

A STUDY OF RHETORICAL THEORIES
FOR COLLEGE WRITING TEACHERS

DISSERTATION

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By

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* * * * *

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For my parents,
John and Mary Connors

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INTRODUCTION

There it is in black and white. You've been assigned to teach a college writing course. Freshman English. Composition. Sentences, paragraphs, outlines, red ink. Already there is a dull alarm bell going off in the back of your mind: "Teach composition? But I never took a writing course in my life! Or the only writing course I ever took was my own freshman composition course, so boring that I have no memory of it at all. I didn't get into this business to teach composition, for crying out loud! What about Faulkner (or Shakespeare, or Johnson, or Joyce)? Teaching literature is what I want to do, what I'm good at. What am I going to do?"

That last question, so central to every new writing teacher, is the question whose answer is this book. The work you have in your hands was written to tell you what you can do in your writing class to help your students become better writers. The theories, techniques, and methods in the following chapters were not made up by the author or chosen arbitrarily; all are based on solid practice, all have been classroom-tested, and, taken as a whole, they represent the greater part of our current knowledge about teaching writing. When the professionals do it, these are the methods they use. Now you are a professional, and you owe it to yourself and to your captive audience, the students, to get good. I hope this book will help.

The material in the following chapters is informed by a three-part thesis. First, it takes as a given that writing is a teachable skill, an art that can be learned and not a mysterious ability that one either has or has not. Second, it accepts the generalization made by many education theorists that students "almost never profit from lectures or 'teacher-centered' classes or from studying and memorizing isolated rules, but from continuous trial-and-error writing," as Andrea Lunsford puts it. Third, it is based on the idea that for a book such as this, the only good principle of selection of theories and methods to include is a practical one: what works. There are many fine authors and many important composition and education theories missing from the following chapters, for the simple reason that they have no immediate, pragmatic classroom use. Those interested in pure theory have a number of other sources they can consult, but new teachers need to be told simply and with brevity what they can use.

There are also entire philosophies of teaching writing that are not represented, or are only minimally represented here. Peter Elbow's teacherless writing class, Ken Macrorie's "Third Way" methods of teaching writing, Donald Murray's theories about teacher-student interaction, are all given little coverage. This is not because I consider the work of these men valueless. On the contrary, they have been important forces in the recent revitalization of composition. They are not well represented here because they espouse an entire philosophy of teaching which rejects or ignores many of the more traditional practices of composition teaching that are integral parts of this book. I believe that new teachers are well served by the

material in the following chapters, but no one can claim to really know the field of composition who is not familiar with Elbow, Macrorie, and Murray. If you find that your interest in composition is raised by the theories presented here, I suggest that you turn to the loyal opposition and read Elbow's Writing Without Teachers, Macrorie's Uptaught, and Murray's A Writer Teaches Writing.

I must here mention another book that has been very useful to me and should be immensely valuable to new writing teachers: William F. Imscher's Teaching Expository Writing. The present volume overlaps Imscher's coverage to some small degree, but should be seen more as an extended supplement to Teaching Expository Writing than as competition. Imscher has been teaching writing for thirty years, the present author for but five. His book offers wisdom that I cannot pretend to, and this book offers specificity about using composition theories that the small scope of Teaching Expository Writing makes impossible. I like to think that the two works complement each other, offering the perceptions of both experienced beginner and acknowledged expert.

I have tried in the following chapters to be short on idealism and theorizing and long on practical solutions to teaching problems. The theories, when they are presented, are there for two reasons: first, as a professional, I am assuming that your pride in yourself will move you to an interest in why you are doing what you are doing, and why it works or fails. Second, many of the teaching strategies simply cannot be carried out without a theoretical base.

I am not assuming that you are interested in composition theory qua composition theory. You may hate it; I certainly did when I was first introduced to it. Some knowledge of it, though, is necessary if you are to teach writing well. Throughout this book I will try to avoid overselling the world of composition, but all English teachers will eventually have to teach writing courses, and even if your first allegiance is to the world of literature some knowledge of writing theory is going to be helpful to you. The skills involved in teaching literature and teaching writing are somewhat different, and if you enter the writing classroom with no knowledge or only that of a literature teacher, you will do a bad job, pure and simple. But writing does not have to be taught poorly, and the assumption of this book is that you care enough about your teaching to want to learn to teach it well.

Teaching writing is hard work. It is perhaps the hardest teaching work done in English departments. A composition teacher cannot peruse a piece of literature, make a few notes, and then go into the classroom and "wing it" with discussion, depending on his knowledge of the context of literature. I do not wish to denigrate these skills, for I know the years of study and thought that go into producing them, but teaching composition involves far more than leading a discussion. The good composition teacher must work with form as well as with content, orchestrating material and activities that deal with many levels of skill, juggling invention, organization, style, mechanical correctness, all the while keeping in mind the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student, his progress or regress, his smile or grimace of

despair on receiving a paper back. Teaching writing takes cleverness, patience, forbearance, humor, and a keen ability to judge other people's efforts, as well as knowledge of the subject. Mother Teresa of Calcutta might make a good writing teacher.

Along with the hard work inherent in teaching writing, the composition teacher faces organizational problems. He must learn to budget time and energy, for he is invariably asked by his department to teach more students than he would like, and each student in a class represents extra work--not merely of one or two papers per term, but of eight or twelve. Overloading is an occupational reality; there will always be more students and more papers to evaluate than you feel you can effectively deal with. You will feel many times that you cannot pick another student paper off that still-daunting pile on the left side of your desk. Departments try to keep down the numbers on writing classes, but do not always succeed. We try to cope with overload as best we can.

The department or program can make other demands on writing teachers that are not made on literature teachers. The composition teacher may be forced to follow a prescribed syllabus, to use a specific textbook, to teach in a certain way. The autonomy of teachers in some departments is severely curbed by rules and regulations, which are meant to provide support and a coherent platform for teachers but sometimes end up as limiting restrictions.

Finally, teachers of writing are looked down upon in many departments as second-raters or fringe elements, and teaching writing is seen as a "service activity," inherently inferior to teaching literature. The feeling of those who look down upon composition seems to be that "anyone can teach it" and that therefore it is a low-level activity. I hope this book suggests that not everyone can teach it well and that teaching composition demands as much knowledge and commitment as teaching literature. Despite all, though, many of those trained in literary studies will continue to believe in the inherent superiority of their specialties even as the call for them diminishes and will continue the split between the two disciplines, a situation which can only be damaging to both.

What I mean to suggest here is that the current attitudes found in some departments may make it easy to despise the teaching of writing and that this attitude can only be destructive. You cannot despise an activity and still want to do it well. If you are determined to loathe composition teaching, I ask you now to close this book and forget any attempts to do it well. You do not have to love the teaching of composition, but neither can you afford to hate it.

For after you have taught writing for a time, you will see past some of the frustrations and problems of teaching it to the satisfactions. You become less concerned with the load and the restrictions and the D papers and the implausible excuses and the fact that it is not literature and never will be. You begin to see your students not as boluses of dullness and potential failure but as

struggling human beings, fellow creatures whom you can assist. And if you are a good teacher, you see the changes. You see the style become more mature, the organization of papers tighten up, the assignments accepted as challenges rather than as busywork. You become an educator in the original sense of ex ducere -- leading out.

The choice is yours. You can either scrape along grudgingly, giving only enough to your course to keep you out of trouble, or you can take it upon yourself to do a difficult job as well as you can. If you choose the path of effort, this book will take you a good way, but sooner or later you will transcend it. It will either become too introductory, and you will go on to the primary material from which it was drawn, or your teaching style will diverge from it and you will change to a traditional course model of some sort. Either way the advice it offers is temporary, contingent, introductory. I hope that this book serves you well for its time and that you will forgive its author his errors, for his entire purpose in the writing of it was to make a task that can seem impossible, possible, and a subject that can seem amorphous, teachable.

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A note on how different readers can best use this book: If you are an experienced teacher and are aware of the physical, practical, and psychological realities involved in learning your way around any new course, you can probably bypass Chapter One, which deals with the

practical problems of setting up a writing course and with teaching materials such as assignments, classroom activities, evaluation, etc. Having had experience with these things, you can go directly to Chapters Two through Six.

If you are a new teacher of writing, either a graduate student or an instructor, the first chapter will help you prepare to teach your first writing course and will give you information about how you can best go about it. After you have looked at this material and become familiar with it, you can then go on to the succeeding chapters. These chapters, Two through Six, cover the three most important canons of rhetoric and the two most essential elements of composition pedagogy. Each chapter is broken down into discrete units which describe specific theories and activities. Each unit consists of a Theory section, which provides background information, and a Classroom Application section, which describes how the theory can best be used in day-to-day teaching.

These Classroom Application sections are based on empirical research and on actual classroom experiences, my own or others', with the methods described. Almost all are structured according to Richard Graves' important teaching model CEHAE--an acronym for Concept, Example, Highlighting, Activity, Evaluation.* The activities are not perfect by any means--no teaching strategy ever is--but they have been successful for me and for others, and I hope they can work for you. No

*Richard L. Graves, "CEHAE: Five Steps for Teaching Writing," English Journal 62 (May 1972), 696-701.

teacher could possibly use all of the methods and techniques discussed here in the course of one or even two terms. I have sampled them over the course of the past four years, and I could not possibly design a single course that could hold all of them. Choose one or at most two theory/application units from each chapter and design your course around them; then if you want to experiment, choose different methods for the next term until you find the combination that works best for your students. Some sample course organizations are shown in the appendix at the end of the book.

One final word. You will notice that the masculine pronoun is used exclusively in this work to refer to writers, teachers, students, etc. Please do not take this to mean that my politics are bad. Following the precedent created by Mina Shaughnessy in Errors and Expectations, I am giving in to an aspect of the language that I cannot easily control. A truly conscientious editing for sexism can make normal prose turgid and turgid prose unreadable, and so I say with Shaughnessy that "when the reader sees he, I can only hope that she will also be there."

CHAPTER I
PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN TEACHING WRITING

BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS

Finding out the Nature of the Course

You have been assigned to teach a writing course, but writing courses come in many varieties. There is even a good deal of variation among Freshman English courses, and before you can begin to make intelligent teaching plans, you need to find out some of the vital statistics of your course. The Director of Composition at your school can answer most of the following questions, and if there is no Composition Director you should probably go directly to the Chairman of the department. Experienced teachers can possibly answer some of the questions, but a direct source is more reliable.

First of all, how many credit-hours does the course carry, and thus how many class meetings will there be per week? The amount of work that a three-credit course can get done in its three meetings per week is considerably smaller than the amount a five-credit course can do, and you will also have to adjust the number of required writing assignments according to credit-hours. Students may be willing to write ten 600-word essays for five credits but balk at doing it for three.

Next, how many students will you have in your class? The maximum number of students allowed into writing courses by most departments ranges from 20 to 30, with 24 or 25 as an average. The smaller the number, of course, the less evaluation and grading you have to do and the better you can serve each student. You may be lucky and get a small class, but if you get the full allowable number--which is likely if you teach at a popular time, late morning or early afternoon--there is probably not much to be done about it. (One enterprising TA I knew used to pass out a fake syllabus to large classes on the first day, one that asked for twice as much work as he really required. After half of the class had dropped his section, panic-stricken, he told the remaining hardies the real story. I do not recommend the technique.) The information you gain from this question should be of help to you in organizing the assignments and planning the syllabus.

Finally, make inquiries about the level of student you will be teaching. Freshman students can range from Basic Writers whose literacy level is still in elementary-school range to extremely sophisticated products of expensive prep schools who can decline nouns in Latin, and a lot of your preparation must be geared to what you can find out about the average levels at your school. Find out whether your college or university is "open admission"--that is, if it enrolls anyone who can produce a high-school diploma. If you are teaching at an open-admissions school, find out if there is a Basic Writing program for underprepared students or if all freshmen are placed into regular freshman writing classes.

If you are told that you will be teaching the "regular Freshman English course," be prepared for a wide variety of students, especially if there is no Basic Writing or remedial program. If there is one, try to find out what its standards are and who enters it; by doing this you can learn more about the sorts of students who may show up in your class. Ask whether your course is limited to freshmen only--many "freshman composition" courses admit students from all years and levels. Some of this information can be gleaned from your more experienced colleagues, but once again take any extreme viewpoints with a grain of salt--no one teacher's experience is all-encompassing.

While you are discussing these things, try to find out about other adjunct writing skills programs that you may be able to use as resources. Is there a Writing Lab to which you can refer students with particular problems? If there is, it may be worth your while to stroll down (all Writing Labs seem to be in basements) and talk to the people staffing it. Is there a Reading Lab where reading and comprehension problems can be diagnosed? Check around to see what sort of support systems your school offers you. Try to find out how other people in these programs view the course you will be teaching, but once again, listen to no one viewpoint exclusively.

Choosing a Text or Texts

After you have discovered all you can about the nature of the courses you are to teach, the next step is to investigate the

available textbooks. Many writing programs have required texts that must be used by all teachers; if this is the case in your department you will have little choice. Other departments specify a primary text and allow teachers to choose their own supplementary ones, and still other departments or programs maintain a list of "approved" texts from which teachers can draw their books. The freedom you have in choosing books will depend on your location and program, and this section is meant to acquaint you in general with the types of books used most often in composition courses. I will mention only a few specific titles, not only because I do not want to influence your choice, but because new texts and new editions of old texts are appearing so constantly. The Freshman English book market is a huge and lucrative one, as you will realize when you meet your first book salesman.

Here are the major types of books:

Rhetorics The "rhetoric" or composition textbook is usually the major book used by most writing classes. There are an amazing number of different rhetorics available, and they range in size from 120 to over 600 pages, hard and soft cover. The rhetoric of today is usually a simplified version of the composition texts developed during the nineteenth century, and it contains material on subjects ranging from invention to punctuation. Rhetorics are usually written in a simple and ingratiating prose style meant to be accessible to students. Just to provide an example of the coverage of a typical rhetoric text, here are some of the chapter headings from one of the most popular rhetorics: 1.) Purpose, 2.) Getting and Using Materials, 3.) Patterns of

Organization, 4.) Paragraphs, 5.) Sentences, 6.) Diction, 7.) Style, 8.) Persuasion, 9.) The Library, 10.) Research Paper. The coverage of these areas is, needless to say, considerably different from similarly named coverage in this book.

Each chapter in a rhetoric is likely to be divided into sections of "lesson" and sections of "activity" or "exercises." The student is supposed to read through the lesson, which contains explanation and examples of good organization, or good sentences, or good paragraphs, and then, with the direction of the teacher, to do the exercises that follow the lesson. These exercises will presumably provide practice and test skill in the material covered by the lesson. Some rhetorics contain more lessons than activities, and others reverse the trend. It is not uncommon to find large hardcover rhetorics incorporating handbooks within them. Prices on rhetorics are variable, and generally range between six and fourteen dollars.

Readers "A reader" is teacher jargon for an anthology or collection of essays, poems, or stories. In composition courses, the reader is far more likely to contain non-fiction essays than anything else, unless the course is set up as a combination of literature and composition. The anthology of essays is a large sub-genre of anthologies as a whole, and most major book companies offer at least one. Typical readers are organized chronologically or by rhetorical mode, and lately there seems to have been a movement toward modal arrangement and toward inclusion of large numbers of contemporary essays.

Most readers include questions and topics for discussion after each essay, and teachers can often be tempted to allow classes to go off on tangents of discussion of the content of essays; this problem is increased by the contemporaneity and interest of many of the essays themselves. The ideal, of course, is to use the essays in the reader as formal models, but this can be difficult unless the teacher gives specific directions as to how this is to be done. Readers are usually softcover, and prices range from four to ten dollars.

Handbooks Handbooks contain no essays and are concerned with the rules and conventions of grammar, usage, form, mechanical correctness, and punctuation. The handbook is the text to which students are sent when they need to pore over the rules governing errors in form they have committed. Typical handbooks cover sentence structure, diction, word form, inter- and intra-sentence punctuation, and mechanical elements such as capitalization. Many also cover typescript form, different forms for footnoting or citation of secondary sources, and common errors, and some cover rhetorical lessons as well.

Many large rhetorics, as I said above, contain at least minimal handbooks, but there are also a number of discrete handbooks available to students. The handbook can save a teacher from having to explain formal errors over and over again, but overuse of handbook terms (especially those from handbooks that contain numbered items, so that a student gets back a paper covered with red "12's" and "33's") can make students frustrated and uncomfortable with the impersonality. Handbooks range from small softcover versions to full-size hardback

Workbooks Workbooks are an offshoot of the rhetoric text in which the "exercise" sections have taken over almost completely. They provide practice for students in different sorts of drills and activities that test and allow practice in writing skills, usually mechanical or syntactic skills. The identifying mark of a workbook is the pages of blank lines on which the student is expected to write his answers to the exercises. Some workbooks are conventionally bound and some are spiral-bound, but in either case they usually have perforated pages that can be torn out as they are completed. Most workbooks cover the general fields of formal skills, and include practices in sentence structure, paragraphing, punctuation, verb forms, capitalization, etc. They are seldom prescribed for students who do not have problems in these areas.

While workbooks do fill a need, they also have some inherent problems, most of which involve student attitudes toward them. They are a very impersonal learning tool. Some workbooks allow students to check their own answers to exercises, but these require a high level of student motivation, which is not common in students with severe formal problems. Others do not provide answers, so the student simply has to trust to luck or ask the teacher to check his work. This provides some human contact, but since most workbooks are self-paced, it can also mean a good deal of extra work for the teacher, especially if many students are using workbooks. Questions have also been raised about the real usefulness of the sort of a-rhetorical practice--practice outside the context of really saying something to someone--that workbooks provide.

There are several newer sorts of workbooks that do not use the traditional scattershot approach, electing instead to give students practice in specific sentence theories, either sentence-combining or Christensen's generative rhetoric, and these can be used with a class as a whole rather than as remedial tools for students plagued by errors. These generally-used workbooks seem to have more success than traditional types. All workbooks are soft-cover and range from six to eight dollars. They cannot, of course, be bought used.

Your first concern in choosing a text, of course (assuming that you have control over the books you will use) is the level of reading and understanding difficulty presented by your choice. Readers, handbooks, and workbooks are generally written or edited on similar levels, but choice of a rhetoric is a problematical area. The book cannot be written at a level higher than your students can understand, but it shouldn't bore them with a "Dick and Jane" level of discourse either. Remember, students will not do the reading at all unless they are motivated by a sense of the rewards to be gained (or a sense of teacher coercion). To illustrate the different levels at which rhetorics can be written, here are the first several sentences from the "sentence" chapters of two popular rhetorics. Note the different levels of difficulty:

The sentence conveys meaning, has esthetic value and is a unique product of the human mind. Therefore, studying the sentence is fascinating: ultimately, one is studying the ways in which meanings get conveyed and is speculating about esthetic values and about the very nature of the human mind.

--W. Ross Winterowd

All this time you have been writing sentences, as naturally as breathing and perhaps with as little variation. Now for a closer look at the varieties of the sentence. Some varieties can be shaggy and tangled indeed. But they are all offshoots of the simple active sentence, the basic English genus John hit Joe, with action moving straight from subject through verb to object.

--Sheridan Baker

A class that contained many Basic Writers might not be able to deal with the advanced vocabulary and content of the first selection, while a class of high-level freshmen might find the "you-and-me" informality of the second simplistic and patronizing.

As you examine the possible texts--and ideally your department should have a small library of textbooks and supporting materials you can spend time looking at--keep in mind the central question of textbook choice: "What will my relationship to this book be?" The answer to that question will inform a large amount of your teaching practice.

The first thing you need to decide is exactly how central the texts will be to the course. A reader or handbook can be slipped in and out of a course structure without too much advance planning, but the use of a rhetoric calls for decisions beforehand. Some teachers ask their

students to read in a rhetoric and prepare the exercises each night as homework, then spend the next class period going over the exercises and discussing the lesson. Other teachers merely assign chapters in the rhetoric as reading, seldom discuss the material in class, and only occasionally bring up the existence of the book at all. To what degree do you want your students to use or depend on a text? Keep this question under consideration as you peruse your alternatives.

Related to this question of degree is the question of structure: How much do you want the structure of the text to inform the structure of the course? If the text is organized "Invention, Organization, Diction, Style, Paragraphs," will you design your course around that structure and assign a week or two weeks to each chapter in order, or do you plan to structure your course differently and break up text readings according to some personal design? Perhaps you will find a text that presents an organizational schema that is congenial to you; on the other hand, you may have to break up a text to get what you want from it. Remember, the decisions that you make about the text and organization now are decisions that become ironclad contracts once they are written into a syllabus. For the next ten or fifteen weeks you will have to live with your decisions of the next few days. Don't decide hastily.

Perhaps obviously, the book you are reading presents a "hidden agenda" concerning these questions of relationship to text. The tacit message in the succeeding chapters is that you can teach composition, and teach it well, without using a rhetoric. There are no mentions of

rhetoric texts in any of the theoretical chapters, and for a reason: in my experience, rhetorics are little-read by students and often serve as a distancing agent between student and teacher. It is too easy to say "Read the paragraph chapter," to your class rather than taking the time and energy to teach the paragraph yourself. Teachers can become dependent on texts, and use them for reasons that have more to do with teacher comfort than with student learning. Most traditional rhetorics are boring, and the good things they present by way of information and exercises can, in my experience, be better presented by classwork and dittoed handouts. Traditional rhetorics can too easily become crutches for teachers.

At the same time, I realize how frightening it can be to go in and "wing it," especially when you have little experience. And thus if you still want to try using a rhetoric text even after the oration above, it is perfectly natural and not at all blameworthy. New teachers can use the structure a text provides; there are, in truth, good rhetorics available, and new sorts are appearing constantly. You may after teaching with a text want to continue with one, or you may gain enough confidence to jettison it. Either way, choose your first text carefully before you sign up for your desk copy. And make certain that you get a free desk copy--under no circumstances should you ever buy a copy of the text you're teaching. Professional ethics--it's just not done.

Planning the First Two Weeks

Preparing yourself psychologically for the first day of class and for the several weeks following it is no small task. The idea of going in and leading a class of college students some of whom may well be as old or older than you are, in a learning endeavour, is a daunting prospect at first. Therefore it is best to prepare your classroom time for the first two weeks with extreme, even painstaking, thoroughness. Give yourself a structure for each class that is carefully thought out so that you won't end up, as I did, gazing helplessly at the end of the notes I had prepared with half an hour still left in the class.

The question that seemed so shameful to ask yet so real to me when I was a new teacher--"How can I possibly fill up all that class time usefully?"--will be answered, I hope, by this book. In truth, there are more things to do in a class than you can possibly ever get around to, and dipping into some of the succeeding chapters should give you an idea as to some of your alternatives. For course structures as a whole, unless you plan to be guided by a text or have some specific plan of your own, I suggest that you adapt one of the model course structures at the end of this book. After your first term of teaching, of course, you will probably want to add, change, experiment with different organizations.

Teaching notes or "lesson plans" (though to me that term has always been redolent of high school) can be put together in several different forms. Some teachers write down the lessons and activities they want to cover each day on numbered note cards, some use spiral notebooks,

or sheafs of typed notes. I myself use a looseleaf notebook; the lessons can then be added to, taken out, rearranged, and the many dittoed sheets I use as I teach can be interleaved with the pages of the lessons they relate to. One notebook can cover one particular course, and you may end up with several notebooks if you use this system.

Most of the Classroom Activities sections in this book are organized according to Richard Graves' CEHAE system--working from Concept, to Example, then to Highlighting of the important elements, then to Activity, in which students practice the concept, and finally to Evaluation by peers or teacher. My own class notes are organized similarly, but each teacher writes class notes according to his personality and I can only provide general advice. Much will depend on the relationship you establish with your texts and on the forms you finally choose for your classes. If you plan to spend a good deal of time lecturing--which I do not, by the way, recommend--your notes will have to be correspondingly dense; if you plan to have student-interaction workshop groups on a given day, your notes might consist of only simple cues or questions to be asked.

As for the notes themselves, each separate lesson should be on a separate page, and each page should have, before any of the "activity notes," a section detailing the goal or object of that lesson. If the lesson involves the explanation and exemplification of, say, a method of essay organization, the goal should be clearly stated-- "Goal: to familiarize students with basics of three-part organization and show them rudiments of introduction and conclusion form. Examples--one on handout, two from reader." If the lesson involves activities, spell

out the purpose of the activities--"Goal --to practice introductions and conclusions for three-part arrangement and get students to be able to write these and reworded theses." Without these goal statements, it is easy to get away from the point of the lesson.

After the goal statement, the amount of actual material is up to you. Some teachers need full paragraphs and short essays, while others can work from notes made up only of key words. Make certain that you cross-index notes to pages in the text or reader if you use one. Another useful element to include, I have found, is an estimate of the time each part of a lesson will take up. (These will have to be estimated at first, but after you have taught a lesson once or twice, you will have a fairly solid idea of how long it takes.) These time estimates will help you plan classes so that you have enough time to get done what you have planned--"15 min." or "20 min." next to a lesson or activity will prevent you from being left with empty time, or worse, from having to break an activity up before it ends.

One last bit of advice on class notes: for every concept you explain and exemplify, have prepared two or three other examples in your notes, ready to put on the board if more examples are needed. Don't assume that you can just reach back into your mind for more examples. A strange paralysis can set in when you are in a classroom situation, and nothing is more embarrassing than to be asked for another example of a concept you are asking students to master and to find that you can't seem to manipulate it yourself.

While deciding on classroom strategies and on the form of your notes, you need also to remember to annotate your texts if you are planning to key class work to them. This annotation is as necessary for the reader as for the rhetoric; if you plan to ask students to analyze the sentences in a certain passage, you had better be certain of exactly what they will find. Make notes on different lessons or passages on the last page of the text, or in the table of contents, as well as on the individual pages. Do not feel, as I used to that annotation of books is a messy business, best avoided, and that the only good book is a clean book. These texts are part of your raw materials and may be with you for years--make them work for you. Annotate any part of the rhetoric that you feel may need more explanation, and mark off the exercises you plan to use. Your marks need be no more than checks or underlinings, but they should be meaningful to you. You should be able to open the book to that page and know immediately what you wish to accomplish on it.

Obviously you cannot make informed decisions about the notes and annotations for the first two weeks without knowledge of many elements of coursework that will be covered later in this chapter and the following ones: the forms your classes will take, the sorts of writing assignments you will require, the order of the material you plan to teach, etc. No serious notes can be prepared without an overview of the whole course and an overall plan for it. After you have read through the rest of this chapter, you should be ready to begin to make a rough draft of your course plan. Formalized, this rough draft will

inform the central document of the course, your syllabus. No course I have ever taught has adhered absolutely to its syllabus, but none has departed very far from it, either. Writing the syllabus is your next main task.

The Creation of a Syllabus

The syllabus for college courses originated as a list of the books for which every student was to be held responsible; in our day, though, it can be quite a bit more encompassing. In writing courses, it is for all intents and purposes a contract between teacher and student, stating in writing what each is responsible for and what standards will be set. Sad to report, in these litigious times such written contracts seem to be necessary; teachers have been sued by students who claim that they were not taught what the course claimed in the catalog to teach. To protect both yourself and your students, then, write a detailed and informative syllabus that spells out your goals and expectations clearly. You will probably never be sued, but a written contract has other uses: it is good to be able to show a student who feels ill-used or wants special privileges the clause in the syllabus that has determined your position on the issue in question.

The syllabus is also the public informing structure of the class, explaining what the course will cover, when it will be covered, and what your qualitative and quantitative expectations of students will be. It prevents the teacher from having to repeat countless explanations of course policies, goals, and dates. The syllabus is also the first

written impression that students get of the teacher and his personality.

Syllabi for writing courses need to be longer and more detailed than those of literature courses, because there is not so developed a context of expectations and intentions in composition as there is in literature. If you follow the outline below, you should be able to create a syllabus that fills all of the teacher's major needs and answers all of the students' major questions. This outline does not produce an exhaustive syllabus, but it is a good model for first-time teachers because of its simplicity and schematic development.

1. Your name, the course number, your office number, and your office hours. Optional are the telephone numbers of your office and/or your home. Office hours are those periods when you must be in your office so that students may drop by unscheduled to speak with you. If your department does not require a minimum number of office hours, the rule of thumb seems to be that you should schedule as many office hours as your course has "contact hours"--hours you are actually in the classroom with students. Teachers can generally choose the time for their office hours, but before and after class times are the most usual. Try to schedule office hours on two successive days, so that students who cannot come in on Monday-Wednesday-Friday or on Tuesday-Thursday have a chance at alternate days.

2. Textbook Information. This includes the author, title, edition, and publication information for each text. If you wish students to purchase folders, modules, or supplementary materials, they should be included here.

3. Course Policy. This section includes your policies on:

- A. Attendance--how many absences you allow for each student and what you will do if that number is exceeded.
- B. Tardiness--what you will do about students who consistently come to class late.
- C. Participation--how much, if any, of the final course grade will depend on classroom participation.
- D. Late papers--whether or under what conditions you will accept papers and written assignments after their due dates.
- E. Style of Papers--what you will demand by way of physical format for graded assignments--double-spaced in pen, typed, etc.

4. Course Requirements. This section discusses written work primarily and includes:

A. Graded Work

- 1. Number and length of assigned papers
- 2. Requirements of journal and explanation of the journal policy and how or whether the journal will be applied to final grading. (optional section)

B. Ungraded Work--explanation of policy on ungraded homework, in-class writing assignments, etc., and how or whether ungraded work will apply to final course grade.

5. Grading Procedures. This section discusses the procedures that will be followed for evaluation and grading of written work. It does not discuss the standards that will be applied; it merely details how assignments will be dealt with in order to arrive at final grades.

This includes two specific areas: a listing of the percentage values of each piece of written work as these values apply toward the final grade, and a detailed review of the revision option and how it works, if you are using one. (For information on a revision option, see The Rest of the Term.) This statement needs to be spelled out in detail; otherwise students will claim confusion as an excuse for not having work done, or for not putting enough importance on a given piece of writing.

6. Grading Standards. This is an optional section, because many teachers do not like to spell out the standards they will use in any quantitative or prescriptive way. Many departments have created grading standards that must be used by all teachers and may require that they be published in the syllabus. If a grading standards section is included, it can contain:

- A. Standards of Form--The maximum number of "serious" syntactic errors--fragments, comma splices, run-ons--that are allowed in a passing essay. The maximum number of lesser errors--spelling, punctuation, usage--allowable in a passing essay.
- B. Standards of Content--The levels of semantic and organizational expertise--a clear thesis, support for assertions, coherent paragraph use, development of arguments, etc--that must be minimally apparent in a passing essay.

7. Meetings. This section details how many days per week the course will meet, on which days the meetings will be held, and any special information about specific days that you want students to have;

for instance, if workshop group meetings, in-class writing, or sentence-combining days will always fall on specific days of the week, this section announces them.

8. Course Calendar. Course calendars can be simple or complex. The only absolutely essential element in the calendar is a listing of the due dates for written assignments and call-ins of the journal, but it can contain extremely detailed information on lessons to be prepared, reading to be done, skills to be worked on, goals to be met and a host of other things. This more detailed material is optional, and whether or not you use it will depend on the degree to which you wish to structure your course beforehand. My advice is not to overstructure your calendar at first--allow yourself at first the freedom to change plans if the methods you had originally meant to use seem not to be working well.

9. Course Goals. Whether this is a departmental statement that must be included in every syllabus or a personal definition of the objectives you have in the course, some statement of goals should be included in your syllabus. It should mention the number of graded assignments, basic skills that will be expected of each student by the end of the course, the question of student participation, and the fact that in order to pass the course, each student will have to demonstrate competency in writing. You can also include a personal message of your own about the course and its expectations.

The above sections are the minimal elements of a composition syllabus. Other sections can be added, of course, but these listed are

the essential ones needed for your own protection and the protection of your students. I offer here as an example a syllabus that I used several years ago when I still taught from a rhetoric and handbook. This syllabus is not perfect by any means, but it does clearly illustrate most of the components mentioned above:

SYLLABUS

English 110
 Spring 1978
 Office Hours: MTWR 10-11 a.m.

R. J. Connors
 Denney Hall 468
 Phone 422-6065

Texts:

McCrimmon, James. Writing with a Purpose, 6th ed.

Corbett, Edward P.J. The Little English Handbook.

A paperback college dictionary. This may seem extraneous, but there will be times when you'll be glad to have a good small dictionary kicking around your desk.

Each student will also purchase a Theme Folder at the bookstore in which he or she will keep all graded and ungraded work. This folder will be called for at the end of the quarter and should be complete at that time.

Attendance:

This course is so structured that any student who misses a significant number of meetings will just not be able to do the written work well. I am not your keeper and will not take roll every day, but the number of meetings you attend and participate in will influence your grade. In general, take more than eight cuts and you are living dangerously. Participation in class activities will be graded S/U at the end of the course and averaged with the final grades from papers and tests. Consistent lateness will be looked upon as absence and counted as such. A word to the wise guy.

Late Papers:

I will not accept late papers, both for your sake and my own. It is a cruel world.

Style of Papers:

The essays to be turned in on Thursdays will be typed and double-spaced. Journals and exercises may be turned in in legible handwriting. Remember that one person's writing course is another person's reading course. You should own a typewriter if you plan to complete college, but if you do not and cannot get access to one, come and speak to me.

Course Requirements:

1. Six 500-600 word essays on subjects to be assigned. Out of these six essays each student will have the option of revising four before they are finally graded.

2. A daily journal, into which you put your increasingly organized perceptions of day-to day existence. Each completed journal will contain at least forty-five entries of a minimum length of 125 words each. The only rule: no use of the words I, me, my, or mine will be allowed. A journal is not about you or your life; it is about your thoughts. We will discuss the fine art of journal-keeping during the first few days of class.

3. Other less formal writing assignments, some to be done in class and some to be done as homework.

There will be a (departmentally demanded) final examination consisting of several essays to be written within a limited time. If I ever get the idea that assigned work or readings are not being done, I reserve the right to introduce that beloved institution, the surprise quiz. Let's hope it doesn't come to that.

Grading Procedures:

Of the six essays that will finally be graded, each student will have the option of revising four essays before they are finally graded; two essays will be graded as they were originally written. When turning in a paper you wish to have evaluated for revision and not graded as is, mark it "DRAFT" at the top. I will assume that any theme not so marked has been turned in for a grade. Essays that have been evaluated and returned must be turned in for final grading, along with the original draft for comparison purposes, within a week after they have been returned. Of course, if you are confident in your abilities as a writer you need do no revision at all, but I advise against over-confidence.....

The final course grades will be arrived at thus:

Class participation.S/U
Essays for grading. . . .	14% each
Faithfulness of journal. . .	.S/U
Final examination.14%

S/U grades will apply to the final percentile grade in a positive or negative way.

Meetings:

We will meet four times per week. The day of no classes will be Friday, which will be devoted to conferences and to writing at home. A typical week of classes might run something like this:

Monday: Discussion and practice of writing skills. Final question period on the assignment to be handed in on Thursday. Sentence practice.

Tuesday: Division of class into workshop groups and execution within these groups of assigned writing and editing tasks. Workshops will largely be used as testing grounds for the essays to be handed in on Thursdays, so bring drafts of Thursday's essay on Tuesday. This is not optional.

Wednesday: Assignment of essay that will be due the following week and discussion of its nature. Discussion and practice of writing skills. Sentence practice.

Thursday: In-class presentation by readers of writing that will be turned in at end of class. Evaluation and discussion of essays read. Sentence practice.

Assignments:

This schedule is flexible and is given only as a broad outline of the due dates of written work.

April 6	First essay due
April 13	Second essay due
April 20	Third essay due
April 27	First journal call-in
May 4	Fourth essay due
May 11	Fifth essay due
May 25	Sixth essay due
June 1	Second journal call-in and Theme folder due

Grading Standards:

These are the general standards which will be applied, along with the departmental standards, to essays which receive grades. Keep in mind that these are minimum standards.

A range. Form--near perfect. A few typos, one or two misspellings will be allowed. Content--all B range material. Thesis must be novel or interesting. Style and content must complement one another and must be both appropriate and delightful. The essay must make the reader want to finish it.

B range. Form--no sentence-level errors, fewer than 5 misspellings or usage errors. Content--all C range material. Thesis must be supported in novel or interesting fashion. Audience must be clearly apparent, and attitude and tone must be carefully controlled. Details and examples must flow naturally from main idea. Sentence lengths and types must be graceful and various.

C range. Form--fewer than three major sentence-level errors, fewer than 8 misspellings or usage errors. Content--clear central idea that

responds to assignment. discernable pattern of organization, paragraphs which have clear topic sentences, logical development, and which use detail to support their contentions. Reasonable sentence variation and diction. Ability to handle Edited American English.

D range. Form--fewer than 4 major sentence-level errors. Fewer than 10 misspellings or usage errors. Content--clear central idea responding to assignment. Paragraphs with topic sentences. Use of some detail to support thesis. Divergence from EAE must be minimal.

E range. Form--more than 4 sentence-level errors or 10 spelling or usage errors. Content--no clear central idea or one not responsive to assignment, nonexistent paragraphing, lack of logical structure or supporting detail, inability to use EAE.

Course Goals:

English 110 is a composition course in which the student will demonstrate competency by preparing and presenting for grading six 500-600 word themes, four of which the student has had the option of revising before final grading; by actively and responsibly participating in the course as the teacher's guidelines define it; and by mastering basic composition and grammatical skills as defined by the OSU Freshman English Program.

A final word from the teacher:

The standards for this course may seem harsh to you, and the workload you are expected to carry may seem heavy. I agree with you; this is not an easy course. But the ability to write, both well and often, is the very stuff of which a college career is made. If you successfully complete this course, you will have a foundation upon which a tower of any height may be built.

The foundation of a structure is always the most thankless part to build. It is no fun, mucking about for hours on your hands and knees, sealing joints, smoothing walls and floors, caulking seams, never even able to see out over the edge of the foundation. It is no fun; it is not easy. But it is necessary.

For once the foundation is complete, you can begin your work on your own structure, whether it is to be a tool shed or a Gaudi cathedral. And that is a task of infinite satisfaction.

So welcome to the substrata. Grab a trowel.

A final word on duplicating your syllabus. If your department has a general-use "ditto room," as most do, do not try to ditto off a four-page syllabus an hour before your 9:00 class on the first day of classes.

Ditto rooms are invariably jammed at that time, and machines break, masters crinkle, tempers flare--it isn't worth it. Make it your business to learn to work the duplicating machines (including the thermofax machine, if there is one) several days before classes begin, and have your syllabus and other first-day handouts ready to go by the night before. If you are one of those unfortunates who must exist in a department with closed ditto services, give the secretaries plenty of time to do your duplicating, and if you have the misfortune to find yourself in one of those Scrooge-like departments which grudgingly parcel out only three or four ditto masters per teacher per term, do yourself a favor: go down to the bookstore or office supply store and buy yourself a box of ditto masters. It costs, but it will be worth it.

One final bit of advice: Make more copies of the syllabus than there are students on your roster. Rule of thumb: increase the number by one-third. Thus, if you have 24 students on your roster, make 32 copies of the syllabus. Some will be carried off by students who drop the class, new ones will be needed for those who add it, and other students will lose theirs and need new copies. It pays to be prepared.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF CLASSES

The First Day of Class

There is nothing like the prospect of teaching your first college class to make you wonder about your own image and how you are perceived by others. The nervousness you feel is completely natural, and every

good teacher feels something of it on the first day of every new class. The teaching act is a performance, in the full sense of that word; the teacher is an instructor, coordinator, actor, facilitator, announcer, pedagogue, ringmaster. For the time that you are "on the air" the show is your responsibility, and it will go well or ill depending on how you move it. I am not merely mouthing a cliché when I say that there are no bad classes, but only bad teachers who set impossible goals, do not care for their students, or fail to do their jobs in some way.

Teaching style, the way you carry off your performance, is partially determined by conscious decisions that you make and partially determined by factors within your personality over which you have no control. There are "rhetorical options" and "stylistic choices," as the style theorist Louis Milic would say. The elements over which you have little control are those concerning the manner and tone with which you address the class as a whole, the way you react to individual students on an intuitive level, the quick responses you make to classroom situations as they come up, and the general personality you reflect in front of the class. I have entered classes at different times with almost diametrically opposed preconceptions of how I wanted to appear to that group--from the down-home, relaxed, "good buddy" style of my first year to the cold, aloof, "Herr Professor Doktor" style of my third year. Somehow, despite my intentions, both of those poses had melted down by the fourth week of class into what seems to be my intuitive personal style, which is somewhere between good buddy and Herr Professor Doktor. At this point, I've had to accept certain

elements of how I relate to students as givens.

This is not to say that a teacher has no control at all over how he appears. Although your essential personality style may not be amenable to change, you can consciously vary all of the other options. You can control what the class does with its time, the order in which it tackles lessons, the sorts of skills it concentrates on--all of the content-oriented material that is at the heart of every class. There are also efforts you can make toward controlling those aspects of your personal style you want specifically to change or suppress--a tendency toward sarcasm, for instance, which can turn a bright, outgoing student into a sullen bolus if it is used unthinkingly. If your personality tends toward condescension or intimidation, you can carefully wrestle the things you say around so that they come out as encouragement. I am taking it for granted that your desire to be a teacher means that you already possess a personality that is not essentially abrasive or destructive, and that you see duty to students as an important priority.

More important than anything else, you should try to evince those two most important traits of a good teacher: humanity and competence. If students believe you to be kind and to know your stuff (and in a writing class, part of your job will be convincing them that there is stuff to know), they will put themselves in your hands and give you a chance to be their teacher. If either side of that duality is missing, you will be perceived either as a tyrant or as a nincompoop. It is a rare teacher who contains no element of either, but some strike successful balances. These two central qualities, humanity and

competence, cannot be demonstrated by a first-day lecture. They show themselves over time, not by how many jokes you tell in class or how hard you grade, but by the total picture you give students of who you are and how you feel about them and their struggle. Humanity and competence cannot be faked. If you have not the first, there is nothing to be done. If you have not the second, this book can help.

It is the first day of classes, an important day for a writing class. Unlike a literature class, in which the teacher merely distributes the syllabi and shows the books before dismissing the class, a writing class has a good deal to get done on the first day. Begin to prepare in the morning. Eat a light breakfast, especially if you have a tendency to nervous stomach. Choose your clothing carefully if you are a person who worries about physical first impressions. Are you a Brooks Brothers or a Doobie Brothers type, in reality? Remember--don't fake it. You can dress yourself up, but you can't take an assumed sartorial personality very far. Dress naturally and comfortably.

In your office, prepare everything you will take in to class with you. Gather your books, notes, handouts, the class roster, and your pile of syllabi. (I've found that even for moving materials from floor to floor or room to room within a building, a briefcase or satchel is no affectation.) If you have a tendency toward cottonmouth, get a coffee or a Coke--that sort of "prop" can help you through the first day.

There's the first bell. Having scouted it out previously, you know where your classroom is. Grab your materials, don't spill your

drink, and enter the confusing river of students passing through the corridor. There is your classroom. Balancing the cup or can precariously on the edge of the briefcase, you open the door. Twenty pairs of eyes swing up and follow you to the front of the room. You look out at your students. You're on the air.

The Tasks of Bureaucracy

The university has provided a required and undemanding routine that fills up the first five minutes of the first class, which are nearly always the hardest. Put your materials down on the front desk, and greet those students present. Students will continue to come in, even ten minutes after the final bell.

Write your name, office number and office hours on the blackboard, and then arrange your books, notes, handouts, etc., so they are within easy reach. Look up every few seconds, trying to keep eye contact with the students--it is natural to avoid their eyes until you speak to them in an official capacity, but eye contact establishes a friendly connection. If you plan to teach standing up, as I do, check to see that the classroom has a lectern that you can use.

When the final bell rings, give the stragglers a chance to come in before you call the roll. Introduce yourself, the course, your office number and hours. These first few announcements, routine though they are, are the most difficult. I believe my voice cracked twice. Speak slowly, and remember that you have everything planned, that you are in

your element, that you will do it well. Meet the students' eyes as you speak to them, and try to develop the ability to take in large groups of students as you move your gaze about the classroom. You may be surprised at how young some of them look. This is their first college writing class, too, and depending on the time of day, you may be their first college teacher.

Announce the add-drop policy of your college or university as preparation for calling the names on the roster. There may be specific policies you are expected to announce, and I have found that it pays to repeat add-drop policy at least one time. Finally call the roster, marking absences. I usually ask my students to raise their hands and say "Yo!" if present, and also to tell me if I have mispronounced their names. Call the last name and have the student tell you his preferred address form. Try for eye contact with each student as you call the roll; if, as I do, you have a poor memory for names, it is best to begin to make connections as early as possible.

After the roll is called, ask for a show of hands of those not on it. There will always be a few; repeat the add-drop policy and ask them to see you after class if they have approved add or change forms. After class you can attend to their situations and make decisions on whether or not you can handle more students in the class.

Explaining the Syllabus

Hand out copies of the syllabus, and after everyone has a copy, read through the important parts of it aloud. On this first reading,

stress the texts--bring your copies to class and display them so that students will know what to look for at the book store. Discuss the absence and lateness policies, the paper style policy (especially if you plan to ask for typed essays, as I do), the number and length of papers due. If you are using a revision policy, go over it in detail and give examples of how it might be used. There is inevitably confusion about a revision policy and how it works, and you may as well begin now to try to dispell it. Go over the calendar of assignment due dates and at least mention the grading standards you will be applying. Ask if there are any questions about the syllabus after you have gone through it.

