use.

Analysis of survey responses suggests that the relationship between programs and publishers can be recognized as a struggle to define program/publisher responsibilities in general. Program personnel relinquish control of their curricula to publishers in several ways. First, they tend to rely on commercial materials more than program-created materials, and they tend to use those commercially-prepared materials to structure course content. Second, they often allow textbook content to define course or program objectives, perhaps especially in terms of reading instruction. Third, they often accept the publisher-determined timetable of publication of new editions as a means of "updating" their own program curriculum. Fourth, they tend to consolidate and centralize the decision making process when it comes to acquiring new textbooks, thereby representing their needs or preferences to publishers in less diverse, less complex, ways. Fifth,

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they define both their program and textbook objectives in terms of behavioral outcomes which textbook publishers make use of to invent specific suggested activities which will supposedly lead to those outcomes. Last, they rely heavily on "individualized instruction." In the "additional comments" section of this survey, respondents spoke most often of the "varied abilities of students," of "individualized reading materials," of "open-entry, self-paced individualized learning situations." This can become a subtle means of blaming the student for the curriculum and course structure/ content by suggesting there is no other means of teaching this kind of student. Once this excuse has been made, teacher-based instruction becomes the handmaiden to text-based instruction, since students become engaged with material "when they are ready." Since the textbook is always ready, when students do come to school, they may often be interacting with texts in pre-determined ways, not with teachers or other students (see Question 8 and Appendix D).

In turn, publishers relinquish control to programs in several ways. First, although they may try to be all things to all people (see Chapter IX), a necessary outcome of an individualized curriculum is that teachers and others seek a broad range of text options to meet those individualized needs. Although this may be seen as affording publishers more opportunities to publish more books, publication of

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large numbers of books is not as cost-effective as high sales of a small number of books. Second, although a centralized decision making process may make it easier for publishers to determine program preferences, such a process may also make it easier for programs to resist the "commodified culture" created by publishers that was alluded to previously. Third, since publishers do not generate what respondents referred to as "theory," they must not only be aware of the increasingly legitimized role of theory in writing instruction and how textbooks can model/reflect it, but they must also work to understand how that theory comes to be interpreted by program personnel, or work to interpret it for program personnel. In writing instruction, the primary site of this effort is over how texts, programs, teachers, and students will think about "process." As previously noted, it is in the interests of publishers to broaden the meaning of "process" as much as possible in order to appeal to a wide range of program interpretations and broaden their own market appeal. Once "process" and "grammar" concerns are made complementary through the unitary form of the singular text, they may also be legitimized in the eyes of those who use the text, both students and teachers.

Another kind of conflict may exist between program administrators and teachers. Although administrators and teachers may be the same person, the objectives of the

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person playing each role may be different. This is evident in the power relations between full-time and part-time faculty, where full-time faculty tend to have control over the process of text selection, even if part-time faculty may have some opportunities to give input concerning particular texts. When this information is joined with the data concerning how courses tend to be organized around selected texts, the locus of struggle shifts from publisher versus program interests to publisher/privileged faculty versus part-time faculty interests. Full-time faculty and administrators may be serving as negotiators of content, meaning, and structure between those who manufacture the curriculum and those who primarily manage and administer it. Since the discrepancy in numbers between full- and part-time faculty is typically large,⁶ the situation may often exist where the majority of teachers teaching students to write have little or nothing to say about what is being taught or how that teaching is accomplished (and discouraged to say anything through lack of incentives). Moreover, those teachers who work with students and understand their needs and abilities best may sometimes be working in situations where their assessment and understanding of their students is obfuscated by departmentally-mandated measurement of behaviorally-defined outcomes constructed by publishers with

⁶In my personal experience, the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty has averaged 14 to 1.

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In order to better understand the conditions that structure relations between the different participants involved in teaching basic writing, as well as the content of the curricula as discussed by these respondents, it is important to assume several historical perspectives. The first of these perspectives is the larger institutional structure most responsible for legitimizing the teaching of writing to academically underprepared students. That institution is the community college.

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Chapter III

COMMUNITY COLLEGES: UNDERSTANDING THEIR ROLE

Most current developmental reading and writing programs had their beginnings in the '70s, a time of federal support achieved through "Great Society" legislation from the '60s. Initiatives such as the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 provided grants and loans to private and public colleges and allowed them to make decisions about how to spend that money. By the '80s, more institutions of all kinds had created developmental programs in that space than ever before (see Bullock, Madden, and Mallery, 34-35). But during the '70s, fiscal austerity had been a preoccupation at higher education institutions, and developmental education had only grudgingly been accepted as a way of helping more students to graduate during a time of declining enrollments. The exception to this grudging acceptance was at community colleges. At most community colleges, enrollments continued to rise well into the 1980s, partly because they were designated "open door" institutions.¹ One of the many institutional concerns became "serving" the new non-traditional, often inadequately prepared students on the

¹Open enrollment is defined as not restricting access on the basis of past academic performance.

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one hand, while maintaining academic "standards" on the other (See Cohen and Brawer 1989). Developmental education programs in community colleges became a major part of these institutions' response to their open door mission, so much so that by 1990, 47% of developmental reading programs were located at two-year colleges, with the other half divided between university and four-year colleges (Bullock, Madden and Mallery, 38). Pilard showed that community colleges had the largest number of remedial students, and that there was a continuing emphasis on moving developmental education out of the university and into the community college (1983, 34). Understanding the nature and quality of the "literacy" put forward by developmental writing texts depends on understanding a number of social, historical, and political contexts. Community colleges are one such context. Here I will attempt to describe their history, objectives, and effects on students in order to suggest the influence they have had on both developmental education and textbook values.

The history of junior/community colleges is barely one hundred years old, but is nevertheless rich in social and cultural detail. William Rainey Harper, considered by some to be the "father of the junior college in the United States," established a junior college at the University of Chicago in 1891. In addition, his influence in Joliet, Illinois, led to the two-year extension of the high school

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program there, which eventually became the Joliet Junior College, considered to be the oldest existing public junior college in the U.S. (Vaughn 1985, 10); This was soon followed by legislation in California in 1907 that allowed high schools to offer post-graduate education, and California soon began providing state and county support and legitimizing and supporting the functions of community colleges on a grand scale. Detailing the history of the community college, however, is not easy, since the institutional records have largely been constructed by those with a vested interest in promoting the community college as a panacea for those traditionally excluded from higher education. This line of rhetoric can be traced all the way back to the beginnings of the community college movement and its founding fathers (no founding mothers received recognition). In the early part of the twentieth century, the heroic image of the "self-made man" was beginning to fade in the face of immense industrialization projects and urbanization. Even Andrew Carnegie had "acknowledged that opportunities to rise from 'rags to riches' had declined with the rise of the giant corporation (as qtd. in Brint and Karabel, 4). Since so much of the American character (from Jefferson to Reagan/Bush) has been concerned with satisfying personal ambition, some other means of channeling ambition (or "managing" it, according to Brint and Karabel) had to be constructed in a newly-industrialized and increasingly

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centralized economy. Although normal schools had become very popular in the 19th century, they were meant to develop an "enlightened" citizenry, not to be a key to economic success as was the emphasis at community colleges from the start. In order to understand how and why community colleges accepted their role, it is useful to consider the arguments of the powerful and influential, who would, in the end, design an environment² where ambition could be negotiated.

Cross has noted that "No other educational institution has been so shaped and promoted by so few leaders as has the community college" (as qtd. in Deegan and Tillery, 14). Those few leaders have tended to be men who took their lead from the universities. Proposals in 1851 by Henry Tappan, president of the University of Michigan, in 1859 by William Mitchell, a University of Georgia trustee, and in 1869 by William Fowell, president of the University of Minnesota, all favored the abolition of "lower division preparatory work" in order to become "true research and professional development centers" (Cohen and Brawer 1982, 6). The traditionally "weaker" four-year colleges would, according

²Brint and Karabel describe the community college by saying that "no other 20th century organizational innovation in higher education even begins to approach the success of the two year college" (6). Cohen and Brawer take a more reserved, but romanticized view, noting that "Community Colleges have affected notable changes in American education, especially by expanding access (20)...enhancing the social mobility that has characterized America" (29).

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to their plan, become two-year colleges in order to facilitate this, or secondary schools could provide extensions that served this purpose. Plans for transforming public schooling into a 6-4-4 structure (6 years in grade school, four in junior high, and four combined high and college) were also put forward as models. Early explanations for the failure of the 6-4-4 plan (it never really caught on) were that this plan would not "lead to a true undergraduate college, complete with 'school spirit'" (Eels 1931 as cited by Cohen and Brawer 1982, 9) which people wanted and needed, but these explanations often made little distinction between the desires of the public and the "ambition of junior college organizers" (Cohen and Brawer, 9). What was not directly addressed, however, was whether people served by these schools wanted them to look like "real" schools, or whether those who controlled the institutions were more interested in "introducing a new tier into the existing hierarchy" (Brint and Karabel 1989, 6). The first use of the word "junior" to describe these schools actually helped them to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public and to separate their functions from those of secondary schools. The successful detachment from secondary schools early on meant more prestige for those attending and also for those who would teach and administer the new colleges. Thus, the creation of the junior college enhanced the reputations of many powerful groups: the university

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elite who could become even more elite, the secondary school teachers who could "move up" to college teaching (many were recruited from public schools), and the leaders of the movement itself, who above all were to be seen as expanding the educational opportunities of Americans who might never have gone to college otherwise. The system then lured students in with the promise of inexpensive and even non-existent tuition, and the promise of credit transfers to the university at the junior year. Theoretically, no one in the educational hierarchy would be displaced by the establishment of the junior college (except perhaps those who taught lower division courses at the college or university, and they had little power anyway), and the creation of an additional "rung" on the ladder of success made it seem even more so that America was the land of opportunity. However, as the century of the community college comes to a close, the most significant question raised by custodians of this institution may be access to what?³ In other words, does the ladder really go anywhere, is it even possible to climb it, and if you get to the top, what do you get?

There has been a small but significant group of critics of community colleges, most of whom began writing in the '60s and '70s and who focused mostly on questions of transfer to other institutions and reproduction of the

³Cohen and Brawer 364.

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social hierarchy (see, for example, Zwerling 1976, Karabel 1972, Pincus 1980). Their work has been an important first step in better understanding the all too often narrowly conceived history of community colleges, because they have questioned the community college's stated outcomes by examining specific characteristics of the students who attended and social and historical conditions and outcomes of that attendance. Jerome Karabel (1972), for example, argued that the increase in the number of professional and technical workers between 1950 and 1970 led to education inflation because in order to avoid the lowest paying jobs, people were forced to attend post-secondary institutions, especially community colleges. This increase in educational requirements was criticized because it did not lead to any social changes in the social hierarchy. In other words, Karabel suggested that people went to community colleges just to maintain the economic position they already held before attending, and that these positions were reproduced from one generation to the next, so that community college students tended to come from families of lower socio-economic classes. Leonard Koos, one of the leaders of the vocational education movement in the '20s and '30s, presented data suggesting that this stratification was true fifty years earlier, but came to very different conclusions than did Karabel. He looked at the differentiation in terms of costs to different socio-economic groups and concluded

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"that the public junior college fosters the economic democratization (i.e., stratification) of higher education" (141), implying that differentiation in the quality of education is made "democratic" by the "choice" one makes to attend a particular institution.

Zwerling (1976, 1986), based on work done at Staten Island Community College, echoed Karabel's criticism that community colleges did not offer students an opportunity to use college to better their economic status. Pincus argued on the basis of data from Connecticut, Virginia, and Maryland community colleges that, when jobs are scarce, educational requirements "rise faster than the skill level of available jobs" (1980, 344). Thus, the demand to know more becomes a way of keeping people from being qualified for certain jobs. Pincus also accused vocational education, which community colleges embraced after World War II, as empty credentialism, arguing that "there are no significant differences between the average monthly earnings of high school and community college graduates" (342), and that "there is no good evidence that vocational education in community colleges delivers on the promise of secure employment, decent pay, and ample career opportunities" (1986, 49). Others have countered these claims by arguing that community college open door policies challenge traditional elitism in higher education (Monroe 1972) and that this democratization in higher education has enhanced

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the social mobility of the disadvantaged (Gleazer 1980). The issue for these critics is whether community colleges are places where students can "move up" within the social hierarchy or whether they are places students "learn their place" and are provided with the illusion of success.

Other critics focused on the issue of transferability. Throughout its history, students have attended the community college with the hope of transferring credits to four-year institutions. And yet, once some students begin attending, some critics claim they are "cooled out" (Clark 1960, in a study done at San Jose State) or encouraged by advisors to pursue less demanding curricula that tend to be "terminal" rather than transferable, usually on the basis of testing scores or persuasive counseling sessions. "Cooling out" is the college equivalent of "tracking" that occurs in high schools where some students are prepared for college and others for work. Templin and Shearon, in a study of the North Carolina community college system, confirmed Clark's conclusions that "students' socio-economic status characteristics were associated with the curriculum in which students eventually enrolled" (1980, 86) but that the relationship was "not particularly strong" (88) and that some terminal degree programs, especially technical programs, drew both upper and lower income students (89). Astin (1975) also focuses on effects when he discusses the differences between two-year and four-year students. He

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argues that students who begin their work in a two-year institution are less likely to earn a bachelors' degree, that they are less involved in traditional college activities, and that they are less likely to see themselves as a powerful or disruptive force,⁴ suggesting a passivity that could affect course content and structure. He also argues, along with Pincus, that minority students tended to be concentrated in community colleges and less selective four-year schools which spend less money on per pupil expenditures and that this represents a lack of equal opportunity under the law (as cited in Vaughn 1980, 7).

The above discussion represents some of the most significant criticism of the past twenty years. Besides helping to identify specific problems in community colleges, this criticism has also helped to shed light on the nature of the activities conducted within the college itself. If community colleges are places where students "learn their place" and are provided with the illusion of success, then what counts as success in developmental programs may be defined in very narrow or even inconsequential ways. In the following section I consider the more recent work of Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel (1989) and Kevin Dougherty (1988)

⁴Nixon would argue that community colleges were better than four-year institutions in that they did not promote "the isolation, alienation and lack of reality that many young people find in universities or on campuses far from their own communities" (1970, as qtd. in Brint and Karabel; 109).

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to focus on three important and interdependent concerns that raise questions about the nature of the community college's professed concern over "serving" students. The first is the role of the institution itself in its own legitimation activities. The second is the often obscured social conditions surrounding the history of the community college, and the third is the use of the rhetoric that promotes their mission.

Brint and Karabel have argued for what they call an "institutional model" (15) as a way of explaining the transformation of community colleges to primarily vocational education institutions beginning in the '70s. Prior to the '70s, they suggest that neither students nor business was interested in vocational education. Others, they say, have explained this transformation through a "consumer choice" model (Cohen and Braver 1989) or a "business-domination" perspective (Pincus 1986). The consumer choice explanation argues that community colleges were transformed into vocational education institutions because students "chose" those types of programs over others. The business domination view asserts that powerful corporations shaped the community colleges to conform to their interest in training (and selecting) docile workers for the workplace. Brint and Karabel's alternative explanation is worth quoting at length:

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powerful structural constraints. Foremost among these constraints was the subordinate position of the community college in the larger structure of educational and social stratification. Put more concretely, junior colleges were hampered by their subordinate position in relation to that of the older and more prestigious four year colleges...Community colleges, by their very location in the structure of higher education, were badly situated to compete with better established institutions for these [better] training markets (16).

From this point of view, community colleges made the decision to embrace vocational education within a structural framework in order to enhance their own status, to enlarge their "piece of the pie." Dougherty (1988) has examined this transformation from the perspective of government officials who made decisions about funding community colleges, and also rejects the idea that either student choice or business interests alone adequately explain what happened in the '70s. He argues that "the origins of massive state-level support for community college expansion" are a result of "constraint" or the threat that government officials would lose influence with their constituencies. As he puts it:

State officials forged community college policies that favored business and students, largely because they believed that serving business and student interests was both socially desirable and necessary to meeting their own interests as state officials (371).

Dougherty cites particular incentives that made the funding of community colleges attractive: first, they were cheaper than public four-year schools and would thereby save the states money; second, state officials believed that training

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more technicians would attract outside businesses and boost state economies; and third, state officials could cite community colleges as a "service" they provided to their constituencies.

Although these two different explanations locate the decision-making process in two different arenas (college administration versus state officials), what they have in common is a focus on legitimizing the institution in order to serve the needs of those with a vested interest in its development. In other words, what both explanations share is an emphasis on meeting the needs of the community college for its own sake, in order to make it a necessary and desirable part of the overall educational structure. Community colleges must, like all institutions, create a permanent, secure place for themselves in order to survive. But because of their subordinate, less privileged, status as educational institutions, they have relied heavily on the rhetoric of "service," often to seemingly mask this legitimizing function. For example, Deegan and Tillery describe the "individualistic" "special characteristics" "of the communities being served" (20) as a way of talking about how what community colleges did in the '70s and '80s was unique and constructive. Yet they also use their discussion of these "new markets" (20) to boast of serving "the world's widest diversity of students" (4). This sort of promotional rhetoric begs the question of whether the new students or

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the new market came first, or if they are the same thing in these authors' minds. Brint and Karabel argue that community college officials actively recruited older and part-time students in the '70s whom they thought would be more receptive to vocational education (12). But Cohen and Brawer insist that the community colleges "goals were to serve the people with whatever the people wanted" (23) and that growth of community colleges must be seen in terms of "demands on schools" (2).

For some, the question of individual versus institutional needs seems either unimportant or so fixed in terms of value as to be unworthy of discussion. Cohen and Brawer see the community college as "a system for individuals [that] helps individuals learn what they need to know to be effective, responsible members of their society" (357). So, on the one hand, institutions "help" people when they are seeking help, but, on the other hand,

Institutional needs are as real as individual and social needs; in fact, they may be more valid as beginning points for analysis because they offer somewhat unified positions that have developed over time, whereas 'individual' and 'social' needs are as diverse as anyone cares to make them (359).

This view is characteristic of many arguments that praise the work of community colleges (see, for example, Deegan, Tillery and Associates 1985; Cohen and Brawer 1989; Vaughn 1983; 1985; Bogue 1980; or Koos 1924). Community colleges, according to this view, are there to "serve" people, but there is a sense that only the institution itself, in

concert with other institutions and authorities, is able to adequately formulate an individual's "proper" goals and objectives, and that people will come to the community college eager to accept these goals and objectives because people don't really know what they want. An institution's objectives are in turn facilitated through a rigid functionalist view of society, where institutions of all kinds exist in order to stabilize and legitimate "services" for the benefit of all. Since we do rely on institutions of all kinds to provide stability in this and all societies, this argument at first glance can seem quite reasonable. But "stability" is not a uniformly desirable objective under all or even most circumstances, whether it be the goal at the institutional level or at the instructional level. If it were, "progress" or even change by any definition would be impossible. The previously cited literature on community colleges, while always couched in the rhetoric of "service" to "communities," creates the impression that community colleges are not simply reacting to outside forces, but instead leading the way in making changes for everyone's benefit. The result is that certain events are seen in very different ways that depend on the perspective one adopts. The "promotional" perspective that focuses on the institution itself as a problem solver succeeds in emphasizing some social conditions while obscuring others.

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This is perhaps best illustrated by an examination of post World War II developments, a period of explosive growth for community colleges everywhere. Explanations of this growth depend on seeing some things and not others, held together by the rhetoric of "democracy" and "access."

In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education for American Democracy, the Truman Commission, began work on a six volume report entitled "Higher Education for American Democracy." This commission was headed by George F. Zook, co-organizer of the founding conference of the American Association of Junior Colleges, and a two-year college advocate. Most community college histories generally state that the purpose of this commission was to encourage "the democratic ideals for which the nation had gone to war [so they would] not be abandoned in the postwar years" (see Vaughn 1985, 13). It is clear that the rhetoric of "democracy," but not necessarily democratic action, here served the dual purpose of institutional legitimation and societal stabilization. The mission of the junior college was redefined and expanded "beyond" its transfer function to include "technical competence" (as qtd. in Brint and Karabel, 70) and technical programs were to be emphasized that produced semi-skilled middle-level positions. Like Koos fifty years earlier, the Commission saw this reformulation as "democratic" because it seemed to offer more "opportunities." This was also the time when the name

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change to "community" colleges was put forward as better describing the multi-service role of the new institution. It must also be remembered that this was a time when GIs were returning from the war and the GI bill allowed many to attend college for the first time. Then as now, keeping people in school successfully delayed expectations of employment. But this was a boom period in the economy, and job opportunities were plentiful, especially for four-year college graduates. So the new "community" colleges had to be "sold" to students, especially their vocational education function. Despite the efforts of the Truman Commission to push "terminal" programs, students continued to enroll in two-year schools mainly in order to transfer to four-year schools. It was not until the '60s that another development would finally set the stage for vocational education to be embraced in the '70s. It was the move to "open access."

According to most of the literature, open access was a result of previous developments, not a cause of future developments. Vaughn, for example, uses the rhetoric of "democracy" to argue that open access was "the belief that all Americans should have access to higher education [and that this] road to open access was paved by the Truman Commission, the GI Bill, and various other developments" (1985, 12). Others have described these efforts as "reaching out to attract those who were not being served by traditional higher education" (Cohen and Brawer 1989, 22).

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Again, the rhetoric of "service" often goes unquestioned in terms of the forces that encouraged such "service" to be made available in the first place. For example, few discuss the role of universities to promote open access in order to maintain their own standards, even though a primary spokesperson on the role of the junior college after the war was James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard from 1934 to 1953. Conant promoted the "differentiation of higher education" (qtd. in Brint and Karabel, 81) in order to create more opportunities to attend college. But these "differentiated" opportunities led to class, race, and gender inequalities, because minorities, women, and poor people ended up being concentrated in two-year colleges (see Astin 1982) and the percentage of two-year students transferring to four-year colleges had dropped by the end of the '70s⁵ (see Cohen and Brawer 1982, 53).

"Open access" became defined and valued in terms of access to institutions, instead of access to opportunities. Although the rhetoric of "service" shifted the focus to students, the practical effect was to further legitimize two-year institutions by expanding their "markets." What the students "got" once they committed themselves to the

⁵The percentage of transfers dropped even as the actual number increased due to the expanding number of two-year students who take community college courses for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to employment. Whether these new students actually realize material gains is difficult to determine.

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two-year college has been shown to be uncertain at best. While some "high-status" and technical programs such as accounting, computer programming, electronics, and health did help students to get jobs, many more did not. A minority of students actually obtained jobs in their field, and dropouts tended to do as well as those who graduated (Wilms 1990). The exception was in fields dominated by women, such as secretarial training, dental assistance, and cosmetology. Cross (1972) has suggested that as many as 78% of women choose these terminal programs where completion of the program made a difference, but even then, these occupations represented some of the worst paying, lowest prestige kinds of jobs (as cited in Brint and Karabel, 121).

By the mid-1970s, the national economy was clearly faltering, and the promotion of "career" education through Sidney Marland in the Nixon administration became a means of "serving" those unable to find good jobs. As times got tough, community colleges, which had not taken part in the protests of the '60s, and which had been receiving large foundational support since the end of World War II through organizations such as the Carnegie and Kellogg Foundations, as well as the federal government, effectively became a dumping ground for the disenfranchised victims of a stagnant economy that was just beginning to feel the effects of a transition to global competition/exploitation. Maryland would garner over \$100 million in "discretionary funds"

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earmarked for "career education...in two years alone, and in 1972 the White House pushed through an education bill authorizing \$850 million for occupational programs in community colleges" (Shor 1986, 41). The twin ideologies of "equal opportunity" based on "merit" would encourage people to fight over fewer resources and blame themselves for economic stagnation that not even the government seemed able to understand or control. Community colleges defused some of the tension by forcing people to look at themselves as individuals rather than as members of social groups or even as "Americans." Those who often had the least access to resources would, in the end, be most responsible for "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps." Nationally, they would also be the recipients of the most "individualized" attention. They were "developmental" education students.

Summary

The content of basic writing textbooks must be contextualized both in terms of history and location. One contextual location is developmental education. Developmental education is itself contextually located primarily within community colleges. This chapter has intended to show that the mission of the community college in this country to provide open access to higher education in order to facilitate access to opportunity has not always been consonant with the reality of its achievements.

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Community colleges, in their effort to gain respectability and legitimacy, may be defining the needs of students in narrowly functional ways that become secondary to the legitimacy needs of the institution or the political needs of others to defuse economic tensions. The community college, put simply, seems to promise more than it can deliver. This raises several questions. Most important for this project is the question of how developmental education became a response to the mission of the community college, and how its curriculum (including textbooks) has been affected by these contexts.

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Chapter IV

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION: TECHNIQUES AND CONTROL

After World War II manual labor became less available at decent wages, and acquiring the necessary credentials became the standard way an increasing number of people secured professional, semi-professional, and middle management positions. When the government set out to create its "Great Society" in the '60s school became a dumping ground for what would become known as the youth culture. Along with the Civil Rights movement and Johnson's "War on Poverty," these developments fueled the argument that education, specifically higher education, should be made available to those excluded in the past. When open access in two-year schools began in 1965, almost immediately the issue of "unprepared" students who could not meet academic standards became a major concern. From an administrative viewpoint, standards could be lowered, but that would undermine the credibility junior colleges had worked so hard to cultivate. A second option was that students could be allowed to fail,¹ but that would undermine the open access mission. Meeting

¹The so-called "revolving door" (see Richardson, Fisk, Okun 1983), where students and their money could be accepted with no promise of success.

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the needs of underprepared students became the best solution, and was more desirable, not only for the *image* of the institution, but also for its finances, since money spent on academic support services would increase retention rates, which would result in increased revenue (Bullock et al. 1990, 11).

As previously stated, the '70s saw enrollment rates at four-year institutions drop for the first time since World War II, even though community college enrollments would not peak until the early '80s. So retention slowly became more of an issue at all institutions, both four- and two-year, although some four-year schools seemed willing to do anything.² This period represented phenomenal growth in what was still called remedial education; in fact, it became the fastest growing part of the curriculum, with enrollments in remedial courses at all colleges increasing by 22% in 1979 and 1980 compared to 15% increases for all other courses during that time period (Piland, 3).

However, remedial/developmental education was not then or is now a new concept. Cross (1976) traced remediation back to a math course offered at Wellesley in 1894, and "preparatory" departments supposedly date back to the Civil War (Maxwell 1979). Since the signing of the Morrill Act by

²At Central Washington University in 1978, faculty were asked to carry prospective first-year students' luggage and serve them meals to persuade them to attend (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 30, 1978; 6).

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Abraham Lincoln in 1862, redefining formal education along "practical" and "technical" lines meant re-thinking educational methodologies so as to "reach" a non-traditional student population. What made the '70s and '80s unique was the *institutionalization* of remediation through the creation of programs that were no longer seen as temporary measures to deal with a temporary problem. Just as community colleges were struggling to define a place for themselves in the institutional hierarchy of higher education, remedial/developmental programs struggled in the '70s and '80s to define their mission within an existing educational hierarchy.

The combination of declining enrollments in four-year schools, increasing fiscal austerity, and the perception that education, especially "career" education, would help the country out of economic stagnation, helped fuel the remediation movement. Although most programs began in the '70s (see Bullock *et al.* 36), most of the decade represented a struggle on the part of both the programs themselves and others to understand what they were trying to do. For example, as late as 1983, most states had no official or working definition of remedial education, and fewer than half had a remedial education mission statement in their community college legislation or state policies (Piland, 6-11). Furthermore, although a majority of states provided funding for remedial courses so that there was more emphasis

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on remedial education at the state level than five years earlier and more students were enrolled in remedial education, the overwhelming majority of states provided no consistent pattern of funding or knew how much they were spending on remedial education (Piland, 14-15). All of this changed in the '80s, what Bullock et al. refer to as the beginning of "the age of accountability."

Concerns about equality and access in the '70s gave way in the '80s to concern for "quality." A number of reports, perhaps the most well known, "A Nation at Risk," warned that all kinds of students were receiving inferior educations. Teachers often took this concern as a positive sign, even though control over the definition of this "quality" was gradually shifting from teachers to government (Altbach 1981 as qtd. in Bullock et al., 24). As education costs continued to rise, administrators and state legislators became partners in "downscaling" many higher education programs even as many families were having a harder time finding the money to send their children to college and Reagan was cutting 500,000 students from federal education programs that provided aid for the disadvantaged (Bullock et al., 23-25).

Remediation programs often responded by becoming more competitive with other departments by documenting needs and justifications and creating long-term plans. This sort of struggle within higher education for diminished resources,

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for a "smaller piece of the pie" is much more significant than it appears at first glance. Although the issue of who gets funding and who doesn't is itself serious business, the larger issue which is concealed by framing the problem in terms of money is the issue of what constitutes knowledge and who or what makes the decisions about what knowledge is important. The short history of remedial/developmental education must be understood in terms of the structural and ideological forces which shaped its knowledge base. What developmental education valued must be historicized and contextualized in order to appreciate how the content of textbooks is determined. In order to do this, it is instructive to examine both the criticism of remedial/developmental education, and the efforts by remedial/developmental educators to defend and legitimize their programs and efforts. From these two views, the history of developmental education looks very similar to that of the community college itself.

Out of the struggle to define their mission in the '70s and '80s, one important outcome was the shift from describing efforts as "remedial" or "compensatory"³ to

³"Compensatory" education was most often associated with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which resulted in the Office of Compensatory Education within the Department of Education (Clowes 1983, 5). McGrath and Spear argue that "compensatory" was "much more threatening, since programs designed to combat cultural deprivation of students seemed likely to redefine the college more as a social or community action agency than as an educational institution (1987, 13).

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describing them as "developmental." "Remedial" was the more familiar term, and associated with the medical model or "remedies" designed to "heal, cure, or make whole" (Clowes, 4). The assumptions of those who favored remediation were that students were ill, diseased, or generally in need of "fixing," and that the job of educators was to imagine how such students might be made well again, since "treatment" would result in the appropriate "cure." This view began with the assumption that the language and dialects students bring with them to college are inherently inferior to the language and dialects of the educators providing this "cure." During the '70s, "remediation" efforts came to be questioned by a group of scholars and researchers who focused on the new developments in community colleges. Cross (1976) argued that programs were too traditional and ineffective. Roueche and Kirk (1973) argued that remedial programs were simply "watered down" regular courses, that 41% of the students said no more than half of their classes were stimulating or interesting, and that academic performance dropped after entrance to regular programs. Moore argued that remedial programs presented a "Mickey Mouse 3-Rs" curriculum (1970, 171). Pincus (1974) examined the findings of Roueche and Kirk concerning G.P.A. Roueche and Kirk had argued that students in remedial programs seemed to persist longer and their G.P.A. was higher than regular students (1973, 57). But Pincus argued that one-

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third to one-half of these students were doing less than "C" work, and that only 45% of those who began such programs were still enrolled by the end of the fourth semester (31). Roueche and Snow (1977) and Cross (1978) suggested that as many as 90% of all students assigned or counseled into remedial programs never completed them (as cited in Lieberman and Cohen 1982). Even as late as 1986 and 1987, research indicated that the effects of remedial education were either questionable or having little impact on graduation rates in both two- and four-year schools (Abraham, 60 and Roueche and Baker, 72-74).⁴

Many of the "answers" to the problems some researchers were seeing focused on what McGrath and Spear have called the "educational effectiveness proponents." If the problem was that remedial programs were trying to teach students using ineffective methods, based on a medical model of remediation, the answer was to change the sorts of methods being used so that students could "succeed." As remediation became an increasingly more important aspect of what community colleges did, the focus on "methods" of instruction seemed to hold the answer. Roueche and Kirk

⁴Among two-year institutions, graduation rates were "about the same" for 15.3% of remedial and non-remedial students, with 64% having "no basis of comparison." In four-year schools, 14.2% of remedial and non-remedial students were "about the same" in graduation rates, with 68.9% having "no basis of comparison." For both two- and four-year students, the percentage of remedial vs. non-remedial graduation rates was "better" in only a small percentage of cases (Abraham, 60).

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argued for "instructional packages" designed to "individualize" instruction (19), since students "need to know what they are expected to learn (objectives), why (relevance or value), and where the program will lead them" (1973, 88). Deegan, Tillery and Associates predicted that in the "fifth generation" (the mid '80s to the mid '90s) of community college service, "computers and other forms of technology have a vivid future in developmental education" so much so that "one inner city community college in California reports that student reading skills can jump five academic years in one semester through the use of a computer system" (1985, 116).

The change in thinking about the unique needs of remedial students was not confined to an all-encompassing faith in technology alone to solve these problems. The recognition of the existence of students with different needs and the proposals for new methodologies to meet those needs became the new challenge for an entire generation of educators and scholars, and created a massive growth industry in publications that focused primarily on methodology (for examples, see Maxwell 1979; Roueche and Snow 1977; Moore 1970; and Vaughn 1983). Adult students with reading and writing problems were seen as having different needs than children struggling to learn to read and write; they didn't learn sequentially, nor did the methods of instruction used in the past necessarily "catch"

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the second time around (Lieberman and Cohen 1982). There was also great concern that the failure of students in regular "open access" classes that led to the phenomenon of the "revolving door" be addressed through active intervention on the part of admissions personnel, counselors, and others either by referral and even required involvement at a "learning center," (see, for example, the experience of Miami-Dade Community College, as discussed by Friedlander 1984; and Roueche and Baker 1987) or through entrance assessment (testing) and appropriate placement (see Rounds and Anderson 1984), or both. The use of entrance tests to screen G.I.s had begun on a large scale after World War II, but then subsided during the '60s open admissions era in response to charges of ethnic and racial bias. But perceived declines in ACT and SAT scores during the '70s led many to believe a crisis was at hand and that a lack of testing would be "unfair" to students, that it was setting them up to fail. The solution then ironically became more testing. If testing had shown poor academic performance (whether it was biased or not had not remained a popular issue), then the answer was more testing so that students could work on raising their test scores so they could succeed in college. Testing simultaneously became the means of identifying the problem and a key to the solution to the problem, and most convenient of all, the question of standards was moved outside of the institution. It is

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interesting to note that the most popular college placement test now used for writing is the ACT-English test, produced by the same people whose documentation of decline helped to create such a concern in the first place (Abraham 1987).

As the concern over methodology and administration intensified, the "needs" of students began to be discussed in more detailed terms. Non-traditional students were seen to have more than simply "academic" needs. During the '70s, the "I'm OK, you're OK" decade, the individual "growth and development" model gradually became much more influential. "Affective outcomes" or "attitudes, feelings beliefs, and values" (Roueche 1980, 32) were judged to be of equal importance to the acquisition of skills or abilities. Clowes describes the developmental model as having "its genesis in the work of human development theorists who articulated a concept of development meaning 'to evolve the possibilities of' or 'to promote the growth of'" (1982, 5). Remediation had aimed to "help" those who were lacking, who were deficient to the point of debilitation. Program administrators had aimed to "make up for" this deficiency, by supplanting the language, dialects, and culture of these students with that of their own. The oppressive and dictatorial nature of the remedial model as it was used in many different learning environments was formally recognized in the 1974 document drafted by a group of individuals within the Conference on College Composition and

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Communication. "Students' Right to Their Own Language" was accepted by C.C.C.C. but eventually rejected by the National Council of Teachers of English as promoting an "anything goes" atmosphere. However, those who drafted the document believed that there was nothing that made the language and dialect of a privileged class of teachers inherently superior to the language and dialects of non-traditional students. The long struggle toward recognizing "diversity" can perhaps be seen as beginning around this time, since many clearly had become uncomfortable with the idea of remediation as it was then being defined. "Developmental" education was in this sense the perfect metaphor for articulating a compromise⁵ between warring factions of writing teachers, since students could be seen as beginning with "individual differences" that were "positive" and "enriching" rather than debilitating, but still progressing towards "growth and change for the individual" (Clowes, 5) which could still be construed in terms of internalizing the language and dialects of the privileged. Moreover,

⁵"Compromise" constructs these developments in a positive, constructive sense. Another equally valid perspective is that "developmental" programs contributed to defusing the tension and avoiding the conflict created by the Students' Rights resolution, since both were being scrutinized at the same time. Rather than examine the details of "edited American English" against the non-standard dialects of non-traditional students, developmental programs can be seen to have internalized traditional standards in such a way that made it *more* difficult to examine or question them, because they were no longer the central focus in "developmental" programs.

