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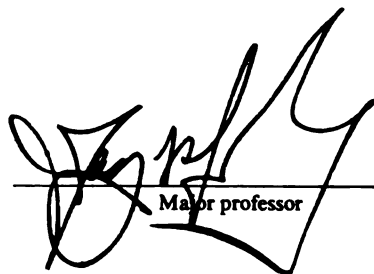
An Investigation of First-Time University English Department
Teaching Assistants: Considerations for Training Programs

presented by

Janet E. Samuelson

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AN INVESTIGATION OF FIRST-TIME UNIVERSITY
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT TEACHING ASSISTANTS:
CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

By

Janet E. Samuelson

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF FIRST-TIME UNIVERSITY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT TEACHING ASSISTANTS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

By

Janet E. Samuelson

This study investigates teaching assistants in American university English departments: the origins and history of teaching assistants and the major issues in training programs for them. I also conducted a survey of first-time teaching assistants at five universities in an attempt to learn more about their backgrounds, their understanding of and attitudes toward writing theory, and their knowledge of writing pedagogy. Finally, I discussed the profile that emerged of the teaching assistants in context with the major recommendations for training programs posited by such theorists as Donald Murray, Janet Emig, Wallace Douglas, Donald Nemanich, and Richard Gebhardt.

The survey revealed that the prospective teaching assistants had extensive experiential backgrounds in writing, but their educational backgrounds in writing were considerably weaker. While they reported having had little knowledge of specific theorists and theories in writing and pedagogy, they more closely aligned themselves with the recent "process-oriented" approach to writing and its teaching than with the "prescriptive" orientation--perhaps reflecting their experience as writers which they bring to their newfound role as teachers.

From the information reported by the teaching assistants and the major concerns discussed by the theorists, training programs are an essential feature of preparing graduate students to teach college-level writing courses, especially given the concentration of literature in undergraduate English majors' curricula. Furthermore, comprehensive and sustained training programs are needed because they offer prospective college teachers the only training they might receive before entering the field as professionals. While training programs provide soon-to-be teachers an opportunity to explore a rich and complex field, they are nonetheless flawed because of the short period of time given to them. In addition, they cannot guarantee effective teaching nor dictate attitudes toward writing, theory, and pedagogy. Their importance is, however, not diminished because in training programs, undergraduates' improved writing is, ultimately, at stake, and that improvement begins with effective college writing teachers.

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In memory of my father

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Writing is inexorably long, hard, and lonely work; the process, however, is made immeasurably easier by support, feedback, and encouragement along the way. This study proved to be no exception. Accordingly, I wish to thank the Directors of Writing Programs and their incoming teaching assistants for graciously providing me with the data for this study. I thank Professor Nancy Ainsworth for her time and suggestions; Professor Candida Gillis for her perceptive and lucid feedback on research methodology; Professor Stephen N. Judy for making me aware of the importance and joy of studying history; Professor Linda W. Wagner for her quiet and constant encouragement. I also thank Professor Jay B. Ludwig for serving as my guidance committee chairperson and dissertation director, for believing in this project, and for continually challenging me to shape my thinking and to make language "beautiful." Special thanks go to friends--Kathy, Gwen, Helen, Jim, Marilyn, and Lois--whose presence and faith helped me to persevere.

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Introduction

"A Lyf so short, a craft so long to lerne."

--Chaucer

The academic community has long questioned the predominant training its graduate students should have: inherent to the problem is the extent to which graduate school should emphasize the making of scholars or the making of teachers. In her chapter on the preparation of college teachers in Challenges to Graduate Schools, Ann M. Heiss examines the rationale behind the dichotomy between scholarship and teaching:

Those who plan doctoral programs are faced with the dilemma of whether to educate scholar-teachers, teacher-scholars, or both. Usually they start with the basic question: is any distinction necessary or desirable at this level? Until quite recently most planners rejected . . . [the] contention that 'to discover and to teach are distinct functions and distinct gifts rarely found in the same person' in favor of . . . [the] view that research informs teaching. In either case, most graduate faculties have operated on the assumption that the process of becoming a researcher requires rigorous exposure to theory and practice but the art and skill of teaching 'comes naturally'--or develops gratuitously when she is educated for research. Thus, the emphasis in most Ph.D. programs has been heavily weighted in favor of preparing students to discover knowledge, and only incidentally if at all on how to impart to others the nature and value of that knowledge. . . . Graduate faculties, who are responsible for the education of future college teachers, are generally disposed to hold the opinion that an intelligent, liberally educated individual who has achieved mastery¹ of subject matter is thereby qualified to teach it.

As yet an unresolved issue, Dennis L. Stockdale and Zachary S. Wochock in 1977 point to graduate programs' concentration on and success in promoting the training of researchers, much to the neglect of

training prospective college teachers. In "Why Not Train College Teachers to Teach?" they write, "Recent studies show that universities generally are credited with doing a good job in training graduate students in research, but it is difficult to find someone who will assert that universities are doing a good job in the training and preparation of teachers. Indeed, the American college teacher is the only high level professional person who enters his career with little or no practice and experience in using the tools of his profession."²

While Stockdale, Wochok, and Heiss in the 1970s address themselves to the university community as a whole, critics specializing in the English curriculum began in the early 1960s to focus their attention on similar matters and have likewise explored the consequences of the dilemma as it pertains to the college teaching of writing. In his 1963 Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College, for example, Albert R. Kitzhaber maintains that the undergraduate and graduate English majors' coursework is "almost entirely literary,"³ the result being that "the young teacher of freshman English is ill-prepared for the job he is asked to do. . . ."⁴ Almost twenty years since Kitzhaber's observation, other critics continue to note the same problem when they describe the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral English preparation in literature as "largely unsuited to the realistic career needs of the students enrolled in them."⁵ Hence, the problem that Kitzhaber described remains a problem in the 1980s, and English departments are not exempt from the "scholar-teacher" controversy noted twenty years earlier.

Indeed, the study of literature has been the charge of, and has consequently preoccupied, university English departments since Harvard

College instituted a literature-based curriculum in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Therefore, while skilled in literature and literary criticism, first-time teachers of college writing courses may not have had the equivalent training in writing, writing theory, and pedagogy to what they have had in the more traditional English curriculum. It is assumed, for instance, that teachers of literature are well skilled in reading and analyzing the genres, and are aware of the problems one encounters when approaching a text. After all, the education that afforded them their jobs supposed, if not dictated, their familiarity with such knowledge. If teachers of writing, however, have not had educational backgrounds and training in writing as they have had in literature, they may not be thoroughly prepared to teach writing as well as they might teach literature.

Robert M. Gorrell also has addressed English departments' priorities and the resulting problems caused by them. In "Freshman Composition," in The College Teaching of English, he points to the belief that "anyone can teach English . . . since he can speak and write it"⁶ as widespread and misleading, if not fallacious. Gorrell supports the notion that first-time teachers of college writing courses may not have had the experience with the types of writing required of their students and with sorting through the maze of research concerning writing theory and pedagogy. Therein lies the problem for the new teachers, for the directors of writing programs who supervise the departments' writing courses, and ultimately for the students enrolled in the writing courses.

Whether to shift, then, from training scholars to training teachers becomes a vital issue in English departments. New teaching assistants' knowledge of writing, writing theory, and the teaching of writing is especially significant when one considers the role of these people inside and outside of the academic community. Teaching assistants and new faculty, the two groups who comprise the majority of first-time college writing teachers, are responsible for the instruction of students in the introductory writing courses offered by university English departments. Kitzhaber notes that "although there are exceptions, especially in smaller colleges, the freshman course is most commonly assigned to graduate students who teach part-time while working toward an advanced degree and to junior faculty newly out of graduate school."⁷ Apparently, little has changed since Kitzhaber made that observation. The University of Iowa, for instance, staffs its freshman rhetoric program with some one hundred twenty teaching assistants;⁸ at Michigan State University, the majority of the English department's sophomore-level writing workshop is taught by teaching assistants. The situation seems to be similar at other universities with the exception of some schools (such as the University of Vermont) which recently have required all full-time faculty to teach a writing course at least once a year. Furthermore, teaching assistants teach not only the first, but frequently the last and only formal writing course in which undergraduates enroll. For many students, then, freshman writing taught by first-time teachers becomes a first and last chance meeting with writing instruction during their undergraduate (and sometimes graduate) degrees. As Gorrell maintains, "From several points of view,

freshman English is the most important work of the English department. It affects more students and occupies more teachers than any other. For many students it is the only college level experience with language or literature. It is, by reputation, at least, basic to success in other disciplines."⁹

Gorrell's last point brings up yet another reason to look closely at the importance of first-time writing teachers' responsibilities to the department and university community. A resurgence of the call for students to receive more and better training in writing is currently being heard at all levels in the schools. The media, as well as academia itself, have turned their attention to what is happening—or not happening—in the writing classroom. Writing classes are now the target for close scrutiny, and the teachers' ability, training, and acumen are included in the investigation. One only needs to peruse any of the weekly magazines (starting in recent times with Newsweek's December 7, 1976 article entitled "Why Johnny Can't Write") or survey the reports on radio and television newscasts to hear that students are making films, engaging in rap sessions, and doing anything but learning the fundamentals and writing in the writing classroom. Currently, one hears of school systems being sued by students and parents for graduating illiterates, and of teachers being unable to pass even the most rudimentary tests in writing and mathematics. Disregarding the truthfulness of such claims, the point still holds: teachers of writing are under investigation, if not attack, concerning their ability to teach America's youth, and as members of the profession, first-time teachers of writing at the college level are not exempt from such matters. From this attention to writing—or at least to its teaching—

one can deduce that the ability to write well is still seen, as Gorrell notes in 1965, as the foundation for achievement in academia as well as outside the university community. Even a Gallup poll taken in the late 1970s reported that despite the poor reputation English has as a subject matter, 1500 respondents maintained that English is the first on a list of school subjects they found "most useful in later life."¹⁰

Since the turn of the century, too, those in the lower levels of education have considered colleges and universities leaders in what is taught and the way it is taught--and for an understandable reason: a desire to best prepare students for what they eventually will have to know in order to succeed in college. In The ABC's of Literacy, Stephen N. Judy suggests, not without irony, that in the primary grades, teachers look to junior high school as the model to follow, and junior high school teachers look to the curricula of high schools, and the pattern continues.¹¹ College-level writing and its teaching, then, become an example or the victim of a ripple effect or reverberation in academia. In other words, the impact of college writing courses may be felt well beyond its intended audience.

Finally, an examination of first-time college writing teachers' knowledge of writing, writing theory, and pedagogy is significant when one considers the importance of writing they will be instilling in their students. As many theorists have noted, among them James Britton, language, and more particularly writing, is a way of "symbolizing what is in the universe"¹² and serves as an "organizing principle in our accumulated picture of the experienced world."¹³ Writing can help to make us fully cognizant of the world in which we live and

the experiences which shape our lives. Both a skill and a craft, it has the ability to unite our real and imagined lives; it can help to bridge our conscious and unconscious worlds. As such, any inquiry into writing and its teaching, especially in light of the reborn or, more accurately, ongoing attention now being paid to the "literacy" crisis, should be of interest to educators at all levels in the schools, including those in disciplines other than English.

Indeed, the role of teaching assistants has, and continues to be, important. Unfortunately and ironically, as Stockdale and Wochok state, "It appears that most institutions see the teaching assistant as primarily a means of providing undergraduate instruction and giving financial support for graduate students, not as a means of explicit training of future college teachers."¹⁴ And while teaching assistants are involved in training others to write, their own training as teachers is no less important: ". . . the experience of the majority of these future college teachers as teaching assistants is the sole opportunity they will have to learn how to teach."¹⁵ Thus, any inquiry into teaching assistants and training programs for them involves both their students' and their own training.

Despite the inherent difficulties that face first-time writing teachers and despite the tremendous responsibility laid before them, they do have several strengths and advantages which make them excellent candidates for such a first teaching assignment. Many are students themselves or are close enough to their days as students to be acutely aware of the demands placed on undergraduates; their natural affinity toward their students can help them to relate to the problems and frustrations that student writers often experience.

In discussing teaching assistants as teachers of college writing courses, Dudley Bailey also cites other qualities peculiar to first-time writing teachers in his remarks on a panel at the Conference on College Composition and Communication: "As yet unsophisticated to the point that they know the general professional contempt for freshman English, as yet unbelieving that knowledge is worthy of their attention, as yet unpersuaded of the division of form and content which often drains the vitality from the instruction of older colleagues--they [teaching assistants] come to their task with enthusiasm and faith; and they often see and readily admit as pertinent to their instruction something of the proper vastness and excitement of student life and student thinking."¹⁶ Or, as Kathryn Zabelle Derounian points out over twenty-five years later, ". . . what the assistant professor possesses in rank and experience, the teaching assistant can match in time and enthusiasm."¹⁷

First-time teachers of college writing courses, then, are worthy of investigation for the backgrounds, responsibilities, and skills they bring to their jobs. To illuminate the nature of first-time teachers of college writing courses and the training for their positions, this study examines three principal areas: the history of teaching assistants in universities, with special attention paid to English departments; the development of training programs for prospective college teachers, with specific attention again paid to English teachers; and first-hand information from first-time college writing teachers regarding their educational and experiential backgrounds, their understanding of and attitudes toward writing theory, and their knowledge of writing pedagogy. To learn about the range of their

backgrounds, I surveyed a group of first-time teaching assistants on the undergraduate and graduate courses they took in writing, their publications, their familiarity with the journals and in the memberships they held in organizations devoted to writing and its teaching, the conferences they attended where writing and teaching were central focuses, and their perceptions of themselves as writers. To learn about their understanding of and attitudes toward writing theory, I asked the teachers about their ideas concerning the qualities which contribute to effective non-fiction prose writing and the processes involved in producing effective writing. I also asked about their beliefs concerning the activities by which one best learns and teaches writing. Finally, to learn about their knowledge of pedagogy, I asked them about the extent of their knowledge concerning major theories and theorists in the teaching of writing, the activities in which they would have their students participate in a writing class, and their anticipations as prospective college writing teachers. From these areas of inquiry, the following question is under investigation: what can be learned for training programs about first-time teachers' backgrounds as writers, their attitudes toward writing theory, and knowledge of writing pedagogy? In essence, what kind of profile might be drawn of first-time college writing teachers, and what are the implications for preparatory programs that might help them, and consequently their students, in their new role of writing teacher?

Any inquiry into first-time teachers of college writing courses and training programs for them points not only to the success or failure of the new college teachers, but the knowledge undergraduates

acquire and the improvement they make in the course of their studies. At stake, too, is a new breed of college teachers becoming the superior, the poor, or the legions of mediocre teachers for their students—in short, the bearers of the tradition. Combining the stakes of both new teachers and students, Joyce Carroll emphasizes the ongoing need to attend to the writing teacher when she states that "what is necessary for writing to improve . . . is a change to occur deep within the writing classroom. And this change must focus first on our greatest resource—the teacher."¹⁸

Notes

- ¹ Ann M. Heiss, Challenges to Graduate Schools (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1970), pp. 228-9.
- ² Dennis L. Stockdale and Zachary S. Wochok, "Why Not Train College Teachers to Teach?" Improving College and University Teaching, 25 (1977), 85.
- ³ Albert R. Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), p. 15.
- ⁴ Kitzhaber.
- ⁵ David D. Roberts, "Survival and Prosperity: TA Training Colloquia" Freshman English News, 10 (1982), 4.
- ⁶ Robert M. Gorrell, "Freshman Composition," in The College Teaching of English, ed. John C. Gerber (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), p. 109.
- ⁷ Kitzhaber, p. 13.
- ⁸ Sue Seyfarth, "The Professional Development Program: More Than One at Iowa" Freshman English News, 10 (1982), 14.
- ⁹ Gorrell, p. 114.
- ¹⁰ Elizabeth Wooten Cowan, ADE Bulletin, 60 (1977), 30.
- ¹¹ Stephen N. Judy, The ABC's of Literacy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 86.
- ¹² James Britton, Language and Learning (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 13.
- ¹³ Britton, p. 276.
- ¹⁴ Stockdale and Wochok, p. 87.

¹⁵ Stockdale and Wochok, pp. 85-6.

¹⁶ Dudley Bailey, "The Graduate Assistant and the Freshman English Student," College Composition and Communication, 5 (1954), 38.

¹⁷ Kathryn Zabelle Derounian, "From Graduate Assistant to Assistant Professor: Promotion in Composition Teaching Skills?" Freshman English News, 10 (1982), 20.

¹⁸ Joyce Carroll, "Process, Praxis, and A Writing Project," Texas Writers Newsletter, 26 (1980), 4.

Chapter I

Historical Reviews

The Origins of Teaching Assistantships in American Universities

In order to understand contemporary teaching assistants and their role in academia, it is helpful to explore the origins of teaching assistants in universities, their growing responsibilities and functions in the department, and the degree and kinds of attention given to their training. In marked contrast to the concern given to the training of secondary English teachers, the history and function of university teaching assistants and training programs are not as easy to ascertain. While the formation of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1911 and the publication of The English Journal in the following year attested to secondary English teachers' interest in and commitment to the need to examine the ways in which the teaching of English could be improved, other conferences and publications of conference proceedings continued the discussion, among them the National Joint Committee on English's Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools in 1917, An Experience Curriculum in English in 1935, and A Correlated Curriculum in 1936. While these documents focused mainly on the secondary schools' English curricula and teaching methods, the training of high school teachers was not ignored; Alfred H. Grommon's "A History of the Preparation of Teachers of English" describes the training of secondary school teachers during

the early part of the twentieth century. Only letters, records, articles by major American university professors and presidents, and the annals on the development of the American college and university provide information about teaching assistants. Complicating the unearthing of the history of teaching assistants, too, is that little, if any attention is directly given to teaching assistants (even the origins and use of the term "teaching assistant" are unclear); rather they are most frequently discussed in context of the awarding of fellowships and scholarships, and rarely in the context of their developing role in the academic community.

As early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, colleges used tutors who might be considered the first graduate teaching assistants as we conceive of them today. In Frederick Rudolph's The American College and University, tutors are described as "just out of college, perhaps with nothing else to do, unlikely to make a career of teaching but conceivably so, probably interested in earning a few dollars shortly before going on to theological school or definitely committing himself to a career. The tutor was a cheap labor device."¹ Not unlike what some teaching assistants now do almost 250 years later, the position provided them with a rest stop to contemplate and decide on their career and/or to build their funds before continuing their education.

When schools first instituted the tutorship, a marked distinction was made between professors and tutors: professors "taught a subject" (such as an area of specialization), and tutors "taught a class" (such as the graduating class of a school or taking a class through

different subject areas in the curriculum). In other words, the tutors' responsibilities were more general than those of professors'. In describing their teaching responsibilities, Rudolph reports that the tutor "would have taught . . . both in subjects for which the college had no professors and in elementary studies for which the college did have professors."² By filling the vacant areas of the college curriculum and being responsible for its beginning or introductory courses, tutors became an invaluable part of the academic system.