Diagnostic Exercise

In order to find out as quickly as possible the nature of your students and the writing skills and problems they have both as a class and as individuals, assign a diagnostic writing exercise on the first day of class. As the name suggests, this exercise gives you an idea of how healthy students are as writers. It is done very simply; you ask the students to take out paper and pen and to write for 20 or 25 minutes on an assigned topic that allows for narrative or descriptive personal responses. The best topics I have found for the diagnostic exercise are those that can be answered in a single short essay and that ask students to rely on their own experiences. An example might be, "In a short essay, discuss the reasons why your best (or worst) high school teacher was effective (or ineffective)."¹

Introduce the diagnostic essay to the class for what it is--an exercise that will give you an idea of how well they are writing now. Stress the fact that it will not be given a letter grade, but will instead be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). It will have no effect on their final class grade. Remind them that you will be looking at both form and content, and that they should try to write as finished a piece of work as possible in the time allowed. Make certain that they put their names on the papers (you can bring paper and pass it out if you object, as I do, to the appearance of paper torn from spiral notebooks), put the assignment on the blackboard, and then give them 20 or 25 minutes. Call out a few time checks before the end of the time so that no one is caught writing. Call the time and collect the essays.

Dismissal

There may be some time left in the period after the diagnostic essay has been completed, but there is little left to do on the first day. You can pad the class with lecture, but I have found that it does not seem worth it to do so. Make your assignments, including the reading of the syllabus. Ask students to write down questions they come up with about course policies and ask them during the next class. Ask if there are any final questions, and if there are none, dismiss the class.

You will be immediately surrounded by the "post-class swirl" of students wishing to talk to you. Some will want to add the course-- send them to the correct office. Some will have completed add or

change-of-section forms--sign them up on your roster. Some will have questions they were too shy to ask in class--speak with them. As each situation is resolved, the crowd will diminish, and eventually the door will close after the last petitioner. You look out over the empty room at a forgotten spiral notebook, a few wrinkled copies of the first-day edition of the school newspaper. It may not have been a smashing success, this first class. But you did it.

Work to Do That Night

You will have several tasks to accomplish after class or that night, the first and most important of which is evaluating and marking the diagnostic essays. The first ask you must consider, even before you look at the pile of diagnostics, is that of preparing yourself psychologically for what you will find. Many freshmen write at what will seem to you at first an appallingly low level of skill. If you plunge into a set of diagnostic essays "cold," you may be brought up short by what seem to you the overwhelming number of errors and problems you may see. As Mina Shaughnessy points out, some teachers of underprepared students initially cannot help feeling that their students might be retarded; certain pervasive error patterns are so severe and look so damaging on a paper that they can be shocking.² This problem is particularly likely if you teach at an open-admissions college without a Basic Writing program. With luck, your students' essays may not evidence any irreparable problems, but you should be prepared.

So, having prepared yourself, plunge into the pile of essays. Most will be short, one page or one-and-one half pages. Some of the handwriting will be atrocious, and spelling errors will be very common, but most essays should be readable. In reading diagnostics, I first read quickly over the essay, trying to get a sense of the writing as a whole. Then, in a second reading, I begin to mark the paper, looking for three specific areas of skill. In order of importance they are:

1. Knowledge of and ability to use paragraph form, including topic sentence and support for it.
2. Ability to write grammatically correct sentences.
3. Ability to use the language in a relatively standard fashion, including grammar, verb forms, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

To get a sense of these three skill-levels, I sometimes have to read each essay two or three times, but since they are not very long, this is not as time-consuming as it sounds. By the bottom of the pile, I am spending around ten minutes on each diagnostic, including writing comments on each level and writing a terminal comment. The last thing I do is mark the essay S/U, according to my perception of whether or not this student can meet the minimum requirements for an exiting C in the course, writing the way he seems to now.

I recommend that you make up a notebook or card file for your class, with a page or a card for each student, and that you chart the strengths and weaknesses of the student as they show in each major piece of writing he turns in. The first entry will cover this diagnostic exercise. Note whether the student grasps organization, can use sentences, has control of usage. A short three-to-five

sentence description of each student's strengths and problems, consulted and added to at the time of each new writing assignment, can be of great help in setting individualized goals for students and in discovering what sort of particular practice in writing he may need. During your readings of the diagnostic, look especially for patterns of errors--a continuing inability to use commas correctly, a continuing confusion about verb endings, a continuing tendency to begin fragments with relative pronouns. Chart such patterns carefully, for they will be your concern in the future.

The assignment of the evaluative "grade" of S or U is your decision, of course; you must decide what is satisfactory or unsatisfactory according to the standards you have set. The "S" or "U" that you give will mean more to your student than it does to you, and for this reason I play down the importance of the S/U with the announcement that it is only meant as advice. If a student takes a "U" to heart, it can either galvanize him into working very hard, or just as often, it can cause him to despair of passing and think of dropping the course. Make the "grade" a less important element by talking of the importance of the terminal comment, and make your terminal comments important by filling them with solid suggestions about what needs to be worked on in order to improve the writing in the paper.

These diagnostic essays and the way that you respond to them will shape the perception that your students have of you as much as your classroom attitude does. As always in grading and evaluation, take the time to consider how the student will feel upon reading your comments. Will he come away from them feeling that he has problems that can be

dealt with, or will he merely be overwhelmed by criticism? I am not suggesting that you shrink from your duty to point out problems, but that you balance criticism with encouragement and treat errors and problems in papers as signposts pointing to needed work, not as dead-end signs.

After you have read the diagnostics, marked them, and noted each in your records, you can put them aside and turn to the other task of the evening: planning the next day's classes. The second class will be your first "real" class, the first class that will demand a prepared lesson plan. Be certain that you know what you want to introduce and accomplish.

The Second Class

You will still be nervous on the second day, but the worst of it will have passed. There are still some bureaucratic features to be cleared away--you will need to call the roll again (remember eye contact and see if you can remember specific name-face relationships) and perhaps give your short add-drop policy speech again. If you have new students, as you usually will on the second and perhaps the third day, give them syllabi and ask them to speak to you after class. Ask the class for questions on the syllabus and its policies, and go over those which might be confusing one last time.

When this is done, you will begin to teach, and here I can be no more specific than to say that you will state the goals of and introduce your first lesson, which will presumably be drawn from the material in Chapters Two through Six in this book. Whether you decide to start by

teaching Invention or The Paragraph, this class is where you begin. You may decide to connect the work you begin today with the first writing assignment you will demand, or you may not. At this stage of the game, you are the teacher and it is your choice. I usually begin (predictably) with work on a handout, because students may not have been able to get the texts in one day.

With ten minutes or so to go before the end of the class, make your assignments for reading and homework exercises, and prepare to return the diagnostic essays. Giving marked papers back at the end rather than at the beginning of class is good policy; that way the reactions to them, good or bad, do not color the class period. Remind the students once again that the S or U on their papers does not count toward their final grades, but is there merely as a signpost. Ask students with U's to confer with you during your office hours within the week or to make an appointment to see you, and mention also that an S indicates nothing except no immediately perceived problems--it is not a passport to an automatic A or B. Pass back the diagnostics and dismiss the class. Expect a few of the U's to approach you immediately (there may also be a few you may never see again), along with the new students and the shy students with questions.

Page 48 is missing

be an overly large part of the grade, though.

If your school's policy gives you any leverage, ask the student affected to speak to you about it. You are not threatening students when you explain disciplinary policies to them--and I take it as a given, of course, that all student-teacher discussions of disciplinary questions take place in private, in a restrained and even advisory atmosphere. I know that constant absenteeism can make a teacher feel rejected and threatened, but shouting, threatening, and sarcasm have no place in the student-teacher relationship in college. Initiate a dialogue with the student, explain your position honestly in both personal and official terms, and try to discover why he is so often absent. If there is a good reason for the absences, he will tell you. Even if there is no good reason, he may make one up. Some students will try to "con" you, and inevitably some will succeed. How much can a teacher openly doubt stories of dead grandmothers and tragic auto accidents without casting aspersions? Again, your own judgment and personality will decide which stories you accept and with what reservations.

I have found that the best way to deal with absenteeism is to choke it off at the root by planning my course to discourage it. Try this: give information about graded assignments on one class day, have your editing workshops on another class day, have graded papers due on yet another class-day--fill up your week with days that provide meaningful progress toward a goal. If a day is missed, the goal becomes harder to attain, the task at hand become harder. If a

student skips an editing day and then receives a poor grade because of sentence fragments his editing group would have caught, he quickly becomes aware that the advantages of being in class are quite concrete. This is not a perfect solution--no solution involving grade-threat is--but it is the best I have found.

Another problem you may have difficulty with is lateness, or "tardiness" (a term I have always found uninvitingly prissy). Occasionally you will get a student who consistently shows up for class five, ten, even fifteen minutes late. Here again, your school may have a policy, but usually this is a matter best settled privately between student and teacher. Speak to the student after class or in conference, and find out if he has a valid excuse for the lateness. Surprisingly often, students do have good excuses--a long campus walk, an unreasonable teacher in the previous class, personal responsibilities of different sorts--but just as often the lateness is a result of late rising, poor planning, or careless habits.

If the student cannot convince me that his reasons for lateness are valid, I usually "read him the riot act," and inform him politely but seriously that he is not welcome in my classroom unless he is there by the final bell. The personal interest you show in the case can have a good deal of effect--after these discussions, students usually begin to appear on time. This may not be the best solution to the problem, but it does circumvent all of the tiresome institutional coercion that seems to be the only other alternative.

Late papers--written assignments handed in (often under the office door or secretly in your office mailbox) after their due dates--can be

another problem, but only if you allow them to become one. I state in my syllabus that I will not accept late papers under any circumstances; then, when the inevitable requests for extensions appear, or the late papers show up, I adjust that policy as seems fit and humane. I have found that it is better to announce a harsh and unyielding policy initially and than adjust it to fit situations than it is to announce a liberal policy, see it taken advantage of, then try to tighten it up after the fact (usually to agonized protests of "fascism").

A very serious problem for college writing teachers is that of plagiarism, of students preparing others' work as their own. Plagiarism can range in seriousness from a single uncited quotation from a newsweekly magazine to a carefully retyped version of an "A" research paper from the fraternity file. It can be as crude as a long passage from Bertrand Russell amidst a jumble of sentence fragments and misspellings, or as sophisticated as an artfully segued-in passage from an introductory sociology text. In any case, it is bad news for both student and teacher, and the problem of plagiarism must be approached with subtlety and caution.

In dealing with plagiarism, the best policy is not to invite it. Use writing assignments that do not permit easy answers from general sources. Do not adopt long-paper assignments that have been around your department for years. Try to put an element into each assignment that would make plagiarism difficult. Let your students know from the beginning that plagiarism is the most serious offence possible in a writing class and that they will be harshly dealt with by the

university if caught at it. (This is not untrue--most universities stipulate a minimum penalty for plagiarism as failure in the course, and a maximum penalty of expulsion from school.) If your department has rules or a statement on plagiarism, read it aloud and discuss it.

Plagiarism is a problem because it cannot be proved unless the source of the plagiarized material is found. You may suspect a student of plagiarizing, but without that source you can do nothing, and the source can be all but impossible to find. The policy I have found best is this: If I suspect a student of plagiarism, I do not return his paper. Instead, I ask him to see me in my office and confer with him. (NOTE--Do not use the word "plagiarism" to a student, publicly or privately, unless you have the source in hand. Teachers have been sued for libel over use of that word.) I ask the student if he used any sources in preparing his paper, and if he did, to bring them in. Often, students who are unaware that they have done wrong or are off their guard will produce the source themselves, or lead you to it. If they do, you can decide whether the plagiarism is culpable or ignorant and deal with it according to department policy.

If the student "stonewalls" you, contending that the paper is completely original, you have several options. First, ask him to produce the rough draft or outline of the paper. If he cannot, ask him to rewrite the paper in your presence, creating the notes or outline he needs as you watch. Often a plagiarist will break down at this point and admit that he cannot do so, because the paper was plagiarized. There are, though, hardened plagiarists who resist these

techniques, and if you cannot get a confession, your only recourse (if you are certain in your own mind that the paper could not be the student's own work) is to ask around the department and advertise the paper as a possible forgery; sometimes a colleague has seen the source and can lead you to it.

And sometimes, after all this effort, you will get no admission of guilt and turn up no source. It is then time to give up--but the experience will probably keep that student from pressing his luck with any more plagiarism in your class.

Finally, you may sometimes find that you have suspected an innocent. If you have, apologize frankly and go on with your work.

This section of plagiarism may seem grim and overly concerned with suspicion and blame. I am sorry for it, but plagiarism is a grim subject. It seems to be increasingly condoned by the society we live in; each term I find advertisements from term-paper selling companies posted on the bulletin board in my classroom, and each term I rip them down. Academic quality cannot be bought and sold. At stake here are both the student's own integrity and that of the university. I have not found plagiarism to be a common thing, and I do not recommend viewing every student paper with the jaundiced eye of suspicion, but you will see plagiarism, late or soon, and it is best to be prepared.

The final disciplinary problem you may have is that of classroom order. "Order," of course, is a relative term; very often an "orderly" writing class going about its business will be abuzz with discussions of choices and options, editing points and correctnesses.

Order does not mean silence. It does, though, signify a progress of meaningful activity, and that can be disrupted in a number of ways. Whether the class is discussing something as a whole, or is meeting in groups, or is listening to you explain something, there are protocols to be observed, and one of your functions as a teacher is to represent and enforce these protocols. I do not mean "enforce" in any authoritarian sense; your job is not that of a policeman. You do, however, have to accept the responsibility for running the class, and running means keeping order.

I have hardly ever seen a classroom order problem that could not be dealt with by a few serious words dropped into the right ears in private. Students in college are anxious to prove their maturity, and usually will not continue behavior that you have spoken to them about. If a student is disruptive, ask him to see you and speak plainly to him. He will nearly always straighten out. Occasionally--very occasionally--a true psychotic may appear in a class and resist all rationality, every effort to keep order and even to help. If you find one of these sociopaths in your class, go immediately for help from your program or department, and get him out of your class if he continues to be disruptive. One does such people no favor by allowing them to continue outrageous behavior in class, and one certainly does the other students in the class no favor. Once again, though, nearly all classroom discipline problems can be settled on an adult level, and students appreciate being approached on that level.

Student Conferences

The student-teacher conference has a number of functions, but the primary one has to do with getting to know your students better as individuals, lessening the distance between student and teacher, and letting your students know that you care about how they are doing. The student conference can allow you to explain writing strategies to students, discuss their problems, strengths, and weaknesses, set goals, plan and examine future work together, and in general establish the coach/athlete or editor/author relationship that seems to me our ideal of teacher-student intercourse.

Unfortunately, in spite of all these desirable goals and profitable possibilities, you may very well find yourself sitting lonely with your office door open during your office hours, seldom seeing a student. The hard fact about office hours is that students, by and large, seem unwilling to just "drop by" the office, even if you have made it clear that they are welcome. This unwillingness may be the result of fear of taking up the teacher's time or simply of laziness and unwillingness to do anything not required. Many students simply do not know how valuable a resource the teacher can be. Whatever the reason, my experience has been that students who do come in during office hours are usually those who don't need to, whose writing problems are minimal or who want help with minor stylistic/mechanical points. (And of course there are the inescapable brown-nosers, who want to convince you that they've never been good writers and will need a lot of special consideration from you.)

Those students who would benefit most from the sort of personal help that conferences can give seldom appear at optional office hours. These are the students that Mary P. Hiatt refers to as "students at bay" during conferences--those who find correction and well-meaning advice painful threats to their self-images.³ These are the students who need your help much more than the "good" students who show up voluntarily, and I have found no way to get these students to talk to me other than by instituting a system of mandatory conferences.

Mandatory conferences need to be specified as such from the beginning of the course, preferably on the syllabus itself. I have found that there should be a certain minimum number of conferences to establish continuity, but a teacher cannot speak meaningfully to every student every week. A conference every three weeks or so provides continuity without exhausting me. To arrange the conferences, specify a range of possible times on a sign-up sheet and send it around the class during the week preceding the conferences; make the range of time broad enough (usually covering two consecutive days) to allow most students to find a possible time. Depending on what is to be discussed, allow ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes per student per conference--if students need more time than that, you can make appointments with them.

Handling the conference itself requires forethought and planning. If you try to go in and merely "wing it", your students will know quickly that you have nothing specific to tell them and will lose interest. The whole purpose of a student conference is to establish understandings about work that is to be done or problems that are to be

solved, and you should make your plans with those tasks in mind. It should be future-oriented, not past-oriented. If a conference merely becomes a post-mortem on a bad paper or a one-student lecture in which you try to force understanding of a concept the student cannot easily grasp, it certainly will produce Hiatt's "student at bay," who avoids eye contact with you, agrees feverishly in monosyllables with everything you say, and escapes as soon as possible.

Each conference must have a purpose that may draw on the past, but must be essentially directed toward future work. I have found that conferences work best when they have one of the following purposes:

1. Discussion of an outline, plan, or draft of an upcoming assignment.
2. Discussion of content revisions of a paper already evaluated.
3. Discussion of the success and direction of any long-term, ongoing project (like a research paper).
4. Planning and discussion of exercises or activities meant to deal with specific and identified form problems--syntactic errors, verb endings, etc. The key word here is specific. If you don't try to create a hierarchy of error patterns and help the student work on them one by one, he may just assume perpetual inferiority, and despair. Error problems must be made to seem soluble to students by presenting them as step-by-step procedures.

Each successful conference, then, should have a "backbone" of written work that the student is expected to bring, even if it is only an outline or an invention-list. Each should end with at least a tacit "task assignment," in which you make your expectations known.⁴ During the conference itself, you may have specific questions and bits of advice ready--advice that is always listened to closely because it

is given personally. You may say the same thing to each student, but to that student it is personal advice. Before you let each student go, ask him if he has any questions that he wishes to discuss, and if not, call in the next. Many of these conferences will be similar, and you will be tired after a morning of them. They will, however, bring you closer to your students, allow you to critique and assist them on a more individual basis, and ideally, make them more willing to seek you out in the future.

Classroom Routines

Most new teachers of writing are used to certain general sorts of classroom routines. They are those we grew up with: lecture by the teacher, or directed discussion by the class. These routines are what we know best, and the temptation is to rely on them completely in writing classes as we have in literature classes. Unfortunately, they cannot be used as the only methods of classroom instruction in writing courses; in fact, they cannot even hold center stage. The writing teacher must use a much larger array of classroom activities, an array that brings student writing to center stage--not student talking, student listening, or student note-taking. This section will discuss some of these classroom procedures.

First we may as well deal with the old standbys. Classroom discussion is probably the method most congenial to new writing teachers, since it is the central method used in undergraduate literature courses. The teacher in a discussion does not "lead" the class in any

authoritarian way; instead he guides the discussion, and everyone has a chance to contribute. Until I taught my first composition class, discussion was the method I had always envisioned myself using. To my horror, I found during the first few days of my first course that the essential component of discussion was simply not available in the composition course: content. Composition had no content, at least no content I could then recognize, and discussion was not workable without something to discuss--a short story, a poem, a piece of literature.

This is the hard truth about discussion in writing classes: it cannot be practiced without content, and writing classes are primarily concerned with form. It is hard to get an exciting discussion going about sentence fragments or three-part organization. Students tend to be uninterested in discussing formal questions unless those questions can be presented in concrete backgrounds, and such discussion, unless very carefully planned and directed (as will be described in succeeding chapters) will not be very useful. A teacher can, of course, assign essays in the reader and then spend all the class time discussing the content of the essays: ecology and bigotry and love and death, all fascinating subjects. Such a course, though, is a literature course in the appreciation of nonfiction, and not a writing course, and such a teacher should not call himself a writing teacher.

Discussion in writing classrooms, then, cannot be the central routine it is in literature classrooms. This is not to say that it has no place in composition; it does, and can be used for two quite different purposes. The first is a relatively traditional use:

classroom discussion of an object, idea, or situation as a pre-writing activity that can give students ideas about content that they might wish to use in writing. This sort of discussion needs to be limited and used carefully, because it can easily take up more class time than it is worth. It should not be used in place of the invention activities described in Chapter Two, but as a supplement to them.

The second use of discussion is described in sections of Chapters Four, Five, and Six. It involves class discussion of different stylistic and organizational options available within sentences and paragraphs. Discussion can be a valuable element in getting students involved in making the formal and stylistic choices inherent in writing. Once again, though, only when it is used in a context where different choices can be analyzed and argued over will discussion of form be fruitful in a writing class. Discussion of abstract concepts is a waste of time; only when formal choices are made concrete and judgable will they serve as good content for discussion.

If discussion is our primary temptation as students of literature, lecturing or reading to the class must be our secondary temptation. Unlike discussion, lecturing can be implemented in the writing class without either students or teacher being aware that it is largely a waste of time. Every college teacher has in his mind the ideal of the lecturer, standing modestly before the crowd in the packed hall, brilliantly exposing his truths to the hushed, respectful, even awestruck multitude. It is a romantic image. Most of us probably had such a teacher at one time or another, a professor whose grasp of

subject and sense of audience came together to make each lecture a performance and the podium a stage. It is part of our ideal of great teaching, and we all aspire to it someday.

The desire to actualize this aspiration in the writing class leads to what I call the "gems-of-wisdom syndrome." Its central thesis is that students will learn to write if the teacher explains to them carefully, with examples, how writing is produced, how invention, arrangement, and style work together, how a good sentence is formed, what makes up a good paragraph. In other words, this position believes that if a teacher tells students how to write better, they will do so.

The "gems-of-wisdom syndrome" (and I speak as a recovered victim) causes teachers to painfully prepare notes, create examples, become public speakers, learn abstract material thoroughly, conquer shyness, wear out their vocal chords, and in general work terribly hard and be terribly earnest in an attempt to become the Ideal Orator of their pedagogic dreams. These teachers lecture for fifty minutes, the students dutifully take notes, the speech ends as the bell rings. It is a noble effort. It is also completely, horribly, demonstrably a useless effort.

As the thesis of this book has suggested, students simply do not learn to write--do not learn to control any art--by studying abstract principles. As the philosopher Michael Polanyi writes,

The aim of a skillful performance is achieved by the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them....Rules of art can be useful, but they do not determine the practice of art; they are maxims, which can serve as a guide to an art only if they can be

integrated into the practical knowledge of the art.⁵

In this case, the "practical knowledge" of writing cannot be gained by listening to lectures on the rules and protocols of writing, but only by actual writing and writing-based activities. Lectures provide none of these useful activities; in fact, their main function is usually as a placebo to assure students and teacher that academic activity is in fact going on in the classroom.

Again, this diatribe against lecturing is not meant to suggest that you cannot tell your students anything, that a teacher explaining material to students is somehow invalid. The very act of teaching is predicated, as Richard Weaver says, on the assumptions that one person can know more than another and that that knowledge or skill can be transmitted. Every section of every chapter of this book contains material that must be explained to students. Such explanations, though, are but the preludes to the central activity--writing, or writing-based activity. After explaining, exemplifying, and pointing out the major components of a skill, the teacher must set up a learning situation and let the students practice the skill. Rather than announcing rules, you will be describing behavior, and when the students practice that behavior enough, they will inductively come to grasp the rules that govern it. This is the only way that "lectures" in a writing class make any sense.

There are other classroom activities that are peculiar to the writing classroom. They take different forms, but all have one thing in common: they all involve students practicing writing skills. You can

ask your students to spend the larger part of their classroom time writing and talking, to you and to other students, about the choices and options inherent in writing. Most of the classroom material in the succeeding chapters is based on this sort of classroom approach, which can take the form of students writing or working alone, or two students working together, or students confederating into groups and executing tasks. You may have to take some time to get used to the meaningful chaos of a writing classroom as it works; after the teacher-centered atmosphere of the literature class, it can seem at first appallingly disordered.

To suggest that the best writing classes are not teacher-centered is not to suggest that as the teacher you can tell students to write, talk, or meet and then sit back at your desk and read the newspaper. If you do, students will assume, and correctly, that you are lazy and don't care much about what they are doing, that the tasks they have been assigned are mere busywork, and that they should devote only minimal attention to them. No, the teacher in a writing-centered classroom must be up and doing all the time, drifting from desk to desk and conversing with writers, peering over students' shoulders, helping those with problems, fielding sudden questions, patting backs and laying down the law, making announcements if patterns of problems appear. This sort of thing is hard work--harder, in some ways, than lecturing. But it must be done if writing in the classroom is to work.

Along with obvious teacher interest and involvement in what is being done, the other main factor in the writing-centered classroom is student participation and involvement in what is being worked on.

Without that, the whole idea collapses. You need to make students realize that writing is an art they can manipulate, that the choices they must make when they write are real and recognizable. Students have to be willing to talk about these choices, even to argue about them. Send students to the blackboard to write things; let others talk about what has been written. Read sentences and paragraphs aloud, and then call for reactions. Ditto student work anonymously (or use papers from old classes) and get students to practice editing on it. Try to draw out nervous or shy students, to make them part of the group; the more comfortable the students feel with each other and with you, the more you can achieve in getting them to help each other.

In-class writing, which is an important part of the writing-centered classroom, can be in the form of pattern practices of sentences or paragraphs, of short essays written on the instructions of the teacher, or editing sessions following specific guidelines. The direction will usually come from the teacher, and what use you make of writing-based activities will depend on what skills you are trying to teach at the time. There are, though, some activities not based in any one specific pedagogy, and I will describe an exercise I have been using for several years with excellent results. It is based on an activity described by David Jones in a College Composition and Communication article called, "The Five-Minute Writing."⁶

This exercise consists of a student-initiated short essay, done on each day of class. Here is how I have adapted Jones' idea: On the first day of classes, I tell the students that they will each be

responsible for the creation and grading of a short essay, which will be written by the entire class in response to an assignment that each will make up and then evaluated by the person who made the assignment. I send around a sign-up sheet and have each student pick a date, telling them to have a short writing assignment prepared on that date. For each class meeting I ask the student who signed up for that day to have his assignment on the blackboard by the time of the opening bell; the only stipulation is that the topic should be simple enough that a coherent response can be written in ten minutes. For the first ten minutes of each class, we do nothing but write silently. Yes, I write the assignments too. It produces a sense of solidarity, the students feel that the task is dignified a little, and I get some practice at quick-draw writing (I have a drawerful of these essays, some of which I am rather proud of).

Each student usually produces three-quarters of a page to a page of longhand, and at the end of ten minutes I collect them and give them to the student who created the assignment. He then has one week in which to evaluate and grade them, mine included, and then return them to me for checking; I then return them to the writers. Before each group of essays is given back to me, though, I ask the assigner to read aloud to the class his favorite response to the assignment (with the stipulation that mine not be read--unfair competition). This gives the writer of the "winning" essay satisfaction and allows other students to hear their peers' work. No, the essays are not usually brilliant, but they do represent valuable practice.

Evaluation of these short essays can be a problem, because if left

to themselves students will usually scrawl "A" on half of the papers and "B" on the other half--perhaps out of some obscure, hopeful sense of future reciprocity--and write nothing else. I found that free-form evaluation did not work, and finally evolved a structured evaluation system to allow students to respond helpfully to others' papers. Using this system, each evaluation must have a sentence responding to each of the following questions:

1. What is your favorite content element?
2. What is the least successful content element?
3. What is the main idea, and is it well supported?
4. If you see a form/mechanical problem, what is it?
5. How well did this essay answer the assignment, and why?
6. Give a grade of A, C, or F.

The grades do not, of course, count toward the students' final grades, but they do give class members an idea of how their writing is perceived by their peer group. Evaluating these essays also gives students some small idea of what we as teachers have to go through in order to evaluate student papers.

Workshop Groups

Throughout this book you will find references to the use of workshop groups in writing and editing tasks in the classroom, and some small introduction to what they are and what they can do may be helpful. The name "workshop groups" seems to be widely accepted, so I will use it despite the fact that it seems pseudo-proletarian and

always calls up for me the image of beady-eyed little elves assembling cheap tin toys.

Workshop groups are groups of from three to eight students, initially chosen and assembled by the teacher, which meet together during class time to accomplish specific tasks. These tasks can include brainstorming discussion of a subject to be written about, discussion of how upcoming assignments might best be done, editorial work on one another's drafts, mutual advising about problem areas, division of research tasks, and other mutual-aids endeavours. The workshop group provides a peer group for each student within a class, a group smaller and more manageable than the class as a whole, a group whose members become familiar and trustworthy over the course of a term. A cadre, or cell, if you will.

The most important task of workshop groups, in my experience, has been to provide a forum for non-threatening peer editing and evaluation of written work. Students are initially unwilling to critique one another's work, but workshop groups make it evident quickly to them that they are acting as mutual defenders. As they learn that each error or problem that they let go by in a group member's paper will be pounced upon by the teacher, red pen in hand, they become very serious about checking each others' work. Every red mark that the group makes on a rough draft will be one that the teacher does not have to make on the final version. By seeing different stages in each others' essays, they get a sense of the plasticity of prose, how changes to be made really can help. Peer judgment makes the teacher's judgment seem less arbitrary.

Workshop groups, then, give students a sense of solidarity, a sense of peer accomplishment, and a critical sense as well. They are not difficult to use, but some care has to be taken when setting them up. First of all, they demand a certain physical environment, to wit, chairs or desks that can be moved around into circles. It is almost impossible to use workshop groups in classrooms featuring rows of seats or desks which are bolted to the floor and immovable. If you have such a classroom, see whether you can trade with a teacher whose room allows physical flexibility.

The size of the groups you form--and they should usually be created by the second week, if possible--is up to you, but in my experience they work best when the number of students in each group does not exceed five. Above that number it is likely that an "in-crowd" will form within the group and exclude one or more members. Do not allow students to form their own "affinity workshop groups" of friends--that sort of group almost guarantees such exclusion will take place, as friends band together against outsiders. As a matter of fact, I work actively against this by not forming groups until the second week of classes. During the first five or six class periods, I try to notice who the friends are in class, who knows whom, which students always enter class together or sit together or leave together--then I assign them to different groups. When forming groups, I try to include at least one student who obviously writes well in each group, and try to balance the groups in terms of race and sex.

As suggested above, workshop groups are capable of many sorts of tasks, but I have found that their primary week-to-week use lies most

clearly in editing practice. One day a week, usually several days before a written assignment is due, I have students bring to class longhand "rough drafts" of the assignment. The workshop groups then meet to pass the drafts around the circle of the group, and to edit and critique what they read. This group editing works considerably better than the "buddy editing" system, in which two students merely trade drafts; in the group editing system, each draft gets critiques by at least three and usually four other people, and errors or problems not spotted by one group member are usually caught by others. Group editing allows better writers to assist poorer ones and allows all students to get an idea of how others are approaching the assignment.

Rather than giving students a free rein in this editing practice, I usually specify a process of editing or specific elements that I want investigated, often elements relating to the rhetorical skill being dealt with in class that week. Some weeks students may be asked to dissect sentences, others paragraphs, arrangements, breadth of inventive coverage of the subject, etc. This direction gives structure to student critiques, which can have a tendency to wander. There are also general structures that can be suggested for use. I have used the following list of questions compiled by Mary Beaven:

1. Identify the best section of the composition and describe what makes it effective.
2. Identify a sentence, a group of sentences, or a paragraph that needs revision, and revise it as a group, writing the final version on the back of the paper.
3. Identify one (or two) things the writer can do to improve his or her next piece of writing. Write these goals on the first page at the top.
4. (After the first evaluation, the following question should come first.) What were the

goals the writer was working on? Were they reached? If not, identify those passages that need improvement and as a group revise those sections, writing final versions on the back of the paper. If revisions are necessary, set up the same goals for the next paper and delete question 3.

Students do not respond to these questions by writing on the draft; instead they use a separate sheet of paper and write their answers on it, then clip it to the draft. This can be done silently or in conference. Either way, each writer should have several written evaluations of his draft by the end of the period.

Of more limited use, but still worth trying out, is a rating scale developed by the Cleveland Heights high school system. I ditto off a stack of these and ask students to fill one out for each draft they read. The information thus gleaned is not as useful in revision as is that produced by the Beaven questions, but can give a student writer an idea of how generally successful his content is:

Assignment	Student	Date
Purpose		
A. Content-50%		
Convincing		Unconvincing
persuasive, sincere, enthusiastic, certain		
Organized		Jumbled
logical, planned, orderly, systematic		
Thoughtful		Superficial
reflective, perceptive, probing, inquiring		
Broad		Limited
comprehensive, complete, extensive range of data, inclusive		
Specific		Vague

	concrete, definite, detailed, exact	
B. Style-30%	Fluent	Restricted
	expressive, colorful, Cultivated	Awkward
	varied, mature, descriptive, smooth appropriate	
	Strong	Weak
	effective, striking, forceful, idioms, fresh, stimulating	
C. Conventions--20%	Correct Writing Form	Incorrect Form
	paragraphing, heading, punctuation, spelling	
	Conventional Grammar	Substandard
	sentence structure, agreement, references, etc.	

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During these workshop group meetings, as during writing activities in class, the teacher cannot sit back and watch. Instead, drift from group to group, sitting in on each for a few minutes, talking, listening. Be ready to answer questions, to settle debates on choices and conventions, to read papers or passages of papers. Do not act as "the judge", but rather as a resource person (another term I dislike but cannot avoid) who can help students find their own ways. Be friendly and informal, and try to draw students who seem shy or withdrawn into the life of the group. You may want to appoint chairmen, or recorders, or different official capacities according to the way you perceive the geist of each group. Most important, be supportive of the activity; only if you show that you think workshop group meetings are important will students come to believe in them.

One final activity that workshop groups can allow is the selection and reading aloud of final versions of essays in class. I generally spend half a period every several weeks on this. It works thus: each workshop group has five minutes to meet and choose an essay and a reader on the day that final versions of essays are due. This division between essay and reader--no one ever reads his own essay--allows me to critique the essay read without publicly embarrassing the writer, who can remain anonymous. After each reading (and there are usually four essays read, one from each workshop group) I try to make a comment or two in which I point out the strengths of the essay read. If it has severe problems, I mention them only in order not to give the rest of the class the idea that bad writing is good. In general, though, I try to say only positive things, and then ask the class for their impressions. The stipulation about this in-class reading is that the choice of reader and essay must rotate each week, so that by the end of the course every student will have had his essay read and will have been a reader.

Successful Writing Assignments

Making and evaluating writing assignments is at the heart of a composition teacher's job, and I have heard the life of a writing teacher described as a perpetual search for good topics for writing assignments. I certainly have never known a good writing teacher, no matter how "finished" his course seemed, who was not on the lookout for better assignments than he was using. I can in this section provide no

magic wand with which great assignments can be created, but I will try to give you some information on the many things teachers have learned not to do in creating assignments and on the things we can do.

First of all, this section makes the assumption--as does the rest of this book--that the course you are teaching is "straight composition"--a course in which the content of literature plays at most a minor role. Therefore, the assignments here discussed do not include the whole large genre of assignments that ask writers to respond to literature. I do not deny that such literary topics can be important; they are, however, more applicable to literature courses, which have a critical-semantic emphasis, rather than to composition courses, which have a generative-formal emphasis.

The first questions that might be considered about writing assignments have to do with how many should be required and how long they should be. Some programs specify the number and length of assignments, but if yours does not, I can make a general recommendation. The average length for most graded college essays is between 500 and 700 words, or two to three double-spaced typed pages. The number of such essays you demand depends on the length of the term and on the revision policy you allow, but most teachers like to have at least one grade per student for every ten days of the term. Schools on the quarter system generally specify five to eight graded essays. These are general figures, and you should confer with your Composition Director or colleagues to see what your school's expectations are.

After you have established the number and length of essays you will ask for, you next need to decide whether you will "sequence" them

in any way, or try to correlate written assignments with the work going on in class in any given week. Detailed correlation of assignments and lessons has both good and bad aspects; on one hand it can make the lesson and its related activities more involving for students and can make them work harder at learning it, but on the other hand it can also turn your class into a completely grade-directed exercise. I have on occasion ended up teaching nothing but "how to do this week's assignment" because that was what my students kept clamoring to know. Such activity didn't give them any help in a long-term perspective, and for this reason I no longer try to tie graded assignments tightly to classroom work.

This is not to say that assignments should never or will never correlate with taught skills. Of course they will; it is impossible they should not. What I am suggesting is that such correlations should be made in the students' own minds and not in the plan of the course. The assignments can then be sequenced according to a separate plan, one created by the teacher concurrently with the course plan.

The most common sequence for writing assignments is, I suppose, the one based on the Scottish logician Alexander Bain's division of all writing into four modes of discourse: narration, description, exposition, and argumentation.⁹ The first two modes, which are more concrete, are the bases for the earlier assignments in the course; they allow students to draw on their own experiences and observations for subject matter, seldom forcing any higher-level generalizations or deductions. The second two modes, which are more abstract, are left

for later assignments, when it is expected that students will be able to better handle non-personal manipulation of ideas and concepts in expository and persuasive fashion.

The supposition of this sequence of assignment is that students gain confidence in their writing by using the more concrete and personal modes of narration and description, and then are able to better use the abstract modes. I cannot say whether this actually happens. There seems to me to be some evidence that narrative and descriptive skills do not carry over easily into exposition and argumentations; I have certainly seen students who were confident and even entertaining when narrating experiences and describing known quantities suddenly flounder when asked to generalize, organize, or argue for abstract concepts.

So I have had problems with the modes-of-discourses sequence of assignments, but on the other hand I can only offer a personal defensio of the alternate system that I have been using. It is based on the known fact that student skills in exposition and argumentation are notoriously weak whether these modes are placed first or last in a course. To try to deal with this weakness, I have asked students to practice expository and argumentative skills in every assignment throughout the course, incorporating narration and description whenever they fit in naturally. Kenneth Burke has said that "Where there is meaning there is persuasion," and that is one of the bases for my sequence. My feeling is that the primary skills students need to practice are precisely those they lack: the skills of formulating,

organizing, and supporting coherent options on non-personal subjects. This, remember, is only my personal bias; take it for what it seems worth to you. The "argumentative edge," as Sheridan Baker calls it, has both supporters and detractors.

One thing is certain, whatever your bias: in structuring the sequence of assignments, the teacher must always try to connect each assignment to its context in others. In creating a sequence, the teacher must always consider "the activities and operations of mind in which the student must engage if he is to cope with the assignment," as Richard Larson says, and arrange assignments so that they inform one another.¹⁰ Asking a student for a "five-part argument" between a "comparison-contrast essay" and a "process-analysis essay" is simply not logical because the progression is unclear. Try to connect each assignment to skills that have been practiced previously and to those that will come after.

After you have decided on length, number, and sequence of types of assignments, you can get down to the actual business of creating each individual one. All assignments should be written down carefully beforehand and passed out to students in dittoed form. Much mischief results from student miscopying of orally delivered assignments or even those put on the board. Dittoed assignments allow you to be as specific in your instructions as you need to be and prevent the "Oh, no, I copied 'and' instead of 'or'" dismay of other systems. Each word in an assignment, no matter how small, is of extreme importance, because the assignment wording is the seed from which oak or dandelion

will grow. When I distribute an assignment I tell my students to pay close attention to the wording, to what is being asked, before all else.

So what is a good assignment? Let us look first at what it is not.¹¹ A good assignment is not an assignment that can be answered with a simple "true-false" or "yes-no" answer: "Do the SAT exams have too much power over students' lives?" Such assignments do not offer a writer enough purchase or give enough direction, and students are often stymied for a place to go after they have formulated their simple answers.

A good assignment is not one which leads to too-short answers or unfocused answers: "How do you feel about the oil crisis?" or "Is inflation a serious problem?" These kinds of assignments invite poor writing from inexperienced writers.

A good assignment is not one which is vague or one which assumes too much student knowledge: "What are the good and bad points of U.S. foreign policy?" or "Is America decaying like the Roman Empire did?" Not only are such assignments far too broad, but even a minimal answer to either one would require students to do considerable reading and research.

A good assignment is not one which poses too many questions in its attempt to get students to write specifically: "In the popular television show The Prisoner, why is the Prisoner kept in The Village? Has he committed a crime? Is he evil? Why or why not? Why do we never see Number One? What might that mean to the Prisoner's guilt? Can he ever really escape?" This sort of assignment means to help students by supplying them with many possibilities, but can often provoke panic as they try to deal with each question discretely.

A good assignment, finally is not one which asks students for too personal an answer: "Has there ever been a time in your life when you just couldn't go on?" or "What was the most exciting thing that ever happened to you?" Some students will be put off by these sorts of questions and not wish to answer them, while others will revel in the chance to advertise their adolescent angst or detail their trip to Las Vegas. Either way you are likely to get bad writing, filled with either evasions or clichés.

If good assignments are not any of these things, then, what are they? William Irscher has listed a number of useful criteria in Teaching Expository Writing.¹² First of all, as Irscher points out, a good assignment has to have a purpose. If you ask students to write a meaningless exercise, that is exactly what you will get. An assignment like "Describe your dorm room in specific detail" has no purpose but to make the student write; the response to such an assignment is meaningless as communication. If we extend the assignment a bit, though, to "Describe your dorm room and explain how various details in it reflect your personality and habits," we have made it a rhetorical problem. The answer to the assignment now has a purpose, a reason for saying what it says.

A good assignment, says Irscher, is also "meaningful within the student's experience." "Meaningful" here does not necessarily mean "completely personal," but you must keep in mind the fact that your students do not usually have access to as wide a world of opinion, fact, or experience as do you. Though you can perhaps discourse coherently

on the Aswan Dam or the civil rights struggle of the Sixties, for 17- and 18-year-olds, these subjects are topics for research. The only subjects that students can be expected to write well about without research are those that fall within their own ranges of experience--the civil-rights struggle as seen in the bussing program at their high schools, or the drug problem as it relates to their circle of acquaintances.

A good assignment, continues Irmscher, also asks for writing about "specific and immediate situations" rather than "abstract and theoretical ones." "Discuss the problem of sexism" will not elicit the good, specific writing that an assignment more tied to concrete reality will: "Discuss how you first became aware of sexism and how it has affected the way you deal with other men and women." If you pose a hypothetical situation in an assignment, make certain it is one within students' conceptual abilities. "If you have been Abraham Lincoln in 1861..." is the sort of assignment opening that will only invite wearying and uninformed fantasy, while "The Board of Trustees has voted to raise tuition by \$100 per year. Write a letter to them explaining why they should reconsider their decision" is a hypothetical situation that students can approach in an informed and realistic manner.

A good assignment should suggest a single major question to which the thesis statement of the essay is the answer. "Is smoking marijuana harmful, and should the marijuana laws be changed?" asks for several different, though related, theses. It is better to stay with a single question whose ramifications can then be explored: "Discuss why

marijuana should or should not be legalized, supporting your argument with details from your own experience or experiences of people you know."

A good assignment should be neither too long nor too short. It should certainly not be longer than a single paragraph unless it includes "content" information which must be responded to as part of the essay, such as a table, graph, quotation, or evidence of some sort. Too short an assignment fails to give enough guidance, but too long and complex an assignment will frustrate and confuse students.

A good assignment, then, must be many things. It should ideally help students work on specific skills, either formal or organizational. It should furnish at least minimal data for the student to start from, and should evoke a response that is the produce of discovery concerning that data. It should encourage the student to do his best writing and should give the teacher his best chance to help the student.¹³

I have deliberately left out of this discussion the question of whether assignments should create fictional audiences or ask students to adopt fictional personae. There are many teachers who feel that specification of a fictive audience for each assignment is necessary so that the student is not always writing "for the teacher." Their assignments create audiences ranging from peer groups to newspaper editors or to corporate executives; many of these assignments also require role-playing by the student writer. As is mentioned elsewhere in this book, I distrust such role-playing assignments; they smack of artificiality and sophistry to me. On a practical level, too, they have problems; the student always knows who the real audience for his

writing will be: the teacher. Trying to write for another person's conception of a fictional audience while approximating that other person's conception of a fictional persona is very difficult and not very useful in terms of writing skills. For these reasons I do not use role-playing assignments. My students write for me, their teacher, in the role of beginner writing for sympathetic critic. It is all out in the open. This is my personal bias, and you may take it for what it seems worth to you.

Now that I have given all of these negative and positive commandments, it is time to give some examples of assignments that have worked for me and for my colleagues. These assignments are arranged roughly according to Bain's modes. I am indebted for some of them to the OSU Basic Writing Workshop.

Narration

Narrate an experience that revealed to you the falseness of a stereotype. (For instance, Jocks are dumb, Clergy and religious people must be devout, all members of an ethnic group are _____, etc.) Be certain to show how your experience changed your mind.

Narrate an incident where a sense of humor helped you to overcome a difficult situation. Specify the situation, show what made it difficult, and describe how your humor eased it.

Narrate an incident where you learned something significant in high school from your peers, not from your teachers. Describe the incident and show how what you learned was significant to you.

Narrate an incident where inadequate preparations or plans taught you the value of adequate preparations or plans. Describe the incident and show the consequences of your inadequate preparations or plans.

Description

Describe your favorite bar or hangout, describing why it is your favorite place and detailing the things about it that you like.

Describe the worst teacher you ever had, detailing the reasons why he was so poor a teacher. These details can be emotional, physical, psychological.

Describe a typical Saturday night in your neighborhood or hometown. What does one see on the streets? What do people do? Describe scenes in detail.

Describe one way in which a television or radio program or personality affects your daily life. Show how you react to it.

Exposition

Compare the intellectual demands made on college students with those made on high-school students. How do they differ? How are they the same? Use examples from your own experience or that of friends.

What are the different types of OSU freshman you have noticed? Describe each type and discuss how the types differ from each other.