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"developmental" education encapsulated a wider range of objectives than remedial programs. As Clowes puts it, "The student development model attempts to bring the student-support and academic functions of a college together to assist students in becoming *fully functioning adults* (5, my emphasis). The glaring assumption here is that students cannot really become fully grown adults until they attend college or at least read and write with college-level proficiency. "Developmental" education conceived in this way is still clearly anchored in the remedial model, with a cursory acknowledgement that the student "as a person" does have some value. More importantly, for those inclined to associate "developmental" with the conventional concept of deficiency, "developmental education" served to preserve the control of the institution to define the values and character of language and knowledge in higher education. Any objections to this control would be met by those whose primary interest was in maintaining "standards" and who would be happy to see developmental education done away with entirely. The preservation of both developmental education in the educational hierarchy and traditional institutional values was accomplished by turning education into an "organic" process, with students' progress modeled on the growth of plants, or if we think in terms of "fully functioning," developmental education becomes a repair shop for slightly broken people. There was no room for a debate

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over whether the term "developmental" was an insufficient response to "remedial," because at that time "developmental" represented a compromise between remediation and no remediation. The terms of the debate left little room to criticize the compromise.

Was the medical model of remediation successfully transformed by the adoption of the term "developmental?" For McGrath and Spear it is less a matter of a complete transformation to a more "humane" or "affective" approach in these programs, and more a matter of adding on another objective or activity to already existing objectives/activities, so that developmental education became "a matter of skills acquisition or personal expression" (1987, 17). These two value systems, which ideally could be made complementary objectives, are described by Freire and Macedo as the "utilitarian" approach, on the one hand, where schools are responsible for disseminating skills and students master "basics," and the "romantic" approach, on the other, where "reading is the fulfillment of self and a joyful experience" (1987, 146-8). One assumption of both the approaches is that remedial/developmental students don't have the ability to deal with complex problems or opinions (except for relatively "simple" personal expression), and that complexity under any circumstances must therefore be "broken down" into manageable bite-sized pieces of information or simple assignments. Richardson et al. (1983)

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labeled this process "bitting" and argued that such practices contributed to the erosion of standards in higher education.

McGrath and Spear take up the erosion of standards argument by claiming that "developmental" education then became confined to thinking dualistically in terms of "skills" or "content" in order to preserve standards that were supposedly eroding. The skills agenda is defined by contexts which are "rule-governed" so that

'correctness' or 'rightness' is conceived orthographically, syntactically, or computationally ...at higher levels what counts is correct argumentation, or analysis. Pedagogy associated with 'skills' instruction relies very heavily on repetition and practice, 'drill' work with 'problems', and memorization of rules (1991, 69).

Those who valued the skills agenda typically justified their classroom activities by depending on educational psychology, especially the explanations of cognitive developmental theorists grounded in the developmental stage models of Piaget and Vygotsky. According to McGrath and Spear, the influence of cognitive psychology was such that classroom teachers misappropriated "developmental" stages of the mind by assuming that basic linguistic and computational skills could be "mapped" onto a linear sequence, thereby facilitating cognitive development in fixed, prescribed ways. By relying on cognitive psychology, the skills agenda "dissolves the social and cultural dimensions of education into aggregates of individual behavior" (1991, 64) and

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reinforces the ideology of "individualism" (the heroic individual acting alone) that can be traced back to 18th century liberalism. The skills agenda rationally took as its pedagogical ideal a focus on "individualized instruction." McGrath and Spear describe some teachers' dependence on individualized instruction to explain and solve student "deficiency" problems. Students with "learning problems" are best served in cognitive isolation, rather than "immersed" in the general academic culture because they may be at a different point in the "sequence" than others. Developmental or remedial education has historically been seen as greatly influenced by these ideas so that student isolation is a common pedagogical tenet that organizes the structure of many programs.

The reduction of developmental education to "skills" development and an implied "service" provided to other disciplines can then be seen as either complementing or obscuring the other half of McGrath and Spear's model of developmental education -- the "content" agenda. "Content" is represented by three categories: cultural literacy, critical literacy, and personal development. Cultural literacy in this view includes not only Matthew Arnold's "the best that is thought and said," as embraced by E. D. Hirsch and others, but any approach to education that presents "'knowledge' as facts about the world" (McGrath and Spear, 71) in an authoritative and confident manner.

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"Critical literacy" is then framed in relation to cultural literacy as not simply the acquisition of knowledge, but the acquisition of the ability to acquire more knowledge. McGrath and Spear see critical literacy as grounded in the scientific tradition of actively seeking answers to the "puzzles" of life. "Personal development" takes its influence from the humanities and favors the sort of personal, moral, and social growth model discussed earlier. The sense of inevitability inherent in "personal development" objectives is complicated, however, by the historical reality of 19th century Romanticism and the rejection of isolated empiricism that led to an interpretive, hermeneutical, and dialogic approach to what constitutes knowledge (73-76). For McGrath and Spear, these historical discontinuities lead to "the confusion of agenda" in academic culture in general that is especially incomprehensible to non-traditional students. Because individual teachers value different aspects of the canonical model at different times for often unexamined and/or unexplained reasons, these authors argue that students

cannot but ultimately decide that academic life has no unity beyond the idiosyncratic requests of individual teachers. For many that is what mass secondary education has predisposed them to believe anyway, that their real task is impressions management, their real goal grades (78).

Although the "cultural content" argument might be easily co-opted by those favoring a standardized, homogenous curriculum, McGrath and Spear describe a chaos of values and

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knowledge paradigms in order to argue for a radical historicizing of all constructions of knowledge in the academy and to suggest that until these constructions are better understood by both educators and students, non-traditional students will continue to be "disarticulated" from the norms of academic life. The assumption is that if students understand "the nature of these communities" and "the intellectual styles and practices which constitute them" (79), they will be better prepared to join these communities. "Understanding" and "joining" higher education communities are seen as acts of assimilation realized in a linear fashion. One cannot "join" until one "understands" the community, which is the implied responsibility of informed educators. In this sense, McGrath and Spear are guilty of their own brand of academic elitism, since the educational establishment is perceived as ineffectively articulating a better understanding of itself and its purpose to students. The implication is that if educators just got their act together, they would be able to "present" their knowledge more confidently and coherently and students and everyone else would better understand what needs to be done. McGrath and Spear's implied assumption of agreement concerning higher education's goals and values is troubling given their other important historical and institutional insights.

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Other important factors influencing the objectives and content of developmental education include social, political, and economic forces. Since developmental programs lacked prestige and were not yet accepted as a permanent part of the available curricula during the 1970s, they can also be seen as working their way through an identity crisis, offering what McGrath and Spear (1991) describe as a "chaos of individual teacher values" from "watered down" regular courses to isolated "bits" of information to a combination of skills agenda activities and objectives constructed as "individualized" curricula. Developmental educators were also influenced by other outside political movements, such as "basic skills" arguments, and always by the directive to prepare the underprepared for traditional, academic work.

The economics of developmental education has also been the focus of debate. Cohen (1987) devoted time and energy to defending developmental education from those on the Right who argued that the public should not have to pay twice to teach someone how to read and write. Cohen argued for the use of paraprofessionals, without understanding how costs for various services added up.⁶ Bullock *et al.* concluded

⁶As in all areas, cost is certainly relative. One of the most expensive of all curricula at community colleges are vocational educational courses, which require special equipment, materials, large amounts of space and lots of "individualized" attention. Piland's study (1983) concluded that per credit hour remedial funding (\$38.40) was below the average for both liberal arts (\$41.07) and vocational

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that developmental programs are actually very cost-efficient, making use of student aides, paraprofessionals, and part-time faculty (33).

In fact, it seems entirely possible that these programs "process" students in such a way that is at least cost effective and, in the long run, even profitable. But as Callahan has argued, "profitable" does not necessarily mean "better." As knowledge is reconstructed along the lines of "skills" or a linear process of "growth" or "development," the administration or facilitation of this knowledge can become de-skilled. Standardized tests and curricula are particularly useful in helping policy makers outline these skills and development, and transfer authority from the teacher to those who make the bigger decisions and create tests and curricula (see Chapter VIII for examples of books that "teach to the test"). Professionally educated teachers learn how to make decisions that will help students in different kinds of situations. Aides, assistants, and paraprofessionals follow orders and carry out pre-determined learning plans. Taking decisions about curriculum away from teachers can make the "knowledge" associated with developmental education as a discipline mechanized and even trivialized as it becomes determined by models of efficiency and economic and political expediency (See also Apple, Chapter 7).

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Criticism of developmental education has played an important and constructive role in questioning the legitimacy and mission of these programs in their brief history. Those on the Right have criticized developmental education for lowering standards and expanding the role of higher education beyond its traditional function of training and educating the best and the brightest. Those on the Left have criticized it for limiting access to higher education and contributing to inequality by offering people false expectations and serving the interests of the powerful. What both perspectives share is an assumption that both the institution and the program within that institution should be at the center of the debate, that what they do is of fundamental importance, and perhaps most significantly, that academic knowledge has intrinsic value and is a force for personal change. The social conditions that lure students to college in order to "better" themselves are all but ignored, along with the knowledge they bring with them. The sense of self-importance that leads to a preoccupation with "the right techniques" also characterizes the mission of many publishers who produce books used in developmental education. There is less of a sense of what the *student* should do (although the student is likely to be told to do plenty) and more of a sense of responsibility that publishers can and should "do it all." Criticism of

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developmental education has, at best, been limited to a debate between insiders who believe their own ways of knowing are the best for their students. What makes their "chaos" of values problematic is not that it is inherently "chaotic," as McGrath and Spear claim, but that the "chaos" of debate is so limited, both in terms of participants and subjects of debate. Criticism of developmental education on the basis of poor methodologies, poor administration, exacerbation of social inequality, and loss of standards all preserve the responsibility of the institution to "deal" with any and all problems and "make things right." But problems will never be made right until those who own the "problems" also play a central role in owning the "solutions." Critics, teachers, and textbook makers too often depend on students to see problems and solutions in *their way*, rather than involve students in problematizing all forms of language and knowledge, including the language and knowledge of the teacher or the textbook. Whether the focus is on providing better technology, better "articulation" with other programs, better intervention efforts, or even better ways of helping people to help themselves, providing a specific product, service, or function serves to reinforce institutional, program, or teacher legitimacy, without necessarily helping students to understand the circumstances of their struggle.

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An alternative form of legitimacy can be found in the argument for a more democratic education (see Wood in Beyer and Apple 1988). If teachers, scholars, and publishers became more "democratic" by offering students a more active role in the construction of the knowledge they and the institution come to own, students' power and responsibility would increase while the power and responsibility of the teacher or administrator might be reduced to that of a "facilitator" of knowledge or a "guide" to producing knowledge. The privileged status of the institution/program to solve any and all problems would be de-emphasized. What schools and programs would provide would be more choices and fewer requirements, and the "chaos" of values McGrath and Spear worry about would increase. To ensure order and control, institutions systematize their approach to knowledge, most obviously in the form of disciplines, but also in the form of disciplinary structures, such as courses, which focus study, and syllabi, which focus objectives. A certain amount of order and focus are obviously necessary in order to achieve coherence and structure, but a fundamentally important issue in developmental education is when and how order and focus do a disservice to students because they have come to serve functions other than coherency and structure.

It is with the issue of order and control within institutional and social contexts that I begin to examine

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developmental or basic writing textbooks. Developmental reading programs rely on commercially-prepared materials more often than any other type of material, and the overall amount of materials is limited (Bullock, et al. 1990, 42, 48). Survey data (Chapter II) indicate that commercial materials are an important, even major, determinant of instruction and mission. But the social context in which textbooks are used is extremely important. Apple has argued that textbooks "de-power" and "em-power" teachers and students at different moments or even at the same time, and that the "politics" of a book is not "written on its brow forever and a day," but instead "depends on the network of social and ideological relations in which it participates" (1991, 9). The history and debates within developmental education suggest that in many programs, student involvement and decision making has often been made secondary to other institutional concerns such as legitimacy and structure, or to a network of relations that defines students solely in terms of their "needs" and teachers in terms of their status as caretakers of privileged forms of language. But there is one more historical/ideological context which must be "unpacked" in order to appreciate the uses and content of these books. That context is the more general history of the effects of particular twentieth century educational trends and reforms on the teaching of writing in educational institutions.

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Chapter V

EDUCATIONAL TRENDS AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

To study history is not to amass information, but to use information in constructing a vivid picture of how and why men did thus and so; achieved their successes and came to their failures.

-- John Dewey, 1900

Nineteenth Century Background

Understanding the institutionalization of the teaching of writing and the development of Composition Studies as a discipline offers important insights into why writing is taught at all in developmental education programs. Luke (as cited in Altbach 1991, 203) and Kaestle (1991) discuss 15th century literacy programs in Sweden, for example,¹ that focused exclusively on reading instruction for the entire population to the exclusion of writing instruction. How did both reading *and* writing instruction come to be privileged in educational institutions in this country and re-emphasized in developmental programs? In order to answer that question, historically situated institutional and

¹Between 1660 and 1720, the Protestant church in Sweden initiated a successful literacy campaign that raised reading levels (primarily to read the bible) in an overwhelmingly agrarian society (Kaestle, 15).

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political developments must be understood. Applebee (1984) and Graff (1987) describe the beginnings of English study in the second half of the 19th century as rooted in the so called "classical" tradition that, as Hegel put it, valued "the works of the ancients [which] contain the most noble nourishment of the human spirit in the most noble form" (as qtd. in Graff, 29). The nourishment of the human spirit was "inherently bound up with the grammar and etymology of the languages in which these works were written" (29). Along with the then-popular doctrines of "mental discipline" and "faculty psychology," a bond was forged between the study of English and the study of "classical" languages, which legitimized the study of the English language, previously perceived as being "too easy" and as having no significant body of knowledge (Applebee 1984). The English language was therefore first studied as the "classics" had been: with an emphasis on grammar, etymology, rhetoric, logic, elocution, history, biography, and "theme" writing (Graff, 36). The domination of Scottish Common Sense Realism in the 19th century (see Berlin 1984), meant that figures such as George Campbell, Hugh Blair, and Richard Whately were turning away from the "classical" model as defined by Aristotle which privileged deductive reasoning, and towards a more empirically-minded, "scientific" privileging of inductive thought. Experience, not rationality, became popular in the conservative, clergy-dominated colleges of 19th century

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America, and the "style" of one's presentation, the language one chose, became the means of reproducing that experience and effectively persuading one's audience (Berlin, 8).

Literary studies were secondary to what Graff has called the "oratorical culture" of this period (36). However, in the second half of the 19th century, several developments turned the emphasis from oratory to composition. One of the most important of these developments was the increasingly widespread availability of print materials of all kinds, from the McGuffey readers and spellers to newspapers, and other popular forms of journalism. The expansion of railroads and the growth of cities meant people were less isolated, and print was a further means of diminishing that isolation (see Kliebard 1986; Applebee 1984). But perhaps most important in educational institutions was what Applebee has described as a national concern to produce a "unified" culture which would address the ethical concern of forging a common moral standard for the "good" of the country.

Literary studies had previously been undertaken as an historical or biographical exercise, but with the unification efforts of Harvard's Committee of Ten in 1892, the American literary canon was born and a common national literary heritage had begun to be defined. Harvard established the first written composition course in 1873 (Harvard Composition). The new composition course required "the writing of themes on subjects to be taken from such

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works of standard authors as shall be announced from time to time" (as qtd in Graff, 44). Enhanced by the publication of cheap annotated "classics" in the 1880s, the institutional marriage of composition to literary analysis cemented the legitimacy of English instruction (if not English as a discipline). By the end of the 19th century, English was well on its way to being a discipline in its own right, not simply a "handmaiden" (Applebee) to classical philology as it was at mid-century.

Twentieth Century Reform Movements

In the 20th century, a complex network of educational movements must be understood in order to appreciate the values and knowledge put forward by developmental education writing instructors and texts. A significant beginning point in this network of relations is the development of specific curriculum manifestos at the turn of the century. Kliebard (1986) identified four primary influences: the humanists, or "guardians of an ancient tradition tied to the power of reason and the finest elements of the Western cultural heritage" (27), and thus defending classical philology, against which three reform movements vied for control. The first was a movement led by G. Stanley Hall, known as the "child-study" movement which valued reform based on "a natural order of development in the child" (28). This movement may be seen as paving the way for the different developmental stage theories of Piaget and

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Vygotsky, but was inclined towards what Kliebard calls "romantic ideas about childhood" (28), including the bizarre "culture-epoch" theory which paralleled the development of the child and the "development" of humanity towards "higher" forms of civilization. Another reform movement was the "social efficiency" educators, who, like all three reform movements, were captivated by a faith in science to resolve difficult questions, but who were primarily concerned with emulating a scientific management approach to education (see Callahan 1962). It is this movement that Kliebard argues had the most profound influence in this century, and it is the specific values of this movement that are of major importance in understanding the more general "skills" model often valued in developmental education as well as the more specific "skills" format in certain developmental writing textbooks (see Chapters IV and VIII). The last of the 20th century reform movements was what Kliebard calls the "social meliorists," who saw the schools "as a major, perhaps the principal, force for social change and social justice" (29). Rather than focus exclusively on the child or child psychology or streamline inefficiency in the existing order, the social meliorists saw the schools as having the power to create a new social order. Their heyday was during the '30s before the beginning of World War II. Although the legacy of the social efficiency reformers is perhaps most apparent today, Kliebard is quick to point out that "In the end, what

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became the American curriculum was not the result of any decisive victory by any of the contending parties, but a loose, largely unarticulated and not very tidy compromise" (29). The idea of an "untidy compromise" is perhaps as relevant to the development of English instruction and the formation of English as a discipline as it is to these more general curriculum movements.

Shaping English as a Subject to be Studied

The Committee of Ten (1892) brought together what Applebee kindly refers to as the "varied" studies of language, literature, and composition, united at that time by the belief in education as "mental discipline." North has pointed to Applebee's thoughts about the effects of this consolidation and is worth citing at length:

The Committee of Ten...brought together a number of disparate subjects, each with its own body of rules and formal subject matter, and called them "English." Beyond the cliché that each of these studies deals with language, they have no real unity as *subject matter*... whether the model for the educational process has been growth in language, the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), or the three basic disciplines (language, literature, and composition) some aspect of what teachers considered to be important has been lost...Inevitably, the edges of the subject have blurred and wavered, creating for the teachers of English a perpetual crisis of identity (Applebee, 245-46; also cited in North 10, original emphasis).

What North goes on to discuss are the effects such an identity crisis would have on the development of English and Composition studies during this century. The implication is that as more compromises are made about the purpose and

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content of one's discipline, the more susceptible that discipline becomes to other influences, including outside social and political forces that would shape that knowledge for their own benefit. Examples of such forces more pertinent to the first half of the 20th century have been discussed by Applebee, North, and Kliebard, while discussions by Shor (1986) and Berlin (1987) provide insight into the post-war years. Several recurring themes, values, or guiding influences are worth discussing, however, because of their ideological manifestations in developmental education and writing textbooks.

Scientific Management

Perhaps the most influential of these movements is the dominance of "scientific" knowledge and paradigms during this century. In the first half of the 20th century, no educational theorist or practitioner (with the exception of the humanists) dared to defy the unquestioned benefits of a scientific approach to both creating and disseminating knowledge. Even John Dewey, who viewed the child "as a striving active being capable of intelligent self direction" (Kliebard 56) and the "work of the school [as] directed toward what is of value to the child in the present" (63) valued the methodical, empirical, and analytical methods of scientific inquiry. Against a construction of knowledge as static, rational, and above all received from an authoritative few, the scientific construction of knowledge

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One of the most important developments at the beginning of the 20th century was the influence of "scientific management" or "Taylorism" that was originally applied to factory production as a means of eliminating all "unnecessary" movements in the interest of speed and efficiency, and which was embraced by educators like Franklin Bobbitt and W. W. Charters as the new "scientific curriculum." Raymond Callahan argues that "lower costs" and "efficiency" were much easier to define and achieve than more nebulous terms like "finest product" (educational or otherwise) or "excellence" (1962, 244). Callahan argues that in the twentieth century, the growing public suspicion towards bureaucratic institutions in general, the increasing prestige of business, and the not yet fully credentialed "profession" of education were all forces working in favor of "efficiency." So both the structure of work and the sort of knowledge to be valued at the beginning of the century were clearly being redefined in favor of a new "practical" knowledge. The sort of "classical" education previously available only to the few would not survive the American educational fervor for equal access to schooling and the new

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"scientific" and "professional" careers. "Practical" education focused increasingly on the ability to perform technical or "functional" skills rather than the more "liberal" or "cultural" "behaviors," and clearly influenced the "skills agenda" that would become a part of developmental education.

Once specific skills were identified, they could also be measured. Bobbitt was particularly adept at combining what had been described as individual variation in ability with scientific management ideas and applying them to the curriculum, so that people "should not be taught what they will never use" (Kliebard, 99) since that constituted a "waste" of resources. At about the same time, 19th century faculty psychology was being replaced by the beginnings of an educational psychology grounded in models of efficiency that depended on accurate measurement. The "mental measurement movement" (Kliebard, 105) allowed for assessment and prediction that would channel students into their appropriate roles in society. At one extreme, this led to ideas like those of educational sociologist David Snedden, later to become Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts. Snedden and many others believed that student abilities would be manifested at the junior high level, and that this required the curriculum to be differentiated in ways so minute as to require a curriculum constructed of "peths," or tiny units of which a spelling word would be an example (as

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cited in Kliebard, 112). These "peths" would be organized into "strands" that would define "adult life performance practices" that would be used to prepare students in careers from streetcar motorman to farmer to homemaker. The methodical and most importantly empirically measurable construction of knowledge according to small bite-sized pieces is crucially important to understanding skills instruction in developmental education and what would later be labeled "bitting" in community college instruction (see Chapter IV). By focusing on measurement (and later on behaviors), perhaps the most important legacy of scientific management, *objectives*, would effectively reconstruct educational thought in terms of the *effects* or the end *product* of education (to be valued in the future) rather than the student's current condition and needs. These effects could be seen as value-neutral, or uniformly positive, since they were effectively separated from the student's current status and social environment. Since they were small and since there were so many of them, their political and ideological content was simultaneously diffused and obscured. However, their purpose needed always to be legitimized by their connection to the preparation of the student for the future. According to the social efficiency model, students were to be prepared for a future in both the workplace *and* the community, so that while "units" might be completed for career preparation, they

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This historical emphasis on abstracted rewards to be received at some future date and the measurement of pre-determined and de-politicized objectives reappears in the comments of basic writing students who "like worksheets better" and teachers who focus primarily on developmental education as preparation for academic work and future careers (see Chapter VI).

Patriotism, Pragmatism, and Practice

While the Committee of Ten Report endeavored to bring together language, literature, and composition as the study of English in the colleges and high schools, in 1918, Clarence Kingsley, a Brooklyn Math teacher, authored the Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education or Cardinal Principles Report, which turned elementary and secondary studies explicitly away from "academic subjects" (Applebee 1984; Kliebard 1986) and toward curricular goals that focused on life outside of work. While the Committee of Ten had argued for a high school curriculum that would be the same for both college and non-college bound students, the American college experience was nevertheless being gradually and steadily differentiated (see Chapter III), so that even though more

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people were going to college,² the community college curriculum was also being redefined to conform to the sorts of "practical knowledge" associated with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which had appropriated federal monies for "occupational" education (Cohen and Brawer 1989, 21). The objectives of vocational education at all levels were being defined and debated, but the consensus was to move away from the perceived elitism associated with a nineteenth century education. Thus the Cardinal Principles Report was an attempt to facilitate the following objectives of a non-elitist general education at the high school level: health, command of fundamental processes, use of leisure, and ethical character. Applebee argues that this promoted the independence of the high school "to meet varying backgrounds of students while at the same time preserving "a reasonable uniformity of aims and a body of common culture" (66). What Applebee does not address is the new emphasis on education at all levels to influence not only the lives of people inside, but also outside the workplace, in the same way that Henry Ford was at that time screening assembly line workers so as to hire only good family men (i.e., married and sexually satiated) who were not drunkards or otherwise troublemakers.

²Koos cites the existence of 20 junior colleges in 1909 and 170 ten years later (as qtd. in Cohen and Brawer 1989, 10).

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Meanwhile, literature study, not yet the dominant leg of the three part language, literature, composition tripartite of English studies, increased its legitimacy by becoming a means of instilling patriotism and national heritage, and as Applebee notes, was more inspirational than methodological (or genre oriented).³ Social efficiency reformers believed that literature study was secondary in importance to more "practical" language uses and study, although framing literature study in terms of patriotic indoctrination and nationalism was probably seen by some as consistent with the aims of social efficiency reforms to produce ideally docile workers. Nevertheless, reading (non-literature materials), writing, speaking, and listening would come to be the "skills" that those with the power of the purse strings would see as most important for the rest of the century (perhaps the reason why developmental education students don't study "Literature"), even as those who taught English and worked to define it as an academic discipline would increasingly privilege literature study as their most important endeavor.

There are three other interesting educational trends that developed during the 1920s and 1930s that suggest

³Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* (1938) was a reaction against such unexamined inspirational literary interpretations and can also be seen as foreshadowing the close analysis and "unnumberable separate responses to individual works of art" (Applebee) that would be the hallmark of the New Criticism of the '40s.

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interesting influences on what would become the curricular control of developmental education. One is the continued influence of science, which by the '30s was translating what had previously been teacher controlled objectives and measured effects into more rigid and externally defined "units" of study that would eventually lead to "objective" testing.⁴ Although it is easy to imagine that such curricular objectives might be advanced solely by those interested in strengthening the existing social structure, Applebee notes that both conservatives and liberals initially liked objective tests: conservatives because they reinforced standards and discipline, liberals because they could be used to diagnose individual student needs (and supposedly help to meet those needs).

The same sort of ideological misappropriation surrounds another popular movement of the '20s and '30s, the education as "experience" movement. While educators like Dewey might see educational "experience" as being "the work of the school...toward what is of value to the child in the present" (Kliebard, 63), "experience" could also be interpreted by social efficiency reformers as the justification for an anti-academic, pro-functionalist preparatory education. English studies could be the "experience" of writing one's own thoughts and ideas (what

⁴Perhaps one of this century's earliest efforts at "de-skilling" teachers.

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would much later be known as "finding one's voice") or it could be the "experience" of "intimate contact with ideals, beauty, and morality...needed to equip our citizens to use their freedom wisely," what would eventually come to be thought of as "cultural literacy" (National Interest and the Teaching of English 1961, as cited in North, 11).

A third example of an educational concept appropriated by those with different intentions than the concept's originators is individualized instruction, a critical element in most development education programs. With the beginnings of "programmed instruction" in the '20s, such as the Dalton Plan or the Winnetka Plan (see Kliebard, 211 and Applebee), individualized instruction was seen as an alternative to recitation methods, and defined in terms of children working individually on assigned material, rather than the more Dewey-esque idea of children expressing their individuality.

What all three of these trends had in common was the tendency to be represented in ideologically favorable ways by very different interest groups (similar to what seems to be happening to "process" writing as a trend today). Rather than directly oppose particular ideas or values, those ideas or values could be reformulated to conform to existing, even oppositional, ideas and values. Since trends in education (and education itself as a focus of study) were being discussed in print form and read by a wider readership than

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in the 19th century, their meanings were certainly subjected to a more varied range of interpretations and made more amenable in relation to their wider dispersal. To have one's values and beliefs widely known might actually be a disadvantage to those who would pay the price by finding those values and beliefs diluted or interpreted in contradictory ways. Although academics are as certain to complain about this now as they did earlier in this century, the general advantage of an institutionalized location for concentrating and legitimizing one's ideas has played an important role in the formation of this century's ideas and values about writing, which is why legitimation has been so important to both community colleges and developmental education programs.

From Discipline Building to Process Construction

As important as educational trends and the power of special interests are to an understanding of the privileging of writing in all schools, equally important is an understanding of what was going on within "the academy" in terms of legitimizing a select body of knowledge. Graff showed how the national concern over the formulation of a unified culture and common moral standards translated into the professionalization" of literary studies in the university [as a] means by which 'the old elite and their allies' sought 'to impose middle class American likemindedness' on a heterogeneous, urban, working class population (1987, 71).

The privileged academic culture was racist and male-centered (for examples, see Graff, 37, 71, 77) and was meant to complement the social efficiency model. Measurement, skills, units, and all the rest were not meant to be reduced through academic "expertise" in cultural matters; instead, the replacement of philology with modern literary study was "less interested in reducing traditional drill work than in demonstrating that their own subject lent itself to it" (73). The analytical and "scientific" approach to knowledge could be applied by "gradationed stages" so that study of the English language should

rise from a somewhat formal examination of phraseology and structure to a real philological study of the tongue in its content and its great linguistic changes...and that this should in turn lead to the study of literature and style (T. H. Hunt in 1883, as qtd. by Graff, 77-8).

The model of instruction put forward here is a simple to complex naturalized progression which parallels that theory of literacy instruction in developmental education advocating movement from "simple" phonics instruction to words, then sentences, then paragraphs. The perceived "complementary" nature of the "skills agenda" and the "content agenda," as described by McGrath and Spear, also parallels this model. By making the work of literary scholars in the newly-forming English departments the logical culmination of a precise, regulated, scientifically-determined progression of language instruction, the specialized activities of an elite few could be made to fit

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the totality of a larger politically and economically privileged structure.⁵ In this way, the model of knowledge as acquired bit by bit and accumulated over a lifetime from grade one to graduate school could be both consistent and uninterrupted. Because the general university economy steadily expanded throughout the twentieth century, and virtually exploded after World War II, the "impractical" study of literature could be economically justified while also being made to seem a natural, and hence functional, aspect of instruction in higher education.⁶

The privileging of literary analysis over language and composition study did not, however, mean language and composition study were to fall into disfavor as classical philology had. It may have meant that in order for these two areas of English Studies to become legitimized, they would have to conform to the same methodological transformation based on close scientific inquiry that literary analysis had undergone as modeled at Johns Hopkins (then Harvard, Yale, and the University of Chicago) and

⁵Graduate instruction, for example, became modeled on the Johns Hopkins belief in extending even by minute accretions, the realm of knowledge; how to cooperate with other men in the prosecution of inquiry; and how to record in exact language, and on the printed page, the results attained (as qtd. by Graff, 57).

⁶ Perhaps more importantly, this construction of knowledge gave time and space to literary scholars to specialize and thereby legitimize English Studies as a discipline.

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manifested in the "close analysis" of New Criticism. Language study was made over in the scientific model as linguistics, but composition study would languish in the realm of what North called "lore" until the late '50s, when the more functional objectives of reading, writing, listening, and speaking began to be criticized for lack of "intellectual rigor." Reading lists were resurrected and discipline became the means by which Americans might successfully compete with the Soviets educationally. The important relationship here to the teaching of writing is that by connecting English study to national defense (as was done by the previously mentioned *National Interest* document and others, such as Vice-Admiral Rickover) English studies became solidified as "a fundamental liberal discipline, a body of specific knowledge to be *preserved* and *transmitted* rather than a set of skills or an opportunity for guidance and individual adjustment" (Basic Issues Conference 1958, as qtd. in Applebee 1984, my emphasis).

Federal expenditures in English acknowledged value in language and composition over literature due to their "skills value." North argues that modern Composition as a discipline (with a capital "C") was born in 1963 when Albert Kitzhaber addressed CCCC and challenged the membership to develop a "mode of inquiry" to control its own authority over composition knowledge (15). According to North, this marks the transition from "practice" as the field's dominant

research methodology to a more top-down model based in more "rigorous" inquiry as modeled by the sciences (17).

Although the separation of practice from research is only now being reconsidered through various teacher-as-researcher arguments (see, for example, Mohr and MacLean, 1987 and Miller, 1990), the impact of what counts as knowledge in the teaching of writing was dramatically influenced by these beginnings in 1963. But there were other disputes that would obscure the research debate that were more philosophical and personal.

Although the call to "objectify" research into the teaching of writing through "scientific inquiry" may have begun in the late '50s and early '60s, within the English profession itself the philosophical differences over how to go about teaching writing were far from settled by this call. What Daniel Fogarty in 1959 labeled the "current-traditional" approach, Richard Young described in 1975 as a paradigm, or "disciplinary matrix" that placed

emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper (as qtd. by Stewart in Tate/Corbett).

Stewart describes the current-traditional approach/paradigm as a "critical study of the products of composing and an art of editing" (181). This approach to teaching writing has

been abbreviated over the years to signify the "product" approach to teaching writing, which Young argued

begins with the assumption that rhetoric [including writing] is primarily the art of presenting ideas and information, not generating them and that creative processes, which include the composing process, are not susceptible to conscious control by formal procedures (Tate/Corbett, 181).

At the heart of this view of teaching is a view of language and thought reminiscent of 19th century reactions against Aristotelean rationality that privileged experience and induction and that positioned language as stylistic presentation of one's preformed thoughts. This view of writing instruction allowed writing teachers (including developmental education teachers who teach writing) to become what Berlin (1984) refers to as "caretakers of the dialect of prestige" (72), especially their own middle or upper class dialect, and to raise "superficial correctness" to a new level of empirical validity (73).

The current-traditional perspective had, in fact, been naturalized in *textbooks* since the turn of the century. Crowley argues that an emphasis on product rather than invention allowed textbooks to arbitrarily shape a view of composition that had no ties to any other knowledge construct:

during the early years of the 20th century, current-traditional rhetoric became a self-generating textbook tradition that drew on...earlier contemporary works for inspiration. Its prescriptions, as definitively

delineated by the big four,⁷ became the subject matter of composition...since it had no ties to rhetorical theory -- let alone to logic or psychology or ethics or epistemology -- the textbook tradition became increasingly prescriptive...the longer it fed on itself...the more authoritative its prescriptions seemed (1990, 144).

Against the current-traditional or "product" view of writing instruction eventually emerged the desire to understand the writing process, or the stages a writer moves through as she transforms her ideas into the final written product. Conceived in this way, composition as a discipline with a legitimized method of inquiry could be researched in one of two ways -- either by examining the stages or steps in the transformation of ideas from imaginative spark to written product, or by examining the influence of rhetorical and social contexts or demands upon the process the writer goes through. The first method of inquiry led to the early dominance of psychological inquiry, grounded in the work of Piaget and Brunner and pioneered by the well-known case study approach of Emig (1971), which began the process of trying to figure out what goes on in writers' minds while they write. This approach was intensified in the early '80s through the protocol-analysis of Flower and Hayes (1980) which "mapped" the activities writers go through as they write and which Flower and Hayes described as the "cognitive

⁷ These authors produced some of the "most pedantic and intellectually poverty stricken examples of the [C-R] tradition": John Franklin Genung, Adams Sherman Hill, Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Villers Denney, and Barrett Wendell.