While the use of tutors benefited the colleges financially as well as educationally, the students for whom they were responsible thought otherwise. In fact, "tutors seldom lasted long enough to become experienced at anything but dodging stones thrown through their windows or bottles thrown at their dormitory doors by inappreciative students."³ Harvard College was the first school that attempted to remedy the problem of ridicule and disdain for tutors in 1767 when it gave tutors a subject to teach; in other words, the tutors' teaching responsibilities more closely matched those of professors' than before when they taught in areas in which they were or were not necessarily fluent. Thus, tutors were brought into the profession as scholars and instructors whose sights were on professorships whereas before, and at other schools, tutors filled in for unstaffed courses and did not necessarily wish to pursue teaching as a career. The shift in function and responsibility between the first tutors and those who came decades later or who taught at schools other than Harvard College is described this way: "The old tutor was in no sense an organization man--he was merely passing through. When he changed into an instructor,

however, and was invited to join in a competitive race for rank, he found the college had become a bureaucracy . . . he was working his way up a ladder. One day he might be a professor."⁴

Even with this change of status, however, tutors were still not conceived of as junior faculty members or even as apprentices; rather they were occupying the lowest rung of the academic hierarchy, "a young man who had given up his rights as a student to become a lackey, a spy."⁵ While disliked by their students (as evidenced by their being the recipients of thrown bottles and stones), they were an economic necessity to the survival of the colleges; while they might eventually work their way up to a professorship, they received no help or encouragement in doing so. Hence, tutors might best be viewed as the bastard children of academia, yet children that the system was not willing to give up. Rudolph sums up the tutor's situation by writing that "Generally despised by students, exploited or ignored by professors, he was perhaps an answer to inadequate collegiate financial resources. But even so, always allowing for those cherished exceptions, he was one reason that the American college presented such a dreary picture to its critics."⁶

In The Development of Harvard University Since the Inauguration of President Eliot, 1869-1929, Samuel Eliot Morison provides further information on the later role and function of the tutor in the university community when he describes the tutor as occupying until 1914 "the lowest grade of instructor. He might hear recitations on a set book, or even lecture; tutoring he never did."⁷ After 1914, however, ". . . the office was revived for its original function of helping

individual students, and for the immediate purpose of preparing them for the new General Examination at the end of the Senior year."⁸

Along with the inception of tutorships came the need for fellowships or scholarships--financial inducement for graduate students to continue their education, populate graduate programs, and serve as junior faculty in colleges. In fact, the entire system of using tutors paled in comparison to the attention given to the economics of education, so much so that the history of the tutorship gets lost in the abundant attention given to funding graduate students' educations. Thus, while the beginning of the eighteenth century brought into focus the use of the tutor, it just as clearly, if not more so, cast attention on fellowships, graduate programs, and departments in colleges and universities. An intermingling of areas of attention became the norm, and in talking about one particular area, one also had to introduce into the discussion several others. In short, mutual exclusivity was impossible.

The story of the Reverend Dean of Derry, Ireland, the later Bishop George Berkeley, illustrates this situation. In 1731, the Reverend Dean offered to bequeath his Newport, Rhode Island, farm to Yale College if it was used to support post-baccalaureate students in Greek and Latin during their studies for the masters degree.⁹ Because of the Reverend Dean's gesture to Yale, graduate education and financial support become linked. Unlike the idea of the tutorship, however, the interest in the area of education and economics escalated, and was a major area of concern until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Because of the abusive situations faced by tutors from their students, professors' attitudes toward their presence on campus, and the general lack of financial assistance available for American graduate students, most young men in the early 1800s had to go to Europe to continue their schooling. Such was the case for George Ticknor, a New Englander who went to Göttingen, Germany, to pursue his graduate studies. Upon returning to the United States, Ticknor took a Smith professorship in French and Spanish languages and literature as well as a professorship of belles-lettres at Harvard. More importantly, Ticknor became a central figure in the corporation, a group formed to examine the nature of American colleges and serve as an outside panel to the university president. In line with his interest in American education--or its failings--and because of his European training, Ticknor proclaimed in 1823 that "Changes must take place in the present constitution and organization of colleges . . . we must accomodate (sic) ourselves more to the spirits & wants of the times and country in which we live."¹⁰ While Ticknor was referring tangentially to changes in graduate education, its funding, and the role of graduate students as paraprofessionals, the principal change to which he was referring was that the college be broken into departments and students be freed from the proscribed studies of the traditional four classes. Ticknor supported the idea that students could advance through the course of their studies as quickly as they wished, and receive their degrees upon successful completion of departmental examinations. This system was based on and influenced, in large part, by German gymnasia and universities. While American colleges and universities became

"departmentalized" and followed in the footsteps of the German system of higher education, the faculties in American universities and colleges such as Harvard were not pleased.¹¹ Still, the need for changes in graduate education was apparent, and growth was inevitable.

One of the questions still nagging the profession and yet to be adequately addressed was how to attract students to engage in advanced study or graduate work. Germane to the history of teaching assistants is an idea posited by Charles Beck, a German classicist and Tübingen doctorate. Arriving at Harvard in 1831, he planned a philological seminary whose function was, in part, to train teachers.¹² In fact, Beck might be considered one of the first people to bring together the need for financial assistance for graduate students and teacher training. Beck was acutely aware of the two needs, and in June of 1832 the Corporation "accepted a committee report suggesting that appointments of graduates to the office of proctor would offer desirable encouragement and that proficiency in the philological department might be considered as one recommendation for the post."¹³ In the Corporation's backing of the report, one finds the first consideration given to qualifications for graduate posts, a commitment to graduate student aid and practical experience for prospective teachers. Such a program was short-lived because Beck's idea for a seminary soon died.¹⁴ More important to the history and discussion of teaching assistants, however, a pattern had begun to emerge: while individuals saw the need for financial aid to graduate students and practical experience for prospective teachers, the schools had yet to act upon the two areas of concern.

Beck's set-back, however, did not put an end to the issue of attracting students for advanced study by offering them financial assistance. In the popular Five Years in an English University published in 1852, Charles A. Bristed pointed to the British system which provided inducements for students to continue their education. Bristed noted that in fact the mere competition for fellowships in Britain promoted growth among the students: "This was a period during which new traits of character, mental and moral, appeared; new capabilities and veins of thought were displayed, and different kinds of knowledge from all quarters were sucked up as if for mere amusement."¹⁵ The situation in America, however, was sadly the reverse because the universities had not actively committed themselves to offering fellowships or scholarships.

Bristed's ideas were not lost completely; his viewpoints did gain some notice in America and had an impact on American thinking about education and financial assistance for graduate students. Even the North American Review, in discussing Bristed's book, concurred: "The great want of American colleges [and universities] at the present day is the endowment of a moderate number of scholarships and fellowships, for the encouragement of liberal studies."¹⁶ While graduate studies were not wholly supported, let alone accepted, by American society, the 1850s were a turning-point in that university policy statements thereafter called for the support of fellowships to promote graduate studies and to entice gifted students to continue their academic interests.

While scholarships and fellowships for graduate students were finally given some attention and support in America, the notion of such monies being given to prospective teachers in order to help them develop their skills as professors was yet to be accepted or even proposed—except by Charles Beck in the 1830s. The need for and interest in training students to become college professors were not diminished. Rather, concern centered on where money would be found and to whom it would be given. The sentiments of a University of Pennsylvania professors sums up the doubts shared by many faculty members concerning fellowships: "'the Yankee graduates, at any rate, will inquire before they start [their academic programs] whether the cash had been paid in.'"¹⁷

And yet, at approximately the same time, in the "Report of the President of the University" from the Regents' Proceedings in 1855, the University of Michigan's concerns over preparing their graduates to become teachers were made a matter of record: "'The graduate of a College is not prepared to become a College Professor. But the direct object of a University is to prepare men to teach in the University itself, or in any other institution.'"¹⁸ In short, while the two needs—financial assistance to advanced degree students and teacher preparation for prospective college professors—were acknowledged, the two had yet to be fully drawn together; while American colleges and universities focused their attention to and concern over these two areas, they remained separate, albeit related, issues.

Of the two issues yet to be solved by academic administrators, financial assistance was the first to receive attention and commitment

from American schools. Despite all of the rhetoric paid to the issues (the major schools citing the need to support graduate education), the first school to demonstrate any appreciable and sustained commitment to providing financial assistance to advanced degree students was Johns Hopkins University. During the early 1870s, fellowships of \$500 were offered to students who showed promise in their studies, despite rumblings of uncertainty and skepticism from the university's board of trustees. Still, the administration of Johns Hopkins was committed to offering graduate education to qualified students, and just as importantly, to providing its faculty with feelings that it was being "'constantly stimulated'"¹⁹ by bright students.

For graduate students, administrators, and faculty, the risk Johns Hopkins took paid off: the first graduates who were awarded fellowships went on to pursue careers as ambassadors, eminent professors, and pioneers in historical studies. The university, of course, garnered much praise and commendation because of its accomplished graduates. And, as Rudolph maintains, "The early success of Johns Hopkins rested in part on its program of fellowships, a device which would become a characteristic element in the creation of every major American university."²⁰

If fellowships to worthy graduate students became a "characteristic element" in major universities, teaching assistantships--another form of financial assistance--were not far behind. While the exact date of the inception of teaching assistantships (including the use of the term) is unclear and remains a question yet to be fully investigated by the historians of the profession, the rise of undergraduate

enrollments in the early part of the twentieth century brought with it the need for universities to staff the growing population of lower-level courses as well as "prolong the period of graduate study, and at the same time to soften the transition from student to teacher."²¹

Such was the case at Harvard. In 1872, when the Graduate Department was first being established, faculty opposition to the graduate school was strong: "It was said that the University had insufficient funds to teach undergraduates properly, and that a graduate department would weaken the college. To which President [Charles W.] Eliot replied . . . 'It will strengthen the College. As long as the main duty of the faculty is to teach boys, professors need never pursue their subjects beyond a certain point. With graduate students to teach, they will regard their subject as infinite, and will keep up that constant investigation which is necessary for the best teaching.'"²²

Thus, one might assume the growth and acceptance of graduate students to teach undergraduate courses increased--primarily to free professors of the burden of teaching undergraduate courses. to encourage graduate students to continue their studies, but only secondarily to help graduates learn the art of teaching. The universities were not really interested in helping to create teachers; such business was considered "a minor and relatively simple part of university work. . . ."²³

Harvard College and its English A program illustrate how the graduate student as teacher helped with the difficulties of teaching large numbers of students, and establish an example of the use of "teaching assistants" which was followed for a number of years. In the early part of the twentieth century, Harvard College was

experiencing a tremendous spurt in growth; students, often from rural areas, were beginning to attend college and they were, more often than not, unprepared for the demands of college work. To help students acquire writing skills, Harvard instituted an English A program which demanded a sizeable amount of writing from its students. By 1918, over 38,000 daily, weekly, and fortnightly themes were being produced each year at that institution.²⁴ No faculty—regardless of how hard working and ambitious it was—could handle such a paper load. One might assume that graduate students as teaching assistants provided such schools with a natural solution to the paper crunch by easing the work load of senior faculty (by being proctors, lecturers, graders, and research assistants to senior faculty) and by being provided financial remuneration for their efforts, thereby allowing them to continue their graduate education. Fellowships and preliminary teaching experience could thus be wed. Just as importantly, the system appeared to be more manageable than before because by the 1930s fellowships had found a permanent home in major American university graduate programs, and the training of prospective college teachers in all disciplines had become a major topic at conferences and in journals.

Once the notion of the graduate student as teacher, or the teaching assistant, was accepted by universities, the nature of the position and its responsibilities grew. In fact, being awarded teaching assistantships guaranteed the recipients that they would be involved in any number of different activities: taking roll, grading quizzes, leading small discussion groups, delivering lectures to large classes, marking student papers and exams, assisting senior faculty in

research--in sum, meeting the needs of the particular department, whatever those needs might have been at the time, with little attention actually paid to teaching the prospective teachers how to teach (unless a major professor was so inclined).

Teaching assistants' responsibilities grew throughout the years; they lectured, helped in the preparation of the courses' direction, and evaluated students' overall performances. Their once menial jobs grew into major responsibilities. Ann M. Heiss reports in 1970 on just such responsibilities: while those teaching in the sciences noted relatively little total responsibility for lecturing and grading, the case for those in English, French, and mathematics was markedly different. Heiss writes that "23 per cent. . . reported that they had total responsibility in planning the course they taught, 65 per cent held full responsibility for devising tests, and 8 per cent were responsible for grading all papers either in their own courses or in the courses offered by their faculty supervisor. In addition, 76 per cent of the teaching assistants in these fields assumed total responsibility for assigning final grades and 81 per cent were responsible for keeping all records associated with their teaching assignment."²⁵ From these data, Heiss found that 75 percent of the teaching assistants benefited from such responsibilities, so much so that they developed an increased interest in teaching; just as many indicated that their skills as teachers had improved from such experiences.²⁶

Because teaching assistants were given so much responsibility and independence, critics began a debate over the "how much is too much" issue. In his 1972 article "Are Teaching Assistants Teachers?"

William J. Lnenicka poses just that question and notes that "One cannot but marvel that the whole process [of permitting teaching assistants to function as the principal teacher of university courses] did not result in complete disaster!"²⁷

In discussing the use of teaching assistants as teachers, Lnenicka echoes the beliefs of a number of critics (parents and students included) who do not support inexperienced teachers assuming so much responsibility:

The pseudo faculty status conferred upon these individuals provided them, and provides today a cover for incompetence in the classroom, and those who pay the price are the undergraduates. . . . Caught in the middle, the undergraduate student and his parents, who suffer financial strain in order to provide for their children's college education, have a right to feel cheated and resentful when they find even one of the important courses in the undergraduate curriculum being taught by a graduate student, one who, in all probability, is inexperienced, unrehearsed, untrained for teaching, and whose primary interest lies not in his teaching, but rather in satisfying the requirements for his own degree. Conscientious members of the teaching faculty cannot react other than with stunned astonishment and dismay at the news that Mr. Grad Student, candidate for the Ph.D., is being assigned to teach a subject to undergraduates because he flunked that portion of his comprehensives and, after all, 'the best way to learn a subject is to teach it.'²⁸

Clearly, Lnenicka's viewpoint is vehement and inflammatory, if not highly speculative and certainly inflated. Nonetheless, it is shared by others in the profession, including students and parents. If nothing else, his attack on the power and freedom given to teaching assistants calls into question the role that teaching assistants have assumed since their inception as well as the role of training programs for prospective college teachers.

The Growth of Training Programs
for Teaching Assistants

Because the responsibility of first-time teachers of college writing courses is so great to students, the department, the university, and in some people's estimation, to the fostering of a literate society, the training of this group of people becomes especially important. While the early literature on teaching assistants focused on financing graduate studies and curricular development, a number of more recent critics and theorists have attended to the issues of preparatory programs (or pedagogical training) for prospective college teachers, in and outside of the English department. While much of the early literature on training programs does not specifically address English teachers, it does help to provide an understanding of the situations faced by, and the solutions available to college English teachers.

As early as 1930, critics turned their attention to the preparation of college level teachers, and in that year the Institute for Administrative Offices of Higher Institutions, organized by the University of Chicago, had as its central theme "The Training of College Teachers." The papers read at the conference, and subsequently edited by William S. Gray, ranged from inquiries into weaknesses in college teaching and methods of training college teachers to sample preparatory programs at three universities.²⁹ It is interesting to note that three years earlier in 1927, a Committee on the Professional Training of College Teachers stated that "'indifference in the need for such training is all but universal in the graduate schools.'"³⁰ During those three years, however, "there . . . [were] heard from the general

direction of the colleges low rumblings of discontent, ominous mutterings of dissatisfaction, savage growlings of complaint, accompanied by flashes of forked criticism directed immediately at the teaching capacity, or, to use the word of the critics, incapacity of the brilliantly hooded products of our graduate schools."³¹ Evidently, the dissatisfaction heard during those three years produced a need to attend to, if not remedy, the problem of college teacher training.

At the 1930 Institute, Henry Suzzallo cited three basic requirements for prospective college teachers: "civilized and cultured . . . intellectual understandings and appreciations"; "more than ordinary mastery" of the content area; and specific mastery of "some of one subject or part of a subject."³² While these requirements were said to have addressed the academic side of the prospective college teachers, other requirements were said to have fulfilled the professional side of the picture. Included in the professional requisites were an understanding of the American educational system, knowledge of the psychology of learning, and supervised experience in the actual teaching of students.³³ (One notes with interest and amusement that the University of Iowa also required a physical examination of all graduate students, and if any "impediments or psychopathic tendencies"³⁴ were displayed, the students would be discouraged from pursuing a teaching career.) Of particular concern to the participants of the 1930 Institute and a concern which lasted for a number of years, however, was prospective teachers' actual experience in pedagogy.

Critics saw some sort of "professional training" necessary for prospective teachers, and in 1930 the most frequently cited training

program consisted of a course on teaching methods conducted by a senior member of the department who was particularly interested in pedagogy. In that course, the prospective teachers, along with an experienced faculty member, discussed problems which might present themselves to beginning teachers. The other major recommendation of the Institute was for prospective teachers to enroll in an education course in order to learn about the developments in and the current state of education.³⁵ Hence, the responsibility for training college teachers was shared by the particular department of the prospective teachers and the school of education. (One interesting antidote to the problem of preparing prospective teachers was offered by Ernest H. Wilkins who saw the need to recruit more students of "high potential teaching ability" than the university had been doing, thus alleviating the need to rely so heavily on training programs. In order to successfully accomplish such a goal, Wilkins also saw the need to make the field of teaching more appealing to prospective teachers, thereby encouraging graduate students with the most potential to pursue the teaching field.³⁶)

Despite the rhetoric on what "should" be done to train and improve new teachers of college courses, and despite the findings of the 1930 Institute, few universities demonstrated any appreciable commitment to preparatory programs. Columbia University officials, for example, stated that their university had no general program for preparing prospective college teachers, nor did it have any plans to institute one.³⁷ Harvard College officials had no program to aid prospective teachers, and thought that one was not critically needed because, in their estimation, prospective teachers could learn the

most from observing their own successful professors. Moreover, Harvard officials felt that graduate students should teach in their specializations or where their strengths lay, and not necessarily in low-division courses for which they were frequently unprepared. Because of such thinking, graduate students would naturally be prepared for their teaching duties and would not need a training program.³⁸ The University of Iowa's graduate students entered the university with certifications in education and, therefore, were considered knowledgeable in teaching. Although Iowa urged its students to attend departmental seminars in teaching, the university required only physical examinations of students, and speech tests and coaching when needed.³⁹

In short, while many of the universities surveyed by the Institute recognized and acknowledged the need for training programs--or at least for prospective college teachers to be trained--few had made a concerted commitment to providing them for their graduate students. And if any commitment was made, it took the form of one seminar, non-compulsary supervision of senior faculty, and a recommendation for prospective teachers to study the state of education through the education department.