Discuss the reasons behind your decision to attend this university, including those relating to your parents, your friends, and your own idea of yourself and your plans. Is there a single main reason for your decision?

Discuss the qualities that go into making a good football team/running shoe/sewing machine/musical group/education. Is there a single general quality more important than any other?

Argumentation

Which is better, life in a small town or life in a big city? Support your contention with specific facts from your own experience or that of others.

Companies have been formed that sell term papers and theses to college students. Should this be allowed? Why or why not? Support your contention with convincing details, drawn if possible from your own experience or that of friends. Do not worry about whether the teacher agrees with your opinion.

At Oral Roberts University, overweight students are forced either to enroll in exercise courses and reach a certain weight by a given time, or to leave the university. Should a university be allowed to make such demands of its students? Why or why not? Support your contention with specific details.

A recent letter in the school paper suggested that all the "junk food" vending machines on campus be replaced by machines vending only fruit or yogurt. Do you agree or disagree with such a position? Why? Use details to support your contention.

These are the usual assignments that writing teachers use, but there are also simpler assignment topics, which I have called "subjects" in Chapter Two. Subjects are one, two, or three-word topics that merely suggest a general range of content--"Marijuana Laws," "The Vietnam War," "The Battle of Gettysburg," "Abortion," etc. These are certainly not "good" assignments as we have been discussing them here, but as I suggest in the chapter on invention, our students should leave our classes able to deal with poorly created assignments as well as good ones; they may very well have to deal with one-word topics in other classes. I usually assign one or two "subject" topics each term, in connection with the teaching of invention techniques.

One final word on assignments: do not be reluctant to change assignments or to jettison those that do not work out. As I mentioned earlier, every writing teacher is always on the lookout for new and better topics, not because the old ones were necessarily bad, but because good teachers always search for better ways of teaching. You may also find that you get tired of reading student responses, even good responses, to an old assignment. When you find this creeping boredom setting in, it is time to change assignments, as much for the sake of your students as for your own sake.

Revision of Student Essays

As the sample syllabus earlier in this chapter suggests, the revision of student essays before they are finally graded is an important element in the way that college writing courses should be

taught. The inclusion of a revision option in your course is up to you, of course (unless your department requires one), but I must here admit that I am a committed supporter of the revision option; the reasons for allowing revision seem to me to far outweigh the inconveniences of the system.

Revision of essays is important in writing courses because it allows teachers to escape from the necessity of having to grade all writing done by students. It removes the constant threat of grade pressure from the writing situation and allows students to concentrate on writing rather than on "getting the grade." In other words, it can provide a new and less judgmental relationship between teacher and student, one in which the teacher can be a "writing coach" rather than the "hanging judge" he can appear to be if his only function is to give grades.

Revision allows students insight into the editing process that is difficult to achieve if all writing is graded and filed without any chance to change it. Studies of the composing process have shown that many students sit down to write a paper with little planning, make no notes, grind out the minimum number of words necessary, and type up what they have written with few changes. Writing is seen as a one-shot, make-or-break process. For these students, the very idea of large-scale revision is alien, and providing a revision option allows them to approach the task of editing in an informed manner. They need to learn, what an important element self-correction is in producing quality writing.

A revision option can work in several different ways, but all of them involve the same general idea: the teacher collects student essays and evaluates them, then returns them to the writers, who have the option of rewriting their essays for a higher grade. The mechanics of turning in essays and of grading them differ from system to system, but all have in common this "second-chance" element.

To give you an idea of how a revision policy works, I will here describe the one I have found most congenial. It involves the following routine: Out of the six essays I require that will eventually be graded, I allow four to be revised. This partial revision option is to make certain that no student will become too dependent on the teacher as his editor. The choice of which four essays he will revise is up to the student, but most students wisely revise their first several essays of the term and then distribute the rest of their option across the rest of the term according to the confidence they feel about their responses to different assignments.

On the due date for an essay, each student must turn one in--we will call this Essay A. Essay A will either be marked "DRAFT" at the top, which indicates that the writer wants his paper evaluated but not graded, or it will be unmarked, which indicates that the writer wants his paper evaluated and graded.

I go through the stack of essays at home, evaluating all of them but grading only the unmarked ones. There are important differences in the way I approach those marked "DRAFT," though. First of all, I do not edit them for formal errors--if I did, students would be tempted to

merely retype their papers without errors rather than really revising them. The terminal comments I make on drafts contain far more specific suggestions and criticisms than the ones on graded essays. This is because the terminal comments on drafts must act as the blueprints for revision, while those on graded essays must by the very nature of the grading process be more concerned with justifying the grade than with suggestions for changes.

Come the next week, I pass back both drafts and graded papers, and students who passed in drafts then have ten days or so --until the next week's due date--to revise their papers, which must then be turned in for final grading. If a draft is very good, as occasionally happens, the student might just pass it back in unchanged and take his grade on it, but 90% of students rewrite their papers. When final versions are passed in, I ask that the original draft be clipped to the revision so that I can see what changes have been made. On this second sweep through Essay A, I grade it, mark the formal errors (usually with checkmarks), write a short comment on the success of the revision effort and the general quality of the essay, and return it to the writer for the last time. During the intervening week rough drafts of the next assignment, Essay B, come in, and perhaps a few early revision of Essay A. By the time I get all the final versions of Essay A, I am seeing the rough drafts of Essay C as well. So on any given week I may be evaluating or grading as many as three separate assignments. It is not so confusing as it sounds. Here is a diagram:

<u>Week Two</u>		<u>Week Three</u>		<u>Week Four</u>		<u>Week Five</u>
Monday	Friday	M	F	M	F	M
	Essay A due in draft form	Essay A returned	Essay B due in draft form (Some revised A's turned in.	B's and A's returned	Essay C due in draft form. Essay A due in final form (Some revised B's turned in)	C's, B's, and A's returned

There are other permutations of the revision system. Some teachers allow their students all term to revise their drafts, asking for all revisions during "revision week" at the end of the quarter or semester. This is a less complicated system, and it allows students more time to revise, but it does result in a great influx of papers to read and grade during that final hectic week. Other teachers grade all papers as they come in, and then re-grade those that students choose to revise. This system gives students an idea of how they are doing in terms of grades, but it also tends to make the teacher work harder at grading, since, as I suggested earlier, the terminal comment of a graded paper naturally has to spend a good deal of its time justifying the grade rather than making suggestions for revision.

The most common objection voiced against the revision option is that it creates more work for the teacher. I cannot argue this point. It does. In a class of twenty-four students which demands six graded essays from each student, the teacher must evaluate and grade 144 essays. If revision is allowed on four essays, the number of papers

to be looked at rises to 240. It is more work for the teacher.

But it is not as much extra work as it first might appear. The revision option places more added responsibility on the student than on the teacher. I have found that reading for evaluation takes less time than reading for both evaluation and grading, and that final reading and grading of revision takes up less time than either. Once I "got the system down," I found I was able to read a 600-word paper for evaluation and write a terminal comment in between five and seven minutes. Grading the revised version usually takes around five minutes, because I know enough about the writer's purpose to grade more meaningfully. In neither reading do I give the attention to small formal errors that I would have to in a single reading; in the first reading I only mark serious errors, and in the second reading errors get only a checkmark. The very act of revision means that there are fewer formal problems.

My estimate of time is as follows: Without a revision option I can go through a stack of essays, evaluating them, marking all the errors, writing complete marginal and terminal comments, and then justifying my grade, in about three-and-one-half or four hours. With a revision option, the weekly stack, which is larger, takes four to four-and-one-half hours. It takes a bit longer, but it makes me feel better about the act of evaluation, and I believe it makes me a more effective teacher. My students are certainly willing to do the extra work implied by revision, and so, I feel, should I be.

This paean to the revision option should not obscure the fact that it can present problems. The most obvious one is the temptation on the students' parts to use the teacher only as editor. When I first started allowing revision, I marked all of the formal errors on each rough draft as well as evaluating the drafts for content. This not only took me longer, but led students to believe that they could get away with doing no more revision than a simple re-typing, incorporating my formal corrections. Too many students already see "revision" as meaning nothing but pencil work and formal correction, and to edit their drafts for them only continues them in this error. If I mark errors in drafts now, it is with a simple check-mark over the error, which the student must then identify and correct himself.

The second major danger revision presents is a psychological one: the fact that students tend to believe that the act of revising a paper will automatically earn them a higher grade. It is the "A-for-effort" misconception. If you get a draft that would be worth a D and the revision moves it up to a C, the student often has a hard time understanding why, with all those changes, the paper is not worth a B or an A. Part of the problem, I imagine, is due to the students' tendencies to see any paper without serious formal errors as A or B work, even if its content is vacuous or its organization incoherent. Some students, used to the grade inflation that has made many high-school records unreliable indications of ability, simply cannot get used to their work receiving C's or lower grades, especially if it is formally perfect.

Despite these potential problems, the chance to revise their written work is of great help to students. No longer is an essay a "do-or-die" proposition, to be created in fear and trembling because of the knowledge that it must soar or crash on its maiden voyage. As Sharon Pianko says in her study of the composing process, the main thing separating good and poor writers is "the ability to reflect on what is being written."¹⁴ Revision allows students to reflect on their writing and to see writing for what it is: a continuing process of re-seeing a subject, a process that never has to be completed until its author is ready to say, "I can do no more."

Paper Evaluation and Grading

The evaluation and grading of student papers is still one of the great terrae incognitae of the world of composition. It is like establishing a relationship to Deity--ultimately, most of us have to do it alone, with only general guidance. Until recently, very little research was available on what sorts of evaluative methods worked best, and even now the empirical research that has been done is often difficult to translate into terms that are useful to the average teacher confronting the average pile of essays on Sunday afternoon. Of the many professional articles that have appeared on the subject of grading, more than 85% seem to be personal, anecdotal "here's how it seems to me and here's how I do it" articles. Some of these are quite helpful (it would certainly be presumptuous of me to criticize that approach in a chapter such as this one), and I will be making use of them.

It is important that I make it clear at this point that while the following discussion of evaluation makes use of some empirically derived information, it should be seen--as the rest of this chapter should be seen--for what it is: a non-absolute, advisory, conditional statement based mainly on the personal experiences of the author. Most of what will be said here is common sense, gradually attained through years of teaching and making mistakes. It is meant to be useful to new teachers, but be forewarned that each teacher sees the act of personal grading and evaluation differently, and that you should not adopt any of the suggestions here unless they seem helpful to you. If you do adopt them, you will gradually adapt them to fit your own personality and your own philosophy of grading; that is as it should be. This section is an introduction, and it must be seen as temporary and contingent on your real needs and the demands being made upon you.

In a real sense, it is unfortunate that we have to grade student papers at all. Grading forces student and teacher to assume an adversary relationship; it creates a schizophrenic split between the teacher as friend and advisor and the teacher as potential enemy and judge. Ungraded classes, or even a Pass/Fail option, would be better for all concerned, as has often been shown by those schools who have introduced non-graded writing classes and competency tests to replace grades. But, alas, the world most of us inhabit demands grading, ranking, rating. We are victims of it as much as our students are, but I am afraid we shall have to continue giving grades so long as the culture demands that our students be set up against one another and

rated. Never forget, though, that it is the help you give, the interest and humanity you show, and the suggestions you make in your written comments on a paper that are important, and not the grade you finally slap down.

The first thing you need to know about evaluation and grading (which from now on I will merely call "evaluation" for the sake of brevity) is that there are two major methods of evaluation: personal evaluation and holistic evaluation. Personal evaluation we all know about; it is the system in which the teacher sits down alone at his desk and carefully reads, marks, evaluates, and grades a piece of student writing without advice from anyone else. Holistic evaluation, on the other hand, is a group activity in which trained "raters" quickly read many pieces of student writing in organized sessions. Charles R. Cooper, a leading theorist of holistic evaluation, describes it thus:

Holistic evaluation of writing is a guided procedure for sorting or ranking written pieces. The rater takes the piece of writing and either (1) matches it with another piece in a graded series of pieces or (2) scores it for the prominence of certain features important to that kind of writing or (3) assigns it a letter or number grade. The placing, scoring, or grading occurs quickly, impressionistically, after the rater has practiced the procedure with other raters. The rater does not make corrections or revisions in the paper. Holistic evaluation is usually guided by a holistic scoring guide which described each feature and identifies high, middle, and low levels for each feature. 15

Which sort of evaluation, personal or holistic, is better? There is no question. Holistic evaluation is better in every way. If the desired end of evaluation is to let students know how well they really write, the evaluation must be reliable, that is, it must eliminate random personal biases and somehow stabilize measurement. Personal grading cannot do this with any degree of success, as was proved by a study done in 1961 by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton. In this study 300 student papers were rated on a scale of 1 to 9 by 53 members of professional groups--editors, lawyers, teachers. Of the 300 papers, 101 received every grade from 1 to 9, and no paper received less than five different grades. It was pathetic showing for the reliability of personal grading.¹⁶

Even assuming that the sense of intuitive agreement about grading among teachers of Freshman English might be higher than that among professionals in general, this test showed that the degree of grade variation due to personal bias is huge. Teachers simply do not share values about what constitutes good writing to the degree they need to to achieve respectable consensus, and as a result, personal grading, which produces a percentage of agreement ranging between 30% and 50%, is not very reliable.

Holistic rating by trained raters, on the other hand, can produce an agreement rate of over 90%, and can also cut down appreciably on the amount of time that teachers spend on evaluation of papers. Paul B. Diederich, one of the primary exponents of holistic evaluation, speaks of his own experience when he was freed of personal-grading responsibilities by saying "It was like coming out of a noisy tunnel

into clear sunlight." Holistic grading can take the responsibilities of being the "judge" away from the teacher, freeing him instead to be the students' "coach." Holistic grading is more reliable, promotes better student-teacher relations, takes less time to accomplish, and produces students who no longer tremble under the last of weekly grade pressure.

This book, unfortunately, will not deal any farther with holistic evaluation. Why not, if it is so obviously the superior method? Simply because, superior though it is, holistic evaluation requires a level of organization, coordination, and training that is not generally available to new teachers, or, for that matter, to many teachers anywhere. The papers to be rated must be written to the same assignment; they must have a certain physical format; the raters must be able to assemble at a "neutral" location at a certain time; they must agree on what analytic scale to use; and they must be trained, directed, and checked by a person or persons who are at least minimally competent to conduct holistic analysis sessions. There are not many English Departments in the country which can provide all of these things.

Unless the decision to use holistic methods is made and enforced by the director of a writing program or the chairman of a department, it is very difficult to organize. For that reason, and for that reason alone, this book will not treat of it in detail. This difficulty of organization, however, does not detract at all from the superiority of holistic methods, and if you are interested in trying to organize holistic evaluation in your department, you should consult two books

for a minimum background: Paul B. Diederich's Measuring Growth In English and Charles C. Cooper and Lee Odell's Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging. Diederich's book, a good, wise book, is especially helpful in giving tips on how to set up a holistic evaluation program. Discuss holistic methods with your Composition Director. The trouble it takes to set up will be repaid if you succeed with it. For now, though, I must leave holistic evaluation and return to what most teachers will find themselves stuck with: personal evaluation.

In preparing to tackle your first stack of student essays (and I am here assuming that you will be grading them as well as evaluating them), there are several factors you must take into consideration. First, are there departmental grading standards that you are expected to enforce? If your department has them, you must be prepared to work within them, for in all probability they are taken very seriously as an attempt to reduce grade inflation within the composition program. Usually this question of enforcing standards gets down to a practical question, one you will have to answer for yourself even if you have no departmental guidelines to follow. It is this: Will you assume that every student paper starts out in your mind as a potential A, and then gradually discredits itself (if it does) into a B, a C, etc? Or will you assume that each paper begins as a C, an average, competent paper, and then rises or falls from that middle ground? (No, I know of no teachers who begin with the assumption that all papers are E's unless proven otherwise.)

Teachers who begin with the first assumption, that all papers are A's until proven otherwise, have a tendency to view a student essay only in terms of what is wrong with it. On the other hand, those who start from the position that all papers are C's are perhaps overly willing to see all student work as average C work; as William Irmscher points out, teachers who begin with the C assumption are grudging with their A's. This may not necessarily be wrong, but it can be discouraging for students who struggle but never rise above C level.

Whichever position you start from, you will have to reach some decision about one other question: writing improvement over the length of the course. Will improvement, which is presumably the goal of a writing course, be taken into consideration during final grading? Should a student who starts out in September writing at C level and works up to B level by December to be given a B, even if his mathematical average is a C+? This question can be answered in one of two ways, assuming that you do want to somehow take improvement into consideration.

The first method of considering improvement is to set up your schedule of written assignments so that later assignments are worth a larger percentage of the final course grade, thus weighting that final grade toward improvement late in the course. The second method is to toughen your grading standards as the course progresses, so that a paper that might have received a B during the second week will get only a C during the eighth week. (A variation of this is to assign "tougher" topics as the course progresses.) I have used both methods, and

recommend the first for newer teachers--the process of tightening standards over time can easily become arbitrary, and personal grading is already an arbitrary enough process.

So you have your stack of papers, ready to be graded. Let's begin.

General Routine for Evaluation

You will need few tools for evaluating papers: a large, flat surface, a colored pen--not necessarily red. In fact, do not use red. It has very bad associations for most students. You should use a bright, contrastive color, though; I like Razor Point Green. You will also need the notebook or card file in which you are keeping your student records. You are ready to take the first paper from the stack and look at it.

Before anything else, you will be interested in whose paper it is, which of those young faces lies behind it. Try not to give in to this interest in authorship--your job is to grade the paper, not the author. Knowledge of the author can be one of the strongest biases in paper-grading, and it can color the whole term if you do not learn to control it. ("Charles is so sullen in class. Yes, this is a D...I know Rebecca worked herself to death to write even this well, and she needs a...yes, sure, this is a C.") I advise the following procedure to minimize your natural tendency to apply personal criteria: Ask for typed papers, and tell students not to type their names anywhere on their papers. Their names should appear nowhere on their essays except in light pencil on the back of the last page. This way (assuming you

have self-control) you can mark, evaluate, and grade a paper without knowing who wrote it. After the last comment has been written and a grade applied, turn the paper over and see whose it was so that you can mark down the grade.

The best general procedure for handling papers is as follows. I am depending in this section and in the following sections on an order suggested by Richard Larson.¹⁷

First, read over the paper quickly, making no marks, but instead trying to get a sense of the flow of the organization and of the general nature of what is being said. Try to decide during this reading what you like about the paper and also what elements of it need work.

Next, re-read the paper more slowly, marking it for errors and writing marginal comments. You may read it paragraph-by-paragraph this time, thinking less about overall organization.

Finally, re-read the paper quickly one last time, this time taking into consideration the overall purpose of the paper, its good and bad features, the number of formal errors it shows, and your marginal notes and comments. After this reading, you will write your terminal comment on the paper and grade it.

After you have finished evaluating and grading the paper, make a note of it in your student file. Compare its successes and failures to those of past papers, and if you see improvement (or decline), note it. You might at this point add a sentence or two to your terminal comment concerning the paper's success compared to previous efforts. After this, you can put the paper in the OUT basket and take up another.

There are other methods of handling evaluation procedures, of course. Some teachers use evaluation sheets detailing areas of content, organization, and style; these sheets are filled out by the teacher and clipped to the student papers rather than writing comments on the papers. Other teachers have experimented successfully with tape-recording their comments on cassettes and returning each student paper along with a cassette of comments on it. Both of these methods are useful, but both require more set-up than the technique described here, and in most ways are merely permutations of it.

A word here about "grader's fatigue" may be useful. It is a real problem, and you should be prepared to cope with it. Grading a stack of themes can take the better part of a day, and it is inevitable that at times you will simply be unable to go on. Your critical sense will seem to desert you utterly, your eyes will blurr, your head will swim; the result will be that you will find that you have no idea whether the paper in front of you is a masterpiece or a terrible failure. This is grader's fatigue, and there is no cure but to get up, move around, take a drink of water, read the Sunday comics--forget about grading, for at least ten minutes. This short respite should allow you to return to your task refreshed. In all honesty, I don't even wait for fatigue to hit anymore; I make it a point to get up and take a break after every five or six papers, and this way I am assured that no student will be ill-served by my attempt to drive myself through his paper too quickly.

The final act, of course, is to return the students' papers, usually at the end of the first class of the following week. (This

assumes that, like most teachers, you do your grading over the weekend.) I do not have to remind you of the fact that you should return student papers as quickly as possible--no doubt you can remember the agony of waiting for your own teachers to get papers back to you.

Making Marginal Comments

A good number of the marks you make on a student paper will be in the form of marginal comments on specific words, sentences, and paragraphs. Making comments in the margin of a paper allows you to be specific in your approbation or criticism--you can call attention to strengths of weaknesses in the paper where they occur. Marginal comments will certainly include comments on substantive matters and notes that will make the student aware of other options he could have chosen in a particular place.

When you are writing marginal comments, there are some things that ought to be avoided and other things to be sought. The first problem to try to avoid is the temptation to comment only on form, to do nothing but point out errors. This emphasis on error-counting can lead to that ultimate in dehumanized marginal comments, the page of red "handbook numbers" which do nothing but point out errors in a mechanistic fashion by tying them to handbook pages. You can and should use conventional editing symbols, but do not let them become your only marginal effort. Do not use a mere question-mark if you have a problem understanding a section--spell out what your problem is. If reasoning is faulty, do not merely write "LOGIC" or "COH?"--let the

student know what is wrong.

What sorts of marginal comments are effective? First of all, a comment of praise is always welcome. If a student says something or makes a stylistic point that seems effective or appeals to you, do not be afraid to tell him. A simple "Good!" or "Yes!" next to a sentence can mean a great deal to a struggling writer, as you may recall from your own voyages on seas of red ink. Simple questions like, "Evidence?" or "Does this follow?" or "Proof of this?" or "Seems obvious. Is it true?" can cause a student to question an assertion more effectively than a page of rhetorical injunctions.

Mary Beaven mentions three sorts of marginal comments that she has found particularly helpful. They are.

1. Asking for more information on a point that the student has made.
2. Mirroring, reflecting, or rephrasing the student's ideas, perceptions, or feelings in a non-judgmental way.
3. Sharing personal information about times when you, the teacher, have felt or thought similarly.¹⁸

All of these sorts of comments will make students feel as if the teacher is genuinely interested in what he has written, and is looking at papers with something other than the "lawyer's eye" searching for errors.

Marginal comments are nearly always short--single sentences or even phrases. Students can be put off if you write a response to everything they say in a paper (not to mention the work it takes), so three or four marginal comments per page seems to be the upper limit that is worthwhile, at least for actual multi-word "comments."

Purely formal marginal or interlinear comments on errors are another area entirely. You must decide yourself on a system for making note of formal errors. (See the section in this chapter on Formal Standards.) Two different teachers might see a page of student writing in two completely different ways; one might mark a fragment, a comma splice, and three misspellings; while another might mark those errors, plus four misuses of the comma, three awkward phrasings, a misplaced modifier and five bad word choices. Much will depend on your philosophy. I myself am, I suppose, a member of the Minimalist school of error marking, which points out major errors but leaves minor faults alone (unless they are the only errors). The sight of papers that have been bled to death by well-meaning teachers still bothers me, and I know that critical overkill, a paper whose margins are completely filled with criticisms, can make any writer despair.

After the term has run for a few weeks and students have been alerted to their error patterns, I no longer use the usual code for errors--FRAG, CS, RUNON, AWK, CAP, SP, S-V AGREE. Instead, I gradually shift to a system of check-marks, placing a check-mark over each error. This forces students to discover for themselves what they have done wrong, and it keeps me from having to continue as editor to papers that cannot see my corrections but as useless and after-the-fact. Check-marks are also considerably faster to apply and allow me to devote my time to real comments and a more attentive reading of the paper.

Terminal Comments

The terminal or general comment is probably the most important message you give a student about his paper, even more important than the grade. It must do a great deal in a short space: It must tell the student why he did well or ill; it must let him know whether he responded well to your assignment; it must help create a psychological environment in which the student is willing to revise or write again; it must encourage some writing behaviors and discourage others; and it must set future goals that you think the student can meet.

There are, of course, different types of terminal comments. As suggested in the Revision Option section, the general message of a terminal comment will depend on whether it is justifying a grade or making revision suggestions; justifying a grade will often force the terminal comment to focus in a closed way on errors, problems, and things not done well, while revision advice can look to the future and deal with error patterns in a more positive way. Both sorts of terminal comments share certain components, though, and the difference between them is more a matter of percentages of these components than of anything else.

First, every terminal comment should focus on general qualities. It should present your impression of the paper as a whole, and a good terminal comment concentrates a large part of its content on an evaluation of the thesis of the paper under examination, and on how well that thesis is supported. How well does the thesis respond to the assignment? If a thesis is a sort of promise of what the paper

will include, how well does the paper keep the promise made by its thesis? The answers to these questions must take in content, organization, and style, and must concentrate all of this information in a short space.

Next, the terminal comment should maintain a serious yet friendly tone--no humor at the expense of the writer is allowable unless you are giving the paper an A. It should include praise for the well-done elements of the paper as well as mentions of the elements that need work. It should point out improvements made and encourage more. It should not concern itself with formal errors, except perhaps to mention one or two important patterns of errors that you feel need to be identified. It should not go over material already covered in marginal comments, nor should it be any sort of compendium of marginal comments. It should not be overly long--certainly no more than 150 words on the average.

If meeting all these goals sounds difficult, that is because it is. A good terminal comment is not easy to write, especially after an afternoon of constant grading, when fatigue sets in and the temptation to merely scrawl, "This is miserable and you've got a lot of gall to insult me with it," grows stronger. I speak as one who has written some poor terminal comments--it is a form as demanding as the personal essay.

In conclusion, let me mention again the idea that has informed this whole discussion: a terminal comment should show the student that you have read his work carefully, that you care about improving

his writing, and that you know enough about your subject to be able to tell him what he did well and how to improve those things he did poorly. Once again, as in all teaching skills, your terminal comments will only be useful to students if they demonstrate humanity and competence.

The Grade

The comments you make in the margins and at the end of a paper are the truly important responses that a student gets from you about his writing, but the grade, the simple letter, remains the first thing he looks for and the standard by which he judges his own work. As stated previously, there are many things wrong with the practice of grading every student paper, but most of us still have to do it. So, distasteful and even counterproductive as personal grading may be, it is best to know how to do it as well as we can.

Before I go into specific material about grading, let me make one suggestion. Personal grading is always difficult, but it can be made easier for you and for other new teachers if you can organize a grading seminar among writing teachers in your department, a seminar which will bring together new and experienced teachers to discuss and practice grading together. This group need not meet more than once or twice, and need not be large, but in one afternoon the experienced teachers can share many of their techniques and standards with the new teachers and learn from each other as well.

If you succeed in organizing such a seminar, ask each teacher attending to bring dittoes of several unmarked student essays, enough so

that everyone attending can get one. Each teacher should mark and grade his copy of the essay separately then contribute to the discussion following the marking session. Out of these discussions of what problems and strengths each paper shows will come a stronger sense of context and unity for both new teachers and old. Though they can be difficult to organize, such seminars are extremely useful--they can give new teachers a sense of how to grade papers beyond the ability of this or any other book.

There are two general levels upon which a paper can be graded: the level of form and the level of content. The formal level includes spelling, usage, grammar, word choice, sentence and paragraph structure, vocabulary, mechanics--the whole realm of "convention" and "correctness." The content level includes validity and interest of main idea, quality of response to the assignment, coherence of the structure of the essay, arrangement of arguments, and general quality of the ideas being expressed. Some teachers prefer to grade these two levels separately, thus producing content/form grades that look like this: B+/C. Other teachers take both levels into consideration and produce a single grade.

How is one to approach the giving of a grade? Many programs break down their grading standards into categories like these:

- A signifies obviously superior performance
- B signifies above-average performance
- C signifies average performance
- D signifies below-average performance
- E signifies unacceptable performance

Standards like these are workable for experienced teachers, but as William Irscher points out, new teachers have no way of knowing what "average" might mean--and many experienced teachers are not all that certain either. Irscher suggests that teachers adopt a different set of definitions, those based on the College Entrance Examination Board's criteria for their advanced placement examination:

- A demonstrates unusual competence
- B demonstrates competence
- C suggests competence
- D suggests incompetence
- E demonstrates incompetence¹⁹

"Competence" is a somewhat more easily defined quality than "averageness," but it still leaves the teacher largely reliant upon his own conceptions of good work. I can, I think, suggest a few of the elements that go into making up competence in writing, though, and with this in mind, let us go on to a closer examination of the two levels on which student papers can be judged.

Formal Standards

As all experienced writing teachers are aware, formal standards are by far the easiest to mark, recognize, and enforce. They are largely standards of convention and correctness, and you will find that going through a paper marking formal errors is rather a mechanical job. You mark a spelling error here, a sentence fragment there, and it takes time and judgment. There is a natural feeling after having marked a paper

for formal errors that you have done a solid, creditable job of telling the student what is wrong with the paper.

That sense of fulfillment, of having completed a job, makes formal evaluation seductive. Because of it, teachers are often tempted to base most of their grade on the formal qualities of the paper and not enough on the content. It is easy to see why: formal evaluation is concrete and quantitative. It demands few complex "judgment calls," which are at the heart of content evaluation. If a teacher produces a student essay dripping with red marks, he has obviously done a careful reading of it; why do more? It is a relief to be able to tell a student he got a D because of three fragments and nine misspelled words and not have to deal with the complex, sometimes arbitrary world of content: thesis statements, patterns of development, assertions.

Yes, it is tempting to weight a grade to the formal qualities of the paper, and I mention it here to remind you also of how profoundly wrong it is. A piece of writing consists of far more than its comma use and punctuation, and if we stress nothing but formal grading, we will become mere pedants, obsessed with correctness to the detriment of meaning. We cannot fail to mark formal errors, for as Mina Shaughnessy says, they are "unintentional and unprofitable intrusions upon the consciousness of the reader" which "demand energy without giving any return," but neither should we give them more than their due.²⁰

There are lists and lists of different formal errors, and to try to present them all here would just lead to confusion. The Ohio State University Basic Writing Workshop, after working with Basic Writing

students for some years, has produced a list of errors for their teachers that I have found useful. These are errors so damaging to meaning that they must be counted as major errors. I list them here in what I think is descending order of importance:

1. Fragments
2. Run-ons and Comma Splices
3. Incorrect use of semicolon
4. Incorrect punctuation that produces ambiguity or confusion
5. Garbles--ungrammatical sentences, blurred patterns
6. CONFUSING dangling modifiers and faulty parallelism
7. Subject-verb disagreement
8. Non-pronoun disagreement
9. Faulty alternations
 - a. I alternating with you
 - b. A student or a person alternating with they/their
10. Wrong word forms
 - a. Tense shifts
 - b. Wrong verb forms (e.g. I done for I did)
 - c. Incorrect singulars and plurals
 - d. Apostrophe errors
11. Misspelled words
12. Omitted words
13. Wrong words (depending on denotation, not connotation)

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There are certainly many other types of formal errors, but these are perceived by readers as being the most serious.

Within these serious errors, many teachers make a further distinction, one between syntactic errors--Fragments, Run-ons, Comma Splices, Garbles--that take place on the sentence level, and word-level errors. Syntactic errors are much more serious than word-level errors because they often present the reader with a situation in which it is impossible to know what the writer meant to say. If teachers quantitatively count errors, they nearly always count syntactic errors and word-level errors separately.

With these distinctions made, then, and with the formal errors marked, how is the teacher to arrive at a formal evaluation or grade? There seem to be two answers to that question. First, the teacher can make the evaluative judgment intuitively, deciding on the general formal quality of the essay as a whole and then considering this "holistic" judgment alongside his judgment of content in order to arrive at a final grade. Or, the teacher can make a frequency count of the number of different sorts of errors in the paper and then use those numbers to determine the maximum grade the paper can achieve according to preset standards. An example of such a list of standards can be seen in the sample syllabus earlier in this chapter.

Both of these methods have their adherents, and choosing one method over the other may be difficult. The intuitive school considers frequency counting to be dehumanizing and mechanistic, while the counters feel that the intuitionists cannot deal with formal errors as conscientiously as they do. I must admit that after years as a counter, I have not moved closer to the intuitionist camp. I do not though, reject counting errors; as a matter of fact, I would not trust my formal intuition so much had I not spent years counting and judging the seriousness of errors. My advice for new teachers, then, is to count errors for as long as you feel you want to--to do what I say and not what I do. So long as you do not count the same error more than once and do not base your grade exclusively on the formal level, counting and using errors counts in grading is a perfectly respectable thing to do.

Standards of Content

The evaluation of formal correctness, as has been noted, is comfortable for teachers because it deals with conventions that are so completely agreed upon: a comma splice is a comma splice. Content grading, though, is a much more abstract business, and despite the fact that content is at least as important as form, writing teachers in general are less confident about their ability to judge ideation and organization, and are therefore tempted to give these things less than their due when grading. To do so, though, is a serious error. Yes, it is more of a "judgment call" to say that a thesis is vague than it is to identify a tense shift, but we must take the responsibility. The teacher must make serious content judgments, and they must inform the grade of the paper.

Content grades are usually assigned on the basis of how successful the paper seems to be in four specific areas, which I will follow Paul Diederich and call Ideas, Organization, Wording, and Flavor.²²

The area of Ideas concerns the following questions:

1. How well does the essay respond to the assignment?
2. How novel, original, or well-presented is the thesis of the essay?
3. Are the arguments or main points of the essay well-supported by explanatory or exemplary material?
4. Is the thesis carried to its logical conclusion?

The area of Organization deals with material that is a step lower on the scale of abstraction. It concerns these questions:

1. Does the essay have a coherent plan?
2. Is the plan followed out completely and logically?

3. Is the plan balanced and does it serve the purpose of the essay?
4. Are the paragraphs within the essay well-developed?

The area of Wording sometimes impinges on the formal level of grading, but here is more concerned with word choices than with grammatical correctness. It addresses these questions:

1. Does the essay use words precisely?
2. Does the essay use words in any delightful or original fashion?

Finally, there is the level of Flavor, which is the term Diederich uses for what others might call "style." The questions asked in this area are:

1. Is the writing pleasing to the reader?
2. Does the writer come across as someone the reader should like and trust?
3. Does the writer sound intelligent and knowledgeable?

Under each of these areas which had been discovered by his research, Diederich developed a set of guidelines for the use of the holistic raters he trained. These guidelines describe student writing in terms of whether it rated "High," "Middle," or "Low." These guidelines are very helpful for teachers who must grade personally as well as for holistic raters, and it is worthwhile to reprint them here:

1. Ideas

High. The student has given some thought to the topic and writes what he really thinks. He discusses each main point long enough to show clearly what he means. He supports each main point with arguments, examples, or details; he gives the reader some reason for believing it. His points are clearly related to the topic and to the main idea or impression he is trying to convey. No necessary points are overlooked and there is no padding.

Middle. The paper gives the impression that the student

does not really believe what he is writing or does not fully understand what it means. He tries to guess what the teacher wants and writes what he thinks will get by. He does not explain his points very clearly or make them come alive to the reader. He writes what he thinks will sound good, not what he believes or knows.

Low. It is either hard to tell what points the student is trying to make or else they are so silly that, if he had only stopped to think, he would have realized that they made no sense. He is only trying to get something down on paper. He does not explain his points; he only asserts them and then goes on to something else, or he repeats them in slightly different words. He does not bother to check his facts, and much of what he writes is obviously untrue. No one believes this sort of writing--not even the student who wrote it.

2. Organization

High. The paper starts at a good point, has a sense of movement, gets somewhere, and then stops. The paper has an underlying plan that the reader can follow; he is never in doubt as to where he is or where he is going. Sometimes there is a little twist near the end that makes the paper come out in a way that the reader does not expect, but it seems quite logical. Main points are treated at great length or with greatest emphasis, others in proportion to their importance.

Middle. The organization of this paper is standard and conventional. There is usually a one-paragraph introduction, three main points each treated in one paragraph, and a conclusion that often seems tacked on or forced. Some trivial points are treated in greater detail than important points, and there is usually some dead wood that might be better cut out.

Low. This paper starts anywhere and never gets anywhere. The main points are not clearly separated from one another, and they come in a random order--as though the student had not given any thought to what he intended to say before he started to write. The paper seems to start in one direction, then another, until the reader is lost.

3. Wording

High. The writer uses a sprinkling of uncommon words or of familiar words in an uncommon setting. He shows an interest in words and in putting them together in slightly unusual ways. Some of his

experiments with words may not quite come off, but this is such a promising trait in a young writer that a few mistakes may be forgiven. For the most part, he uses words correctly, but he also uses them with imagination.

Middle. The writer is addicted to tired old phrases and hackneyed expressions. If you left a blank in one of his sentences, almost anyone could guess what word he would use at that point. He does not stop to think how to say something; he just says it in the same way as everyone else. A writer may also get a middle rating on this quality if he overdoes his experiments with uncommon words: if he always uses a big word when a little word would serve his purpose better.

Low. The writer uses words so carelessly and inexactly that he gets far too many wrong. These are not intentional experiments with words which failure may be forgiven; they represent groping for words and using them without regard to their fitness. A paper written in a childish vocabulary may also get a low rating on this quality, even if no word is clearly wrong.

4. Flavor

High. The writing sounds like a person, not a committee. The writer seems quite sincere and candid, and he writes about something he knows, often from personal experience. You could not mistake this writing for the writing of anyone else. Although the writer may assume different roles in different papers, he does not put on airs. He is brave enough to reveal himself just as he is.

Middle. The writer usually tries to appear better or wiser than he really is. He tends to write lofty sentiments and broad generalities. He does not put in the little homely details that show that he knows what he is talking about. His writing tries to sound impressive. Sometimes it is impersonal and correct but colorless, without personal feeling or imagination.

Low. The writer reveals himself well enough but without meaning to. His thoughts and feelings are those of an uneducated person who does not realize how bad they sound. His way of expressing himself differs from standard English, but it is not his personal style; it is the way uneducated people talk in his neighborhood. Sometimes the unconscious revelation is so touching that we are tempted to rate it high on flavor, but it deserves a high rating only if the effect is intended.

These guidelines may help you to grade content, but short of reprinting 100 graded student essays along with analyses of their content quality, there is little more I can say to make your task easier. It is you who must ultimately decide whether an essay says something significant, has a strong central idea, adheres to standards of logic in its development, and supports its contentions with facts. All teachers know the uncomfortable sense of final responsibility you feel when you put that grade down at last. As T.A. Koclanes says, our job is difficult because in practice it is never possible to do all that we want to do.²⁴ That comfortless sense of personal responsibility you are feeling goes with the territory, and if it becomes overwhelming you can always share your problem with fellow teachers. Asking colleagues to give second opinions on papers is a common and useful practice. You are not really out on the edge all alone.

Essay Tests, Research Papers, and Debates

Thus far we have been discussing the teaching of writing in a general sense, but now I would like to focus in on three particular sorts of tasks that students can be set in writing courses: essay examinations, research papers, and oral debates. Here again, your departmental policy may enforce or forbid the use of one or all of these activities. All of these assignments can be carried out in isolation, and although I teach the research paper and debate concurrently, I will describe them separately.

First of all, essay examinations are demanded by some departments, and even if they are not it can be a good idea to give at

least one. Practice in how to approach and take an essay exam can be of great use to your students after they leave your course, and for that reason I make certain that I devote some time to teaching essay-exam strategy. Writing under time-pressure utilizes some of the same skills as does all writing, but it demands new ones as well, and some of these--short-outlining, planning and organizing time, checking work--can best be dealt with in a writing class. I usually give either a midterm or a final essay examination, then--one that affects only a small proportion of the final grade, but one that students must prepare for and take seriously. The usual essay format--choice of questions, blue books, answers expected to be legible, calling of time checks every fifteen minutes--is applicable to these exams.

The research paper is a longer essay, usually of at least 1000 words, that demands of the student that he master not only essay-writing skills but also the skills of library research and of citation and bibliography form. Research papers are generally done in response to topics assigned by the teacher and may be worth a larger percentage of the final grade than the shorter essays demanded by the course. They tend to be long-range tasks, requiring from three to four weeks altogether, and are usually among the final papers required in a course.

I will here give in to personalizing, because I believe my own experience with research papers will be more helpful than abstract material culled from books. I require a research paper of 1000-1200 words from my students each term, and I have had very good results from the assignment. The doubts that are commonly expressed about research

papers, that they too easily become "literature surveys" without a clear thesis, I circumvent by specifically assigning an argumentative research paper, one that demands that students use researched material to support a central argumentative position, which I assign. This "argumentative edge" gives a point to the whole assignment that it would not otherwise have. The topics I have used include these:

Nuclear Power Generation: Yes or No?

Deficit Spending: Good or Bad Policy?

Socialized Medicine in America: Pro or Con?

There are obviously many other topics to choose from. In assigning sides for the argument, I always try to let students choose sides if they feel strongly about it; one always argues better for truly held beliefs.

If you elect to use the research paper assignment, you will have to spend a few class periods teaching research and citation skills. I have found a library tour to be a good idea; for many students it is their first introduction to the card catalogs, serial files, and reference room. At least the basics of research procedure need to be explained: how to search a subject, how to expand a search by use of indexes and bibliographies, how to use notecards, what sorts of notes are most useful, etc. I encourage students to do research together and to share findings with other class members who have chosen the same topic. This way no student is left without help or a place to begin from. Those who have found particularly useful sources are asked to bring them to class and share them around.

Along with research skills, citation skills usually must be given some time, for although some students have written research papers in high school, their skills are usually rusty by the time you see them. They need to be taught the use, form, and proprieties of footnotes, bibliographies, and lists of references. This is a point at which handbooks can be very useful--nearly all of them have chapters on research and citations. I used to teach only MLA form (footnotes and bibliography), but with the explosion of interest in the sciences I now feel that I must also teach APA form, consult a technical writing textbook and thermofax the necessary pages from it.

Students usually need at least several days' practice working with citation form. I use the blackboard to explain the major forms for citation of books and journals, and then I give a homework assignment asking students to translate raw titles and authors into proper footnote, bibliography, and list of reference forms. At the next class meeting I ask volunteers to put their answers on the board, and then other students to translate them from note to bibliography form or vice versa. Students need to master all of the different citation forms in order to do a proper job on a research paper.

There are other elements of the research paper that may need in-class explanation: how to use quotations, how to fit quotations into sentences, what sorts of material needs to be footnoted, what sort of physical format you expect, etc. If you have any trouble answering any of these sorts of questions, I suggest you consult one of the standard rhetoric texts. Those rhetorics which cover the research paper often do it extremely well; it is in this sort of formal instruction that

rhetorics come closest to fulfilling their promise.

Although the persuasive nature of the research paper I describe here makes it a livelier assignment than a mere literature survey might be, I must warn you to expect neither exhaustive researching nor high-level argumentation from it. You may, of course, see some very impressive papers, but by and large the results are reflective of students who have had little experience with either research methods or argumentation. I find that I usually have to specify a minimum number of footnotes, sources cited, bibliography entries, and lines of argument to be followed if I want to see papers with more than one or two notes, sources, or arguments. Keep in mind that these papers are often done under time pressure and are first attempts, practice runs.

I have found that I can increase the quality of the research papers a class produces and make the research assignment more real and more involving for them by linking the research/argumentative essays with a class debate on the same issue, with students taking the debate sides for which they argue in their papers. I will only describe this debate assignment cursorily because some departments feel that debate has no place in writing classes and therefore forbid such activity. I myself would not wish to see too much emphasis placed on oral debate in composition classes, but the one or two class days I give up each term to debate have seemed well worth it to me.

The worth of the debate is predicated on the fact that it does not mean extra work or research for the students, but does give them a chance to practice argumentation in a real-life setting. The debate

topics are the same as the research paper topics; typically in a class of twenty-four students we use two topics: for example, nuclear power and socialized medicine. Each topic has a pro and a con group of students, placed either voluntarily or by teacher assignment. (I try to assign only those students with no strong feelings about the issue either way.) The class then breaks down into four groups of around six students each--pro-nuclear power, anti-nuclear power, pro-socialized medicine, anti-socialized medicine. These groups supersede the established workshop groups and become debating teams.

The team members meet, in class and outside class, to prepare for the debate at the same time that they are researching their topic and preparing their papers. They share sources, plan debate strategies (usually in secret), help each other find and arrange material. I encourage each team to elect a captain who can map out the overall team strategy and control the order and responses of his team during the debate. The competitive edge created by the debate creates a sense of excitement, anticipation, and involvement in the material that could never be created by a research paper alone. Each team member has specific responsibilities, and everyone works hard because no one wants to let the team down.

I usually allow one day per week, often the day on which workshop groups would have met, to let teams do in-class planning and discussion of the topic for several weeks before the debate takes place. These sessions are not allowed to completely take over workshop days; the first twenty or twenty-five minutes of the class are devoted to editing practice, and then the teams are let loose to plan. These planning

sessions are carried out in low tones by the teams, and if an empty classroom is nearby, I let both pro- or con- teams meet in it so that secret strategies are not divulged by too-loud planning. Although I sit in on all these sessions, I tell no tales about what I have heard. My advice goes no farther than warning a team that it had better be prepared for a hard fight. The only general stipulation I make to all students about their debate presentations is that each debater must work from memory and note-cards--no points are to be prepared beforehand and read. Other than that one rule, the captains handle their teams.