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processes" of "planning, translating, and reviewing."
"Cognitive" psychology, an extension of educational/
developmental psychology, saw the mind as operating through
a structure of sequences or processes that occurred in
developmental or cognitive stages and in response to its
environment. Language and thought interacted in
"distinctive" processes that writers were able to organize
or "orchestrate." These processes were hierarchical and
"highly embedded," and composing itself was a "goal directed
thinking process" guided by "the writer's own growing
network of goals." Writers also created their own goals as
a result of what they had learned through writing.

By organizing the knowledge about teaching writing
according to the "scientific" principles of cognitive
psychology, Composition as a discipline began organizing
itself according to a larger scientific meta-discourse that
assumed a fixed body of knowledge or "truths" could be
accumulated, bit by bit, until all of the pieces of the
puzzle were someday filled in, or at least enough pieces of
the puzzle were present to give us an idea of "the big
picture." In the case of cognitive psychology, these
"pieces" included the mind of the writer and the processes
this mind works through on its way to proficient writing.
While the research of the cognitive psychologists
contributed to an understanding of writing as non-linear or
recursive in nature, the irony is that this discovery was

made within a context that denied the recursive and non-linear nature of knowledge production itself while idealizing the writer and the writing situation. In this sense, psychological/cognitive research into the teaching of writing divorced language from meaning (knowledge) and writing from diverse contexts as the current-traditional paradigm had done before (for further criticism, see Holtzman and Cooper 1989, Hill 1990).

A second "process" alternative to the product or current-traditional approach to teaching writing has emphasized invention techniques which draw on the "new classical" idea of writing as a non-mystified art rather than science. This approach has focused on detailed models of what came to be known as pre-writing, as described in the linguistically-based research on tagmemics of Young (1976), or Winterowd (1981) or the pentad theory of Burke (1969), or the less dictatorial, occasion-setting approaches of Elbow (1973) or Macrorie (1980). Another angle on invention techniques more sympathetic to the values of the C-R paradigm has offered models by which the "received" ideas about style or arrangement inherent to the "product" approach can be transformed by more "generative" pedagogical activities that lead writers to acquiring and employing more complex "universal stylistic features" (Hirsch 1977). The most enduring of these has been the "sentence combining" instruction introduced by Francis Christensen (1967), where

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students combine "simpler" sentences to form more syntactically (and supposedly cognitively complex) sentences. Hirsch helped to reduced "style" to "relative readability" which has become a formulaic and mechanical element of textbook construction as it is interpreted through "readability formulas" (see Chapter VII).

Looking to the Future

Although the research exploring "invention" or "generative techniques" has done much to demystify how writing gets produced, as well as place needed emphasis on the writing process, it has also idealized the idea of process. One response to this problem has been what Berlin (1984) calls the "transactional" approach, emphasizing the active construction of a socially constructed reality through the interaction of the individual writer with her discourse community. This view serves as the basis of the "social" construction of writing, as described by Holtzman and Cooper (1989). For these authors, writing is "not merely a common system through which individual minds can communicate" but is also "a way of communicating with others- a social activity...located in the social world and, thus, is fundamentally structured by the shape of the environment" (x).

By making the production of writing fundamentally dependent on the writer's relationship to a specific "community" of readers, the invention process becomes

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contextualized and less generalizable. Cognitive processes are not idealized and analyzed along the lines of traditional scientific inquiry. Language and thought serve the construction of social "reality," but not simply as abstracted "tools". Language and thought become part of a dialectical process involving the interaction of diverse language constructions utilized by readers and writers in a localized, non-idealized material world. It is this emphasis on the social construction of meaningful writing experiences that I believe represents the current vanguard in the teaching of writing. However, a significant question for future inquiry may be whether this pedagogical perspective will be compromised by political and economic forces who see few avenues of investment or exploitation in such a highly localized and context-specific set of educational circumstances. It is also questionable whether writing seen as a social construction of meaning will be noticed at all by the textbook industry, which has such a major investment in teaching writing to a generalized, context-free population of basic writers. This investment must be seen as a result of writing conceived as a highly localized and abstracted set of correct procedures intended to assist students in their effort to emulate the writing of "great" authors. That their efforts are not expected to ever "measure up" does not prevent advocates of teaching writing from seeing this as a "democratic" impulse in the

same way community college organizers saw the differentiation of higher education as facilitating "democratization." Writing seems taught to "basic writers" in order to facilitate the impression that what basic writers write matters or will someday matter, even though it is unclear whether what these students write will ever significantly affect the quality of anyone's life.

Chapter VI

THE TEACHER INTERVIEWS: DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

In order to explore teacher attitudes, values, and concerns about textbooks in a more in depth, meaningful way than is possible with surveys alone, I conducted ten interviews ranging from 30 to 60 minutes with survey respondents who expressed interest in further discussion (for selection criteria of interviewees see Chapter II, and for transcripts of selected interviews see Appendix D). The objective of these interviews was not to explore any particular survey question in greater depth, but to allow respondents the opportunity to talk about the textbook issues that were important to them, especially in relation to the teaching of writing. Denzin (1978) identifies three types of interviews: the scheduled standardized, or oral questionnaire; the non-scheduled, or a variant of the oral questionnaire; and the non-standardized, where

general questions are to be addressed and specific information desired by the researcher are anticipated, but may be addressed during the interview informally in whatever order or context they happen to arise (Preissle-Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, 119).

These interviews fall into the non-standardized category.

My intention was to direct these conversations to the subject of writing textbook use, but to also encourage

teachers to discuss whatever circumstances of that use they considered important.

Common Concerns

Concerns and interests varied, but there was general agreement among these teachers (although not necessarily the survey respondents) that the teaching of writing in developmental programs was moving away from grammar intensive workbook approaches towards what many referred to as "real writing," the "process" approach, or an emphasis on "whole pieces of writing." However, this shift in values was being facilitated for different reasons and in different ways, which will be addressed in this chapter.

All of the teachers were also able to describe particular problems with specific texts. Most of the criticism was aimed at books which modeled workbook style formats and did not favor or model process approaches to teaching writing. Pedagogical problems discussed included the teaching of grammar, (e.g. how to construct sentences), providing appropriate rhetorical models, and meeting the needs of developmental students.

Finally, teachers often discussed the above issues in relation to their particular program goals or values, as well as the problems programs faced in realizing these values through textbooks or other instructional materials.

Methodology

Although this project does not purport to stand as a complete ethnographic study, qualitative and ethnographic research principles guide the data collection and analysis processes. In ethnographic studies,

data collection and analysis are inextricably linked...because the ethnographer may not know what questions to ask until initial impressions and perceptions have been analyzed and tentative conclusions...formulated (Preissle-Goetz and LeCompte, 165).

Thus, my discussion of the content of these interviews develops first and foremost as a result of the content of the interviews, not as a result of my own pre-formulated ideas about what categories are worthy of discussion.

Secondly, in ethnographic research,

theorizing is the general mode of thinking, upon which all analysis is built: perceiving; comparing; contrasting; aggregating, and ordering; establishing linkages and relationships; and speculating (Preissle-Goetz and LeCompte, 165).

My objective was therefore to search for areas of both agreement and disagreement among responses and to describe relationships and speculate as to their meaning. In the analysis of these interviews, I rely primarily on

analytic induction, or scanning the interview data for categories of phenomena and relationships among categories, then developing working typologies and hypotheses upon examination of these initial cases (Preissle-Goetz and LeCompte, 179).

This inductive technique is meant to generate theory that may be modified or refined on the basis of further case study.

The following general categories of analysis emerged as a result of these interviews: Student Needs, Program or Course Values and Goals, Shared Concerns and Dissatisfactions, Textbook Problems as They Relate to Students' Needs, and Textbook Problems in Modeling the Writing Process.

Findings

Student Needs: Problems and Solutions

Since program values and goals were often shaped in response to perceived student needs¹, teacher perceptions of those needs will be discussed first. Teachers addressed student needs primarily in terms of students' lack of familiarity and difficulty dealing with print, their inexperience at being able to think in particular ways or employ particular strategies, and their lack of confidence in and misunderstanding of academic expectations.

For some teachers, students' inexperience at dealing with the printed word led to a discomfort level which translated into a distrust of printed material, so much so that students were often uncomfortable with discussion formats where a clear right or wrong answer was not the norm. More than one teacher argued that developmental students have problems seeing visual features on the page,

¹"Individualized instruction" is an example of a developmental "student need" often accepted by teachers and administrators alike.

and need an uncluttered format with plenty of white space, visual organizers, and subheadings. Another explained that little experience with print materials meant students needed more of an opportunity to "hear familiar voices" through rhetorical models that encouraged students to both relate to issues of personal relevance and develop their own writing voices. This teacher sought out what she thought were the most current and accessible rhetorical models she could find to facilitate this, such as Ben Hamper's *Rivethead*.

The student's desire for a heavily structured learning experience with "correct" and "incorrect" answers also suggests the sort of personal insecurity and lack of confidence several teachers described as detrimental student characteristics. For some teachers, it was "hard to convince them [students] they can succeed." Students were said to enjoy exercises, but "their writing doesn't change" or they "don't respond [i.e., produce better writing] to traditional approaches." They are "able to find things in isolation, but if it's not the single or only thing they're looking for, they can't find it." Moreover, the general concern was that some students don't recognize this as a problem. One teacher told of a student who, at the end of the term or semester, told her that "I still don't understand nouns and verbs" and "I still like doing worksheets better." For this reason, this teacher argued that students "needed to see errors within a piece of

writing to give [them] the situation of editing their own papers." For some teachers, student lack of confidence due to inexperience was often underscored. Several argued that students "know lots if given the chance to talk" but that too often "no one asks them to think." For these teachers lack of the right *kind* of educational experience led to student lack of confidence and seemed inextricably linked to different expectations on the part of teachers and students. Teachers generally agreed that "doing it right" seemed to be defined in different ways for students than for teachers. While students valued surface correctness, teachers valued a more complex "correct" model of writing production, one that emphasized strategies, invention, and revision.

For one teacher, developmental students often lacked an awareness of "how they think" (and create). For another, they sometimes lacked the ability to employ strategies that would lead to "getting their ideas on paper." Teachers described student deficiencies as due to the following: differences between oral and written communication; because they "didn't understand the process;" because they "don't handle pre-draft (or pre-writing) activities thoroughly enough;" because their reading strategies were "too immature;" or because they needed "to become aware of how they think" (i.e., enhance "metacognitive skills"). Students were also said to sometimes "bring counter-productive attitudes" or were simply lazy.

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In order to address what they generally saw as student deficiencies or lack of awareness, teachers endorsed teaching strategies based on their perception of these student problems. For the teacher who saw students and their experiences as disconnected from academic life, the answer was to work to make reading and writing relevant to students' lives, primarily by helping them to see themselves as writers with important things to say, and by using that sense of an identity as a writer to facilitate their own methods for constructing readings of others. For most of these teachers, students were often seen as the victims of unsuccessful teaching practices from their past experiences. For example, students may have taken English classes that focussed exclusively on prescribed forms of grammar and/or literature, instead of creating their own readings and writings. The result was that students could work well with exercises but struggled to do what many programs and teachers saw as more important: the creation of whole pieces of writing that facilitated the need for self-expression.

Other teachers viewed solutions primarily in terms of heuristic or cognitive deficiencies. For example, one teacher said "students often don't know how to learn. We teach them how to know themselves, recognize their strengths, and change their behaviors." For this teacher, reading was "at the core" of a student's success, so

teachers in this program looked for textbooks that offered "state of the art strategies for how to think, with material that will create opportunities for students to apply thinking strategies also taught by the text."

For all of these teachers, students needed a variety of thinking and writing strategies to choose from when beginning to write. Teachers identified what they saw as common student problems resulting from the lack of strategies to choose from, including the tendency to draft too soon (so as to get it over with faster), not enough time spent on revision, a tendency to summarize rather than analyze due to an unfamiliarity with "response" writing, an inability to imbed sentences, string together "unconnected free standing modifiers," and a general inability to "put it all together."

Helping students write better then meant offering strategies that addressed these deficiencies. For those who saw the problem as drafting too soon, students needed more invention strategies and heuristics that would help them to have more things to say. For those who saw problems in the form of writing students chose (i.e., summary over analysis) the answer was to make students more comfortable with writing as a means of expressing their opinions and interacting with reading materials. For those who saw problems in terms of complex sentence construction, classroom activities such as sentence combining were most

useful. Although no teacher argued that these particular issues represented the only problems of developmental writing students, most teachers tended to privilege some one concern over all others, so that when they talked about ideal textbooks, a hierarchy of concerns emerged representing what they saw as the most valued textbook characteristics for teaching writing.

Program or Course Values and Goals

Teacher assessments and suggestions, as they grew out of their perceptions of student needs, tended to shape particular program structures and teaching methods. For example, those teachers who argued that basic writing students have not had opportunities in previous classes to read and write in diverse and meaningful ways, and who were often distrustful of print mediums, usually placed value on teaching writing "globally," often through portfolio assessment and the use of nonacademic response readings from newspapers and magazines.

From a different perspective, the teacher who suggested students need to be made aware of how they think (through metacognitive strategies), and who come to college not knowing how to learn, argued that students benefit most from reading courses before writing courses, and structured her writing program around separate writing and grammar labs that involved a lot of peer editing (i.e., reading) and opportunities to revise based on peer and tutorial

responses. This teacher favored the development of student writing through critical student and teacher readings of student writing. This approach, while socially inclusive, tended to be content exclusive, in contrast to "globally" portfolio-centered teachers who nurtured student writing by including marginally academic voices and content as rhetorical models and requiring revision of student writing that was dependent on the production of lots of writing (every class). In other words, for one teacher student writing got better as a result of increased confidence (a result of unconditional support) and practice. For the other, student writing got better when a variety of critical readers pushed writers to make it better, and when successful reading strategies were made central to the production of good writing.

For yet another teacher, student needs were addressed by facilitating an awareness of individual student learning styles. This meant that one of the most important first steps her program took was helping students to understand what "type" of learner they were. She described four types of learners. The first was the kind of student she described as a "traditional" learner. This student prefers to be given "the facts," often through a top-down authority structure, and usually prefers science and math. The second type of student often asks why she or he must learn a particular thing. This student needs to know the importance

of a body of knowledge before committing to it. The third type of student is a "hands on" learner, someone who must apply conceptual learning to a form of reality. This student likes to "work with it" (the material). The fourth and final type of student is the learner who needs lots of guidance and encouragement, and needs to apply information to different situations in order to "make it stick." This category, she said, includes many developmental students, and translates into a composition strategy involving the "piecing together" of different sentence parts in various combinations to "see" how to create complex sentences. For this teacher, working with and playing to student strengths or preferred ways of learning was a means of avoiding teaching practices grounded in models of deficiency.²

Shared Concerns and Dissatisfaction

Although program goals, values, and techniques of instruction were often different, teachers did share common concerns. One concern was a general dissatisfaction with the way traditional commercial textbooks have modeled and taught writing. Although this was most often expressed as a dissatisfaction with "workbook" approaches, several teachers expressed the desire to "get away from textbooks entirely"

²It is worth noting that in this case although students were encouraged to make use of "whole language" techniques that encouraged invented spellings, production of ideas, and the like, students did not tend to work together socially, since individual learning styles meant students needed to work on their own in their own ways.

in teaching writing, substituting newspaper or magazine material for textbooks as a source of reading students might respond to, and student notebooks for actual course content. Another teacher said, "I could do a better job with no textbook at all," including grammar instruction, since students could just as easily "invent the rule for why they did what they did" rather than look to a grammar handbook. This teacher noted that, "We're dealing with language; everyone has language. We could generate all our own rules in the course of the class." Yet another teacher observed that "just in the past year, it seems, have programs gotten away from letting the textbook run the course."

For another teacher, dependence on textbooks for instruction was related to the educational background of program faculty. Faculty not familiar with composition theory tended to "remediate from the bottom up, from simple to complex." This teacher tied textbook instruction to broader, developmental education problems in general. He spoke not just about problems with textbooks, but with the structure and objectives of developmental programs themselves. He expressed dissatisfaction with faculty ignorance of composition theory, arguing that many developmental teachers "come up" through the public schools, where "traditional" approaches to teaching writing still have a powerful influence. His alternative to traditional instruction methods was "sentence combining on an idea

level" so that students might "modify their thoughts while employing complex [grammatical] structures" and "cover grammar, but not in a traditional way."

For all of these teachers, process oriented concerns such as student generated ideas, development of student voices, and the production of writing meaningful to students, acted to facilitate or create opportunities for grammar instruction, especially in terms of writing "correct" sentences. These teachers were dissatisfied with the *methods* and *preoccupation* some programs and teachers have with teaching students how to produce "correct" writing, not *whether* it should be ultimately taught. They were primarily interested in changing instructional methodologies and some objectives in order to make the teaching of writing less mechanical and more interesting and meaningful to both themselves and their students. However, there was great reluctance to change methodologies or objectives to the extent that they significantly questioned the primary objective of traditional writing instruction, i.e., the production of academically appropriate and grammatically correct writing. This would be going "too far." The teacher most dissatisfied with teachers' educational preparation argued that "we must teach how to produce ideas first, then the structure expected by other faculty." For another teacher, the dual objectives of making writing instruction personally interesting but also

making it serve disciplinary needs meant it "feels like teaching two courses sometimes, one for grammar and one for process." For the teacher who argued that programs were starting to get away from letting the textbook run the course, there was still great concern that every course have specific named objectives related to "teaching students how to think" (presumably in "academic" ways). Another teacher taught basic writing "because there is a need" which meant that she taught these students "because they were flunking out." Only one teacher spoke of "accommodating student writing preferences" in a "flexible approach" designed to produce "not just what teachers want to see."

In other words, most teachers emphasized the obligation of students to meet academic expectations, not institutional adaptation to variation in student language forms. These teachers valued "process" as a departure from traditional methods of writing instruction because as a method of learning to write, "process" instruction acknowledges that the writer is a human being whose humanity is inseparable from the writing that is produced. Teachers then defined textbooks they valued or rejected on the basis of their ability to connect to the "human" needs of the writer. But the common assumption was that providing for these "human" needs was not in conflict with the primary objective of preparing the student for academic writing. The two

objectives remained separate but compatible as "naturalized" value systems.

Textbook Issues

These teachers were generally familiar with a broad range of textbooks. Many had been teaching for many years, and had worked with different books over the years. Given their experience with a variety of texts representing different educational trends, it is not surprising that these teachers saw both good and bad. Since most believed that textbooks had improved in recent years (one named 1986 as an important turning point for unknown reasons), problems tended to be associated with books used in the past, although those who reviewed texts for program adoption saw problems with current texts as well. Not surprisingly, since different programs saw different student problems and different student needs, they also named different textbook characteristics as being more problematic or beneficial than others. However, several recurring complaints were cited by these teachers, which I will address below.

Textbook Problems: Relating to Student Needs

Teachers complained that many textbooks were too difficult for some students to read. This usually meant that in general the text used too much unfamiliar terminology. However, the most common complaint was that books were too "skill-based," that is, they were anchored in workbook

models that used the language of parts of speech and other grammatical concepts in such a way that intimidated students rather than instilled confidence. Teachers often said students needed lower level texts that would help them to build self esteem, and that de-emphasized grammar study. Yet "lower level" texts could also be problematic because they were condescending in such a way that did not respect the intelligence and experience of new students, especially older adults. Teachers in this way sometimes seemed to be wishing for a "middle ground" between the academic language and culture of traditional textbooks and the language and culture or ways of knowing students bring with them to an unfamiliar school environment. Few teachers named specific ways that these languages and cultures might be bridged, although one teacher argued that programs need books that talk about issues going on in students' lives now, such as those dealing with stress, child care, and other daily problems, instead of stories about people and places remote from students' experience.

According to these teachers, textbooks seemed to do a good job of addressing one particular problem or another, but rarely several problems at once. For example, one teacher named Glazier's text, *The Least You Should Know About English* as being very well organized, thus addressing the "visually messy" and "difficult to manage" problems cited earlier. But the text was also very "unemotional" in

such a way that "doesn't draw the reader in" and simply "delivers" information without engaging student interest. Another teacher tried to explain the problem of gaining student interest by suggesting that publishers must deal with a "time problem," meaning the length of time it takes to publish a text, and that this makes it difficult to create materials that are timely and immediately relevant to students' experience. That, this teacher argued, may be one reason why there is no canon in developmental education, since there are fewer opportunities to legitimize and fix the content of textbooks. Demands on publishers for a diverse, flexible, wide-ranging reading and writing curriculum, she argued, are not as easy to achieve as "the traditional methods of creating a standardized anthology,"³ which tend to change less often.

So while some teachers hoped that textbooks could bridge traditionally academic and non-academic cultures, they also wished for a way to recognize or address the diversity of non-academic cultures. Most publishers and teachers probably find it easier to describe and teach a relatively stable set of values and structures than to

³However, another interviewee named McGraw-Hill as a publisher experimenting with custom designed texts that allow instructors to pick and choose particular essays to be included in a chosen text. Called *Primus*, this McGraw-Hill production effort represents a response to those who complain that texts become outdated too quickly, since *Primus* allows teachers to update and diversify content at irregular intervals on an individual basis.

constantly be struggling to meet new student needs, learning styles, language constructions, and values in general. One teacher pointed to the Langan text, *English Skills With Readings*, as an example of a book that used "isolated examples" in order to make it "easy to evaluate." This particular text has remained very profitable over the years, perhaps due in part due to its stable and unchanging format (see Chapter VIII for more discussion of this textbook). A question that remains in light of teacher comments is whether serving a diverse range of student needs can be made to serve the production interests of publishers.

Textbook Problems: The Writing Process

Teachers also criticized textbooks for the ways they "taught the writing process." "Skill based" books, for example, relied on "editing exercises" that asked students to "fix" run on sentences, subject verb agreement, etc. and thereby "focus on particular errors" instead of what goes on in "normal writing." For one teacher, this focus on errors took time away from the development of the "thought processes" of students (generating ideas and developing those ideas).

The goal of helping students to both develop their own ideas while also improving the quality of their writing (not necessarily compatible goals) seemed to lead some teachers to search for a "middle ground" between two very different (but in the past, theoretically complementary) instructional

methodologies. At one extreme are skill based, workbook style exercises, (as described above) while at the other is the idea of the "rhetoric" or "reader" by which students work to model and interpret whole pieces of writing. But as another teacher noted, in the current-traditional paradigm, rhetoric is divorced from grammar, so that "there is no connection between idea [creation] and structure. What we need is a 'middle' that draws on both." While many of the "better" books, in this teacher's opinion, provided examples of student writing (a "rhetoric" theoretically closer to students' own experience), one teacher complained that too many "super samples" of non-student writing still dominate readers used in developmental writing instruction. The result is that there may seem to be a great distance between what students actually do and what is held up to them as what they should try to do, thereby leaving a gap in how "process" works or doesn't work.

So according to most teachers, the "process" that is modeled by many books requires students to work primarily at the sentence or perhaps paragraph level, but often to make the big jump to essays almost magically, simply by discussing and imitating "great" authors. The solution, as one teacher described it, was for books to take students through the writing process rather than simply preach it.⁴

⁴For example, poor textbooks, for this teacher, would describe what "pre-writing" is without engaging students in specific activities or showing the possible results of these

But since the possible areas of exploration (and success) a writer might pursue may be more numerous than can be contained within the pages of a textbook (or within the confines of a limited class period), guiding students through *many* writing processes is a task that both publishers and teachers who seek predictable and manageable outcomes are probably less likely to attempt. One technological response to this dilemma has been the application of computer programming to writing instruction. A program described by one teacher⁵ supposedly "helps" students by asking questions and responding to their answers in such a way as to allow students to expand their topics and have more to say. However, the negatives associated with computer programs are many, according to this teacher, including high cost, success only with highly motivated students, and rejection of some student responses, making this alternative of limited use.

Unlike reading instruction, which can be made to conform to "correct" answers and thus "contained" by the limits of a textbook or a text, writing instruction is more difficult to objectify and quantify. Beyond documenting particular incidents of positive or negative elements in a

two activities.

⁵*The Sheridan Pre-Writer*, published by Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario, Canada, runs on IBM computers.

given piece of writing, textbooks are necessarily limited by the endless variety of good (and bad) writing that could be produced, as well as the variety of methods that might be used to produce it. The result is that, as one teacher said, "No one book can do it all, and packing it in creates messiness." This raises the question of whether the answer for many of these teachers in the future lies with more books, no books, or different books. For many of these teachers, although they might be more tempted to use no book rather than more books, they would probably agree that there are still certain textbook qualities that encourage a diverse student population to explore the writing process in different ways, rather than contain and commodify it.

Textbook Strengths

In order to invite exploration of the writing processes by which students come to produce "good writing," teachers believed that the study of "parts" should be made secondary to the study of "wholes." In other words, all of these teachers saw value in teaching writing by emphasizing the analysis and production of actual pieces of writing (usually student writing) rather than the assignment of isolated exercises that needed to be "fixed," or abstracted study of difficult grammatical concepts. As one teacher said, the study of "whole passages, not sentence level exercises, is closer to what students do in real writing." However, what constituted a "part" differed from one teacher to the next.

For example, one teacher praised Fawcett and Sandberg's book, *Evergreen*, because the abstracted study of parts of speech was made secondary to simpler explanations and exercises with a variety of sentence structures and whole paragraphs. However, other teachers might have characterized this as replacing one "part" with another, rather than with the study of the "whole," since whole sentences or paragraphs, rather than essays, are most often presented in *Evergreen*.

For another teacher, thinking in terms of "whole" pieces of writing meant that an ideal textbook would strike a balance between "process" and "product." Thus, students would not only gain insight into the methods they use to create or invent "whole" pieces of writing, but would also be able to become meaningfully engaged with that whole as a "product," as a finished piece that was meant to reflect their abilities as writers. Process, for this teacher, was a means by which product might be perfected, and did not necessarily stop once a product had been produced. Revision was important to this teacher and others, but where several books were named as doing a good job of teaching process,⁶ many were criticized for minimizing the role of revision in this process. Some teachers argued that revision was

⁶See, for example, *A Guide To Whole Writing, Casting Light On Writing*, and *A Writer's Journey*.

reinforced through some Computer Assisted Instruction programs (C.A.I.).⁷

The less effective C.A.I. programs helped students to do more mundane tasks, such as review sentence structure or comma rules, but others were seen as more valuable because they "reinforced the writing process and allowed students the freedom to choose options." In general, C.A.I. was perceived by these teachers as an underdeveloped and for now less effective means of teaching writing. However, many were confident that improved technology would lead to better programs in the future (for criticism of computer technology, see Beyer and Apple, 1988, amongst others).

For all of the teachers, the best textbooks or computer programs were those that helped the teacher to teach "better." Textbooks were seen as tools that should assist teachers in a variety of situations. In this sense, textbooks needed to be flexible enough to adapt to different students and classes. For example, one teacher praised Prentice-Hall's, *Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage*, because it "applies to other courses like business." Teachers also named specific characteristics of the "ideal textbook" which would help teachers to teach better. These characteristics included getting people started; provision

⁷These included *Writer's Helper* by Conduit, *Microlab* by Educulture, *Sentence Combining* by Milliken, and the Norton disk by Ann Arbor software that included an "on line" handbook at the bottom of the screen.

of heuristics; a wide choice of invention strategies; material that stimulates reader interest and idea generation; the opportunity to write whole pieces quickly; a variety of methods to structure one's writing; a means of dealing with major grammar problems selectively, ideally by integrating grammar into the writing process; and meaningful revision techniques. Some teachers also appreciated texts that emphasized the value of word processing.

For these teachers, textbook strengths were seen in terms of assisting teachers to help students produce meaningful writing, not attain abstracted writing "skills." This emphasis on the production process may represent a significant shift away from the current-traditional emphasis on presentation and acceptable form and indicate more of an emphasis on producing meaningful content.

Summary

Criticism of textbooks can at times seem idiosyncratic. One teacher may think a text has too many reading selections, while another thinks the same text doesn't have enough. One teacher may be looking to develop students' "thought processes" while another just wants a text to be well organized. In these interviews, however, several common concerns seem to account for many of the teachers' criticisms of textbooks. The first shared concern arises out of an awareness of the scholarly criticism of skill based workbook instruction and the significant amount of

research that argues such instruction has little or no effect on improving actual student writing. Teachers were very aware of the benefits associated with the most common alternative, teaching writing as a process, and were able to articulate the ways textbooks effectively and non-effectively modeled that process. Equally important, their experience with students seems to have made them very sensitive to particular student needs and abilities. For example, student needs were described as a result of inexperience at dealing with print materials and a range of specific problems related to that inexperience, such as lack of confidence, inappropriate attitudes, and inappropriate ways of interacting with reading and writing materials. Since teachers understood students to have particular needs, they were also able to criticize textbooks on the basis of those needs. Teachers were able to identify things texts did well and not so well. Most were dissatisfied - as one said, "It's a default choice. Nothing better is available." Besides criticizing the inadequate treatment of writing as a process, and the lack of addressing particular student needs, these teachers also described more general problems such as books that were too unemotional, too filled with unfamiliar terminology, too skill-based, and too condescending. They also criticized books for insufficiently addressing the instructional gap between isolated skills development (such as sentence construction)

and the imitation of rhetorical models within textbooks. Some teachers speculated as to why developmental writing texts tended to be disappointing, but mostly from the perspective of production constraints on publishers and programs, such as the inordinate amount of time it takes to publish a textbook, leading to less "timely" reading topics.

Lastly, these teachers were able to name specific remedies that would result in both better textbooks and better instruction. Better books would help students to get started on writing projects more easily, provide heuristics and invention strategies to help them generate material, stimulate their interest as readers, help them to produce and structure whole pieces of writing, help students to deal with grammar issues on an as-needed basis, and help them to become engaged in meaningful, significant revision activities. Better writing instruction would require less dependence on textbooks and would be facilitated through more and better training of teachers. Teachers also needed to learn how to do a better job of simultaneously satisfying the needs of students to develop themselves as writers while also meeting the expectations of other disciplines to write according to accepted formats and conventions.

These teachers' concerns and recommendations reveal them to be individuals whose primary objective is to assist students as they struggle to meet the writing expectations of higher education. In the final part of this chapter, I

will attempt to articulate a critical response not so much to the recommendations of teachers interviewed here, which taken on their own, outside of any larger social or political context, are nevertheless constructive, substantial, and forward-looking, but to the unexamined assumptions evident from these discussions about teacher roles and functions. These roles and functions often seemed limited because teachers were less likely to discuss administrative and institutional mandates and objectives, perhaps because they were less comfortable doing so. My intent is to use this discussion of institutional and administrative contexts, along with an emphasis on historical developments, to construct a "thick" description of these interviews that will serve as the basis for a more critical examination.

Many of these teachers' understandings and explanations of both program and student needs begin with the assumption that their duty is to meet pre-determined requirements of their students and of the programs they hope to enter (which in turn theoretically meet the needs of the institution). While this assumption may seem self-evident in the '90s, it raises the question of what sort of outcomes are the result of thinking about developmental writing instruction in such purely functional terms. By framing writing instruction only indirectly in terms of "service" to students, and more directly in terms of service to the institution, the way is

cleared for centralizing and streamlining the decision making process that determines what kind of writing is to be valued. Fewer individuals decide which objectives are worth pursuing. As more emphasis is placed on helping students to "get through the system," less emphasis is placed on helping everyone concerned to understand why they are doing what they are doing. An emphasis on "issues of efficiency and increasing meritocratic achievement" succeeds in "depoliticiz[ing]... the essential political and ethical issues of what we should teach and why" (Apple in Apple and Weis, 1983, 16), and technique can become the primary focus of teachers' interest. Emphasis on technique can obscure more critical issues, including what Apple refers to as "intensification," or "the ways work privileges of educational workers are eroded" (1987, 41). In this case, the emphasis each of these interviewed teachers placed on textbooks as tools suggests the possibility of unexamined or non-critical acceptance of the nature of their task. For example, if classroom size was smaller due to a larger pool of salaried teachers, would these teachers have been so disposed to view textbooks as efficient "tools?" Or, similarly, if the standards students were expected to meet as "real" college students were made more flexible so that writing styles accommodated students' home cultures, would these teachers have been as frustrated as some were by the dual and potentially contradictory objectives of making

students "comfortable" as writers while also preparing them to write academically-appropriate prose?

Clearly, some teachers saw writing instruction as producing positive outcomes outside of academic success, but these were primarily confined to supposed psychological "cognitive" or "maturity" benefits. Also, the results of students' efforts too often tended to be talked about as either entirely positive or entirely negative, and the teacher's actions were perceived as the primary means by which they enabled students to achieve one and avoid the other.

Teacher criticism of flawed textbooks, although a necessary part of one's job description, can also become a means of asserting one's expertise and authority in the workplace. This assertion of authority and judgment as the sophisticated "reader" of a text can at times seem to leave little room to discuss why textbooks should help students to do any of these things. By emphasizing their role in terms of responsibility for figuring out the "how" over the "why," teachers reinforce the legitimacy of their position as those who at times unquestioningly facilitate the goals of the institution. Another result of putting teachers "in charge" of realizing administrative objectives is that the status of the student as an outsider is reinforced. To their credit, these teachers discussed student needs in terms of "awareness" rather than deficiency, implying that students

already know how to think and use language. But the need to facilitate "awareness" or reveal "options" or "strategies" helps to create personas who are indispensable to the successful operation of an institution. For example, although these teachers suggested that reading and writing needed to be made relevant to students' lives, which may be construed as a departure from academic culture and values, the responsibility was on teachers, not students, to make reading and writing relevant. Relevancy, in this way, is still controlled by the institution through the institution's spokespersons.

The dynamics of control in the workplace are also evident in the extent to which teachers were willing to compromise their own and their institution's influence. At best, textbooks might "bridge" the distance between academic and non-academic culture and languages, but for those teachers who valued textbooks for specific reasons, there was little doubt that students should eventually cross over to their side. Teachers would help students to become "good" writers, but becoming a good writer was not seen as inconsistent or in conflict with the "voice" that the writer would develop. Teachers could help students "to see themselves as writers with important things to say," and also help them to become "good" writers, meaning writers who can write for academic purposes, and not see any potential contradictions in those goals. To use the jargon of

critical theory, the "other" might be accepted as a welcome element of a diverse student population, but a population struggling to transform itself in the interest of academic and future financial success. Significant questions remain in developmental education concerning how the "middle ground" between academic and non-academic culture is being bridged, and whether institutional personnel really are willing to meet students halfway.

For all of these teachers, the primary role of textbooks is to help students to write, but to eventually write material which the disciplines value and to do so as quickly as possible. Grammar drill and workbook study, once seen as the most efficient means of accomplishing this, now seem to be viewed as preventing students from becoming members of the academic community. Although these teachers were eager to involve students, to seek out textbooks that skip the meaningless drill and replace it with activities that engage students and help them to develop their ideas, there was little discussion about the nature and value of "development" as a goal. When this subject was brought up, few teachers seemed to question their objectives in larger societal terms. The common assumption often seemed to be that the development of students' ideas through writing leads to an ability to engage in more complex thinking, which is in turn basic to intellectual activity and academic success. What students *did* with their ideas once they were

"developed" seemed not to be the teachers' responsibility. This may be exacerbated by the narrowly defined functional role of developmental education, as it emphasizes "process" over "product." Process writing instruction may, in some circumstances, actually be obscuring important questions that institutional and administrative interests would rather remain unexamined, such as the use-value of the finished result of one's efforts (recursive or otherwise).

Institutional and administrative efforts to describe the reasons for producing successful writing typically focus on work-related products, from the resume to the response to the report. But even when the benefits of writing well are discussed in terms of more nebulous benefits, such as "self satisfaction," (a less quantifiable outcome for the evaluative institutional yardstick) it is the labeled and legitimized service the institution provides that makes such an outcome a positive one.