As is the case with trends in education--perhaps a reflection of the political movements in the country--the issue of college teacher preparation received renewed attention almost twenty years after the Institute. This time a report of a 1949 conference on college teachers' preparation, chaired by O. Meredith Wilson, President of the University of Oregon, noted that in spite of the lipservice paid and minor gestures offered to alleviate the problem, few schools had taken

an active commitment to helping college teachers prepare for their jobs; rather, it was concluded, the attention to preparatory programs was expressed by a few interested professors, with little consistent or ongoing support and involvement evident from the rest of the department or university community.⁴⁰

While the 1949 conference participants noted that graduate schools were concerned with turning out qualified teachers, they found that the overwhelming sentiment was for graduate schools to produce the learned scholar, and only secondarily the accomplished teacher. Hence, one discovers some rationale for graduate schools' lack of commitment to supporting strong and active preparatory programs for their prospective college teachers. It is not surprising then that just over twenty years later in 1960 Bernard Berelson reported that 6 percent of the respondents of his study of attitudes toward training programs wanted to reduce the attention given to teacher training, 40 percent wanted it increased, and 41 percent wanted the current emphasis (or lack of) maintained.⁴¹ Clearly, university departments and administrators were divided in their attitudes toward the training of college teachers, but the leaning was toward no increase in preparatory programs for college bound teachers.

Finally at the 1949 conference, questions were raised concerning the professional needs that graduate schools would better serve. Among those questions or concerns were the fostering of individual teaching styles of prospective college teachers, prospective teachers' understanding of their students' motivations for learning, the content or subject matter of doctoral work becoming broad enough to help new

teachers, and, most germane to the discussion of training programs, an inquiry into the extent to which graduate students are prepared by the universities to become the best teachers possible.⁴²

The recommendations made or the issues cited as needing continued support from graduate schools included assigning reduced teaching loads to new teachers, having new teachers work under the supervision of experienced professors, providing new teachers with a diverse range of teaching experiences, monitoring new teachers' responsibilities from initial observation of classes to assuming full responsibility for teaching, and providing new teachers with seminars and workshops on teaching to be conducted by superior faculty members.⁴³ Thus, the 1949 conference, more so than the 1930 Institute, generated not only specific areas of concern but, more importantly, remedies or recommendations to aid prospective college teachers. These recommendations, over thirty years old, are now the ones more frequently adopted in graduate teaching assistant programs in universities, especially in departments of English; in other words, the recommendations of the participants of the 1949 conference have become procedure or policy of many college teacher training programs.

Almost a decade elapsed before two more conferences on college teacher preparation were held and a renewed commitment to the area was demonstrated. In its discussion of pertinent issues in academia, the American Council on Education's January 1956 conference (whose proceedings were published in 1958) included inquiries into masters and doctoral programs as well as graduate study's commitment to preparing prospective college teachers. Like the 1930 Institute,

attention was given to several programs in college teacher training at universities. The participants of this 1956 conference, however, disagreed on the kind of pedagogical training needed to prepare prospective teachers. Nonetheless, they did reach consensus that some sort of training was necessary, and that requiring graduate students to take a course in college teaching was insufficient to the demands of real teacher training.⁴⁴

The most significant issue raised at the American Council on Education's conference was the long overlooked distinction in teacher training programs between the prospective teachers' mastery of course work (content or subject matter) and the methods of teaching that content or subject matter. While the 1930 Institute had focused primarily on the professional preparation of prospective college teachers (e.g. handling student problems and becoming bone fide members of the profession) and the 1949 conference had focused on pedagogical issues (e.g. class loads and the supervision of new teachers' classes), all of the conferees at these two conferences had failed to specifically talk about the prospective teachers' mastery of the material they were to teach as an important feature of college teacher training. In reporting on the proceedings of the 1956 conference, Joseph Axelrod noted that the participants agreed that "two obvious fallacies are to be avoided: the assumption that such preparation [college teachers'] is exclusively a matter of content preparation, and the assumption that pedagogical competence can serve as a substitute for scholarly knowledge."⁴⁵ Thus, under examination at the 1956 conference were not the methods behind teaching (pedagogy) as much as the knowledge

of subject matter required of college teachers that informs what will happen pedagogically--the distinction between the knowledge of course material and the presentation of that course material to students, with the 1956 conference addressing the former.

Held in 1958 under the auspices of the American Studies Association, the College English Association, the Modern Language Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English, the Basic Issues Conference posed thirty-five issues which the participants deemed worthy of investigation, and of those thirty-five, seventeen dealt with the preparation or training of prospective English teachers. Hence, the concerns of the 1930, 1949, and 1956 conferences received renewed attention. Of the issues germane to teaching at the college level, the committee asked "What preparation for college teaching should the Ph.D. candidate receive?" and "How can we achieve articulation of teaching and teacher training at all levels in English?"⁴⁶ While the issue of teacher training for prospective college teachers was not a major consideration at the Basic Issues Conference, it was given some attention, and suggests that while previous conferences had focused on college teacher preparation, the area was still open for further consideration; no hard and fast conclusions had been reached in almost thirty years of discussion.

Perhaps the one issue that united all of the conferences on teacher training for the college level was the question of whose responsibility it was to train prospective college teachers. There appears to be, at least in recent years, consensus on this question, and the answer, according to a number of critics, rests with the

individual academic departments, and not with the graduate school or department of education. In The Miseducation of American Teachers in 1963, for instance, James D. Koerner wrote that the "academic departments must accept major responsibility both for the present state of teacher education and for affecting improvements."⁴⁷ The conclusion of a program for college teacher training at the University of Michigan during 1967 and 1971 was that "a move toward active departmental responsibility for preparation of college teachers was gaining momentum. More time and resources are being devoted to this responsibility."⁴⁸ While the Michigan program involved the departments of botany, history, philosophy, physics, and psychology, it appears that English departments are not exempt from similar commitments to college teacher preparation. In his article "How the Candidate Learns to Teach College English," for example, Warner G. Rice, a University of Michigan professor, made just that claim: "If, then, departments of English think that college teaching is important, they must accept the obligation for providing a more thorough discipline in the art than they have attempted in the past."⁴⁹

Certainly one of the most damning commentaries on the issue of responsibility for college teachers' training also came in 1963 from Albert R. Kitzhaber, one of the critics who put the issue into sharp focus:

. . . much of the poor teaching that one so often finds in freshman English is less the result of inexperience and indifference than of inadequate professional preparation--as indeed it is in the high schools also. The blame for this state of affairs must rest squarely with the college departments of English that have given these teachers their undergraduate and graduate education.⁵⁰

Kitzhaber cited the English curriculum's reliance on the study of literature (and not on writing and its teaching) as the culprit. Despite the interest and care that prospective college teachers bring to their own classes, such qualities, according to Kitzhaber, do not take the place of training or preparatory programs. Good intentions and hard work, while complementary to, are no substitute for training in the teaching of college English. Commenting on the need for teacher preparation, one critic noted, ". . . all the high-priced texts and high-powered materials will not replace a well-prepared teacher."⁵¹

It is interesting to note that the early to mid-1960s produced a tremendous amount of interest in the training of college English teachers. In 1963, for example, Alfred H. Grommon edited The Education of Teachers of English for American Schools and Colleges. Also in that year, Albert R. Kitzhaber's Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College appeared. Two years later, in 1965, John C. Gerber edited The College Teaching of English. Clearly, writers in the field of English were concerned with the ways English might best be taught at the college level and the ways prospective teachers might be trained to become effective college writing teachers.

Despite the 1960s interest in the training of prospective English teachers and the call for English departments to shoulder the responsibility of preparatory programs, Ann M. Heiss reported in 1970 that "in half of the fifty institutions which produced 90 per cent of the Ph.D's each year, [training] program[s] for teaching assistants had remained substantially unchanged during the past decade or more."⁵² In other words, from the 1960s call to prepare future college teachers

to 1970, more talk than action had been given to training programs. In 1979, Elizabeth Wooten Cowen reported that of the 157 schools she surveyed concerning their college teaching education program, only 92 (or 59 percent) had graduate instruction in writing as a requirement for their teaching assistants. Still more striking was that 18 percent of the surveyed departments had whatsoever no retraining program for literature specialists faced with teaching college composition.⁵³ So, despite the call for individual departments to be responsible for training their graduate students how to teach, less than full and active commitment was being given to preparing prospective college teachers for their new role.

Addressing the issue during a panel discussion on teaching assistants and training programs, Edgar W. Lacy contended that "The system of using graduate students to teach freshman can be regarded as functioning satisfactorily. . . ."⁵⁴ However, Lacy was quick to add that one of the "safeguards" was that the teaching assistant "must not be asked to do more than he has experience to do."⁵⁵ Twenty years later, in 1974, Maxine Hairston amplified Lacy's stance when she wrote that "In many ways, Teaching Assistants may do a better job of teaching freshmen than some of our senior colleagues. They will do a good job, however, only if we have effective ways to train them and to supervise them during the first years of their apprenticeship in the profession."⁵⁶ Even the 1979 Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Conference featured an entire session on training the composition teacher (specifically the teaching assistant), and other national English conferences such as the Conference on College Composition and

Communication have included in their programs papers discussing the training of teaching assistants to become successful college writing teachers. Such conferences, it is important to note, come twenty years after a 1959-60 survey on the issue of college teacher training which reported that "'If there is a grave lack . . . it is in the production of teachers of freshman composition who are specifically trained and psychologically conditioned to perform with enthusiasm and real distinction.'"⁵⁷

Because of the need for well trained college writing teachers and the plethora of research now emerging on the writing process and the most effective ways to teach college writing, the issue of preparatory programs continues to be a concern among directors of writing programs, English professors, and administrators. The issue of college teacher training--at least in English departments and writing programs--has received more than lipservice, and has not been relegated to the departments of education or graduate schools as it had been in the past. While significantly improved since the 1930s, training programs are still imperfect, and remain one of the focuses of attention of theorists, researchers, and teachers in the field, especially those who want to successfully staff their freshman writing courses as well as graduate masters and doctoral candidates who are as competent in the teaching of writing as they are in the study of literature.

Notes

¹ Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 161.

² Rudolph, p. 162.

³ Rudolph.

⁴ Rudolph, p. 163.

⁵ Rudolph, p. 164.

⁶ Rudolph.

⁷ Samuel Eliot Morison, The Development of Harvard University Since the Inauguration of President Eliot, 1869-1929 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), xli.

⁸ Morison.

⁹ Rudolph, p. 336.

¹⁰ Richard J. Storr, The Beginnings of Graduate Education in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 16-19.

¹¹ Storr, p. 19.

¹² Storr, p. 21.

¹³ Storr, pp. 25-28.

¹⁴ Storr, p. 28.

¹⁵ Storr.

¹⁶ Storr, p. 65.

¹⁷ Storr, p. 66.

- 18 Rudolph, p. 337.
- 19 Storr, p. 115.
- 20 Rudolph.
- 21 Morison, p. 461.
- 22 Morison, pp. 461-2.
- 23 Morison, p. 523.
- 24 Stephen N. Judy, Lecture on "The Teaching of Writing at the College Level," Michigan State University, February 8, 1979.
- 25 Ann M. Heiss, Challenges to Graduate Schools (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1970), pp. 234-5.
- 26 Heiss, p. 236.
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- 28 Lnenicka.
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- 30 Woodward.
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- 32 Henry Suzzallo, "Academic and Professional Elements in the Training of Prospective College Teachers," in The Training of College Teachers ed. Wm. S. Gray (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 20-23.
- 33 Suzzallo, pp. 25-6.

³⁴ William S. Gray, "Survey of Current Methods in Training Prospective College Teachers," in The Training of College Teachers, ed. William S. Gray (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 83.

³⁵ Laing, pp. 57-8.

³⁶ Ernest H. Wilkins, "The Enlistment of Prospective College Teachers," in The Training of College Teachers, ed. William S. Gray (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 70.

³⁷ "Reports on Current Methods of Training College Teachers in Various Higher Institutions," in The Training of College Teachers, ed. William S. Gray (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 218.

³⁸ "Reports," pp. 221-2.

³⁹ "Reports," pp. 224-5.

⁴⁰ W. Max Wise, "Who Teaches the Teachers?" in Improving College Teaching, ed. Calvin B. T. Lee (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1967), p. 77.

⁴¹ Bernard Berelson, Graduate Education in the United States (New York: McGraw Hill, 1960), p. 206.

⁴² Wise, pp. 78-80.

⁴³ Wise, p. 88.

⁴⁴ English Journal, 57 (1968), 537-547.

⁴⁵ Joseph Axelrod, Graduate Study for Future College Teachers (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1959), pp. 1-3, 95.

⁴⁶ Axelrod, p. 95.

⁴⁷ James D. Koerner, The Miseducation of American Teachers (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 263.

⁴⁸ Dennis L. Stockdale and Zachary S. Wochok, "Why Not Train College Teachers to Teach?" Improving College and University Teaching, 25 (1977) 90.

⁴⁹ Warner G. Rice, "How the Candidate Learns to Teach College English," in The Education of Teachers of English for American Schools and Colleges, ed. Alfred H. Grommon (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 583.

⁵⁰ Albert R. Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), p. 15.

⁵¹ Joyce Carroll, "Process, Praxis, and A Writing Project," Texas Writers Newsletter, 26 (1980), 7.

⁵² Ann M. Heiss, Challenges to Graduate Schools (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1970), p. 231.

⁵³ Elizabeth Wooten Cowen, ADE Bulletin, 60 (1977), 30.

⁵⁴ Edgar W. Lacy, "The Graduate Assistant and the Freshman English Student: A Panel Discussion," College Composition and Communication, 5 (1954), 36.

⁵⁵ Lacy.

⁵⁶ Maxine Hairston, "Training Teaching Assistants in English," College Composition and Communication, 25 (1974), 52.

⁵⁷ Robert M. Gorrell, "Freshman Composition," in The College Teaching of English, ed. John C. Gerber (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), pp. 113-4.

Chapter II

Elements of the Study

Background

In the fifty year history of articles, books, and conferences devoted to the training of prospective teachers, specifically those in the teaching of writing offered by university departments of English, much has been assumed about the experiences, attitudes, and knowledge with which first-time writing teachers come to their first college teaching assignment. Nowhere in the history of new college teachers does one find the critics asking the first-time teachers about their experience, attitudes, and knowledge regarding writing, writing theory, and pedagogy. Learning about new teachers of college writing courses might help not only to create more successful training programs for them, but ultimately better serve the students in the courses for which the new teachers are responsible; training programs are not an "end" in themselves, but are rather a means for developing and sustaining coherent, substantial, and significant writing programs. Just as important, information about the new college writing teachers' experiences, attitudes, and knowledge might allow us to predict their teaching methods; their backgrounds and attitudes then, might, in the long run, affect the learning of their students.

The Survey

By the nature of the pasts they bring to their new teaching assignments, one might view first-time teachers of writing as a diverse group; they have differing educational and experiential backgrounds as writers, and differing attitudes about what constitutes effective writing, the process by which such writing is achieved, and the way writing is best taught. In order to acquire data on first-time college writing teachers self-reported backgrounds as writers, attitudes toward writing theory, and knowledge of pedagogy, I developed a survey (see appendix A for the complete instrument) which asks three main questions:

1. What educational and experiential backgrounds help prospective writing teachers in their first college-level teaching experience?
2. What attitudes about the process and product of writing do the prospective teachers bring to their first college teaching position?
3. What kinds of knowledge do the prospective teachers have of the pedagogy of college-level writing courses?

Knowledge in these three areas--writing experience, writing theory, and knowledge of writing pedagogy--are frequently cited by theorists as necessary important goals in successful training programs for prospective writing teachers and, consequently, for the development of effective teachers of college writing courses. In "Preparing the Composition Teacher," for example, Donald Nemanich reports that the conferees at a three-day meeting on the preparation of college English teachers agreed that prospective writing teachers should be trained in actual writing, rhetorical theory, and the methods of teaching writing.¹

Similarly, in Richard Gebhardt's "Balancing Theory With Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers," the same three areas are discussed as necessary components of any inquiry into the preparation of writing teachers and of adequate training programs for them.²

Part one of my survey explored the teachers' educational and experiential writing backgrounds, both in and out of the academic setting. In recent years, teachers' backgrounds as writers have received much attention from theorists. Donald Murray believes that writing teachers should be writers themselves. In A Writer Teaches Writing, he states that "The writing teacher cannot afford to hide behind the myth of his own good writing. . . . The student should not leave the writing course believing the legend that English teachers can write more easily than other people. . . . The teacher is not a lecturer or an evaluator alone, he is also a participant, and must share with his students the personal process of writing."³

Janet Emig concurs with Murray. In The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, she amplifies the notion of writing teachers being writers when she maintains that ". . . teachers of composition should themselves write in both the reflexive and the extensive mode so that when they teach, they are more likely to extend a wider range of writing invitations to their students."⁴

In part one of the survey, then, I asked about the undergraduate and graduate courses the prospective teachers have taken in writing, about the jobs they have had which required a significant amount of writing, and about the types of writing they had done. In order to learn about their professional involvement with writing (beyond

actually writing themselves), I asked the teachers to list the workshops or conferences they have attended where writing, theory, and pedagogy were the main subjects, and to list their memberships in organizations and the journals they regularly read which concentrate on writing. These extra-curricular activities help, at some level, in shaping one's attitudes toward writing, its theory and its teaching. Moreover, these questions begin to draw a profile of the teachers as writers and as participants in the community of those interested in writing, theory, and pedagogy.

Finally, in part one of the survey, I asked the teachers to describe their attitudes toward writing, specifically, what they perceived as their satisfactions, frustrations, strengths, and weaknesses as writers, and the process by which they produce effective written prose. These questions attempt to seek information concerning the way they view themselves in the role of writers. Such questions are important because the teachers' attitudes toward writing--and, in particular, themselves as writers--contribute to the tone they set for their students to write and respond to the written word. As such, college writing teachers are role models for their students, and students can directly or indirectly learn from the satisfactions and frustrations their teachers derive from writing. Further, and just as important, teachers' attitudes toward their own writing can predict the ways they would view the teaching of writing.

Part two of the survey includes questions on the new teachers' attitudes regarding the theory behind the writing process and product. The questions concern their beliefs about the features of effective

non-fiction prose and the processes by which one produces such writing, as well as how both process and product might be learned. I offered the teachers a wide range of choices by which to describe their attitudes. At one end of the possible range of options is what one might call the "prescriptive" or the "product-oriented" viewpoint. This attitude looks at writing as a firm, linear set of processes by which writing is both produced and evaluated; the guidelines for writing and evaluating are formulaic and normative. At the other end of the possible range of choices are items which might be seen as characteristic of the "descriptive" or "process-oriented" viewpoint; that is, the actual process by which writers produce effective prose and the perspective which attends to the person behind the writing: what s/he learned from the writing experience about the topic, about writing, and about him/herself. Distinguishing between the product and process orientations, Walter T. Petty states that "The product is not behavior, nor does it represent what has gone on in the individual's mind. It is only a product; process is what people do"⁵ (emphasis mine). The process-oriented viewpoint also looks at the personality, individuality, and a sense of the real person emerging from the writing.