While this feverish preparation is going on, I arrange an audience for the debate (actually, there are two debates, on two successive days) by contacting another teacher whose class meets at the same hour and asking for the loan of his class as an audience. Most colleagues are intrigued and are happy to help out, often using the debate as the topic of a paper they assign to their own students. The presence of an audience is a key ingredient if the debate is to be conducted seriously, and I announce from the beginning that an audience of strangers will be present. Without that peer audience of strangers, student debaters are more sluggish, and less serious. They realize immediately, that looking stupid in front of teacher and class members is quite different from looking stupid in front of a group of sniggering strangers. An audience lends weight to a debate.

The debate itself is conducted along traditional lines, I control the times with a stopwatch and act as moderator from a seat at the back

of the classroom. The teams sit at the front, facing the audience. After opening statements from each team captain (the order of which is determined by a coin toss), each team gets four minutes to make a point. The opposition then has two minutes for a rebuttal of that point, and immediately four minutes for a point of their own. The first team then gets a two-minute rebuttal of that point and another four-minute point, and on it goes until each team member has made a point. The order of presentation of points and the choice of person to conduct each rebuttal is up to the team captains, who must think on their feet throughout. At the end of the last rebuttal each captain makes a concluding summation, and the debate is over. You can then ask the audience to mark secret ballots for a winner, or not, as you choose.

Once again, although I have found that debate works for me, I do not recommend its use except in the context of argumentative research papers. Too much emphasis on oral debate can lead to a neglect of the writing skills that are the real point of a composition class. At the same time, though, debate can sharpen students' writing, provide them with motivation for better research, give them skills in working together and conducting effective argumentation, and provide your class with a few days of useful excitement. I suggest that if you can see a use for debate in your class that you experiment with it.

Final Course Grading

Writing down that final A, B, or D next to a student's name in your grade book represents your ultimate judgment on that student, usually the only judgment he will carry with him. It is both a

difficult task and a relief, a closure, to mark down that letter. From whence does it come?

You have, of course, since before the first day been preparing a system that would allow you to judge each student's individual performance. In front of you you have evidence concerning the following factors:

1. Grades for each written essay
2. Test grades
3. Amount of class participation
4. Faithfulness of homework and journal (if required)
5. Amount of perceived improvement in writing ability

Of these five factors, only the first two are amenable to a mathematical solution. Final grading would be easy if we could merely tot up the figures, the percentages for each essay and test, work it out on a pocket calculator and apply mechanical standards to the result. Unfortunately, this mathematical solution, tempting though it is, cannot be all we take into consideration.

The writing grades that go into the final numerical "score" will certainly be by far the most important elements determining the final grade, but to that raw "score" that the numbers give us we must add the judgments of our sensibilities, our senses of many different subtle qualities that fall under the heading of "class participation". How much did the student care? How hard did he try? How serious was he? How willing was he to help others? How was his workshop-group performance? How much time did he give to his journal entries? These and other considerations must go into the process of turning that raw mathematical "score" into a final grade. And ultimately, as with

individual paper grades, this grading decision is one that you, the teacher, must make alone.

The question of giving a student an F, of failing a student, is painful, real, and must be faced. Flunking a student is difficult, especially if you know that the failing student has been trying hard to pass. It is not so difficult to write down the F for a student who has given up coming to class, or who seems not to care--but that desperate, struggling one, the one to whom your F means a blow to the dream of medical school or law school--that one is hard to fail.

I try not to have to fail such students. If a student looks as if he is in danger, I speak to him and recommend that he drop the course while he is able to, seek outside writing help, and pick it up again when he is able to pass. Most do drop if they see that there is no hope, but sometimes no advice helps the student cannot or does not drop, and I am forced--you will be forced--to write down that damning F.

Do we do it? Yes. To be fair to the other students, we must. Being able to force ourselves to do it is one of the meanings of the word "professional."

Evaluating Yourself

The teacher has to make final judgments about the students in the form of grades, but their judgments about you and your course, although important, are usually optional. Not all departments demand that teachers use student evaluation forms in their courses. While I know how threatening student evaluation can be, I still must strongly recommend it. I hate it too, but it has taught me a great deal and

allowed me to improve my course and teaching. Student evaluation forms should be filled out anonymously either as required homework or during class time on the last day of classes. Here are several forms I have used; you can choose questions from either one that seem helpful to you:

Evaluation Form A: (questions spaced to allow writing on ditto)

1. Was the content of the course adequate? Too narrow? Too broad? Explain.
2. What was the most useful assignment in the course? Explain.
3. The last useful assignment? Explain.
4. Was the book helpful? What were its strengths and weaknesses? Would you recommend it be used again?
5. Were the essays you wrote annotated to your satisfaction?
6. Was the revision policy helpful to you? Do you have any suggestions that might improve it?
7. Do you feel that the requirements of the course were excessive?
8. Was the instructor clear and distinct in class?
9. Did you find the in-class editing practice helpful?
10. Did the research paper/debate assignment seem useful to you?
11. Was the grading policy clear to you? Was it fair?
12. How helpful were the conferences? Would more/fewer be better?
13. General comments: amplify above answers or address unasked question

Evaluation Form B

EVALUATIVE SURVEY

This questionnaire is designed to provide your instructor and the English Department with information from students about the instructor's successes and your assessment of this course. Your thoughtful and honest responses are necessary so that the instructor can carefully assess his or her progress as a teacher while the Department assesses the nature of this course. We appreciate your participation and will, of course, request your privacy by encouraging you not to identify yourself on the questionnaire. After reading each of the items below, circle the point on the scale which best answers the question.

A. Instructor

1. Did the instructor meet his class regularly?

A	B	C	D	E
Always Present..				.Often Absent

2. How long did the instructor take to evaluate tests and assignments.

A B C D E
One Day Two Days Three Days Four Days Five Days

3. Did the instructor make oral or written comments and explanations on returned papers?

A B C D E
Always. Never

4. Were the comments and explanations on the paper helpful?

A B C D E
Very Helpful. Not Helpful

5. If you asked for a conference, did the instructor arrange for a mutually convenient meeting time?

A B C D E
Always. Never

6. Were the requirements of the course, and the weight of these requirements in determining the final grade, clearly presented?

A B C D E
Clearly presented. Not presented

7. Was there considerable agreement between the announced objectives of the course and what was actually taught?

A B C D E
Considerable Agreement. Little Agreement

8. In your opinion, has the instructor accomplished his or her objectives for the course?

A B C D E
Fully accomplished. Not Accomplished

9. Was the grading system clear?

A B C D E
Very Clear. Unclear

10. Did the instructor give specific guidance, in class, concerning assignments?

A B C D E
Always. Never

11. Were the assignments in the texts and other outside reading related to the subject matter of the lectures, discussions and in-class work?

A B C D E
 Always related. Never related

12. Did the instructor emphasize key points in lectures, discussions, and assignments?

A B C D E
 Strongly emphasized. Did not emphasize

13. Did the instructor use enough examples or illustrations to clarify the material?

A B C D E
 Ample. Insufficient

B. Course

1. Do you think English 100 has prepared you adequately for the writing you will do during the rest of your college studies?

A B C D E
 Fully prepared. Inadequately prepared

2. Do you think English 100 has adequately prepared you for the writing you will do after you leave College?

A B C D E
 Fully prepared. Inadequately prepared

3. How adequately has English 100 contributed to your ability to read with ease and understanding?

A B C D E
 Adequately. Inadequately

4. How adequately has English 100 contributed to your ability to analyze the statements of others?

A B C D E
 Adequately. Inadequately

5. How did English 100 affect your sensitivity to propaganda techniques in advertising, political statements, and/or other forms designed to persuade you?

A B C D E
 Great effect. No effect

7. How well did your teacher perceive your individual problems as a writer?

A B C D E
 Very well Not well

8. Do you feel more confident about writing now than you did at the beginning of the course?

A B C D E
 More Confident. Less Confident

9. How fully did your teacher respect your individual dialect even though you were encouraged to write in Edited American English?

A B C D E
 Fully. Not Fully

10. How experienced were you in writing exposition in themes, reports, or other forms before you entered English 100?

A B C D E
 Very experienced. Inexperienced

D. If you would like to make additional comments or clarify any of your answers, do so here:

Afterword

Your evaluations are read and digested; your grade cards are marked, signed, and turned in. Nothing remains but the stack of student Theme Folders and your faithful grade-book, filled with red and green and black hieroglyphs where previously only blank squares existed. Your first writing course is a memory; you will henceforth see those students only occasionally, accidentally, except for the few who will come back and report to you their triumphs and failures in other courses. The hardest part of it is over for you, and now, a seasoned veteran, you will soon be able to tell the nervous new teachers of next year not worry, that they'll do fine.

But do not fall victim to "sophomore solipsism"; you know much, but you do not know all. None of us does, and that is why every good writing teacher is a searcher, a listener, a learner. There are always farther reaches, new methods, untried paths, and we must be ever moving, for as soon as we stop searching for better ways to do our job we begin to stagnate. To stop growing is to begin to die. The succeeding chapters should help you in your search, but I hope you will go beyond them to look for yourself, that you will not take my word--that you will take anybody's word--as the final answer.

You have just entered what I think is the most vital and exciting field in the teaching of English. I hope that you find it so too. Welcome.

NOTES

¹I am indebted to the Ohio State University Basic Writing Workshop for this topic.

²Mina Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 2-3.

³Mary P. Hiatt, "Students at Bay: The Myth of the Student Conference," College Composition and Communication 26 (Feb. 1975), 38-41.

⁴Rosemarie Arbur, "The Student-Teacher Conference." CCC 28 (Dec. 1977), 338-342.

⁵Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 49-50.

⁶David Jones, "The Five-Minute Writing," CCC 28 (May 1977), 194-196.

⁷Mary H. Beaven, "Individualized Goal Setting, Self-Evaluation, and Peer Evaluation," in Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging ed. Charles H. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1977), p. 149.

⁸Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District, "Composition Rating Scale," in A Guide for Evaluating Student Composition ed. Sr. M. Judine (Urbana: NCTE, 1965), pp. 159-60.

⁹Alexander Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1877), pp. 118-211.

¹⁰Richard Larson, "Teaching Before We Judge: Planning Assignments in Composition," in Teaching High-School Composition ed. Gary Tate and Edward P.J. Corbett (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 212.

¹¹Some of the following material is from a valuable article by Edmund J. Farrell, "The Beginning Begets: Making Composition Assignments," in Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers ed. Richard L. Graves (Rochelle Park, N.J: Hayden Books, 1976), pp. 220-224.

¹²William F. Irmischer, Teaching Expository Writing (New York: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), pp. 69-71.

¹³CEEB Commission on English, Freedom and Discipline in English (New York: CEEB, 1965), pp. 92-96.

¹⁴Sharon Pianko, "A Description of the Composing Processes of College Freshman Writers," Research in the Teaching of English 13 (Feb. 1979), 20.

¹⁵Charles R. Cooper, "holistic Evaluation of Writing," in Cooper and Odell, Evaluating Writing, p. 3.

¹⁶Paul B. Diederich, Measuring Growth in English (Urbana: NCTE, 1974), p. 3.

¹⁷Richard L. Larson, "Training New Teachers of Composition in the Writing of Comments on Theems," CCC 17 (Oct. 1966), 152-55. This short article packs more good sense and useful advice into four pages than whole books often can into their entire lengths.

¹⁸Beaven, p. 139.

¹⁹Irmscher, p. 174.

²⁰Shaughnessy, p. 12.

²¹From Ohio State University Basic Writing Workshop, "Error Counting," unpublished handout (Columbus, Ohio: ditto, 1980).

²²Diederich, pp. 55-57.

²³Ibid, pp. 55-57.

²⁴T. A. Koclanes, "Can We Evaluate Compsotions?" in Tate and Corbett, Teaching High-School Composition, p. 268.

²⁵This form was used by the Ohio State University composition program in 1975 and 1976.

CHAPTER II

TEACHING INVENTION

Invention, which has traditionally meant in rhetoric a systematic search for persuasive arguments, has come to be a much broader term in composition classes today. In our time, invention has become the writer's search for his thesis, or central informing idea for a piece of writing, and all of his supporting material which will illustrate, exemplify, or prove the validity of the thesis. Invention is truly the central canon of rhetoric, the sine qua non of all of the other canons, and it has had an important place throughout the history of the discipline. Without content material, there can be no effective communication, and invention is the process that supplies writers and speakers with their content material.

Invention is particularly important in college writing courses, because it helps students to generate and select from material that they must write about.¹ These generative and selective processes are often difficult for students, many of whom have had little practice at such activity. When faced with a writing assignment, many students who have problems are troubled not by the lack of a subject or topic but rather by a seeming lack of anything important or coherent to say about the subject. Invention comes into play here, providing processes by which the student writer can analyze the assigned subject in order to discover things he can say about it.

For teachers, student difficulty with invention is sometimes hard to understand. Most teachers, if asked, can reel off four or five possible subjects for essays in almost any branch of humane learning, and when a subject is named, theses about that subject will pop into teachers' heads almost unasked for. "Nineteenth-century history? How about writing on the Battle of Gettysburg? Or the Monroe Doctrine? "Marketing? How about writing on the United Pricing Law? Or how about subliminal advertising?" Teachers, who have probably unconsciously assimilated several methods of inventive inquiry, see those code words-- "Monroe Doctrine," "subliminal advertising"--as starting points for many fascinating questions, many possible theses. The training and experience as teachers that we have had have made inventive inquiry an intuitive and almost automatic process for us.

For many of our students, however, such intuitive processes are not often available. Rather than a beginning, the Monroe Doctrine seems to students like an end. "Yeah, there was the Monroe Doctrine and it started the War of 1812 and so what? It's all in the history books. What can I do about it?" The subjects are buzz words; they sit like dead lumps in front of many students because the students lack the tools to take them apart and make them give up their secrets. All techniques of invention deal in subject-matter, not in creation of subjects; they are techniques of expansion and development rather than processes trying to create material out of nothing.

Invention as it will be discussed in this chapter will deal in three different but closely related elements: thesis statements, which provide a solid declarative sentence which serves as the backbone for an essay; subject matter, which fills out, expands, and amplifies the thesis; and arguments, a specialized form of subject matter consisting of persuasive demonstrations of points the writer wishes to prove. Some of the techniques here will work best for one or two of these elements, some for all three. The new teacher will see the tendencies of each technique easily, and you can then make your own decisions on what you want your students to be able to learn to do in the time you have. Before reviewing the techniques of invention, though, you should be aware of a few facts about invention as a whole.

There is a deep, almost schizophrenic split in the attitudes of composition teachers toward theories of invention. It is obvious to us that many of our students do desperately need some kind of systematic assistance in discovering theses, subject matter, and arguments, and yet nearly all teachers of composition are or have been writers and are thus painfully aware that, as Edward Corbett says about teaching classical topical invention, "I am not conscious of composing in any such systematic way."²

The fact is that most writers who have been seriously writing for any period of time have incorporated, at least subconsciously, some system of invention in the way they plan and carry out their writing. This knowledge is not necessarily very comforting, though, because as a result of our knowledge about the way we as experienced writers

compose, most of the theories and suggestions for teaching invention in this chapter will probably seem more or less artificial. Whether the inventive system we teach will make it from the stage of dreary conscious precepts to a useful, assimilated method of looking at problems is perhaps the central question we need to be aware of. It is a noble experiment, this making the tools of inquiry available to our students, and a difficult one, but if we leave our students with no new skills except those of rational inquiry, we have not done badly.

The discomfort with artificial systems is not new. The history of rhetoric is characterized by a continuing disagreement about the usefulness of systems and topics; it seems to be an argument as old as rhetoric itself.³ On the one hand we have the idealists, those rhetorical theorists who believed that there could be no meaningful communication unless the speaker or writer was broadly educated, trained in philosophy, morals, ethics, and politics, and of great natural intellectual ability. For a person of this order systems and topics might be secondarily useful, but subject matter would flow primarily from his meditations and wisdom rather than from any artificial systems of discovery.

On the other hand, the realists, whose greatest spokesman in Aristotle, were aware that not everyone who needs to communicate will have the broad educational background necessary to produce subject matter from personal resources. Many people need an external system that they can consult in order to probe their subjects and discover subject matter and arguments. They need to be held up until they can swim by

themselves.

The systems of invention in this chapter try to provide that assistance. It is obvious that freshmen as they come to us are, with few exceptions, far from the idealistic vision of a trained and generally educated rhetorician. Most freshmen have had very little serious practice in extended, coherent writing, and an appalling number of them cannot name two books they have read in the past year. Clearly many of our students are in need of training in invention; without some introduction to the techniques of discovering subject matter and arguments, they might flounder in a morass of vague assertions and unsupported, ill-thought-out papers all term. They need a system.

Even after this point is admitted, invention as a science is suspect in the eyes of many teachers, not only because it seems artificial and disconnected from the way that most experienced writers actually compose but because there is a feeling lurking in many liberal hearts that systems of invention, if they work, may be conducive to lock-step thinking. Unchanging methods of rhetorical analysis, applicable to any subject matter, smack a little of the Thought Police to some well-meaning teachers. They fear that systematic invention may remove all originality of thought from students, producing a new generation of Scholastic thinkers dedicated to discovering how many bureaucrats can doze on the head of a pin. To tell the truth, such fears have at times crossed my own mind.

They are, I think, unnecessary fears. Whichever of the following techniques a teacher uses, its success or failure will depend largely

upon his interpretation of it and his willingness to make his students work at absorbing it. There is no monolithic System of Thought promulgated by any of these systems of discovery. Teachers need not fear that they will turn out Neo-Schoolmen in ten or thirteen weeks. If we can introduce our students to a method or a few methods of developing their half-formed impressions into coherent discourses we will be doing them a service, not indoctrinating them.

Nearly all of the systems of invention covered in this chapter can be called heuristic systems. This term is uninviting but important, for it describes the sorts of things that the systems can and cannot do well. Janice Lauer, a contemporary rhetorical theorist, describes heuristic procedures in her important study of invention:

...a heuristic procedure will be defined as a conscious and nonrigorous search model which explores a creative problem for seminal elements of a solution. The exploratory function of the procedure includes generative and evaluative powers: the model generously proposes solutions but also efficiently evaluates these solutions so that a decision can be made. Heuristic procedures must be distinguished from trial-and-error methods which are non-systematic and, hence, inefficient, and from rule-governed procedures which are rigorous and exhaustive processes involving a finite number of steps which infallibly produce the right solution.⁴

Although the systems described here differ widely in their approaches, with few exceptions they fit Lauer's definition.

To help judge the heuristic procedures that this chapter contains, the reader can run each one through a set of questions that Lauer has recently developed to test heuristics. The three characteristics possessed by the best heuristic procedures, she says, are transcendancy,

flexible order and generative capacity. Put into simpler question form, the test of a heuristic model looks like this:

1. Can writers transfer this model's questions or operations from one subject to another?
2. Does this model offer writers a direction of movement which is flexible and sensitive to the rhetorical situation?
3. Does this model engage writers in diverse kinds of heuristic procedures?⁵

Before the reader chooses a system, he might try this model.

The seven systems in this chapter are all discrete; you can choose one and ignore the others, or you can try several concurrently or at different times. Since invention is such a central skill in composition, some system should probably be introduced near the beginning of the course--otherwise you may not have a coherent framework upon which to hang the other elements you teach. Some of these methods--pre-writing, freewriting, brainstorming--will continue to be practiced during class time, while others will be used at home after you have taught them and familiarized your students with them through exercises. Ideally, they will gradually be assimilated into the subconscious, recallable when needed.

Our goal as teachers of invention is ultimately to make these artificial systems of discovery so much a part of the way our students think about problems that they become second nature for students as they have for most teachers. Truly efficient writing is almost always done intuitively and then checked against models for

completeness and correctness at the revision stage. We cannot expect that this process of subconscious assimilation will be completed in ten or fifteen weeks but if a system of invention is conscientiously taught and practiced for that period of time, it will at least become a useful tool for the student to fall back upon for help in other classes, and eventually it may become part of his thought processes. So, at least, we hope.

As these techniques, many of which are quite modern, show, invention is the most important element in many of the "New Rhetorics" which have been invented within the last thirty years. We are living in a vital time for rhetoric, and invention is the most vital of the canons for most contemporary theorists. Teaching invention, and watching the gains your students make in their abilities to understand the world around them, can be extremely gratifying, for in teaching invention you will be providing not tired rules, but new methods of thought.

CLASSICAL INVENTION

The classical rhetorical system is sometimes perceived as a huge monolith of rules, precepts, and standards that sprang full-fledged from the brow of Aristotle and was handed down to us almost unchanged. This is far from the truth. As Edward P.J. Corbett points out, there is no single "classical rhetoric"; instead there are several systems, both Greek and Roman, that have coalesced into a body of knowledge we now call classical rhetoric.⁶ Whenever we speak of "classical" systems,

however, we should always remember that despite our convenient conflation, Aristotle's concerns were different from those of Cicero and that the casual use of the word classical here is for the sake of simplicity rather than precision. We will here be concerned with the classical tradition.

The tradition of classical rhetoric, as it grew from Aristotle to Cicero and then was codified by Quintilian, is the only "complete" system that we will deal with in this book and still remains one of the most definitive methodologies ever evolved by the Western mind. The rhetoric of the Renaissance was largely informed by it, and even the "epistemological" rhetoric of the eighteenth century is far less coherent as a system than is classical rhetoric in its finished form. The "New Rhetoric" of the twentieth century is still in its infancy, with many workable techniques but no informing paradigmatic structure.⁷ Many books have been devoted to analyzing and explaining the structure and usefulness of the classical rhetorical tradition, but for our purposes only a few elements of classical theory will be useful.

The two classical techniques that we will concentrate upon as aids to invention are the concept of the topics, or seats of argument, and that of status or stasis, a Latin term that involves a formula for determining the point at issue in any controversy. Both techniques can be used to conceptualize and formulate the single-sentence declarative thesis that usually constitutes the backbone of a freshman essay,⁸ and the topical system can be used as well to invent subject matter and arguments. It will be useful to remember that all classical

techniques were originally devoted to the creation of persuasive discourse and that classical invention works most naturally in an argumentative mode. It should not be expected to work as well for non-expository prose.

Status

The concept of status, which is not to be confused with the modern sense of the word meaning "place in the social order," has its origin in the legal system of ancient Rome, where it became necessary to be able to determine the point at issue in a court trial. The following formula was developed to assist in identifying the kind of issue upon which the trial hinged; it consisted of three questions that were asked about the subject:

An sit (Whether a thing is)--a question of fact

Quid sit (What a thing is)--a question of definition

Quale sit (Of what quality it is)--a question of quality

Edward Corbett's demonstration of status uses the example of a murder trial:

1. Did Brutus, as has been alleged, kill Caesar? (question of fact--whether a thing is)
2. If it is granted that Brutus did kill Caesar, was the act murder or self-defense? (question of definition--what it is)
3. If it was in fact murder, was Brutus justified in murdering Caesar? (question of quality--what kind it is)⁹

The best way to use status as an aid to invention is to consider the given subject--let us take the Monroe Doctrine and subliminal advertising as examples--in the light of the types of questions that can be asked about them. Since a thesis statement is always the answer to a tacit question, if we can find a fruitful question to ask, a thesis will follow. For instance, we could ask the following questions about the subjects mentioned in the Introduction:

The Monroe Doctrine

An sit--questions of fact

Did Monroe originate the Monroe Doctrine?

Did the Monroe Doctrine exist in 1812?

Does the Monroe Doctrine exist today?

Quid sit--question of definition

What is the Monroe Doctrine?

What does it state?

Is it formal part of U.S. policy?

Has it actually been invoked? When and How?

Does it have historical precedents?

Quale sit--question of quality or nature

Has the Monroe Doctrine been good for the U.S.?

Is it a moral or amoral policy?

Has it been useful in dealing with world communism?

Has it been useful in dealing with the Third World?

Should it be used in Cuba?

Should it be invoked in the future?

Is it an inherently imperialistic policy?

Subliminal Advertising

An sit--question of fact

Does subliminal advertising exist?

Does Blortschimitz Vodka use subliminal advertising?

Is subliminal advertising used on television? Does it work?

Quad sit--question of definition

What is subliminal advertising?

How does subliminal advertising work?

Which audiences are most affected by subliminal advertising?

What produces use subliminal advertising most often?

Who produces most subliminal advertising campaign?

Quale sit--question of quality or nature

Is subliminal advertising an immortal technique?

Is bypassing conscious will unique to subliminal advertising?

Is some subliminal advertising harmful?

What does subliminal advertising show about firms who use it?

These are obviously only some of the questions that can be raised by using the concept of status; there are many others possible and all a writer needs is one question whose answer intrigues him and he has a workable thesis.

The Topics

Aristotle is responsible for our first introduction to the topics or places of argument, but his doctrine was continued and amplified by the other classical rhetoricians. The topics were conceived of as actual mental "places" (the term itself comes from geography) to which the rhetorician could go to find arguments, presumably plucking them off the trees like apples and pelting his opponents with them. This system sounds like an extremely useful (almost magical, in fact) idea, but the system of topics as used by the ancients is too large, unwieldy, and specialized to be of direct use to composition today. Aristotle conceived of four "common" topics, that is, topics that could be used for almost any subject--(1) more and less; (2) possible and impossible; (3) past fact and future fact; (4) greater and smaller. He also spoke of as many as twenty-eight "special" topics that were to be used in more specialized types of argumentation. To try to teach the classical topics raw in a writing class is a mistake.

The system of the topics that I will describe here is a modern rearrangement of classical topical invention that is adapted from the work of Corbett, Duhamel, and a group of teachers at the University of Chicago.¹⁰ The topics as I will deal with them here are not so much places to go for ready-made arguments but are rather "a method of probing one's subject in order to find ways of developing that subject."¹¹ The four common topics that are most useful to students are definition, analogy, consequence, and testimony.

Definition The topic of definition involves the creation of a thesis by taking a fact or idea and expanding on it by the use of precise identification of its nature. The subject can be referred to its class or genus and the argument made that whatever is true of the genus is true of the species, i.e., "The expansion of the national debt is an inflationary policy"--and should therefore be classed with other inflationary policies. A less popular form of the topic of definition is "the argument from the word," the use of dictionary or etymological meanings to define things or ideas. Much as we all love our cheap OEDs from the Book-of-the-Month Club, etymological arguments are usually viewed today as sophistic and should therefore be avoided in most cases.

Analogy The topic of analogy is concerned with discovering resemblances or differences between two or more things, proceeding from known to unknown. It should always be kept in mind that no analogy is perfect and that we deal in probabilities, but analogy is a useful tool for investigating similarities and differences, comparisons and contrasts. A type of analogical reasoning is the argument from contraries or negative analogy--"The marijuana laws are unlike Prohibition." Although analogy is often thought of merely as a figure of speech, it is an important demonstrative tool as well.

Consequence The topic of consequence investigates phenomena in a cause-to-effect or effect-to-cause pattern, or in a pattern of "antecedent and consequent." The best use of consequence is in the prediction of

probabilities from patterns that have previously occurred--"Appropriation of all usable agricultural land led to the downfall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua." The topic of consequence is prone to two fallacies: one is the fallacy of post hoc ergo propter hoc--"after, therefore caused by," a logical error which must be guarded against. Just because one element precedes another in time does not mean that it is a cause. An extreme example of this fallacy might be, "The crossing of the Atlantic in a balloon led to the downfall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua." The other fallacy is claiming but not demonstrating a cause-and-effect relationship between two phenomena.

Testimony The topic of testimony relies on appeals to authority, some external source of argumentation. The authority could be an expert opinion, statistics, the law, etc. This topic is not as useful as it once was; our controversial age has produced so many conflicting authorities that all too often they cancel one another out. Still, testimony can be a good starting place for an argument.

Unlike some other systems of invention, the topics can be used to generate these, subject matter, and arguments. Let's look first at teaching the use of the topics in general and then familiarizing students with their use in generating arguments.

CLASSROOM USE OF CLASSICAL INVENTION

Classical invention takes some time to teach, but it is not as complex or difficult for students to manipulate as are some of the other techniques in this chapter. Teaching status as a device for arriving at thesis statements can be done in only a day or two, and students are often impressed when they are told the background of the technique--at last a high-level classical skill--and use it with enthusiasm after they learn to apply the different terms.

Start by putting a topic on the blackboard. You can use one of the two exemplified in the section on status, but only write down the topic itself at this point. Ask students to try to come up with questions concerning the topic, questions whose answers might be turned into thesis statements. (This exercise, of course, presupposes the fact that you have explained what a thesis statement is.) They will come up with several questions, which you should group into the three categories of an sit, quid sit, and quale sit. When you have exhausted the questions that the students can think of, ask them to try to figure out why you grouped their questions as you did. This can lead to a discussion of what sorts of questions create good thesis statements, and out of that discussion you can introduce the concept of status and explain the Latin terms under which you have grouped questions.

Hand out dittoed sheets that group questions around a topic in the way that was illustrated earlier in this section, and after discussion of what sorts of question fall into which categories, your students can

try to use status themselves. Point out first to them the general patterns that question openings group themselves into--the "did, does, is" for an sit, the "who, what, which, how," for quid sit, the "could, should, has, is," for quale sit. After they have seen these examples, assign subjects and ask students to use status to try to arrive at questions whose answers could become thesis statements. Give time for in-class writing of questions and then ask students to orally volunteer their questions. You can begin with carefully selected "rich" subjects, moving to more difficult ones as students gain confidence.

Once students have arrived at the questions, the next step is turning the questions into usable theses. Very often the answer to a question generated by status will be useable thesis, but the best theses are created by mixing together the answers to several questions arrived at under a given category of status. For instance, out of the four model questions listed under "subliminal advertising" in the earlier example of quale sit the answers can be conflated into a single useable thesis that can be well developed: "Firms which use the harmful and immoral technique of subliminal advertising show that they wish to bypass the conscious will of the consumer to force him to buy their products." Admittedly, this is stretching it a bit, but it does illustrate how theses are developed from status questions. This should probably be done on the blackboard and then by the students in class before you again ask for volunteers to read the theses they have created.

The acid test, of course, is whether students can formulate actual theses. The last step in teaching status is the assignment of several difficult topics with the demand that each student come up with five probable theses for each topic. If your students can do this, they have mastered status, and the only other test you may want to run is that of asking them for theses on a subject that they choose themselves. While it is not as complex and thorough as some of the other inventive techniques (most of which generate subject matter as well as theses), status is a useful tool that students can memorize and apply easily.

Teaching how to use the topics to generate thesis statements is a good way to get students used to them and will make other more complex teaching tasks easier. You can begin by giving a short historical rundown of how the system of the topics came to be in the form we use today and then giving a short definition of each topic similar to the short definitions I include here. You have to immediately back these definitions up with examples, though, or they will become just another bit of rhetorical arcana that the students will nod sagely at and then forget.

As Richard Weaver says, to have power "an argument must say something intelligible about the real world."¹² In teaching the topics, this means using examples. Good examples are to be had for this topical use by applying each topic to a definite subject and coming up with several thesis statements by use of that topic. I usually ditto off a sheet with these examples on it and pass it out to the class--it helps to have the examples in front of the students when they begin to create their own

theses. You won't find that drawing theses from the topics is difficult for you. Here is our old friend, the Battle of Gettysburg, quickly run through the topical-thesis mechanism:

Definition Definition always answers the question, "what is it or what was it?" asked in a variety of different contexts. The subject can be defined in its immediate context, or a larger context, in different stipulative settings, in space or in time or in a moral continuum. Here are some examples:

The Battle of Gettysburg was the longest battle of the Civil War.

The Battle of Gettysburg was a damaging defeat for the South.

The Battle of Gettysburg was a tragedy of errors in command on both sides.

The Battle of Gettysburg was a turning point for the Union.

Analogy Analogy always asks the question, "What is it like or unlike?" and the topic of analogy usually answers the question by explaining a lesser-known element in the context of a better-known element. Because of this explanatory nature, at least one side of the analogical topic statement is often historical or general, as in these examples

Gettysburg was a Pyrrhic victory for the Union.

The Battle of Gettysburg was for Lee what Waterloo was for Napoleon.

The Battle of Gettysburg was completely unlike the Battle of Shiloh in tactics. (negative analogy)

Pickett's Charge was the American version of the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava.

Cemetery Ridge was the Bunker Hill of the Civil War.

Consequence Consequence always answers the question, "What caused/causes/will cause it or what did cause/is it causing/will it cause?" It is a topic not to be taken lightly because even in a thesis statement it demands that the creator have traced out the chains of consequence leading to ends. Consequence can be either explanatory or predictive.

The Battle of Gettysburg lost the Civil War for the South.

Superior industrial capability allowed the Union to win the Battle of Gettysburg.

If Lee had won at Gettysburg, the South would have taken Washington and won the Civil War.

If Ewell had taken Cemetery Ridge, Lee would have won the Battle of Gettysburg.

The loss of life in Pickett's Charge caused the South to lose the Civil War.

Testimony Testimony always answers the question, "What does authority say about it?" The authorities can range from experts, to statistics, to eyewitnesses, to accepted wisdom.

Lincoln considered the Battle of Gettysburg to have been the most important battle of the Civil War.

The loss of over 20,000 men from each army crippling the South more than the North. (reliance on statistics)

Bruce Catton, the noted historian, called Gettysburg a black day for both sides.

Pickett's Charge was insanity, for it is only common sense not to charge up a fortified hill without a heavy advance bombardment.

Again, these are just a few of the possible theses available under each of the topical heads. It will be apparent to you that using the topics to create theses demands a more immediate knowledge of the subject than does the use of status. This phenomenon is partially due to the fact that topical theses are answers, not questions, but it is also due to the more specific nature of the topical breakdown of inquiry. Topical theses are not as easy to generate as questions from status, but there is less danger that students will get caught by a thesis that is too general. You can also see that some topics will be more fruitful than others in dealing with certain kinds of subjects. The topics of definition, analogy, and consequence are the most useful for thesis creation, while the topic of testimony is most naturally suited to the buttressing of already created theses.

So the topics are not magical formulae that can make something out of nothing, but they are useful in organizing unformed masses of information into thesis statements. I did not have more than a layman's knowledge of the Battle of Gettysburg when I came up with the thesis statements above, but after having created the theses I had a

much better idea where I needed to go to look up information that would support the theses.

Work through each of the topics in class in a way similar to the manner in which you introduced status. Passing out a dittoed sheet with the examples I have listed here of the topics in action on a subject is a good idea. Spend enough time on each of the first three topics (Testimony is a more specialized issue) to allow your students to digest the examples you provide and to see the process by which you arrive at the statements under each topic. This can sometimes take several days.

After you have explained the examples and shown how they are derived from the topics, give your students exercises in the form of assigned subjects upon which you ask them to use the topical system. The assignment is to come up with at least three theses under the heading of each topic. After this assignment has been written, either in class or as homework, ask the students to volunteer theses verbally in class. If they have been successful at that assignment, the next step is to ask them to come up with a paper subject from one of the other classes they are concurrently enrolled in, and apply topical thesis invention to that subject. They should be comfortable enough with the system at this point--often even openly pleased by it--to be able to reel off theses for other subjects without much trouble.

Using the topics to generate supporting subject matter follows thesis production readily. Once students have chosen their thesis out of the myriad possible ones the topical system offers, they are left with many other statements that are at least indicators of other informational lodes and where they may be found. Very often, after

choosing a thesis, a student can structure his essay around other possible thesis statements that he changes slightly to make them subordinate to the main purpose of the essay. If you have the time in class, a good exercise is to ask your students to put together a rough "topic-outline" of a projected essay by arranging as many of the theses they have generated (remind them that often they may have to change the direction of the theses slightly to subordinate them to the master-thesis) in an order that could be used to structure an essay.

What I have been describing here is a deductive use of the topics, in which the thesis statement is created and then subject matter is generated and arranged according to the perceived needs of the thesis. The topics can, of course, also be used inductively, to explore the subject and gather a mass of potential material, creating a thesis only after the subject material has been arrived at. To teach this sort of inductive use of the topics, it is only necessary to leave the whole area of thesis creation until after the topical system has been used by students to gather subject matter. You will find that they often cannot wait to begin to arrange the matter under a thesis and greet the stage of thesis creation with anticipation.

Thus far the uses of the topics we have discussed have been fairly simple; using the topical system to support argumentation is a somewhat more complicated task. The best description of classroom use of topical argumentation is found in the article, "Looking for An Argument," by Richard Weaver and a group of rhetoricians at the University of Chicago. The method that follows is adapted from the system described by Weaver.¹³

At this point your students should be comfortable with the idea of topics and able to manipulate them fairly well. To introduce Weaver's topical arguments, once again it is necessary to give the students examples of their use. You can usually find several good examples of arguments from definition, analogy, etc. in any of the widely-used freshman readers. Classify the passages by topic, ditto them off and hand them out to your students so that they can see the new angle from which they will have to view the use of the topics. When you have gone over the ditto sheets, try this exercise:

Choose three propositions that are simple, fairly clear, and controversial, at least to some degree. They can often be chosen from current news events and can involve political opinions. Ask your students to use the topics to write short supporting statements for each proposition as homework, and during the next class convene the workshop groups or have students exchange papers with their classmates and try to identify the use of specific topics in the work of the other person.

The next steps are optional; they take a good deal of time and energy and may ask for more of an investment than you are willing to make. After simple manipulation of topical arguments, expose your students to writings that make use of complex and combined arguments. These are the classic persuasive pieces--Federalist #10, Civil Disobedience, A Modest Proposal. These essays have to be carefully dissected in class, and the arguments they use have to be pointed out in all their intertwined complexity. Only after students have been

exposed to topical argumentation in its most developed form are they then given the long persuasive assignments which are the final goal of topical argumentation. This chapter, though, is not the place for a detailed exposition of classical persuasive techniques.

Classical invention in its simplified form can be very satisfying to teach. You are aware of a tradition of education that is as old as any in Western culture, and students are often impressed by it as well. It is not difficult to impart, and is easy enough for students to memorize that they can carry it with them for use in other classes. It is neither the simplest nor the most complex system, but it has both a charm and a comprehensiveness that make it one of the most attractive.

KENNETH BURKE AND THE PENTAD

Kenneth Burke has been in his long life, a poet, short-story writer, music critic, book reviewer, translator (the first English translator of both Mann and Spengler, amazingly), novelist, literary critic, professor, magazine editor, social commentator, essayist, researcher, teacher at at least fourteen different colleges and universities, and rhetorician. He is the author of numerous books of all sorts and is one of those rare men whose analytic and syntehctic work is equally brilliant.

Beginning in the early 1950's, awareness of Burke's essays on the analysis of literature and the meaning they might have for rhetoric began to penetrate Departments of Communication (or Speech Departments, as

they were called then), and gradually spread to practitioners of rhetoric and composition in English Departments, where Burke had previously been known only as a brilliant but somewhat obscure literary critic. Burke's reputation grew, and for some years now, Burke and his analytical invention, the dramatistic Pentad, have been on the lips of specialists in the teaching of writing.

Burke calls his central method of analysis "dramatism," (the Pentad is sometimes called "the dramatistic Pentad") because "it invites one to consider the matter of motives in a perspective that, being developed from the analysis of drama, treats language and thought primarily as modes of action."¹⁴ This idea of "language as symbolic action" runs throughout Burke's critical and rhetorical work, leading to a method of literary analysis that concentrates on what a work does to its audience and a rhetorical outlook that is far from idealistic or rarified--Burke refers to social communicative situations as *The Human Barnyard*.

Burke's rhetoric is heir to that of Aristotle in many ways, particularly in the insistence of both men on awareness of the nature and needs of the audience. Burke has said that "wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning' there is 'persuasion.'"¹⁵ If this seems to enlarge the field of rhetoric to include all human actions, that is exactly what Burke means it to do; his investigation of linguistic phenomena range from Shakespeare to Hitler's Mein Kampf to advertising jingles, all of which he considers rhetoric: "the use of language in such a way as to produce a desired impression on the reader or hearer."¹⁶

Kenneth Burke's primary contribution to invention is his Pentad. Burke first introduced the pentad in A Grammar of Motives as a device for the analysis of literature. Simply put, it is a list of five terms that can be used as principles of invention. They are as follows:

Act
 Scene
 Agent
 Agency
 Purpose

Burke explains the genesis of these terms in the Introduction to A Grammar of Motives:

In any statement about motives, you must have some work that names the act (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the scene (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also you must indicate what person or kind of person (agent) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (agency) and the purpose.¹⁷

As William Rueckert has suggested, Burke feels that the stress on act characterizes the realists; the stress on scene, the materialists; the stress on agent, the idealists; the stress on agency, the pragmatists; and the stress on purpose, the mystics--with whom Burke identifies.¹⁸

The most immediately obvious quality of the Pentad is its resemblance to the journalistic formula of "What, Where, Who, How, Why?" It has, however, become an accepted dogma that the Pentad differs from the journalistic formula because of a further development of Burke's, the "ratios" between elements in the Pentad. "Simple as it

appears," says Richard Young, "Burke's procedure is capable of far more complex analyses. The terms and their references can be combined in various ratios (e.g., act-scene, act-purpose, act-agency), ten ratios in all being possible. The relationships revealed in analyses using the ratios often provide original and important insights into behavior."¹⁹

In the hands of Kenneth Burke, perhaps they do, but in the hands of most mere mortals the ratios are not very useful. I state this with no small amount of trepidation; nearly all of the commentary on Burke's rhetoric mentions the ratios: how fruitful they make the Pentad and how clearly they differentiate Burke's Five Points from the journalists'. Disparaging the ratios seems a cardinal sin. But in fact, analysis is not the same as invention, and Burke meant the ratios to be analytical; in fact, he uses them sparingly himself in his own literary analyses; in fact, they are little understood, as is evidenced by Burke's own examples of their use being repeated by nearly all of his commentators (new examples seem hard to come by); in fact, I've never seen them usefully taught in a composition classroom; and in fact, as Frank O'Hare has pointed out, the journalistic terms can be said to have "ratios" as well.²⁰

The ratios are a Holy Mystery of rhetoric. Sometimes in our eagerness to prove that we do after all have genuine subject matter in composition teaching, we have gone chasing wills-o'-the-wisp, and the ratios seem to be one such case. Everyone knows the term and no one questions its reality, but every attempt to use the ratios in composition teaching has resulted in vagueness about what they are and

what they can do for invention. The facts are that some of Burke's concepts appear to be useful only in his hands and that the use of the ratios has never been defined satisfactorily for use in writing classes.

CLASSROOM USE OF BURKE'S PENTAD

The criticism above should not suggest that the Pentad is not useful in the writing classroom. On the contrary, it is one of the easiest heuristics to teach and can be easily remembered by students. Several different sorts of invention activity can be carried on using the Pentad, but each one must be carefully described to students, because the Pentad is only a collection of terms until students are taught how to manipulate it.

For a relatively limited sort of invention that is best used in classes discussing works of literature, W. Ross Winterowd has evolved a use of Burke's terms that can be helpful in the analysis of a piece of writing.

Here is his adaptation of the terms of the Pentad:

What does it say?	(Act)
Who wrote it?	(Agent)
In what source was it published?	(Agency)
Where and When was it published?	(Scene)
What is its purpose?	(Purpose)

These questions can be expanded upon in order to generate material about the text and its meaning, and are useful in a literature class if the students are being asked to generate material responsive to a text. Response-to-text assignments are not nearly as common, however, as they often seem to most of us, who have been trained in literature; they are really only a small part of the universe of discourse with which students must be able to deal. Fortunately, the use of the Pentad can be expanded to generate many disparate kinds of subject matter.

The most complete adaptation of Burke's terms for use in general invention has been done by William Irmischer, who in his Holt Guide to English of 1972 compiled fifteen questions which were divided into Burke's five categories. Irmischer's use of Burke is not a method of inventing thesis statements or single declarative statements; what it is best used for, as Irmischer says, is "accumulating a mass of material" on subjects, gathering subject matter in the form of supporting propositions or kernel thoughts.²²

Irmischer's questions run thus:

Action--to generate thoughts about an action ask:

1. What happened?
2. What is happening?
3. What will happen?
4. What is it?

Actor-Agent--to generate thoughts about an agent ask:

1. Who did it? Who is doing it?
2. What did it?
3. What kind of agent is it?

Scene--to generate thoughts about a scene ask:

1. Where did it happen? Where is it happening?
2. When did it happen?
3. What is the background?

Means-Agency--to generate thoughts about an agency ask:

1. How was it done?
2. What means were used?

Purpose--

1. Why?

These questions can be dittoed and handed out to your students. While this approach to the Pentad is by no means the only one possible, it is representative of the methods writing teachers use to put the code words of the Pentad into a form that students can use. Unlike other techniques of invention, this one is so simple and schematic that it takes little teaching on your part. Once the students are exposed to the terms and the questions, they are more or less on their own. Your primary task as teacher will be to assist your students in distinguishing which of the terms of the Pentad will be most useful when applied to the subject at hand.

If a student runs a subject through all of the questions suggested by Pentad, faithfully jotting down an answer to each question, he will generate much more information that he can usually use (or at least use well, in a coherent essay). Our pet subject of subliminal advertising, for instance, can be put into a perspective of any of the five terms,

and seen as primarily an action, or in terms of who does it, or where it is done, or the technical means by which it is accomplished, or the purpose behind it. Your task as a teacher of the Pentad will be to assist your students in figuring out how much information they need for an essay and what Pentad questions will most helpfully assist them in mining it.

As always when teaching invention, use of the blackboard to provide examples of the technique in action is a good idea. Run a few subjects through the Pentad for your students before you ask them to try manipulating it themselves. You may find, as I did, that students can use the Pentad well to provide subject-based questions and material, but that other important elements of rhetorical purpose are not so well served by it.