Teachers (not necessarily the ones interviewed here), who see themselves primarily as service providers, can become unwitting mouthpieces who transmit textbook values and attitudes. The more teachers see themselves as service providers, the more likely this seems to be the case, because the textbook can encapsulate and fix the goals the institution intends to provide. It is important to note, however, that teachers, in their role as educated and experienced professionals, see themselves as more than

service providers. As people who create curriculum, not just deliver it (teachers interviewed here would include themselves in this group), teachers have the ability to negotiate, mediate, and interpret textbook content. In this sense, the administrative or institutional mouthpiece teachers might become may be resisted by some teachers (see Apple and Weis, 1983, 160 or Giroux, 1983). For some teachers, teaching writing as process rather than product may represent such a point of resistance, depending on particular circumstances. However, any point of mediation also represents a site of on-going conflict, which in this case deserves continuing examination.

Finally, the history of teaching writing (see Chapter V) can be seen as influencing the responses of these teachers. On one level, their responses can be read as the rejection of the "appreciation" model of language study that preserves elitist forms of writing. These teachers' adherence to process, to encouraging their students to become actively engaged in creating writing, can also be construed as privileging "experience" over Aristotelean "rationality" by promoting student confidence in their ability to explore language the way the scientist explores the material world. For the students of these teachers, the legacy of nineteenth century empiricism, as well as the influence of John Dewey, means that experience is privileged over reason through an emphasis on "doing" language,

expressing opinions, employing strategies to produce more language, or combining sentences to create new sentence constructions.

Other historical influences are also in evidence in these interviews. While these teachers may be seen as rejecting the "current-traditional" paradigm of language instruction on the basis of their emphasis on generating, instead of simply presenting material, their views may also be seen as redefining, but not rejecting, the old humanist label of "guardians of culture." Teachers interviewed here, without exception, saw their task as helping students to produce "academically appropriate and grammatically correct writing." In this sense, their job is to be "caretakers of the dialect of prestige" as Berlin (1984) puts it. The objective of ensuring the status of middle class linguistic norms and values can be concealed by an emphasis on helping students to "think," to "generate ideas," and to "employ strategies." The view of many writing teachers is probably best represented by Kathleen Welch:

Writing and speaking dominant culture English provide the fastest route to the large middle class of the United States and all of its various substrata. One might hope that, after excluded groups have been assimilated into the middle class, they can go on to subvert its many malignant aspects (1990, 91).

Putting aside for the moment the question of whether a large middle class actually exists in this country, the idea that assimilation into the dominant culture will somehow make things better for those whose home dialects are

currently devalued in educational institutions is clearly questionable at best. Emphasizing the abstracted values of "invention" and "process" over assimilation can obscure assimilation as an objective. Teaching writing as a process may be expanding the meaning and significance of teaching writing, not so much for *students* whose home dialects and ways of saying things on paper may be devalued in favor of middle class norms and methods of generating and presenting material, but for *teachers* of writing, who are able to enhance their own professional prestige in austere economic times.

Another historical influence is that of social efficiency theory, present not so much in the teaching practices of teachers interviewed here, but in some teachers' willingness to hand over the responsibility of defining and measuring achievement to program or college administrative hierarchies. The implicit functionalism in any teacher's discussion of textbooks as "tools" suggests that some teachers may not be questioning the objectives of developmental education, and may have either internalized social efficiency ideals, or given up on redefining them. Although the move towards "holistic grading" in some programs (not discussed by teachers here) suggests less social efficiency related approaches to evaluation, the question remains as to whether this evaluation method serves

the interests of students or those of programs interested in standardizing their evaluation procedures.

The responsibility for developing forms of measurement, objectives, and evaluation can also be seen as *transferred* to the text, when the text serves as an instructional tool, and will be taken up in the following chapter. Embraced by these and other caring and committed teachers in many developmental programs, teaching writing as a process, in holistic ways, is one reaction to the de-skilled teaching implicit in workbook and drill approaches to writing instruction. The ways teachers are "re-skilled" (see Apple, 1983, 8 and 1991, 146) as a result of this de-skilling, or "counter-skilled" as a form of resistance to over-simplified goals and methods, will remain an important, on-going issue.

Chapter VII

TEXTBOOKS: HISTORY, CONTENT AND ANALYSIS

Although content analysis of textbooks is not new, my analysis of fourteen of the most often cited developmental or basic writing texts reveals complex and varied ideological constructions generally overlooked by previous analyses. Whatever value my own content analysis insights have must be seen in relation to past efforts to examine developmental writing textbook content, as well as critical curriculum theory, historical factors, and political economic conditions of textbook use and production.

Critical Analysis of Curriculum Issues

It is useful to begin any discussion of textbook content with an understanding of the significant questions critical curriculum theorists have recently asked. Apple and Beyer (1988), focus on several important curriculum critiques. They include the epistemological, or what should count as knowledge; the political, or who controls the selection and distribution of knowledge; the economic, or how the control of knowledge is linked to an unequal social structure; the ideological, or whose knowledge is of most value; the technical, or how knowledge is made accessible; the aesthetic, or the linkage of knowledge to the personal

meanings developed by the student; the ethical, or the responsible and just treatment of others; and the historical, or identifying the traditions that already exist to help answer these other questions (5). Of these eight areas, the epistemological is centrally important to examining textbook content. What counts as a legitimate knowledge construct has been described as being dependent upon a series of conditional events, or an "event in the order of knowledge" (Foucault, 1970). With the emergence of "man" as an object of study in the nineteenth century, the modern "episteme" became represented by different "dimensions" of thought, with the "human sciences" struggling against the more "formalized" philosophical and mathematical "sciences" for validation of their subject: "language, life, and labour." Language thus becomes represented in "scientific ways." To speak of language instruction in Foucauldian terms is then to examine the uses through which language is "constructed" by dominant knowledge paradigms and how power becomes concentrated in the hands of those who use language as a form of oppression (345-51).

However, the relationship between epistemology and language in terms of the textbook is not so obviously or easily described. Although textbooks are necessarily selective in their language choice and knowledge selection, most of the books I will consider in the next chapter were

written by one or two people and then assembled in the end with the editorial assistance of others from institutions of higher education. Does this represent the dispersion of power in the selection and distribution of knowledge by filtering textbook content through the viewpoints and language constructions of many different people? Or is this a technique by which publishers of textbooks privilege and legitimize traditional forms of writing instruction by assisting students in recreating predetermined writing forms that structure knowledge in traditional ways? Besides epistemological issues, do questions of technical control, or how knowledge is made accessible to students, surface in relation to coordinated instructional packages that offer supplementary computer-assisted instruction? Might questions of an aesthetic or ethical nature reveal themselves with respect to students' personal experiences and cultural values, and whether these experiences and values are respected in the content of a text's instructional illustrations and the way authors treat students as learners in general?

These kinds of questions of control are not easily determined. Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) and Bennett (1986) have argued that the "political function of a text 'depends on the network of social and ideological relations' in which it participates" (Apple and Christian-Smith, 9). In other words, the text is less a location or concentration

of power than it is a site of on-going conflict between others. This conflict can develop between those who would both construct and interpret the text's content for the benefit of a dominant elite culture, and those who would reconstruct, re-interpret, and even re-think the role of the text for the benefit of traditionally excluded cultures and values. Since schools in general represent sites of on-going conflict between dominant and disaffected groups of people,¹ the textbook may at times appear to be a tangible artifact, recording and documenting larger conflicts. It is easier to imagine different textbook accounts on any given topic as the record of a past conflict than the site of on-going conflict.

However, both Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) and Luke (1988) have argued in favor of "more sophisticated and nuanced models of textual analysis" (1991, 13). Textual content is seen not simply as a reflection of the ideas of

¹Apple (1983) has described the function of schools as more complex than the traditional base/superstructure model of control. He describes three functions of schools: accumulation, legitimation, and production. Accumulation refers to the function of schools to "assist in the process of capital accumulation by providing some of the necessary conditions for recreating an unequally responsive economy" (5), largely accomplished by "sorting" students by "talent" into a credentialized labor force. Legitimation refers to the process by which "social groups are given legitimacy and through which social and cultural ideologies are built, recreated, and maintained" (5). Production refers to the way "the educational apparatus as a whole constitutes an important set of agencies for production" especially the need for high levels of technical and administrative knowledge.

the dominant culture, but as a site of conflict *within* the dominant culture over ideas and values. A more complex model of textual analysis would not "suppose that texts are simply readable, literal representations of 'someone else's' version of social reality, objective knowledge, and human relations. For texts do not always mean or communicate what they say" (Luke 1988, 29-30). Why and how would texts not always mean or communicate what they say? In developmental writing textbooks, I will argue that the different but authoritative interpretations and treatments of writing as a "process" can be one of several ways developmental writing texts do not always mean what they say, at least to those whose interpretations of process differ from those of the author or authors of the textbook.

Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) also suggest that the textbook as a site of internal conflict is not simply an annoying but necessary state of affairs, but can be a sophisticated means by which dominated and oppressed cultures negotiate and realign their power bases. Power can be maintained or redistributed, they argue, through *inclusion*, not exclusion, by often "incorporating the knowledge and perspectives of the less powerful under the umbrella of the discourse of dominant groups" (10). Citing Tony Bennett (1986), these authors suggest that tactics such as "mentioning" non-traditional individuals or groups, or placing "oppositional" cultural values only within the

context of their struggle with the dominant culture (10), can have complex, even contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, marginalized oppositional or non-traditional values may simply be "aligned" with dominant culture values, thus reinforcing the status quo. Bennett's more optimistic interpretation of this scenario imagines room for "reverberation" or "echoes" of contradictory values within texts that leads not to marginalization, but to the transformation of dominant value systems. Much depends on how students and teachers in all classrooms respond to textbooks. Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) suggest that potential responses can be characterized as "dominated, negotiated, or oppositional" (14). In dominated responses, the reader accepts the messages at face value. In a negotiated reading, the reader might dispute claims, and in an oppositional response, "dominant tendencies and interpretations" are rejected (14). By essentially arguing that readers not only "receive," but construct meanings from textbooks, these authors leave room for resistance to textual authority. In this chapter, I will be arguing that not only is it possible that students construct their own meanings of received texts, but authors and publishers who create texts construct *their own* meanings of multiple "texts" (representing different epistemological value systems) that they must encounter, interpret, and transform into commodities. One of the "texts" authors and publishers

cannot ignore in the teaching of writing today is the textual authority of process writing instruction as put forward by composition theorists. But publishers have historically responded to other texts as well.

Historical Developments in the Use of Textbooks

Although it may seem self-evident that the history of textbooks was tied to the developmental of printing, Ian Westbury (in Elliott and Woodward, 1990) and Robert Connors (1987) have also tied technological developments advancing the ability to print large quantities of books with the development of school systems themselves. During the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe, the ability to mechanically reproduce texts led to reduced reliance on oral instruction and memory and increased reliance on books as a means of storing knowledge. This period also saw the beginnings of the use of texts in order to store a systematic curriculum (Westbury 4). However, it was not until the 19th century that school *systems* began to build their curricula around textbooks in a systematic way. Previously, textbooks had not been used to organize a prescribed body of knowledge so that it could be "delivered" to students as a standardized curriculum. But by the mid-19th century, publishers were assisted by increasing numbers of elementary schools staffed by semi-trained adults who used textbooks as a means of imposing structure and "narrowing the range of achievement" (Westbury, 5-6). Graded series of readers and other similar

systems became a systematized means of both achieving mass education and fostering appreciation and allegiance to a narrowly defined curriculum.

But the real winners in this post-Civil War transformation were the shrinking number of publishers who were able to make use of other technological developments, such as the railroad, to nationalize their industries and thereby dominate smaller publishing houses. This was a general corporate trend at the time. With few local textbook approval committees representing the interests of local communities, the unregulated marketplace allowed publishers not just to sell books, but to sell entire curriculum packages (Westbury 8). Even when local committees began to regulate textbooks by constructing curriculum guidelines, the committees' function was to approve or disapprove submitted texts, not to create a curriculum itself. As Westbury puts it, "publishers propose while the regulators dispose" (8). Such confidence in the ability of publishers to provide a proper curriculum for the elementary and secondary schools (given school approval) was certainly assisted by the late 19th century and early 20th century faith in industrialization and capitalist enterprise to adequately address the problems of the future. There was little if any question of a conflict of interests between selling books and manufacturing their content. Westbury asks, "Does a profit-seeking industry...have the capability

that is needed to function both as a national curriculum authority and as an effective developer and distributor of schoolbooks?" (8). The answer over the years seems to have been an increasingly qualified "yes," determined by the quality of relations between publishers, teachers, administrators, and community representatives (see Chapter IX). However, there are other contexts beyond the formal approval process that goes on in public schools that affect textbook content. One such context is the changing nature of what constitutes knowledge and how that is played out in classrooms of all kinds-- elementary, secondary, and higher education.

The history of writing instruction during the 19th and 20th centuries (See Chapter V) illustrates that, important as the goals of the publishing industry are, equally important are the evolving social contexts that invited publisher involvement. Publishers may "propose" and regulators "dispose," but as Robert Connors (1986) has argued, "textbooks...have always responded to the preferences of the teachers cast up by the culture" (78). In this view, teachers get what they want, but what they want is culturally or structurally determined. "The Culture" is itself constructed from a variety of diverse influences, including publishers and what they publish. Also important is institutional legitimation, especially in the schools and classrooms where books are used and where

the cultural and ideological assumptions underway within the classroom itself are constructed. Although publishers and industrialists in general gained power and prestige in the 19th century, so did institutions of higher learning. In his description of the "college movement" beginning around 1815, Connors (1986; also discussed in Chapter II) argues that the study of rhetoric before 1800 had been confined to philosophical treatises grounded in mental discipline theory and took its inspiration from the work of the ancient Greeks. But during the 19th century, rhetorical "treatises" became rhetorical "texts," transforming the recorded lectures of men like Campbell, Blair, Whately, or Priestly into curriculum guides. The book became the teacher, conveniently serving the interests of men like Hugh Blair, whose *Lectures*, according to Connors, saw at least 66 full-length editions in the U.S. before 1874 (1986, 180). The "drill and skill" models that followed Blair's more philosophical approach benefitted not only untrained teachers, but also publishers, who successfully assumed more responsibility for defining what went on in the classroom.

So as new colleges in the U.S. opened their doors and expanded in the early and mid-19th century, certain elements of the cultural milieu benefitted in different ways. Big publishers benefitted because they sold more books, and new teachers benefitted by using these books. Colleges benefitted as well, of course, but the growth of colleges

was so great that larger enrollments and lack of trained teachers often meant overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowded classrooms in turn influenced the *kind* of writing that was done by students. These kinds of structural conditions led to the valuing of writing that, as Connors says, was "not the sort of writing the teacher needed to look at" (1986, 184). Writing that emphasized drill and pre-determined correct and incorrect answers met this need. While the teaching of rhetoric tended toward the philosophical, teaching writing became mechanical but cost efficient, even going so far as to "carry rhetorical theory along with it" (184), to the detriment of rhetorical theory, some would argue².

The popularity of drill books waned in the second half of the 19th century due to the failure of many colleges to survive. Fewer colleges led to a more educated college teaching force who rejected overly mechanical teaching practices. But publishers didn't give up their influence so easily. Drill books were exported to the secondary schools, where public education used the books to teach larger numbers of students. The twin ideologies of "individual opportunity" and "merit" (see Chapter III) were becoming commonly accepted, even as industrialization was making structural mobility less likely. School was becoming the way to supposedly "get ahead," especially through the

²See Crowley, 1991 and Welch, 1990.

application of "science" and the scientific method, which required students to perform close analysis of sentence constructions, a fundamental ingredient of drill books. By the 1880s, writing and the teaching of writing (along with education in general) had become an individual, rather than a societal issue, as it had been when public schools were being built earlier in the century.³ Having helped to establish a new cultural standard for education, the combined interests of the educational establishment and the publishing industry (to say nothing of the government) put the responsibility on individuals to measure up to that standard. The more education in general and writing in particular became a matter of individual ability, the more important it became to measure that ability. The reduction of writing and rhetoric to skills that could be measured through completion of exercises published in textbooks meant publishers might both retain and even expand their markets. The current-traditional paradigm (see Chapter V) became the much-treasured result of this restructuring of knowledge. An emphasis on the composed product was, in this sense, a result of a combination of vested ideological and financial interests.

³In much the same way that the "literacy crisis" of the 1970s evolved into first a "back to basics" movement followed by the struggle for "excellence," moving from advocacy of instructional techniques to individual victim blaming.

In the 20th century, subsuming rhetoric within the teaching of writing became widely accepted, as educational reform movements gained momentum, especially scientific management theory and patriotic fervor (see Chapter V). The publication of drill books, workbooks, and handbooks contributed to this momentum in their presentation of culturally correct language forms and efficient exercises. Connors (1987, 261) identifies several texts that ushered in an era of "exercises in composition," beginning with A. S. Hill's *Foundations of Rhetoric* and John Genung's *Outlines of Rhetoric* in 1892 and 1893. These were followed by what Connors calls the first "drill book," Edwin Wooley's *Handbook of Composition* focusing for the first time on the elimination of sentence and word error, which Connors argues had "come to be a cultural preoccupation in America" (260). By the late teens, Charles H. Ward at Scott-Foresman had developed the first workbook, or book students could actually write-in, not simply read and copy. Teachers loved the format because it was a tidy means of keeping students' materials organized (in addition to creating classwork), and Scott-Foresman loved the format because it meant schools would have to buy new books regularly.

But publishers and teachers had other reasons to justify their use of these books that were more convincing to educational power structures. The influence of scientific management and its obsession with "bits" and

"components" could usefully be applied to the analysis of language and language instruction in conjunction with the ideology of deficiency remediation. During the 19th century, oral rhetoric had thrived on the continued division and subdivision of language study into many discrete classes (Connors 1986, 188), and written rhetoric as it was "invented" in the 20th century continued this "atomistic perspective" until it was "perceived as a collection of observations about the properties of successful written products" (188). A "collection of observations," could be easily formatted into text form that carried the weight of authority. These books of rules⁴ were easy to write, easy to market, and in an age when formal education in this country continued to struggle (usually successfully) to gain legitimacy, they carried the academic stamp of approval. Textbooks succeeded in both reinforcing the legitimacy of the school, as well as in gaining legitimacy of their own through their association with the school. Even today, the primary job of writing textbooks continues to be to dictate rules of written language, but how these books discuss written language and its rules continues to be an important educational and language issue.

⁴Connors argues that 95% of contemporary developmental writing textbooks teach writing by "learning and arhetorically applying 'rules'" (1987, 265).

Previous Examinations of Writing Texts

Although the current-traditional paradigm has arguably dominated most schools for much of this century, the claimed shift to a process model of instruction by some teachers has raised questions central to this project and other investigations as well: Have textbooks responded to this shift by changing the ways they teach and model writing? Do the same ideological, political, and economic forces that are often independent of teacher's concerns and that shaped the initial explosion of workbooks, drill books, or handbooks continue to exert their influence in effective ways? Before presenting my own examination of these books, I will consider three other assessments completed during the 1980s. In 1983, drawing on Barry Kroll's 1980 description of three categories of texts, Christopher Hayes focused exclusively on developmental writing texts. The other two analyses were completed in 1987, one by Kathleen Welch, examining first year writing textbooks, and another by Robert Connors who examined "basic" writing textbooks. Each of these assessments provided important critical insights relevant to this investigation. Beginning my discussion with an examination of these authors' work, I will then attempt to both expand the examination of developmental writing texts beyond the traditional concerns of composition theory, as well as suggest how textbooks currently used by

survey respondents have or have not responded to this sort of scholarly criticism.

Christopher Hayes examined 24 basic writing "rhetorics" using Barry Kroll's three categories of interventionism, maturationism, and interactionism. Hayes concluded that the predominant philosophy of basic writing texts (in 1983) was interventionism, characterized by the belief that teachers and texts must intervene in the learning processes of students so as to teach acceptable form and usage conventions. The format of these kinds of texts tends to represent writing as a linear and formulaic process, presents and describes the traditional "modes of discourse" such as narration, exposition, etc., focuses on paragraph development and sentence correction, and presents models of "good" writing (2). Examples of such texts include William J. Kerrigan's *Writing to the Point: Six Basic Steps* (Harcourt Brace 1979) and Gallo and Rink's *Shaping College Writing* (1979).

The second category, maturationism, "assumes multiple realities, individual voices, and diverse forms" (6) and although these books do not ignore traditional conventions, they primarily emphasize "developing writer fluency" and "exploring the mind of the writer" (6). Writing as "self-discovery" that grows from an "organic process" characterizes this perspective, and is associated with authors like Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie, and Donald Murray.

Writing is seen as recursive, not linear, and analysis of student writing is as valuable as the analysis of professional models. Interventionists, says Hayes, would argue that this perspective focuses too extensively on the self-expression of the writer, wasting time that should be devoted to helping students prepare for academic expectations.

The third category, interactionism, can in some respects be seen as a compromise position. This perspective "attempts to balance text, writer, and reader in the active process of creating a particular message in an appropriate form for an identified audience" (10). Because of its emphasis on audience, Hayes argued this position has rhetorical affinities, and because of its emphasis on problem solving, is associated with cognitive psychology. Like maturationism, interactionism sees the composing process as recursive and non-linear, but broadens the context of the writing situation beyond self-expression to include readers and criticism. Hayes cites Linda Woodson's *From Cases to Composition* (Scott-Foresman) as an interactionist text because although it is organized by "traditional rhetorical modes and expository patterns," there is also an emphasis on "realistic writing situations students might actually encounter" (10).

Hayes' and Kroll's work, now ten years old, is compelling for several reasons. First, there is a sense of

exploring the unknown, of wondering aloud how composition theory that privileges process over product has or has not been interpreted by publishers and authors. The conclusion, that most textbooks continue to be primarily interventionist in their philosophy, is seen not so much as a cause for alarm as a call to teachers to make better choices. Hayes argues that

at the least, we may find a need to adjust the 'fit' [between classroom goals and textbook content] and so choose a different kind of textbook. At most, we may find ourselves adrift in the crossroads of change, and if that is the case, we might find the triad a beacon that will point out a clear distinction in choices of theory and textbook (17).

There is a clear presumption by Hayes of a natural progression towards a more enlightened core of teachers, who, if only better informed, would be able to draw on their power as consumers in a responsive capitalist market place and affect change in the content of textbooks. There is also a sense of a natural progression towards a "reasonable" middle ground (through "interactionism") that incorporates the most "sensible" arguments about how writing should be taught, thus arriving at successively "better" methodologies. Was the optimism of Hayes warranted? Would authors and publishers change the way they wrote textbooks for underprepared students to reflect current research and theory? I will argue that this analysis of Hayes is hopeful for no good reason except that through the presentation and discussion of textbooks that *don't* fit the traditional

format, it is at best made clear that alternatives exist, although of the 24 texts selected by Hayes, the assumption is that these types are evenly distributed amongst the three categories. I will draw on the work of Welch and Connors in order to show why this implied transformation to other than interventionist texts has been slow in coming.

In her analysis of first-year writing textbooks, Kathleen Welch (1987) fixes the blame for poor textbooks on publishers' and teachers' lack of sensitivity to theory. In her view,

the discrepancy between composition textbooks and composition theory arises from a shared sense of belief between the textbook sellers - the publishers - and the textbook buyers - the writing instructors (270).

This shared system of belief⁵ is grounded in what Welch sees as teachers' commitment to a truncated version of the five classical canons⁶ or the modes of discourse⁷ made popular in 1866 by Alexander Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric*. Neither approach serves the needs of students, Welch argues, primarily because they decontextualize both the process of producing writing and the finished product, and because they primarily serve the needs of teachers to deliver lessons and

⁵Eagleton defines ideologies in terms of a "naturalized" system of unconscious or semi-conscious beliefs.

⁶Invention, arrangement, and style are favored; memory and delivery usually deleted.

⁷primarily exposition, description, narration, and argument

publishers to construct chapters of books. As a result, both student and professional writing

are surgically sliced from their contexts and made to appear as whole pieces of writing. In other words, they are the logical extensions of formalist criticism, in which text is privileged over reader, writer, and context (1987, 273).

The remedy, according to Welch, is to "subordinate the status of the textbook in favor of student text production" (271) as a means of subverting the traditional status of the textbook as an artifact that trains and serves teachers' needs more than students' needs. Welch thus significantly extends Hayes and Kroll's analysis beyond "types" of textbooks or instruction to call for a critical examination of the context of any textbook's use while also suggesting an alternative. She is also able to subvert the Arnoldian or Leavisite conception of a "received" culture (or "received" conceptualization of language) by arguing that English studies must be taught as the study of "lived" language, including the literary, rather than "cutting off language with the taxonomic imperative and failure to connect to anything; much less to a student's life" (277).

Welch also understands both the seduction of process pedagogy and the way it can be disappointingly transformed. While she acknowledges that "hope exists...because of the fact that 'process' has been recognized in most of the textbooks," she is also aware that the "problem is that many textbook writers have converted process into another mode

[or chapter]" (272), and that anything can be thus transformed or reduced through a decontextualized discussion that facilitates commodification more than instruction.

While this criticism is extremely important, other assumptions and questions remain to be examined. Welch assumes, like Kroll and Hayes, that teachers and publishers have entered into an ideological pact that ensures the publication of texts for their own, not students', benefit. It is the secure nature of this symbiotic relationship that then ensures a lack of significant change. Unlike Hayes and Kroll, however, while "both sides must change," change must begin with publishers who have "ample possibility [for creating] a contextualized, engaging, holistic book about writing" (279). However, concluding with this sort of simplistic blaming may be reducing the complexity of the situation and letting other significantly involved parties off the hook. The teachers interviewed in chapter VI seemed well aware that their choice of textbooks was often by default - as they said often, nothing better exists. But survey results indicated that some teachers may not even have the authority to make the sorts of informed consumer-decisions Hayes, Kroll, and Welch want teachers to make, and may be under pressure (program or otherwise) to privilege certain topics or knowledge over others.

Connors (1987) describes the relationship of theory to the publication process in greater detail than does Welch.

Connors begins with some general "truths" about all composition textbooks. First, they are "centrally concerned with mechanical correctness." Second, they "perceive the sentence and the paragraph as the primary units of writing," and third, "they reduce writing, insofar as it is possible, to a completely algorithmic, rule-governed, stage/step process" (266). In this sense, they are both anti-recursive and anti-heuristic, perceiving writing as a rigid, step-by-step process that allows few insights and focuses almost exclusively on rules.⁸ He then divides rhetorical texts into three categories. The first moves incrementally from sentence to paragraph to essay analysis. The second begins with the paragraph and then moves to sentence analysis, and the third begins with a discussion of process, and then works into paragraph and sentence discussions (267). Of the three, Connors argues that the sentence-first books are most condescending to students and the rarest, since they are often supplanted by workbooks. Paragraph first books (with rules) are most common, and process books are seen by Connors (at this time) as somewhat experimental and wide

⁸This criticism was also raised by Mike Rose in "Sophisticated, Ineffective Books - The Dismantling of Process in Composition Texts" (1981) and "Speculations on Process Knowledge and the Textbook's Static Page" (1983). See also Winterowd, "Publisher-Author Relations" (1989) for a discussion of composition text philosophies: current-traditional, "vitalist" (i.e., writing as "mysterious"), and new-rhetorical (writing as "art").

ranging in their definition of "process," but united by their:

refusal to treat composition skills *atomistically as a whole book* policy (original emphasis)...they begin with invention, journal keeping, discussion of why basic writer are afraid of writing, or material to which students are to react (267).

Since process-oriented textbooks were a novelty in the mid '80s, one question this 1992 analysis will seek to explore is how this type of text has changed in response to the on-going economic and ideological influences on its creation and use.

Connors describes two sub-genres of the basic writing rhetoric: the "reading-writing rhetoric" and the "rhetoric-workbook." The first includes significant reading sections designed to show inter-connections between reading and writing, and the second includes "intensive workbook practice" after each lesson (268). One is predicated on the assumption that reading comprehension skills (developed through comprehension skills questions at the end of a reading selection) transfer to writing, and the other that the student can "teach himself" through the completion of exercises.

Other main categories include the basic writing handbook which represents the most rule-governed of texts since its entire content is devoted to right and wrong structures and conventions (268), and the workbook or drill book most often associated with basic writing. Workbooks

have developed their own philosophies over the years, according to Connors, although all try to be comprehensive in scope, serving as an entire course for "independent learning" (269). Some emphasize "active" or "creative" sentence manipulation, such as is involved in sentence combining, while others are "passive" fill-in-the-blank versions that stifle creativity.

In sum, Connors shares the more general interpretations of Welch, Kroll, and Hayes that some or most composition textbooks attempt to teach writing in mechanical, error driven, and rule-governed ways that divorce writing from a meaningful context. Unlike Welch, Kroll, and Hayes, Connors does not see the most significant struggle as that between teachers and publishers, but between research and theory as represented by the authority of academic journals, and publishers. He argues that

the history of research on writing and composition teaching from the 1940s through the present is a history of epistemological warfare, of progressive theoretical and empirical research struggling with entrenched traditional pedagogy (1986, 191).

The struggle for "epistemological primacy" is between journals and textbooks, "and textbooks are changing because they have begun, for the first time, to lose the battle" (1986, 191). So even though, in his view, the responsibility for change depends on the relationship between academicians and publishers, he does see the impact of "more rhetorically-trained persons" (1986, 192) as

representing a positive development. Like Welch, Kroll and Hayes, there is a space for optimism (or "reverberation" as Bennett would have it) based on the academy's role in expanding the awareness and understanding of teachers and publishers. This is especially true in terms of subverting the traditional view of teaching that focuses on the examination of the written product in order to promote the teaching of writing through a broadly-conceived process pedagogy. But given the traditional reluctance of many teachers to become engaged with theory of any kind, including composition theory, a more detailed critique is necessary that examines the "post process" era of text production and use in ways that look beyond instructional theories alone to theories of language and social and economic relationships. By understanding a broader set of relations between the text and the reality it interacts with or reflects, we may also better understand, among other things, why teachers may not respond to theory, no matter how "enlightened" it is.

Going Beyond Process versus Product

The effort to determine who is responsible for poorly written, oppressive textbooks and calling them to task is seen as a way to institute change by the previously discussed critics. Although their work can be seen as bridging the distance between theory and practice, both theory and practice tend to remain abstracted by the

language of the theorists. When Hayes speaks of "interactionism," for example, the "needs" of the hypothetical reader are not discussed using examples that show the results of this emphasis on needs. When Welch speaks of writing that is "surgically sliced from its context," she provides no examples of this, or conversely, of writing that is successfully contextualized. This may be due, in part, to the paucity of good "process" texts at the time of these writings. But composition textbook analysis would be enriched by an analysis not limited to categorizing texts on the basis of their organization or adherence to particular instructional methodologies. More fully understood and explored, process theory makes assumptions about language and the way people use language to interact with the world. For example, if we value process in writing instruction we may be less likely to believe that language is a way of "getting it right," and more a means of exploring meaning. Process theory possesses the potential to challenge the correct/incorrect assumptions of most textbook approaches. Analysis of textbooks can reveal how little some textbook authors understand (or at least make explicit) their own process writing assumptions. We need a framework that is able to examine not only authors' instructional models, but also their assumptions about language. Do they see language as a social construction reflecting diverse political, social, and historical

realities?' We need a framework that criticizes authors on the basis of how they represent and reinforce authoritative relations between student and teacher and that is critical of some of the kinds of writing authors say students should be producing through an emphasis on process or product (See Chapter VIII). In other words, we need to understand more than process or product; we need to understand whether authors and publishers vision of schooling and society is largely functional and service oriented or whether it is critical and skeptical of the normative relations inscribed in traditional texts.

One way of understanding authors' vision of school and society is through the lens of race, class, and gender depictions and constructions. For reasons probably related to their high visibility as social constructs, as well as their long and continuing history as sites of oppression (but not necessarily as legitimate areas of inquiry), race and gender issues in textbooks have recently gotten some deserved attention.¹⁰ Class has gotten less attention,

⁹For example, Rich's *The Flexible Writer* discusses writing not only to "develop your senses" and "to remember," but also to "bridge cultures" and "to learn to be a responsible thinker and make connections."

¹⁰For gender analysis, see "Women and Economics Textbooks" (1983) by C. L. Hahn and G. Blankenship; "Gender Scripts in Professional Textbooks" (1991) by David Carrell (focuses on books published between the 1930s and 1950s and designed to train women as secretaries); and "Gender, Popular Culture, and Curriculum" by Linda Christian-Smith. For race and ethnicity analysis, see "The Portrayal of Black Americans in U.S. History Textbooks" (1985) by Jesus Garcia

although the now classic work of Jean Anyon (1979) in her analysis of U.S. history textbooks continues to serve as an important focal point for discussions of class. Other writers have addressed the issue of class in reading instruction, either by focusing on basal readers¹¹ or historical overviews that politicize reading instruction.¹²

In the final section of this chapter, I would like to point to a recent analysis (Sleeter and Grant 1991) of textbooks published between 1980 and 1988, representing social studies, reading/language arts, science, and math in grades 1-8, because of the ways this study reveals how race, class, and gender criticism has or has not influenced textbook authors who may have intended to make their textbooks sensitive to these issues. Although this criticism focuses primarily on elementary school texts, this type of criticism is an important way of looking at all texts. Their results reveal a twisted, even perverse, sense of what constitutes sensitivity to race, class, and gender. For example, previous work (see above) found that all texts

and D.C. Tanner; "The North American Indian in Contemporary History and Social Studies Textbooks" (1987) by G. O. O'Neill; and "Native Americans in Basal Reading Textbooks: Are There Enough?" (1986) by J. Reyner.

¹¹see Luker, Jenkins, and Abernathy, "Elementary Schools Basal Readers and Work Mode Bias" (1974).

¹² see Patrick Shannon, *Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in Twentieth Century America* (1989); *The Struggle to Continue: Progressive Reading Instruction in the U.S.* (1990); and "Reading Instruction and Social Class" (1985).

tended to include members of ethnic groups in their use of examples and illustrations, but that they were still "few and sketchy." White racism tended to be muted, and the "complexities within groups or involving interaction among groups is virtually ignored" (81). Gender bias tended to be more common than racial bias, and although females were represented in traditionally male roles, there were few males in non-traditional roles and conflicts surrounding sexism were ignored (81).

Sleeter and Grant employ six forms of analysis: picture, anthology (analyzing the kinds of characters in a story), "people to study" (the race and sex of each person mentioned in the text), language, story line (which group of people receives the most attention), and miscellaneous. Their conclusions reinforce the conclusions of other current studies suggesting extensive academic discussions of diversity haven't changed textbooks very much, although some have improved in specific but limited ways. Sleeter and Grant find that white culture is consistently represented as causing no problems for racial or ethnic groups. Problems are addressed and dismissed through the documentation of events from the past (such as the Civil Rights movement), giving the impression that all such conflicts have been resolved. Whites continue to dominate textbooks by receiving the most attention and the widest variety of roles. Blacks are the next most included group, but are

represented in a more limited range of roles and given a "sketchy" history (97). Asian Americans and Latinos "appear mainly as figures on the landscape with virtually no history or contemporary ethnic experience" (97), while Native Americans are represented primarily as "historical figures" (97). Gender issues are resolved through the elimination of sexist language and the modeling of women in non-traditional roles (again, few-to-no males in different roles), and implying, as with race issues, that all conflicts have been resolved and that sexism no longer exists (98). Social class is not discussed at all, giving the impression that all people are middle class, and socially constructed relations are presented as naturalized, so that problems become the fault of individuals, reinforcing the idea that individuals can "be all that they can be." Disability is ignored entirely. They conclude:

Textbooks participate in social control when they render socially constructed relations among groups as natural...white culture is not shown to be a problem... students do not get information on groups dominating groups, nor are they given the vocabulary and concepts that would help them see themselves as members of social groups that relate in unequal ways...although women constitute slightly more than half the population [they] receive less than half the attention...any group that receives scant attention...tends to be treated superficially and piecemeal (99-100).