In the final section of the survey, part three, I looked at the kinds of knowledge the prospective teachers indicated they have of the teaching of writing. This section deals with theory put into practice and is particularly important because it focuses on the respondents as teachers. I was interested in learning what first-time teachers know about important topics in writing pedagogy and about the activities they would have their students explore during their writing

courses. I asked the prospective teachers to indicate their degree of familiarity with teaching practices and respond to a list of activities they would require of their students in an ideal classroom situation. The term "ideal" is important because it offers the teachers an opportunity to relate what they would do if they were not restricted by curricular or budgetary demands. The items in this portion of the survey again ranged from the more conventional or prescriptive (e.g. completing handbook and worksheet exercises on grammar, discussing and analyzing literature, and studying the principles of logic) to the more descriptive or process-centered approach to the learning and teaching of writing (e.g. using peer group workshops, revising, compiling anthologies of student writing).

I also asked the teachers to cite the concepts or ideas about writing, theory, and teaching they feel are most valuable for a writing teacher to know, and to list the strengths and weaknesses they feel they will bring to their classes as teachers. In short, I asked them to distill into several short answers the knowledge of pedagogy they feel is pertinent to the effective teaching of college writing.

Procedures

I wrote all of the items in each question and checked for breadth of the area covered, thoroughness and accuracy of expression with several experienced teaching assistants and instructors of English at Michigan State University. In generating the questions and items in each part of the survey, I first relied on my own knowledge of theories and practices concerning writing, theory, and pedagogy, and then

referred to the following popular rhetorics used in college-level writing courses for areas and items I had overlooked: Donald Hall's Writing Well, James Macrimmon's Writing With a Purpose, and Anthony C. Winckler and Jo Ray McCuen's Rhetoric Made Plain.

A variety of types of questions were used in the survey; that is, some questions required the teachers to fill in the blank, other questions required them to check their preference or degree of knowledge, and yet other questions required short essay-type responses. I used this variety to insure not only a complete response to the questions, but to provide the teachers with some variety in the types of their responses, thereby avoiding fatigue of same-type responses to a large number of questions.

A pilot survey was conducted during July of 1981; several new and experienced teaching assistants in the English department at Michigan State University served as respondents. The purpose of the pilot survey was to insure a wide range of items and choices were included, the directions and items were easily understandable, and the survey was complete, yet not too lengthy and difficult to complete. The surveys were then distributed during August and September of 1981 to the Directors of Writing Programs in the English departments at the University of West Virginia, Michigan State University, Colorado State University, the University of Utah, and the University of Vermont. I chose these schools because they are in different geographical areas and because they are of different sizes (see appendix B for descriptions of schools sampled). The Directors of Writing Programs at the schools also assured me that the surveys would be distributed to and collected from all incoming teaching assistants according to my

instructions (the first page of the survey provides the instructions).

The surveys were distributed to all first-time teaching assistants before their departments offered them any kind of training program in order to guard against the potential influence of departmental or peer attitudes on their responses toward writing, theory, and pedagogy. The teachers were given as much time as needed to answer the questions fully in order to provide them the opportunity to be as thorough as possible in their responses. Forty-seven new teachers of college writing courses completed the survey: fourteen from the University of West Virginia, twelve from Michigan State University, thirteen from Colorado State University, three from the University of Utah, and five from the University of Vermont. This represents a return of 87 percent of the first-time teaching assistants from the five schools.

When the surveys were returned to me, I compiled and tabulated the responses by the following methods: where lists were required (e.g. of conferences or books), I listed the names the teachers cited; where short essay-type responses were required, I listed the points they made in their answers; and where the teachers were asked to check items in the questions, I totaled the number of responses to each item in the question and then tabulated the percentages of those responding to the question. These data are reported in percentages because they are more revealing in percentages; since not all of the teachers responded to each question, raw numbers would be misleading (i.e. forty-seven is not always the total number of responses to each question although there were a total of forty-seven respondents to the entire survey).

I did not intend to draw any conclusions about all new teaching assistants from the findings of the survey. Instead, I sought as much information as possible in the three areas of inquiry (writing, attitudes toward writing theory, and knowledge of pedagogy) in the belief that a long survey producing much information on a small group of respondents would reveal more about the breadth and depth of information about teaching assistants.

The Findings

Among the qualities that are important to the teaching of writing, according to some theorists, is the requirement that teachers of writing have some experience writing themselves. To develop a profile of the prospective teachers as writers, question five in part one of the survey asked about the types and extent of experience the first-time teachers have had in writing. Their educational backgrounds in writing were by no means extensive: 61 percent of the prospective teachers completing the question reported having taken a freshman composition course,⁶ and 33 percent had taken a course in sophomore composition (see appendix C for definitions of course titles). Thirteen percent of the teachers had taken a course in expository writing, whereas 10 percent had had experience in an advanced expository writing course. The more specialized writing courses did not fare as well, perhaps an indication of these courses being new to (or non-existent in) some college curricula. For example, 16 percent of the teachers indicated that they had taken a course in the research paper, 3 percent a course in business writing, and none indicated having taken a course which

focused on scientific writing.

Almost as many first-time teachers reported having taken creative writing courses as freshman composition courses: 57 percent of the new teachers indicated having taken a creative writing course, and 31 percent had taken advanced creative writing. Nine percent had taken a graduate course in composition or writing, 2 percent a graduate course in writing theory, and 4 percent a course in writing pedagogy at the graduate level--perhaps reflecting the fact that the new teachers were beginning their graduate studies.

Question two of part one of the survey asked the prospective teachers about the time they devote to specific types of writing; that is, what percentage of their writing time was spent on, say, poetry as opposed to scholarly essays. While the overwhelming majority of the new teachers reported spending the greatest percentage of their time on scholarly writing (e.g. research or seminar papers), poetry and fiction writing also proved to occupy the teachers' writing time, with drama receiving little, if any, attention from most of the teachers. Over half of the new teachers also indicated that they spent between 20 and 60 percent of their writing time on journals, letters, and personal meditations. In marked contrast, however, none of the teachers reported spending any of their time writing self-sponsored, informal essays--typically the kinds of writing required of students in beginning writing courses.

Included in the inquiry about the new teachers' writing backgrounds were questions about their publication records. In question three of part one of the survey, 40 percent of the teachers reported

having published articles, stories, or poems in journals, newspapers, and newsletters. While the majority of the teachers noted having had a poem or two published in a journal or newspaper, several indicated that they had a sizeable number of publications. In fact, one teacher had three books of poetry and 240 individual poems published, while another reported having had three books, 450 poems, twelve to fifteen book reviews, two chapters in a book on poetry, and an article published. While the majority of the teachers answering this question cited poetry as the genre in which they were published, others indicated that they had journalism publications: articles, reviews, and editorials for school newspapers or church newsletters. Several of the teachers also reported having had published an article of literary criticism or analysis.

The prospective teachers' attitudes toward their own writing--the satisfactions and frustrations they derived from writing as well as their strengths and weaknesses as writers--were examined in question nine of part one of the survey. Perhaps reflective of their involvement with writing was the fact that the teachers' satisfactions and frustrations, strengths and weaknesses were wide-ranging. The following list, in their own words, is representative of the satisfactions the new teachers said they derived from writing: "ordering chaos," "communicating," "having an outlet for emotional and intellectual energy," "getting it right," "manipulating and having power over language," "exploring self and ideas," "articulating thoughts, gaining insights, sharpening ideas, and turning potentially wasted ideas into a useful product that affects others," and "involving self in exciting

work." From their responses, the teachers appeared to be concerned with writing as a means of better understanding their thoughts and feelings, and with writing as a means of accurately, clearly, and powerfully communicating or speaking to an audience.

The teachers also listed a wide variety of frustrations they experienced in writing: "anxiety of the blank page," "doubting the quality of the work," "problems in organization, fluidity, and logic," "failure to get it right," "writing what comes across as derivative," "striving for but never reaching perfection," "loneliness and solitude of writing," and "fear of rejection." Their responses not only indicated problems in the beginning stages of writing (trouble with actually starting to write), but difficulties in achieving a product which met their expectations and demands. Despite all that it takes to overcome these frustrations and achieve satisfaction with the final product, it is significant to note that the satisfactions that the teachers reported in writing far outnumbered their frustrations; despite the problems that writing presented to the teachers, they found more satisfaction than frustration in writing.

The answers to the questions about the strengths and weaknesses the teachers perceived in their writing also indicated tremendous variety. Further, and just as interesting, the features some teachers considered to be their strengths were the exact features others considered to be their weaknesses. For example, while some of the teachers said they "underwrote" (i.e. did not fully describe or support their ideas), others said they "overwrote" (i.e. were too verbose or belabored the points they were trying to make). While some of the

prospective teachers cited grammar and mechanics as problem areas in their writing, others indicated those as their greatest strengths. Still other teachers viewed themselves as being "creative," while others felt they were "not creative enough," describing their writing as too "derivative." While some of the teachers had no problem starting the writing process, organizing their ideas, and achieving depth and clarity, other teachers were troubled the most by these activities. In fact, the teachers' lists of their strengths and weaknesses as writers almost read like a compendium of the elements that can and cannot work effectively in writing, as well as a comprehensive list of the features which help and hinder writing. As such, their lists were a remarkably accurate representation of the problems students encounter in writing as well. Interestingly, too, the teachers listed as many weaknesses as they did strengths in their writing. In sum, the range and descriptions of their strengths and weaknesses, satisfactions and frustrations, demonstrated the prospective teachers to be a group who was aware of the demands of writing, knowledgeable about the features which comprise effective writing, and therefore, one might assume, capable of understanding the problems their students might encounter in writing.

Along with examining the new teachers' backgrounds as writers, the survey also investigated their previous teaching experience. Teaching experience is, in some fashion, "training"—at least "on the job" training—and affects their perceptions about the teaching of writing and the theories that underlie pedagogy. A surprising 57 percent of the group indicated having had previous teaching experience which involved, for the most part, tutoring, substitute teaching,

student teaching, and full-time teaching at the primary and secondary levels. Three of the prospective college writing teachers had experience teaching English as a second language (TESOL), and two of the forty-seven respondents indicated that they had taught briefly (one term or semester) at the junior college and college levels.

While writing and teaching activities contribute to the experiences of new college writing teachers, so do job-related activities, that is, jobs which require a significant amount of writing. In question four of part one of the survey, 32 percent of the new teachers indicated that they had had jobs which required a sizeable amount of writing as one of the job's principal requirements. The overwhelming majority of those jobs were primarily journalistic: reporters and columnists for college newspapers, research interns, editors for research documents, and copy editors.

Yet another area of questions in the survey concerned the prospective teachers' "professional" activities and experiences: the memberships they held in professional English organizations (such as the Modern Language Association or the National Council of Teachers of English), the journals they regularly read which include topics on writing theory and pedagogy, and the workshops or conferences which they have attended or in which they were participants where writing was a major topic. In question six of part one of the survey, very few of the prospective teachers indicated that they held memberships in professional organizations. Those teachers who did list memberships held them in honorary societies such as Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Tau Delta, as well as creative writing organizations such as the Associated

Writers Program, the Association for Poetry Therapy, and American Poets and Writers (see appendix D). Thirty-six percent of the teachers responding to this question indicated that they regularly read journals which specialized in writing, theory, and pedagogy. These journals, however, were rather specialized in that they dealt with creative writing.

Among the journals listed were Writer's Digest, The Writer, Poetry Northwest, and Coda (a poets and fiction writers' newsletter). Only 6 percent of the prospective teachers regularly read College English and English Journal, two publications of the National Council of Teachers of English (appendix E shows the other journals listed by the teachers).

In question seven of part one of the survey, 19 percent of the prospective college writing teachers indicated that they had attended at least one workshop or conference on writing. The overwhelming majority of the workshops or conferences listed by the teachers, too, dealt with creative writing (e.g. poetry festivals, regional creative writing and literature gatherings). None of the new teachers indicated that they had attended conferences or workshops which were specifically directed to non-fiction prose, its theory, and teaching (see appendix F for a complete list of conferences or workshops).

While part one of the survey probed the prospective teachers' educational and experiential backgrounds as writers and professionals, part two of the survey looked at their views about the writing process and the qualities which contribute to effective non-fiction prose--in short, their attitudes toward writing theory. In question one of

part two of the survey, the teachers were asked to rank in order of importance the most important features of non-fiction prose writing (see table one). Seventy-five percent of the new teachers indicated that content or ideas was the most important feature of non-fiction prose writing; in fact, 98 percent of the teachers placed content or ideas in one of the first three areas of importance. Conversely, 68 percent of the teachers reported that adhering to Standard English and conventional usage was the least important feature of good non-fiction prose; in fact, 88 percent of the teachers placed that feature in the last three ranks of importance. Grammar and mechanical correctness also was not seen by any of the teachers as the most important feature of non-fiction prose writing; rather 64 percent of them placed that feature between fourth and seventh ranks in importance. Only 6 percent of the teachers felt that grammar and mechanical correctness was one of the first three important features of good writing. Variety of sentence structure, too, was deemed by 77 percent of the teachers as ranking between fourth and seventh positions of importance, with only 7 percent of the teachers placing it in the first three ranks of importance.

Holding the position for the second most important feature of non-fiction prose writing, with 31 percent of the teachers' responses, was form and organization. Fifty-one percent of the teachers indicated that form and organization ranked between first and third places in importance to good writing, and 55 percent of the teachers felt that logic was one of the first three areas of importance. Forty-two percent of the prospective teachers ranked personal voice as being one

TABLE 1

THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS' RESPONSES TO THE
MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES OF NON-FICTION PROSE WRITING

Degree of Importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Content, ideas	75	16	7	0	0	0	0	0	2
Voice, personality	12	14	16	11	19	2	5	9	12
Grammar, mechanics	0	2	4	11	14	20	19	25	5
Logic	4	18	33	14	5	10	14	0	1
Form, organization	7	31	13	21	16	4	3	2	3
Diction	0	6	13	11	19	17	19	15	0
Sentence structure	2	2	3	12	15	31	19	29	0
Details, specifics, examples	4	18	18	26	18	9	2	6	0
Standard English, conventional usage	0	0	4	3	3	2	8	14	66

of the first three important features of good writing, and 40 percent felt that the use of details, specifics, or examples was one of the first three most important features of good writing.

In sum, the prospective teachers of college writing courses prized, in order of importance to effective non-fiction prose writing, the following features: content or ideas; form and organization; logic; personal voice; details, specifics, or examples; diction; variety of sentence structure; grammatical and mechanical correctness; and, finally, Standard English and conventional usage.

Question two of part two of the survey examined the teachers' perceptions concerning the importance of particular processes in producing a piece of good writing (see table two). The teachers responding to the question saw the following processes as very important: reaching a personal understanding of the topic (91 percent); revising (90 percent); providing details, specifics, or examples (78 percent); brainstorming (72 percent); gaining a better understanding of oneself as writer (70 percent); attending to form and organization (68 percent); developing a thesis or topic sentence (60 percent); adhering to the principles of logic (54 percent); expressing personal voice in writing (53 percent); and making notes or outlines (51 percent).

Several processes were seen as not very important in producing effective prose, and received low percentages of responses from the teachers in the "very important" category. Among these were following a five-paragraph format (none of the teachers saw it as a very important process); adhering to Standard English and conventional usage (only 17 percent deemed it very important); being neat

TABLE 2

THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS' RESPONSES TO
THE IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN PROCESSES IN
PRODUCING A PIECE OF GOOD WRITING

<u>Degree of Importance</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
Brainstorming	72	23	3	2
Notes, outlines	51	25	18	6
Writing without planning	35	18	28	19
Grammar and mechanics	31	38	15	16
Revising	90	8	2	0
Feedback from teacher	45	37	8	7
Feedback from peers	33	36	31	0
Form, organization	68	24	8	0
Logic	54	30	14	2
Diction	44	29	20	7
Voice, personality	53	33	14	0
Details	78	18	2	2
Standard English	17	36	39	8
Secondary sources	16	45	28	11
Neatness	20	31	25	24
Thesis or topic sentence	60	17	15	8
Sentence structure	33	52	15	0
Understanding of topic	91	7	2	0
Five-paragraph format	0	23	22	55
Understanding self as writer	70	13	9	8

(20 percent placed it in the very important category); attending to grammatical and mechanical correctness (31 percent saw it as a very important process); and receiving feedback from peers (33 percent viewed it as a very important activity in producing good non-fiction prose).

In short, the prospective teachers considered six processes or activities to be either "very," "moderately," or "somewhat" important to the production of good writing: revising, receiving feedback from teacher, attending to form and organization, expressing voice or personality in writing, varying sentence structure, and reaching a personal understanding of the topic. Finally, a very small percentage of the teachers indicated three processes or activities as not at all important to the production of good writing: brainstorming (2 percent of the teachers did not see this as at all important); adhering to the principles of logic (2 percent did not view it as at all important); and providing details, specifics, or examples (again, 2 percent did not see it as being at all important).

The last issue examined in part two of the survey dealt with the teachers' perceptions about the learning of writing at the college level (see table three). Again, this area sought to reveal prospective teachers' attitudes toward theories which underlie the learning of writing. In question three of part two of the survey, the majority of teachers answering this question indicated that good writing is learned by practice, discovering one's own voice, and not by prescriptive activities. For example, 85 percent of the new teachers responding to this question felt that writing is best learned by writing and

TABLE 3
THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS' RESPONSES
TO ATTITUDES TOWARD WRITING

Percent	
6	You can't teach people how to write; they're born with the ability or not.
5	Writing is learned by reading and imitating the masters.
0	The purpose of writing is to produce grammatically perfect papers.
81	Good writers revise extensively.
15	The best writing appeals to any audience.
6	Writing should be taught only through English departments.
43	Writing is a lonely, solitary activity.
64	Meaning may not be what writers start with, but it can be an end result.
6	Writing is best learned through formal instruction.
51	Distinctive voices emerge from the work of good writers.
70	The process of writing is just as important as the finished product.
85	Writing is best learned by writing and receiving feedback.
19	In order to write well, one must first have studied grammar.
68	The best writing comes from being inspired or inwardly motivated.
74	Writing is more shaped and precise than speech.
38	The ability to write well is the sign of an intelligent person.
68	Language shapes reality.
5	The best writers have the largest vocabularies.
66	In order to best teach writing, teachers should be writers themselves.
28	Speech is primary to writing.
17	Adhering to Standard English is a sign of good writing.
6	Women write differently (content and style) from men.
62	The purpose of writing is to enable writers to better understand their worlds and lives.

receiving feedback, whereas only 6 percent of the teachers felt that writers are born with the ability to write and, therefore, cannot be taught how to write, and 5 percent of the teachers felt that the best writers have the largest vocabularies. Eighty-one percent of the teachers thought that good writers revise extensively, and that 51 percent of the teachers indicated that they believed distinctive voices emerge from good writing. Only 5 percent of the teachers felt that writing is learned by reading and imitating the masters, and none of the teachers indicated that the purpose of good writing is to produce grammatically perfect papers, whereas 19 percent felt that one must have first studied grammar in order to write well, and 17 percent agreed that adhering to Standard English and conventional usage was a sign of good writing.