Considerations of audience and arrangement of material are not natural parts of the inventive system of the Pentad, and it will be your responsibility to hammer away at those two realities. Determining the purpose of his own essay and arranging the gathered material into coherent form are the jobs you will have to help your student with. Using the Pentad can provide a large harvest, but the crop has to be husked before it can be used.

Burke's stock is not as high right now among teachers of composition as it was in the halcyon days of the early Seventies, when a real New Rhetoric seemed just around the corner. In his survey of invention in Teaching Composition, Richard Young expresses surprise

that there are no composition texts based on Burke's dramatic method and rhetorical theories,²³ but the fact is that outside of the dramatic method and the terms discussed here, Burke's work has not proved to be as practically usable as we once thought it could be. Despite the undoubted genius of Burke in the realm of literary criticism, his theories have not made the leap to prescription very well. There is no Burkean rhetoric text because so much of Burkean rhetoric can only be manipulated by the man himself.

PREWRITING

The term prewriting has recently begun to be applied by the composition profession to all forms of activity that precede actually putting pen to paper to begin the first draft. I prefer the more ancient and formal term of invention, a term which allows us to narrow our reference for the term prewriting to its original use. Prewriting is a theory of invention and teaching developed by Michigan State University in the early Sixties by D. Gordon Rohman and Albert O. Wlecke and modified by them and by other teachers over the next ten years.

Rohman and Wlecke's work first appeared in 1964, and was partially a result of the influence of the education theorists whose ideas informed many disciplines in the early part of that decade--Jerome Bruner, G. A. Austin, William J.J. Gordon. These are the men whose work is largely responsible for the "new education" movement that

climaxed in the early Seventies; their theories are behind the "new math" that baffled so many students (and their parents) and are also the basis for Prewriting. Rohman quotes a telling passage from Bruner: "...the way to make schooling 'count' is to give students an understanding of the fundamental structure of whatever subjects they take."²⁴ In the new math, fundamental structure included set theory and base-seven subtraction; in Prewriting the attempt is to teach the fundamental structure of thinking that leads to writing.

The major complaint made by Rohman and Wlecke about the teaching of composition was that teachers only taught the standards of correct writing and that "a knowledge of standards is not enough to produce good writing."²⁵ This emphasis on product only told a student what was good or bad about his writing effort; it did not help or teach him to make that effort. Rohman saw more emphasis on the process of writing as the answer to the problem, and thus Prewriting is concerned with the kinds of thought and the reactions to experiences that go into creative response and good writing.

Prewriting, then, seeks to promote the process of self-actualization in the student. Rohman defines "good writing" as "the discovery by a responsible person of his uniqueness within his subject,"²⁶ and his definition of a responsible person is one who "stands at the center of his own thoughts and feelings with the sense that they begin in him. He is concerned to make things happen...he seeks to dominate his circumstances with words or actions."²⁷

Prewriting as a theory claims that writing in general consists of two contexts--the "subject context" of objective material that can be found in encyclopedias, stuff that is essentially inert and manipulable, and the "personal context," in which a writer finds that "combination of words which make an essay his." Prewriting is mainly concerned with the personal context of writing. Rohman feels that if a student can "isolate the principle that underlies all writing," then a subject will be easily found and exploited.²⁸

Within limits, we know that the techniques of Prewriting work. Rohman and Wlecke tested their theories in a sophomore-level writing course and found that Prewriting classes produced writing that was "more original" than the writing of control classes.²⁹ Whether techniques of self-actualization and process-thought that worked for elective sophomore classes in the early Sixties will work for required freshman classes in the Eighties is an open question. In my experience, more freshmen are concerned with passing the course than with discovering their uniqueness within their subjects. Prewriting assumes an interest in written self-expression on the part of students that is often hard to find in freshman composition classes, and it has suffered from the back-to-basics movement.

Despite the reactionism of back-to-basics (which, like any reactionary movement, has both salutary and destructive effects), the techniques of Prewriting have much of value to offer to a teacher willing to experiment with them. Our task here is to encourage that delicate balance between the self-indulgent personalizing of the total process-orientation and the fearful, unimaginative conventionality of those who worship only rules and product.

CLASSROOM USE OF PREWRITING TECHNIQUES

Because so much of Prewriting is classroom-based, this section will be longer than most Classroom Use sections in this chapter. It will be helpful to look critically for a moment at the philosophical position taken by the Prewriting theorists in order to understand the nature and tendencies of their techniques. Rohman and Wlecke said in their research monograph that "Ours is what might be called an existential approach to composition: In effect, we are seeking an image of man within the process that mobilized the 'mechanisms' of problem-solving."³⁰ This emphasis on the existential self, leads to an emphasis on the process of thought and on personal writing that are both strengths and weaknesses in Prewriting as a method of invention. They are strengths in that they point out the sterility of any rules-based system that concentrates only on the product of writing, ignoring the composing process which is vital to the writer. These emphases are weaknesses because the writing processes they seek to explore do not necessarily fit usefully into a ten- or thirteen-week composition course. As Richard Young points out, Prewriting concentrates on personal writing to such a degree that it often ignores the needs of the audience. It produces informal essays easily, but it has a harder time moving to the assigned, subject-based discourse demanded by college and the professions.

Prewriting's emphasis on personal experience that also runs the risk of shortchanging the "subject context" as Rohman calls it. He

admits that "our classrooms have had a much higher degree of permissiveness in the things allowed to be written than is usually the case in writing courses."³¹ He is aware that Prewriting does not represent a complete course in writing; Prewriting, says Rohman, produced in his study that kind of writing

which immediately follows the discovery of fresh insight; it was not necessarily a kind of writing suitable to all possible occasions for written discourse. We believe, however, that writing grounded in the principle of personal transformation ought to be the basic writing experience for all students at all levels.³²

That statement, so redolent of the Sixties in its certainty that personal transformation could be accomplished and was the key to real writing, now seems somewhat optimistic. The "new education" movement produced a backlash, the "back-to-basics" movement whose insistence is that the rules are what is important to learn, not the processes from which the rules are derived. Composition teachers today must meet the demand that their students be turned out able to write on assigned subjects; the market for self-actualized beings is slow. Nevertheless, Prewriting techniques can be adapted in many ways and can be extremely helpful in teaching invention. Let us examine them.

Rohman and Wlecke used three main techniques: the journal, the meditation, and the analogy. Clinton S. Burhans, their colleague at Michigan State, later created several other techniques, two of which are included here: free association and the categorical list. I have included them here, along with several other Prewriting-type techniques.

The Journal

Rohman and Wlecke are largely responsible for the tremendous leap in popularity that journal-writing made during the Sixties in English classes. For some years a journal became the staple requirement for many courses. The journalistic craze has died down in literature courses to some degree, but it is still strong in composition courses. The journal is not a systematic technique of invention so much as it is a repository of material and concepts that can be made into essays and other discourses.

In order to allow student to get the most from journal-keeping, a careful preparation and an introduction to the art of the journal are necessary. First, it is important to acquaint your students with what a journal is. If you fail to be specific about this, you'll get little but diary entries--"Got up at 7:30, went to the commons for breakfast, saw Diane. Went to Bus. Math, course a bore, prof a wimp. Had lunch with Marc..." etc. etc. ad nauseum. Students have to be shown, and then convinced, that a journal is a record of a mind and its thoughts rather than a body and its movements. One good way of demonstrating this is by the use of excerpts from the journals of good writers; Rohman likes Thoreau; I have known people to use Pepys, Virginia Woolf, Hawthorne, Anais Nin. Once a student sees how essentially lame an activity diarizing is when compared to journal-keeping you will have to deal with fewer fascinating accounts of trips to Cleveland to see Kiss.

Along with familiarizing the students with the best in journals, a list of questions or suggestions that will provide them with subjects to explore is helpful. Rohman and Wlecke used the following list:

- a. What sensory details have been most vivid in your experience the last few weeks--details that you have enjoyed, details that have bored or disgusted you?
- b. Are you self-sufficient? Have you lost a former feeling of self-sufficiency?
- c. Did you ever hold an unpopular opinion or belief? With what result?
- d. Are you afraid of being alone? Afraid of thinking? Afraid, in irrational ways, of other people?
- e. How does your city street or a corner in your small town look in summer on a Sunday morning, a Saturday morning, a Monday morning, a Saturday afternoon, a Saturday night? On a cold winter night, on a morning in early spring, on a raw November afternoon?
- f. How does a farm look in the opulence of midsummer, in a dry season, in heavy rains, at morning, noon, and evening in the same season and weather; in spring, summer, autumn winter?
- g. What surroundings stimulate you? Depress or annoy you? Why?
- h. What basic attitude to religion or morals has been the prevailing one in your own family? What attitude to work? To money? To the different attitudes of some other family? In what situations have you seen these attitudes appear?
- i. What beliefs, notions, or preferences of yours are really irrational prejudices, instead of basic principles? What or whom do you dislike for no sound reason? On what subjects do you rationalize? By what processes?
- j. Have you ever discovered from specific experience that friends change? That the home town doesn't stay the same? That a time comes when you wait between two worlds, the past and the future?

I have had success from passing out dittoed copies of the following list from Joseph Comprone's book From Experience to Expression:

1. Put your ongoing responses to course readings in your journal. Begin by recording your immediate reactions. Every once in awhile go back and write a few paragraphs that pull together the immediate reactions and form more unified, overall impressions.

2. Be sure to try at least a few observation exercises. You are a professional writer on the lookout for material. Just take notes on what you see, be concrete and try to observe from several different perspectives.

3. Include some personal feeling entries. Describe how an experience makes you feel inside. Try to find words and a style that you think accurately convey feelings to your readers. Don't just say that something made you feel gloomy. Actually show in words how it feels inside to be gloomy.

4. Rewrite your descriptions of objects and people every once in awhile. For example, if you've observed and objectively described some person, try rewriting that description in more subjective language. Feel free to tell what you think of this person along with the objective detail. Imagine yourself a vase or a glass of milk. How do you feel?

5. Try writing a longer journal entry in the style of your favorite sports columnist, editorialist or political columnist. Better yet, write a series of fictional "Dear Abby" columns into your journal, letters and all.

6. Record your passing observations of current events--elections, local issues, general public events. Try to include entries from different perspectives, in varying styles.

7. Record little language tidbits that you find interesting or instructive. A particularly apt advertising slogan, a clever piece of irony you overheard at a party or in the student union, a short, descriptive poem or an excerpt from a popular song. Occasionally you might attach an explanation to what you record telling just why you like the selection.

8. Write some letters that you'll never send in your journal. A note introducing yourself to a classy girl you saw only briefly. An ironic note to a store clerk or college official that you feel treated you rudely. A "beef" letter to a public official or a teacher about some bothersome rule, convention or official policy.

9. You may discover as you begin your journal that one theme keeps recurring as you write. Maybe you are constantly referring to particular kinds of people. Perhaps you enjoy sketching in busy department store more than anything else. Maybe you are interested in students rights, in how you are treated as a second-class citizen because you are a student. Then force yourself to make at least one entry, no matter how small, on that subject everyday. You might want to boil down all your entries into a single expository essay as the class comes to an end.³³

It is important not to use so many questions that the students never have to grope for a sense of their own will to write something; questions and suggestions can be a crutch. When you introduce the questions, stress the fact that you expect your students to move beyond them to more self-directed writing.

Perhaps the central problem with a journal for freshmen is their tendency to rely on ready-made opinions, pre-manufactured wisdom, clichéd concepts. Many freshmen have not even begun to question their parents' norms and will repeat the most appalling prejudices as if they had invented them. You have to face this reliance on secondhand thought by demanding that they be as concrete in their actual entries as possible. Discourage generalizing and opinionizing unless the opinion can be tied to some actual experience in their lives. (This is, after all, just good argumentation--no assertions without concrete support.) Comprone's "observation exercises" are particularly good at eliciting

sometimes startlingly concrete and well-observed vignettes.

The question of whether or how to grade or evaluate journals is a sticky one. As Rohman and Wlecke observe, the journal situation is a sort of double bind; students are expected to write sincerely, presumably for themselves, yet they know that the instructor will see everything in the journal.

There is no easy way out. The best compromise measure that has been found is to treat journals with much more circumspection than papers while still evaluating them according to minimal standards. I never put marks of any kind in journals except for a date after the last entry; if anything needs to be said it is said on sheets of paper inserted into the journal. At times you will find an entry directed to you--I consider that license to reply. Try to treat each journal as the product of a person with a right to privacy and to a sympathetic understanding, and realize that you are a privileged reader.

The sheer bulk of the journals for a whole class means that you cannot go over each entry as carefully as you do students' papers (another good reason why marking up journals is to be avoided), but at the same time that you allow journal-writers room you cannot appear uninterested, or allow students to merely slide by with a few sentences each night. Human nature being what it is, your success at motivating journal-writing will be based, at least initially, on coercion. If the students suspect you of merely collecting and not reading their journals they will slack off accordingly, and the journal, if not kept habitually, is a useless exercise.

I employ a purely formal requirement for this coercion, generally demanding at least two-thirds of a large spiral notebook page for each day of the term. Not all entries need be that long--the requirement can be applied with flexibility--but the final length of all entries taken together must show a good-faith attempt to produce that many lines. I ask the students to date each entry, which has a tendency to make the writing of each entry a habit; honest dating also prevents the mad-night-before-journal-is-due scribbling of twenty-five entries with a number of different colors of ink for realism (an activity which is twice as much work as doing one entry a night). I collect the journals at least every four weeks, note whether the journalist is keeping up, and return them dated.

Some students enjoy keeping and learn from a journal, keep at it after the course is over, write fascinating entries, and generally uphold process-oriented theories of writing. Others hate it, see the journal as useless drudgery, write entries that are short, bland, and clichéd, squeak by with as little work as possible in the journal, and on the way out of the last conspicuously drop their returned journals into the wastebasket with a loud, satisfying BANG. There is nothing to be done. Some students learn from it; some are determined not to. The journal experiment is worth the effort for those who benefit from it; and those who do not are not harmed.

The Meditation

Rohman and Wlecke created the Meditation form from several different sources, all of them religious. It is what they call a "puzzle form"--a technique for recasting a difficulty with minimum personal definition into the terms of a 'puzzle' in which there is a set of givens and a set of procedures."³⁴ The actual technique is from the stage of preparation for religious meditation and is called "the composition of place." It can be used for both concrete and abstract subjects but works best when the subject is physical, concrete.

Like many prewriting techniques, the meditation is concerned with linking the general with the specific, the imagined with the actual. Meditation technique asks the student to concentrate on providing a concrete representation of the subject being meditated, some sensuous reaction to it, some "concrete similitude" that can make the subject appear realer. The example that Rohman provides is from actual theology: to meditate on Christ's coming, the petitioner is asked to concentrate on the spot itself, the stable where Jesus was born. There are, of course, non-theological subjects that the meditation can be used for. For instance:

arson--the smoldering ruins of an apartment building with
all of their pathetic traces of the occupants.

inflation--the discouraged young married couple coming out
of a bank after being told they cannot afford a
home of their own.

The Battle of Gettysburg--the soft green rolling grassland of Cemetery Ridge the day before the battle and the day after.

The Monroe Doctrine--a Yankee blockade runner in 1810 skirting the coast of Maine.

unit pricing--a confused housewife standing in the shopping aisle of the market wondering which size of a product is least expensive.

It is obvious from these examples that the meditation is not an all-purpose technique because it supplies only physical material. The meditation assignment used by Rohman and Wlecke was a 500-word essay on "Loneliness," in which students were told not to conceptualize but rather to begin by asking themselves personally relevant questions: "How is it when I am lonely? What do I see, hear, taste, when I am lonely? What situation stands out in my memory as the loneliest of my life?" After these personal questions were dealt with, the students were told to apply these new understandings to an analysis of the meaning of loneliness and to write their essays from the material their questions had generated.

Using the meditation in your own class does not take a great deal of preparation. Introduce your students to it orally, perhaps with a supplementary handout containing examples of its use like those above. Spend some class time discussing how the composition of place can be used to create material, and then ask students to write meditations on subjects you assign. It is not generally worthwhile in most composition courses to spend more than a day or two on the meditation.

Rohman and Wlecke went on to apply more complex structures of the meditation to writing, but the most immediate use of the techniques is in the composition of place. As we can see, the meditation is not terribly useful in situations calling for non-personal or non-narrative writing. It does not easily generate theses, but it can be used to generate interesting supporting matter for these already generated. It is primarily a supplementary technique, and its only danger is that it can evoke too much personalism if not used carefully in a subject context.

The Analogy

The use of analogy in Prewriting has some similarities to the classical topic of analogy, but it is really a good deal less structured in use than the topic. Rohman and Wlecke felt that their students had too little developed their "personal matrices" as opposed to "subject matrices" and as a result tended to react in predictable or hackneyed ways. The use of analogy as a relational device would, they hoped, improve this situation.

In order to teach analogy and invention, Rohaman and Wlecke developed what they call "The Paradigm of Compose and Refer." After an introduction to the concept of the analogy as an informative tool and not just as a rhetorical ornament, the students were given a number of examples of extended analogies used in discourse. Then, after being given the subject "Mind" for a 500-word essay, they were told to use a concrete analogy to organize and develop their essays. Using the

Paradigm of Compose and Refer, the routine went like this:

The students were first asked to compose, using the meditation technique, the specific concrete details suggested by their perspective analogy. The example Rohman uses is "the ocean," and the composition would include the physical details of rippling waves, strange fish from the depths, etc. These physical properties were listed on one side of a piece of paper under the heading "World of Perspectives."

Next the students were asked to refer this list of physical details to the original subject, asking questions about possible connections, resemblances, likenesses. Questions to be asked were: "How is a wave like anything in the mind? What could correspond to the strange fish from the depths?" etc. The resemblances discovered among were listed on the other side of the page of paper under the heading "World of Subject." While exploring these connections, students were asked to keep a list of "Metaverbalizings," phrases which mingled words from both lists. An abbreviated version of the results looked like this:

World of Perspective: Ocean

1. waves rippling
2. currents, brief currents in a bay, great ocean currents like the Gulf Stream, sparkling currents under sunlight
3. unsounded depths, sunken treasure
4. mysterious, murky depths squirming with strange creatures

World of Subject: Mind

1. thoughts, ideas passing over the surface of consciousness
2. Emotions, passing emotions, anger, guilt, joy, etc., permanent emotions, ambition, love; sparkling feelings of laughter
3. The hidden potential of a man's untested virtue, creative imagination waiting to be provoked
4. the suppressed destructive emotions revealed by modern psychology, anger, lust, jealousy, the bathosphere of the analyst's couch

5. deep-sea fishing

5. deep thinking: struggling for self-understanding; struggling to capture an idea, smelly ideas

Possible Thesis: Trying to understand one's mind is like fishing in a mysterious, unpredictable, sometimes frightening, sometimes placid ocean.

Metaverbalizings: the ripple of an idea, the rising tide of ambition, the underwater light of dreaming, the treacherous reefs of unacknowledged guilt, etc.³⁵

There are two dangers associated with the use of this technique. The first is that students will use the lists composed as the actual outline of the essay, which results in a boring and mechanical paper which goose-steps from one side of the analogy to the other until it collapses. The other danger is that the student will elaborate on the analogy in such detail that it becomes only a witty mind-game rather than a structural device. Warn your students against both of these courses of action early.

The Prewriting analogical technique has a very useful, if limited, part to play in the array of inventive techniques. It is excellent to use as an early assignment, "priming the pump" of invention and giving the students self-confidence about their own inventive abilities. Again, like most Prewriting techniques, it cannot be applied to all subject and thus needs to be stressed as having only limited applicability to subject-based writing.

Free Association

Free association is perhaps the least structured of all the Prewriting-type techniques. It is suggested for use by Clinton S. Burhans, an associate of Rohman and Wlecke at Michigan State. In his

book The Would-Be Writer, Burhans claims that free association is a good method of unlocking the often unknown mass of material stored in the minds of freshman writers.³⁶ Instead of a whined complaint that "I can't think of anything to write about," the user of free association will soon be complaining about an embarrassment of riches, that there are too many things to write about.

A technique liberally adapted from Freud's psychoanalytic device of "chimney-sweeping," free association consists simply of focusing the mind on one specific object and letting it go from there, roaming freely around the object and writing down a list of words, phrases, and clauses that are suggested by the object. The result will either be a completely unrelated listing of things or a structure with at least an implicit pattern, which can be used as the starting place for the structure of an essay.

You can teach free association by first providing a physical object for your students to free-associate about. (I use a strangely-shaped planter that I found at an auction which looks like a giant molar.) Ask your students to study it for ten minutes and jot down a list of their reactions. Next, have them choose one or several of the elements on the list and enlarge on them in a short essay. This activity is best done as a homework assignment. Free-association has limited uses in discourse that is based in abstraction, but it is a good tool for freeing up students' inventiveness and showing them that they do have a great deal of potential material within them.

Brainstorming

Free association in a somewhat more structured form is often called "Brainstorming," and it is the method used in actuality by most professional and academic writers. It is not in the canon of official Prewriting techniques (if there is one), but fits in most naturally in this section of inventive theory. The main difference between free association and brainstorming is that in brainstorming, the subject can be abstract as well as concrete; the process of selection of what to list is also usually more rigorous in brainstorming.

The technique of brainstorming is simple. The brainstormer decides on a subject, sits down in a quiet place with pen and paper, and writes down everything that comes into his mind about the subject. Alex Osborne codified the main rules of brainstorming in the late Fifties:

1. Don't criticize or evaluate any ideas during the session. Simply write down every idea that emerges. Save the criticism and evaluation until later.
2. Use your imagination for "free wheeling." The wilder the idea the better, because it might lead to some valuable insights later.
3. Strive for quantity. The more ideas, the better chance for a winner to emerge.
4. Combine and improve ideas as you proceed.³⁷

The brainstormer writes down ideas until he has seemingly exhausted the motherlode. (Invariably, the lode is not really mined out, and new aspects, arguments, or ideas pop up throughout the writing.)

At this point, the writer either tries to structure the list in some way--by recopying it in a different order, or by numbering the items, crossing some out, adding to others--or finds the list suggestive enough as it stands and begins to work. As an example, here is the list of brainstorm items I jotted down for this chapter:

Prewriting chapter

tested results
 self-actualization
 best for upper-level?
 "new ed" conception of process
 after-the-fact rules vs. process
 coercion vs. self-actualization
 can it be done in 10 weeks? 13?
 "good writing" definition
 high degree permissiveness
 ignores audience, produces informal essays
 the techniques--journal, meditation, analogy, free assoc.
 Not a complete course in writing
 brainstorming?
 archetypal sixties technique
 Macrorie/Elbow work
 students now and in '64
 human perfectability

Brainstorming is extremely simple, yet effective. It is the most widely used inventive technique, mainly because it seems to be the technique that naturally moves in to fill the void if no structured method is ever taught. Research suggests that if an inventive system is not internalized by around age 20, brainstorming is adopted, probably because it represents the natural way the mind grapples with information storage and retrieval. Most professional writers and academic writers were never taught systematic invention, and therefore turned to brainstorming.

The main disadvantage of brainstorming is that it tends not to work so well for young, self-conscious writers without much specialized education or experience. We as "the pros" tend to forget how much richer our stores of knowledge and general intellectual resources are than our students'. Ideas and connections are usually literally overflowing from our minds, and brainstorming is a way in which we can channel the flood; it seems to do this job better than it does the job of bringing up the initial flow. Where students seem to have no trouble free-associating, they often go dry when confronted with listing ideas about an abstract topic. If you are teaching upperlevel students you could use brainstorming and nothing else, but for freshmen I suggest that you also teach at least one structured system as a backup.

The Existential Sentence

The existential sentence is a minor technique. Although it can create interesting and possibly useful juxtapositions of abstract and concrete, it is not really flexible enough for use in general college writing assignments. It is a form of the analogy technique stripped down to the point where it becomes a bare thesis.

The existential-sentence (a term which could only have been put forward with a straight face in the Sixties) technique begins with an abstraction and then asks students to probe their experiences for the concrete meaning it has to them. As Burhans says, in the existential sentence "the verb is functions as an equals-sign,"³⁸ with an abstract

term on its left and a concrete term or phrase of personal meaning on its right. The most obvious example is Charles Schulz's famous "Happiness is a warm puppy," which, cheapened though it has been by commercialism, still has some emotional power.

Teaching existential sentences is not difficult; for most students this simple kind of analogizing is fun. But there is a real danger that existential sentences can degenerate into nothing more than stereotyped phrases:

Misery is a bad toothache.
 Embarrassment is forgetting your homework.
 Irritation is my baby brother.

At worse, the existential sentence can be completely useless, but at best it can become the thesis of an interesting essay. The point is to make certain that the concrete term is carefully chosen and personal; you as the teacher constantly have to stress originality and concreteness.

Prewriting as a theory of invention has both good and bad points. It often seems unrealistic in its assumption that students want to learn to express themselves through writing, that they don't like the evaluation or need the pressure that grades provide, that they need merely to be released from hackneyed objective thinking in order to be good writers. Those assumptions may have been valid in 1964, but the type of student will most likely be dealing with in the Eighties is apt to be less impressed by self-actualization than was his confrere in the Sixties.

Idalistic and even sometimes naive as Prewriting now seems to us to be about human nature, though, many of its techniques can still be used fruitfully. Some are dated and not all are equally useful, but they can help students find something to say. And perhaps if we can imitate the attitudes of Rohman and his disciples, we might again begin to see a type of student whose goal is to be self-actualizing, who does feel that his creativity is repressed by convention, who is waiting for us to free him to explore his own humanity through writing.

TAGMEMIC INVENTION

Since composition and linguistics are both dependent upon language systems and seem to be sister disciplines, there has for many years been an expectation on the part of composition teachers that linguistics would offer them a system upon which a new rhetoric could be based. Linguistics seemed, after all, to be so much more "scientific" than composition, with its complex formulae and descriptive, objective approach to language structures. Surely, we thought, those complicated transformations could yield us something in our search for a new approach to teaching writing. But the hopes were long deferred. Beyond a few points of grammar, the two fields had hardly any useful crossover until Kenneth L. Pike of the University of Michigan began applying some of the terms of his theory of tagmemic linguistics to composition.

The ultimate goal of all linguistic theory is essentially description that will allow correct prediction. This is not the

place to go into the various linguistics theories which are in competition, but it will be helpful to remember that the beginning of tagmemic invention lies in an inductive, descriptive theory. Pike's theory of tagmemic linguistics includes as its central thesis this statement: "A repeatable, relevant pattern of purposive activity is made up of a sequence of functional classes-in-slots...This combination of slot-plus-class is called a tagmeme."³⁹

The "slots" that Pike mentions have "classes" of alternative units that are eligible to fill them. A simple example in linguistic terms would be the sentence:

Mary hit Bill.

The slot between the subject, "Mary," and the object, "Bill" is filled by a class. In this case, the class is composed of verbs of a certain kind. Replace the word "hit" with another word in the class--say, "kissed"--and the slot is filled:

Mary kissed Bill.

At the same time, the slot after the verb-slot--the object of the sentence--is also fillable by a class, this time by nouns or pronouns:

Mary hit the ball.

Mary hit him.

The slot plus the class of alternative fillers is what Pike calls a tagmeme, and the tagmeme is the basis of his descriptive theory of language. Pointing out a tagmeme is both simple and maddeningly vague for non-linguists; if someone asks you for an example of a

tagmeme, you cannot merely write a short sentence, but must explain the whole concept. Tagmemics is a method of description, a way of conceptualizing reality, and it is this method of conceptualization rather than "the tagmeme" as an all-purpose tool that Pike has brought to composition.

Tagmemic invention treats knowledge in terms of units and is concerned with the precise definition of these units. Sloppy rhetoric, according to Pike, is the result of sloppy methods of thought and inquiry;⁴⁰ careful phrasing and definition are part of the answer. In an article in College Composition and Communication in 1964, Pike introduced nearly all of the aspects of the theory that would later be shaped into the elegant inquiry machine that has been labeled "the tagmemic heuristic":

1. A unit to be defined must be treated in reference to its contrast with other units, its range of variability, and its distribution in class, sequence, and system.
2. A repeatable, relevant pattern of purposive activity is made up of a sequence of functional classes-in-slots.
3. The slots occur in larger and larger units of interlocking levels.
4. A three-way hierarchy of levels is found in natural human language and in other purpose activity.
5. Meaning does not occur in isolation, but only in relationship to forms.
6. Language units can be viewed as particles, or as waves, or as points in a linguistic field.
7. Language must be analyzed as social behavior. Speech is an act...not a total abstraction from action.
8. Change passes over a bride of shared components.⁴¹

For our purposes here, not all of these "maxims" are useful (Pike enjoys expressing his theory in maxims, and considering how seminally descriptive it is, he should not be blamed), but 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are important to a whole-system view of tagmemic invention. Maxims 1 and 6, when joined, are the basis of the tagmemic heuristic, and other maxims surround those two to modify them and prevent their application from becoming too mechanical. The heuristic, though, is the final product of tagmemic theory, and to understand how it is put together it will help to trace uses of more basic components of the theory first.

Tagmemic Aspects of Definition

As Bruce Edwards, Jr. suggests, tagmemicists believe that "the composing process should be the focus of composition teaching and that, indeed, it is something which to some degree can be taught." Invention for tagmemicists is "essentially a problem-solving activity." If one can make this activity sharable, then one can "isolate and identify its features," and if this process is learned empirically, "then it may form the basis for a new rhetorical procedure which can be taught to the student."⁴² Tagmemic invention sees problem-solving as beginning with the careful definition of units, and this question of defining a unit is a useful place to begin.

The heart of the tagmemic invention system in Pike's conception of the three aspects which must be described or specified above any unit can be well-defined. They are its contrastive features, its range of variation, and its distribution in sequence and ordered classes.⁴³ These are considered in tagmemic theory to be "the basic

modes through which the human mind apprehends reality"⁴⁴ and thus can be used as inventive topics or questions of a formal sort. The early use of Pike's work in invention used only these aspects of units as its basis, formulating questions from each mode and applying them to the subject at hand.

Contrastive Features

The first mode of inquiry, an investigation of the contrastive features of a subject, would start by asking: What features does it have that make it different from other similar things? This is the simplest tagmemic mode to apply; speaking of our old friend the Battle of Gettysburg have that make it different from other Civil War battles? Of what sort are they? Do they form a pattern? By identifying contrastive features, this mode brings out the most important definitive features of a subject, those elements that create its unique identity.

Range of Variation

The second mode of inquiry concerns the subject's possible range of variations; it asks how the subject can be variously defined and still remain itself. This mode works best for concrete physical items and for absolute abstracts--the classic examples used in the literature are "divan" and "democracy," both of which have an obvious range of variations (Can a love seat still be a divan? Can a divan have no

arms? Can democracy exist without press freedom? Can democracy have a hereditary leader? etc.). It can, though, be applied to any subject.

About the Monroe Doctrine, for example, we might ask whether all of Monroe's foreign policy was part of the Doctrine. Or was it a single statement only? Was it a tradition of policy that Monroe codified, or was it a sui generis proclamation? Was Teddy Roosevelt's foreign policy the Monroe Doctrine in action? Was John Kennedy's?

The range-of-variations inquiry can be extremely flexible and useful in the hands of an imaginative questioner, but is often less fruitful than it can be. The key idea for this mode of inquiry is the idea of change over time while maintaining identity. It is all very well to invent questions about physical variations of a divan or abstract variations of democracy, but in the brouhaha of real subject-inquiry most important variations are chronological. Is the Monroe Doctrine of Andrew Jackson's time the same policy as that behind the Bay of Pigs invasion? Chronological variations can be real in a way that physical or abstract questions are not necessarily.

Distribution in Larger Contexts

The last mode of inquiry in Pike's original system is made up of questions about the subject's distribution within larger systems. This mode is very directly related to the definition of tagmeme as slot-plus-class; it asks what place or slot the subject occupies in a larger pattern. This mode is extremely useful for nearly all subjects because it can locate them in physical patterns, chronological patterns,

historical or abstract patterns--in nearly any context.

To run another of our old subjects, deficit spending, through this mode is possible in a number of different ways. What part in current fiscal policy does deficit spending play? When was deficit spending initiated and why? What relation does deficit spending have to stock prices? Is deficit spending a valid government practice historically? How is deficit spending related to the balance of trade? What is the role of deficit spending in inflation? The list is almost endless.

The whole range of questions implied by these three modes is an inventive method in itself, which can produce a wide range of subject matter. Questions from each mode should be rephrased in several different ways in order to get the most out of that mode, and in using all of the modes a writer can generate a great deal of material. Useful though this method is, however, tagmemic theory has gone farther.

Further Development of Tagmemic Theory

Pike's rhetorical work first appeared in the middle Sixties and was developed continuously throughout the rest of that decade. Particularly valuable contributions were made by Pike's colleagues at the University of Michigan, Alton L. Becker, Richard E. Young, and Hubert M. English, Jr, who was largely responsible for the first testing of the "three-aspect" method discussed above. The theory was refined and finally, in 1980, Young, Becker and Pike produced an important textbook entitled Rhetoric: Discovery and Change, which codified the

work done on tagmemic invention in a form that they hoped composition teachers could use.⁴⁵

Rhetoric: Discovery and Change was widely reviewed, with most reviewers agreeing that the tagmemic approach to invention was novel and important. To many reviewers, however, the style of Young, Becker, and Pike's text seemed too difficult for freshmen, and the methods used to relate information appeared too complex to be grasped by any but the most intelligent students. As a result, Rhetoric: Discovery and Change has become known as a "teachers' book," and is not often assigned to classes; another result is that tagmemic invention is not as well known as it should be.⁴⁶

In Rhetoric: Discovery and Change, Young, Becker, and Pike took the invention technique as it had been used by earlier experimenters--the "three-aspect" method investigated by English--and joined it to another element of Pike's linguistic theory, one expressed in Maxim 6 of Pike's CCC article: The "trimodal perspective" of particle, wave, and field. These three perspectives were originally called "feature, manifestation, and distribution modes" in Pike's linguistics until he noticed their similarity to physicists' theories about light form and analogized them as particle, wave, and field preparation.

Young, Becker and Pike make it clear throughout their discussion of these perspectives that they are not mutually exclusive. Any unit of experience can be discussed as a particle or wave or field, but they warn that "a unit is not either a particle or a wave or a field, but can rather be viewed as all these."⁴⁷ The particle perspective views

units as essentially static; the wave perspective as essentially dynamic; and the field perspective as essentially a network of relationships or part of a larger network.

Particle Perspective

Particle perspective, according to Young, Becker, and Pike, has the following features:

1. It deals with the unit's static nature, ignoring changes in time.
2. It selects from a dynamic whole one "bit," usually the central bit, for presentation (the "snapshot" effect).
3. It arbitrarily specifies boundaries.
4. It isolates the unit from its surroundings.

The particle perspective on the Battle of Gettysburg would deal with the battle in suspension, as having begun at a certain time and place, ended at a certain time and place, containing features A, B, C, D, etc. It would choose a single perspective on the battle and might present a single historical description of it. Particle perspective sees the subject as immoveable, alone, and unrelated to physical or chronological continuums.

Wave Perspective

The wave perspective has different features:

1. It recognizes some dynamic function of the unit, nothing spatial, chronological, or conceptual movement or flow.
2. It points out the central component of the unit.
3. It emphasizes the fusion, flow, or lack of distinct boundaries between the unit and other units.

The wave perspective on the Battle of Gettysburg would deal with the

different sorts of movement that it incorporated. It might discuss the battle as the central component of the troop movements and command decisions of the days preceding or following it, or it might look at the changing attitudes of the soldiers on both sides as the tide of battle changes. It might follow the movements of troops throughout the battle or might focus on Pickett's Charge and on what that troop movement meant to the outcome of the battle. Wave perspective emphasizes change and flow.

Field Perspective

Young, Becker, and Pike give a unit viewed from the field perspective two characteristics:

1. It is seen not as isolated but as occupying a place in a system of some kind.
2. It is seen as a system itself, composed of subsystems.

Field perspective of our battle could deal with it in a number of ways. It could view the Battle of Gettysburg as part of the Civil War and deal with its meaning to the War, or as part of Lee's Pennsylvania campaign and its place in that. It could be placed in the system of battle types or tactics and viewed as part of the continuing evolution of warfare. It could be seen as the reason for the downfall of Longstreet in the system of his military career.

If we view the battle as a system in itself, its subsystems could be detailed in different ways: a perspective could follow the Union artillery through the battle, or trace the movements of the

Confederate cavalry under Stuart. It could follow the fortunes of one regiment or company within the battle, or could focus on one specific engagement within the larger battle, like the defense of Cemetery Ridge. The field perspective is concerned mainly with relationship between whole and parts.

These two triads, that of contrast, range of variation, and distribution, and that of particle, wave, field, are the central components of tagmemic invention. There are, of course, many important elements of tagmemic theory in general that we cannot examine here, because the purpose of this chapter is to examine only invention. Let us move on to the practical uses that have been made of tagmemic invention that may be helpful in the classroom.

CLASSROOM USE OF TAGMEMIC INVENTION

Before we can adequately discuss the use of tagmemic invention in the classroom, some introduction has to be made to the most famous teaching device that has been created by the tagmemicists, the tagmemic heuristic. Although it is little more than a codification of the two triads that have already been discussed, it has a reputation all its own, due in part, I expect, to its name.

If there is a more off-putting term in the field of composition than "Tagmemic heuristic" I have yet to hear it. It was so arcane that it became a sort of joke in my teaching practicum at the beginning of graduate school. No one could satisfactorily define "tagmemic," and "heuristic" seemed to us to be one of those words dreamed up by

people in third-rate education schools to try to convince themselves that there is actually some content in what they do.

Our suppositions, of course, were wrong. "Heuristic" is actually the Greek word for invention and has been used since the time of Aristotle. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, in our own time it has come to signify more specialized forms of systematic inquiry. As "heuristic" is used by tagmemics, it means a technique or method for developing questions and organizing material around a subject. Young, Becker, and Pike include in Rhetoric: Discovery and Change an excellent discussion of heuristic procedure, which it is worthwhile to reprint in part here:

Heuristic procedures should not be confused with rule-governed procedures. A rule-governed procedure specifies a finite series of steps that can be carried out in mechanical fashion without the use of intuition or special ability and that infallibly results in a correct answer; for example, the procedure in arithmetic for finding the least common denominator for a number and the procedure in syllogistic reasoning for making valid inferences. If we follow the same rules, we all get the same result. The procedure can be made entirely conscious, each step leading to the next in an unbroken sequence. The process is single-minded and rather simple-minded in the sense that it can be simulated by a machine.

A heuristic procedure, on the other hand, provides a series of questions or operations that guides inquiry and increases the chances of discovering a workable solution. More specifically, it serves three functions:

- 1) It aids the investigator in retrieving relevant information that he has stored in his mind. (When we have a problem, we generally know more that is relevant to it than we think we do, but we often have difficulty in retrieving the relevant information and bringing it to bear on the problem.)

- 2) It draws attention to important information that the investigator does not possess but can acquire by direct observation, reading, experimentation, and so on.
- 3) It prepares the investigator's mind for the intuition of a ordering principle, or hypothesis.⁴⁸

PARTICLE	1) View the unit as an isolated, static entity. What are its contrastive features, i.e. the features that differentiate it from similar things and serve to identify it:	4) View the unit as a specific variant form of the concept, i.e., as one among a group of instances that illustrate the concept. What is the range of physical variation of the concept, i.e., how can instances vary without becoming something else?	7) View the unit as part of a larger context. How is it appropriately or typically classified? What is its typical position in a temporal sequence? In space, i.e., in a scene or geographical array. In a system of classes
WAVE	2) View the unit as a dynamic object or event. What physical features distinguish it from similar objects or events? In particular, what is its nucleus?	5) View the unit as a dynamic process. How is it changing?	8) View the unit as a part of a larger, dynamic context. How does it interact with and merge into its environment? Are its borders clearcut or indeterminate?
FIELD	3) View the unit as an abstract, multi-dimensional system. How are the components organized in relation to one another? More specifically, how are they related by class, in class systems, in temporal sequence, and in space?	6) View the unit as multidimensional physical system. How do particular instances of the system vary?	9) View the unit as an abstract system within a larger system. What is its position in the larger system? What systemic features and components make it part of the larger system?

Figure One. The Tagmemic Heuristic.

(from Young et al, Rhetoric: Discovery and Change), p. 127.

Of all of the heuristics discussed in this chapter, the tagmemic heuristic is the most elegant and also the most complex in construction. It is created by multiplying Pike's three modes of inquiry--contrast, range of variation, and distribution--by his three perspectives--particle, wave, and field. A chart constructed around this three-by-three operation is a spatial representation of the tagmemic heuristic, specifying questions and operations that can be asked and completed under the heading of each conjunction:

[see figure one]

Although this heuristic is a beautiful creation in the abstract, it is not perfect nor of unlimited usefulness in practice; there are some subjects such as political issues and historical events, that will not easily be explored by using this ninefold method. Once again, physical objects and abstractions seem best served by this heuristic--one teacher of composition who has used it complains that it works beautifully for a coffee pot and for America, and not so well for subjects in between. Young, Becker, and Pike use the example of a tree in Rhetoric: Discovery and Change and run it through the heuristic very successfully; W. Ross Winterowd, in his text The Contemporary Writer, uses the subject of a Parker pen in a modified version of the tagmemic heuristic.⁴⁹

Use of the heuristic for trees and pens is well and good, but when we try to apply the tagmemic heuristic to one of our pet subjects, the Battle of Gettysburg, we see that it has some limitations. The following questions were created by application of the mode-perspective conjunction under each number of the chart.

1. How is the Battle of Gettysburg differentiated from other Civil War battles by its time, place, tactics, etc.?

2. What is the central factor or operation of the Battle of Gettysburg? (Except for this question, there seems to be nothing new to ask under this heading--#1 has already asked it all.)

3. What were the components of a Civil War Battle? What were the usual tactics? How were the units in battle related? When and how were they usually developed? (The key word here seems to be abstract system, which keeps us from asking about any particular physical battle. See #6.)

4. (This question seems sheerly impossible to create without too many mental gymnastics.)

5. How does the way that people saw the battle in 1864 contrast with the public's feelings in 1865, 1870, and in our own time? Have historians' views of the Battle of Gettysburg changed over the last century? (The only way the Battle of Gettysburg keeps changing--it is, after all, over and thus time-bound in the most important sense--is in the perceptions that people had or have of it. Still, this seems to be reaching a little, although it does ask a potentially fascinating question.)

6. What were the components of the Battle of Gettysburg? What were the tactics used? How were the units in battle related? How and why were the troops delayed? (This asks in specific terms the questions asked in abstract terms by #3).

7. What type of battle was it? What did it mean to the War? What did it do to the countryside? (There are a number of other possible questions to be asked under this heading--it is one of the most fruitful in the heuristic.)

8. (The questions askable under this heading seem very much like those in #7.)

9. As a tide-turning battle, what did the Battle of Gettysburg mean to American history? (Once again, this is reaching, and the questions askable under this heading do not seem easily separable from those under #7 and #8.)

As we can see, some of the components of this heuristic are very productive for this subject, and others seem repetitive or just off the point. The problem, of course, is that the heuristic sometimes calls upon the student for subtle differentiations he does not know how to make--and which he cannot be easily or quickly taught to make. If you choose to use this system, you have to make very clear to your students that not every box produces useful lines of inquiry every time. As you use it, you will find that you want to change or simplify parts of it to suit your own students and teaching style.

There have been several important classroom tests of tagmemic invention over the last twelve years, notably those of Hubert English, Richard Young and Frank Koen, and Lee Odell. Nearly unanimously these tests reported mixed results. English, reporting on an early test of tagmemic invention in 1964, reported that his experience teaching tagmemic invention was inconclusive, and that students sometimes became absorbed in the inventive means rather than in their writing ends.⁵⁰ Young and Koen found that work with tagmemic invention has to be rigorous and has value only when it is done repetitively over a lengthy time period.⁵¹ Odell, whose test of the theory is the latest and most carefully controlled, reported that his experimental group of students who were taught tagmemic invention did after the course was over present more evidence and use more tagmemic operations, but that the tagmemic instruction seemed to have no effect at all on reduction of conceptual gaps, or questionable statements.⁵² All together these experiments that suggest that more work needs to be done on tagmemic pedagogy.

There have been serious criticisms of tagmemics heard lately from composition teachers as well. James Kinney, in a rather scathing article inflated claims, blasted tagmemics in general as being based on an outmoded linguistic theory and stated that the heuristic was not really much different from the classical topics or other inventive procedures.⁵³ The very value of heuristics themselves has been called into question by Ann Berthoff and others. How can we as teachers respond to these criticisms? Should they discourage us from attempting to sue tagmemic invention?

My personal answer is "No." As Lee Odell pointed out in his response to Kinney, systematic inquiry as represented by the tagmemic heuristic is important for our students. As long as there is an "apparent gap between systematic inquiry and the art of writing," says Odell, our students will be able to use heuristics.⁵⁴ A good deal of the kind of frustration that Kinney shows with tagmemics is, of course, due to the fact that tagmemics has seemed at times to promise more than it can deliver, but there is no formula that can solve all of our problems easily. As Bruce Edwards suggests, it is easy to grow impatient with a new method if one is unwilling to spend the time necessary to master the procedures and theory behind it.⁵⁵ Kinney is quite right when he complains that at this point "tagmemics seems a theory more talked about than understood," and a part of that problem is the result of the fact that it takes a good bit of time and energy to understand and apply. If you choose to teach tagmemics, be prepared to put in that time.