The authors express concern that after the "multiculturalism" of the late '60s and early '70s, we have entered a period of "backsliding" in the '80s and '90s. Although critiques such as this one focus on deficient or

marginalized treatments of race, class, and gender in existing texts, and although my concern here is also to raise the sorts of questions meant to expose insufficient treatment of race, class, and gender perspectives, an important question that arises is what a significant treatment of race, class, and gender would look like in these texts. To make use of process theory in this regard is to imagine ways teachers and textbooks might propose open-ended activities that problematize race, class, and gender rather than rely on superficial "mentioning" techniques (See Chapter VIII). But first, several levels of questions need to be asked of textbooks used in developmental education now (see Appendix B for most often cited texts).

First, analysis of race, class, and gender needs to be applied to these college-level writing textbooks as urgently as it needs to be applied to grade school texts. Second, if "textbooks participate in social control" (Sleeter and Grant, 99), we need to understand the primary *means by which authors assert their authority as writing* (and language) "experts" -- how they must conceive of language and language instruction in order to maintain that authority. Third, just as social relations appeared naturalized in Sleeter and Grant's study, we must understand *how process theory can become naturalized* as a part of the authority of the text. Lastly, in order to better understand any tendency towards

multicultural backsliding, we need to better understand the *conditions of use* of current textbooks. In other words, how does the context of their eventual use influence their construction and content? The answers to these questions will then suggest the outline of general changes in objectives, format, and content that may lead to the production of more significant writing by students.

**CHOICE BY DEFAULT: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING TEXTBOOKS**

Volume II

By

Daniel Fraizer

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Chapter VIII

THE CONTENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING TEXTS: BEYOND PROCESS VERSUS PRODUCT

Foreword

The developmental writing textbooks analyzed for this project in no way represent a conspiracy of evil, oppressive intentions on the part of authors and publishers. It is not my intent to describe such a conspiracy. However, it is my intent to examine these texts critically, primarily by focusing on particular language issues. I begin with two philosophical assumptions. The first is that I am *opposed* to the use of language instruction as a means of developing the authority and legitimacy of educators and publishers for their own benefit, to the extent that the development of students' language ability becomes secondary to the maintenance of that authority. The second assumption is *that I favor* the development and construction of more democratic and consensually-defined standards and objectives that include more diverse and heterogeneous forms of expression and communication as a way of challenging the legitimacy of dominant language usage.

Methodology

Fourteen textbooks were examined, eight of which were first published between 1990 and 1992. The other seven were

initially published during the 1980s (except for one originally published in 1977) and reprinted/updated in subsequent editions during the '80s or early '90s. They also represent the products of eight different publishers, as well as a wide range of instructional philosophies. Perhaps most importantly, this diverse selection of texts represents some of the most frequently cited books by survey respondents. (See Appendix B for a list of these textbooks.) Although there is no assumption on my part that these texts determine the quality of writing instruction in developmental education today, nor that they represent the most often used books, when combined with survey results that indicate significant portions of class time are spent engaged with texts in general (see Chapter II), I believe that the content of these texts suggests important influences on how writing is taught in many of the programs surveyed.

The Ties That Bind

The content of these textbooks reflects a wide range of beliefs about what is important in the teaching of writing, what needs to be said, and how it should be said. However, there were important similarities in all of the books described in this chapter. By focusing first on the similarities, I hope to contribute to a more generalized portrait of the concerns of the composition textbook business, the focus of the next chapter. I also hope that

by first concentrating on similarities, the reader will be better prepared to assess the contexts within which publishers produce their products so that we may begin to understand if, as Connors argues, change must begin with publishers.

First, the books examined here all make certain assumptions about the nature of writing instruction for writers placed in developmental classes. They assume that students learn best by writing first about simple and familiar topics. Writing is an unfamiliar and even threatening activity for many underprepared students, and many books aim to maintain student interest by keeping student writing focused on discussion of student experiences rather than overwhelm students with the new, the unfamiliar, or the complexity of issues of concern in the disciplines. Texts also tend to model the writing process by providing already constructed examples that show the results of the writing process rather than the process itself. This tendency is what might be referred to as the "transference principle," based on the assumption that if students see particular examples of good or bad writing, and are able to recognize what is good or bad about it, that awareness will transfer or translate into improved ability to write on their own. This phenomenon is particularly in evidence at micro levels of sentence and paragraph analysis (as described by Welch and others). For example, all books

asked students to create "topic sentences" that reflected the "main idea" of particular, text constructed, isolated "supporting" sentences, or the reverse, asking students to create "supporting" sentences for text generated "topic" sentences. The relationship between general and specific statements provided by the text is also emphasized in discussions of the importance of providing details. The importance of providing alternating specific and general statements is then naturalized by an authoritative emphasis on "proper" order, usually in discussions of chronology that ask students to arrange decontextualized sentences into the "correct" sequence based on time or space or "degree of importance."

The legitimacy and authority of any particular format is reinforced by always asking students to pour their own experiences into this predetermined mold or structure. The common wisdom of developmental writing instruction holds that these writers write best about that which is most familiar to them. But by emphasizing what one textbook referred to as "coherence through order," two potentially contradicting notions are reinforced. The first is that student writing and student experiences are valuable in and of themselves, but made more "coherent" if ultimately presented in a widely accepted, academically defined format. In this sense content and structure are steps one and two in the writing "process." But if content and structure are two

equally important steps, content should be as important a determinant of structure as structure is of content. In other words, content and structure influence each other recursively. For example, a writer might choose to discuss her experiences in one school compared to another, but in the process of writing about these two schools, come to realize there are other "types" of schools she wishes to discuss. The structure has thus been altered from a comparison/contrast format or "mode" to a classification format/mode, or perhaps the use of both at different locations in the writing. The main point is that the structure is revealed as a result of working through the content of the writing, not choosing pre-existing structures as modeled in textbooks that fit the content to the structure.

In these textbooks, the value of students writing from their own experiences serves mainly as a means of luring students into an activity that doesn't really value their experiences so much as the successful manipulation of the form they use to organize that experience. As Rose (1983) has argued, asking students to write about what is important to them does not, by itself, prepare them for the kind of academic writing they are supposedly preparing themselves to do, where the line between content and structure, between form and content, is less distinct.

Finally, all of these textbooks privilege grammar instruction to greater or lesser degrees. As Tibbetts and Tibbetts (1982), two experienced textbook authors, put it, "Try taking the grammar sections out of your textbook in its second or third edition - and listen to the salespeople scream" (856). That which makes writing instruction legitimate for most people has been and probably still is grammar instruction. Grammar instruction means talking about sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-ons. It means talking about nouns, pronouns, subordination and coordination, past participles and prepositions. In these textbooks, many of which Connors (1986) would probably classify as "rhetorics," grammar instruction is always placed at the end of the book. Since process writing instruction advocates correction of errors in the final stages of the "process," location within the text becomes a means of simultaneously pleasing those who might be offended if a text began with subjects and verbs, while continuing to appease those who probably wouldn't buy the text without a grammar section. Since most authors in their introductions encourage teachers to "skip around" in the text, assigning chapters or material on an "as needed" basis, the physical placement of the grammar section becomes a politically self-serving act that has little real meaning in terms of an influence on classroom activities.

Once one begins to examine these grammar sections, the similarities are remarkable. Instruction consists of filling in blanks, especially with appropriate verb tenses.¹ Books always provide a list of irregular verbs (present, past, and past participle) with corresponding fill-in-the-blank exercises that require students to flip back and forth from the blank to the list and back again. Punctuation is (with one notable exception) always used "correctly." A list of commonly misspelled words is always provided, although some texts encourage students to make their own lists. "Coherence" is always discussed as a crucially important element of good writing, and is almost always defined in terms of "transitional words" like "then," "because," "as a result," "after a while," etc. These transitional words then become the focal point of sample paragraphs in which the words are either underlined or deleted. Again, with one exception, all of these textbooks "provide" examples of transitional words sometimes with definitions without explaining why they are used in the sample paragraphs. Gaps in the instructional continuum of the text, as in this case, usually occur during "exercises" or "activity" sections, when authors and publishers are most likely to assume that teachers and/or students are providing their own explanations in response to individual exercise

¹Fawcett and Sandberg argue in their introduction that "verbs are the biggest problem for developmental students" (*Grassroots*, xxii).

questions. This is the sort of authorial assumption I will address in a later section of this chapter, "Conditions of Use."

A typical textbook that exhibits many of these qualities to varying degrees is Fawcett and Sandberg's *Evergreen*. Examples of free writing (6, 7), clustering (10), and asking questions (11, 12) are followed by "practices" that ask the student to imitate the modeled activities. Two hundred and sixty-two pages later, after extensive discussions of types of paragraphs such as narration, description, process, etc., as well as work on "sentence variety," language awareness," and "consistency and parallelism," the authors present anonymous student essays (239, 241) that students are asked to analyze by copying topic sentences and thesis statements before "Writing the thesis statement" (242) then "gathering ideas for the body" (246), and "ordering and linking paragraphs" (253). The progression from sentence to paragraph to step-by-step essay production is halted 311 pages into the book as authors retreat to "reviewing the basics" which includes a new "spelling and look alike/sounds alike placement," and other lessons consisting of "examples, explanations, and practices that reinforce each skill taught and always move toward the writing of paragraphs or longer compositions" (xxii). The fact that the "paragraphs or longer compositions" are already written (not written by the

student) and in the "wrong" order or contain "monotonous simple sentences" that should be eliminated (332-33) is not seen as inconsistent with the goal of students producing their own writing. In other words, it is unclear why students cannot do the same sorts of manipulation of their own writing (in non-threatening situations) rather than some other writing in which they have little interest.

Language and Authority in the Teaching of Writing

The basic language philosophy of writing instruction as modeled by most of these textbook authors rests on two assumptions. The first is that language describes a mostly stable system of meanings. These meanings are determined through fixed, logical, and stable language forms and constructions that, when closely scrutinized and methodically organized, explain and justify this system of meanings. The second assumption is that although these language forms are not concealed, and in fact represent a sensible and logical approach to the creation of meanings, their construction is complex enough to overwhelm the average language user, who needs the language authority, the interpreter of the text(book), to guide her to the requisite "sophisticated" understandings of how the forms are to be employed "correctly." Language is seen by these textbook authors as a Saussurean totality, in which any given individual utterance (the "parole" in Saussure's terms) is defined in relation to a comprehensive existing system of

signs. This philosophical view does not match words to the "things" they are meant to represent, as suggested by a Cartesian interpretation where reality and words correspond exactly to one another, nor does it reflect a more historicized and semantic interpretation of language, as envisioned by Raymond Williams (*Keywords*). For the textbook authors whose work is examined here, any attempt to conceive of an "utterance" which cannot be "dissolved" back into the language system of which it is a part, is not useful for writing instruction purposes.²

With the emphasis on a naturalized system, the inclination of most of these authors is to be ever vigilant as they protect against potential disturbances in the "efficient" operation of that system. The most common expression of that vigilance is through an obsession with grammatical error, or "mechanical correctness." This obsession takes various forms, usually expressed through format decisions. For example, in older books like *Building Basic Skills in Writing* (Books One and Two, first published in 1981), pre- and post-tests employ multiple choice questions that ask students to identify errors in grammar and punctuation. These tests are meant to help students to identify "skills you should strengthen" as well as a way to "see how your skills change after you work through [the

²see Frederic Jameson's *The Prison House of Language* for extensive criticism of this "Structuralist" position.

book]" (Book One,4). Putting aside for the moment the question of whether writing is a skill, textbook approaches that measure writing ability through the use of non-writing assessments, especially multiple choice questions, were seemingly discredited during the 80s³. In textbooks, however, changes in the way students are assessed develop slowly, since assessment represents a significant function of textbooks in general (see Chapter IX). While the multiple choice testing format may have fallen into disrepute, other similar methods that focus primarily on sentence manipulation or fill in the blank questions still remain popular and clearly legitimized. *Grassroots*, one of the most popular of all texts according to survey data, boasts in its test package that "you will find three types of tests -- two tests for each chapter, two tests for each unit (one consisting of separate sentences and one consisting of paragraphs to be revised), and diagnostic and mastery tests..." (letter to instructor, first page). Though not labeled "pre" and "post" any longer, these tests continue to exert their influence, and teachers are reassured that the "format" for both "diagnostic" and "mastery" tests is "interactive," meaning "the computer will grade the tests and record the answers for the instructor" (letter).

³For example, the G.E.D., or high school equivalency exam, instituted actual writing as a requirement for its writing exam in 1987.

These authors' obsession with error also translates into a tendency to use the *concept* of error to advance their own instructional methodologies and legitimize text content. Testing is a means by which authors highlight the *importance* of error, but once teachers have been reassured that texts consider errors important, something must then be done within the text to supposedly deal with and "fix" errors. Authors tend to approach error in one of two ways. The first, and most common way is to use error as an instructional technique. Students are required to identify errors in exercises, so that they will presumably be able to identify errors in their own writing. This is basically a means of extending the testing function of the book, but is justified for a variety of improbable reasons. *Grassroots*, for example, tells teachers that "A number of exercises - often paragraph or essay length- require students to spot and correct particular errors, thus honing their proofreading and revising skills" (xxii). Here the criticism of someone like Welch, who accuses textbooks of "surgically slicing writing from its context" (273) is superficially addressed by lengthening each exercise.

The second way authors approach error is to conceal the appearance of the extended testing format by manipulating the arrangement of errors on the page. For example, instead of requiring students to work through an entire exercise followed by checking to see "how many they got wrong," error

identification questions are dispersed throughout the text with "answers" to each "error" on the following page. *English 2200, A Programmed Course in Grammar and Usage* is formatted in this way. The author suggests that "programs" or "material...broken down into very small and carefully arranged steps -- 2200 in this book...are constructed to prevent [my emphasis] mistakes before they happen. The psychologists call this 'errorless learning' and have proved its importance by scientific experiment" (xiv). Here the legacy of "peths" (see Chapter V) and "bits" (see Chapter III) continues.

Obsession with error occurs to greater and lesser degrees in these textbooks. For example, some books use the exercise format in more exploratory ways that do not reinforce "correct" and "incorrect" answers. Books like *A Writer's Journey* and *Writing With Confidence* reveal "possible" answers in the "answers to exercises" sections of their books. However, even in a book like *Writing With Confidence*, (as well as books like *Evergreen* and *Grassroots*) an instructor's edition will intentionally conceal these "possible" answers from students, thereby reinforcing the authoritative status of the teacher, who has the "answers," while the students do not.

Besides relying heavily on error identification in exercise formats, these texts also rely on the author's ability to explain and justify the "rational" and

"comprehensive" nature of the English language as a grammatical system. In order to defend the structure and legitimacy of this system, it must be shown to "make sense." Otherwise, there would be no way of organizing grammar as a system. In order to show how it all "makes sense," these authors tend to assume a "parts to whole" and "simple to complex" approach as previously mentioned, what Connors (1987) sees as an "algorithmic, rule-governed, stage-step process" (266). The foundation of this approach, what gives not only the format but also the author his or her authority, is two assumptions. The first is that in order for something to "make sense" it must be logical or rational, and the second is that there is value in the way rational concept formations contribute to this logic in the form of the "transference principal" discussed earlier. For example, *Evergreen* manages to discuss how to "avoid" comma splices and fragments by "correcting" them in different ways (334,38). In other words, a rational and logical system of language use is described through concepts like "independent clauses," "comma splices" or "linking verbs," which end up having their own use value because they function as "logical" manifestations of a larger, supposedly rational system of language use, and because *learning* this rational system of language use is assumed to be as logical as the system itself. The emphasis on learning and language as logical, rational procedures or constructs is often

concealed through the use of the code word, "thinking." The author of *The Least You Should Know About English* (form C, 4th edition) tells the instructor that her book is valuable because "It stresses thinking. As students write logically organized papers, they learn that writing problems [original emphasis] are really *thinking* problems" (vii).

Not all authors assume such an unmediated connection between language and thought, but most assume that how *they*, not the *students*, use language will affect how students think about grammatical concepts, which will in turn affect how students use written language themselves. Authors may sometimes intensify their discussions of grammar, assuming that more detailed explanations will finally help students to "get it." This seems to be the attitude in the complementary series *Grassroots* and *Evergreen*, with *Evergreen* representing what Connors would probably label the "rhetoric-workbook" while *Grassroots* represents the simple "workbook." In *Evergreen*, for example, one chapter is devoted to "Consistency and Parallelism," whereas in *Grassroots* a whole unit (three separate chapters) is devoted to the same. It is probably the student who is struggling the most who would be assigned work in *Grassroots*, and subjected to more complex and detailed explanations of "troublesome" grammatical concepts than in *Evergreen*. At the opposite extreme are those authors who choose to "dumb down" their grammatical explanations, assuming that it is

simply the terminology that prevents students from grasping what one book⁴ calls "writing skills...[that are] nothing more than common sense" (x). This same book refers to "wrong place words," (11) instead of "misplaced modifiers" or "glue words" (23) instead of "coordinating conjunctions."

Perhaps it is the second assumption of these authors, that language forms are too complex to be understood by students without their assistance, that is most disturbing. Their arrogance is displayed, not so much in the scope of their objectives in which they usually portray themselves as humble servants providing needed information, but in the language they use to talk about writing and what is important in the teaching of writing.

Many, if not most of the books refer to writing as a skill, as an act that is made easier by hard work. Although most theorists and teachers alike would agree that students become better writers by writing (as opposed to doing exercise work or studying grammar rules) the assumption that writing must involve suffering and hard work has been questioned by many, most recently by Rosemary Dean (*College English* 1992). The idea that writing is hard work is of course reinforced by the testimonials of tortured professional writers, but also leads to the kind of oversimplified analogies that can be found in *Grassroots*, where "writing is much like ice skating: the more you

⁴*Building Basic Skills in Writing, Book Two*

practice, the better you get" (3). Although this comparison is made to reinforce the claim that writers need to be free to make mistakes just as ice skaters need to feel free to fall, what is also reinforced is the old nineteenth century "mental muscle" theory, the notion that the "writing muscle" is like the muscles one would train by practicing to ice skate. Since all humans have the same muscles, any language use attributable to cultural differences is effectively subordinated to "practice."

When writing becomes a skill that teachers and texts help ignorant students to "get better at," (perhaps reinforced by recent arguments that suggest writing teachers should behave more like "coaches") the unequal status between teachers/texts and their students is reinforced. Teachers and texts mean to help students to strive to be as good as the teacher or text, and the idea of the authority who can identify and describe "good writing" becomes an integral part of the "process" of guiding students through the "process." Identification and description of "good writing" requires the use of many techniques, not only by teachers to intimidate students, but by textbook authors to either intimidate or impress teachers, and sometimes both.

The struggle to intimidate and/or impress means authors and publishers must acquire the authority and legitimacy in the eyes of the individual with purchasing power, which at times can lead to seemingly philosophical contradictions in

their statements. In *Grassroots*, Fawcett and Sandberg offer sound and practical advice to writing instructors about student attitude and motivation, creating a writer's community, not marking grammar for at least two weeks, talking about only what is good in a paper, critiquing one another's work, and developing a flexible range of writing assignments (xvii-xix). But they also argue that their chapters are "self-contained lessons" that stress "development of writing skills rather than mere error correction" (xxi). A teacher interviewed for this project complained that there was much more content in *Grassroots* than could ever be made use of in a basic writing class. If teachers take Fawcett and Sandberg's earlier advice seriously, there would seem to be little time to make use of any of the textbook. A main objective of the authors is to create a "reference" text that teachers can "dip into" in order to prescribe relevant sections to students who "need the work." But even if the entire book is not meant to be used, what message is sent to students about the complexity and difficulty of learning to write when they purchase a textbook that contains more "knowledge" than they have time to assimilate? Doesn't this have the same potential to intimidate a student as overloading a paper with negative comments? One result of this practice is that the authority and knowledge of the textbook and teacher is reinforced at the expense of the student's contribution. In other words,

a massive textbook asserts its authority and legitimacy through its bulk, but *Grassroots* does this in other ways as well.

For example, Fawcett and Sandberg argue that "through inductive, step by step lessons and numerous practices" (xiii) the book has helped thousands. This sort of appeal to scientific authority is complimented by other academic language that tries to persuade teachers and others that the old has been thrown out in favor of the new: "We have replaced seventy practice sets with high-interest continuous discourses (sequential sentences that develop a topic), paragraphs, and essays for proofreading and other tasks" (xiii). *Evergreen* also refers teachers to the "scholarly" work of Erika Lindemann's *A Rhetoric For Writing Teachers* (Oxford University Press, 1982) and Gordon Brossell's "Current Research and Unanswered Questions in Writing Assessment" in *Writing Assessment: Issues and Strategies*, edited by Greenburg, Wiener, and Donovan, 1986, in refernce to the construction of writing assignments. "New" research is meant to uphold the integrity of the text by associating its content (and especially its writing assignments) with prestigious and valued arguments in the academy. However, if academic language is offensive to some, they might be reassured by *Grassroots* continuing emphasis on "fundamentals." Fawcett and Sandberg manage to use the

terms "basic" and "essential" in one sentence describing the book's treatment of subordinating conjunctions (xxiv).

Writing instruction seems to be described to teachers in introductory chapters not only with "scientific" and composition jargon, such as "full range of materials" or "collaboration" or "process", but also with a variety of truisms and advice in the actual text that preserves the distance between teacher or text and student. One is the valuing of "objective" writing as when *Writing With a Purpose*, in a discussion of "informative writing," advises students to "Leave your point of view out unless you are asked for it" (163). But there is no discussion of the fact that *choosing* what to inform readers of involves developing a point of view on the subject. Another way of perpetuating the objectivity myth is to co-opt scientific techniques of analysis and methodology, as when *English Skills with Readings, second edition* suggests that

When you look closely at a point, or topic sentence, you can see that it is made up of two parts:

1. The limited topic
2. The writer's idea about the limited topic (25).

Here the assumption is that if a student simply looks closely enough, and proceeds rationally, she should be able to "see" what everyone else sees.

Authors can also simply prohibit or discourage students from writing in a certain way or about a certain topic out of rhetorical considerations. For example, when students

write "persuasive" or "argumentative" essays, it is widely accepted that, as *Passages: A Beginning Writer's Guide* advises,

it [is] wise to avoid topics that are highly charged with emotion or just too complicated to be dealt with in a short essay - topics such as abortion or capital punishment or a freeze on nuclear weapons.

There are legitimate reasons for advising students to avoid topics which are too complex for short assignments or which prevent students from making intelligible arguments because they are too angry or excited. But notice how this advice is turned away from emotions and toward intelligence:

Now, this doesn't mean you must limit yourself to trivial issues or ones you care nothing about. Rather it means that you should consider topics you *know* [original emphasis] something about and are prepared to deal with thoughtfully in a short paper (181).

This author goes on to suggest that topics like the need for a campus day care center may be better. However, by the end of this chapter, the reader sees that Gore Vidal has addressed the hugely complicated and emotional topic of drug legalization in less than twelve paragraphs (197). The lesson to be learned here is that some writers can write about "big" issues while others cannot, not that some topics are more "suitable" than others.

Lastly, revised editions of textbooks all made significant efforts to describe "features" of their books to teachers and others who were considering a purchase. For example, *Writing With Confidence* divides "new" from "continuing" features, with new features highlighting the

importance of the writing process and placing greater emphasis on what seem to be "larger" structures such as "the paragraph," "student production of text," and "less fill in the blank activity." But "continuing features" suggest the same "micro" approach used in the past, focusing on sentence manipulation, punctuation, verbs, and other grammar concerns (xi-xiii). Books such as this suggest a "be all things to all people" approach, regardless of whether what is said in one part might contradict what is said in another part, and is intended to contribute to the credibility/legitimacy issue mentioned earlier.

Language Issues and Race, Class, and Gender

Writing textbooks tend to be thought of in purely "instructional" ways. Yet, when criticism is limited to instructional techniques, important social and political assumptions about that instruction may be obfuscated. Perhaps one of the most useful ways of revealing social and political assumptions is by examining how authors use and talk about language. In the following analysis, I will attempt to reveal a broad range of social attitudes and assumptions through the way authors use language and talk about it. I start with the assumption that race, class, and gender are familiar social constructs for understanding authority and inequality. These categories assist me as I critically examine the content of these selected texts. For example, when I examine the use of textual illustrations and

reading selections, race, class, and gender allow me to explore specific authorial attitudes and beliefs about societal norms and values. Or when I discuss the treatment of non-standard dialects and gendered pronouns, authorial attitudes about the role of language in contributing to an individual's sense of a social identity are more apparent.

Together, the following four sub-categories of analysis begin to describe particular attitudes the text may perpetuate about both appropriate social formations and the appropriate behavior of the individual within those formations. The categories include: the use of racist, sexist, or classist examples or illustrations in instructional explanations of various writing concepts; the use of racist, sexist, or classist reading selections in books designed to be "rhetorics;" the treatment authors give to discussion of non-standard dialects, and the way authors address the use of gendered pronoun usage.

Use of Illustrations and Examples

My analysis suggests that while race and class differences tend largely to be avoided entirely, gender is much more difficult for authors to avoid when using illustrative examples. While a few texts make conscious attempts to redefine traditional gender roles, others seem oblivious to any such criticism. Here are three non-traditional examples, the first two taken from *Grassroots* and *Evergreen* respectively:

Tim was sifting the flour Zelda built a blazing fire in the fireplace (156).⁵

A feminist is not a man-hater, a masculine woman, a demanding shrew, or someone who dislikes housewives. A feminist is simply a woman or man who believes that women should enjoy the same rights, privileges, opportunities, and pay as men (110).⁶

Or, from *Writing with a Purpose*

I'm getting really tired of hearing the same old thing from the commercials on television. One ad in particular that I cannot stand is the one that keeps repeating the phrase "ring around the collar." The chauvinistic man and his stupid looking wife say the same thing at least a dozen times, and none of this makes me want to use the product (9).⁷

However, for every non-traditional gender role modeled by an illustration, it was easy to find others that reinforced sexist stereotypes about men or women. Here are three examples from *Building Basic Writing Skills, Book 2, A Guide to the Whole Writing Process* (second edition), and *Passages, A Beginning Writer's Guide*, respectively:

1. The stewardess slipped and fell as the plane landed on her rear end.

The stewardess slipped and fell on her rear end as the plane landed.⁸

⁵From an exercise designed to identify run-on sentence and comma splices.

⁶From a discussion on definition employing the use of the negative.

⁷From an exercise asking students to divide a long paragraph into shorter ones.

⁸From an exercise designed to show students that words need to be "put in the right place."

2. He threw the ball. He has/had thrown the ball.

She did her work. She has/had done her work.⁹

3. Connie was thirteen years old when she first joined our church group five years ago. She was a typical ugly duckling, with fly away hair framing a pale, thin face and shapeless dresses disguising her lanky figure...

Now, five years later, the ugly duckling has become a beautiful swan. She has made herself pretty, with her hair fashionably short and neatly combed... (131-2).¹⁰

To reiterate, although classist and racist stereotypes in illustrative examples were more difficult to identify, now standard admonitions on the part of textbooks and teachers to draw out the writing process, to try not to do everything at once, and to return to a piece of writing many times, may be construed by some as classist in the sense that for many working class families, work is something you "do until the job is done." Choices about when to work based on individual desire or "readiness" have historically been an upper class luxury, especially for those students who do not have other outside obligations, such as part-time jobs or other responsibilities.

Reading Selections

Similar to illustrations or exercise work is the way race, class, and gender issues are reflected in the reading selections included in writing rhetorics. Here the issue

⁹From an explanation of irregular verbs.

¹⁰From an exercise designed to model "then" and "now" paragraph structure.

has been problematized in terms of student versus professional writing, where critics have argued that students are often intimidated by professional writers' work that is "too good." What is often overlooked in this discussion are the *kinds* of authors and texts presented and the content of their work, be they student or professional. My analysis suggests that, again, while some texts are sensitive to race, class, and gender issues, many, if not most, are not. Those sensitive to race, class, and gender may be grouped according to two categories: those privileging professional writing and those privileging student writing. In the first category are books like *Evergreen*,¹¹ which presents fourteen reading selections, seven by male authors and seven by female authors. Five of the fourteen represent non-white groups, including Alice Walker, Shanlon Wu, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Richard Rodriguez, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The content of these essays varies from the frivolous - Andy Rooney's "How to Put Off Doing a Job" - to the oppositional - Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Three Types of Resistance to Oppression." In the second category are books like *The Flexible Writer*, which eschews professional writers entirely, but includes numerous named student authors, both men and women, and represents a

¹¹Both gender and ethnicity were inferred by author's name or reputation.

wide range of racial/ethnic groups who discuss a wide range of cultural issues.

As with handbooks, those "rhetorics" which tended to be insensitive to race, class, and gender issues also tended to be most insensitive to gender. *A Guide to the Whole Writing Process* (second edition) includes no less than eleven writing samples by professional writers who are men, and only three by professional writers who are women. Of the three samples by women, one is a remembrance of the soft hands of a grandmother (81), and another is a remembrance of how the author stuck up for a girl being abused in gym class (91-92). Only one deals with a "worldly" issue, the growth of the computer industry (18). Essays by men authors tend to deal with "big" issues like preserving wilderness (83), getting rid of atomic weapons (93), saving the ozone layer (95), defying unjust laws (13, 14), or television violence (16). None deal with class or race issues, and Martin Luther King, Jr. is the only non-white author represented.

A different approach to gender stereotyping can be seen in *A Writer's Journey*. Here six professional authors' works are cited, all white men. The difference is that this time half of them are also prominent composition theorists.¹²

The quiet, paternal voice of authority is also present in *Passages: A Beginning Writer's Guide*, where, of the fifteen professional writers whose "passages" are included,

¹²William Zinsser, Peter Elbow, and Donald Murray.

eleven are white men. Of the four women authors, only one is black (a particularly mild piece by Maya Angelou).

English Skills with Readings, second edition seems at first as balanced in its representation of women as *Evergreen* (eight women writers and seven men writers), but a closer examination reveals that the eight essays by women tend to focus on issues traditionally considered "women's issues." They include two essays about families, two about education (and the importance thereof), one about careers, one about drunk driving, one about relationships between women, and one about dating. The seven essays by men are not only concerned with traditionally "male" topics, but more heavily favor individual action (you as an individual can do something) compared to the more socially-defined values of the essays written by women (we, together, can do something). One of the essays by men is about the heroic importance of "doing" sports, one about how you can control anger, two are "humorous," one is about "how to think clearly," and two about "family values." Of the fifteen essays, at least seven perpetuate the ideology that the individual will be successful if she and he perseveres long enough, suggesting a classist bias based on the belief that structural inequality is not a significant factor in this society. All but two authors (Maya Angelou and Delores Curran) appear to be white men or women, and the two essays

by Angelou and Curran address "families" and "adolescence" in ways that all but ignore ethnic or cultural differences.

Non-Standard Dialects

How these authors discuss the legitimacy and use contexts of non-standard dialects is revealing in terms of both their attitudes toward the use of language to reinforce authoritative relations in general, as well as the possible use of prestige dialects to perpetuate racial divisions.

These textbook authors either ignore the existence of non-standard dialects altogether, or treat them as issues of marginal importance. They often betray their ignorance of widely accepted terminology when they do address the issue. For example, in *Building Basic Skills in Writing, Book One* (most recently re-released in 1988), the use of the term "Black English" or any term at all referring to dialects from the African American speech community is avoided altogether, even though the following verb forms are described as "common in many parts of the United States:"

He done said.
He gone said.
He done gone said (119).

These forms are described as "Everyday English," and a phrase like "He done told me" is described as having one of several meanings, from "He did tell me" to "he told me" to "He had told me" to "He has told me" (119). Smitherman (1977) had already written succinctly on this subject long before the book was published:

A Black English statement containing only 'done' can usually be understood to mean the White English 'did.' However, when it is used with another verb, you cannot substitute the White English form 'did.' Instead, the White English equivalent is a form of 'have' (have, has, or had). The Black English 'James done seen the show' [means] 'James has seen the show,' not 'James did see the show' or 'James did seen the show.' (24).

In the *Building Basic Skills in Writing* example, only "He had told me" or "He has told me" would accurately describe the statement "He done told me." Only one or possibly two of the four possible meanings suggested above would be correct in Black English vernacular. The implication in this book's discussion is that Black English (discussed as "expressions common in many parts of the U.S.") has only a loosely-defined and accepted structure or has a variety of acceptable forms, in contrast with Standard English. This misstatement or ignorance of linguistic scholarship continued to be reflected in developmental writing instruction eleven years after the initial publication of Smitherman's work. One of the most popular texts of all, according to survey data, is *English Skills With Readings, Second Edition*, most recently published in 1991. This book refers to Black English vernacular forms as "community dialects" (266). Here "community dialects", which are "not to be used in your writing," are charted alongside "Standard English," which is to be used "for clear communication." The verb forms for "community dialects" are then literally crossed out. This is actually fortunate because, according to Smitherman (1977, 21), many of the

past forms listed as "community dialects" would be incorrect Black English vernacular forms.