The majority of teachers responding to this question also supported the notion that writing involves self-motivation and discovery. Sixty-eight percent of the prospective teachers indicated that the best writing comes from being inspired or inwardly motivated; 64 percent believed that meaning may not be what writers start with, but it is frequently an end result; and 62 percent felt that the purpose of writing is to enable writers to better understand their worlds and lives.

Part three of the survey investigated whether, and to what extent, the teachers would be knowledgeable about major figures in writing pedagogy and theories about writing that have had a significant impact on the teaching of writing or on their own pedagogical beliefs (see table four). As might have been expected, the prospective

TABLE 4

THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS' RESPONSES
TO THEIR DEGREE OF FAMILIARITY WITH PRACTICES,
THEORIES, OR ISSUES IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING

	<u>Very</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
Freewriting	22	32	40	6
Audience	31	50	16	3
Voice, personality	34	53	13	0
Process approach	49	37	11	3
Forms of discourse	41	52	4	3
Classical rhetoric	4	20	55	21
History of usage items	6	31	47	16
Peer groups	24	18	40	18
Journals	22	39	20	19
Britton and Emig	4	4	4	88
Zoellner	0	0	7	93
Sentence-combining	9	29	40	22
Traditional grammar	21	38	38	3
Transformational grammar	9	14	44	42
Christensen	3	2	9	95
Non-Standard English	7	25	26	42
Acquisition of discourse	2	44	38	16
NCTE's Statement	6	0	23	71
Sexism in language	20	30	37	13

teachers did not reveal that they were very conversant with major theorists in the field of writing theory and pedagogy: none of the teachers indicated that they were very familiar with Robert Zoellner's "talk-write" approach to the teaching of writing; only 4 percent indicated that they were very familiar with Janet Emig and James Britton's transactional and reflexive modes of writing. Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric fared about as well, with only 3 percent of the teachers indicating that they were very familiar with his ideas.

The new teachers also did not reveal a high degree of familiarity with the more specialized concerns in the teaching of writing. For example, only 9 percent indicated that they were very familiar with sentence-combining as it relates to improved writing; 9 percent of the teachers said that they were very familiar with transformational grammar, and only 2 percent reported that they were very familiar with the acquisition of spoken and written discourse. The National Council of Teachers of English statement on "Students' Rights to Their Own Language" ranked about as well, with only 6 percent of the teachers indicating they were very familiar with that statement.

Of the issues or practices in the teaching of writing with which the teachers were most familiar were those that are long-standing and that they were probably introduced to in high school or college. For example, 41 percent of the teachers said that they were very familiar with the forms of discourse (description, narration, exposition, and argumentation), and 21 percent of the teachers indicated that they were very familiar with traditional grammar.

That the prospective college writing teachers showed the most familiarity with long-standing practices is telling. Just as interesting and informative, however, was their familiarity with issues in the teaching of writing which have been either newly researched or given renewed consideration by theorists. For instance, 22 percent of the teachers said that they were very familiar with freewriting, 31 percent with the consideration of audience in the teaching of writing, and 34 percent with the expression of voice or personality in writing. Twenty-four percent of the teachers indicated that they were very familiar with the use of small or peer groups in the teaching of writing, and 22 percent revealed that they were very familiar with the use of journals in writing classes. The activity or practice which received the highest percentage of responses from the teachers was the "process" approach to writing: 49 percent of the teachers said that they were very familiar with this approach, and only 3 percent reported having whatsoever no familiarity at all with it.

Attitudes toward writing theory and pedagogy are shaped by the reading of books and articles on these areas as much as by writing and enrolling in writing classes. Among the books which had significantly shaped the new teachers' attitudes toward the teaching of writing, and which were particularly germane to non-fiction prose writing and its teaching, were Donald Murray's A Writer Teaches Writing, Ken Macrorie's Telling Writing, Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers, Donald Hall's Writing Well, Richard Lanham's Style: An Anti-Text, Francis Christensen's Notes Toward a New Rhetoric, William Irmscher's Teaching Expository Writing, and Mina Shaughnessy's Errors and

Expectations. The one book which influenced the greatest percentage of the teachers responding to this question (13 percent) was, not surprisingly, the granddaddy of style books, William Strunk and E. B. White's The Elements of Style.

The teachers also listed other books which significantly shaped their attitudes toward writing and teaching writing. These, however, leaned more toward poetry than they did to non-fiction prose. Among these books were Judson Jerome's The Poet and the Poem, Robert Bly's 70's, John Ciardi's How Does a Poem Mean, Field (a poetry journal from Oberlin College), Lew Welch's How I Work as a Poet, Paul Carroll's The Poem in Its Skin, and Kenneth Koch's Wishes, Lies, and Dreams. Other books that the new teachers cited, dealing primarily with language and style, included Jacques Barzun's Simple and Direct, William Alston's The Philosophy of Language, John Simon's Paradigms Lost, and Sheridan Baker's perennial The Complete Stylist (appendix G provides a complete list of the teachers' responses).

The prospective teachers' attitudes toward the learning and teaching of writing are no more clearly demonstrated than in their responses to question three of part three of the survey where they listed the most important concepts or ideas in writing theory and pedagogy with which writing teachers should be familiar. Here, as in question three of part two of the survey, the new teachers repeatedly noted that writing is self-examination and a means by which one can explore and discover one's personal voice; that the process of writing is just as important, if not more so, than the final product; that pre-writing, revision, freedom to choose one's topic, continuous writing and consideration of that writing are essential components of

learning how to write. The respondents also noted the importance of teachers respecting the processes by which students write. Further, many of the first-time college writing teachers indicated their belief that writing is both fun and hard work, challenging yet rewarding, and a creative act that requires discipline.

Part three also explored the activities in a writing class in which the new teachers' students would participate (see table five). One might assume that the teachers' choice of activities in their writing classes would be consistent with their theoretical beliefs about the features of effective writing and the processes by which such writing is produced. In a number of instances, however, this did not prove to be the case, as illustrated by the teachers' answers to question two of part three of the survey in which they were asked to check how frequently their students would engage in certain activities in an ideal writing class.

While the overwhelming majority of the new teachers previously indicated that they did not feel that reading and imitating the masters helped to improve writing, 32 percent of those responding to this question in the survey indicated that they frequently would have their students read, discuss, and analyze literature in a writing class. Thus, while the teachers did not believe in the efficacy of reading and imitating great literature as a way to learn how to write, they would choose to have their students frequently engage in reading literature in a writing class. While the overwhelming majority of the teachers placed adherence to Standard English and conventional usage as the least important feature of good writing, 11 percent of the

TABLE 5

THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS' RESPONSES
TO WRITING CLASS ACTIVITIES

	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Several times</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
Read literature	32	53	15
Read essays	26	62	11
Read grammar handbook	2	63	35
Read own writing	79	21	0
Freewriting activities	41	67	2
Peer group workshops	75	25	0
Keep portfolios	91	9	0
Edit writing	49	36	15
Grade writing	13	45	42
Listen to lectures	0	61	39
Choose own topics	47	49	4
Trade papers	29	48	23
Keep journal	60	32	8
Sentence-combining	11	50	39
Grammar worksheets	2	52	46
Collaborative papers	2	29	69
Conferences with teacher	44	56	0
Listen to teacher's writing	4	68	28
Study logic	7	58	35
Write in class	50	35	15
Revise in class	44	40	16
Study Standard English	11	53	36
Run the class	13	47	40
Discuss issues for topics	14	79	7
Rewrite with teacher's comments	43	52	5
Library skills	3	74	23
Use other media	8	67	25
Explore language topics	3	75	22
Compile class anthology	13	65	22

teachers indicated that they frequently would have their students study the conventions of Standard English and usage. Interestingly, too, 17 percent of the teachers previously indicated that adhering to Standard English and conventional usage was an important process in producing good writing. Similarly, while the overwhelming majority of the teachers did not view grammatical and mechanical correctness as a very important feature of good writing, 31 percent said it was very important in producing good writing.

Other seeming inconsistencies also appeared in the teachers' responses to the survey. For example, while 54 percent of the teachers viewed adhering to the principles of logic as an important process in writing, only 7 percent would frequently have their students study logic; while 22 percent of the teachers said that they were very familiar with journals in writing classes, 60 percent said that they would frequently have their students write in journals; while 24 percent of the teachers reported being very familiar with small or peer groups, 75 percent indicated that their students would frequently participate in such workshops; and while 22 percent of the teachers reported being very familiar with freewriting, 41 percent indicated their students would frequently engage in this activity.

The teachers appeared to be very open to experimentation and willing to try a number of different activities in their writing classes. Even if they chose not to have their students frequently participate in the activities listed in the question, the majority of the teachers said that they would have their students try the activities at least several times during the writing course. Included in such

activities that the teachers would have their students try several times were compiling a class anthology, exploring topics in language, working on library skills, reading and discussing essays from a reader, discussing current issues to help generate paper topics, listening to the teacher's own writing, and having the students be responsible for running the class.

Finally, the teachers also chose to have their students engage in certain classroom activities which were thoroughly consistent with their attitudes toward writing theory expressed earlier in the survey. Because approximately 80 percent of the teachers placed a great deal of importance on writing and revising, only 15 and 16 percent, respectively, would never have their students write and revise in class. Reading and discussing grammar topics was selected as an activity in which the students would become involved several times during the writing course as were completing grammar exercises and worksheets. These activities are consistent with the teachers' feelings that while grammatical and mechanical correctness is not of primary importance to good writing, it is important to some degree in creating good non-fiction prose. Also 11 percent of the teachers reported that they would have their students frequently experiment with sentence-combining exercises in a writing class, and 9 percent of the teachers previously indicated being very familiar with sentence combining.

Discussion of the Findings

The completed surveys of the prospective college writing teachers produced an interesting portrait of the group as writers and as people

engaged in thinking about writing theory and pedagogy. While not necessarily reflective of the attitudes of all first-time college writing teachers, the portrait provides ample information on a group of soon-to-be teachers and material to consider in the development of training programs for them.

Of particular interest was the picture drawn of the new teachers as writers and professionals in the field of writing. As was expected, the majority of the teachers' writing involved the scholarly essay (i.e. research or seminar papers), and no doubt reflects the work required in their undergraduate schooling. However, the teachers indicated that the next major amount of time spent on writing involved poetry and fiction. Hence, their writing centered both on "extensive" (writing for others) modes and on "poetic" forms (the art of poetry and fiction). The other type of writing in which the majority of teachers frequently engaged was "reflexive" or personal writing for self. This type of writing included journals, meditations, and letters. Indeed, the spectrum of writing described by the first-time teachers is wide. If any type of writing was not well represented in their responses to the types of writing they undertook, it was self-sponsored non-fiction prose or the informal essay. This type of writing becomes particularly important because it is the type of writing frequently required in beginning writing courses. Many theorists, among them Janet Emig, suggest that teachers of writing should experiment with a wide variety of writing forms in order to be more willing to offer their students a diversity in writing tasks and be able to better understand the problems their students might encounter. While

A. B. Clegg, in The Excitement of Writing, maintains that proficiency or experience in one mode of writing invariably aids the writer in achieving success in other modes, the question of what one specifically learns and is able to transfer to another type of writing remains unclear. Clegg never fully explains what in particular one learns about an appreciation of language, about the way words work, and about an understanding of form which would help the writer in exploring other genres. Therefore, one might assume that a clearer articulation of this transferred knowledge is important for new teachers proficient in one mode of writing to examine so they can draw on their own talents to help their students achieve success in writing. In other words, an important question for first-time college writing teachers to consider is this: what knowledge about the teachers' own writing can best help their students produce effective writing in introductory writing courses?

Interestingly, too, the teachers surveyed in this study indicated they had taken relatively few writing courses in their undergraduate studies. In fact, only two-thirds of the teachers indicated having taken a freshman composition course, and half of those teachers had taken an advanced writing course. These low percentages, especially for people who are pursuing graduate degrees in English and are prospective writing teachers, may reflect a trend started in the 1960s when required writing courses were dropped as a requisite for college graduation at a number of schools. (Only in the past few years with the return of basics-type courses have such requirements been reinstated at many universities.) Hence, relatively few of the prospective teachers reported having had ample and direct personal experience in

the type of course they will be teaching (beginning writing courses). Whether this can be viewed as an asset or a liability depends largely upon the degree of such courses' success; that is, if the teachers had a positive experience in their own beginning writing courses, they might enter the courses they teach with potentially valuable information and attitudes; if they had negative experiences, they either know what not to do in their role as teachers or, unfortunately, their attitudes toward teaching beginning writing courses may be less than positive.

Of course, enrolling in formal writing courses is but one way to gain experience in writing, and the majority of the surveyed teachers indicated that they had had jobs which required a significant amount of writing. Job-related experience might well be considered "hands-on" experience or learning by doing. In Deschooling Society, for instance, Ivan Illich contends that the work-place is as much a classroom as the four walls many people often think of as "school."⁷ The job-related writing experiences described by the teachers fall into this work-related preparation and can help to shape their attitudes toward writing and themselves as writers as much as the formal writing courses they have taken.

By looking at the types of writing with which the teachers have experimented, the courses they took in writing, and the writing required in their jobs, one begins to gather information on the forces that influence their attitudes toward writing. After all, attitudes must be shaped by some forces, and for the teachers surveyed in this study, those forces were actual writing experiences, outside of the writing classroom and in the work-place. Here one of the most

interesting and revealing parts of the survey emerges: the teachers reported a fascination and joy that result from actually writing. As evidenced by the language they used to describe the satisfactions derived from their own writing, they responded powerfully and enthusiastically to the activity of writing, regardless of the labor involved in producing effective non-fiction prose. Repeatedly, they spoke of the power of writing to illuminate their ideas, the feelings of success when they were able to accurately represent their ideas for others to understand, and the accomplishment when they wrote of ordering what would otherwise remain chaotic, disjointed thoughts and feelings. Of value to note, too, is that the satisfactions they listed far outnumbered the frustrations they experienced as writers. One might conclude, therefore, that writing held a real excitement and adventure for them. Simply, writing was a beneficial experience for them, and such attitudes can be immeasurably helpful in establishing a positive atmosphere in the teachers' own classes, if only through the power of suggestion.

From the information the teachers provided about themselves as writers and the way they viewed their final writing products, the respondents indicated they were well acquainted with the demands of writing: the frustrations or problems it presents as well as its satisfactions and joys. In fact, from the lists of their own strengths and weaknesses as writers, the teachers demonstrated they were well aware of the problems involved in writing, be they motivational, stylistic, ideative, or grammatical. So attuned to the problems involved in producing effective non-fiction prose, the teachers indicated that

they were cognizant of the problems one might encounter in writing; from both the depth and breadth of their responses to their own involvement as writers, the teachers indicated an understanding of what it means to write, of writing to be effective for an audience besides oneself, and of writing to be evaluated by others--all of which are elements of beginning writing courses and suggest that the surveyed teachers were prepared to understand the problems their students might face when writing.

That the prospective teachers described a receptivity toward and love of writing is not surprising, given the nature of their own positive writing experiences and their jobs as teaching assistants for writing courses; that they were published writers and just out of undergraduate school, is. While it is assumed that professors write and publish their work, it is not as readily assumed that graduate students have publications before they enter the profession full time. Many of the teachers surveyed in this study were published, and this fact suggests that they are familiar with the perseverance and determination not only involved in producing an effective piece of writing, but in seeing that writing through to publication. That the teachers would try to get their work published also suggests that they view themselves as serious writers who want to communicate to an audience larger than a professor or their peers. While judging the quality of their published work is perhaps an area of investigation for future study, what matters is that they perceive themselves to be writers for whom publication is the final act of producing language. This attitude is a particularly valuable asset to the classes they will be

teaching because it promotes the idea that writing is a serious activity which fulfills more than course requirements; rather, it is a means of speaking to different audiences and of trying to be heard because one's ideas are worthy of sharing.

In contrast to their own writing experience and, as might have been expected, because of their being first-time college teachers, the prospective teachers reported having little, if any, involvement with the professional side of teaching; that is, few of them were members of organizations devoted to the teaching of writing, read journals which focused on writing, theory, and pedagogy, and attended conferences or workshops where writing, theory, and pedagogy were principal topics. Because of the literature concentration in most undergraduates' education, the prospective teachers' professional involvement with writing theory and pedagogy would not be expected of them. Further, many organizations, journals, and conferences are primarily directed to those already in the profession, and not to students (except those in elementary and secondary education). Not until the prospective teachers see the advantages of familiarity and involvement with such professional activities would they become members of organizations, read journals, and attend conferences or workshops on writing theory and pedagogy.

The first-time teachers' attitudes toward writing theory, perhaps guided by their own experiences as writers, provided other revealing material. The teachers surveyed in this study did not indicate that they had abandoned traditional concerns in writing such as thesis or topic sentences, form and organization, adhering to the

principles of logic, and using notes and outlines as important features of and processes by which one produces effective non-fiction prose. These concerns, while by no means the most important according to the teachers, might suggest the backgrounds from which they emerge as writers; that is, such concerns might be the residue of what they were taught or heard about writing in high school and college. Of more importance and interest, however, were the teachers' attitudes which more closely aligned themselves with writing theories which are being newly researched or are receiving renewed attention from theorists. For example, the teachers reported that they subscribed to the following practices in and features of writing: revision, including writing being viewed as a process; voice or personality expressed in writing; writing learned not only by writing but by receiving diverse feedback from others; and writing as a means for discovery and understanding of self as writer and of the world and life from which one creates. The teachers, as evidenced by their attitudes, no doubt would agree with John Dixon who maintains that "Recalling experience, getting it clear, giving it shape and making connections, speculating and building theories, celebrating (or exorcizing) particular moments of our lives-- these are some of the broad purposes that language serves and enables."⁸

From their responses, then, the first-time college writing teachers held the belief that writing, both in its production and product, involves more than getting the commas right, avoiding the splitting of infinitives, making certain that verbs agree with subjects, and antecedents with pronouns, and escaping the dreaded mixed metaphor. Rather, the prospective teachers indicated that they felt that writing

is more a matter of process than product; that is, the actual writing or doing is just as important, if not more so, than the final product, and deserves equal, if not more attention. While they did not completely discount the more traditional expectations of and beliefs about writing, the majority of the surveyed teachers reported believing more strongly in the "descriptive" or "process-oriented" theorists.

The prospective teachers' close alignment with the new or newly considered theories of writing might indicate the power of their own experiences as writers influencing their attitudes toward writing theory and its pedagogical practices. If not by learning from writing courses and professional affiliations, the teachers' attitudes may be shaped by personal writing experience. Hence, Donald Murray's idea of writing teachers being writers themselves is given credence. Simply put, actual doing shapes attitudes toward the task involved and might be seen as one of the most valuable tools from which to teach others.