The original three-aspect system, the perspectives system, or the complete tagmemic heuristic are all usable in teaching invention, either separately or as a progressive structure. Both English and Odell taught the original three-aspect system, but you must decide yourself which you feel most comfortable teaching. The information and some of the teaching techniques have already been discussed, but there are a few methods and caveats that you should be aware of if you plan to use tagmemics.

First, as Hubert English found, students using tagmemic invention sometimes become absorbed in the elegance and sophistication of the system itself, sacrificing ends to means, and concentrate on merely reeling off the information the system provides without any attempt to arrange it in a coherent essay.⁵⁶ This fascination with means is to some degree a problem with any heuristic system, but tagmemics invites it particularly because the tagmemic system is so complex and novel; a student who learns to manipulate it can be so exhilarated by the informational possibilities tagmemics gives him that he is loath to come back down to the potentially dreary linearity of arrangement. A careful explanation of this danger should accompany your first explanation of the tagmemic system--always stress the importance of coherent arrangement of the invented material rather than a mere pile-up or listing of it. It may be possible for inventive systems to be too efficient.

Perhaps the best defense against this problem is the good offense of stressing the creation of a thesis before the system is tapped for

subject matter. The way that I have done this is to ask students to create the list of questions first, using either the modes, perspectives, or heuristic. When the questions have been generated, I ask them to choose one of the questions, the one they feel most drawn to, and answer it in a one-sentence statement. This statement becomes the thesis of the essay on the given subject, and the students then choose which of the other generated questions can provide supporting information for the thesis and which can be discarded.

Second, in their experimental test of the tagmemic system, Frank Koen and Richard Young found that the method works best when the teacher initially presents students with subjects and problems to run through the heuristic; otherwise, they found, the students would choose "easy ones" to run, problems about which they already knew a good deal.⁵⁷ This danger, once again, exists in teaching almost any heuristic. A good heuristic must be applicable to unknown or little-known subjects as well as to problems we already are confident about.

More importantly, Koen and Young also found that the heuristic needed to be used again and again, applied to many different kinds of subjects until its use was almost unconscious. Only then was it made really helpful and not just interesting but cumbersome intellectual baggage. Once the use of the heuristic is established and the student is familiar with what it can and cannot do he can apply it to his own problems. Repetition and a movement from assigned to self-created subjects are the keys to the successful teaching of all inventive heuristics but are particularly necessary when teaching tagmemic

invention.

The actual classroom use of the tagmemic system proceeds in a manner similar to that advocated for the other invention-systems in this chapter. The teacher must first familiarize students with the terms and structure of the technique, usually through the use of handouts and work on the blackboard, and then the students must be asked to manipulate the technique, at first in discrete pieces, and later as a whole. I have found that handouts with examples of the original three-element method and handouts with examples of the original three-element method and handouts with the heuristic work well, but only when you take the time to explain thoroughly how the examples were derived. More than most techniques, tagmemics takes time and repetition in order to allow students to grasp its use. Do not become discouraged when your students still have trouble with the heuristic after a week's work on it--I have known teaching the tagmemic heuristic to take as long as three weeks of (intermittent) practice. If you keep on with it, though, the dawn should break eventually.

Tagmemic invention is the Ferrari of inventive techniques: It is sleek, elegant, goes faster than any other when well tuned, but is not terribly dependable, breaks down a lot, and costs a fair amount to fix. Many teachers claim that it should only be used for teaching upper-level students, that it is just too complicated for freshmen. My own experiences with it suggest that it takes a great deal of time to teach well and that if you have only ten weeks, you and your students might be better served by a simpler system. At the same time, there is no doubt that if well taught, it can produce a great deal of information

information and as much interestingly-presented information as any other system. Be certain that you master its intricacies before you try to explain them to students, though. This is a system that can "catch you blank" all too easily, and on in which your students will see immediately whether you know what you are talking about.

FREEWITING

Putting freewriting into the chapter on techniques of invention reveals the essential arbitrariness of any method that breaks up a discipline in which form and content are in fact inextricably wedded. The classical rhetorical concepts of invention and dispositio, upon which this chapter and the next are based, have been criticized for making two operations out of what is quite possibly only one, the act of composition itself; in defense, all I can say is that for ease of understanding, the material needs to be broken up somewhere. I do not claim that invention and arrangement are in fact separate operations. I have merely placed things where they seemd most useful.

The preceding confession is prompted by the fact that freewriting, the technique central to this section, has from the other techniques discussed in this chapter. Unlike the other heuristic-type techniques, it is not a device through which experience can be consciously processed, but rather a ritual that can be used to bring out possible subjects for writing to which the conscious mind may not have easy access. Free-writing exercises do not provide theses, arguments, or subject matter,

but they can be mined for all these things. What freewriting does best is loosen the inhibitions of inexperienced writers.

Freewriting exercises have been developed by a number of writers over the past fifty years as methods of getting used to the idea of writing. The first mention I can find of freewriting-type exercises is in Dorothea Brande's 1934 advice-to-novelists book Becoming A Writer, in which she suggested freewriting as a way for young writers to get in touch with their subconscious selves. Brande advocated writing "when the unconscious is in the ascendent":

The best way to do this is to rise half an hour, or a full hour, earlier than you customarily rise. Just as soon as you can--and without talking, without reading...--begin to write. Write anything that comes into your head...Write any sort of early morning reverie, rapidly and uncritically. The excellence or ultimate worth of what you write is of no importance yet...Forget that you have any critical faculty at all.⁵⁸

Brande's technique, the ancestor of freewriting, was largely ignored by teachers of expository writing until the Fifties, when Ken Macrorie, who had read Becoming A Writer, began to use an updated version of it in his composition classes. He modified Brande's directions for use in general composition and told his students to "Go home and write anything that comes to your mind. Don't stop. Write for ten minutes or till you've filled a full page."⁵⁹ This exercise produced writing that was often incoherent, but was also often striking in its transcendence of the dullness and cliched thought we all too often come to expect in English papers.

It was Macrorie who popularized the technique of freewriting in his books Uptaught and Telling Writing, but it was Macrorie's disciple, Peter Elbow, who developed and refined freewriting and made it a really widely-known tool. In his polemical book, Writing Without Teachers--a book you should be aware of, if only as the far end of the spectrum of opinions about how to teach and learn writing--Elbow presented the most carefully-wrought freewriting plan thus far advanced, a plan which is largely copied here.

Freewriting, sometimes called "wet-ink" writing, consists of a series of exercises, conducted either in class or at home, during which the student starts with a blank piece of paper and writes for a set period of time without stopping or lifting his pen from the paper. The point of the exercise is to place such a constraint of action on the brain that it overloads the "academic superego" that worries about what other people will think of the writing; rather than worry about contents, criticism, spelling, grammar, or any of the other formal or content-based "correctnesses" that so easily turn into writing blocks, the writer is struggling to get words down on paper--any words. He is, in other words, writing--for five, ten, or fifteen minutes in each class.

Elbow's directions on freewriting are best:

Don't stop for anything. Go quickly without rushing. Never stop to look back, to cross something out, to wonder how to spell something, to wonder what word or thought to use, to think about what you are doing. If you can't think of a word or a spelling, just use a squiggle or else write, "I can't think of it." Just put down something. The easiest thing is just to put down whatever is in your mind. If you get

stuck, it's fine to write, "I can't think what to say" as many times as you want, or repeat the last word you wrote over and over again; or anything else.⁶⁰ The only requirement is that you never stop.

This requirement that the pen never be lifted off the paper and that the writing continue even if nothing but gibberish is produced is what differentiates freewriting from free association, brainstorming, and other Prewriting-type exercises. Prewriting exercises are meant to tap certain unconscious processes, as is freewriting, but they do not produce the deliberate overload of the editing mechanism that freewriting does.

The requirement that the student never stop writing or lift pen off paper is matched by an equally powerful commandment to the teacher: never grade or evaluate freewriting exercises in any way. You can collect and read them--they are often fascinating illustrations of the working of the mind--but they must not be judged. To do so would obviate the whole raison d'etre of such exercises--these are free-writing not to be held accountable in the same way as non-free writing. The value of freewriting lies in the way it allows students to slip the (often self-imposed) halter of societal expectations and rummage without guilt in the garrets of their own minds. If you grade or judge such productions, your message will be that there is no escape, and free-writing would become a dreadful double-bind, a timed exercise in fear and frustration like the Switchboard torture machine in William Burroughs' Naked Lunch.

CLASSROOM USE OF FREEWRITING

Most teachers who use freewriting use it at the opening of each class, every day for at least four or five weeks of the term. It has become apparent through years of use that a session or two of freewriting, though it may be interesting, will provide no long-term gains for the students. To be of use, freewriting exercises must be done constantly and regularly. Only then will the act of writing stop being the unnatural act it seems to some students (one of my Basic Writing students once told me that she felt that writing was "like walking down a dark street in a bad neighborhood--only boring, too.") and start to be just a part of the function-arsenal of an adult. Regular freewriting in class has two particularly worthwhile effects, says William Irmscher: "It creates the expectation that writing classes are places where people come to write, and it makes writing habitual."¹⁶

When given more self-direction, freewriting can be used as a technique for use at home as well. You can assign freewriting as homework and grade on the fact of whether or not it is done. One nice feature of freewriting is that it is grossly quantitative and cannot pretend to substitute quality for quantity, as do some journal entries.

As students become more used to being pushed by a time-constraint, you will find that their freewritings become more coherent--the "superego" learns to work under pressure, although not with the deadly efficiency it once had. This is the point at which directed writing

assignments can begin to be interspersed with freewritings. It is also the point at which you can begin to consider phasing out freewriting.

One method of using freewriting as an aid to longer pieces is to combine it with brainstorming. This should be tried after if students are comfortable with techniques, and it is most fruitful if done at home, since most class periods are too short. Give the students a subject to write on and then suggest the following pattern: Rather than using whatever routines they usually follow in writing, they should first brainstorm the subject for ten minutes, write down a list, and then set the alarm clock for an hour and sit down and write for the whole hour, not stopping and using nothing but the brainstorm list. Yes, their hands will hurt; yes, there will be a great deal of garbage in the resulting paper. But this piece of writing, or the next one, will be with a little luck the first draft of a paper that is editable into something that you can grade. It works best when you give out the subjects a week or so before the assignment; two that I have used are "The Meaning of the Funny Papers" and "Women's Liberation."

The keeping of a journal composed of nothing but freewritings done at home is another possibility. This sort of journal is efficient, because, once again, it can be evaluated in quantitative terms. The entries will improve over the course of a term in quality and coherence, but that is almost an extra attraction. Very often the entries in a freewriting journal will be more personal than those in a conventional journal, a factor that makes some teachers uncomfortable.

Freewriting's use in invention is not as clear-cut as the use of the other techniques this chapter contains. To find a subject in freewriting, Elbow suggests that the student "simply do one or two. Afterward, look to see what words or passages seemed important-- attracted energy or strength. Here is your cue what to write."⁶² He also suggests that students try to do a freewriting while holding a subject in mind and concentrating on it--a sort of written-out version of the brainstorming exercise.

It is clear that freewriting does not provide the neatness of heuristic systems nor even the coherent processes of Prewriting techniques. What, then, is its use? The answer to that question is bound up with the nature of freshman students and their level of exposure to the writing process. Freewriting, so long as you explain its purpose and make certain that it is not perceived as busywork, can do two things for students. First, it can give students who have seldom had to write a good start at becoming familiar with the physical act of writing. As Mina Shaughnessy suggests, it is hard for some teachers to understand exactly how little experience many freshmen have had in writing.⁶³ Their penmanship seems immature, and their command of sentence structure suffers because they quite literally cannot put words on paper with enough continuity to match brain with pen; as a result, their sentences are incoherent. Freewriting forces them to produce, to become more familiar with the physical act of putting words on paper without the conscious editorial mechanism making things even harder than they are. A full five or six weeks of this forced-march writing can really make a difference.

Second, freewriting demystifies the writing process. After pouring out whatever comes in a freewriting exercise, students cannot view the ability to write as a divine gift (denied them) anymore. They come to realize viscerally the difference between writing and editing, a difference which can be crucial to their willingness and ability to write. Freewriting "primes the pump" for more structured writing by demonstrating that the finished essay never flows out perfectly like salt-water taffy from any writers, that the process has many steps, and that the most unpromising piece of gibberish can yield valuable material.

A final word. There is a tendency for teachers to be discouraged from using freewriting by the incoherence of the final products or by the negativity expressed in many freewritings about the exercise or the class. Do not be discouraged. The incoherence is natural and does not carry over into other writing--it is not a communicable disease. As for the negativity--once again, assuming that you have made it clear that freewriting is not just busywork and that you are not trying to take up the whole of each class period with it--remember that hostility is a feeling, a response. You are moving something in there. Freud found hostility in his "chimneysweeping," and since freewriting, like free association, is related to certain psychoanalytic techniques, we must not be surprised to see hostility too. The hostility doesn't usually persist; it seems to wear itself out and students get bored with it. By the time you finish the freewriting section of the course, there will be students who are sorry to see it go.

MODERN TOPICAL INVENTION

The heuristics and techniques already discussed are the most widely known inventive systems, but there are several more minor systems that are worth knowing. They consist of lists of different sorts of topics rather than heuristic systems, but are wide-ranging enough that a knowledge of them can be useful. Despite W. Ross Winterowd's contention that lists will not yield as much information as heuristics, the specialized natures of the following topical systems make them good classroom techniques.

Modern Rhetorical Topics

Perhaps the most widely known set of modern topics is the one listed in John Wilson and Carroll Arnold's speech text, Public Speaking as a Liberal Art. These topics can produce general subject matter, but they are mainly rhetorical in the classical sense of leading most naturally to argumentation. The division of the topics into those concerning attributes and those concerning relationships is particularly useful:

- A. Attributes commonly discussed:
 1. Existence of nonexistence of things.
 2. Degree of quantity of things, forces, etc.
 3. Spatial attributes, including adjacency, distribution, place.
 4. Attributes of time.
 5. Motion or activity.
 6. Form, either physical or abstract.
 7. Substance: physical, abstract, or psychophysical.

8. Capacity to change, including predictability.
9. Potency: power or energy, including capacity to further or hinder anything.
10. Desirability in terms of rewards or punishment.
11. Feasibility: workability or practicability.

B. Basic relationship commonly asserted or argued:

1. Casuality: the relation of causes to effects, effects to causes, effects to effects, adequacy of causes, etc.
2. Correlation: coexistence or coordination of things, forces, etc.
3. Genus-species relationships.
4. Similarity or dissimilarity.⁶⁴
5. Possibility or impossibility⁶⁴

As you can see, there are many elements of this list that derived directly from the classical topics, but it is more complete and complex than the simplified classical system discussed earlier. Before this list of topics can be used fruitfully, a thesis or question must pre-exist; this is not a system that provides theses as efficiently as it generates questions leading to arguments. Let's try a simple example: our old friend about whether or not deficit spending is inflationary. Here are some of the questions that the Wilson and Arnold list can provide:

- A.
 1. Does deficit spending exist as a policy? Does Inflation exist at this time?
 2. How large is the present deficit? How bad is inflation?
 3. What areas of the economy are most affected by deficit spending? By inflation?
 4. When did the U.S. begin to run a deficit? How has it grown?
 5. How does inflation work?
 6. What is the process of deficit spending in the US?
 7. This question is related to #6 in this case.
 8. Can deficit spending be halted? Can inflation be curbed? Or will both continue uncheckable?

9. What aspects of deficit spending promote inflation?
 10. Is deficit spending a beneficial or harmful program for the country to engage in?
 11. Will a constitutional amendment to balance the budget work? Why or why not?
- B.
1. Is inflation can effect of deficit spending? Vice versa? Is it the only cause of inflation? Why? Why not?
 2. What policies pushed the government into deficit spending?
 3. Classification does not seem immediately useful for this topic.
 4. Has deficit spending been a policy before? When? How are the two situations similar? Different?
 5. Is it possible to bring inflation under control? How is deficit spending related to controlling inflation?

Obviously, this list does not exhaust all the possible questions that these topics might raise. As you can see, they tend toward the creation of what Sheridan Baker calls an "argumentative edge"; they do not work as well on topics that require less decision or less action on the part of the audience. Subjects that tend toward description or exposition, like "the Battle of Gettysburg," are not so fruitfully explored by use of these topics. Still, this is a sophisticated list that can be of real use for students who are past the stage of looking for sheer subject matter. The relative complexity of the operations it demands means, however, that it is best not used except in classes of very sophisticated freshmen or of upper-level students. Unless your students are comfortable with a simpler system and want to go beyond it, I recommend that this topical system be held in reserve for advanced writing courses.

Topics of the Audience

Another specialized list of topics was created by Karl Wallace, a list that grew out of his interest in the work done on argument by Chaim Perelman, a Belgian lawyer and rhetorician. Wallace divided his list of topics into three categories, with each category corresponding to a rhetorical appeal as suggested by Aristotle. There are logical topoi, or topics of the subject, ethical topoi, or topics of the speaker, and pathetic topoi, or topics of the audience.⁶⁵ Wallace's logical topoi are not very different from classical topics, and his ethical topoi deal mainly with character traits of the speaker, but his topics of the audience can have a specialized use for writers in that they can create a working concept of the audience's nature and needs that should inform the structure of any discourse.

Wallace's audience topics, in other words, focus not on the subject but on the presumed relationship between the writer and his readers. These topics cannot be based on the subject like most topical systems; they are instead a supplementary system that can be used with any of the other techniques in this chapter that are subject-based. Here are Wallace's audience-topics in outline form:

- I. In general
- II. Values
 - A. In general
 1. The desirable
 2. The obligatory
 3. The commendable
 - B. In the chief rhetorical genre
 1. Deliberative
 2. Judicial
 3. Epideictic

- III. Value hierarchies
 - A. Group and institutional
 - B. Individual
 - C. Age
- IV. Economic
- V. Educational
- VI. Affective states; emotions, motives, feelings
- VII. Political preferences
 - A. Ideals determined by kinds of states
 - B. Ideals professed by political parties
- VIII. The probable and possible, as revealed in
 - A. Probabilities: assumptions and presumptions
 - B. Habitual patterns of thought
 - 1. Deduction
 - 2. Generalization and example
 - 3. Analogy
 - 4. Correlation and causation⁶⁶

Obviously this listing in its present form would do nothing but frighten and confuse students, so for classroom use I have translated Wallace's audience topics into a list of simple questions that I ditto and hand out to my class. After explaining that these questions should be consulted before every assignment, I then spend a class period discussing how the questions can be used to help write the next assignment that is due. This practice is done in class, in general orally. After initial introduction to the audience-topics, I let the students use them on their own, only mentioning them if a student seems to be having real trouble identifying the potential audience for his essays.

I. Who are your presumed readers? Readers of what?

II.A.1. What do they desire or wish for concerning the things you are writing about?

2. What do they demand you include? What elements, if you fail to mention them, will cause your audience to lose interest or trust in you?
 3. What sorts of form of content do they praise? What kinds of writing or opinions do they like to read?
- B.
1. Do they expect you to discuss or recommend policy for the future?
 2. Do they expect you to prove a point or points about things that happened in the past?
 3. Do they expect praise or blame of someone or something from you?
- III. A. Do your readers identify themselves as members of a group or organized institution?
- B. Do you know anything about your audience as individuals?
- C. How old are they on the average? How will this affect the way you approach them?
- IV. What is their economic level, on the average? How will this affect your discourse?
- V. What is their economic level, on the average? How will this affect your discourse?
- VI. Do you know anything about their present emotions, motives, or feelings.
- VII.A. Is their attitude toward your discourse affected by the nations, states, areas in which they live?
- B. Do their political parties or beliefs alter your presentation?

VIII.A. What will your readers assume about you and the point you're making?

B. What sorts of arguments most naturally suit the way your readers think?

When used together with some subject-based topical or heuristic methods, this list is a good way to make certain that your students never lose sight of the question of audience. I often simplify the list and pare down the number of questions it asks, but for each essay you assign, a concurrent demand for a short statement responsive to these questions about audience will force your students to at least be aware that writing for academics and for bootblacks is not the same thing. In teaching these topics, lay stress on the fact that although the writer's audience is always to some degree a fiction, he can still make informed choices about its nature.

Topical Questions

The last topical system you may find useful is the system of topical questions created by Richard Larson, an endlessly helpful and inventive rhetorician in the CUNY system. Larson's work, unlike that of many theoreticians, never loses sight of the classroom situation with all of its necessary simplifications and difficult variables. In his article "Discovery Through Questioning: A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," Larson states that students should come to a "thorough knowledge of their experiences, concepts, and propositions

through a process of systematic questioning--questioning which students engage in mostly by themselves."⁶⁷ Larson has created seven groups of questions that can be applied to almost any subject:

"Topics that Invite Comment

- A. Writing about Single Items (in present existence)
 What are its precise physical characteristics (shape, dimensions, composition, etc.)?
 How does it differ from things that resemble it?
 What is its "range of variation" (how much can we change it and still identify it as the thing we started with?)
 Does it call to mind other objects we have observed earlier in our lives? why? in what respects?
 From what points of view can it be examined?
 What sort of structure does it have?
 How do the parts of it work together?
 How are the parts put together?
 How are the parts proportional in relation to each other?
 To what structure (class or sequence of items) does it belong?
 Who or what produced it in this form? Why?
 Who needs it?
 Who uses it? for what?
 What purposes might it serve?
 How can it be evaluated, for these purposes?
- B. Writing about Single Completed Events, or Parts of an Ongoing Process (These questions can apply to scenes and pictures, as well as to works of fiction and drama.)
 Exactly what happened? (Tell the precise sequence: who? what? how? why? Who did want to whom? why? What did what to what? how?)
 What were the circumstances in which the event occurred?
 What did they contribute to its happening?
 How was the event like or unlike similar events?
 What were its causes?
 What were its consequences?
 What does its occurrence imply? What action (if any) is called for?
 What was affected (indirectly) by it?
 What, if anything, does it reveal or emphasize about some general condition?
 To what group or class might it be assigned?
 Is it (in general) good or bad? by what standard?
 How do we arrive at the standard?

- How do we know about it? What is the "authority" for our information? How reliable is the authority?
 How do we know it to be reliable? (or unreliable?)
 How might the event have been changed or avoided?
 To what other events was it connected? how?
- C. Writing about Abstract Concepts (e.g. "religion, "socialism")
 To what specific items, groups of items, events or groups of events, does the word or words connect, in your experience or imagination?
 What characteristics must an item or even have before the name of the concept can apply to it?
 How do the referents of that concept differ from the things we name with similar concepts (e.g. "democracy" and "socialism")?
 How has the term been used by writers whom you have read?
 How have they implicitly defined it?
 Does the word have "persuasive" value? Does the use of it in connection with another concept seem to praise or condemn the other concept? Why or why not?
 Are you favorably disposed to all things included in the concept? Why or why not?
- D. Writing about Collections of Items (in present existence)
 /These questions are in addition to the questions about single items, which can presumably be asked of each item in the group./
 What exactly, do the items have in common?
 If they have features in common, how do they differ?
 How are the items related to each other, if not by common characteristics? What is revealed about them by the possibility of grouping them in this way?
 How may the group be divided? What bases for division can be found?
 What correlations, if any, may be found among the various possible subgroups? Is anything disclosed by the student of these correlations?
 Into what class, if any, can the group as a whole be put?
- E. Writing about Groups of Completed Events, Including Processes. /These questions also apply to literary works, principally fiction and drama./
 What have the events in common?
 If they have features in common, how do they differ?
 How are the events related to each other (if they are not part of a chronological sequence)? What is revealed by the possibility of grouping them in this way (these ways)?
 What is revealed by the events when taken as a group?

How can the group be divided? On what bases?
 What possible correlations can be found among the several sub-groups?
 Into what class, if any, can the events taken as a group fit?
 Does the group belong to any other structures than simply a larger group of similar events? (Is it part of a more inclusive chronological sequence? one more piece of evidence that may point toward a conclusion about history? and so on)
 To what antecedents does the group of events look back? Where can they be found?
 What implications, if any, does the group of events have? Does the group point to a need for some sort of action?

II. "Topics with "Comments" Already Attached

A. Writing about Propositions (statements set forth to be proved or disproved)

What must be established for the reader before he will believe it?

Into what sub-propositions, if any, can it be broken down? (What smaller assertions does it contain?)

What are the meanings of key words in it?

To what line of reasoning is it apparently a conclusion?

How can we contrast it with other, similar, propositions? (How can we change it, if at all, and still have roughly the same proposition.?)

To what class (or classes) of propositions does it belong?

How inclusive (or how limited) is it?

What is at issue, if one tries to prove the proposition?

How can it be illustrated?

How can it be proven (by what kinds of evidence).

What will or can be said in opposition to it?

Is it true or false? How do we know? (direct observation, authority, deduction, statistics, other sources?)

Why might someone disbelieve it?

What does it assume? (What other propositions does it take for granted?)

What does it imply? (what follows from it?) Does it follow from the proposition that action of some sort must be taken?

What does it reveal (signify, if true)?

If it is a prediction, how probable is it? On what observations of past experience is it based?

If it is a call to action, what are the possibilities that action can be taken? (Is what is called for feasible?) What are the probabilities that the action, if taken, will do what it is supposed

- to do? (Will the action called for work?)
- B. Writing About Questions (interrogative sentences)
- Does the question refer to past, present, or future items?
 - What does the question assume (take for granted)?
 - In what data might answers be sought?
 - Why does the question arise?
 - What, fundamentally, is in doubt? How can it be tested? evaluated?
 - What propositions might be advanced in answer to it?
 - Is each proposition true?
 - If it is true:
 - What will happen in the future? What follows from it?
 - Which of these predictions are possible? probable?
 - What action should be taken (avoided) in consequence?
- Most of the other questions listed under "Propositions" also apply.⁷⁶⁸

Using this system is almost self-explanatory. Given a subject, students choose one of the seven groups of questions and apply the questions in the group to the subject. The questions--many of which will seem familiar to you by now--are drawn, Larson says, from the work of logicians, rhetoricians, and language theorists. According to its creator, the best way to teach this system is to hand out dittoed lists of the questions and discuss in class what subjects fit into which groups of questions and why. Extensive classroom practice will allow the students to eventually decide for themselves the question groups that subjects most naturally fall into, and then the use of the questions will go on individually.

The subjects themselves will provide subject matter, but no theses; to do this, says Larson, it is necessary to take the mass of discovered material and run it through another group of three sorts of questions:

1. What is the subject like? What can it be compared to and why should it be? How can we generalize about the comparison?
2. Do I like it or not like it? Is it good? Bad? Dangerous? What proves or supports my feelings?
3. Is there any conflict, inconsistency, or inexplicability within this material? Is there a problem in it that interests me? Does anything puzzle me, lead me to want to investigate more?⁶⁹

These last three question-sets can be used to tie up in a thesis most of the generated material, which might otherwise not appear to fit together. Once your students can choose their own questions-group, generate their own material, and then pull a thesis out of the material inductively, you will have succeeded in getting them to use this system well.

It is a truism in rhetoric that the best topics are those that are easily remembered. As Wallace says, a topical system should be "an organized system, the better organized the better."⁷⁰ It is certainly true that in training professional speakers and writers an easily recognizable system is best, but I am not certain that the same is true for freshman students, many of whom need only a working competence and some helpful techniques. Most students will not memorize any inventive system unless forced to by test pressure-- and even then they will forget it the following week. W. Ross Winterowd criticizes Larson's system for being bulky, claiming that "the best heuristic will have the profound simplicity of a mathematical formula,"⁷¹ but what is most pleasing and aesthetic for the teacher may be a nightmare of subtle complexity for the student.

What this means to your teaching of freshmen is that you should not expect your students to absolutely commit any of these topical systems to memory. If you had them for a year and were able to work with the systems over and over, then memorization might be something to work for, because you would be training rhetoricians at that point. In ten or thirteen weeks, though, the best you can expect from any of the systems in this chapter is a growing unconscious grasp of the principles and structures of inquiry that lie behind all of these systems. In the form of dittoed handouts or notes your students will have access to the formal charts or topics or questions, and only in time will the conscious use of the techniques you introduce become the unconscious set of mental tools with which experienced writers attack their subjects.

NOTES

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²⁶Ibid., p. 108.

²⁷Ibid., p. 108.

²⁸Ibid., p. 107.

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⁵⁹Ken Macrorie, Uptaught (New York: Hayden Books, 1970), p. 20.

⁶⁰Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 3.

⁶¹William F. Irscher, Teaching Expository Writing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), pp. 82-83.

⁶²Elbow, Writing Without Teachers, p. 9.

⁶³Mina P. Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 14-15.

⁶⁴John F. Wilson and Carroll C. Arnold, Public Speaking as a Liberal Art, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), p. 115.

⁶⁵Karl R. Wallace, "Topoi and the Problem of Invention," in Contemporary Rhetoric: A Conceptual Background with Readings ed. W. Ross Winterowd (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 120-122.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁶⁷Richard L. Larson, "Discovery Through Questioning: A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," in Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric, p. 147.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 151-4.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 148-9.

⁷⁰Wallace, "Topoi and the Problem of Invention," p. 120.

⁷¹W. Ross Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric, p. 144.

CHAPTER III

TEACHING ARRANGEMENT

One of the continuing criticisms of classical rhetoric, from whose distinction between inventio and dispositio this chapter and the preceding chapter are drawn, concerns the very arbitrariness with which it divides up the canons of rhetoric. These critics ask whether there is any essential reason for assuming that the process of producing discourse should be divided into the restrictive classifications of invention, arrangement, style, etc, as if these were real stages in the composing process. Research into the nature of the process seems to indicate that these are arbitrary divisions; why, then, do we not put them behind us?

My reply is that, arbitrary though they may be, the divisions of rhetoric are useful conventions. Were we to try to describe the composing process as the seamless interaction of form and content it apparently is, our discussion of it would have to be considerably deeper and more theoretical than it is. Separating invention and arrangement is a convenient tool for discussing certain features of each aspect of the composing process. It should not, however, obscure the fact that the two operations are not carried out one after the other by practiced writers, who pile up their "invented" material like tumbled Lincoln Logs, only "arranging" it when they have "enough."

The fact is that invention and arrangement are inextricably intertwined in the practice of experienced writers and that no approach to one can ever ignore the other. As Richard Larson says, "form in complete essays has not been the subject of much theoretical investigation," because of this intimate relationship between form and content.¹ Invention, with its many open-ended systems, has received much more recent attention than has arrangement, possibly because of the expressive and romantic biases of our age, which militate against formal requirements in general and prefer to dwell upon self-ordered expression, but the demands of arrangement still remain an important part of rhetoric.

With that point admitted, let me once again stress the fact that arrangement is not a genuinely independent skill. It must be used in conjunction with invention, and although the two canons are treated separately here and can be practiced with separate exercises, teachers' desideratum for students is that they learn to intuitively combine the canons of inventio and dispositio in order to produce the internal process of discourse generation that practiced writers can call upon.

There are two extreme views to be avoided when considering the teaching of arrangement. The first holds that arrangement is an artificial skill, and that all arrangement should naturally grow out of the writer's purpose. The second holds that arrangement is the most essential skill in rhetoric and that all successful communication grows from correct identification and use of forms. We must see both extreme views of arrangement from our points of view as teachers and ask what they offer our students and what they would mean to our

practice. Each teacher will have to decide what relationship he will have to the concept of form in writing, how he will strike the balance between form and content. This chapter can only suggest the various alternatives available as they have been used throughout the history of rhetorical teaching.

Even though the forms and arrangements in this chapter can be tempting to assign (and for students to use) as crutches for all writing occasions, we as teachers must constantly stress in our discussions of form the relationships between structure and content. We must remind our students time and again that purpose and the needs of the audience and the subject should dictate arrangement, and not vice versa. Rather than putting forward one or two arrangements as all-purpose lifesavers, we must "help students quietly in the subtle and personal task of choosing a form that suits well their ideas and emphases," as Richard Larson puts it.²

Whichever of the following prescriptive forms or methods of arrangement you choose to teach, you cannot allow your students to depart without alerting them to the fact that these forms are merely conventional forms, to be used or adapted or changed as the writer perceives the needs of his subject and of his audience. These methods of arrangement can provide a rough framework upon which an essay can be built, but they should never become limits to the development of an essay that needs sections not provided by the arrangement or demands for sections that are clearly unnecessary.

It is true that many of the writing tasks that their lives and careers will demand of our students will be formally weighted, and we

have no reason to be ashamed of preparing them for those tasks. The methods of arrangement listed in this chapter will be of genuine help to most students, but we have to be constantly aware of the seductiveness of teaching only forms. Students are often grateful to us for forms, are hearteningly interested when we teach them, listen absorbedly to our expositions of arrangements. Given the chance, many students would come to depend upon formal arrangements completely, and the more detailed the better. In forms they can see the concreteness and solidity which seem to them lacking in so many other elements of composition, and they are thus delighted with our gift of them. Each formal requirement means one less difficult decision to be made--a real boon! And so, eager to be loved, it is easy for teachers to stress prescriptive forms.

The prescriptive arrangements in this chapter, then, should be thought of and taught only as stepping-stones to an end, not as ends in themselves. You will be a mere industrial-arts teacher if you do not teach your students to transcend them as well as to use them. As Kenneth Burke, the master-rhetorician of our time, says, "Form is an arousing and fulfillment of desires," and is "'correct' in so far as it gratifies the needs which it creates."³ If the prescriptive forms we give our students can help them to realize this primary purpose of arrangement, then we can offer the forms with the certainty that they will provide support only until the students can kick them away and walk on their own.

GENERAL PATTERNS OF ARRANGEMENT

As the introduction to this chapter has suggested, the arrangement of material in an essay grows out of a complex blend of the author's purpose and his knowledge of the subject and the formal expectations of this audience. For students, though, an intuitive grasp of the centuries of conventions that illuminate the composing process for experienced writers is just not available, and to try to teach all of the actual intricacies of the marriage of form and content would consume far more time than most of us have with our students. In a sense, teaching arrangement is like trying to expose students to a microcosm of Western literary culture. Such knowledge cannot be taught with any completeness in ten or thirteen weeks.

Teachers are forced, then, to rely upon the use of prescriptive conventional forms as a large part of the teaching of arrangement. The following methods in this section are such forms; they range from simple and short forms that can be adapted to nearly any subject matter to longer and more complex forms that are specifically useful in argumentation. You can use one, two, or all of these patterns of arrangement as part of assignments for your students. Once more, tired though you may be of hearing it, let me exhort you: these patterns are not absolutes, should not be taught as absolutes, and must be seen by both teacher and student as the teaching devices they are, not as the actual structures they often threaten to become.

One final point concerning these prescriptive arrangements: The elements discussed as parts of each method of arrangement have no

necessary correlation with paragraphs, which are discussed in Chapter Five. There is often a temptation to conceive of a "six-part" essay as a six-paragraph essay, but except for some minor forms such as the "five-paragraph theme" you can stress to your students that each element in a discourse-scheme consists of a single paragraph as a minimum. Thus, a "four-part" essay might consist of a single paragraph for the Introduction, three paragraphs for the Statement of Fact, four paragraphs for the Argument, and a single paragraph for the Conclusion. Each element of arrangement can theoretically control an unlimited number of paragraphs, and you should beware of letting your students fall into the habit of perceiving a single element to call always for a single paragraph.

Classically-Descended Arrangements

Aristotle, in what was probably a fit of pique at the complicated methods of arrangement being retailed by his sophistic competition as "improvements" in rhetoric, says bluntly in the third book of his Rhetoric, "A speech has two parts. Necessarily, you state your case and prove it. . .the current division is absurd. . .when you coin a term, it ought to mark a real species, and a specific difference; otherwise you get empty, frivolous verbiage."⁴ We will not discuss the two-part discourse here; even Aristotle relented a paragraph later and allowed that there can be four parts to a discourse, a pattern that we will cover.

The classically-descended patterns of arrangement, with the exception of the three-part essay, which has been generalized and

modernized, are all essentially argumentative in nature, as was classical rhetoric itself. They are thus not well suited for use in most narrative or descriptive writing and can confuse students who try to use them for non-argumentative purposes. These methods of arrangement are organized formally and not according to content. As Edward P.J. Corbett points out in Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, instead of being topically organized, "this system of partitioning is determined by the functions of the various parts of a discourse."⁵

Three-Part Arrangement

"A whole," says Aristotle in his Poetics, "is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end."⁶ It is easy to chuckle a little at the seeming obviousness of this observation--Arthur Vergara has drawn a clever cartoon about it for Corbett's Little Rhetoric--but it is the starting place for one of the most widely accepted methods of rhetorical arrangement: three-part arrangement. Aristotle's dictum may seem obvious to us, but that does not obscure the fact that he noticed it first, or its obvious truth. A discourse, like the dramatic works Aristotle was describing, does have three parts if it is to be complete; any successful essay must have an introduction, a body of some length, and a conclusion. From the simplest single-paragraph exercise to a forty-page research paper, every piece of writing students are asked to produce consists of these three pieces: introduction, body, and conclusion.

The simplicity of this pattern of arrangement has both positive and negative aspects. On one hand, it is easy to teach, easy to

exemplify, and does not present the dangers of mechanistic over-structuring that more complex patterns of arrangement do. It is the one truly universal pattern of arrangement, usable for narration, description, exposition, and argumentation alike. On the other hand, it does not give students much actual guidance in structuring their essays, especially if the assignment calls for a response longer than 500 words. Beyond that length, the student often tends to find that although he is able to write and place his introduction and conclusion, the body of the essay is still terra incognita. The three-part essay presents no interior structures that help to guide writers in the construction of the body of the essay, which is nearly always the longest part.

The three-part arrangement, then, is most suitable for shorter assignments. In general, five to six hundred words is the limit to which the form can be stretched and still be helpful to students. Each section is teachable separately, and here are some of the characteristics that can be noted in each:

Introduction "A beginning," says Aristotle, "is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be."⁷ In the three-part essay, the introduction has two main tasks. First, it must catch and hold the reader's attention with some sort of opening "hook"--an introductory section which does not immediately announce the thesis of the essay, but instead begins to relate the (as yet unannounced) thesis to the world in some brief, attention-catching way. The introduction can open with an anecdote, an aphorism, an argumentative observation, a quote.

Donald Hall calls such an opening strategy a "quiet zinger"--"something exciting or intriguing and at the same time relevant to the material that follows."⁸

Second, the introduction must quickly focus the attention of the reader on the thesis itself. The thesis or central informing principle of the essay is determined by the writer's purpose, subject, and audience. It is usually found in the form of a single-sentence declarative thesis statement near the end of the introduction. This thesis statement represents the essay-length equivalent of the topic sentence of a paragraph, and is general enough to announce what the following essay plans to do yet specific enough to suggest what the essay will not do. It is the master-sentence of the essay and makes the promise that the rest of the discourse must keep.

Body of the Essay "A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it," says the Poetics, and in truth there is little more to be said in terms of the theory of the three-part essay.⁹ Those textbook writers who support this form trail off into generalities in their discussions of the body of the essay, talking about "shaping purpose" and "order of development" and "correct use of transitions." All of these things are certainly necessary, but unfortunately such general advice is of little help to students adrift between their first and last paragraphs. The body of the three-part essay can take many shapes, most of which are similar in form to the different methods of developing the classical paragraph discussed in Chapter Five.

Conclusion In a sense, the conclusion is a reversed version of the introduction. As does the introduction, the conclusion has two

main tasks (although it can accomplish others, such as summarizing). First, it restates the thesis in different wording, usually near the beginning of the conclusion. This restatement is usually somewhat more complex than was the original thesis statement, since now the writer assumes that the reader can marshal all of the facts of the situation as they have been presented in the body of the essay. A typical if obvious example of the opening of a conclusion might be, "Thus, as we have seen. . ." followed by the reworded thesis.

The second task of the conclusion is to end the essay on a graceful or memorable rhetorical note. The difference between a mere "ending," which trickles off after seeming to run out of material, and a conclusion, which strives for a conscious effect and a sense of an ending, can be the difference between a satisfied and an unsatisfied reader. As Sheridan Baker suggests, a successful conclusion satisfies the reader because it "conveys a sense of assurance and repose, of business completed."¹⁰

Classroom Use of Three-Part Arrangement

While it is the most generally useful of all the classically-descended arrangements, applicable to many modes of discourse, the three-part essay arrangement simply does not provide enough structure to direct students in their attempts to put together a middle section. Instead of concentrating on the body section, then, I have found the three-part form most useful as an introduction to the conventions of introductions and conclusions. It is possible to work with the three-part essay as a whole form, but generally the easiest way to approach

the body section is through the use of such mechanical versions as the three-, five-, and seven-paragraph essay. These are such blatantly artificial forms that most teachers that I know prefer not to use them.

To the end of teaching the importance of introductions and conclusions, you first need to explain the structure of the three-part essay and give your students examples of it. Put special emphasis on the structures of the typical introduction and conclusion. From that point on, practice in writing these beginnings and endings will be the key. You might suggest a series of short essays, no more than 300 words each, to be written in class. Each essay, on a topic you suggest, should have an easily recognizable introduction and conclusion section, and you might, as I do, even allow your students to dispense with the actual writing of the body of each essay, instead allowing them to substitute a rough outline or list of components that would make up the body of the essay.

Here is a place where workshop groups can be of great usefulness. On the class day after each short essay is written, convene the groups and ask students to read over and evaluate the success of the introductions and conclusions of each others' essays. Specific questions about effective openings, coherent thesis statements, concluding restatements that are not heavy-handed or obvious, and final sentences that have the right tone of closure can be put on the board so that students have something to refer each paper to. You can ask the students to confer on ways of improving each others' work, and after the introductions and conclusions are hammered out, allow those students who have become intrigued by the ideas of the subject to complete the

essay for a grade. Several days of this kind of practice and peer criticism can give students a solid if not necessarily brilliant competence in opening and closing essays.

Four-Part Arrangement

After Aristotle had loosed his blast upon the hair-splitting pedagogues of his day and declared that an oration really had only two parts, he relented and admitted that as speakers really practiced rhetoric, a discourse generally had four parts: The Proem or Introduction, the Statement of Facts, the Argument, and the Epilogue or Conclusion.¹¹ Although this four-part arrangement can be extended into the more complex forms which are discussed later, many modern theorists and teachers recommend some form of four-part arrangement for current use. It is specifically an argumentative form and does not adapt well to narration or description, but within these limits it can provide useful guidance for students. The four parts of the arrangement are sometimes called by different names, but they serve the same purposes.

Introduction Called by Aristotle the Proem (from the Greek word Proemium, meaning "before the song") and by the author of the Roman handbook Rhetorica ad Herrenium the exordium (from the Latin weaving term for "beginning a web"), the introduction to the four-part essay has two functions, one major and one minor. The major task is to inform the audience of the purpose or object of the essay, and the minor task is to create a rapport or relationship of trust between the writer and his audience.

"The superlative function of the proem," says Aristotle, "is to make clear the end and object of your work." Rather than plunging directly into the subject matter, the writer uses the introduction to prepare the reader for what is to come. As Edward P.J. Corbett points out, there are two considerations to keep in mind about this function of the introduction: first, it orients the audience within the subject, but second, and even more important, it seeks to convince the audience that what is being introduced is worthy of their attention.¹² In a fashion similar to the "quiet zinger" that opens the three-part essay, the four-part essay can catch the attention of the reader by using different devices. Richard Whately lists a number of different types of introductions that can arouse reader interest in a subject. The usefulness of these types of introductions is, of course, not limited to the four-part essay, although they do complement argumentative subject matter:

Introduction Inquisitive--shows that the subject in question is "important, curious, or otherwise interesting."

Introduction Paradoxical--dwells on characteristics of the subject which, though they seem improbable, are none the less real. This form of introduction searches for strange and curious perspectives on the subject.

Introduction Corrective--shows that the subject has been "neglected, misunderstood, or misrepresented by others." As Whately says, this immediately removes the danger that the subject will be thought trite or hackneyed.

Introduction Preparatory--explains peculiarities in the way the subject will be handled, warns against misconceptions about the subject, or apologizes for some deficiency in the presentation.

Introduction Narrative--leads into the subject by narrating a story or anecdote.¹³

These different sorts of introductions can help to deal with the major task of acquainting the audience with the subject, but the

minor task of rendering the reader attentive and well-disposed toward the writer and his cause is also often served by them. In rendering an audience benevolent, the writer must be aware of certain elements concerning the rhetorical situation in which he finds himself. Corbett offers five questions that must be answered before a writer can be certain of the conditions for his discourse:

1. What does the writer have to say?
2. Before whom is it being said?
3. Under what circumstances?
4. What are the predispositions of the audience?
5. How much time or space does the writer have?¹⁴

It is usually also a good idea to try to establish "bridges" with the reader in the introduction by pointing up shared beliefs and attitudes-- that is, by creating what Kenneth Burke calls identification between the writer and his audience.

The introduction to the four-part essay, then, performs functions similar to that of the three-part essay. It draws the reader into the discourse with the promise of interesting information and informs him of the main purpose of the discourse while rendering him well-disposed toward the writer and the subject.

Statement of Fact The Romans called this section of a discourse the narratio, and it is sometimes referred to as the Narration today. Young, Becker, and Pike call it the Background section in their text Rhetoric: Discovery and Change, and that term is perhaps the best

modern term, but I will here adopt Corbett's term, Statement of Fact. This section is certainly not narration as we now use the term to signify a dramatized relation of the activities of individuals, and often it presents more than just background information. Put most simply, the statement of fact is a non-argumentative, expository presentation of the objective facts concerning the situation or problem--the subject--under discussion.