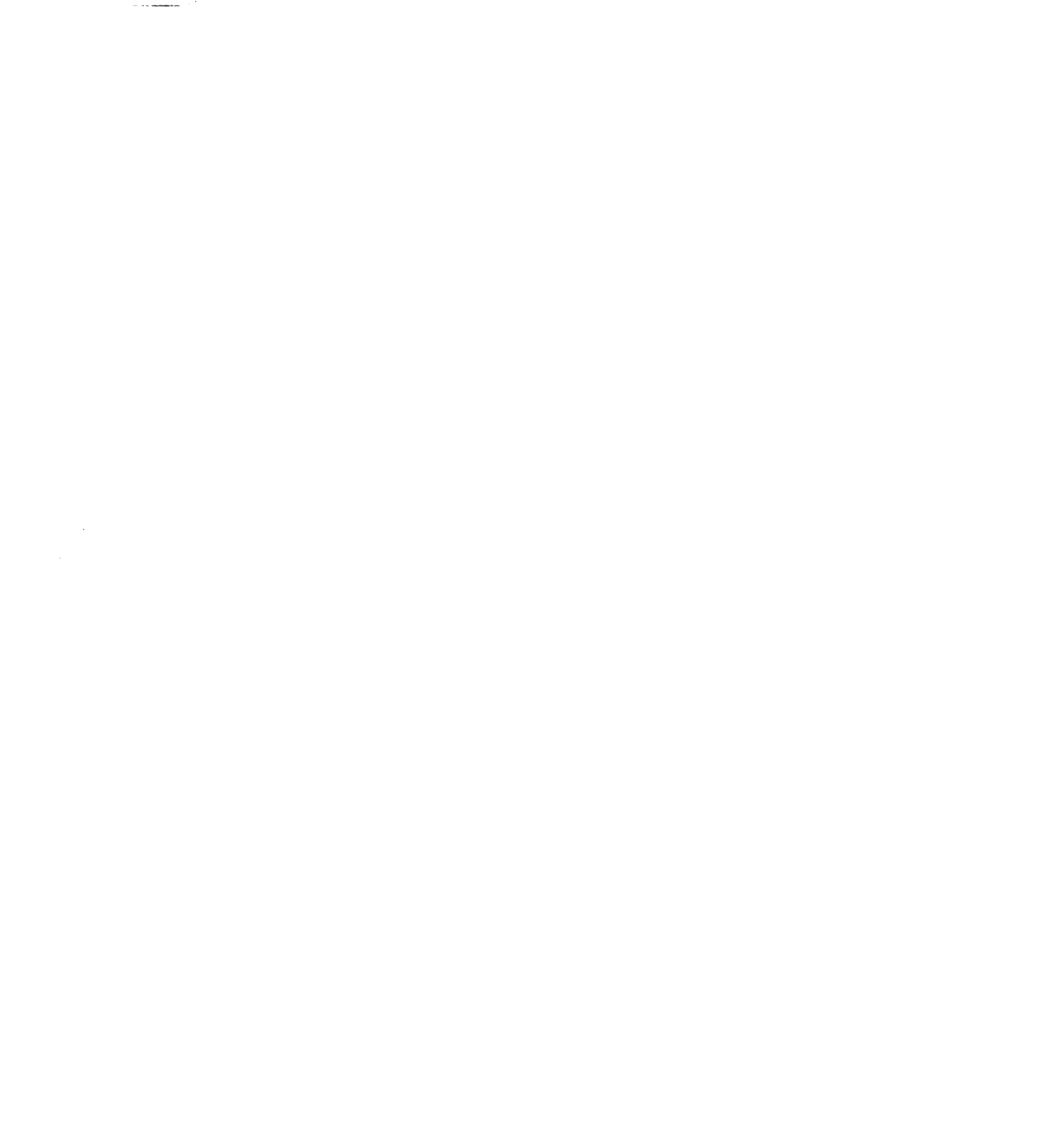
Non-standard dialects usually seem like something these textbook authors would rather not address, but feel they must. A middle ground is represented by books such as *A Writer's Journey*, which describes "black American English" statements like "He be here" or "Cajun dialect" statements such as "Pie are round" as "correct" in conversation but not "in academic or business writing" (138). Only one notable exception stands out in the discussion of non-standard dialects. In *The Flexible Writer*, "to know a language is to know a way of life." Here dialects are generally described, but the circumstances surrounding the development of dialects are not ignored:

the different dialects show that the people who speak them have been separated from each other at some point. Whether you tend to say 'I don't have any money,' 'I got no money,' or 'I'm broke' depends on the cultures in which you move (251).

Differences are thus defined in terms of culture, not in terms of inherent value in "appropriate" and "inappropriate" settings.

Gendered Pronoun Usage

Perhaps no other gendered language issue is as unavoidable as the question of whether the masculine singular form (he, his) should be used in situations where the gender of the subject is unknown. For example, in the following sentence, what pronoun should go in the blank?



Everyone should get _____ things together before we leave.

"Their," though gender neutral, is plural, and hence inappropriate according to some dictates because "everyone" is singular. Textbook authors handle this question in a number of ways. They can avoid the issue altogether, as is the case in books like *Building Basic Skills in Writing (Books One and Two)* or *A Guide to the Whole Writing Process*. Another alternative is to alternate "his" and "her" in discussions or examples of other concepts. *Writing For a Purpose* employs this "modeling" method (8), but avoids an outright discussion of the issue. Still other texts address the issue in their discussion of pronouns, but avoid prescribing any one method. For example, *The Least You Should Know About English (Form C, 4th edition)* describes what has been potentially controversial by distancing itself from the conflict:

Today many people try to avoid sex bias by writing sentences like the following:

If anybody wants a ride, he or she can go in my car. If anybody calls, tell him or her that I've left (116).

This author then describes "grammatically incorrect" solutions that are not "wordy and awkward" as well as constructions that "take a little thought" but avoid sex bias while maintaining correctness (such as making words plural). Another text, *Writing With Confidence* (fourth edition), describes the same sort of options, including "new

pronoun forms such as s/he and s/his" but concludes that "you may want to discuss the issue in class and perhaps hear your instructor's opinion" (248). What is noteworthy about this issue is not so much that it is an issue, but that textbook authors, who usually have no reservations about prescribing "correct" forms, back away from advocating a particular usage (unlike the standard versus non-standard dialect differences). They seem to see this as an "unsettled" issue that is somehow outside the bounds of their authority. This state of affairs may be related to the majority of women who teach writing in all institutions (see Susan Miller, 1989) or simply to the failure of feminists and others to connect language to gender issues. Again, only one of the examined texts attempts an open discussion of gender and power relations and direct advocacy of avoiding gender bias:

Language embodies gender differences. English retains remnants of old sexist beliefs. Starting with the end of the nineteenth century, we have made strides in establishing the equal rights for both sexes. But there is more to do. In writing, you can avoid sexism by paying close attention to not only what you write but to how you use pronouns that refer to gender. Here are several strategies (*The Flexible Writer*, 403).

The author then suggests "referring to both sexes," including reversing the customary order of "he or she" to "she or he," using plural forms instead, or shifting the focus from persons to "ideas, activities, states of being, or things" (404).

And What About the Writing "Process?"

Both Welch (1987) and Connors (1987) conclude optimistically that because textbooks were, at that time, beginning to present material about the writing process, teachers might be hopeful that positive change was at hand. Welch is qualified in her enthusiasm, however, by the presence of superficial treatments of process by some textbooks, often presented simply as another "mode." How do these textbooks treat discussions of "the writing process" today, after five to ten years on the "process" bandwagon? The answer is in a variety of mostly superficial ways, ranging from ignoring it altogether (e.g., *English 2000*) to reformulating the process as steps or procedures (e.g., *The Least You Should Know* and *Writing for a Purpose*) to "mentioning" techniques that amount to paying lip service, often in the first chapter (e.g., *English Skills with Readings, Passages, Grassroots, Evergreen*) to earnest philosophical discussions that are contradicted by text content and structure (e.g., *Writer's Journey, Guide to Whole Writing, Writing With Confidence*). Here I will focus on those texts which at least use the word "process" in their discussion of writing.

For some textbook authors, process, like grammar instruction for others, has become a part of the book that cannot be left out. Like Stephen North's celebrated metaphor of "adding on another wing" to the "lore" of

teacher knowledge¹³, some of these textbook authors simply add another chapter to an existing text and are either ignorant of any inconsistencies or hope they will go undiscovered. For example, *Grassroots* moves straight from a discussion of "freewriting," "brainstorming," and "keeping a journal" to "subjects and verbs," "avoiding sentence fragments" and no less than 26 subsequent chapters devoted to grammar or punctuation. What would constitute fundamental elements of "the writing process" for most authors (freewriting, brainstorming, etc.) is subsumed under a unit called "The Complete Sentence."

In *Passages*, the author begins with an overview of "the writer and the writing process" that asks students to explore their attitudes and background, as well as a writing process that identifies "four basic steps" most writers "follow in their own way: discovering, drafting, revising, and proofreading" (9). But a discussion of "freewriting," presumably an element of the first step involving "discovery," is not discussed until chapter five, fifty-two pages into the book and after discussions of topic sentences, paragraphs, and conclusions.

Along similar lines, *English Skills With Readings* devotes its first unit (84 pages) to the "first four steps in writing" and "the four bases for evaluating writing" before turning to the second part, "Other Important Factors

¹³see *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*

In Writing," (85) which is immediately renamed "Key Factors in Writing" (87) and includes a discussion of "having the right attitude," "writing for specific purpose and audience," "knowing or discovering your subject," "pre-writing," "outlining," and "revising, editing, and proofreading" (87). Unit Two seems inserted into the book with no apparent awareness on the part of the author that some of the topics discussed there might displace "the first four steps in writing" discussed in Unit One.

Other books treat discussions of "process" with more enthusiasm and understanding of its implications in the teaching of writing. For example, *A Guide to the Whole Writing Process* begins by assuring students that they "have a natural sense of language and of what language can do" while making more "scholarly" assertions that "writing is a way of thinking," an "act of communication," and that it is "not a neat, orderly, step by step process" (1, 2). But almost before this last sentence is written, the author is laying out a chapter by chapter overview that models an incremental, step by step approach, beginning with things like "exploring topics" and "focusing and ordering your material" and ending with "revising the whole paper" and "revising sentences" (3, 4). Chapter headings that focus on various aspects of the writing process may be a necessary organizational and presentational technique in the writing of any textbook, but these chapters give no sense of the

recursive nature of writing, of returning to "exploring topics" kinds of work if "focusing and ordering your material" doesn't produce the desired results.

The first chapter of *Writing with Confidence* is devoted not only to "examining the writing process," including planning, discovery, revising, and editing, but "illustrating the writing process" as well, through sample student drafts that show free writing, drafting, and revising. But the remainder of the book (16 chapters) is spent, not elaborating on elements introduced in the first chapter, but on detailed discussions of grammar and punctuation, primarily at the sentence level. Although Chapter Two claims to "build on [the writing process] by showing you how to write a powerful paragraph" (19), there is no discussion in Chapter One or Two of why writing paragraphs is an important part of the writing process, and by Chapter Four ("Joining Your Sentences: Coordination"), discussion of "the process" has been dropped, even in the introductory remarks.

While some critics may have once hoped that future textbooks might do a better job of teaching writing by starting with the simple but fundamental assertion that writing should be taught as an activity, not a product, it now seems to still be just that -- a hope. In order to understand why, however, we need to look beyond finger pointing arguments that fix the blame on publishers,

teachers, or even textbook authors, and begin to understand what sorts of circumstances inhibit change. Why do textbooks often seem organized in nonsensical ways, or in ways that mechanize and rigidify writing processes? Beginning to answer this question requires that we look not so much at how these authors imagine writing should be taught, as implied by their lessons or exercises, but at the physical and ideological conditions under which the textbooks are actually constructed and used. We need to imagine how writing, an activity historically reserved for the elite, is justified and envisioned when instruction is aimed at those who will probably never be members of the elite. Consideration of these issues may help us to better understand, compared to other concerns, why it may not matter to textbook authors such as these if they address "process" in their books in significant ways or not.

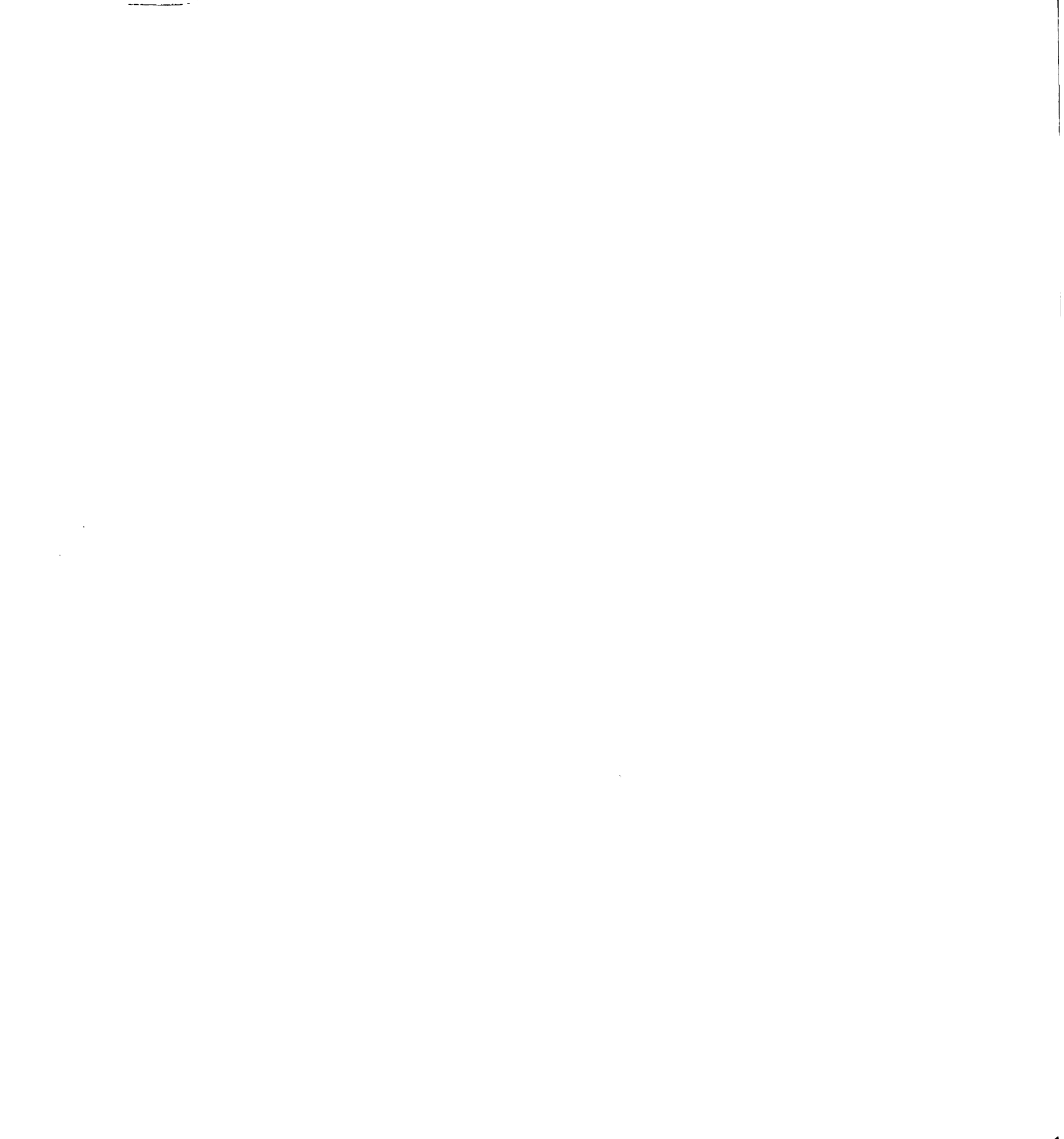
Conditions of Use: The Political Economy of Content

If a book simply sits on the shelf in a learning or writing center, or is lugged around as dead weight in a student backpack, from a publisher's point of view it has less value than a textbook that is read and studied, even though money has already been spent. What counts is the long-term investment in the same book over a period of many academic years. Books must be purchased, consumed, and purchased again in a cycle that first recoups an investment and then begins, over the long-term, to reap profits. Books that are

unused or not valued, though adopted repeatedly, enter the used book market, which undermines sales of new texts. In this section I will explore how the writing textbooks examined here have been assembled in the interest of the long-term use publishers hope their books will see. It is in this sense that the textbook as a commodity is most obvious. Commodities normally possess either use value or exchange value. Under ideal conditions, textbooks possess both. They possess use value because they are "used up" once a student has filled in all of the blanks and "done the work," and exchange value because their use theoretically translates into certification that can be exchanged for employment and other rewards. So every detail about a textbook is worthy of examination, from a publisher's perspective, in order to extend or enhance possible gain and avoid risk. Here I name several ways in which publishers adapt their products to the conditions under which they are used. These adaptations tend to do much to streamline textbooks and make them more "user friendly," but whether they actually benefit students is at best questionable.

Books are streamlined in the way they are physically constructed. For example, several texts examined here,¹⁴ employ perforated pages that can be torn out of the book easily so as to be "consumed" as homework assignments. *Evergreen* also provides an instructor's manual that includes

¹⁴see, for example, *Evergreen, Passages, and Journey*.



ready made teacher's handouts that can be used to support mini-lessons on everything from transition words to paragraph organization. The text in this way helps teachers to create both lesson plans and homework assignments, freeing the teacher to spend time doing other things. Along with *Grassroots*, *Evergreen* represents what might be called the "full service" textbook. Both books are advertised to teachers as providing a "full range of materials" that "adapt easily to course design" in flexible ways. For students, the texts include *USA Today*-like chapter highlights, summaries, and writing samples that focus on topics drawn from up-to-the-minute popular culture topics ranging from Batman to Whitney Houston to Tracy Chapman to Judy Chicago. These books are incredibly seductive in their appearance and in their appeal to do more for a diverse group of students. The appeal is similar to buying a multi-use vehicle like a Jeep or Bronco - one can drive it in the mountains but also use it to commute to work. If textbooks were automobiles, this state of affairs might not be troublesome, but permitting texts to "do more" means students and teachers do less, depriving both of an opportunity to construct their own ideas and values about writing by interacting with one another and the rest of the world on their own terms. Textbooks that try to "do it all," or even "do more" by continually adding new features, are still beginning with the assumption that students should

"receive" the knowledge most appropriate for them, rather than construct it themselves with the help of the teacher.

Although the idea that textbooks should adapt to the diverse needs of teachers and students is a more desirable state of affairs than the reverse, which has often been the case in the past, the occasions and methods by which students create meaningful writing are still being decided by textbook makers. The way authors suggest topics to students is one way responsibility is taken away from teachers and students. For example, textbooks often reasonably guide students towards topics more familiar to them, such as campus-related issues or family problems. But authors also have a tendency to use familiarity to simultaneously expect both more and less, especially in terms of persuasive writing. For example, students may be expected to know "more" about their subject, especially if the focus is on persuasive writing, but "less" may be expected in that many texts limit persuasive writing to consumer issues, especially writing letters of complaint about deficient products. Textbooks in this way reinforce the student as consumer rather than creator, a role the textbook has a vested interest in maintaining. By emphasizing the arguer as articulate consumer, textbooks also avoid more overtly political topics that might alienate some segment of their market.

Although one market expansion technique is to extend the scope of a book's discussion in order to make a simple book do more and appeal to more potential buyers, another technique is to replicate the content of a book in another book. In other words, authors can publish several books under different titles meant to serve different populations, but use essentially the same content in each book. This is the case in the financially successful series of books written by John Langan and published by McGraw-Hill (some in their fourth edition). *College Writing Skills with Readings*, and *English Skills with Readings*, for example, although targeted to either first-year composition or developmental writers, both begin with the first through fourth "steps in writing," followed by "the four bases for evaluating writing." The content in each of these books is virtually identical, except that the examples illustrating various concepts have been changed from one book to another. Publisher and author thereby increase the likelihood that programs and different types of students will purchase at least one book and maybe more with minimal publisher or author effort.

Finally, if publishers are unable to make an appeal to customers on the basis of doing more for more students in a generic way, they can appeal to customers on the basis of meeting outside directives or mandates. For example, in its "Instructor's Resource Manual," *Evergreen* shows how writing

skills as measured by student competency exams in Texas and Florida can be "correlated to the sections in the text where the specific skills are covered" (ix). Including this information in the teacher's manual but not in the regular text is a subtle way of circumventing the political controversy surrounding competency testing. Publishers are also able to appeal to those teachers untroubled by the competency testing mandate to buy a book because it will prepare students for a test.

Summary and Recommendations

This analysis of a broad range of "post-process" writing textbooks suggests that while some publishers and authors continue to be moving away from the current-traditional paradigm and more textbooks address "the writing process" than ever before, the actual content and structure of the books is a cause for continuing concern. While some textbooks reflect an understanding that process cannot be determined at the outset of a writing project, others are keen to delineate a precise and pre-determined format, and still others are content to ignore the issue altogether. Even those who understand the recursive nature of the writing process do not necessarily understand the recursive and individualized nature of language itself in the writer's process of making meaning, and many use the concept of error to assert their own authority and legitimize the presence of



the text as well as prescribed and culturally determined language forms.

While many authors have become sensitized to issues of diversity in the forms of race, class, and gender, others seem unaware of these issues, especially in the case of gender, or avoid potential confrontations with potential buyers who may not accept overtly politicized discussions. Sensitivity to race, class, and gender is perhaps best thought of as one of many choices that authors and publishers make on the basis of whether profit margins might be extended, along with other conditions of textbook use. Textbooks must appeal to a broad range of students and fulfill a broad range of functions in the classroom in order to justify their expense, and these functions may commodify the text in ways that directly contradict the individualized nature of process pedagogy.

Although it is important to realize that many textbook authors are teachers who are trying to help other teachers to teach better, I believe this reasoning and commercial writing textbooks in general, are fundamentally flawed because teachers unnecessarily abdicate responsibility to publishers and authors. The text, even when it "preaches" activities instead of platitudes, is still preaching, primarily to the largest group of converts it can assemble. Therefore, I recommend that, whenever possible, commercial textbooks should not be used in basic writing instruction.

This does not imply that "texts" of a different sort should not be used, however. Students best learn to write from each other, which means basic writing classes should rely heavily on student "texts" or writing. These texts can adopt academic conventions and formats with the assistance of the teacher, who can introduce them when they are needed and when students seem ready to use them. Basic writing classrooms can also make use of more worldly "texts" as a way of problematizing, rather than simply lecturing about, race, class, and gender. For example, students can become involved in critically reading the kinds of "texts" which construct reality on a daily basis, including music lyrics from women and/or minority perspectives, newspaper stories dominated by gender pronoun usage, wedding announcements that construct unequal relationships, or magazine advertisements that sell the same product to different populations (e.g., jean advertisements in *Cosmopolitan*, *Esquire*, or *Jet*). Students can become amateur ethnographers, listening in on the conversations of women and men, members of ethnic groups speaking with each other and those of other ethnicities, or the rich and the poor. Their discourse analysis can then serve as a "text" to be read by all members of the class, small groups of students, or individuals constructing their own writing projects. These are not the sort of "activities" promulgated in most basic writing projects partly because they are

controversial, but also because they require students and teachers to interact with their environment in specific ways that may not be reproducible in other classrooms. There is less for the textbook to do, and hence less profit to be made.

If previous researchers remained hopeful that composition theory would eventually have a positive effect on how commercial textbooks taught and modelled writing instruction, this researcher does not. The assumption of previous researchers is that theory translates into purchasing power when those who have come to own that theory use it to make choices as consumers of products. But this view assumes fixed, static conceptualizations of theory and preserves a model of consumption that relegates publishers and authors to much more passive roles than may in fact be the case. Theory is never "accepted" in a comprehensive way, but rather is confronted and negotiated in terms of its meaning. While composition theory is often confronted and reinterpreted by both teachers and students (see Chapter VI), we must also include publishers and authors in that group. In order to understand the circumstances of their confrontation, we must also better understand the nature of the current publishing scene.

Chapter IX

PUBLISHING TEXTBOOKS: THE TYRANNY OF THE BOTTOM LINE

Stated in the briefest terms, what is occurring is concentration of the industry in fewer and fewer hands; installation of rationalized, bureaucratic management practices borrowed from other industries; pressure to make conservative publishing decisions as a way of avoiding economic risk taking; and a focus on short term profits. Growth, expansion, and cost effectiveness are the goals that rule the day.

-- Naomi Silverman

Behind the commodity, the book, stands indeed a whole set of human relations.

-- Michael Apple

While some previous criticisms¹ of textbooks have focussed on the responsibility of publishers to take the lead in developing better books for students, those involved in publishing books, including authors and editors, often see themselves as doing the best they can given that they work in a very competitive business. The entire book publishing industry, although small compared to other industries, brought in sales of about \$6 billion in 1980, of which \$1.5 billion came from elementary, secondary, and college markets (Apple 1991, 28). Although publishing has remained lucrative, there has been an increasing trend towards

¹see Connors, 1987; and Welch, 1987

consolidation among all publishers, including textbook publishers over the last twenty to thirty years, with fewer companies producing fewer products (books). According to Cosher, Kadushin, and Powell, "in 1975, the ten largest college publishers accounted for 75% of college textbook sales, and the top twenty had over 90% of the market" (1982, 273). More recently, Wong and Loveless state that 80% of the nation's textbook market is controlled by only seven major publishers (1991, 31). Coser, Kadushin, and Powell describe how this trend towards consolidation is not new:

For over one hundred years publishers [in general] have sought to market fewer books in larger quantities to achieve higher profits; and over the same period, virtually every house of any size has been involved in mergers and acquisitions (23).

Nevertheless, recent consolidation and centralization of power in the textbook industry is ethically troubling to some, given publishers' unique relationship to educational institutions, as well as the large sums of money involved. Greco reports that "between 1984 and 1988, publishing mergers and acquisitions involved dozens of major U.S. firms that spent a reported \$23.1 billion on corporate takeovers [while the] actual costs were probably closer to \$40 billion" (1989, 26). The most dramatic publishing ventures during this period include Rupert Murdoch's \$3 billion purchase of Triangle Publications and Robert Maxwell's \$2.6 billion purchase of MacMillan (Greco, 25).

This chapter will outline some of the most disturbing trends and issues that have characterized the industry in recent years, as well as some of the criticism of the way the publication process works. I will describe the mergers and acquisitions that have affected many publishing houses, including those that publish books used by programs discussed in this project. I will also summarize conversations with publishing editors and representatives whose books have been discussed in this project in order to gain an additional perspective on their creation and function.

Textbook publishing is unique for several reasons. Perhaps most obvious is the fact that publishers don't sell directly to buyers, but to others who assume the decision making power for the buyer (or student). The number of actual "customers" (teachers, administrative representatives, or in the case of some public schools, adoption committees) is smaller than for other book markets. When decisions about how large sums of money will be spent are placed in fewer hands, it is certain that the marketplace will take notice. Keith notes other factors that make textbooks appealing to investors: "Textbooks offer a mass market, steady turnover, and relatively stable profits to present to stockholders" (1991, 44). Making money through textbook sales is far from an easy enterprise, though. Apple notes that "in the publishing industry as a

whole, only three out of every ten books are marginally profitable; only thirty percent manage to break even. The rest lose money" (1991, 32). The result is that decisions are made based on what Apple calls a "set of choices within corporate logic," or a "censorship of profitability" (32), rather than from a narrow range of purely abstracted ideological interests. In other words, the content of the textbook is determined, more than anything else, by what Silverman calls "the tyranny of the bottom line" (173). However, probing the conditions under which that bottom line is drawn is an important way of better understanding its influence. Problematizing rather than accepting the bottom line then becomes a form of critical inquiry into the ideological and epistemological values the book as commodity represents.

Keith (44) argues that three specific factors determine the content of all textbooks, including those used in higher education: 1) the organization and practices of the publishing industry; 2) the selection processes of authorities; and 3) the influence of special interests. Perhaps because of their public and official nature as well as their extraordinary power over the curriculum, textbook adoption committees have been the subject of significant criticism² and exemplify one of the major problems with the

²see, for example, Marshall, "With A Little Help From Some Friends," and "State Level Textbook Selection Reform," both 1991; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988; and Cody, 1990.

selection process, that is, who makes the decisions about which textbooks are used in the schools, how they go about making those decisions, and what the consequences of these decision-making practices might be. In what have been called the "adoption states," twenty-two mostly southern and western states including Texas and California, textbooks for the public elementary and secondary schools must be approved by committees³. In Texas, for example, the statewide adoption committee is made up of fifteen educators, mostly classroom teachers, who review books submitted by publishers. They make their decisions with the "help" of those publishers, and their choices are then approved or rejected by "curriculum experts" and subject to hearings where the strengths and weaknesses of particular texts are aired.

The adoption committee process emphasizes eliminating problematic texts, not adding new ones. Although this takes place on a large scale in elementary and secondary school systems, departmental adoption committees at the college level seem to use similar approaches when choosing textbooks for use in developmental education. Also, since the same publishers who publish elementary and secondary texts also publish developmental texts, decision making practices in

³Apple (1989) describes the aristocratic basis of laws that developed primarily in the South to protect "incompetent" teachers from disreputable publishing firms.

one market may overlap into other markets. One effect of the practice of "weeding out" bad texts is that publishers invest a great deal of time, money, and effort in the preliminary phase of consideration, where it becomes essential for a publisher's books to be placed on a list for consideration. In large adoption states like Texas, the payoff for publishers can make a large financial investment worthwhile, and often other states follow the lead of the large adoption states. But the negative consequences have led writers like Tyson-Bernstein (1988) to label the entire process "a conspiracy of good intentions." She argues that while the creators of the bureaucratic system may have been well meaning, the overall effect is that textbook content suffers.

First, adoption policies result in the standardization of the curriculum for not only an individual state like Texas but for the rest of the country as well, because so much financial capital is invested by publishers in a single product that must then be updated at regular intervals to ensure its popular status. That text is often accompanied by "freebies" or "add-ons" that enhance a text's appeal, such as teacher editions, student workbooks, audio or video cassettes, and so forth. These enticements raise the overall cost of the textbook, making additional purchases less likely. A significant part of the appeal of that text may also be its "ease of use" rather than its content, which

tends to be "watered down" to avoid controversy during the approval process⁴. The final product may contain boring text but visually dazzling graphics and pictures in order to appeal to those buyers who employ the "flip test" (i.e., flipping through the book to decide if it is what they want). Often Adoption committee members and teachers in general don't have the time to actually read the books, and rely on a quick look and the pitch of a sales representative (see Marshall in *Politics of the Textbook*, 1991).

Although state adoption policies may directly affect only those elementary and secondary schools in particular states, the effects on the organization and practices of the textbook industry (which also publishes books used in developmental education) are worth noting. Centralizing the decision making processes in elementary and secondary school systems means publishers become accustomed to devoting more time and attention to the needs and interests of fewer individuals (who often represent special interests, such as religious or patriotic groups) and this can become habituated as the normal or "necessary" way of relating to everyone. More energy and money is then invested in fewer, less diverse products, partly because a minority of teachers submit their opinions, but also because of the demand for texts that match testing objectives and the desire to avoid

⁴see Tyson-Bernstein, 1988; Daniel Tanner, 1988; Marshall, "With A Little Help...", 1991; Cody, 1990; and English, 1980.

controversy.⁵ The net result is that even those teachers or school districts able to choose their own books have fewer overall choices to make, especially when the products with the largest time and money investment are made more attractive through "freebies" and broad pedagogical appeals.

College textbook publishers follow this trend by making large investments in "basic texts," or those texts professors rely on to "teach the course." Class sizes in many colleges and universities have been steadily increasing due to financial cutbacks that result in hiring freezes and layoffs (see Grassmuck, 1991) and students who are financially squeezed by increasing tuition have less money to spend on texts considered "supplementary" to the course content. Publishers are also stung by resulting increases in sales of used texts and examination copies, as well as shorter publishing cycles as a result of rapidly changing research in the disciplines (Watkins, 1979).

Large investments in general college or public school texts must then be protected by more extensive market research and what one publisher refers to as being "more into the management of the entire textbook process" (Watkins, 1979). This may mean saving money by producing "author-assisted" books that require the authors to write only part of a text or revise an existing text (while

⁵See Fawcett and Sandberg's *Grassroots* for an example of a basic writing text keen on matching textbook content to testing objectives.

editors or others write the rest), or "managed" texts that may be written entirely in-house but reviewed by a noted authority who sells his or her name to the publisher⁶. These kinds of "inside" techniques represent what individual publishing houses can do on their own to enhance their competitive status. But in order to understand the structural changes still underway in the publishing industry, one must also understand the merger mania of the '80s.

In 1974, Dessauer optimistically predicted that:

If it is true that increasing complexity and diversity are the hallmarks of cultural maturity and advancing civilization, what is happening to higher education is on the whole profoundly encouraging. For despite diminishing enrollments, hard financial times, and the confusion that accompanies any major transition, diversity is becoming increasingly manifest in the teaching programs of colleges and universities. And the college textbook, like its elhi [elementary-high school] counterpart, is becoming a less monolithic and more individualized entity (65).

While the existence and impact of authentic diversity in higher education continues to be debated, the prediction that textbooks would become more individualized and less monolithic now seems unjustified. In order to understand why, it is useful to examine the more general history of mergers and acquisitions in this country. Corporate mergers did not originate in the 1980s. Bluestone and Harrison describe two other general corporate merger waves at the

⁶see Winkler, 1977; Coder, Kadushin, and Powell, 1982; and Keith, 1991.

turn of the century and again in the late 1960s (1988, 59). Sewall and Cannon (1991, 67-8) and Noble (1991, 7) each describe one such publishing merger wave in the textbook industry consolidation of 1890. This consolidation led to the creation of the American Book Company, which then controlled 75-80% of the market, including the legendary *McGuffey Readers*. Independent publishers were eventually able to break into the market through favoritism and bribery, but the difference between then and now is that in the past publishers had neither high production and distribution costs, nor did they attempt to serve virtually the entire population, as U.S. educational publishers now try to do. Moreover, Bluestone and Harrison argue that the number of general corporate mergers in the past "pale by comparison with either the number of mergers or the value of the acquisitions (adjusted for inflation) that occurred in the 1980s" (59). These general corporate mergers were making big money for Wall Street firms "engineering" the deals,⁷ which allowed "corporate raiders" to threaten smaller companies with their ability to buy them out, resulting in radical "downsizing" of some companies so they could afford to fend off these attacks. Bluestone and Harrison cite the eloquent explanation of Walter Adams (economics professor at Michigan State University) and James

⁷Greco (1989) says Wall Street firms specializing in acquisitions earned \$1.28 billion on 158 mergers and acquisitions in 1988 alone.

Brock (Miami University of Ohio), that points out the consequences:

Two decades of managerial energies devoted to playing the merger game are, at the same time, two decades during which management has been diverted from the critically important job of building new plants, bringing out new products, investing in new production techniques and creating jobs. The billions spent on shuffling paper ownership shares are, at the same time, billions not spent on productivity-enhancing investments (62).

Bluestone and Harrison point out that to make matters worse, one out of three acquisitions is later undone, due to a failure to produce a return on the investment for the parent company (but not for the deal makers). The quickest way for large companies to earn money from a purchase that may not be working out is to treat acquired businesses as "cash cows" until their assets have been effectively drained. Noble points out that in the publishing industry, this scenario may be the result of economies of scale in the marketplace. Large companies typically have a harder time offering a wider variety of products than small companies, due to the need to "allocate [their] overhead fairly equally over [their] product lines" (1991, 7). The solution has been to acquire a large number of smaller companies in order to diversify their offerings, while "consolidating only cost factors (such as printing and paper purchases)" (7). In other words, large publishing companies buy smaller companies for their innovative ideas, but if the innovations

don't pay off, the smaller companies are drained of their assets as punishment.

Other effects are also noteworthy. Rothman argues that in the publishing industry the merger and buyout trend both "reduces competition and may result in greater homogeneity among the materials" (1989, 1). Independent publishers who may have once found themselves able to occupy a market niche, now may find the niche to be more of a constraint on their ingenuity rather than an opportunity to specialize. Being a part of a larger corporate structure means publishers may be directed to produce a narrower range of products so as "not to compete, overlap, or in textbook industry jargon, 'cannibalize' one another" (Sewall and Cannon, 62). Meeting the needs of the parent company can mean that producing "innovative" or different products is mandated from outside of the smaller company but within the corporate structure, rather than from within the smaller company. Gilbert T. Sewall, director of the American Textbook Council, argues that smaller companies can be diverted from their traditional objectives: "textbook companies are becoming subjugated to worldwide communications firms more interested in MTV and Nintendo games than Thomas Jefferson and quadratic equations" (as qtd. in Rothman, 12).

Sewall may have been thinking of Time-Warner Communications, which bought textbook giant, Scott-Foresman

in 1986, only to sell it to Harper and Row, which later became Harper Collins, both made subsidiaries of News America Publishing in 1989.⁸ In 1989, Warner spokespersons confessed that they "didn't understand exactly what [we] bought" (Rothman, 12). However, by 1992 they seemed to understand their market better, claiming that "when Warner books look at book contracts, [we] think about whether it will make a good movie," thus emphasizing its interest in entertainment publications ("Talk of the Nation," National Public Radio, May 17, 1992).