Although the surveyed teachers indicated that they were not familiar with specific theorists and theories in the field of writing (e.g. Janet Emig, James Britton, Robert Zoellner, sentence-combining, transformational grammar), they appeared theoretically and pedagogically to support the ideas posited by these theorists and theories. The new teachers most likely would have had little opportunity to learn about them in their reported educational and experiential backgrounds. That the teachers noted their allegiance with new or newly considered topics in writing again might point to their own experience as writers which they bring to their attitudes toward pedagogy and its theoretical underpinnings.

Another interesting facet of the teachers' responses involved the activities in which they would have their students engage during an ideal college writing course. Although they reported being unfamiliar with some areas of writing pedagogy such as sentence-combining, journals, and peer or small group workshops, the prospective teachers indicated a willingness to offer these experiences to their students. In fact, they seemed to be open-minded and experimental in their pedagogical approaches. While such receptivity to different activities or an eclectic approach to teaching might be seen as advantageous for new teachers (allowing them to explore a host of possible classroom activities with their students), the diversity of their choices might also suggest that the new teachers are choosing haphazardly and spuriously; no theoretical framework underlies their choices. Not being familiar with all of the different ways writing can be taught, the new teachers opt for trying all possible ways to teach writing. Thus, theorists' claims, such as those of Donald Nemanich and Richard Gebhardt, that new writing teachers need to know about the differing theoretical and pedagogical approaches to teach writing are given support. While their own rich experiences as writers might help to inform their theories about the learning and teaching of writing, specific knowledge about pedagogy--theory put into practice--is just as important. In fact, when the teachers responded to the question about the theoretical and pedagogical concepts which are important for teachers to know, they relied heavily on their own experience as writers, and none of them mentioned ideas posited by theorists or teachers in the field. Further, when the teachers were asked to respond to the question about

their greatest anticipations as first-time college writing teachers, the majority of them referred to their "inexperience in teaching" and their "lack of knowledge" about how writing is best taught. Even their own experience as writers did not seem to help lessen their concern about teaching college writing for the first time.

The data gathered from the surveyed teachers in this study, then, illuminate several important themes: writing teachers being writers themselves was shown to be valuable for a number of reasons. The prospective teachers' own writing experiences perhaps made them cognizant of both the satisfactions and frustrations that the act of writing produces. Further, their articulation or understanding of the strengths and weaknesses they saw in their own writing might have helped to make them aware of the problems others might encounter when writing. In sum, the teachers appeared to be aware of the many demands placed on writers and could join in understanding their students' writing problems. Just as important, an understanding of themselves as writers might begin to shape their attitudes toward writing theory: what they prize as important features of and processes in producing effective prose, and how the learning and teaching of writing can most effectively occur. Thus, the prospective teachers come to their first college writing courses with valuable material concerning writing, even if they were unable to cite specific theorists and theories as helping to shape their beliefs.

While the personal experience of the teachers as writers is important material upon which they can draw in their writing classes, personal experience can only go so far; that is, from the data received from the surveyed teachers, a more thorough grounding in the

range of theories which informs the teaching of college writing is just as important. In fact, the two, ideally, go hand in hand. An understanding and appreciation of the specific theories which underpin writing can help to guide the new teachers' pedagogical approaches and enable them to select appropriate and consistent materials to teach. An awareness of the different ways writing can be taught supports the notion that the teaching of writing is not an easy nor a surefire activity; rather, the manifold theories about the writing process and the pedagogical implications they produce help to assure variety in the ways writing is taught and reinforce the idea that the teaching of writing is a complex field. Further, prospective college writing teachers might find comfort in the fact that because of the many ways writing can be taught, there is no one absolutely "right" way with which they are unfamiliar. Instead, the field is rich with possibilities, and part of their task is to discover from their own experience as writers and their growing knowledge of writing theory the pedagogical approach they find most plausible and suitable. Thus, the triad of writing experience, writing theory, and writing pedagogy find a relationship among one another and are united in an experientially based, theoretically informed, and pedagogically implemented approach to teaching.

Notes

- ¹ Donald Nemanich, "Preparing the Composition Teacher," College Composition and Communication, 15 (1974), 46.
- ² Richard Gebhardt, "Balancing Theory With Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers," College Composition and Communication, 28 (1977), 134-5.
- ³ Donald Murray, A Writer Teaches Writing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), pp. 21-22.
- ⁴ Janet Emig, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (Urbana: NCTE, 1971), p. 4,
- ⁵ Walter T. Petty, "The Writing of Young Children," in Research on Composing, ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana: NCTE, 1978), p. 83.
- ⁶ While the question asked the teachers to report how many courses they had taken in each of these areas, all of the teachers just marked the courses they took, and failed to note how many courses they took in each of the areas listed.
- ⁷ Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 78-9, 84.
- ⁸ John Dixon, Growth Through English (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 7.

Chapter III

Issues in Model Training Programs for Teaching Assistants

In a research project querying over 600 college presidents and academic deans, Bernard Berelson discovered that 35 percent of the current doctoral programs require some teaching experience from their degree candidates.¹ The rationale behind this requirement is that "knowledge of how to teach"² is one of the most important features that academic employers supposedly look for in prospective faculty members. One only needs to peruse the Modern Language Association's Job Information List or the Chronicle of Higher Education's job descriptions to know that English department administrators seem to place considerable emphasis on candidates' demonstrated ability and experience in teaching writing. Many English departments have addressed the need to provide graduate students not only with teaching experience but with courses on the teaching of college writing and supervised direction in their teaching. Other departments have followed suit: in Berelson's study, the faculty (including English and other disciplines) of the surveyed schools reported that 68 percent of their universities offered supervised teaching experience for teaching assistants, and 39 percent had an internship available for those graduate students especially interested in pursuing teaching as a career. In addition, 33 percent of the schools offered seminars on college teaching as preparation for their degree candidates; 13 percent offered specialized courses in teaching; and 7 percent indicated that special programs were available

for those candidates particularly interested in college teaching.³

While graduate students can now participate in a host of activities which help to prepare them for college-level teaching, one must consider the quality of those opportunities. In other words, attention must be given to what actually happens in those supervised teaching experiences, courses, and special programs. As the need for experienced college writing teachers increases as one way of dealing with the instruction of underprepared college writers, so does the escalation of rhetoric on "ideal" or "model" training programs for teaching assistants. In fact, a number of critics have already addressed the issue of such ideal training programs, both in and outside of the boundaries of English and the field of writing.

In "The Preparation of College Teachers," for example, Frank Koen proposed seven "critical attributes" for ideal training programs. While his recommendations are for all disciplines in the university, they are nonetheless applicable to the field of English: a complete program; an efficient one where redundancies are avoided; a practical program; a program that is seen as legitimate by all members of academia; a program that has continuity; a flexible program; and one that is, above all, aggressive.⁴ In Reform in Graduate and Professional Education, Lewis B. Mayhew and Patrick J. Ford also listed requisites for ideal training programs for teaching assistants. Among them, reminiscent of, but more specific than Koen's list, were a progressive sequence of teaching experience and responsibility, beginning with observation of classes and culminating with total responsibility for the instruction of students; teaching experience that involves more than menial tasks such as calling roll and reading quizzes;

informing graduate students of the full range of teaching experiences, methods, and resources available to them; matching teaching assistants' scholarly interests with their teaching interests; evaluation of teaching assistants; treating teaching assistants as professionals which includes providing them with adequate office space and, just as important, offering them the unqualified respect of the faculty and administration; commitment and leadership from department chairpersons and administrators; and, finally, offering teaching assistants a wide enough range of teaching experiences that will adequately prepare them for their duties once they secure full time positions in university departments.⁵

Koen, Mayhew, and Ford are suggesting sequential, practical, and comprehensive training programs for teaching assistants which are supported by department and university officials. In "Who Teaches the Teachers?" in Improving College Teaching, W. Max Wise also explored teacher training at the college level and contended that the problem was not whether teaching assistants had enough time (in terms of the years they spend as teaching assistants) to develop their skills as teachers. Instead, Wise sought to learn about "what kinds of carefully delineated, limited experiences would give the most help to the prospective college teacher."⁶ Unlike other critics who provide lists of features for ideal training programs, Wise was interested in exploring the quality of those features whereby prospective teachers would gain the most help and he found three types of experiences which universities have offered their prospective college teachers: initial and limited experience in assuming the responsibility for teaching

entire courses; an interruption in one's graduate education to become an instructor at a college in order to get direct experience in teaching; and brief orientation programs for new teachers in which the major issues in the field are addressed. Also helpful to the prospective teacher, Wisemaintained, were summer conferences and workshops specifically designed for new teachers and for those interested in refining their teaching skills.⁷

Much like Koen, Mayhew, and Ford, Wise supported the belief that if teaching assistantships were to be used as a major aid to university departments and as a means of training prospective college teachers, several matters demanded careful consideration: the new teaching assistants' work loads; the opportunity for teaching assistants to experience a variety of teaching responsibilities; ample time for teaching assistants to devote to their teaching and to completing their own course work; and the issue of teaching assistants merely staffing introductory courses or being adequately inducted into the profession.⁸ In light of these matters, Wise finally proposed three measures that American universities must act upon if their teaching assistants are to be adequately prepared to enter teaching as a career: assigning reduced teaching loads to inexperienced faculty; giving senior faculty the responsibility of working with and helping new teachers; and supporting local and regional conferences which address college-level teaching, preferably led by major figures in the field.⁹

While Wise's suggestions apply to all fields of college-level teaching, they are no less important to English departments in providing issues that need to be investigated. Theorists in the field of English, particularly writing, also have addressed ideal training

programs for teaching assistants, and therein lies rich material for directors of writing programs, faculty, and teaching assistants alike. These ideal training programs are particularly interesting in light of the responses of the surveyed teachers in this study. Thus, the theorists' recommendations, along with information garnered from the surveys, provide an interesting angle from which to examine the training of teaching assistants in American university English departments.

Of worthy notice in the field of English, especially composition, is that some of the ideas which are considered to be new in training programs are little more than "reinventions of the wheel." In other words, those in English are beginning to find in their history theorists, researchers, and teachers who already have made claim to ideas that others are supposedly discovering or inventing for the first time. An example of this phenomenon is the report of Professor Charles N. Greenough's 1913 graduate course in English composition for those planning to teach at the college level.¹⁰ Greenough's rationale for this course, innovative in the early part of the twentieth century and now embraced by many theorists and teachers, was that because most doctoral students teach freshman for at least the first few years of their careers, they should be required to take a graduate course which explores what they as teachers will expect from their students. In other words, Greenough thought it important for prospective teachers to have personal experience with the writing required of undergraduates.

Precisely fifty years after Greenough's graduate course in composition, Albert H. Grommon, in his twelve major recommendations for

planning programs in English, cited a need similar to the one Greenough proposed in that it addressed the experiential background of prospective teachers. Grommon saw the need for "the future teacher of college English . . . [to] demonstrate proficiency in written and oral expression."¹¹ Other theorists and researchers also express the need for teachers to be writers: Donald Murray's philosophy is apparent in the title of his book, A Writer Teaches Writing, and in The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, Janet Emig implores teachers to try a wide range of writing modes in order to be willing to offer students such a range of possibilities in their own writing. As J. N. Hook, Paul Jacobs, and Raymond Crisp so aptly point out in What Every English Teacher Should Know, "Can a golf coach who never swings a club be successful? Can a shop foreman who never operates a machine do a good job? Can a teacher who never writes teach writing well? Probably not."¹² Or, in the words of George Bernard Shaw, ". . . Bid the professor quit / His fraudulent pedantries, and do i' the world / the thing he would teach others."

As the first requisite for prospective college writing teachers, then, no teacher is exempt from being an active writer. In effect, teachers cannot expect from their students anything that they would not and could not do themselves. In order to understand the problems confronting undergraduate writing students, teachers should know about the demands of writing. Above all else, the profession needs to challenge vigorously the notion that "those who can, do; those who can't, teach."

The teachers surveyed in this study reported that they were active writers; they indicated not only having written academic types of writing (e.g. scholarly papers for classes), but poetry, fiction, journals, letters, and meditations. In fact, 40% of the respondents indicated that they had poems, books of poetry, scholarly articles, and editorials published in journals, newspapers, and newsletters. Further, the satisfactions they described in their writing activities outnumbered the frustrations they experienced in writing. One area in their writing repertoires, however, seemed unusually thin: the teachers did not experiment with the self-sponsored, informal essay often required of undergraduates in writing courses. Training programs which provide new teachers with a diverse range of writing experiences, including the types of writing most frequently required in undergraduate writing courses and not restricted to research-type papers, could immeasurably inform their teaching since they would have had first-hand experience in the writing required of their students.

Besides insisting that ideal training programs include the new teachers writing the types of prose they will expect from their students, a number of critics charge prospective writing teachers with the responsibility of being familiar with or knowledgeable in other areas. In a 1979 interview, Wallace Douglas stated that "they [prospective college writing teachers] ought to know something about the history of the teaching of composition so that they don't re-discover the wheel without noticing how broken it is."¹³ Like Robert Gorrell and Albert Kitzhaber, Douglas claimed that writing teachers should know the history of the English language, including language change,

dialects, and usage items. In terms of knowing about these areas, the prospective teachers in this study did not fare too well: only 4 percent indicated that they were very familiar with classical rhetoric (e.g. Aristotle and Quintilian), and only 6 percent indicated that they were very familiar with the history of usage items. Further, only 2 percent were very familiar with the acquisition of spoken and written discourse, and 7 percent reported being very familiar with forms of non-Standard English. Such knowledge is particularly important to writing teachers because it provides them with an understanding of the development of the "rules" of correct usage, an appreciation of the changing features of English, and a knowledge of dialects and non-Standard varieties of English which might help in teaching minority students.

Douglas also concurred with other critics in wanting teachers to know more about non-fiction prose: "If you stop and think about it, an English major and even an English graduate student is much more likely to have had experience with poems, plays, poetic plays, fiction and rather specialized essays from the eighteenth century. For these students not really to think about the nature of contemporary non-fiction prose—what the conventions are, what the style is—is unfortunate."¹⁴ Douglas's observation suggests a rich area for needed investigation: what do prospective writing teachers know about contemporary non-fiction prose, and how can a knowledge of it aid their teaching of writing courses?

Besides a knowledge of the history of the field and non-fiction prose, other critics look to more recent theory as an important

feature of model training programs for college writing teachers. Donald Nemanich, for example, described an ideal training program for composition teachers which not only emphasized a substantial amount of writing from them, but a knowledge of specific theories and theorists as well. Along with an understanding of classical rhetoric, Nemanich believed in the importance of new writing teachers knowing about Ken Macrorie's freewriting approach to the teaching of writing, Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric, and Robert Zoellner's talk-write theory. Nemanich continued his list with such names as Wallace Douglas, Janet Emig, James Moffett, Edward Jenkinson, and Donald Seybold.¹⁵ Nemanich's rationale behind wanting prospective teachers to know about such theorists and theories was that they should "read widely about composition and its teaching, and . . . know that there is more than one way to teach composition. They should be aware that there are composition programs teaching writing with literature, with linguistics, with rhetoric, with grammar, with film, etc."¹⁶

The survey results in this study confirm Nemanich's perception about prospective college writing teachers needing to know about the theories behind the teaching of writing. Generally not knowledgeable in specific writing theories and theorists, none of the teachers (even those from Colorado State University where he teaches) reported being very familiar with Robert Zoellner's talk-write approach to the teaching of writing, only 3 percent of the teachers were very familiar with Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric, and only 4 percent indicated that they were very familiar with Janet Emig's and James Britton's extensive and reflexive modes of writing. Of the approaches

to the teaching of writing Nemanich mentioned, the teachers were most familiar with the freewriting approach (22 percent indicated that they were very familiar with it). The teachers also were most familiar with traditional grammar (21 percent), whereas 9 percent indicated being very familiar with transformational grammar.

In "Balancing Theory With Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers," Richard Gebhardt also addressed the importance of making college writing teachers aware of the different areas of theory which invariably dictate what will happen in the college writing classroom. While Nemanich discussed specific theorists in the field, Gebhardt's focus was primarily on the differing spectra of theory: "They [writing teachers] need to be able to find their way through the jungle. . . ." ¹⁷ That "jungle" is divided into three overlapping categories: Classical/Existential, Thinking/Writing, and Product/Process. ¹⁸ According to Gebhardt, the classicists believe that writers know in advance of putting pen to paper what the meaning is in their writing, whereas the existentialists see the actual activity of writing producing the meaning. His thinking/writing poles distinguish between pre-planning and writing as a way of discovering meaning. The final pair, product/process, demonstrates the split between placing more emphasis on the final product as opposed to the process through which writers move to reach the product. Gebhardt maintained that "differences in emphasis [of the items in the pairs] do result in different methodologies," ¹⁹ and that "future teachers should understand these distinctions so that they can more intelligently develop their own teaching styles and select compatible teaching materials." ²⁰

Of the categories Gebhardt proposed, the teachers surveyed in this study more closely aligned themselves with the existential, writing, and process beliefs than they did with the classical, thinking, and product orientations: 70 percent of the teachers reported that the process is just as, if not more, important as the finished product; 64 percent indicated that meaning may not be what writers start with, but it can be an end result of the writing process; and 62 percent felt that the purpose of writing is to enable writers to better understand their worlds and lives. While the prospective teachers indicated their allegiance to Gebhardt's existential, writing, and process categories, it is important to note that they were not necessarily familiar with or knowledgeable of the theoretical underpinnings of those areas, nor with the classical, thinking, and product orientations at the other end of Gebhardt's spectrum of categories. In other words, their responses to questions in the survey indicated their attitudes, and not necessarily their knowledge of theories which informs the teaching of college writing. If only because of this distinction between attitudes and knowledge, new teachers of college writing courses need to build upon their own writing experience and the attitudes it creates by investigating all topics in writing theory. Not only will they then appreciate the complex field of theory and pedagogy, but they will be able to ground their attitudes in knowledge and discover the theories which guide their teaching.

Thus, the link that unites such theorists as Douglas, Nemanich, and Gebhardt in their recommendations for training programs is not just teachers' experience in writing, but an understanding of writing

theory, old and new. All of the theorists agree that knowledge of writing theory helps to shape one's teaching, that practices in writing classrooms must have theoretical foundations, and that those foundations are indeed diverse. The prospective teachers in this study demonstrated that Douglas, Nemanich, and Gebhardt's recommendations are essential to ideal training programs which produce knowledgeable teachers of college writing courses.