The statement of fact may contain circumstances, details, summaries, even narrative in the modern sense. It does set forth the background of the problem, but very often it will explain the central point as well. Quintilian recommends that the statement of fact be lucid, brief, and plausible, and this general level of advice is all that is really available.¹⁵ The statement of fact can be ordered in a number of different ways: by use of chronological order, by moving from general situation to specific details, by moving from specific to general, or by proceeding according to topics. The tone of the statement of fact should be calm and matter-of-fact, with few overt stylistic mannerisms and without any obvious bias. Understatement is the best policy to follow in this section, for once the audience realizes that the writer is striving for fairness in presentation it will tend to trust him more.

Confirmation This section, also called the Argument, is the central element of the four-part essay and is often also the longest section. Corbett states that this section is applicable in use to expository as well as to argumentative prose, but its main historical use was in argumentation. Simply put, the confirmation section is used to prove the writer's case. With the audience rendered submissive by the

introduction and informed by the statement of fact, the writer is ready in the confirmation to show them the reasons why they should accept and believe in his position concerning the facts. It is in this section that most of the argumentative material discovered in the invention process is used.

The two main types of truly argumentative speech (there was a third type, epideictic speech, but it was more ceremonial than argumentative) as theorized by Aristotle deal with two different sorts of questions: those in the past and those in the future. If the question is about events in the past, the confirmation will try to prove:

1. Whether an act was committed
2. Whether an act committed did harm
3. Whether the harm of the act is less or more than alleged
4. Whether a harmful act was justified.

Similarly, if the question is about a course for the future, the confirmation will try to prove that:

1. A certain thing can or cannot be done. If it can be done, then the confirmation tries to prove that
2. It is just or unjust
3. It will do harm or good
4. It has not the importance the opposition attaches to it. ¹⁶

After the question and the position have been decided upon, there are few solid rules to apply to the conduct of the confirmation without going into a deeper study of argumentation than this work allows. For now let us merely say that argumentation utilizes definitions, cause-effect demonstrations, analogical reasoning, authoritative testimony, maxims, personal experiences, evidence of all sorts in order to prove the writer's point in the confirmation.

Arguments can be built up in different ways, but there is a rough consensus among classical rhetoricians that if there are, for instance, three specific lines of argument available to the writer, one strong, one moderately convincing, and one weak, they should be grouped thus: the moderate argument first, the weak argument second, and the strongest argument last. This arrangement both begins and ends the confirmation on notes of relative strength and prevents the writer's position from appearing initially weak or finally anticlimactic.

Conclusion Called the Epilogue by the Greeks and the Peroration by the Romans (from "per-oratio"--a finishing-off of the oration), the conclusion has four possible tasks, according to Aristotle:

1. It renders the audience once again well disposed to the writer and ill-disposed toward his opponent.
2. It magnifies the writer's points and minimizes those of the opposition.
3. It puts the audience in the proper mood.
4. It refreshes the memory of the audience by summarizing the main points of the argument.¹⁷

Not every conclusion does all of these things, of course; they are merely the major options.

Most conclusions do recapitulate the main points, or at least the central thesis, of the discourse, but the other three possible tasks of the conclusion are less concrete. It is true that the conclusion tends to be the most obviously emotional of all the sections, but the use of pathos in written assignments is a dangerous technique for beginners, in whose hands it can all too easily degenerate into bathos. The best conclusions for written assignments are those that restate their main points and then sign off gracefully, with a stylistic flourish that signals the end of the discourse. As Corbett suggests, attempts at

the first task, creating ethical appeal, are usually carried on throughout the discourse, and if they are not, it is too late to begin in the conclusion.

Classroom Use of Four-Part Arrangement

The four-part pattern of arrangement gives more direction to an essay than does the three-part pattern, but it is not so adaptable to different sorts of discourse. It generally demands subject-directed writing that can support an argumentative thesis, and as a result of this non-personal direction you will find that students usually need at least a week to investigate their subjects. Students usually will need to apply techniques of invention and do research on their subjects before writing their first drafts. I generally provide the subjects on which the students write, at least in the beginning, since the four-part arrangement can be confusing to try to apply to questions that are not rigidly defined.

Try to assign subjects that can be easily researched--usually in three or four hours at the most--and can support several different argumentative theses. You as teacher can decide whether you wish to begin with a question involving actions in the past--what Aristotle calls a forensic question--or with a question of future policy--a deliberative question. The four-part arrangement will support either, and I only begin with a forensic question because historical material is slightly easier to research than is contemporary policy-oriented material.

Some possible forensic topics might be:

Major Reno's Conduct at Little Big Horn

John Kennedy's Role in the Bay of Pigs Invasion

CIA Involvement in the Overthrow of Salvador Allende

Cotton Mather's Responsibility for the Salem Witch-Trials

Paul Robeson--Traitor or Patriot?

And deliberative topics might include:

Should there be a moratorium on nuclear power plants?

Is a "bottle bill" good for this state?

Should the foreign-language requirement be reinstated?

Should the U.S. build the MX missile?

Obviously deliberative topics will change as the issues of the day change.

I should warn you at this point that most of the essays you receive on these topics will of necessity be somewhat disappointing to you at first. While students can certainly master the forms in a week, that short amount of time does not allow enough time for complete research, and your students' argumentative capacities will often seem weak to you. Students making generalizations and arguing abstract points are notoriously vague and tolerate lapses of logic and weaknesses of argument that teachers spot immediately. Do not, in other words, expect high levels of argumentation at this point. Pay attention, instead, to the care with which each student is applying the four parts of the form to the subject.

Young, Becker and Pike have created a useful schematic representation of the four-part essay which I pass out to my students before

they begin this assignment. This list allows a student to work through the four-part essay section by section. You can ditto it and pass it out along with the assignment:

- 1) Introduction
 - a) Direct the reader's attention to the subject or problem.
 - b) Explain your experience with the subject, the reasons why you can write with authority.
 - c) Establish bridges with the reader by pointing out shared beliefs, attitudes, and experiences.
- 2) Background
 - a) Explain the nature of the problem--its history and causes.
 - b) Explain its relevance to the reader's problems, desires, and interests--the reasons why the problem is important to him.
- 3) Argument
 - a) State the major premise. Include any information that is necessary for making it clear and acceptable.
 - b) State the minor premise. Include any information that is necessary for making it clear and acceptable. (It is usually the minor premise that needs the most substantial support. Cite authoritative statements, facts, statistics, personal experiences and experiences of others, and so on.)
 - c) State your conclusion.
 - d) Demonstrate the superiority of your position by pointing out defects in the premises or inferences of alternative positions. Explain why the alternatives cannot solve the problem; or if they can, why your solution solves it better.
- 4) Conclusion
 - a) Explain the implications of the argument, such as the benefits to the reader of accepting it and the undesirable consequences of rejecting it.
 - b) Summarize your argument: the problem (2a), your conclusion (3c), and the reasons for accepting it (3a and 3b).

After your students have finished their first drafts of the four-part assignment, ask them to break into workshop groups and read each others' drafts. Have them ask the following questions about each section of the essay:

Introduction--

- Do the first four sentences attract my interest?
- Is the subject clearly defined in the introduction?
- Is the introduction too long?
- Does the introduction seem to be aimed at a specific audience? What is it?
- Do I want to know more, to keep reading? Why?

Statement of Fact--

- Does this section clearly explain the nature of the problem or situation?
- Is there anything not told that I need to know?
- Does the problem or situation continue to interest me?

Confirmation--

- Is the argumentation convincing and believable?
- Does the order of presentation seem reasonable?
- Has any obvious argument been left out?
- Has the opposing position been competently refuted?

Conclusion--

- Has the case been summarized well?
- Do I feel well-disposed toward the writer? Why?
- Does the ending seem graceful?

After the workshop groups discuss these questions and evaluate each others' papers with them, you are ready to ask for a typed copy of the assignment. This is an important workshop session, and I usually drift from group to group during the meetings and reiterate the warnings about how any form must be adapted to its content. Often the teacher will be called on to approve each small departure

from the prescribed form, and so it is a good idea to try to talk to each student about his paper if that is possible during the group meetings.

There are several things that can be done with these first argumentative papers in class, but I generally choose several and read them aloud anonymously, praising and criticizing them as they reflect or fail to reflect the formal qualities of the arrangement form; students can also be asked to do this. The more students know about what is successful in argument the easier it will be for them to write their next papers.

Two More Detailed Arrangements

Throughout the history of rhetoric there have been a number of different prescriptive arrangements, but since most of them are founded in the conception of the four-part arrangement already covered, we can deal with the most important of the more detailed forms in a single section.

The classical oration form as dealt with by Cicero and Quintilian was in most senses a four-part form, but the Latin rhetoricians divided the third section, the confirmation, into two separate parts, confirmatio and reprehensio. As Cicero says, "The aim of confirmation is to prove our own case and that of refutation [reprehensio] is to refute the case of our opponents."¹⁹ Thus the classical oration was composed of five parts:

The exordium or introduction

The narratio or statement of facts

The confirmatio or proof of the case

The reprehensio or refutation of opposing arguments

The peroratio or conclusion

The splitting of the refutation section into an area of its own is not a really meaningful change from the four-part arrangement. As you may remember, the confirmation section of the four-part essay could also be refutative. Still, a separate section of refutation makes the task of dealing with opposing arguments mandatory, and thus can provide more structure for a discourse. While it is not always true that the refutation follows the presentation of the writer's own positive arguments, that order is the one usually used--unless the opposing arguments are so powerful or so generally accepted that the audience would not listen to an opposing confirmation without first being prepared by the refutation.

As Corbett points out, refutation can be accomplished by means of appeal to reason, by emotional appeals, by the ethical or personal appeal of the writer, or by wit. Refutation usually can be accomplished in one of two ways: 1.) The writer denies the truth of one of the premises on which the opposing argument is built, or 2.) The writer objects to the inferences drawn by the opposition from premises which cannot be broken down.²⁰

The last classically-descended arrangement with which we will deal, and the most detailed, is the six-part arrangement recommended by Hugh Blair in his extremely influential Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres of 1783. Blair's conception of arrangement was largely influenced by the classical theorists, but he was also a practitioner

of pulpit oratory; thus his arrangement shows both classical and sermonic elements. Blair's model of a discourse was composed of these elements:

- The exordium or introduction
- The statement and division of the subject
- The narration or explication
- The reasoning or arguments
- The pathetic or emotional part
- The conclusion²¹

In this breakdown of parts, the introduction contains much the same material as has already been covered. It raises audience attention, renders the reader benevolent, and so on. Blair distinguishes two sorts of introductions, as did some of the classical theorists: The principium, which is addressed to well-disposed audiences and which is essentially a direct opening, and the insinuatio, which is directed to hostile or ill-disposed audiences. The latter is a less direct method which respects the subtlety necessary to prepare a hostile audience for arguments counter to their opinions. The insinuatio generally opens by first admitting the most powerful points made by the opposition, by showing how the writer holds the same views as the audience on general philosophical questions, or by dealing with ingrained audience prejudices. The principium, on the other hand, can proceed with the knowledge that the audience is sympathetic and can go directly to the task of rendering them attentive.

Blair's first large departure from what we have called the four-part essay is in the second of his divisions, the "statement and division of the subject." In this arrangement, as in the three-part arrangement,

the thesis is clearly stated at the end of the introduction, but in Blair's arrangement the thesis is immediately followed by the "division" or announcement of the plan of the essay. Both the proposition and the division should be short and succinct, states Blair, and the division should avoid "unnecessary multiplication of heads." In other words, it should contain as simple an outline as possible, presented in a natural, non-mechanistic fashion.

The next two sections, "narration" and "reasoning," correspond to the statement of fact and confirmation sections in the four-part essay. Following the argumentation section, though, Blair proposes an entirely new division of arrangement, the section he calls "the pathetic part." The word pathetic in this case refers, of course, not to our present-day usage to mean "pitiabile," but to the pathetic appeal of classical rhetoric, by which is meant any strong emotional appeal made to the audience. The pathetic part, then, is a section in which, all the arguments having been presented, the writer attempts to arouse the feelings of his readers in favor of his position, and it is also the section in which the discourse begins to draw to a close.

Blair offers a specific method by which a writer can arouse the emotions of his audience, a formula that is remarkably similar to T.S. Eliot's definition of the "objective correlative." The writer must in the pathetic part of his discourse attach the audience's emotions to a specific instance, object, or person, says Blair. A writer arguing against nuclear power, for instance, might close his arguments with specific examples of nuclear harm--factory workers rendered sterile by isotope poisoning, workers killed in grisly fashion in nuclear

accidents, and so on. A writer arguing for nuclear generation of electricity might paint a dreadful picture of poor people freezing to death because the cost of heating without nuclear power was too great for them to bear. The point of the pathetic part is to conclude the argumentation with a powerful emotional appeal which will--the writer hopes--bring the arguments together in the reader's mind and cause him to act on his feelings. When properly handled, a pathetic appeal at the end of the arguments can be very effective.

The pathetic part should also be short, Blair says, and must not rely on any stylistic or oratorical flourishes. The language of passion, he claims, is not that of oratory; passionate language is bold, ardent, and simple, and so should the language of the pathetic part be. And finally, Blair warns, do not attempt to create a pathetic effect if you are not moved yourself, for the result of such attempts will be not only ineffective but hypocritical because of their artificiality.

The conclusion of this six-part form follows the pathetic part and is similar to the conclusions described in the previous arrangements.

Classroom Use of the More Detailed Forms

These forms are not very profitable except for use by more advanced students, perhaps honors freshmen or sophomores at very least, and more probably juniors or seniors. Since these more detailed forms are based on the four-part essay it is usually best to teach them as extensions of it. I have found that once I provided a more complex arrangement structure for my students they were unwilling to go back to

a less detailed structure and the larger burden of decision it placed on them, so I teach these two forms after spending time on the four-part structure and progress from the less-structured to the more detailed. Each successive structure subsumes those that precede it, to some degree.

The choice of assignments is important when teaching these argumentative arrangements, and you will probably find that your students will need more time to write argumentation than any other type of discourse. Argumentative essays cannot be assembled by students overnight. The forensic and legislative topics I mentioned earlier can be profitably applied to these arrangements, but by the time that I have reached the stage of teaching these forms it is usually close to the end of the term, and I often let students choose their own argumentation topic. Having been led through the four-part form, they know which topics can be well argued and which will present problems, and only if a student cannot come up with a topic of his own do I give out topics for these essays.

Both the five- and the six-part forms provide specific sorts of practice, the five-part form in refutation and the six-part form in emotional appeals of one certain sort. If you teach the five-part form you should make certain that each student can list at least two arguments his opposition would be likely to use before he begins to write--otherwise the refutation sections can be too general or can be indistinguishable from the confirmation sections. If you require an essay in the six-part form, some training in the difference between pathos and bathos is in order if you are to avoid some genuinely

embarrassing attempts to "sway the emotions." Once again, the six-part form is not one that can be used well by most freshmen, whose emotional perceptions are not always informed by the rational and calculating judgment necessary for effective pathetic appeal. This is a form more useful for upper-level students than for freshmen.

Whichever form you decide to use, you will have to familiarize your students with it through the use of models, either in handout form or in the reader. After you introduce each element in a new arrangement, it must be exemplified. After soliciting an argumentative subject from the class, I often outline the course of the argument on the board, showing how it can be dealt with by a specific form of arrangement. "Thinking on your feet" this way is not easy, but it shows the students that you are not expecting work you cannot do yourself.

And finally, continually impress during each stage of teaching these prescriptive arrangements to your students that the demands made by such forms are flexible. The more complex the pattern of arrangement, the greater the chance that the nature of the subject will render one or more of the sections extraneous or actually harmful to the discourse because of that section's lack of a real task. From classical times to the present, the corollary dictum of all of the forms of arrangement has told us to use common sense in deciding whether or to what degree the method of arrangements fits the real needs of the writer and his subject.

Non-Classical Arrangement

Richard Larson's Problem-Solving Form

There have been relatively few attempts to "fix" patterns of arrangement outside of classical rhetorical theory, but Richard L. Larson, a rhetorician at Herbert Lehman College of CUNY, has devised a method of arrangement based on problem-solving which can be used as a pattern for essays and also as an inventive heuristic. "Problem-solving," says Larson, is "the process by which one moves from identifying the need to accomplish a particular task (and discovering that the task is difficult) to finding a satisfactory means for accomplishing that task."²² What this emphasis on action-based task definition means, of course, is that the problem-solving form is both exploratory and finally, argumentative. It deals more successfully with situations in which a change needs to be accomplished than with narrative or purely expository writing. Defining a problem leads, as in the classical deliberative oration, to arguing for one specific answer; the novel and valuable aspect of Larson's method is that it uses the very process of arriving at an arguable position as the pattern of arrangement for the essay.

In his article, "Problem-Solving, Composing, and Liberal Education," Larson identifies eight steps that must be accomplished in order to complete the process of identifying and solving a problem.²³ I have here adapted them for use as a pattern of arrangement:

1.) Definition of the problem -- After a short introduction this section provides "a clear statement of exactly what is to be decided."

This statement usually involves a choice between possible courses of action or the identification of an undesirable condition needing correction.

2.) Determination of why the problem is indeed a problem--a source of difficulty for the decision-maker -- If a course of action is clear, as Larson points out, there can be no problem. This section clarifies the need for a decision on policy or an explanation of what is undesirable about the current situation. This explanation may demand a causal analysis of the present situation.

3.) An enumeration of the goals that must be served by whatever action is taken -- Sometimes the determination of the goals to be striven for is in itself a problem-solving situation, but most possible subjects for student essays present readily identifiable "goods" as goals-- continued world peace, equitable distribution of wealth, the best quality education, and so on.

4.) Determination of the goals which have highest priority -- This step can be difficult. Usually there are several goals in any realistic problem-solution, and if possible goals include mutually exclusive goods such as "free trade" and "fair trade" (for instance), some decision must be made on priority. This assigning of priorities may need to be argued for in itself, depending upon the audience projected for the essay.

5.) "Invention" of procedures that might attain the stated goals -- If the question is one of choosing between several possible courses of action, no invention will be necessary unless some sort of compromise is proposed. If the problem-solver must discover how to improve an

undesirable situation, though, invention of possible methods will be necessary. For example, the problem of poor urban transit could be solved by creating more bus stops, or by buying more buses, or by instituting peak-hour special runs. If choices are not immediately apparent, they must be created.

6.) Prediction of the results that will follow the taking of each possible action -- This is the most difficult step, requiring careful study of evidence about conditions, precedents, laws of nature, history, past cause-and-effect sequences, and so on. This entire section must be based on intelligent appraisals of probability. Each possible action must be weighed against the good it would accomplish, how much it would cost, and any unavoidable evil attached to it.

7.) Weighing of the predictions -- This part of the essay compares the possible actions and their projected outcomes, trying to gauge which action will be most likely to attain the chosen goals with the fewest unwanted side effects.

8.) Final evaluation of the choice that seems superior -- This section closes the essay by determining whether the chosen alternative does indeed solve the problem. It may include some modification of the chosen action to minimize the bad effects or to maximize the good.

Larson puts forward this method as both a pattern of arrangement and as a system of invention, and it is easy to see elements of both canons of rhetoric in problem-solving, but to a degree, as has been previously stated, one canon always implies the other, and all patterns of arrangement contain aspects of invention within them.

Classroom Use of Problem-Solving Arrangement

The problem-solving technique is one that has many uses for students outside of English classes, and thus can be one of the most practical forms to teach. It is, for example, the primary report form used in technical and professional writing of all sorts, and thus is a tool that many students will be able to use throughout their professional careers. It also provides a method of thinking situations through that may help remedy the easy assertions and cut-corner thought processes that plague freshman English classes.

Larson warns against making his eight-step method into "a sterile formula"--a problem which is central for all systems of arrangement. In my experience, though, once you have introduced your students to the eight steps of the problem-solving process they tend to stick slavishly to them, no matter how often you caution flexibility. My own way of dealing with this student dependence on the eight steps has been to stop worrying so much about it. More than most arrangements, problem-solving form is a duplication of actual conceptualizations, so that even if students' essays are formulaic to some degree they are not generally sterile. As students discover the real demands of problems they face, their dependence on the form should decrease.

To introduce your students to the problem-solving pattern of arrangement, ditto off and hand out a sheet that details the eight steps involved. The example of its use mentioned by Larson is Swift's "A Modest Proposal," which can be found in many readers, and if you wish to expose your students to a more modern example, you might look through technical writing texts for models of the feasibility study,

which is usually an important technical-writing assignment. You might also ask a colleague who teaches technical writing if he has any copies of student essays using the form that you can borrow and thermofax. The simpler the example is, the better; try to stay away from too much technical detail, which can discourage freshmen.

After you have explained and exemplified the steps of the process, when you feel your students are comfortable with and able to identify the steps, ask them for a form of outline--just two or three sentences under each heading--on a campus topic: "Should the school newspaper be free or should it be sold for a nominal sum?" or "Should the library go to a closed-stack system?" The best problem-solving topics are deliberative, having to do with future policy. Students usually need several days to come up with this outline. On the day it is due, convene the workshop groups and ask the students to evaluate each others' work, examining each step of the outline for strengths and weaknesses. At this stage, they need to be examining the logical structure of the outline, making certain that no important goal or prediction has been ignored or underplayed.

At this point students are usually ready for a longer assignment. You can ask them to expand the outlines they have been constructing into full-length essays, or, as I do, go directly to a full-length deliberative question and assign a problem-solving essay based on it. Any of the deliberative topics mentioned in connection with the classical forms will work in this connection, and others, on current questions political and cultural, will probably suggest themselves to you. If you can create the time, it is a good idea to discuss the outline of this paper

with each student before he commits himself to a first draft. If you do not have the time, have students do this in groups.

Problem-solving, as Larson points out, "offers the student writer one model for planning rigorous arguments on complex issues," and it is also a technique by which students can investigate systems and draw intelligent, defensible conclusions. If you expose your students to this system, you will be providing them not only with a rhetorical tool but with a method of analysis that will leave them better able to handle the complex demands made by contemporary culture on educated people.

Frank D'Angelo's Paradigmatic Arrangements

Of all the contemporary rhetorical theorists, Frank J. D'Angelo of Arizona State University has probably given the most thought to problems of arrangement. In his numerous articles, in his theoretical treatise A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric, and in his text Process and Thought in Composition, he has taken on some of the more persistent problems that arrangement presents to both teacher and student. In the Conceptual Theory and in his article, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Essay," D'Angelo discusses a theory of arrangement based partially on Francis Christensen's work with sentences and paragraphs and presents a method of formal analysis he calls linear or syntagmatic analysis.²⁴ This method, which sees an essay as a sort of macro-paragraph to be analyzed in terms of coordination and subordination, is fascinating, but like Michael Grady's similar approach in "A Generative Rhetoric of the Composition," it tends to be mechanical and reductive as well as difficult to apply in the classroom.²⁵

D'Angelo is aware of this. In the Conceptual Theory he proposes an alternative theory of arrangement, which he calls paradigmatic analysis, and it is this method which he has treated at great length in his textbook Process and Thought in Composition. A paradigm, says D'Angelo, is "the core structure that represents the principle of forward motion in. . .writing."²⁶ Paradigmatic analysis, by investigating the core structures of various sorts of discourses, can isolate those that appear again and again and allow writers to use them as structures for arrangement. As D'Angelo says,

The purpose of this kind of analysis is not only to reveal the underlying principles that inform discourse, but also to make them generative (in the sense of actually producing discourse). The abstracted paradigm can be re-individuated in new content and can thus be used as the informing principle to generate new discourse.²⁷

D'Angelo has isolated what he considers to be the ten most common paradigms of discourse, and he has presented each one in the form of a model or outline which students can use as the "informing principle" or plan for essays of their own. "In the act of composing, our minds think along these lines," D'Angelo says of these paradigmatic structures, and although his list of paradigms may not be all-inclusive, it does encompass most of the important forms of rational discourse. Other rhetoricians have, of course, mentioned some of these patterns of arrangement--indeed, in so far as they recapitulate the classical topics, they can be said to go back to Aristotle--but D'Angelo's presentation of them is the most thorough we have today. Paradigms

as he discusses them are not merely the arbitrary structures of abstract philosophy but formal extensions of the underlying thought patterns of the human mind.

Paradigms can take a number of different forms, but the useful form for arrangement is the outline-paradigm, what D'Angelo calls abstract paradigms, those that are stripped to their most basic structures. For instance, an abstract paradigm for a cause-to-effect essay might look like this:

- (1) Introduction (states the thesis)
- (2) Cause 1
- (3) Cause 2
- (4) Cause(s) 3,(4, 5. . .)
- (5) Effect
- (6) Conclusion (restates the thesis, summarizes, and so forth)²⁸

In order to make it useful, this bare-bones outline must be given first a basic clothing of content in the form of simple declarative statements:

- (1) The war in Vietnam was the result of a number of historical forces at work all over the world.
- (2) The first was the awakened nationalism of the Vietnamese under their guerilla hero Ho Chi Minh.
- (3) The second was the Truman Doctrine of containment of communism by American forces.
- (4) The third was the reawakening, aided by the Soviet Union, of Chinese imperialism under Mao Tse-Tung.

- (5) All of these factors met in Vietnam in 1965, producing the "dirty little war" that changed modern history.
- (6) Without all of these factors the Vietnam war would either never have started or would have been over in a year.

While I do not put this outline forward as the basis of a prize-winning essay, it is obvious that the paradigm allows considerable flexibility to the writer while guiding the general direction of the essay being written. You will notice that the elements of the paradigm seem to transfer themselves into topic sentences for the paragraphs of the essay being created. This direct translation of paradigm-element to paragraph-topic is not uncommon, but often each element of a paradigm needs more than a single paragraph to develop it fully. Once the outline-statement for each element has been created, the writer must decide how many paragraphs will be needed to deal adequately with that element.

The Common Paradigms

Narration

Narration conceives of events chronologically in relation to one another. As a pattern of thought, writes D'Angelo, it "consists of the act of following a sequence of actions or events in time. It is a recounting of the facts or particulars of some occurrence." Its abstract paradigm is this:

Introduction (contains time, place, agent, and beginning
of action)

Event 1 (or Incident 1)

Event 2 (or Incident 2)
 Event 3 (or Incident 3)
 Event 4 (or Incident 4)
 Events 5,6,7 (or Incidents 5,6,7)
 Conclusion (falling action)²⁷

Process

"A process," says D'Angelo, "is a series of actions, functions, steps, or operations that bring about a particular end or result." The chronologically ordered, interlocking steps of a process focus either on how something works or on how something is done. Process suggests the concept of change through time, and its paradigm is this:

Introduction (thesis--usually a simple one)
 Step 1 (Phase 1)
 Step 2 (Phase 2)
 Step 3 (Phase 3)
 Step 4 (Phase 4)
 Steps 5,6,7. . . (Phases 5,6,7. . .)
 Conclusion (summary and so forth)³⁰

Cause and Effect

Like the classical topic of consequence, this paradigm is concerned with the question of influence. A cause, says D'Angelo, is "an agency or operation responsible for bringing about an action, event, condition, or result," and an effect is "anything that has been caused. . .the result of an action." Cause and effect are always related; "one always

implies the other." A cause-and-effect pattern is always concerned with the explanation of phenomena, and its paradigm in simplest form is this:

Introduction (includes thesis)

Cause. . .

Effect. . .

Conclusion (summary and so forth)

In actual essays, though, the patterns are more complex. They can either proceed deductively, from effect to cause, or inductively, from cause to effect. There are many permutations, depending on the number of causes or effects to be explained. Here are some common cause/effect patterns:

Inductive:

Introduction (includes thesis)

Cause 1

Cause 2

Cause 3

Causes 4,5,6

Effect

Conclusion (summary and so forth)

OR

Introduction

Cause

Effect 1

Effect 2

Effect 3

Effects 4,5,6

Conclusion

Deductive:

Introduction (includes thesis)

Effect

Cause 1

Cause 2

Cause 3

Causes 4,5,6

Conclusion (summary and so forth)

OR

Introduction

Effect 1

Effect 2

Effect 3

Effects 4,5,6

Cause

Conclusion ³¹

Description

Description, says D'Angelo, is "a way of picturing images verbally in speech or writing and of arranging those images in some kind of logical or associational pattern." The central question to be dealt with in this kind of arrangement concerns that logical or associational pattern, and D'Angelo says that this grouping can be done in one of four ways, each way representing a different form of the paradigm.

These are:

- Paradigm 1: Vertical Order (bottom to top, top to bottom)
- Paradigm 2: Horizontal Order (left to right, right to left)
- Paradigm 3: Depth Order (inside to outside, vice versa)
- Paradigm 4: Circular Order (clockwise, counterclockwise)³²

Thus a typical paradigmatic arrangement using vertical order might look like this:

- Introduction (includes thesis)
- Element 1 (upper part of object or scene)
- Element 2 (middle part of object or scene)
- Element 3 (bottom part of object or scene)
- Conclusion (summary and so forth)

This is obviously extremely simplistic, and there are certainly many other possible abstract paradigms available for use in descriptive writing. The element that each has in common, that all good descriptive writing must have, is a dominant perspective or impression of the subject that can serve as a thesis and inform all the details with meaning.

Definition

"To define," says D'Angelo, "is to set bounds or limits to a thing, to state its essential nature." There are a number of different sorts of shorter and more specific meanings for definition: logical definitions, lexical definitions, stipulative definitions. An essay-length definition, however, must be an extended version of a formal or logical definition, which is composed of three parts: species, genus, and differentia. The species, or term to be defined, is always a member of a larger class or genus, and is set apart from other members of the genus by factors described by the differentia. For example,

<u>species</u>		<u>genus</u>	<u>differentia</u>
Brazing	is	a welding process	in which the filler metal is nonferrous.

A paradigmatic arrangement of an extended formal definition would look like this:

- Introduction (includes logical definition)
- Expansion of the genus
- Expansion of the differentia (often more than one)
- Conclusion (summary or restatement)³³

Analysis

Analysis is "the systematic separation of a whole into parts, pieces, or sections," says D'Angelo. Analytical essays usually examine complex wholes and dissect them into understandable parts. A physical analysis breaks an object into its components, and a conceptual

analysis divides an idea into other ideas. The paradigmatic structure of analysis is this:

Introduction (includes thesis)
 Characteristic 1 (or Part 1)
 Characteristic 2 (or Part 2)
 Characteristics 3,4,5 (or Parts 3,4,5)
 Conclusion (summary, return to beginning)³⁴

Classification

Classification is "the process of grouping similar ideas or objects, the systematic arrangement of things into classes on the basis of shared characteristics." Any group of people, objects, or ideas that possesses shared characteristics can be classified. D'Angelo points out that classification is differentiated from analysis by the fact that the object of analysis is always singular--"a painting, a movie, the human body"--while the subject of classification is always plural--"cars, jobs, popular songs." The most important rule to keep in mind when classifying is that the classes created for the paradigm must be mutually exclusive. The paradigm is this:

Introduction (thesis, including the basis of classification
 and a listing of the types or classes found)
 Subclass 1
 Subclass 2
 Subclass 3
 Conclusion (summary or restatement)³⁵

Exemplification

"Exemplification," says D'Angelo, "is the process of illustrating a general principle, statement, or law by citing specific examples."

It begins with a generalization and then introduces specific instances that illuminate the generalization. Exemplification is perhaps the simplest and certainly one of the most common essay forms, especially for student use. Its paradigm is this:

Introduction (includes the generalization)

Example 1

Example 2

Examples 3,4,5

Conclusion³⁶

Comparison

Comparison is "the process of examining two or more things in order to establish their similarities or differences." D'Angelo mentions three main paradigmatic structures, of which two are relatively common. He calls them the Half and Half Pattern and the Characteristics Pattern.

The Half and Half Pattern, which is also known as "block" or "divided" comparison, deals with the two objects to be compared as wholes and examines first one and then the other:

Introduction (includes thesis, sets up comparison)

Subject 1

Characteristic 1

Characteristic 2

Characteristic 3

Characteristic 4

Subject 2

Characteristic 1

Characteristic 2

Characteristic 3

Characteristic 4

Conclusion (summary, return to beginning)

The Characteristics Pattern, which is also called "alternating" comparison, treats the subjects alternately in terms of characteristics they share, examining each characteristic in relation to its opposite number:

Introduction (includes thesis, sets up comparison)

Characteristic 1

Subject 1

Subject 2

Characteristic 2

Subject 1

Subject 2

Characteristic 3

Subject 1

Subject 2

Conclusion (summary, return to beginning)³⁷

Analogy

An analogy is an extended metaphor, "a kind of logical inference based on the premise that if two things resemble each other in some respects, they will probably be alike in other respects." Analogy is a teaching technique in that it allows a writer to explain unfamiliar concepts by relating them to familiar things. The paradigmatic structure of analogy is similar to that of comparison:

Introduction (sets up the analogy)

Subject 1 is similar to Subject 2 in this respect

Subject 1 is similar to Subject 2 in this respect

Subject 1 is similar to Subject 2 in this respect

Conclusion (therefore, Subject 1 is similar to Subject 2
in some respect known of one, but not known
of the other.)³⁸

Classroom Use of Paradigmatic Arrangement

Although D'Angelo's paradigmatic arrangements have recently begun to come under fire from other composition theorists as being hardly more than extensions of the three-part essay, they still have a good deal of classroom usefulness.³⁹ Although nearly every sort of essay can theoretically be written using one or more paradigms, D'Angelo himself cautions that they should not merely be memorized as an artificial set of arrangements. "The idea," he says, "is to internalize the principles upon which the patterns are based so that when you use them they become intuitive rather than self-conscious." In patterns of arrangement as in many other elements of the writing process, this shift from conscious to intuitive process is what we strive to teach. It is particularly

difficult to do in arrangement and formal work; in the time we have about the best we can hope for is a working knowledge of the paradigms.

You can introduce the outlines of the abstract paradigms to your students on dittoed sheets in the same form in which they are reproduced here. Once you have exposed your students to the paradigms in abstract form, there are two activities that need to be practiced before you can expect them to manipulate paradigmatic arrangement competently. The first is skillful choice of which paradigms mesh best with which sorts of subjects, and the second is expansion of the chosen abstract paradigm into a fuller outline-like form, which produces content and direction in the essay.

Practice in choosing paradigms that correspond to subjects can be done orally in class. After you have gone through the paradigmatic arrangements and explained what each one consists of, hand out a list of simple declarative thesis-like statements that can be fitted into the various paradigms. You might begin the list with theses that fit very obviously into one paradigm or another and gradually work down to theses that are more difficult to place. My list begins and ends with these:

There are three kinds of freshmen at OSU.

An incident in high school taught me the falsity of ethnic stereotypes.

The VW Rabbit and the Dodge Omni look similar, but have many differences.

The Seventies were called "The Me Decade," and the fads of those years reflected it.

* * *

There is no obvious answer to the problem of
pornography in America.

Dwight D. Eisenhower is responsible for the problem
of the "boat people."

My room is an accurate reflection of my personality.

Ask your students to try quickly to place each statement into a paradigmatic context, running quickly through the listed elements of each paradigm to see whether that arrangement suited, or could be made to suit, the subject. Some theses, especially those near the bottom of the list, will be usable in several different paradigmatic arrangements. I have found that this practice in fitting form and content together is important and well worth the several class periods it takes. After the oral discussion of each thesis and why it works with specific paradigms and not with others, I ask each student to choose two of the examples--each thesis should now have a paradigm attached to it--and actually write out a semi-abstract outline for the thesis in the form of key words.

At this point the practice in the second necessary skill, that of developing an abstract paradigm into a sentence outline, begins. After a few minutes, most students will be able to produce a key-word outline from the abstract paradigm and the thesis. A typical key-word outline looks like this:

1. Introduction--three kinds of freshmen
2. Classification 1--the freaks
3. Classification 2--the jocks

4. Classification 3--the serious students
5. Conclusion--three kinds

From this rough (and unpromising sounding) key-word outline, the next step asks for full-sentence expansions of each idea:

1. There are three sorts of freshmen at OSU.
2. The first kind of freshman is the freak, a child of the Sixties who still thinks it is cool to listen to Led Zeppelin while smoking banana peels.
3. The second kind of freshman is the jock, a beer-guzzling sort who drives a Trans-Am to Buckeye Bashes and thinks Woody Hayes was God.
4. The third kind is the serious student, who is here for an education and tolerates no nonsense.
5. Together these types make up the freshman class at OSU.

This expansion work is most helpful when it is read out loud or written on the blackboard. Do not fail to correct those who make mistakes in their expansions--gently, of course. Remember that those who do not read their outlines aloud will be learning from those who do.

The final step, of course, is writing an essay from the expanded paradigm, and it is at this point that you need to stress the fact that each element of the paradigm does not automatically translate into a paragraph. Sometimes it does, of course, but often, more than one paragraph will be needed in order to handle and exhaust each element. When your students seem comfortable with the use of the paradigms applied to theses and subject matter you supply, you can assign them

paradigms to apply to theses and subject matter they invent themselves. I have also found that asking for an abstract paradigmatic representation of the structure of an essay along with the essay itself is a good method of checking on the arrangement method used by the student--and of making sure one was used.

Despite the criticisms of D'Angelo's work, paradigmatic structures can be helpful for beginning students who need an informing principle around which to structure their writing. Whether the paradigms are genuine channels of thought, "dynamic organizational processes" or not, students can learn to manipulate them consciously while internalizing their structures, and at best, the paradigms can help provide them with the intuitive formal sense of mature writers.

EDITING AND PLANNING TECHNIQUES IN ARRANGEMENT

Thus far we have been discussing methods of arrangement that are "transcendent" in that they prefigure the essays patterned on them. They might in a sense be called "generative," although many rhetoricians are uncomfortable with that term. In any case, although some of the prescriptive arrangements we have seen are more flexible than others, many teachers completely distrust the idea of prescriptive or transcendent arrangements. Rather than using pre-existing arrangements, these teachers subscribe to the organic model of composition, in which invention, arrangement, and style exfoliate together from a writer's perceptions of his subject, purpose, and audience. It is certainly inarguable that most mature writers do compose organically, but without

section-by-section prescriptive arrangements, teachers are left with little to offer students seeking advice on arrangement except some rather vague maxims--"Organize your points clearly," "Strive for unity, order, and coherence," "Don't ramble or digress."

For those teachers, then, who wish to avoid prescription but still want to be able to offer students sound advice, there do exist some techniques of post-facto editing and section-rearrangement that are very useful. This part of the chapter covers only the most important and easily taught.

The Outline

It may seem like heresy to relegate the outline to the status of a mere editorial technique. For the last hundred years, and even in many textbooks today, the outline has been advanced as the primary arrangement-generative tool available to students. Many teachers still hold to the sentiments of John F. Genung, who wrote in 1893 in his textbook Outlines of Composition, "It is strongly advisable, perhaps we had better say necessary, to draw up a careful plan of what you are going to write. . . . Even if a writer gets by experience the ability to make and follow a plan mentally, he must ordinarily have acquired that ability by planning much on paper."⁴⁰

The "careful plan," of course, was an outline of topics the essay would treat. Like a skeleton (a frequent analogical comparison), it would give structure to the body of the essay. The idea of the outline became very complex, with expectations of Roman and Arabic numerals, large and small letters--a full blueprint, in fact, of every topic,

sub-topic, and sub-sub-topic in the proposed essay. The idea of outlining before writing became almost de rigeur in high schools and continues to be taught there and in many colleges.

There are many theoretical advantages attached to the idea of outlining as the creation of a careful plan by which an essay can proceed. In some ways, the theory of outlining is related to the paradigmatic structures of arrangement found by Frank D'Angelo in all discourse and recommended by him as structures for prescriptive use in the classroom. Despite these theoretical advantages of outlining, though, it is a terribly inefficient method in practice, as many teachers have discovered to their sorrow. The full outline with all of its sets and subsets is simply not a method that reflects accurately the mental processes by which writing is actually accomplished. The fact is that for most sorts of essays the practice of outlining beforehand can cause more frustration and discouragement for students than it provides assistance.

Many students simply cannot make the connections between the topics they want to deal with in the abstract context of an outline. They need to see a context of previous expression before they can decide where their essays should go next. For these students, the writing itself is an epistemological tool, a way of knowing, as Janet Emig has suggested in several articles. As the famous E.M. Forster quote goes, "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" The first cousins of the outline, D'Angelo's paradigms, at least provide a pre-existing framework into which a student can fit his subject matter; in the use of the outline, though, the student must

generate both form and content simultaneously in an abstract context. Just how difficult this is can be illustrated by attempting to write a full-blown subset outline before you write your own next essay.

This is not to say that the use of any form of ordered list of topics drawn up beforehand is bad. As the discussion of D'Angelo's paradigms and the chapter on invention have suggested, such cue-sheets are often very helpful. What is being questioned here is the use of the full-scale outline in a generative capacity. I actively encourage my students to use ordering lists or brainstorming lists in the generative part of the composing process, for such lists are invaluable in helping to keep the general flow of conceptions going. It is the subset outline that is interruptive and confining when used as a generative tool. What many teachers have discovered about the full-scale outline is that its use can be much more helpful to students in the editing stage of composition, after the first draft has been written.

The two most common sorts of outlines that have been proposed for use in composition are the topic outline and its more complex brother the topic-sentence outline. The topic outline, as its title suggests, is a listing of the sections of the proposed essay, its topics and their subtopics, with a key word or a short clause attached to each letter or number as a designation of content. The topic-sentence outline asks that the writer create a topic sentence for each paragraph in the proposed essay and order these topic sentences as the topics and subtopics of the essay; thus the major and minor ideas of the essay could be ranked according to their importance or the writer's purpose.

This sort of outline is, as you may imagine, extremely difficult to create beforehand.

Both of these types of outlines can be turned around by students and used after the first draft of the essay has been written, and what were devices for creating frustration can become easily usable and illuminating editing tools. Here is the way it works.

When your students have completed their first drafts, using one of the above forms of arrangement or proceeding intuitively, ask them to draw up an outline of the paragraphs in their drafts. Do not insist on sets and subsets at this point; merely suggest a numbered list. Each number will represent a paragraph, and after each number the student should write a short sentence summarizing the main idea of that paragraph.

After each paragraph has been thus represented and charted, each student will have what is in essence a map of where the argument of the essay is going. At this point, have the students meet in workshop groups or merely exchange lists with one another and discuss them for ten minutes or so. Questions to be asked about each list include:

1. Are there any paragraphs or topics that don't seem to relate well to the development of the subject?
2. Is there anything that should be cut?
3. Might one or several paragraphs work better in another position in the essay?
4. Is there any important part of the essay that seems to be missing?

After writing and discussing their post-facto outlines, students will have a much clearer idea of what changes need to be made in the paragraph arrangement of a rough draft before it is finalized. Generally, adding a few paragraphs, cutting a few, or rearranging a few will be the result--and a much more consciously organized final draft should also result. The practice in paragraph-level transitions that the students will get is an extra bonus.

The same sort of after-the-fact outlining can also be done using the simpler topic outline, but I have found that use of the sentence-outline produces clearer realizations on the part of the students about what it is they are saying as their arguments proceed.

Barrett Wendell's Note-Card Technique

Barrett Wendell of Harvard, one of the most influential teachers of composition of the late nineteenth century, evolved for his own use a system of planning and arrangement of writing that he describes in his 1891 text, English Composition:

On separate bits of paper--cards, if they be at hand--I write down the separate headings as they occur to me, in what seems to me the natural order. Then, when my little pack of cards is complete--in other words, when I have a card for every heading which I think of--I study them and sort them almost as deliberately as I should sort a hand at whist; and it has very rarely been my experience to find that a shift of arrangement will not decidedly improve the original order.⁴¹

Wendell goes on to relate the different ways in which changing the order of the cards can reveal duplication of ideas or relationships between

ideas that were previously not seen.

This technique of card-arrangement can be used profitably in freshman classes, but it is not usually worthwhile unless the writing assignment to be thus planned is at least 750 words in length. Below that number of words, the manipulation of cards seldom shows any new juxtapositions of ideas.

The best place for students to begin to hunt for what Wendell calls "headings" is in the list of invented materials gathered by using one of the invention methods described in Chapter Two. These lists can contain information ranging from single cue-words to long sentences, but for the purposes of the card-technique, each "bit" of information should probably be transferred to the note-card (I ask my students to buy 3/5" cards--inexpensive and small enough to be easily reshuffled) in the form of a short declarative phrase summing that "bit" up. For instance, from the garbled list of invented material that was to become the introduction to this chapter, three entries were:

amorphous vs. mechanistic

little written about

Burke quote

In note-card form, these cryptic "bits" might become:

"Two contrasting views of rhetorical form--in their extreme forms can be called the amorphous and the mechanistic."

"Unlike other canons of rhetoric, little theoretical material has been written about forms."

"Burke quote--form is creation and fulfillment of desires."

The very act of turning "bits" into note-card clauses has two salutary effects: first, it alerts the writer to unperceived

duplication in his invented material, and second, it creates an awareness of things that are not there, elements that are needed but have not yet been invented. Sub-topics suggest themselves, connections are made in the mind, and often the writer ends up with more cards than there were original "bits."

After the cards have been completed, they can be "shuffled"-- usually this means laid out on a desk or table and rearranged in different orders. This step is best accomplished by students at home, because the process of studying the permutations takes different lengths of time for different people. At this stage, students need to ask themselves these questions, which you can put on the blackboard or ditto off:

1. Which of these ideas seems to support other ideas?
2. Does any powerful sequence naturally suggest itself?
3. Do any of these ideas not seem to fit in?
4. Are there parts of any sequence missing?

When all of these questions have been answered as the cards are rearranged, the student can then decide on the final order of the cards, and thus of the essay. At this point, I usually have students write out the headings on paper in the form of a simple outline list they can work from.