Other mergers in the publishing business suggest larger, "macro" forces that may be making the publication of non-traditional textbooks more difficult. In 1989, British entrepreneur Robert Maxwell acquired MacMillan Publishing Company, which had only that year joined with McGraw-Hill and Merrill Publishers to overtake Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich as the largest school publisher in the U.S. Maxwell had been trying since 1987 to acquire Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich (HBJ), which had, until 1989, been the largest educational publisher, due in no small part to its own acquisition of Holt, Rinehart and Winston from Columbia Broadcasting System in 1986. HBJ had diversified over the years by selling insurance and developing theme parks in Florida, making it an attractive takeover target (DeGeorge, 1988). But HBJ spent \$2.5 billion in 1987 fighting off

⁸source: Directory of Corporate Affiliations

Maxwell's takeover efforts, and ended up selling the theme parks in an effort to avoid bankruptcy (Rothman, 12). The only reason HBJ survived in its present form is because General Cinema offered to buy the company from bondholders who "were presented with an offer that was close to what they might receive in a bankruptcy, yet General Cinema was offering a chance to cash out sooner" (Donnelly, 1991). The deal meant HBJ would get a "fresh start," in business terms, while MacMillan and the other Maxwell Corporation subsidiaries would be weighed down by the parent companies' own bankruptcy following Robert Maxwell's death in 1991 and the indictment of his two sons in 1992 for embezzling millions from the Maxwell empire's pension funds.

While these high stakes battles over global corporate empires may be seen by some as the cost of doing business in the global economy, others, like Tyson-Bernstein, worry that "the people running companies who used to spend their time looking after development are now spending their time fending off takeovers and writing memos to their corporate bosses" (as qtd. in Rothman, 12). An important issue that remains is the influence of these corporate re-structurings on the creation and content of textbooks used to teach basic writing. Of the most regularly cited publishers, all but Houghton-Mifflin, St. Martins, and Contemporary are currently (1992) subsidiaries of corporate giants, including News America Publishing (Scott-Foresman, Harper Collins),

General Cinema (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich and Holt, Rinehart, and Winston), the Maxwell empire (McGraw-Hill and MacMillan), Paramount Communications, (Allyn and Bacon, Prentice Hall) and Raytheon, maker of electronic "defense" products (D.C. Heath).

But is affiliation by itself an indictment? I spoke with representatives (editors and members of editorial staffs) from each of the eight publishers whose books were examined in the previous chapter.⁹ I asked them whether mergers with larger parent companies influenced their work in any way. While most individuals were aware of their company's relationship to parent companies, they often expressed little animosity about that relationship, even though one editor had years before been forced out of a job at Little, Brown as a result of its acquisition by Time Warner. Another editor pointed out that as long as the parent company allows the smaller company to control its own production, and does not devote its time to "watching what we publish," there are several advantages to the relationship. For example, although the parent might at any time "call them to corporate accountability," when times were tough due to uncontrollable factors like declining enrollments, it could also "bail them out" until profits increased. The parent company also provides the sort of

⁹McGraw-Hill; Contemporary; Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich; Allyn and Bacon; D.C. Heath; Harper Collins; St. Martins; and Houghton Mifflin.

manufacturing and distribution advantages alluded to earlier through a centralized economy of scale that reduces printing and storage costs. This is important, said this editor, because of changes during the '70s in tax laws that increased tax rates on back inventory stock as well as changes in permission laws that increased the cost of re-printing previously published material.

From inside the industry, editors and authors tend to be generally optimistic (or defensive, depending on your perspective). Much of that optimism is grounded in the belief that the publishing business continues to draw "good people" such as

book lovers, intellectuals, creative souls, people with a sense of social mission, and others as well, who genuinely enjoy being in the business of making books (rather than, say, breakfast cereals or automobiles or shoes) (Silverman, 179).

Another inside view holds that most textbook editors are former teachers who are sympathetic to teacher concerns and do all that they can to create the kind of book that teachers want (although none of the editors I spoke with were former teachers). In other words, what they want is what they get:

...if what they [teachers] wanted was not in textbooks, it was either because not enough teachers wanted it or because not enough teachers made their wants known. Focus groups, surveys, feedback from sales representatives, are all used to find out what teachers want. I am sure that if enough teachers said they wanted pictures of dogs on page 14, publishers would have at least one picture of a dog on page 14 of every school textbook produced (Young 74).

This view was defended, sometimes bitterly, by editors and staff members with whom I spoke. For example, some basic writing textbooks are designed to meet the needs of classes whose entire focus is on writing sentences, or paragraphs, or essays, but not all three. The Contemporary book discussed earlier, *Writing For A Purpose*, was written for classes that emphasize the writing of paragraphs, while another book in the series was written specifically for classes that emphasize sentence writing. Another editor argued that teachers want these "sentence books"¹⁰ because they offer pre-made homework assignments (some of which are easily torn out of the book in classic workbook format). Editors said that teachers who use them are either "old fashioned" in that they believe assigning these exercises actually improves student writing, or because they are "too lazy" to think up other activities. Yet another editor argued that the popular text published by his company is constructed to "get students through the course" in a "simple, step by step fashion that leads students through the process." His assumption was that teachers want a text that simplifies material so that students do not lose confidence and drop out, a common occurrence in developmental classes (see Chapter V). In this case, retention becomes a dominating objective, pedagogically

¹⁰Two examples of this type of book in this study are *English 2200* and most of *The Least You Should Know About English*.

separated from theoretical struggles over how students "really" learn to write.

A second factor leading editors and others to believe they are primarily the servants of classroom teachers is the extensive review process that has developed in concert with the centralization of the publishing industry. As more money is invested in fewer products, a greater concern develops for ensuring a return on the investment. The primary method of ensuring that concern is through marketing surveys, peer reviews,¹¹ and on-going visits by sales representatives and editors alike to both schools and professional conferences. Although the content and results of marketing surveys are not readily made public, several editors spoke of important questions they ask in the peer review process. These include questions about the reading and interest level of the textbook content, or how readable the prose is, whether assignments or exercises "work" (meaning whether they help to meet class objectives), whether the text is "logically organized," contains "high quality" readings, and whether overall content is "appropriate." This last concern was illustrated by suggesting that if some reader found a prose selection objectionable due to its controversial content, that selection might be dropped. For example, an essay on

¹¹A process which involves asking selected teachers from around the country who use the text being examined to say what they think about it.

abortion in a rhetoric workbook that supplied graphic details about the fetus might then be eliminated.

The emphasis in the review process is not always on eliminating objectionable material, though. Editors interviewed here noted that while approval committees tend to focus on identifying problems, individual reviewers suggest additions, not deletions. This is important because, as one editor put it, "Nobody ever bought a textbook for what you left out." One consequence of this adage is that while writing textbooks may start out as only 200 pages in length, by the third or fourth editions they may be 300-400 pages long, with additional material constituting more "traditional" values if the text started out as an innovative approach to teaching writing, or more "innovative" (i.e., including discussion of the importance of the writing "process") if the book began its publishing cycle with more traditional material. But bulkier books have their disadvantages as well. One editor described the increasing resistance on the part of students over the past ten years to the increasing prices of textbooks, especially large books that typically cost more. Students may decide not to purchase a large, expensive book and instead share with other students or photocopy necessary material from books. So the review process publishers now use is made more difficult because of the risk of lack of desirable content as well as excessive content.

The process of determining textbook content is made even more complicated by accountability or testing mandates and demographics. An editor at one publishing house, whose market is primarily adult basic education and G.E.D. testing, said that if the G.E.D. test had not been amended in 1987 to require student writing as a component of the writing portion of the test, two recent titles would probably never have been written, since adult education teachers tend to "respond only to changes in testing or textbooks." Another editor spoke of the soon-to-be implemented CUNY (City University of New York) grammar tests that would influence the content of many textbooks.

Student and teacher demographics, or determining the type of individual for which the textbook is meant to appeal, is another factor distinct from theoretical or ideological appeals. For example, one sales representative remarked that a textbook included diverse multicultural readings because it was used "in the bowels of Los Angeles" where whites were a minority. A diverse multicultural curriculum was not, in this case, valued for its own sake, but because it met a particular market need. A similar logic was voiced by an editor who explained that the textbook we were discussing was more sensitive to gender issues than other books, not because gender sensitivity was important in the teaching of English or writing classes, but

because "there are more women than men [teaching those classes] out there."

Editors say they do what they do, therefore, because "customers" want books to do certain things. What is noteworthy about the views of both teachers and publishers is first, that neither speaks of any formalized process by which students contribute their views directly, and second, that neither seeks to involve or criticize those who supposedly "produce" the knowledge they take responsibility for imparting to students. Scholars, researchers, and authors seem to be held at arms' length, as though their input was either unassailable, irrelevant, or dangerous.

While both written and oral accounts by publishing insiders tend to defend the integrity of those involved in publishing, they also seem to see themselves as intermediaries or negotiators who must resolve conflicts between sometimes oppositional objectives. Many of the publishing representatives interviewed here echo other authors (see Young, 1990), who seem to see teachers as the obstacle to the creation of innovative college textbooks. Publishers would innovate, or implement new and compelling ideas and techniques from the academy, they argue, if only teachers would accept these innovations (Young, 83). Silverman emphasizes the personal and ethical dilemmas between college publishers'

goals, perceptions, ideas, and interests of their own [and] the financial goals of the corporation [which are] sometimes, but not inherently or inevitably, in conflict (1991, 164).

It is then "the interplay of these tensions [that] drives the complex process of college textbook publishing" (164).

These views portray publishers as problem solvers inevitably constrained by the mandate of the bottom line. Publishers do not create problems, in their view, but react to existing situations. Rather than see themselves as contributors to the state of affairs as they currently stand, publishers, unlike teachers or even adoption committees, see themselves as victims of the rules of corporate logic which define their relationship to the larger educational enterprise.

But their involvement is clearly not as neutral or subordinate to the involvement and beliefs of teachers and others as they might imagine it to be. Many of the editors and other representatives I spoke with took clear ideological stands on how writing should be taught. Some valued textbooks that emphasized the writing of essays rather than sentences and encouraged activities involving peer criticism, not just teacher criticism. Others seemed to intentionally straddle the fence, striving to please everyone, as in the case of the sales representative who told me "process is important because that's what teachers want, and if you look closely, the exercises in this book will lead up to student generated writing." Still others

were defiant and defensive, as was the editor of a hugely popular textbook who challenged me with "If you don't know grammar, how can you communicate?" and "Do you think 50% of 18 year olds can write a sentence? Don't you think that's kind of a necessary skill?" These representatives of the publishing industry were clearly not ideologically value-neutral in their approach to publishing textbooks, but instead were important participants in the production of beliefs about the teaching of writing. The editor who argued that the parent company "doesn't watch what we publish," also claimed that books begin as an author's vision of what should go on in the classroom but end "as a compromise," presumably between author ideals and what publishers think will be valued by buyers.

But how do publishers go about deciding how they will "compromise?" The editor who, for all practical purposes assumed responsibility for staff development in adult education through the textbooks her company published, saw her role as one of changing teacher's attitudes, not just making money or giving teachers what they want. Such comments point to an involvement by publishers in the interpretation of what should count as knowledge in the teaching of writing. Publishers react to particular economic situations, but what they do and what they produce is in turn the basis of some other participants' reaction. More than any other party involved, publishers embrace their

connection to financial interests, but because their involvement is participatory, not simply reactionary, as many would like us to think, an understanding of how "the tyranny of the bottom line" constructs viewpoints and relationships represents one of the most profound ways of understanding the commodification of literacy in educational institutions.

Summary

Rather than an economy being out there, it is right here. We rebuild it routinely in our social interaction.

-- Michael Apple

Publishing has often been understood as a secretive business, protective of its practices, policies, and decision making procedures. From the data collected in these interviews, one of the most interesting findings is the way people involved in the publication of textbooks see themselves in this process. By emphasizing and visualizing their role in narrowly economic terms, publishers are able to simultaneously justify the content of their products while obfuscating the process by which decisions about content are made. Although nearly all publishers subject their books to the process of peer review that seeks input from teachers who respond to the content and structure of proposed texts as well as to marketing surveys, the process of determining what questions will be asked, who will be contacted, and how decisions are ultimately made on the

basis of that input is typically not make available or discussed in detail.

Publishers interviewed here often preferred to define themselves as the neutral, even transparent vehicle through which teachers' needs are met. This role is justified by the involvement of publisher representatives in the gathering of information as previously mentioned, but interpreted in purely functional terms that are translated into economic equations. The oft heard cry that if teachers want something, the market will provide it does not take into consideration either the structural demands (such as testing) under which teachers come to make decisions about what they want, or the role of the publisher in perpetuating certain "needs." For example, publishers who may be apologetic about a structured rather than a philosophical approach to writing explain that the structure is necessary for inexperienced or lazy teachers who do not want to do the work of designing lesson plans themselves. But in making this kind of statement, they assume first that such "shortcuts" are conscionable (since they meet market demand), and second, that some sort of equally authoritative and structured lesson plan is what most teachers want, but that experienced or hard-working teachers simply create their own. This suggests a resigned acceptance of authoritative, traditional methods of writing instruction that no reason except the force of market relations will

change, and even then changes that might be made would have to minimize risk taking, since so much is invested in so few products.

The most successful way to minimize risk in the creation of basic writing texts is by incorporating elements of alternative pedagogical value systems while maintaining elements viewed as fundamental from traditional practices, thereby appealing to a broader range of potential buyers. This is why many basic writing textbooks make so little sense when considered as whole texts. Any consistency in a book's theoretical approach to the teaching of writing is undermined by the economic co-optation that rules the decision-making process. This has been exacerbated by the mergers and acquisitions trend of the '80s, so that even though small publishers continue to exist, once they come under the economic control (or protection, depending on your perspective) of a parent company, their ability or inclination to continue to create innovative materials can become diminished.

Publishers, like everyone else, have opinions about what they will and will not publish, but the emphasis on profit can obscure those values, making it seem as though they have no responsibility to create anything that the market does not seem to value. Teachers' widespread dissatisfaction with many of the textbooks on the market, however, (see Chapter VI) suggests that the tyranny of the

bottom line can be seen as an excuse to continue writing a certain kind of book as often as it is a mandate to produce what teachers want. The perpetuation of homogenous textbooks meant to appeal to many must be seen as assisted through the centralization of authority in educational systems, general economic re-structuring by publishers, and narrowly defined interpretations of teacher feedback by publishers. None of these realities will be easy to change, because each represents a site where power is concentrated for legitimation purposes. Rather than fight to take power away from any single participant, in the remainder of this discussion I will attempt to discuss how changing the *relations* between participants is another way to advocate for change.

Chapter X
OBSERVATIONS

Publishers, institutions, and teachers expend considerable effort in their attempts to teach historically excluded students to write material suitable for academic work. Most people see such efforts as laudable, while others see them as misplaced, producing unintended and often contradictory results. While the status gap between those who have the power to shape writing instruction methods and values and those who must submit to those values will probably always remain, I will here resist the impulse to villainize an oppressor and martyrize a victim. Instead, I will employ an hegemonic framework to describe what I believe is a network of existing participatory relations that inscribe many influences on the creation and use of commercially produced basic or developmental writing textbooks in the developmental classroom. Rather than over simplify the complexity of relations involved in the production and use of these textbooks, I will try to describe what I see as details in the "big picture." In order to do that, I rely on what I believe to be the best theoretical construct adequate to such a task: the construct of hegemony.

Most often associated with the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971), hegemony is described by Raymond Williams (1980) as that which

supposes the existence of something which is truly total...not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent [that it] even constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway (37).

For Williams, hegemony is "a saturation of the whole process of living" (1977, 110) and is differentiated from simple ideology which "equates consciousness with [an] articulate formal system" most often associated with "worldview" or "class outlook" (109). Hegemony is more than the way people see things, because it goes beyond a system of fixed "beliefs" or "perspectives" to what people *do* as a result of both their beliefs and the lived conditions of their lives. Hegemony itself, therefore, resists analysis as a "fixed" system to be manipulated, because the conditions giving rise to its shape and existence undergo constant change. It is the fluidity of its structure that makes hegemony a compelling theoretical model for understanding both oppression *and* resistance.

Gramsci has described the "normal exercise of hegemony [as] characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally" (80) and Watkins (1989) has interpreted this activity as an "educational relationship" involving the use of both coercion and consent as a "disciplinary" structure leading to the presence of

both sanctions and punishments. The "disciplinary" or "educational" act requires the involvement of three parties, the first an "enforcer," the second the "enforced," and the third those who "learn a lesson from it" and internalize that lesson as part of the natural order (58).

The production and use of textbooks involves the naturalization of a great many such "lessons." Although some would seem to be more well established and immutable than others, I hope to convey in this discussion a sense that all might be challenged at particular sites of resistance. A key factor will be an emphasis on resistance as an activity, since hegemony is characterized as the lived relations between people. What teachers and others do with writing is therefore fundamental to the solution of inadequate basic writing textbooks. In other words, only by stressing both the act of writing and what teachers and students do with a piece of writing after it is produced, will students be able to exert power over their own learning processes in the classroom. Foucault (1980) argues that "power is not given, exchanged, or recovered, but exercised" (90). How students and teachers "exercise" their power in the classroom through the writing process may not "recover" control from textbook publishers, but it may affect the ways publishers are able to "exercise" their own particular form of power.

The network of participatory relations that results in the creation and use of textbooks as examined in this project might be described in many ways. I will employ three interrelated categories to review what I believe are the most significant ideological influences affecting the quality of those relations. It is important to note that although ideology cannot be imagined as a *determining* factor, ideology can be described as an enabling factor in the reproduction of particular kinds of social relations, which in turn are related in complex ways to relations of production and accumulation of wealth.

The first category includes acts of legitimation by those involved in the production and use of textbooks that secure the development and maintenance of a variety of authoritative relations between various groups and individuals. The second category describes specific institutional and individual ideologies that focus on the construction and preservation of attitudes and beliefs necessary to legitimize the decisions the institution makes about how to conduct its activities. The third category includes beliefs that assist in the preservation of the ideology of commodification as a fundamental decision making apparatus. While each of these categories might be thought of as an element of a single interrelated ideological system, I will be emphasizing each as an active force within the larger hegemonic structure. Each contains within it

"small" ideologies or perspectives which some might argue are components of larger "class outlook" ideologies.¹ However, I will be arguing that these smaller belief systems do not necessarily "add up" to create larger, class-specific belief systems, but tend to serve specific, even contradictory purposes that "add up" or at least peacefully co-exist as elements of the larger hegemonic apparatus. In other words, particular belief systems don't necessarily have to make sense as a logical, coherent whole that we might call the construction and use of basic writing textbooks. They only have to make enough sense to justify their continued place in the patterns of belief of certain groups or individuals. For example, students and teachers may believe that developmental education exists because there is a "need" to help those who want to go to college, while administrative decision makers may decide to fund developmental education because it raises overall retention efforts at the institution and brings in needed tuition dollars in cost-effective ways.

Development and Maintenance of Authority

Foucault (1980) argues that even in situations where no one may want to act as an authority, authority develops anyway in order for a "certain relation of forces not only to maintain itself, but to accentuate, stabilize, and broaden

¹see Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 109

itself" (206). An authoritative "grow and expand or die" logic is perhaps a basic tenet of all capitalist enterprises, but is especially apparent at the various university, college, and departmental levels in educational institutions and the megacorporation level of some publishing enterprises. The assumption of authority precedes the process of defining and legitimizing many "niches" of responsibility. In this project, responsibility is manufactured at many levels, including the community college niche of vocational and terminal education, the remedial, compensatory, and finally developmental niche within the community college, the service-to-research-oriented niche that would gradually become Composition Studies, and the curricula-provision-niche publishers first acquired at the turn of the century to "assist" school systems. With authority comes power, and with power, Foucault argues, comes knowledge; power and knowledge "directly imply one another" (1977, 27). Similarly, the authority located in particular educational sites eventually becomes associated with the knowledge produced at those sites. The interminable conversation over "process" or "product" approaches to the teaching of writing among scholars, teachers, and publishers would not remain controversial unless the knowledge associated with these pedagogical and theoretical debates was itself a form of authority. Although "process" writing instruction should

ideally mean to realign authoritative relations between the teacher and student so that the emphasis is on the student's control over the process of producing a piece of writing, fixing "process" writing theory as a body of scholarly knowledge implicates it as an authoritative structure, which means it can become appropriated by those who hope to enhance their own authority status through their association with it.

In their respective roles as representatives of various "niches," individuals constantly struggle over authority. It may be the teacher's job to teach, but the publisher often sees it as her responsibility to provide materials for the inexperienced or inept teacher. Likewise, it may be the author and publisher's job to create textbooks, but many of the textbooks examined here were authored by former teachers who wrote books because they wanted to help other teachers (and publishers) to "do it right."

The struggle for authority is also present in the departmental or program decision making procedures used to choose textbooks, where the traditional autonomy of teachers to choose their own textbooks for their own classes is often undermined by those with greater institutional authority. The scholarly authority of those who persuade teachers to view the composing process in more complex, recursive terms is then exercised over students who would often prefer to skip the complexity in favor of simple exercise work.

In short, what all of these examples have in common is a struggle to determine who will have the power to do what they want. This struggle may have as its common objective the goal of changing or improving the way students write, but the more immediate objective is to acquire the authority and power necessary to exert that influence. The act of acquiring the authority one needs to exercise influence is fundamental not only to those who hope to gain authority over others, but also to those who wish to resist the authority of others.² The transformation of authority in writing classes depends not only on successful resistance through the development of counter-authoritative measures, but also on the successful resistance to dominant institutional and individual ideologies that perpetuate submissive behavior.

Institutional and Individual Ideologies

At the institutional level, the debate over the mission of community colleges on the basis of models of "consumer choice" (Koos, 1924; Cohen, 1979), "business domination" (Zwerling, 1976; Pincus, 1980), or institutional legitimation (Brint and Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1988), represents not just the most widely recognized arguments over how community colleges "work," but a range of competing institutional ideologies as well. Although each suggests a

²For specific examples of forms of resistance teachers and students might employ, see Chapter XI.

different authoritative or submissive role for the community college, authority in each case is defined by a system of beliefs about the nature of power at the institutional level. These systems might be characterized respectively as beliefs in power through service (to the community), power through submission (to more powerful interests), and power through self-legitimation (enhancing one's own prestige). What makes these ideologies important is not the debate over whether one is more "true" than another, but the ways these institutional belief systems become integrated with individual belief systems to form interrelated ideological networks. Apple (Ideology and Curriculum, 1990) has argued that categories such as "smart" and "stupid" or "teacher" and "student" are "common sense constructions which grow out of the nature of existing institutions" (134). I suggest that these "constructions" are augmented and enhanced by individual belief systems, or a network of personal ideological relations that then becomes, for many, a means of defining a coherent vision of what the educational experience is supposed to be about. For example, the increased influence of local business and industry after World War II during the period of community college expansion into vocationalism represents a compelling aspect of the "business domination" argument. While critics describe such "domination" in order to expose potential incidents of class, race, and gender exploitation and

inequality, others adopt such larger belief systems as a means of organizing and articulating their own personal beliefs about what it should mean to be a student generally and specifically what it should mean in terms of the posture and actions of the student in the writing classroom. If the not so subtle message to the community college student enrolled in a two year dental assistant certification program is that the purpose of college is to get a job in the "business" world that pays better than flipping burgers, that student will probably also believe that hard work (i.e., the ideology of merit, assuming reward based on effort) and proof of one's skills (i.e., ideology of capability, assuming reward based on ability) will lead to getting a decent job (i.e., ideology of opportunity, assuming rewards will be offered to the deserving). Since educational success and economic opportunity/rewards have been so perfectly paired in the minds of many,³ the "match" between institutional and individual ideologies feels at times to be seamless, especially if the objectives are the same. Both the institution and the individual can be committed to self legitimation activities that may or may not be successful, but the commitment, as it translates into action, becomes the crucial factor. Students especially tend to accept without question the equation-like certainty

³For the most articulate recent refutation of this argument, see Bastian, et. al. 1985, 49.

that educational prescriptions will lead to personal, financial, and professional success.

But it is not just students who reinforce institutional ideologies with their own personal belief systems. For those teachers who accept the "consumer choice" argument as not only an argument, but a mission statement of the institution, a range of primarily functional beliefs emerges to describe what the teacher's role should be in that institution. Some teachers interviewed for this project, for example, placed inordinate importance on securing books that would "get the job done" while assigning very little time to considering what that job should be and why it should be done in the first place. Their emphasis on "service" to their students, although admirable during a time when concerns about the "underclass" are not fashionable, can obscure the broader issues which make such service necessary in the first place. When a teacher argues that "somebody's gotta do it," the hasty and unjustified conclusion may be that the "problems" of basic writers are being addressed by a cadre of committed candidates for sainthood. Although such remarks may be meant to imply that not *enough* teachers are now willing to "do it," more teachers of all subjects need to devote more time to a critical assessment of what they are currently teaching as a way of understanding their commitments more fully. If a fraction of the time spent on determining students' needs

and developing techniques of instruction was spent questioning teacher and institutional objectives in the classroom, developmental education might be mobilized as a significant site of resistance to views of literacy bound to narrow prescriptionism and might lead to the construction of broader definitions of empowerment. As it stands, too many teachers are unable to see beyond their role as "workers" whose responsibility is to their bosses. Watkins (1989) has characterized this kind of teaching as

the dirty work, as it were, of maintaining, extending, and reshaping where necessary the boundaries of class [which] is not accomplished largely by a socially dominant group, but by intellectual functionaries. These functionaries are then positioned for the most part at...the boundary "contact points," like English, in the social circulation of people (244).

The characterization of English teachers as "intellectual functionaries," or those whose job it is to maintain standards and reinforce hierarchies of status, is a more personal version of the institutional characterization of community colleges as "gatekeepers." But gatekeeping implies the sort of obstruction and direct force present in discussions of literacy as "violence."⁴ While many literacy situations may be characterized in such a way, the "service" model invites students and teachers to participate in their own oppression. Rather than create conditions whereby students are invited to become involved decision makers and

⁴See J. Elspeth Stuckey's *The Violence of Literacy*, 1991.

full participants in the construction of their education, the institutional "consumer service" ideology leads to situations where students end up primarily interested in "what they get out of it."

An emphasis on the Freirean "banking" critique of literacy acquisition⁵ that postulates students as empty accounts to be filled with knowledge, disempowers students because any educational activity can be justified on the basis of its ill defined future outcomes. For example, basic writing instruction in writing "labs" and adult literacy programs alike have historically isolated the individual for the sake of "individualizing" instruction. Different learning styles or abilities are often the justification for such isolation (as teachers interviewed for this project indicated). The personal and solitary confrontation between the student and the "material" then becomes the proving ground where the student's deficiency is documented through the student's own *involvement* with the literacy "situation." This material then "violently" (that is, forcefully and without regard to the way the student constructs meaning) challenges the student to construct meanings in largely pre-determined ways that have some unspoken or vaguely defined tie to future success. The static and fixed nature of these meanings is often not problematic because a final key ideology that must be

⁵See *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1972, 57.

accepted by all participants is the unspoken authority of the printed word.

The "literate" behavior required to decode primarily written language then becomes bound through the "what do I get out of it" ideology to a literacy that Stuckey calls the language of profit in the postindustrial United States (1991, 19). The assumption of legitimacy that this kind of literacy carries with it is reinforced by textbooks that describe language and language use as a fixed system of "correct" and "incorrect" usage. Even though process writing pedagogy implies the use of language to construct diverse and unpredictable meanings evaluated on the basis of communal or community intelligibility, many of the textbooks examined here discuss process in the most narrow and superficial ways. Once "process" is accomplished in "correct" ways, "correct" discussions of grammar are not contradicted and the cohesiveness (and legitimacy) of the text as a whole is uninterrupted.

The authority and legitimacy of the textbook as a textual artifact should also not be underestimated. Even in classrooms where the role of the textbook is supplementary and secondary to the teacher's discussion and use of writing activities (as seemed to be the case in the most dynamic teacher accounts of what happens in particular classrooms), the presence of an authoritative book as a tangible artifact with obvious explicit financial value can be a means of

undermining the teacher's less authoritative ideas about "correct" and "incorrect" writing. In other words, I may work hard to assure my basic writing students that "correct" language constructions are dependent on context and that meaning changes over time as a result of the way language is used in social situations to construct meanings, but the subtlety of that message may be lost to those who see the expensive textbook as the material embodiment of what it means to study writing. It is this "materiality" of literacy or the printed word, as Stuckey describes it, that is missing in too many discussions, including Freire's, whose ideas about literacy are too idealistically centered on a simple call to "expulging domination" (Stuckey, 87). When literate behavior is tied to rewards such as release from prison, participation in sports, drug treatment or job re-training programs, the purported cognitive or moral benefits to be derived from reading and writing become secondary to the material rewards students receive for particular literate displays. It is the material nature of literacy and the textbook that is the focus of the third analytical category.

The Text As Commodity

Apple (Ideology and Curriculum, 1991) has argued that within an advanced corporate economy, the production of high levels of technical knowledge is necessary in order to maximize profits, but that the widespread and more equal distribution

of this knowledge to the general population is not a financial necessity (36-7). Emphasis on what Apple calls "common sensical" production of knowledge as a commodity in the schools normalizes "the ties between school knowledge, the reproduction of the division of labor, and the accumulation process" (Education and Power, 1982, 47). In other words, the commodification of knowledge, or fixing of financial value to certain forms of knowledge (usually technical forms), becomes more important than whether many people have access to that knowledge or benefit from it. What is supposedly a valuable form of knowledge for all may be valuable only to a few whose privileged access to and accumulation of that form of knowledge means they are among the few who gain tangible rewards. The servile relationship between scientific research/technology and the needs of industry is an example of how the interests of capital and knowledge production (not just distribution) are closely linked. But how might the interests and values associated with capital accumulation be tied to the "production" of knowledge as described in basic/developmental writing textbooks? The answer to that question can begin to be formulated by describing the textbook as a commodity shaped by commodity relations.

First, capital accumulation is a fundamental objective that justifies the *procedures* used in these books' creation and use. The "bottom line" mentality that guides textual

content means its content can be subject to the sort of homogenizing directives that are the result of a mergers and acquisitions logic requiring a text to "do" more for more students. Efficiency-dominated logic is now even more of a basic guiding principle of many academic institutions, albeit in the form of larger technical schemes such as the video course. In this century, schools first took their cue from scientific management theories, and now often apply such well established operational models in order to procedurize developmental education referrals and testing. Access to the more elite forms of knowledge is often restricted through the selective moral mandate of "maintaining standards," which also conveniently justifies "serving" more and more students for reasons that are often ideologically unclear or contradictory. The act of *producing* and hence accumulating something-- anything, be it a textbook or a test score, as long as it seems to have value-- and in the most expeditious and lucrative way possible, represents one significant ideological contribution to the construction of the commodified textbook.

A second set of factors contributing to the commodification of the text are the *cultural* values and especially forms of expression that represent the cultural capital, or linguistic assets, of the privileged few. Their language and forms of cultural legitimacy and structure

become the basis of the "coherence through order" mandate prescribed by many textbook authors. The construction of linguistic concepts such as "sentences," "paragraphs," and even "process" in correct or incorrect terms that the textbook patiently and benevolently reveals ensures that the basic writing textbook is simultaneously the life preserver that would save the uninitiated from drowning and the dead weight that would keep that individual from swimming faster in her own way. To ensure that the student will continue swimming with the life preserver on, the student must invest both financially and emotionally in the life preserver, so that swimming without it seems both frightening and wasteful. The historically remedial nature of all writing instruction has legitimated itself by perpetuating a combination of fear of inadequacy and a belief that access to and mastery of privileged forms of discourse will lead to access to the privileged themselves. In this way, "Culture" is not, ideologically, what students already have before they come to school, nor is it what is given to them as a means of equalizing access to the more obviously monied technical forms of knowledge. Culture is what students attempt to buy for a price determined by the nature of the service that school personnel and publishers provide, which is in turn controlled by the value placed on this enterprise by the financial interests who control the more technical and scientific forms of knowledge. What complicates and

denies the determinism implied in this argument is the extent to which these financial interests value the teaching of writing to non-traditional students, which is in turn affected by many of the other factors (ideologies) already discussed, so that what emerges is an interrelated and interdependent ideological network of relations that functions as an active, hegemonic apparatus. Because hegemonic effects are dependent upon a *network* of relations, however, it is not necessary to dismantle the entire network, only to challenge as many of the elements that maintain it as possible.

Chapter XI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project has attempted to examine a number of contexts which influence the creation and use of commercial textbooks to teach what is commonly described as developmental or basic writing. These contexts include historical developments in the teaching of writing, institutional influences such as community colleges and developmental education programs, and contexts that affect the way books are created and used, such as teaching practices and teacher values which privilege certain relationships between educators and publishers. The site where many of these contexts struggle for influence is the textbook. Though it may be tempting to imagine the textbook as the artifact recording the resolution of this struggle, the textbook is more accurately a record of a complex conflict still in progress. The participants in this conflict at the present time are teachers, administrators, and publishing representatives. Together, they struggle to create and promote material which will help students to write better, but often the result is books which are limited by a narrow range of purposes and an inadequate conception of language. In this final chapter, I will summarize the findings of this

study and recommend changes in the goals of developmental education generally and writing instruction in particular, as well as changes in the sort of service publishers might provide to developmental programs and changes in the relationships between the current participants.

Summary

Survey findings indicate a wide range of textbooks and teaching practices are valued by survey respondents. Respondents most often associate their practices and textbooks with "skill" or "process" approaches to teaching writing and are most concerned with meeting what they feel are the needs of their students and/or programs. Survey findings also reveal different sorts of conflicts between educators and between educators and publishers. The outcome of these conflicts is that various groups or individuals gain power in particular ways that fix the textbook as an instrument of that power. The most powerful and influential teachers/administrators are able to assemble a variety of textbook options and demand the attention of publishers who make efforts to tailor books to meet their needs. Publishers use program and teacher reliance on commercially prepared materials to create a dependency on these materials to create and facilitate program objectives. Administrators and full-time faculty use their status to advance their own particular program values and objectives with often less than equal involvement/input by part-time faculty.

The decisions of those who choose and use textbooks exist within a variety of contexts. Community colleges have spent much of this century struggling for legitimacy and differentiation from four year institutions. Their struggle for legitimacy has too often limited their mission to training students for occupations with limited opportunities, thus ironically limiting their own role as well. Developmental education, one institutional response to the identity crisis of community colleges, has suffered from its role as an educational arbiter between the values of the elite standard bearers and those of the equal opportunity advocates. The result has too often been a retreat to debates over instructional techniques and an avoidance of controversial issues.

Each of these contexts must also be located in relation to past educational reforms and political mandates, especially scientific management doctrines and the drive to direct writing instruction to "pragmatic" ends. When educational values and values about teaching writing do change, so do the responses of publishers to create certain kinds of textbooks. Whether these responses are significant or not remains an important question.

Teachers are perhaps in the best position to negotiate the influence and significance of various contexts. They do this by rightly focussing on the needs of the student, but these needs are often not evaluated or critically examined.

Teachers may value "process" as a method for teaching students to write, but often have a difficult time articulating or describing the process of valuing students' experiences and home cultures while also initiating students into academic ways of writing and knowing. That process is more apparent to teachers when they assume the role of critic of textbooks which seem disconnected from students' "needs." Criticizing textbooks seems to help teachers to name particular needs, but not to recognize potentially contradictory needs, such as the preservation of the writer's integrity on the one hand and the preparation of the student for "academic" writing on the other.

Textbooks have historically limited their efforts to preparing students for academic writing through the use of narrow and reductive methods. The focus of most past criticisms has been on the limitations of these methods, not whether their objectives are to be valued. Only recently have critics begun to examine writing as the use of language to produce meaning within a broader social context not necessarily restricted to academic or "cognitive" benefits. The key to enlarging both the criticism of writing textbooks and the goals of writing instruction in general is to more fully examine the language used to talk about writing. "Correctness," for example, remains a concept that legitimizes the content and purpose of most textbooks used to teach writing. By "fixing" language meanings in

predictable and stable ways, textbook authors and publishers (as well as teachers) "fix" their authority and status, and reinforce the market value of their products. Bookmakers also, in this way, preserve the subordinate status of the student, who is left struggling to "get something out of" her education rather than contribute to her education. The subordinate status of the student is also preserved in more subtle ways when authors and publishers intentionally or unintentionally perpetuate race, class, and gender stereotypes and inequities through their choice of illustrations and reading selections, and through their discussions of non-standard dialects and gendered language.