While some critics address the importance of teachers knowing the range of theories which dictate how writing is taught, other critics focus on the nuts-and-bolts issues of teaching in their description of ideal training programs. When William Irscher wrote that "The teaching of composition could be immensely improved if more teachers knew what they were doing"²¹ that knowledge involved writing theory and practical ideas on the operations of college writing classes. In helping new teachers to know more about "what they are doing," beyond the theories about writing and its teaching, ideal training programs can help to "acquaint him [the new teacher] with some practical problems that will confront him in the composition classroom and . . . suggest ways of dealing with them."²² Attending to practical and common problems which arise in the teaching of writing is of major importance to new teachers because it focuses on the all-too-common question or fear, "What should I do?" As reassuring as knowing that one is a writer and that one is conversant in writing theory are, those abilities and understanding are often not enough; that is, theory needs to be translated into actual practice, and given the nature of practice, problems often present themselves in the writing classroom for which new

teachers are frequently unprepared. As Douglas Cazort wrote in "Advice From a Recent Has-Been to a TA Starting Cold," "Someone helpfully pointed you in the direction of finding out what's going on in the relatively new field of research in composition, and you've been reading the literature to learn what really works in the composition class. But very quickly you begin to feel overwhelmed by the sheer mass of all the material, and by the question of how to apply the research in your own classroom."²³ The matter of actual classroom practices and the fears of new college writing teachers are graphically described by David D. Roberts: "Beginning TAs are generally not concerned about the road to full-professorship or about publishing their first article in CCC [College Composition and Communication] or about becoming stars in the pedagogical heavens. They are worried about embarrassing themselves."²⁴

In describing model training programs, theorists have attended to the day-to-day problems, the actual classroom practices, and the potential embarrassments that might face new teachers. At Michigan Tech University, for example, Toby E. Fulwiler and Peter M. Schiff have experienced writing teachers serve as "mentors" to first-time teaching assistants. The mentors help the new teachers develop syllabi, writing assignments, lesson plans, and strategies for classroom discussion. The mentors also help the new teachers with handling everything from first-day jitters to the day-to-day secretarial management of writing courses.²⁵ Yet other training programs include simulations of undergraduate writing classes, jurying of student papers, lectures on student conferences and on motivating the unmotivated student—all

in an effort to provide first-time teachers with the fruits of others' experiences in and knowledge of writing pedagogy.

While the attention to the practical problems in the teaching of college writing may appear to be a relatively insignificant or superficial part of an ideal training program, the teachers who participated in this study thought otherwise. When asked about their major apprehensions about teaching college writing, they did not cite their lack of knowledge of writing theory; rather, they most frequently termed "grading fairly," "motivating students," "running the daily activities of a writing class," "getting students to talk," and "helping students become more comfortable with writing" as their main preoccupations. Because of these anticipations, practical attention and advice are particularly valuable.

While model training programs address theories behind writing and practices in pedagogy, other types of knowledge--knowledge that teachers already have, but of which they might be unaware--are important to identify. Warner G. Rice described one such area that can be useful to teachers, but which is too frequently overlooked:

. . . the young teacher, more so than a person in any other profession, has the opportunity to learn successful classroom skills by a long course of observation and indoctrination before he begins to practice. That is, every teacher has himself been taught, and taught by at least a few highly successful experts. If he has been at all alert, he should certainly have analyzed and evaluated the methods of those from whom he has learned. Apparently, however, the process of instruction, as it now operates, does not sufficiently develop this critical awareness, nor do the students' preceptors provide all the benefits possible. Considerable gains could surely be made if college and university teachers of English made more explicit and direct use of the opportunities daily offered them to explain and illustrate,

as part of their regular practice the pedagogical methods which they themselves employ.²⁶

Although theorists may not have given their full attention to this area of teacher training, one cannot deny the influence that past teachers have had on students. Consciously or unconsciously, new teachers use the truly excellent (instead of the truly poor) teachers they themselves have had as their models; the majority of teachers who fall between the extraordinarily good and bad no doubt recede so far into the recesses of memory, they are forgotten. Still, new teachers take as their cues what to do and what not to do from the teachers they most vividly remember, and a recognition of this idea provides the new teachers with a form of training. Therein lies potentially valuable material--the unearthing of rich personal experience--upon which new teachers of college writing can draw, as well as another area for study: the impact of previous teachers on new teachers' attitudes toward and styles of teaching.

While a number of critics point to well-planned model training programs which include writing, writing theory, and pedagogy as their main concerns, other critics describe attitudes toward college teacher training which do anything but attend to viable training for college writing teachers. Echoed by other critics, the sentiments of Kitzhaber on this matter are described in the following statement:

On the one hand, it would be a mistake to follow the lead of some universities at which the young teacher, having been given a handbook, a book of readings, a syllabus, and the number of the room where he is to teach, is turned loose on a class as inexperienced with college study as he is with college teaching. Nor is the opposite plan any better: unloading on the prospective teacher such menial jobs as taking roll in someone else's course

and correcting routine quizzes but never letting him take full charge of a class.²⁷

Roger P. McCutcheon also noted the same negligence in many departments: those that provide their new teachers with a textbook and a syllabus informing them what to do moment by moment, and others that "lead the new teaching fellows to the classrooms and firmly close the doors."²⁸

On the surface, the two drastically opposing scenarios offered by Kitzhaber and McCutcheon exemplify the "structure and direction" (or lack of) that Joseph Comprone observed: "Certainly we all need a sense of structure and direction as we find our way through complex literary texts and criticism. But we need to avoid either-or posturing—the absolute structure as opposed to the complete lack of structure—that often presents itself to new composition teachers."²⁹ Clearly, the two extremes—dictating the daily activities of writing classes and the total abnegation of responsibility in helping new teachers in their first teaching experience—fail to promote a situation, let alone an atmosphere, in which new teachers can learn about writing theory and pedagogy. If anything, the two extremes serve as a model of what not to do with prospective teachers and point to a more sane middle ground: model training programs which encourage a fair exchange of knowledge and discussion of writing and its teaching.

The various recommendations of critics concerning model training programs and the ample data on the new teachers' writing backgrounds and attitudes suggest that the theory behind the teaching of writing can conceivably be life-long studies—and no doubt they are for many theorists, researchers, and teachers. Still, the training of new teachers not only to become competent, but successful teachers of

college writing is possible without their undergoing years of preliminary study. While it is fatuous to think that all of the research on the composing process and its teaching can be capsulized for new teachers to immediately assimilate, training programs can begin to address the pertinent issues of teaching college writing. And while the notion of "ideal" or "model" training programs is appealing, it is likewise fatuous to believe that "teaching others how to teach" is as easy or surefire as the terms ideal or model might suggest—at least not under conditions which are less than utopian. Complicating the matter, too, is the wide range of the field with no set of terms or fully agreed upon theories about the teaching of writing. In short, training programs can only do so much; they are a start in a field which includes literature (non-fiction prose), education (cognitive development), linguistics (the acquisition of spoken and written discourse), psychology (motivation for learning), and, of course, at its center, writing, theory, and pedagogy.

As a start, however, training programs might have as their center the examination of the teacher as writer, the first requisite cited by many critics. The field of writing is no more interesting than at this point because writing and observing what happens during the composing process suggest the methods by which writing can be taught to others; that is, once teachers experience the writing process themselves and reflect on the process, they know a tremendous amount about the ways in which writing can be approached in the classroom: writing is learned by writing; because individuals compose in different ways, flexibility and a lack of prescriptive teaching is

warranted; writing involves rewriting because producing good copy is not a one-shot affair; ample and diverse feedback is important for writers to receive in order to emphasize writing as communication to an audience besides oneself; writing often involves discovering what one knows and wants to say—meaning is not necessarily apparent at the beginning of the writing process; and writing is frequently hard and lonely work because it forces writers to support their beliefs, unlike oral discourse which allows for mitigation. While no means a complete list, these ideas about writing have been examined by the Bay Area Writing Program (1974) and the National Endowment for the Humanities Conference on the Teaching of Writing held at the University of Vermont in 1977-78.

The personal experiences and revelations that emerge from the writing process are seemingly endless. Because some writers/teachers subscribe to the aforementioned ideas concerning the learning and teaching of writing and others do not necessarily share the same conclusions about the process of writing, the notion of teacher-as-writer cannot be the only feature of training programs; rather, the notion is but a start, a base upon which to build. Furthermore, training programs are a beginning and need not end after a one or two week period—an idea alluded to, but not strongly enough stated by critics of training programs. Training programs would benefit from a sustained, coherent continuation of the issues they pose through a graduate course required of all new teaching assistants concurrent with their first college teaching experience.

In such a graduate course, a more thorough articulation of the themes of the training program could be attempted. The field of writing is rich and complex; the research which has emerged in the last decade or so is testimony to that fact. As such, the following topics in the teaching of writing might be explored in both training programs and in their continuation through a graduate seminar or a series of related courses: the history of the teaching of composition; classical rhetoric; peer group workshops; responding to and evaluating student writing; the composing process; the Back to Basics issue; different grammars and their role in the writing classroom; the history of usage; the Standard English controversy; conferencing as a means of teaching writing; the use of journals in teaching writing; sentence-combining; the studies and ideas of James Britton, James Moffett, Janet Emig, Robert Zoellner, Mina Shaughnessy, Ken Macrorie, Peter Elbow, Donald Murray, Donald Graves, Richard Lanham, Lev Vygotsky, E. D. Hirsch, Wallace Douglas, William Labov, Francis Christensen, James Kinneavy, and Paul Diederich; the issue of literacy; writing across the curriculum; and the findings of such conferences as the Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English (the Dartmouth Seminar) and the Bay Area Writing Program. Examination of these areas in the teaching of writing is critical because it offers new teachers a more thorough understanding of the field, the issues currently under debate, and the different viewpoints posited about writing, theory, and pedagogy. In short, an investigation of these areas serves to inform prospective teachers by illuminating important issues in the teaching of college writing.

Besides a graduate course or series of courses on the teaching of college writing are weekly or fortnightly meetings of new teaching assistants to discuss the problems and successes which arise in their teaching. Such conversation, supervised by an experienced writing teacher, may be particularly valuable because not only does it sustain the training programs' dialogue about writing, theory, and teaching, but it focuses directly on the teachers' own experiences as first-time instructors. No doubt if one were to eavesdrop on the conversations which take place in teaching assistants' offices, one would discover that such talk is often frequent and lively. Providing new teaching assistants with a directed forum for discussing their own classes could be helpful and reassuring to them because it promotes yet another arena for examining problem and success areas as well as the sharing of ideas about teaching.

Yet another way to promote and sustain learning about the teaching of writing is by evaluations of teaching assistants' performances. While evaluation is traditionally seen as a means of gathering information to be used in assessing teaching assistants' performance for contract renewal, it need not be restricted to that one purpose. Rather, comprehensive and sustained evaluation of teaching assistants can help to make them more aware of their skills, abilities, and styles. By faculty members observing their classes, reviewing a set of marked papers, reading a journal of their daily classroom activities, and talking to them about their teaching, evaluation can become a means by which the teaching assistants learn more about themselves as teachers and can help establish a working relationship between the teaching

assistants and the faculty.

Training programs also can encourage new teachers of college writing to enter the profession more fully by urging them to read books and articles on writing theory and pedagogy, to attend local, regional, and national conferences which focus on writing and its teaching, and to write articles which explore their perspectives on particular issues or describe what they feel works especially well in writing courses. In fact, such journals as Exercise Exchange and English Journal have been particularly supportive in soliciting manuscripts from teachers on successful classroom practices. Newsletters such as Freshman English News and The Arizona English Bulletin, among others, are also dedicated to publishing the ideas of college writing teachers. It is important to note that teachers are fine researchers without ever dealing with raw numbers, percentages, standard deviations, and chi squares; if they reflect on the "data" they receive from their students (what works and what doesn't work in their teaching), explore them in their study of writing theory and pedagogy, and take them into account in their classes, the new teachers can continue to gain valuable information about effective teaching, and that material can be shared by writing about it for publication. While it does not take training programs for teaching assistants to examine their ideas about writing theory and pedagogy, such forums can begin to promote the teaching assistants' views of themselves as professionals with valuable information to share. Thus, teaching assistants become a part of the community of researchers, theorists, and teachers actively engaged in exploring the ways in which writing can most effectively be taught rather than allowing teaching

assistants to see themselves isolated from others in that goal. Further, training programs can help to foster the view that the teaching of writing is more than a "service" course or the "bastard child" of the English department and university; rather, it is an honorable pursuit, and one that is an intellectually viable endeavor. And like writing, too, the teaching of college writing is a challenging activity, replete with continual discoveries which affirm the possibilities of language.

Because the effective teaching of writing is a rich, complex, and wide ranging field, because--like writing itself--it does not accommodate itself to a prescriptive approach, and because new research is continually appearing on writing theory and pedagogy, the study of instructing others to teach writing is all the more complicated. Despite comprehensive and well-meaning training programs, one factor remains immutable: while forums for new teachers of college writing can provide valuable information about writing theory and pedagogy, they cannot dictate new teachers' attitudes; while these arenas for discussion of writing, theory, and pedagogy can help to inform, shape, and refine new teachers' thinking about the field, they are no guarantee that the teachers will adopt the ideas that are presented and discussed in the meetings, nor can they assure the growth of effective teachers of writing. Thus, training programs can only help to prepare new teachers to consider the major issues related to their first college-level teaching assignment. Much like writing, too, "learning by doing" might, in fact, be the best teacher. But that learning can be encouraged, supported, and reinforced by the issues discussed in training programs and follow-up graduate courses in writing theory and pedagogy,

all to help make teaching assistants both experientially and theoretically aware of the teaching of writing. Are training programs, then, an exercise in futility? Hardly. For knowledge is a valuable commodity, especially in the field of writing which is relatively new and uncharted for researchers. Simply providing new teachers with an opportunity to know something about writing theory and pedagogy remains a much needed practice—arming the soldiers, if you will, even if they choose not to make use of their supplies. First-time teaching assistants of college-level writing courses—and their students—deserve nothing less.

Notes

¹ Ann M. Heiss, Challenges to Graduate Schools (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970), p. 237.

² Heiss.

³ Heiss.

⁴ Lewis B. Mayhew and Patrick J. Ford, Reform in Graduate and Professional Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974), pp. 193-5.

⁵ Mayhew and Ford, pp. 191-3.

⁶ W. Max Wise, "Who Teaches the Teachers?" in Improving College Teaching, ed. Calvin B. T. Lee (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1967), p. 81.

⁷ Wise, pp. 84-7.

⁸ Wise, p. 88.

⁹ Wise.

¹⁰ Roger P. McCutcheon, "Graduate Programs in English," in The College Teaching of English, ed. John C. Gerber (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), p. 251.

¹¹ Albert H. Grommon, "Background for Planning Programs" in The Education of Teachers of English, ed. Albert H. Grommon (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), pp. 463-412.

¹² J. N. Hook, Paul Jacobs, and Raymond Crisp, What Every English Teacher Should Know (Urbana: NCTE, 1970), p. 35.

¹³ Wallace Douglas, "Interview With Wallace Douglas," The Gypsy Scholar,⁷ (Summer, 1980), 57.

¹⁴ Douglas.

- 15 Donald Nemanich, "Preparing the Composition Teacher," CCC, 25 (February, 1974), 46-8.
- 16 Nemanich, p. 47.
- 17 Richard Gebhardt, "Balancing Theory With Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers," CCC, 28 (May, 1977), 136.
- 18 Gebhardt.
- 19 Gebhardt, p. 137.
- 20 Gebhardt.
- 21 William Irmscher, Teaching Expository Writing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 12.
- 22 Harold B. Allen, Jean Hagstrum, Bruce Harkness, et al., "The Doctoral Program for the Teacher of College English," in The Education of Teachers of English, ed. Albert H. Grommon (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 554.
- 23 Douglas Cazort, "Advice From a Recent Has-Been to a TA Starting Cold," Freshman English News, 10 (Winter, 1982), 1.
- 24 David D. Roberts, "Survival and Prosperity: TA Training Colloquia," Freshman English News, 10 (Winter, 1982), 12.
- 25 Toby E. Fulwiler and Peter M. Schiff, "MSU Graduate Students Become MTU Writing Teachers," Improving College and University Teaching, 23 (1978), 8.
- 26 Warner G. Rice, "How the Candidate Learns to Teach College English," in The Education of Teachers of English, ed. Alfred H. Grommon (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), pp. 571-2.
- 27 Albert R. Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), p. 150.
- 28 McCutcheon, p. 252.
- 29 Joseph Comprone, "Preparing the New Composition Teacher," CCC, 25 (February, 1974), 51.

Conclusion

Since the early 1960s, critics have seriously addressed the importance of training English department teaching assistants. In the twenty years which have followed, the issue has sporadically received renewed attention in articles and conference papers that reflect on major issues in the preparation of college writing teachers and describe training programs at particular universities. While the ongoing discussion of training programs is indeed important, a number of issues remain absent, or at least unstated, in the seemingly abundant material on these programs.

First of all, little consideration of the teaching assistants' backgrounds has been given to the discussion of training programs; that is, critics write as if new college writing teachers enter the field tabula rasa, with no experience in, attitude toward, and knowledge of writing, or critics assume that the new teaching assistants come to their first college-level teaching experience knowing everything they should because of their undergraduate degrees in English. While prospective graduate students' backgrounds (i.e. grade point average, scores on Graduate Record Examination, letters of recommendation, and an occasional writing sample) are reviewed for their candidacy as advanced degree students, are the same features of their backgrounds adequate assessments for their candidacy as teaching assistants? Overlooking the entire range of prospective teaching assistants' backgrounds in this fashion is unfortunate because they are

important areas which can shape both their teaching and the training programs offered them. Furthermore, their backgrounds can suggest other areas of consideration. The teaching assistants surveyed in this study, for example, reported ample experiential backgrounds in writing, but their educational backgrounds in writing courses were, at best, weak. Attention, then, might be given to the undergraduate English majors' training in writing (besides research papers and scholarly essays), and might indicate that the English majors' curriculum should include substantial work in both literature and writing. While some universities are incorporating writing specializations into their English majors, the commitment is new and, as such, untried. Still, it will become an interesting development to follow.

A second issue never overtly stated by critics is that training programs, because of the time and resources allotted them, are flawed and incomplete. In undergraduate teacher education programs, for instance, entire courses and series of courses are devoted to training students to teach. A three-day, one-week, or two-week orientation program for college-level writing teachers can begin to point to areas which need investigation, but a thorough examination cannot be completed in such a short period of time: the theoretical and pedagogical issues are too diverse and complex for mere perusal. Still, training programs are essential for a number of reasons: first, to help assuage the fears with which new teaching assistants approach their first college-level teaching assignment; then, to help teaching assistants develop an understanding and appreciation of the areas which will need further examination; and finally, to help promote

uniformity in the teaching assistants' classes. And while the most obvious purpose of training programs is to produce teachers who will help their students learn how to write, another less obvious, and too frequently overlooked, responsibility is at work: teaching assistants' own training. Indeed, training programs are often the only formal training that prospective college teachers will receive before they enter the field as professionals. Because training programs are frequently a first and last chance at learning about pedagogy, they are all the more important.