Finally, publishers often resist responsibility or leadership by characterizing their function in narrowly defined economic terms and/or by embracing the role of "service" to the needs/demands of teachers. The mergers and acquisitions in the textbook industry during the 1980s did little to encourage publishers to become more involved in producing less traditional, less authoritative textbooks or to take any sort of leadership role.

Recommendations

Given the power and financial clout of the publishing industry, as well as the dependence of the educational profession on commercially produced texts, it may seem as though advocating for change is either futile or would produce results deemed inconsequential. But because

textbooks function as an element of an hegemonic apparatus (see Chapter X) which may be plagued by internal contradictions and which may also be challenged at various locations, there is much that can be done by individuals, especially teachers, to address the problems discussed in this project. Here I will describe sites where authority might be challenged and actions might be taken to redefine and reinvigorate the teaching of writing in particular and developmental education more generally.

First, developmental education conceived solely as preparation for academic work needs to be critically reexamined. While the actual benefits of developmental education as a means of facilitating future academic success continue to be debated, it is the concept of "preparation" that demands attention. Preparation has traditionally implied that the student will be "helped" to "learn the prerequisite material" and/or to think and interact in ways valued by various disciplinary approaches. This "service model" conception of developmental education may legitimize its activities within the institution, but does little to help students understand their position outside the institution or their position in relation to the institution. What students in developmental education mostly understand is that they are "too stupid" to be in "regular classes." What goes on now doesn't address that self-imposed status; developmental education programs often

don't help students understand or interact with outside expectations, but instead see their goal as describing expectations, usually by relying on superficial "correct" or "incorrect" answers.

One way of re-imagining developmental education is by re-thinking the assumptions inherent in its methods. Rather than rely heavily on a medical model of diagnosis and treatment, developmental education might be reconceived as a site where students could "problematize" their situations. Rather than neutralize reading and writing by disconnecting these activities from the material reality which gives them meaning, students might read and write in order to better understand themselves and their relations to others, both inside and outside the school. Reading and especially writing can also be a means of doing the sort of preliminary work so many students don't do before deciding upon a career or specialized area of study. Rather than "cool out" students by suggesting they don't have what it takes to become, for example, a nurse, developmental education can be a location where reading and writing become a means of better understanding what it means to be a nurse, to think like a nurse, to appreciate the perspectives and problems of nurses, and perhaps even to begin to challenge and criticize the knowledge of the nursing profession. Students can take advantage of their association with developmental education and its institutional legitimacy by corresponding informally

(both orally and in writing) with those within the institution whose knowledge and expertise they value. Brodkey has shown the value of such written correspondence (1991, 166) between basic writing teachers and basic writing students. Students and others can in this way interact in ways that help students to write (and perhaps think) better now as well as help them to understand and prepare for future work.

Writing conceived as an *activity* offers many opportunities to resist and challenge the authority of the textbook. What makes the writing done by authors in textbooks appear to have value is that it is commodified. A price is fixed based on an assumption that the writing will be meaningful to someone else. But student writing can be made to have value in the same way. Student writing can be made meaningful by connecting it to real and diverse readers, not just within the institution, but in the community as well. Teachers might organize writing "situations" where community members *need* to read student writing because it is in their interest to do so. I am not advocating the writing of more letters to Congress, nor letters to the editor, nor letters to companies that build defective products. Although these writing activities move writing beyond the walls of the institution, they do so in ways that reinforce the status of the student as powerless or victim or both. I am suggesting that students, teachers,

and community members together can create writing situations that matter, situations where what is written is read by those both inside and outside the classroom, because someone wants or needs to read it. Students might accomplish this by becoming temporary researchers, activists, care-taker providers, organizers, or any other purposeful, constructive activity that is social. The interaction between student and community can then become the basis of the "conversation" begun by the student who writes to, for, and about those involved. Students can also use their community work to learn how to write for different readers, such as those familiar with the subject, and others, like fellow students, who are not.

Student writing can also be used as a means of challenging the authority of textbooks and the authors and publishers who produce them, and thus redefining the relations between students and books. For example, students might work together as a class to produce classroom texts that define particular standards they as a class value. Naming these standards, whether they be grammatical, organizational, or content related, becomes a process of seeing their value in relation to their use in actual writing (for which a workshop approach is most valuable). These standards, though defined by class members and not textbooks, would be no more arbitrary than the internalized rules for language use that students bring with them to the

class as speakers of English. Students would also be reading material written by others outside the class, which would influence the construction of class standards.

By reclaiming authority over the creation of standards, students and teachers can help to redefine the role of publishers. For example, those publishers who are truly interested in "giving" teachers and students "what they want" might be convinced to take on a different sort of role that de-emphasizes the text as an author-constructed commodity. Instead of producing slightly different versions of the same old grammar exercises, publishers might serve as coordination and distribution centers that assemble and/or bind diverse and localized educational "booklets" or "treatises" written by individual schools or classrooms (and perhaps assembled through desk top publishing technology, although the expense of desk top publishing may be prohibitive for some programs). These booklets could represent a range of actual writing community standards, as well as selected essays and philosophical testimonials or discussions of writing from students themselves. Publishers would not "incorporate" student samples into a professional writer's textbook (as is sometimes done), but give the writing of the textbook over to students and teachers entirely. Publishers would retain control over the selection of particular texts for publication, and teachers would retain control over the evaluation process, but

students would be able to take a more active role in the construction of writing standards and values grounded in actual writing communities. These new "texts" could then be used by future writing classes to begin their own discussion of standards and values and to reflect on what writing means to them. The constantly changing cycle based on localized production would respect the changing and contextualized nature of language as the means of interpreting a changing, material reality, and the work students do to connect their writing to the outside community would ensure the publication of texts more attuned to broader and potentially democratic social relations.

These recommendations turn traditional student-teacher-publisher relations on their head, because authority flows from students and teachers to publishers, not from authoritative authors and publishers to teachers and students. For this reason these changes will need to be understood as being in the interests of all of those involved. It will be necessary to show that student-produced textbooks help most students to produce better writing than any other kind of book, and that this process is more meaningful to teachers and students than any other. This question could be addressed by researchers researching a wider range of texts than would be possible under any other circumstances. It will also be necessary to help publishers understand the benefits to them in this

restructuring of relations. For example, the need to interpret program needs and translate those needs into professional-author prose is eliminated by redefining their role more in terms of production and distribution than creation. Teachers will need to understand that their knowledge remains important, but that being re-skilled as a guide to the production of knowledge rather than de-skilled as an "objective" messenger of knowledge will make their task more meaningful to their students.

Change is not simply possible; it is inevitable. But change that matters, that is meaningful, only occurs when we are able to re-think our ideas about what constitutes knowledge and valued forms of language and who has the power and responsibility to contribute to this conversation. The sooner that process begins, the better.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

**List of Publishers Named by Survey Respondents and
Number of Texts Named At Least Once**

<u>Publisher Name</u>	<u>Writing Texts</u>	<u>Reading Texts</u>	<u>Reading Series</u>	<u>Writing Software</u>	<u>Reading Software</u>
Allyn-Bacon	2	2			
Amsco		2			
Barnell Loft			1		
Barrons		1			
Cambridge		1			
College Skills Center		1			
College Survival Inc.		1 (study skills)			
Computerized Learning Systems Conduit				1 1	1
Contemporary Curriculum Associates	8 1	6	3		
D.C. Heath	2	3			
Davidson	1	2			1
EDL		2			
Easy Way Press				1	
Educational Activities				1	
Educational Design					1
Educulture National Book Co.		1			
Hada		1			
Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich	6	2			
HarperCollins	5	8			
Hartley					1
Holt, Rineheart Winston	5	2			
Houghton Mifflin	6	15			
Innovative Sciences, Inc.		1			
Jamestown		10	4		
Kendall Hunt		2			
Learning Unlimited			1		
LVA		1			
Little Brown	3	1			

**List of Publishers Named by Survey Respondents and
Number of Texts Named At Least Once by Respondents**

(continued)

<u>Publisher Name</u>	<u>Writing Texts</u>	<u>Reading Texts</u>	<u>Reading Series</u>	<u>Writing Software</u>	<u>Reading Software</u>
Longman and Atkinson		1			
MECC				1	
MacMillan	2	3			
McDougal, Littel and Co.			1		
McGraw-Hill	9	10	1		
Merrill		1			
Micropower and Light					1
Milliken					2
Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium				3	
Modern Curriculum Press		1			
National Publishers 1		4	1		
New Readers Library (Laubach)	1	5	2		
Paradigm	1	1			
Phi Delta Kappan	1				
Prentice Hall	11	19	1		
Queue				1	1
Random House	1	1			
Roxburg		1			
Sadlier/Oxford		1			
St. Martin	5	3			
St. Ursula Academy		1			
Scholastic				1	
Scott Foresman	3	8	3		
Skills Bank				1	
Southwestern	2	1			
Steck Vaughn	3	11	5		
Step by Step Publications		1			
Study Orientation Skills Consultants		1			
Teachers College Press		1			
Townsend	5	4			
West		3			

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

List of Writing Textbooks Most Frequently Cited By Survey Respondents¹

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
Meyers	Writing With Confidence	HarperCollins
Langan	Sentence Skills; College Writing Skills With Readings; English Skills With Readings, Second Edition	McGraw-Hill
Goodman/Mohr Nist/Mohr Goodman/Nist/ Mohr	Building Vocabulary Skills Improving Vocabulary Skills Advancing Vocabulary Skills	Townsend
Buscemi	A Reader For Developing Writers	McGraw-Hill
Glazier	The Least You Should Know About English, form C Fourth Edition	Holt, Rineheart, Winston
Fawcett/ Sandberg	Grassroots: The Writer's Workshop	Houghton/Mifflin
Fawcett/ Sandberg	Evergreen: A Guide to Writing	Houghton/Mifflin
Farbman	Sentence Sense, A Writer's Guide	Houghton/Mifflin
Blum, Brinkman, Hoffman, Pick	A Guide To The Whole Writing Process	Houghton/Mifflin

¹Text named by at least three respondents.

APPENDIX B
(continued)

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
Fitzpatrick, Fitzpatrick	The Complete Sentence Workout Book	D.C. Heath
Platt	A Writer's Journey	D.C. Heath
Nordquist	Passages: A Beginning Writer's Guide	St. Martin
Varnardo	English Essentials	Steck Vaughn
Varnardo	Writing Skills Series For Adults	Contemporary
Jones and Evanson	Writing For A Purpose, Shaping Sentences	Contemporary
Blumenthal	English 2200, third ed. English 2600, fifth ed. English 3200, third ed.	Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
Troyka and Nudelman	Steps in Composition	Prentice Hall
McDonald, et. al.	Writing Clear Paragraphs	Prentice Hall
Schachter	Basic English Review	Southwestern
Rich	The Flexible Writer	Allyn and Bacon

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Survey Form

Dear Developmental Education Coordinator:

We are requesting your help in a dissertation research project that will examine the textbooks used to teach **reading** and **writing** in developmental/compensatory/remedial programs at community and junior colleges belonging to the Council of North Central Community and Junior Colleges. The project is being supervised by Professor Diane Brunner of the English Department.

The objective of the enclosed survey is to identify the textbooks that are used, to understand how they are selected, and the purposes they serve. As you will note, the survey is brief and should not take more than a few minutes to complete.

The information you and/or others responsible for choosing textbooks provide will help us to understand which books are most popular and why. It will in no way be used to assess programs or individuals in those programs. The information will be held in strictest confidence and any comments will remain anonymous. You will not be quoted directly, nor will the name of a contact person appear in any of the findings. I will take great care to assure confidentiality.

Participation, of course, is voluntary. You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this survey. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (517) 482-3592.

Sincerely,

Dan Fraizer

The purpose of this survey is to provide information that will help us to understand the role of textbooks in developmental reading and writing programs. We are seeking your assistance in the following areas:

1. On page 4, please list the text(s) your developmental/remedial/ compensatory program uses in classes or tutorials. Please provide author, title, publisher, and edition/year. Also indicate texts produced by individuals within the program/department. Finally, indicate whether the text is used for reading or writing instruction.

2. Briefly describe the decision making process involved (who chooses/creates the text(s)). For example, were books chosen by committee, by individual instructors (please note full or part-time), or by entire programs?

3. What factors are important to you and/or others in choosing a text?

_____ Specific learning objectives (please name them)

_____ Modeling of specific composition theories or pedagogies

_____ Publisher

_____ Price

_____ Other (please specif

PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE

4. What uses are made of these books?

- _____ to suggest class activities
- _____ to create writing assignments
- _____ as student reference materials
- _____ to plan curriculum
- _____ other (explain)

5. How often do you change books?

- _____ annually
- _____ every 2-5 years
- _____ irregularly (explain conditions)

6. How much class time is spent using textbooks?

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| _____ less than 20% | _____ 60-79% |
| _____ 20-39% | _____ 80-100% |
| _____ 40-59% | |

7. What do you see as the strengths of the books you currently use?

8. Are you satisfied with the books you currently use?

9. How well do the objectives of the books match the objectives of your program?

_____ closely

_____ not very closely

If not closely, why not?

10. We would appreciate it if you could provide us with the name and phone number of a contact person in the event that we have further questions.

11. Please use this space for any additional comments you think are important about the selection and use of textbooks in your program.

PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE

LISTING OF TEXTBOOKS CURRENTLY USED

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	Reading	Writing

APPENDIX D

Transcripts of Selected Teacher Interviews

INTERVIEW #1 July 15, 1992

Q: Can you tell me a little about how you feel about using textbooks to teach developmental writing and what's important in a textbook?

A: I teach developmental writing once a year. I dislike textbooks because they're visually messy and difficult to manage. Students have problems seeing the reading and the visual features on the page. Textbooks need to look uncluttered, with plenty of white space and be easy to handle. I also like clear visual organizers and information should be easy to locate- there should be clear headings and subheadings.

The Glazier text [*The Least You Should Know About English*] was what we used for the past three years. It meets the above qualifications but is too innocuous- there's no emotional investment, nothing to draw a person in on a personal level. There's no real content. Information is in the form of discreet sentences. The examples are good and clear, but too neutral.

Q: So neutral can be bad?

A: The difficulty with a book like Glazier's is that it is not going to engage students' interest in writing. A book like that needs to bridge academic and non-academic cultures. Similar "neutral" books are *College Writing Basics* by Tyner, I think, published by Wadsworth- it's nicely laid out, but there's no chapter unity, no communication between author and reader. It's too impersonal. Other books like that include Helen Gordon's *Interplay: Sentence Skills in Context*, published by St. Martins, and *Elements of Basic Writing* by Audrey Roth and *Evergreen* by Fawcett and Sandberg. All these books treat how to punctuate and do other grammar stuff, the burning issues of the days, but I've gotten away from using books at all. I have students read and respond to newspapers and

magazines. They create their own process materials. I also have students keep notebooks for course content.

Q: Are there textbooks out there you think are useful?

A: Good texts tend to be too difficult; there's too much reading and they're too hard. I like *Casting Light On Writing* by Sally Ann Fitzgerald, published by Harper Collins. It's a good book on the writing process and the layout is manageable, but there's very little information on the specifics of revising and editing. The course itself mandates that I teach grammar, but this book doesn't really do that.

Q: Can that be a problem?

A: The problem is that no one book can do it all and packing it in creates messiness. It feels like I'm teaching two courses sometimes, one for grammar and one for process. I've tended to give more lip service to grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph construction in the past. Now process is more important, especially since we use computers to reinforce process.

Q: What programs do you use and what do you like about them?

A: Computer Assisted Instruction is good for editing and revising. We also pair students at the computer or use a student and a tutor at one computer so they're not by themselves. We use *Writer's Helper* by Conduit -- they're out of Iowa, I think. It reinforces the writing process and allows freedom in choosing options. *Microlab* by Educulture helps students to review sentence structure, comma rules, that kind of thing. It's kinda useful but more supplemental to *Writer's Helper*. *Sentence Combining* by Milliken is good for the sixth to seventh grade level and is also good for ESL. We have about 6000 students but only three Macs [Macintosh] and four Apples. You can bet our sign-up sheet is always full. The Business Department of course has a lot of computers, but they're in another building.

Q: What do you value the most in a textbook?

A: We look for books with a reading based approach, books that include short stories and essays. It's important to have samples, but not super samples that students can't emulate. We also value student writing and try to help them to write interesting or different essays so that students get the feeling they can do it. There's more of a sense of connection and immediacy with student writing.

INTERVIEW #2 July 14, 1992

Q: Can you tell me something about what your program feels is important when teaching writing and how you go about choosing textbooks?

A: We believe that those who don't do well in reading don't do well in writing. We previewed something like twenty textbooks and in most of them the reading was too difficult. We like to build self-esteem, and we can't do that without a low level text. Most books still use a skill based approach that focuses on parts of speech and grammar. We would rather do a process approach that allows students to write and work on their problems by writing. We like *Evergreen* because the parts of speech are in the back, rather than up front, which makes them secondary in importance.

Q: What does "process" mean to you in the teaching of writing?

A: I take students as to their learning styles. I want my students to be "global learners." I taught Business English and clerical skills for many years and transferred what I was doing there with learning style inventories to the developmental courses. Basically, Colden and McCarthy say there are four learning styles. Your type one learner wants to know why he should learn this- give me a reason why this is important. That kind of student ends up in counseling, personnel, teaching careers, like that. Your type two learner just wants to be given the facts. You're the expert and he's the student. It's a top-down structure. This kind of student succeeds in math and science. Developmental students are not type two learners. Type three learners are hands-on people. They want to work with it, apply concepts to reality, and tend towards science or engineering careers. Type four learners need lots of guidance and encouragement. They have to apply the facts, which makes computer instruction useful. Most developmental students fall into this category. You have to say things like "what if you put this part at the beginning or end" when learning about things like complex sentences and so forth.

Q: What kind of textbooks do you like to use?

A: We like *Evergreen* because of its simple, short chapters. But they've still got to know what a gerund is before they get to English Comp. *Evergreen* is modifiable but its still got definition, process, comparison/contrast, how to write a paragraph. It starts with the sentence but has a chapter on paragraphs and one on essays and expanding the paragraph to the essay. Other texts are too skill based, meaning they use a workbook approach, or too difficult in terms of

reading material. Neither approach has worked for us in the past.

Q: How do you use *Evergreen*?

A: Independent learners work with the book in some ways and other learners work with the book in other ways. You can't force some students to create an outline, but you can help students to brainstorm and do other pre-writing activities. The order of the chapters in *Evergreen* could be better, but we have different students do different practices. We use the book as a resource, as a tool rather than a requirement.

Q: What do you think of textbooks used to teach developmental reading and writing?

A: Reading books are worse than writing books. They've got study skills, questions at the end of the passage. Students need to be taught how to find the main idea, not just told to do it. Another good thing about *Evergreen* is that the examples of writing are by students, not "great" authors. The challenge is to keep the instruction varied and the students interested. You lose half the students by the end of the term anyway, no matter what you do. My question is why can't textbooks be relevant by discussing issues going on right now (they change every three years anyway) like child care, stress management, setting goals, time management- why can't writing textbooks teach that along with writing?

Q: So if a book can do that sort of thing it's a better book?

A: Yes. Also, traditional books are too dictatorial. They say things like "was is a weak verb." Better books say "Okay, what do you use instead?" They create options. But sometimes we get in a rut and just teach the way we were taught. I also like books that stress whole language approaches. Whole language stresses the writing process, things like getting started, invented spelling, getting your ideas, not worrying about grammar at first, creating options. That also helps students to learn which style they learn in.

INTERVIEW #3 July 14, 1992

Q: What do you think of textbooks used to teach writing today?

A: Textbooks are getting better, but in '86 there was still nothing but grammar books. The majority of books still ignore that grammar study doesn't help. At least starting out with grammar doesn't help. Another problem is that a good share of our students are older students. A lot of the books talk down to older students.

Q: Are there books you like that don't do that?

A: *A Guide to the Whole Writing Process* is good, but we couldn't get through more than half of it. The problem is that students in basic writing classes don't read. There needs to be more of a connection between reading and writing. Students also aren't used to writing in response to things. They need to do the same sort of writing here they do in regular classes; they need to be treated the same in all classes. Students need to start out with whole pieces of writing. They know lots of things if you give'em a chance to talk.

Q: What do you do to make those kinds of things happen?

A: In the fall we put together our own materials. We have students start out on word processors. That encourages revision and students take pride in seeing their work printed out. They also start out with free writing, things like that. We also have small classes- about ten each. We go over student writing individually. If there are sentence structure problems we talk about them in reference to a specific piece of work. Students have all different kinds of problems.

Q: Is most work done individually?

A: No, we do group work. We use groups to introduce assignments, discuss writing, how it works. We encourage them to work together in the lab.

Q: What do you look for in a textbook?

A: We look at organizational things, things having to do with development, support of ideas. Books don't model structural development enough. And they don't provide sufficient stimulation. Usually there's not enough reading selections. Students need rhetorical models and things to catch their interest. Grammar texts are the worst.

Q: Why do you think teachers use grammar texts?

A: I think they're used because they're easy, because they provide right and wrong answers, because teachers don't have enough training to know better. People get stuck in a rut. Grammar textbooks mean less work because the teacher just follows the text.

Q: Why should anyone teach basic (developmental) writing?

A: I teach basic writing because there is a need. Students are flunking out and somebody's gotta do it. It's also more interesting to me. You can't force people into teaching basic writing, though. It's hard. There are basically three kinds of students: lazy, returning students with a poor self image, and ESL [English as a Second Language] students. But students who get through this class go on to Communication Skills class.

Q: Is there such a thing as an ideal textbook?

A: An ideal book would get people started writing, stimulate interest, provide idea generation techniques, help students to write whole pieces quickly, provide suggestions for writing from a variety of interests, and deal selectively with major kinds of writing problems, like sentence structure, commas, etc. Not that much different from process books already out there. I don't think handbooks are necessary. Handbooks are only important if used to deal selectively with problems.

INTERVIEW #4 July 6, 1992

Q: Can you tell me something about how your program teaches writing?

A: We have a two hour lab system. In the first hour we focus on grammar. We divide a class of twenty into two groups of ten each. A peer tutor then facilitates a grammar discussion where students go over rules, do drill work, and try to write examples using correct grammar. In the second hour we go to a writing lab. Students divide into four groups of five each and professional tutors help students write ungraded material that is then subject to peer editing and lots of revision. The tutors point out errors but not in a judgmental way. Students like this lab more. Our students are at the bottom level- fifth grade reading level and a weak background in experience. Their reading strategies are very immature.

Q: Are textbooks important to your program?

A: John Langan's books work very well for us. Textbook material is often a starter for writing activities or drill work, but the teacher uses her own creativity. Sometimes its useful to introduce it again, even though they've had it before. Students use the textbook as a resource book. But really, reading is at the core of our program. Students go through an assessment process which determines if they need to complete the developmental reading course before taking college courses. We try to teach metacognitive skills, or helping students to become aware of how they think. We also teach strategies for relating to the material, using texts in the field that teach particular strategies. The main thing is that students need to know how to change their behaviors. Students often don't know how to learn. We try to teach them how to know themselves, recognize their strengths, change their behaviors, reading behaviors, that is.

Q: What sorts of things do you look for in textbooks?

A: Teachers seem to be getting away from letting the textbook drive the course, which was happening in the past. Last year [1991-92] seemed a big push away from letting this happen. We look for textbooks that provide a state-of-the-art strategy for teaching students how to think. The narration should be of sufficient depth and breadth to apply strategies in a simulated way. In other words, we look for texts with material that will be an opportunity for students to apply thinking strategies also taught by the text. We think we do a good job; students who complete our courses have a higher pass rate than students who didn't need

courses according to their assessment. And our reading class has become very important. Only 4% of our students were passing our writing course if they took it before taking our reading course, but 80% pass the writing course if they take the reading course first. We believe what we teach in the reading class translates into skills used in the writing class.

Q: So helping students to develop certain skills is important?

A: Yes. We have to restructure our objectives because of accountability pressures from North Central certification. For every course we teach we develop objectives and assessment based on cognitive, affective, and developmental skills. We have to ask ourselves whether we are teaching just facts or the process to learn other things. All teachers are involved in determining objectives and assessments. The older, more traditional teachers have more problems with this, but we work our way through it.

INTERVIEW #5 July 7, 1992

Q: Can you tell me something about the books you use to teach writing?

A: I'm currently looking for two new texts to teach two levels of developmental writing. I'm thinking of using one called *The Student Writer*. There are lots of basic skills books out there, but they're mostly workbooks. We try to teach writing "globally" using the portfolio method. Students write for every class, and then pick out pieces they like for official evaluation at the end of the term. Everything a student writes gets instructor feedback. In the past we've taken various readings out of newspapers and magazines for response writing assignments rather than use readings from textbooks, but when we look for textbooks we look for a book that acknowledges that writing is both process and product.

We know that when it comes to worksheets and drill, students do very well on these types of exercises, but their writing doesn't change- they make the same mistakes. If something is done in isolation, they can find it, but if it's not the single or only thing they're looking for, they can't find it.

Q: So you can find books that emphasize process or product but not both?

A: Mostly you find books that focus exclusively on error. Even "editing exercises" have exercises for run-on sentences, etc. that focus on particular errors rather than anything you might find in normal writing. Students need to examine errors in their own writing to give them a real editing situation. Exercises in workbooks get away from the thought processes of students. It's not that they aren't capable of thinking about things; it's just that no one has ever asked them.

Q: So you emphasize helping students to express their thoughts first?

A: Yes, I value an idea perspective first and grammar later. The problem with "correctness" is that students want to see things as either right or wrong. The majority of students are very uncomfortable with writing. They tend to give summaries rather than analysis- you have to build in a certain comfort level so they will get used to doing that kind of writing. But don't get me wrong- I don't totally abandon an exercise approach; it's just that I use it on an as needed basis. Students tend to make run-on and comma splice errors most often. When that happens I break error makers into small groups, according to their errors, to work

on their own writing. Sometimes analyzing student writing works, sometimes not. I don't know- sometimes I think it's the mind set of the last class students took. For example, many had grammar and literature courses, so they see English as grammar or literature. My students tend to be older, non-traditional students, and on the last class period, they will still make comments like, "I still don't understand nouns and verbs," or "I still like doing the worksheets better." With exercises, I just try to deal with particular problem areas and make the exercises as reflective of real life as possible.

Q: How do you do that?

A: I use directed writing assignments. I might have students write in their journal in response to questions to get students started writing. I have students who like this kind of writing better because they don't have to deal with conventions. Last semester, I also had four or five out of twenty-two students who wanted to write for a different audience. They invented their own writing situations, like writing family chronicles or writing about kids on Mother's Day. That's not something the textbook can help to do so much as the teacher's attitude. The teacher's attitude is at least as important as the textbook. In a workshop approach, if you say to students, write whatever, say whatever as long as it's not hurtful, at first they might be resistant, but they do it once they're comfortable.

Q: What is a textbook good for?

A: The textbook can help by presenting a certain philosophy- if the textbook doesn't jive with the teacher's philosophy, then students will believe the book rather than the teacher. The book we're using now has refresher exercises at the end of each chapter where students have to identify errors and review material from previous chapters. That's more like students own writing- it's most similar to what students actually do as writers. The writing in the textbook is also in "handwriting" so it looks like "real" writing. It's like saying to students, this is what your writing actually looks like.

Q: Do computers help to do that, too?

A: We operate a computer assisted learning lab. The Norton disk is good. It's simple and has lots of functions, including an on-line handbook across the bottom of the page. Students find it very easy to use. We also use the Fred writer, or free education writer, that is public domain software. We also have grammar programs, which are available to students if they want it, but they're not used

much. Another program is good for description and process- it helps students by asking them questions to expand their writing- I'll send you a postcard with information about it. We've also looked at interactive video for business writing, but it's very expensive, and the program would not accept some student answers. We've also looked at preview disks but some of them need laser or color formats. Computers are good for certain students, but not the majority, because they need to be self motivated and have the discipline to use them.

INTERVIEW #6 July 13, 1992

Q: Could you tell me something about what you think of the books you use to teach writing?

A: The quality of books being published for community colleges to teach basic composition are very poor. They seem to be unaware of current research in basic writing. For that reason, we use a course packet composed of graded writing assignments that we use in all our basic writing courses, and these graded writing assignments count for 75% of the final grade.

Community colleges have a different set of book representatives than the big schools. The faculty take terminal degrees who teach in community colleges and they're not familiar with composition theory. Students are remediated from the bottom up, and they don't address problems of performance errors related to things like motor skills or misapplication or rules. Most developmental books are still on the level of sentence correction. I agree with Berlin's four philosophies of composition: the neo-Platonic, traditionalists, neo-Rhetoricians, and classical Rhetoricians. Most books fall into the current-traditional paradigm and focus their discussions on where to put topic sentences. There's nothing above the paragraph level.

I started off as a Spanish teacher, then got interested in writing. For teachers who haven't looked into the scholarship, the traditional approach is seen as logical, building from one thing to another. Seventh and eighth graders do the same thing- community college is just a continuation of public school attitudes. They neglect audience and purpose, but how can you teach audience when five paragraph themes are "the way to do things?" We need to teach from the complex to the simple, not the other way around. Our curriculum here is established to have students write five essays. We help them aim for the structure expected by other faculty, but we aim for getting ideas first. The problem is students are remediated throughout school.

Q: What kinds of things are most important when teaching someone to write?

A: Sentence combining is valuable because you're working on an idea level- students are looking for getting a good fit. The educational level of the faculty is important and relates to the books that are chosen. You can get wonderful lesson plans out of exercises but not wonderful writing. Developmental folks with B.A. degrees in English often don't know where to start. And a lot of M.A.s have degrees in literature, so they're untrained. I usually assume students

can write. Student writing will improve but the average teacher wants quick outcomes.

In the first three weeks I have to convince students they can succeed. Gradually students realize they are covering grammar like crazy, but not in a traditional way. In the end, of course, spelling and punctuation are still a problem, but big errors are fewer because students are better able to get ideas on paper. You have to look at basic writing fluency in different ways. On the sentence level, don't look at spelling and punctuation only, but look at things like handwriting and printing. Fluency also means looking at how paragraphs hold together. Our students know a lot. Martinez and Martinez did a study comparing graduate students and basic writers and found no difference between the complexity of their ideas.

Traditional grammar books divorce rhetoric from grammar. Students need to learn structure through the rhetorical side. It's too difficult to think on both levels [rhetorical and grammatical]. That's why sentence combining works. It modifies thought while employing complex structures. Traditional books assume no connection between idea and structure. We need some sort of middle that draws on both. But traditional books will be around for a long time. North's ideas [Stephen North] are counterproductive because they don't involve practitioners, and articles written in *College English* or CCC [College Composition and Communication] are not written with teachers in mind. Flower and Hayes [John Flower and Linda Hayes] have a nice idea, but there's no relationship to what we're doing.

Teachers want to do the least bit possible. The easy stuff, like sentence combining, is appropriated. Composition and rhetoric as a discipline is still very insecure -- many people see its methodologies as imported from education so it tries to be scholarly instead. And basic composition is misunderstood because kids bring attitudes that are not productive. The basic problem in the composition field is that practitioners don't know how to go about remediating them [students]. Even in _____ County, a "Cadillac" institution, the students aren't writing above the paragraph level, although they do have them doing a lot of writing.

The problem is that developmental writing is too political. Money comes out of English departments and standard multiple choice tests will win out. In the future students will be remediated fast. Competency exams are coming, and they'll be under the control of national programs.

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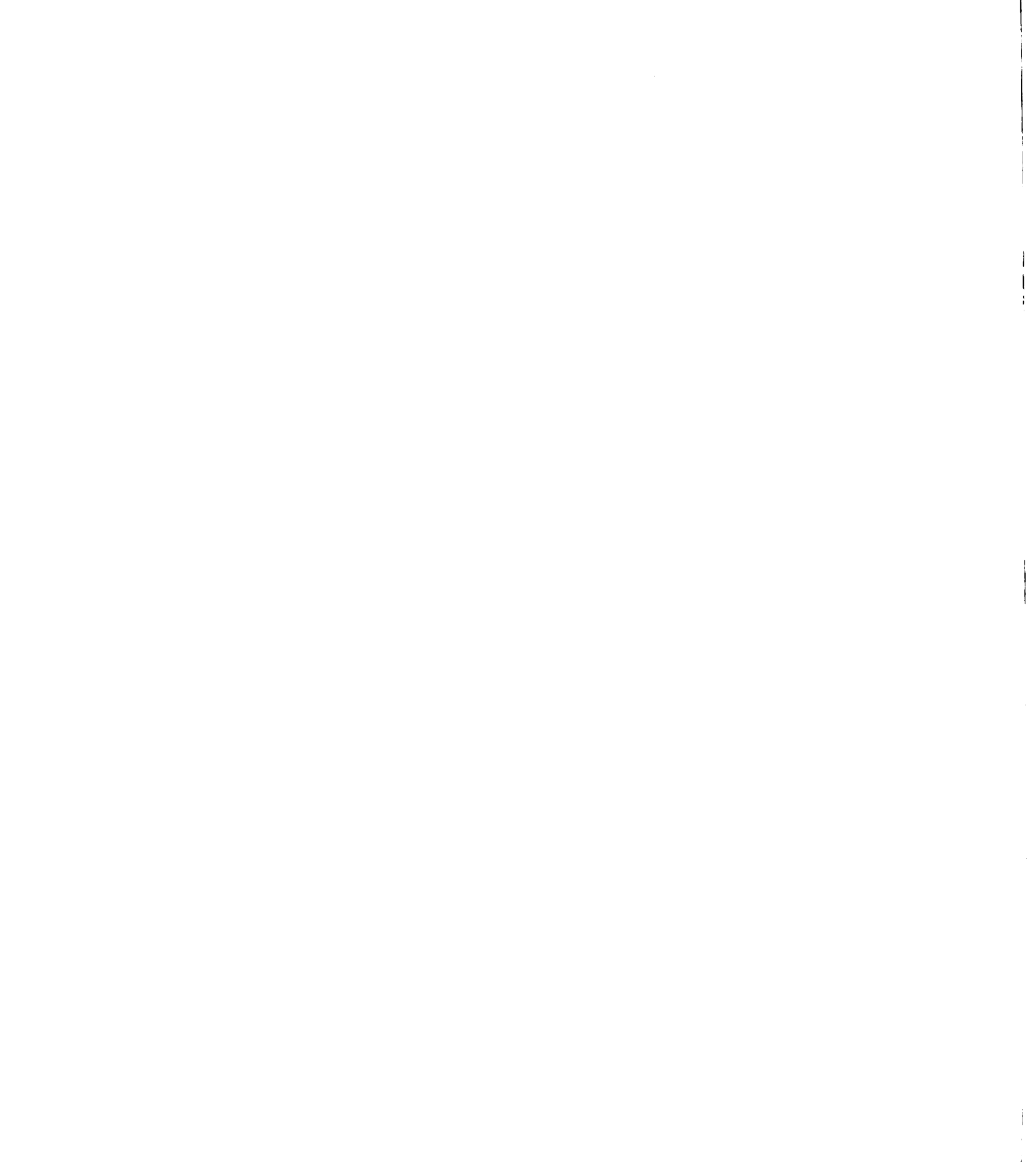
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