Another overlooked area, related to the second, involves the extent to which training programs are sustained throughout the teaching assistants' appointments. While many schools describe training programs which examine major theories in the field and help new teaching assistants with the "practical" side of teaching (occurring shortly before they begin teaching and occasionally continued throughout the first semester or two of the academic year), the question remains: are orientation programs and whatever follow-up programs the department offers sufficient to fully educate graduate students about writing, writing theory, and pedagogy? Or, to what extent are training programs a gesture, albeit a well-meaning one, toward preparing teaching assistants? None of the universities in this study, for example, reported having any kind of training program which was sustained beyond the first few terms of the graduate students' assistantships (except for writing staff meetings, faculty visitation once a term and at some schools, a graduate course). While the overwhelming attention to training teaching assistants is concentrated in the

first few weeks before the start of the academic year, the interest appears to wane after that time. In short, sustained or follow-up programs need more attention.

While this study investigated first-time teaching assistants' reports of their backgrounds, attitudes, and knowledge, it did not consider their actual behavior in the classroom. Indeed, a gap may exist between what people report they have done or plan to do and what they in fact do. Because of this potential for discrepancy, future studies might examine the actual behavior of teachers in the classroom to test their ideas about teaching with their actual classroom performance. For example, Susan Florio and Christopher M. Clark's "The Function of Writing in an Elementary Classroom" describes the behavior of writing teachers to learn about what actually takes place in the classroom.¹ Lois Rosen, an instructor of English at Adrian College and a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University, is studying the comments teachers put on student papers in light of the teachers' beliefs about responding to student writing. In short, an inquiry into the discontinuity between what teachers believe about teaching and what actually occurs in the classroom is warranted.

Yet another overlooked issue in training programs involves an examination of the effects of these programs. In other words, do English departments ever evaluate the success of their programs in creating competent, let alone effective, writing teachers, and what shaping of attitudes and growth in knowledge do training programs promote? In the past twenty years, an abundance of material has surfaced on training prospective college English teachers, but none of the

rhetoric addresses the testing of training programs to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Here, again, the input of teaching assistants can be valuable in assessing the features of training programs that helped them, those that did not, and yet others that might have been included. Such evaluation can only serve to improve the training of new teaching assistants and, one might assume, the training which undergraduates receive from them.

Germane to the universities hiring of graduate student teachers is the economic efficacy of teaching assistantships. As was the case with tutors in the 1700s, teaching assistantships are a highly economical way to staff large numbers of introductory courses. These "cheap labor pools" not only help the universities in staffing freshman-level courses and filling graduate courses and programs, but help graduate students gain much needed teaching experience as well. Teaching assistantships, thus, provide a dual service to universities and graduate students alike. To what degree, however, do the economics of hiring teaching assistants instead of full-time faculty outweigh the time, resources, and commitment to providing comprehensive and sustained training programs for teaching assistants? And, what are universities' and departments' responsibilities for even providing training programs for their teaching assistants?

Any discussion of these admittedly thorny questions demands consideration of the purpose of training programs in relation to that of graduate education. Graduate schools' primary commitment to their students is, understandably and rightfully, the promulgation of scholarly knowledge. If teaching assistants, however, are to assume

the total or major responsibility for the instruction of courses (as has increasingly become the case in English department writing courses), thorough training programs for them become more than a gesture or a secondary function of universities and departments. Instead, training programs become a crucial part of graduate students' education, whether they plan on pursuing careers in academia, concentrating on literature, or not. For training programs in the teaching of college writing involve more than survival skills for teaching assistants; they include the study, scrutinization, and synthesis of theory, followed by the translation and integration of that knowledge into actual classroom practices. English departments' and teaching assistants' responsibilities do not end until these areas have been met, and the discussion of effective training programs need not end until their objective of producing better writing students via better writing teachers has been reached.

Notes

¹ Susan Florio and Christopher M. Clark, "The Function of Writing in an Elementary Classroom," Research in the Teaching of English, 16 (1982), 115-130.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**A SURVEY OF FIRST-TIME TEACHERS OF
COLLEGE WRITING COURSES**

APPENDIX A

A SURVEY OF FIRST-TIME TEACHERS OF COLLEGE WRITING COURSES

Directions:

1. Complete each of the three parts of this survey to the best of your ability. Take as much time as you need, and try to be as thorough as possible in your responses. If you need more room to complete your answers, use the space on the back of the survey or attach extra sheets to it.
2. If you wish to add any pertinent information not covered in the questions, feel free to provide it on the back of the survey or on attached sheets.
3. When you are finished responding to all of the questions, return the survey as soon as possible to the person who distributed it to you.

The purpose of this survey is to draw a profile of a small sample of people teaching college writing courses for the first time; the survey is not meant to evaluate you as a prospective teacher of the college writing courses. Corresponding to the three parts of the survey, the three main areas of inquiry are you as a writer, your understanding of writing theory, and your knowledge of writing pedagogy.

Thank you for your time and energy in completing the survey as well as your willingness to participate in this study. If you have any questions or comments regarding this survey or study, feel free to call or write to me about them.

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A SURVEY FOR FIRST-TIME TEACHERS OF
COLLEGE WRITING COURSES

Part I

1. Name of university _____
 Degree you are seeking and year expected _____
 Area of specialization _____
 Job you are training for _____
 Courses you expect to teach when degree is completed _____
 Nature of your current job and courses you teach _____
 Previous teaching experience _____

2. Provide the percentage of your writing time spent on the following genres:

poetry _____%	scholarly essays _____%
fiction _____%	other non-fiction prose _____%
drama _____%	(specify) _____%
	other (specify) _____%

3. List your publications (include place and date of publication).

4. List jobs you have had which required a significant amount of writing. Describe when and where you were employed and what kinds of writing you did.

5. How many of the following courses have you taken as an undergraduate?

_____ freshman composition	_____ writing workshop
_____ sophomore composition	_____ advanced writing workshop
_____ creative writing	_____ the research paper
_____ advanced creative writing	_____ business writing
_____ expository writing	_____ scientific writing
_____ advanced expository writing	_____ other (specify) _____

Describe as specifically as possible the writing required in these courses.

List the courses you have taken as a graduate student:

in composition or writing	_____	when taken?	_____
about writing theory	_____	when taken?	_____
about writing pedagogy	_____	when taken?	_____

6. List memberships you have in professional English organizations and journals you subscribe to or read regularly which address themselves to or include topics on writing, writing theory, and pedagogy.

7. List workshops or conferences on writing, writing theory, and pedagogy (local and national) which you have attended.

If you were a participant, describe your contribution or the nature of your participation.

8. List books and articles on writing and writing theory which you feel have significantly shaped your attitudes toward the teaching of writing. Specify title and author; include publisher and year, if possible.

9. In what ways is writing a satisfying or a frustrating activity for you? List all of the pleasures and the pains you experience in writing.

What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses as a writer?

Describe how you go about writing (the process you use).

Part II

1. Number in order of importance what you see as the most important features of non-fiction prose writing:

☐ content, ideas
☐ expression of voice, personality
☐ grammatical and mechanical correctness
☐ logic
☐ form, organization
☐ diction
☐ variety of sentence structure
☐ details, specifics, examples
☐ adherence to Standard English and conventional usage
☐ other (specify)

2. Indicate how important you believe the following processes are to producing a piece of good writing. V=Very, M=Moderately, S=Somewhat, N=Not at all

☐ brainstorming (discussing topic with others or self-reflection)
☐ making notes or outlines
☐ putting pen to paper and writing without much planning
☐ attending to grammatical and mechanical correctness
☐ revising
☐ receiving feedback from the teacher
☐ receiving feedback from peers
☐ attending to form, organization
☐ adhering to the principles of logic
☐ using correct diction
☐ expressing voice, personality
☐ providing details, specifics, examples
☐ adhering to conventional usage and Standard English
☐ using secondary sources for documentation
☐ being neat
☐ developing a thesis or topic sentence
☐ varying sentence structure
☐ reaching a personal understanding of the topic
☐ following a five-paragraph format (introduction, 3 supporting, conclusion)
☐ gaining a better understanding of oneself as a writer
☐ other (specify)

3. Check any or all of the following statements which reflect your attitudes toward writing.

- ☐ You can't teach people how to write; they're born with the ability or not.
- ☐ Writing is learned by reading and imitating the masters.
- ☐ The purpose of writing is to produce grammatically perfect papers.
- ☐ Good writers revise extensively.
- ☐ The best writing appeals to any audience.
- ☐ Writing should be taught only through English departments.
- ☐ Writing is a lonely, solitary activity.
- ☐ Meaning may not be what writers start with, but it can be an end result.
- ☐ Writing is best learned through formal instruction.
- ☐ Distinctive voices emerge from the work of good writers.
- ☐ The process of writing is just as important as the finished product.
- ☐ Writing is best learned by writing and receiving feedback.
- ☐ In order to write well, one must first have studied grammar.
- ☐ The best writing comes from being inspired or inwardly motivated.
- ☐ Writing is more shaped and precise than speech.
- ☐ The ability to write well is the sign of an intelligent person.
- ☐ Language shapes reality.
- ☐ The best writers have the largest vocabularies.
- ☐ In order to best teach writing, teachers should be writers themselves.
- ☐ Speech is primary to writing.
- ☐ Adhering to Standard English is a sign of good writing.
- ☐ Women write differently (content and style) from men.
- ☐ The purpose of writing is to enable writers to better understand their worlds and lives.

PART III

1. Indicate the degree of familiarity you have with the following practices, theories, or issues in teaching writing. V=Very, M=Moderate, L=Little, N=Not at all.

- ☐ freewriting
- ☐ consideration of audience
- ☐ expression of voice, personality
- ☐ "process approach" (prewriting, writing, revising, editing)
- ☐ forms of discourse (description, narration, exposition, argumentation)
- ☐ classical rhetoric (Aristotle, Quintilian, et al.)
- ☐ the history of usage items and language change
- ☐ use of small or peer groups in teaching writing
- ☐ use of journals in teaching writing
- ☐ Britton's and Emig's transactional and reflexive modes of writing

- ☐ Robert Zoellner's "talk-write" approach to teaching writing
- ☐ sentence-combining as it relates to improved writing
- ☐ traditional grammar as it relates to improved writing
- ☐ transformational grammar as it relates to improved writing
- ☐ Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric
- ☐ studies of Non-Standard English and writing
- ☐ acquisition of spoken and written language
- ☐ NCTE's statement on Students' Rights to Their Own Language
- ☐ sexism in language and writing
- ☐ other (specify)

2. In your "ideal" writing class, how often would you have your students engage in the following activities? N=Never, S=Several times during the term or semester, F=Frequently.

- ☐ read, discuss, and analyze literature
- ☐ read, discuss, and analyze essays from a reader
- ☐ read and discuss grammar items from a handbook
- ☐ read, discuss, and analyze their own writing as a whole class
- ☐ do free writing activities
- ☐ critique their writing in small or peer group workshops
- ☐ keep portfolios of their writing
- ☐ edit each other's writing
- ☐ grade each other's writing
- ☐ listen to lectures on writing
- ☐ choose their own topics for papers
- ☐ trade papers to read without critiquing them
- ☐ keep journals
- ☐ complete sentence-combining exercises
- ☐ complete grammar exercises or worksheets
- ☐ write collaborative papers
- ☐ meet with the teacher for individual conferences
- ☐ listen to or read the teacher's own writing
- ☐ study the principles of logic
- ☐ write in class
- ☐ revise in class
- ☐ study the conventions of Standard English and usage items
- ☐ be responsible for running the class
- ☐ discuss current issues to help generate paper topics
- ☐ rewrite their papers following the teacher's corrections, suggestions, and detailed comments
- ☐ work on library skills
- ☐ use other media (e.g. tapes, film) to accompany their writing
- ☐ explore topics in language (e.g. dialects, slang)
- ☐ compile a class anthology of student writing
- ☐ other (specify)

3. List what you see as the most important concepts in writing theory and pedagogy with which a writing teacher should be familiar.
4. List in order of importance the greatest problems you anticipate in teaching writing and state why you expect these problems. Be as specific as possible.
5. What do you anticipate will not cause you any problems in teaching writing, and why don't you anticipate these problems?

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTIONS OF SAMPLED SCHOOLS

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DESCRIPTIONS OF SAMPLED SCHOOLS

At the University of West Virginia in Morgantown (student population of 19,000) teaching assistants participate in a training program which takes place before classes officially begin in the fall. The new teachers are responsible for teaching a freshman-level writing course. Along with being required to enroll in a supervised practicum in the college teaching of expository writing, West Virginia teaching assistants may enroll in an undergraduate course which focuses on elementary and secondary school teaching of writing; however, this course is not required of teaching assistants.

Michigan State University's first-time teaching assistants are responsible for the instruction of a sophomore-level writing workshop which is not required of all of Michigan State's 40,000 undergraduate students. Michigan State requires a one-week, intensive training program of all new teaching assistants held the week before classes begin in the fall, and requires weekly meetings of the new teachers with a senior faculty member in charge. At these meetings, problems and successes in the new teachers' classes are discussed. In addition, the Department of English requires all new teaching assistants to enroll in a graduate-level course in the teaching of college writing. While not required of teaching assistants, a graduate-level writing workshop is also available for teaching assistants.

At Colorado State University, new teaching assistants are responsible for teaching a required, freshman-level writing course for its 20,000 undergraduates. The incoming teaching assistants meet for two weeks prior to the beginning of fall classes to discuss writing theory and pedagogy. The Department of English also requires all new teaching assistants to enroll in a graduate-level course in the teaching of college writing concurrent with their first teaching experience. This course builds upon the training program, and details the issues of writing theory and pedagogy brought up during the training program. The teaching assistants at Colorado State also enroll in a supervised practicum in the teaching of college writing with a senior faculty member as supervisor.

The University of Utah (undergraduate population of 22,000) offers its graduate students practicum and seminar experience in the theory and practice of college writing. At Utah, teaching assistants may enroll in both a supervised practicum and a seminar which examines theories of rhetoric and composition. New teaching assistants at Utah teach the freshman expository writing course.

At the University of Vermont, teaching assistants are responsible for staffing a freshman-level required writing workshop for its 9,000 undergraduates. The University of Vermont requires its incoming teaching assistants to participate in a week-long intensive training program in which theories of writing and teaching are examined. Vermont has no graduate-level course in the teaching of writing, but encourages its teaching assistants to attend bi-monthly or monthly meetings in which the teaching of college writing is discussed.

APPENDIX C

DEFINITIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

APPENDIX C

DEFINITIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Freshman Composition (the study of grammatical, mechanical, and usage problems, the writing of essays about literature); Sophomore Composition (the continuation of Freshman Composition, picking up where it left off with more intense study of course material); Creative Writing (writing and discussion of poetry, fiction, and drama); Advanced Creative Writing (picks up where Creative Writing left off, with closer study of course material); Expository Writing (the writing and discussion of expository essays); Advanced Expository Writing (picks up where Expository Writing left off, with more intense study of course material); Writing Workshop (writing and discussion of informal essays, often the personal narrative); Advanced Writing Workshop (picks up where Writing Workshop left off, with closer study of course material); Research Paper (designing, researching, and writing a research or term paper, with attention given to library skills, footnoting, etc.); Business Writing (writing and discussion of reports, letters, memos, etc.); Scientific Writing (writing about science for both scientific and non-scientific audiences).

(These definitions of undergraduate courses were generated from the respondents' descriptions of course material and from descriptions from university catalogues.)

APPENDIX D

**MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL
ENGLISH ORGANIZATIONS**

APPENDIX D

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL
ENGLISH ORGANIZATIONS

Association for Poetry Therapy

Directory of American Poets

Associated Writers Programs

National Council of Teachers of English

Sigma Tau Delta (3)

Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

National League of American Pen Women

National Federation of State Poetry Societies

(Number in parenthesis after the organization denotes the number of
respondents indicating their membership in it.)

APPENDIX E

JOURNALS READ REGULARLY

APPENDIX E

JOURNALS READ REGULARLY

American Scholar

Writer's Digest

Poetry Northwest

Coda (Newsletter for Poets and Writers)

Phi Beta Kappa Reporter

English Journal (2)

College English

The Centennial Review

Forum (TESOL publication)

The Writer

(Number in parenthesis after the journal denotes the number of respondents indicating their regular reading of it.)

APPENDIX F

WORKSHOPS OR CONFERENCES ATTENDED

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WORKSHOPS OR CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Women Writers Conference, University of Kentucky
Appalachian Writers Conference, Kentucky
Portland (Oregon) Poetry Festival
"Writing Well," Santa Rosa, California
East Asia Regional Conference for Overseas Schools
Writing Workshop, Oxford University
Monongahela Arts Center Writing Class, Morgantown, West Virginia
National Federation of State Poetry Societies Conference
Midwestern Literature Conference
Midwest Writers, Canton Ohio
Sinclair College Workshop
Columbus Public Library Workshops
Learning Connection Workshops
Right to Read / Young Writers Workshops

(The last seven entries on this list were cited by one respondent.)

APPENDIX G

BOOKS AND ARTICLES SHAPING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEACHING OF WRITING

APPENDIX G

BOOKS AND ARTICLES SHAPING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEACHING OF WRITING

- William K. Wimsatt: The Verbal Icon
- Judson Jerome: The Poet and the Poem (2)
- William Strunk and E. B. White: The Elements of Style (6)
- Donald Murray: A Writer Teaches Writing (2)
- Sheridan Baker: The Complete Stylist
- Paul Carroll: The Poem in Its Skin
- Robert Bly: 70's
News of the Universe
- William P. Alston: The Philosophy of Language
- Mina Shaughnessy: Errors and Expectations
- Kenneth Koch: Wishes, Lies and Dreams (2)
What Color is the Rose (2)
- Lew Welch: How I Work as a Poet
- Naropa Institute's Interviews on Poetics
- Jean Wyrich: Steps to Writing Well
- Sylvia Ashton Warner: Teacher
- Clark, Cox and Craig: About Language
- Field: Contemporary Poetry and Poetics (Oberlin College)
- Dean: Effective Communication
- Creative Ways to Teach English, 9-12
- Francis Christensen: Notes Toward a New Rhetoric
- William Irmischer: Teaching Expository Writing

- Ken Macrorie: Telling Writing
- Clint Burhans: The Would-Be Writer
- Peter Elbow: Writing Without Teachers
- Vladimir Nakokov: Lectures on Literature
- Hans Guth: Words and Ideas
- Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren: Modern Rhetoric
- Donald Hall: Writing Well
- Intro 9 (journal of creative writing of college students)
- Writing Research Papers in English
- Frank Gada: First Person
- Overton: Philosophy of Fiction
- Wayne Booth: The Rhetoric of Fiction (2)
- Richard Lanham: Style: An Anti-Text
- John R. Trimble: Writing With Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing
- Jacques Barzun: Simple and Direct
- John Simon: Paradigms Lost
- John Ciardi: How Does a Poem Mean
- Wood: Poets Handbook
- Robert Graves: The Crowning Privilege
- Walter Ong: "The Writer's Audience as Always a Fiction"
- Oscar Wilde: "The Critic as Artist"

(The number in parenthesis after the book indicates the number of respondents indicating that as a book shaping their attitudes toward the teaching of writing.)

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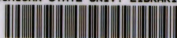
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