John F. Genung provides arrangement exercises in his Outlines of Rhetoric that I have found useful in practicing the note-card technique. I pass out sheets with the following headings on them, have students make note-cards for each heading and then rearrange the cards in the form of a coherent essay. We then discuss the different possible permutations in class. These exercises force students to make connections and also

force them to discard irrelevant information. Genung's headings are:

THE COLLEGE BURNING.

(1) The smothered spreading of the fire. (2) The kindling of the fire. (3) Progress from part to part of the building. (4) The bursting out of the flames. (5) Importance of Education. (6) The ruins. (7) The sin of carelessness. (8) The dying out of the fire. (9) Classical study. (10) The utility of fire departments. (11) Relative destructiveness of fire and water. (12) Cause of the fire.

THE DUTY OF BEING HEALTHY.

A healthy body.--We think of health as something that we cannot control.--Hence ill-health is not regarded as blameworthy, nor good health as a duty.--A healthy mind.--This may be cherished in a feeble body.--Hence imposes a higher duty.--What is included in a healthy body.--Work, recreation, good diet, sleep, good habits.--What is included in a healthy mind.--Cheerfulness, hopefulness, kindness, common sense, lack of prejudice.--All play.--Frivolousness.--Marks of an unhealthy mind. [Having arranged these, see if they are brought sufficiently to bear on your exact theme--duty--and add more headings if necessary.]⁴²

As old-fashioned-sounding as these exercises are, they can provide good practice. They can be used either before or after you first ask students to use their own invented material, depending on the level of student and on the method of invention you have been teaching.

W. Ross Winterowd's "Grammar of Coherence" Technique

In an article in College English in 1970, W. Ross Winterowd argues that beyond the sentence level--that is, at the level of paragraphs and essay-units (what Willis Pitkin calls "discourse blocs")--the main factor that controls coherence is transitions.⁴³ Form and coherence, says Winterowd, are synonymous at the paragraph and discourse

bloc level, and we perceive coherence as consistent relationships among transitions. To be aware of and able to control these transitional relationships is a very important skill for our students, and an editorial technique that can promote this awareness is implicit in Winterowd's discussion.

Winterowd has identified seven transitional relationships between parts in an essay, and the application of knowledge of these seven relationships can help students order the parts of their essay. The seven relationships are:

Coordination--expressed by the terms and, furthermore, too, in addition, also, again

Obversativity--expressed by but, yet, however, on the other hand

Causativity--expressed by for, because, as a result

Conclusativity--expressed by so, therefore, thus, for this reason

Alternativity--expressed by or

Inclusativity--expressed by a colon

Sequentiality--expressed by "first. . .second. . .third", "earlier. . .later" etc.

Winterowd suggests that this list of transitional relationships can be used for many generative and analytic purposes, but my use for it is fairly simple and has to do with maintaining coherence among the parts of an essay. To use it, first introduce your students to the transitional concepts by the use of illustrative handouts; as Winterowd suggests, these concepts are much more easily illustrated than defined

or explained--especially to freshmen. After talking about the transitional relationships for a few minutes, ask the students to do a short imitation exercise with them, copying the form of several of the examples while substituting their own content. This practice helps to make certain that students have at least a minimal understanding of the transitional relationships.

After this imitation exercise, ask students to bring in a paper that has already been written and evaluated. In class, assign the task of going over this old paper, marking each paragraph in the essay as it relates to the previous one. Each paragraph will be marked "Alternativity," "Causativity," etc. After the imitation practice, this task is not as hard as it sounds--most students are able to see most transitional relationships fairly easily. There will, of course, be the occasional mystery paragraph, which can be marked "?" and discussed later. This exercise gives students an immediate method of analyzing their own papers for coherence and of learning to strike or regroup paragraphs that have no observable relation to those around them.

After having practiced it on old papers, your students should be ready to use this analytical method on rough drafts of papers they have not yet revised. This system cannot be used to generate arrangements, but is helpful in checking arrangements already generated. Convene the workshop groups and ask students to check each others' papers for transitional relationships between the paragraphs. Papers with clear transitions between paragraphs and discourse blocs may have other problems, but they will generally be coherent. If you continue to use this method in class it will help to ingrain the meaning of

transitional relationships in the students' minds, and this intuitive grasp of transitions will mean that you can phase out the post-facto analysis of rough drafts.

One final note: some of my colleagues have criticized the use of Winterowd's original terms in the freshman classroom as off-putting for students because of their technicality. I continue to believe, though, that any attempt to simplify the terms would be reductive--one might as well use "A" "B" and "C". I have found that students can handle the terms if they are given sufficient illustrations for each one. Our students may be untrained, but they are not stupid.

NOTES

¹Richard L. Larson, "Structure and Form in Non-Fiction Prose," in Teaching Composition: Ten Bibliographical Essays, ed. Gary Tate (Forth Worth: Texas Christian Univ. Press. 1976), p. 45.

²Ibid, p. 71.

³Kenneth Burke, "Lexicon Rhetoricae" in Counterstatement (Los Altos, Cal.: Hermes Press, 1953), p. 124.

⁴Aristotle, Rhetoric, trans. Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932), pp. 220-221.

⁵Edward P.J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 303.

⁶Aristotle, Poetics, trans. S.H. Butcher, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. W.J. Bate (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), p. 24.

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⁸Donald Hall, Writing Well, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1976), p. 38.

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- ¹⁰Sheridan Baker, The Practical Stylist, 3rd ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973), p. 22.
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- ¹²Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, p. 304.
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- ¹⁵Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory, vol. II, trans. H.E. Butler (London: W. Heinemann, 1926), p. 67.
- ¹⁶Aristotle, Rhetoric, p. 233.
- ¹⁷Ibid, p. 240.
- ¹⁸Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike, Rhetoric: Discovery and Change (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), pp. 234-235.
- ¹⁹Cicero, De Partitione Oratoria, trans. H. Rackham (London: W. Heinemann, 1960), p. 337.
- ²⁰Corbett, Classical Rhetoric, p. 324.
- ²¹Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Philadelphia: T. Elwood Zell, 1866), p. 341.

²²Richard L. Larson, "Problem-Solving, Composing, and Liberal Education," College English 33 (March 1972), 629.

²³Ibid, pp. 631-33.

²⁴See Frank J. D'Angelo, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Essay," College Composition and Communication 25 (Dec. 1974), 388-396, and A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1975), pp. 55-72.

²⁵Michael Grady, "A Conceptual Rhetoric of the Composition," CCC 22 (Dec. 1971), 348-354.

²⁶Frank J. D'Angelo, Process and Thought in Composition (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1977), p. 56.

²⁷D'Angelo, A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric, p. 86.

²⁸D'Angelo, Process and Thought in Composition, p. 58.

²⁹Ibid, p. 88.

³⁰Ibid, p. 101.

³¹Ibid, pp. 113-114.

³²Ibid, p. 129.

³³Ibid, p. 147.

³⁴Ibid, p. 161.

³⁵Ibid, pp. 174-75.

³⁶Ibid, p. 186.

³⁷Ibid, pp. 197-8.

³⁸Ibid, p. 209.

³⁹Andrea Lunsford, "On D'Angelo's Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric," paper delivered at CCCC Convention, Washington, D.C., March 13, 1980. This paper criticized the paradigms in particular.

⁴⁰John F. Genung, Outlines of Rhetoric (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1893), p. 239.

⁴¹Barrett Wendell, English Composition (New York: Scribners, 1891), p. 165.

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CHAPTER IV

TEACHING STYLE

There has been an immense amount of scholarly work done over the past thirty years on the subject of style. As Edward P.J. Corbett suggests in his bibliographical essay, "Approaches to the Study of Style," stylistics is the most flourishing area of rhetoric today, at least if success is measured by the sheer number of works published.¹ To attempt to present a complete picture, or even a coherent overview, of the current state of stylistic studies would require far more space than is available here and would repeat much of Corbett's work. Some background in stylistics is helpful for teachers of composition, however, and to make our task a little easier I will borrow a duality that was created by W. Ross Winterowd for his anthology Contemporary Rhetoric.

Winterowd divides the study of style into two areas: theoretical stylistics, which is primarily concerned with the nature and existence of style, the application of stylistic criteria to literary studies, the linguistic attributes of different styles, etc., and pedagogical stylistics, which deals with the problem of teaching students to recognize and develop styles in their own writing.² The material in this chapter will deal almost completely with pedagogical stylistics, which has produced only a few definitive methods in comparison with the vast bulk of theoretical materials. Theoretical stylistics,

although it is a fascinating area, impinges in only a few ways on needs and concerns of teachers of composition, and therefore this chapter will treat of it only tangentially.

Theoretical stylistics is of little direct use to writing teachers because it has historically concerned itself with the analysis of literary texts. Much of the material published in the journals Style and Language and Style deals with the stylistic nature of specific authors' works or with specific poems, stories, novels, and other pieces of literature. Although the theoretical aspects of this literary study do not touch on composition theory in many ways, there are concerns that do cross the line between composition and literature, and a background in these concerns is helpful in teaching the concept of style.

Perhaps the central theoretical problem presented by the study of style is the question of whether or not style as an entity really exists. Is it, as some claim, "the totality of impressions which a literary work produces" or merely "sundry and ornamental linguistic devices" tacked onto a given content-meaning?³ There is no agreement at all on this question among the foremost stylisticians of our time, yet this is a question that must be answered by every writing teacher before he can decide on a teaching method. Three distinct views on this question of the nature of style have emerged, says Louis T. Milic, perhaps the primary modern stylistician, and he identifies and describes these three views in his article "Theories of Style and their Implications for the Teaching of Composition."⁴

The first of Milic's theories I will discuss is the one to which he gives the daunting name "Crocean aesthetic monism," because it is based on the critical theories of Benedetto Croce, who denied that any separation between form and content was possible. "The work of art (the composition) is a unified whole," say the Croceans, "with no seam between meaning and style."⁵ This theory is widely held by those stylisticians with a linguistic base, since linguistics seems to support the opinion that any change in wording is a change in stress and structure, and therefore a change in meaning. This theory would hold that the sentences "John gave me the book" and "The book was given to me by John" have different semantic meanings as well as different syntactic forms.

The second theory is what Milic calls "individualist or psychological monism" and it is best summed up by the famous aphorism of the French naturalist Buffon, "Le style, c'est l'homme même," usually translated as "Style is the man." Psychological monism holds that a writer "cannot help writing the way he does, for that is the dynamic expression of his personality."⁶ This theory claims that no writer can truly imitate another's style, for no two life-experiences are the same; it further holds that "the main formative influences on a writer are his education and his reading."⁷ This theory and the Crocean theory are both monisms because they perceive style and content as a unity, inseparable from one another either because different locutions say different things or because "an individual's style in his habitual and consistent selection from the expressive resources

available in his language," and is not consciously amendable to any great degree.

The third theory of style, and the one most applicable to pedagogy, is what Milic calls the "theory of ornate form," or "rhetorical dualism." The assumption behind rhetorical dualism is that "ideas exist wordlessly and can be dressed in a variety of outfits depending on the need for the occasion."⁸ As the French critic Michael Riffaterre puts it, "Style is understood as an emphasis (expressive, affective, or aesthetic) added to the information conveyed by the linguistic structure, without alteration of meaning." In other words, "language expresses and style stresses."⁹

Milic points out that the two monisms make the teaching of style a rather hopeless enterprise, since for the Croceans there is no "style," form and content being one, and for the individualists style is expression of personality, and we cannot expect students to change their personalities. These monisms leave teachers helpless, all of the resources of rhetoric rendered useless.¹⁰ In order to retain teaching options, then, teachers must be dualists, at least to some degree. Although dualistic theory cannot be empirically proven true, it is still the only approach we have to improving students' writing style. If we cannot tell a student that the struggle to find the best words in which to express an idea is a real struggle, then we cannot teach style at all.

Although he himself is a confessed individualist, Milic is aware that dualism must be adopted at least conditionally if we are to teach

style. He tries to resolve the division between his beliefs and the pedagogical options offered by dualism in an important essay called "Rhetorical Choice and Stylistic Option: The Conscious and Unconscious Poles."¹¹ In this essay Milic argues that a great deal of what we call style is the production of a huge unconscious element that he calls the "language-generating mechanism." This mechanism, processing subconscious choices and operating at a speed that the conscious mind cannot possibly match, creates most of what we call style. After these decisions have been made, an editing process takes over that can make any stylistic changes the author consciously desires.

"I distinguish," says Milic, "between decisions made unconsciously while the language-generating mechanism is proceeding as stylistic options and decisions made consciously while the mechanism is at rest as rhetorical choices."¹² Rhetorical choices, in other words, are an evaluation of what has been intuitively created by the "language-generating mechanism," an editorial element that can be practiced consciously, and thus something we can teach to our students in an attempt to improve their styles. Of course, if practiced often, certain rhetorical choices can become habits of mind and thus become stylistic options, and this process of adding to the repertoire or the "language-generating mechanism" is what we hope to be able to accomplish. Thus does Milic attempt to integrate his roles as theorist and as teacher, with a synthesis that seems generally successful.

What will be discussed in this chapter, then, will be rhetorical choices, since they are the only elements of style that can be handled

consciously. Now we are in the realm of pedagogical stylistics, and the discussion of techniques in this chapter will be at a considerably lower level of abstraction than most of the works mentioned by Corbett in his bibliographical essay. We have to be aware that our abilities to change the styles of our students in ten or thirteen weeks are limited; as Milic says, "One cannot teach an eighteen-year-old student to write instantly because the process takes a dozen years and must be begun much earlier."¹³ Style, more than any other canon of rhetoric, is difficult to teach to students who have read little, because all style is generated and perceived in a contextual continuum. The more models and styles a writer knows and is aware of, the more raw data there are to feed the "language-generating mechanism," and the more informed the choices that can be made both intuitively and consciously. (Consider the immense contextual awareness necessary to write--or read--the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter in Ulysses, which is perhaps the greatest stylistic tour de force in literature.) To truly teach stylistic choices, we would need to teach a ten-year course in the history of Western literary culture.

Not being able to do that, let us examine what we can accomplish and some of the things we need to know in order to accomplish it. An excellent essay by Winston Weathers called, "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy," mentions several obligatory tasks for those who would teach style in college. The first task is "making the teaching of style significant and relevant for our students."¹⁴ Many freshman tend to view the concept of "style" with suspicion, as if "style" were

something that only effete snobs should be interested in. It is our task, says Weathers, to justify the study of style on the grounds of better communication and as a proof of individuality. Style can be taught as "a gesture of personal freedom," a rebellion against rigid systems of conformist language. It is not any sort of "dainty humanism" nor a mere "aesthetic luxury," and if students cannot be convinced of this point their willingness to put effort into stylistic concern will probably be minimal.¹⁵

The second task Weathers mentions is that of "revealing style as a measurable and viable subject matter." Style seems vague and mysterious to most freshmen because they have mostly been exposed to the "metaphysical approach" to style, in which arbitrarily chosen adjectives are used to identify different styles--the "abrupt," the "tense," the "fast-moving," the "leisurely," and the ever-popular "flowing" styles. As a result of hearing styles described in these nebulous terms, students despair of seeing how such an amorphous entity as style can be approached or changed. They need to be exposed to the actual components, the "nuts and bolts," of style--words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs--and to methods of analyzing them before they can begin to use them to control their rhetorical options.

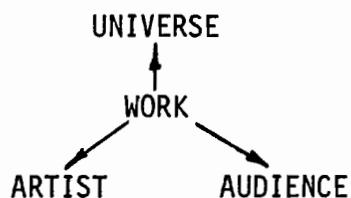
We do have important tools for explaining these stylistic features. As Richard Graves has pointed out, the following four explanatory methods are primary:

1. We can identify the technical name of a particular stylistic feature or concept.
2. We can give a definition or description of the feature.
3. We can provide a schematic description of the feature.
4. We can provide an example or illustration of the feature.¹⁶

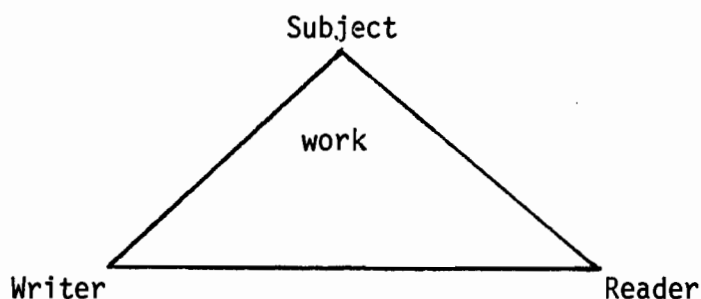
The goals of these methods are recognition and then gradual mastery of the different stylistic features, and such explanations can be used in both stylistic analyses and in imitation exercises, which are the central practical activities in this chapter. As well as skills that can be built and exercises that can be practiced, though, there are questions about style that must inform every paper a student writes. Style, like the other canons of rhetoric, must be approached philosophically as well as practically.

More than the study of any other canon, the study of style needs to be prefaced by a careful discussion of the purpose of each piece of writing a student does, and of a writer's need to be aware of the interrelationships of author, subject, universe, and audience.

M.H. Abrams presents a useful diagram of these elements in The Mirror and the Lamp:



Composition teachers use a version of this diagram called the "communication triangle" to help students formulate their concepts of the whole rhetorical situation they find themselves in:



Each of these elements suggests a question that must be faced by a writer every time he sits down to write, and a large element in these questions must necessarily be stylistic. No one element can predominate in a successful piece of writing, and Wayne Booth's famous essay "The Rhetorical Stance" offers a well-expressed overview of this fact; the "rhetorical stance" he discusses "depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and voice, the implied character of the speaker."¹⁸

There is what Booth calls a "corruption" of the rhetorical stance that corresponds to too much emphasis on any one of the other elements of the communication triangle of author-audience-subject, and student compositions can be prone to all three sorts of corruptions, or imbalances. The first is the pedant's stance, which concentrates only on the subject while ignoring the author-audience relationship.

This reliance upon nothing but subject-based discourse makes the pedant's stance dry and uninteresting. It makes no concessions to a personal voice or to reader interest. It is the sort of depersonalized prose that students often think their teachers want to hear in English classes. Ken Macrorie's famous term for it is "Engfish," and it is to be found in its purest form at a relatively high academic level: as "dissertation style."

The second sort of imbalance is the advertiser's stance, which concentrates on impressing the audience and underplays the subject. This imbalance is not as frequent as the first because it takes a fairly high level of writing ability to attempt it. "The "advertiser," says Booth, "overvalues pure effect," and is likely to be writing directly to you as the teacher in an attempt to charm you with candor or with humor or with just attention to you as a human being--something writing teachers do not always get from their students.

Related to the advertiser's stance is the entertainer's stance, which "sacrifices substance to personality and charm." This stance, of course, is an imbalance in favor of the ethical appeal of the speaker and is the least common corruption of the rhetorical stance to be found in student essays. Most students are unaware of the methods used by writers to generate ethical appeal, and their imbalances are likely to tilt in other directions. Some freshmen have been taught in high school never to use "I" in their writing, and "I" is certainly the key word of the entertainer's stance.

The question of rhetorical balance that Booth brings up is essential to an understanding of the methods available for manipulation of stylistic choices. The question of the relationship between the writer and his subject is certainly important, but more central to your students' attitudes toward style will be the question of their relationships as writers to the audience for their writing--an audience which in the final analysis will be composed only of you, their teacher. Obviously students will attempt to choose a style that will suit their identified readership, but the voice chosen for a letter to a boyfriend or girlfriend and that chosen for the English Teacher (re-imagine for a moment the echoing corridors of arbitrary convention that phrase calls up in the minds of most people) will be very different. The danger of artificiality is all too real.

There have been attempts to deal with the problems inherent in the fact of our being our students' final and most important audience. Teachers have tried to create plausible audiences other than themselves for students, with the most obvious sorts of such assignments being "letters to the editor" of a local newspaper, "letters to the President" of the United States or the University or the dorm. Some assignments were created that specified a very complex writing situation, complete with subject and audience; one example might be an assignment I used to use that asked students to define and give examples of "conventional diction" to a group of ninth-grade French students who knew basic English but who needed more information about how Americans really used it.

The problems with these plausible or created audiences (not including ethical problems some teachers have with the sophistic aspect of audience creation) grow out of the fact that the students are always quite aware that behind the "editor" or the "President" or the "French students" stands the teacher, who ultimately wields the power of the grade. As a result of this awareness, the assignment is made much more complex. The student knows that what he really has to do is write not for the "editor" or for the teacher, but somehow for the way the teacher thinks he should write for the editor. He must try to write, in other words, for another person's conception of a fictional audience. It is no wonder that students often freeze solidly into take-no-chances dullness in such assignments.

The alternative, to specify no audience at all, leaves the student in a simpler but no less difficult situation. Most freshmen, accustomed to the rich contextual responses of verbal communication, find it difficult to conceptualize that abstract, fictionalized "universal audience" which the Belgian rhetorician Chaim Perelman says is the ultimate audience for written discourse.¹⁹ Many freshmen find it difficult to adjust their styles, which are sharpened and skillful on the oral level, to what seem to them the difficult conventions of non-contextual written discourse.²⁰ As a result, they tend to write pedantically, on the assumption that stressing the subject is the safest thing to do. They cannot create a fictional audience easily, and thus tend to "write into the void."

There is no easy answer to this problem of audience, since both over-and under-specification of audience can have unfortunate consequences. The best compromise is to admit that the teacher is the audience and to attempt to work within this fact. William Irmscher puts it well in Teaching Expository Writing:

In the classroom it is difficult to escape the hard fact that the teacher is usually the only reader. The teacher is therefore the audience, and the style will no doubt be accommodated to the teacher. That's not all bad if the teacher is someone whom the student respects, feels comfortable with, and wants to write for. I have on occasion simply said to students in my classes that they should write for me, not so much me in the role of a professor who is going to give a grade, but me in the role of reader/critic or editor, who is going to make a professional judgment about their writing.²¹

It can be difficult for students to see past their teacher as "judge," armed with red pen and grade-book, to the "coach" who is honestly pulling for every student to get an A, but this compromise solution is the best we have yet found.

Intimately related to the question of audience is the conception of different levels of style. Cicero mentions the High, Middle, and Low styles of oratory and suggests that each has its place and purpose. In the early days of composition teaching, however, this sort of liberalism was supplanted by prescriptive judgments about the different levels of style. Style was either Right or Wrong, Correct or Incorrect, and in general, only an attempt to write in a high, "literary" style was acceptable to the teacher. Gradually this dichotomy of Good and Bad

STYLE ANALYSIS

Many freshmen, if queried about style, will claim that they have none. For them, style is some mysterious "extra" quality that good writing has and that their writing has not. This attitude is less strange if we remember that they have been introduced to style, if at all, as literary style. Style for them is some vague quality, called "vigorous" or "curt" or "smooth" by the teacher, that is found in the writing of Hawthorne or James Baldwin; it does not seem to them anything that student writing has.²⁸ For students style is a nebulous and qualitative thing, and before you can make it understandable to them and demonstrate that they, too, can own styles, you must make style measurable and quantitative. Teachers have to provide tools with which students can dissect and examine writing styles, and techniques of style analysis can give us these tools.

There are many different style analyses that can be performed today; style analysis has come a long way from the reliance upon tropes and schemes that once characterized it. For years these figures of speech were mechanically multiplied, and the unfortunate student of style was forced to memorize and use them all (Henry Peacham's Renaissance rhetoric The Garden of Eloquence contained 184 figures). Although awareness of the figures may be of use to an upper-level graduate student, style analysis means more today than figure analysis. It encompasses many of the elements of diction, usage, sentence construction,

and paragraph treatment that are composed without conscious attention to the method.

The three types of style analysis in this section were chosen for their relative simplicity and because all three have been tested in composition classes. They range in difficulty of use from Flesch's comparatively simple scales, through Corbett's method, which can be made simpler or more complex by addition or subtraction of elements, to Gibson's Style Machine, which requires a fair amount of familiarity with grammatical nomenclature on the part of the students. All three rely on the same general teaching method:

1. The students are introduced to the terms and techniques of the method of analysis.
2. The method is used on simple examples and practiced on familiar pieces of prose.
3. The method is practiced by analyzing the style of professional prose and discussing the findings in class.
4. Finally, the method is used by each student to analyze his own prose, and his findings are compared with other sorts of prose.

As Winston Weathers points out, "improvement in student style comes not by osmosis, but through exercises."²⁹ Analyses are not always exciting, but "we cannot make a tenable judgment about style without tedious counting and tabulating," as Corbett suggests. More than anything else, analyses of style show students that the subjective labels given to styles can have an understandable base and that they are not the prisoners of their own unchangeable ways of writing.

Rudolf Flesch's Readable Writing Analysis

Rudolf Flesch, whose books The Art of Plain Talk and The Art of Readable Writing were among the first self-improvement manuals, is not generally thought of as a rhetorician. Amid the bluff assertions and general advice of his works, though, can be found a good deal of solid and genuinely helpful rhetorical advice. He makes some points about practical writing practice pithily, and of special interest to teachers of style is the system worked out by Flesch to measure the relative human-interest quotient and the ease-of-reading quotient of prose.

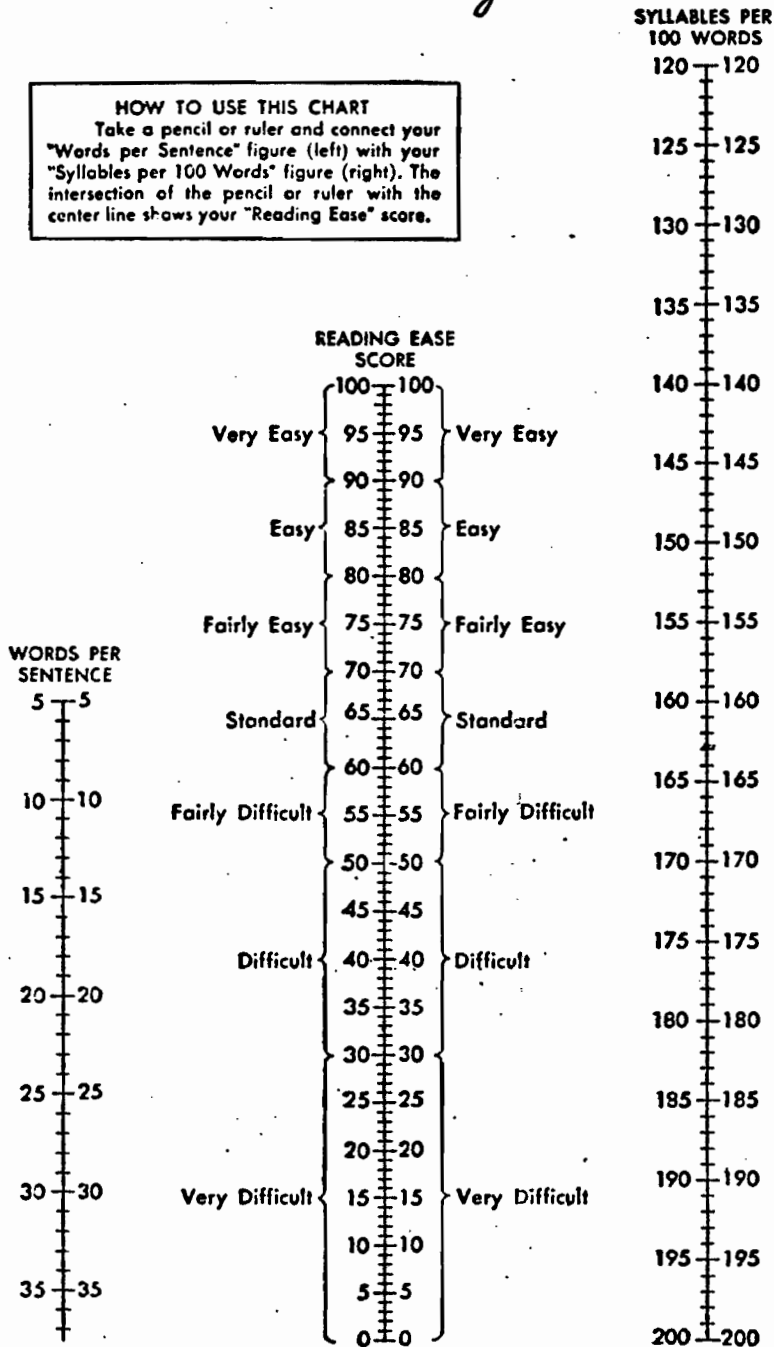
Flesch's system is based on two scales, the "Human-Interest Score," which calls for the identification of what Flesch calls "personal words" and "personal sentences," and the "Reading-Ease Score," which calls for the identification of the number of words per sentence and the number of syllables per hundred words. The two scores are plotted on graphic scales (Figures 1 and 2).

The human-interest score is determined by following these steps.³⁰

1. Choose a sample of writing, preferably one at least 500 words in length. Count the number of words and the number of sentences in the total sample.
2. Count the "personal words" in the sample. "Personal words" include:
 - (a) all pronouns except neuter pronouns it, its, itself, and plural pronouns they, them, their, theirs, themselves if referring to inanimate objects rather than people
 - (b) all words that have masculine or feminine natural gender--John Jones, Mary, father, sister, iceman, actress. Do not count common-gender words--teacher doctor, spouse
 - (c) the group words people and folks

How Easy?

HOW TO USE THIS CHART
 Take a pencil or ruler and connect your "Words per Sentence" figure (left) with your "Syllables per 100 Words" figure (right). The intersection of the pencil or ruler with the center line shows your "Reading Ease" score.



© 1949 by Rudolf Flesch

Figure Two Reading-Ease Scale

(From Rudolf Flesch, The Art of Readable Writing, endpaper)

How Interesting?

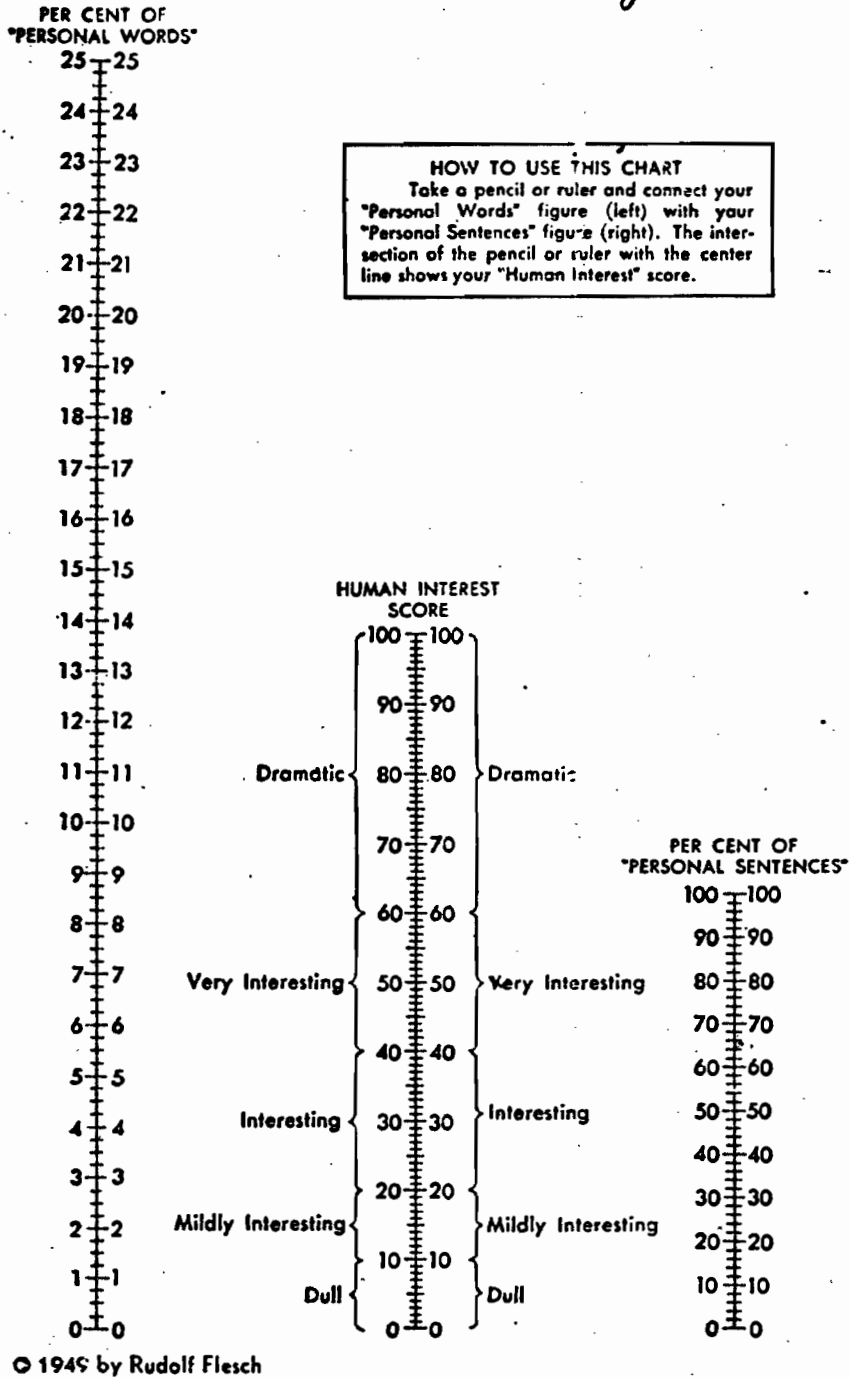


Figure Three Human-Interest Scale
 (From Rudolf Flesch, The Art of Readable Writing, endpaper)

3. Count the "personal sentences" in the sample. "Personal sentences" are:
 - (a) spoken sentences marked by quotation marks, often including speech tags like "he said" set off by colons or commas. ("I doubt it," he said.)
 - (b) questions, commands, requests, and other sentences addressed directly to the reader. (e.g., Does this sound impossible? This is a point you must remember.)
 - (c) exclamations (It's unbelievable!)
 - (d) grammatically incomplete sentences whose full meaning has to be inferred from the context. (Well, he wasn't.)
4. Find the percentage of "personal words" per 100 words and the percentage of "personal sentences" per 100 sentences, and chart each percentage on the How Interesting? chart. This will put the writing sample on a scale between 0 (no human interest) and 100 (dramatic and full of human interest).

The human-interest scale, claims Flesch, "simply gives you an estimate of the attractiveness" of writing. He includes a chart that illustrates the application of human-interest rating to different types of magazines:

Description of Style	Percent of "personal words"	Percent of "pers. sent."	Human Interest	Typical Magazine
Dull	2 or less	0	0 to 10	Scientific
Mildly Interesting	4	5	10 to 20	Trade
Interesting	7	15	20 to 40	Digests
Highly Interesting	10	43	40 to 60	New Yorker
Dramatic	17 or more	58 or more	60 to 100	Fiction

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The other rating scale used in The Art of Readable Writing is the reading-ease scale, which can be used by following these steps:

1. Choose a sample of writing, preferable at least 500 words. Count the number of words in the sample.
2. Figure the average sentence length by counting the sentences and dividing the number of sentences into the number of words. Count colons, semicolons, and dashes as terminal punctuation marks.
3. Find the number of syllables per 100 words. This can be done by counting the syllables, dividing that number by the total number of words, and multiplying the result by 100. Count syllables the way the words would be pronounced aloud--"determined" has three, "undervalue" four, "1916" four, "pronunciation" five.
4. Chart the average sentence length in words and in number of syllables per 100 words on the How Easy? chart to find the reading ease rating. This score puts the writing sample on a scale between 0 (practically unreadable) and 100 (easy).

Flesch includes another chart which indicates the level of reading ability that each sort of style is keyed to:

Description of Style	Average Sentence Length	Average No. of Syll. per 100 Wds.	Reading Ease Score	Estimated Reading Grade
Very Easy	8 or less	123 or less	90 to 100	5th grade
Easy	11	131	80 to 90	6th grade
Fairly Easy	14	139	70 to 80	7th grade
Standard	17	147	60 to 70	8th and 9th
Fairly Difficult	21	155	50 to 60	10th to 12th (high school)
Difficult	25	167	30 to 50	13th to 16th (college)
Very Difficult	29 or more	192 or more	0 to 30	college grad:

And the reading-ease scores of writings in typical popular magazines look like this:

<u>Reading Ease Score</u>	<u>Typical Magazine</u>
90 to 100	Comics
80 to 90	Pulp Fiction
70 to 80	Slick Fiction
60 to 70	Digests
50 to 60	Quality
30 to 50	Academic
0 to 30	Scientific 33

Classroom Use of Flesch's Analysis

Flesch's system is probably the simplest method of style analysis that can turn up worthwhile results, and thus is a good introductory method. Students can grasp the principles behind it without much trouble and enjoy the use of the scales that measure human interest and reading ease. Unfortunately, the simplicity of Flesch's system has some negative aspects that counter-balance its ease of use.

The central problem with Fleschian analysis involves the sort of prose it seeks to promote as "interesting" and "easily readable." As Flesch himself admits in his first chapter, he is writing for people who want "exact information about what kind of language will fit what kind of audience."³⁴ The book is a sort of Dale Carnegie course in rhetoric, and as a result Flesch has a tendency to promote writing that pleases the widest possible audience with dramatic style and simple structure--a lowest-common-denominator approach. As Corbett warns, "If applied strictly, these formulas would rate the kind of prose found in Dick-and-Jane readers as being the 'most interesting' and the 'easiest to read'."³⁵

This estimate may be a trifle harsh, but it is certainly true that Flesch has a tendency to promote what Wayne Booth calls an "advertiser's stance," and before Flesch's system is taught it is a good idea to make your students familiar with this negative tendency of the method of analysis. The language abuses Flesch was addressing in 1948 are qualitatively different from the problems most students now have to face in their writing; instead of the over-reliance upon formal devices, bureaucratized dullness, and depersonalized tone that Flesch seeks to uncover and improve, today's students have problems with the context of language itself, lacking familiarity with its resources and with the very concept of style. As a result, Flesch must be used carefully if you are not to leave your students with the dangerous idea that the best style is that of comics and pulp magazines.

After an introduction to the idea of style analysis in which you give a short description of how analyzing and quantifying style can help students become aware of what they do when they write, you can teach the Fleschian method with little trouble. It seems to present students with few problems. The steps necessary for making the analysis are short enough to put onto dittoed handouts along with the scales for ease and interest. Hand out these dittos along with a sample of writing about 500 words long that contains a medium percentage of "personal" words and sentences--I have found that Cosmopolitan magazine is a gold mine of examples of many different styles for analysis. Lead the class through the steps of the analysis on the board, beginning with the syllables, words, and sentences, and then proceeding to the

more subtle "personal" elements.

It is a good idea to emphasize and repeat the instructions concerning the personal elements, because they require qualitative decisions. Stress particularly the difference between gender-based nouns--Mary, milkman, husband--and neutral nouns--spouse, principal, person. There is a danger that Step 3 (d) of the human interest scale will be used as a defense of sentence fragments if you do not explain initially the difference between accidental fragments and ungrammatical incomplete sentences used for a specific rhetorical purpose. Once you have explained and exemplified personal elements on the blackboard, your students should have a workable grasp of them.

After the sample analysis has been completed and you have led the students through to the conclusion, pass out a second dittoed sample or indicate a 500-word section in the reader and ask the students to analyze it on their own. After this analysis, which you might want to assign as homework, you might want to expose them to the charts which describe the grade levels and style levels that different reading-ease and interest scores tend toward. This discussion of the possible abuses that the system can suggest should help to prevent negative attitudes toward complex styles. I tell my students that they should see the high-score extremes of readability and drama not as desirable ends but merely as extremes.

This important case against the natural tendency of the Flesch system to promote melodrama and oversimplicity can be supported by judicious use of examples for analysis. Analyze one or two samples from

the reader--chosen beforehand by you to illustrate middle-level prose which avoids extremes on either scale--and then as a contrast pass out dittoed samples from childrens' books or advertising copy. Since the Flesch analysis usually takes less than 15 minutes to apply once students are used to it (and even less time if students bring their pocket calculators to do the math), two or three class periods should suffice for these contrastive analyses.

To finish up the work of analyzing other people's prose, I ask students to choose two articles from a magazine they enjoy and analyze them using the Flesch system, presenting their analyses (which are usually done as homework) to the class in a two-or three-minute oral report. The stipulations of the assignment are that the analyses must be of the article the student liked most and the article in the same issue that was liked least, and that the oral report should deal with the question of whether the analysis showed any stylistic basis for the feeling about the articles. This assignment is not always completely successful, since student likes and dislikes are based just as often on semantic as on stylistic considerations, but it does help make students aware of audience and of some of the methods authors use to attract readers.

For the usual final stage of style analysis, the dissection by the student of his own writing, I cannot recommend heartily using the Flesch method. As simple as Flesch's scales are to apply, they were created to analyze the mature prose of professionals to try to make it more humane and readable. They do not reflect in any readily usable way the stylistic problems to which student prose is prone. The Flesch

scales can tell a student whose prose is overly personal or melodramatic that he writes with great human interest or a student who writes nothing but syntactically immature sentences that his prose is very easy to read. More subtle questions of quality and maturity get passed by. For instance, an average student essay--an expository theme which was given a "B" by the teacher of the course--received a 9 on the interest scale and a 54 on the ease scale, which placed it in the range of "dull" and "fairly difficult," while a narrative essay which was very poorly constructed, almost unreadable, and received an "E" from the teacher, placed with a 41 in interest and a 67 in ease, making it "very interesting" and "standard" according to Flesch. (For those interested, the work you are reading got a 19 in interest and a 45 in ease, making it "mildly interesting" and "fairly difficult.")

For these reasons, I can recommend the Flesch method up to the level of careful contrastive analyses of different sorts of professional prose, but not beyond that. It is just not a subtle enough instrument. While it is helpful in discerning audience levels and certain gross stylistic elements, its purpose is too limited and utilitarian to make it a really effective teaching tool. It is a good simple introduction to quantitative stylistic analysis, and as such has a place in writing courses.

Edward P.J. Corbett's Prose Style Analysis

Developed in the early Sixties and refined throughout that decade, Edward P.J. Corbett's method of style analysis is a flexible teaching tool because it offers a large number of stylistic features for possible analysis. A teacher can choose only a few features or the full range of features discussed by Corbett and assign them according to the level of the class and preparedness of the students.

Counting is at the heart of Corbett's method. The first step in using his analyses is to complete the "tedious counting and tabulating" necessary to obtain the raw data concerning the stylistic features of the prose work being examined. This is time-consuming but not difficult. The next step, which is more challenging, is to "relate what the statistics reveal to the rhetoric of the piece being analyzed."³⁶ Corbett explains the method in his article, "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style with a Demonstration Analysis of Swift's A Modest Proposal," and presents the method in a more finished form in his text Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student.

The three main stylistic areas investigated by the Corbett method are sentences, paragraphs, and diction. The piece of prose to be analyzed should be a minimum of 500 to 600 words in length (the optimum length is around 1000 words). The analysis itself is carried out by using and filling in charts which map out various stylistic elements. The charts follow. In Corbett's method, a sentence is defined as "a group of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with some mark of end-punctuation."³⁷

Stylistic Study--I
(Sentences and Paragraphs)

EVALUATION	PROFESSIONAL	STUDENT
A. Total number of words in the piece studied	_____	_____
B. Total number of sentences in the piece studied	_____	_____
C. Longest sentence (in no. of words)	_____	_____
D. Shortest sentence (in no. of words)	_____	_____
E. Average sentence (in no. of words)	_____	_____
F. Number of sentences that contain more than 10 words <u>over</u> the average sentence	_____	_____
G. Percentage of sentences that contain more than 10 words <u>over</u> the average	_____	_____
H. Number of sentences that contain 5 words or more <u>below</u> the average	_____	_____
I. Percentage of sentences that contain 5 words or more <u>below</u> the average	_____	_____
J. Paragraph length	_____	_____
longest paragraph (in no. of sentences)	_____	_____
shortest paragraph (in no. of sentences)	_____	_____
average paragraph (in no. of sentences)	_____	_____

Stylistic Study--II
(Gramatical Types of Sentence)

A simple sentence is a sentence beginning with a capital letter, containing one independent clause, and ending with terminal punctuation.

A compound sentence is a sentence beginning with a capital letter, containing two or more independent clauses, and ending with terminal punctuation.

A complex sentence is a sentence beginning with a capital letter, containing one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses, and ending with terminal punctuation.

A compound-complex sentence is a sentence beginning with a capital letter, containing two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses, and ending with terminal punctuation.

Title of professional essay _____
 Author _____

	PROFESSIONAL	STUDENT
A. Total number of sentences in essay	_____	_____
B. Total number of simple sentences	_____	_____
C. Percentage of simple sentences	_____	_____
D. Total number of compound sentences	_____	_____
E. Percentage of compound sentences	_____	_____
F. Total number of complex sentences	_____	_____
G. Percentage of complex sentences	_____	_____
H. Total number of compound-complex sentences	_____	_____
I. Percentage of compound-complex sentences	_____	_____

Stylistic Study--III
 (Sentence Openers)

Title of professional essay _____
 Author _____

For this study use only declarative sentences. No interrogative or imperative sentences.

Total number of declarative sentences: Professional _____
 Student _____

SENTENCES BEGINNING WITH	PROFESSIONAL		STUDENT	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
A. Subject (e.g. John broke the window. The high cost of living will offset. . .)	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Expletive (e.g. It is plain that. . . There are ten Indians. Exclamations: Alas, Oh)	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. Coordinating conjunction (e.g. and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so)	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. Adverb word (e.g. first, thus, moreover, nevertheless, namely)	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. Conjunctive phrase (e.g. on the other hand, as a consequence)	_____	_____	_____	_____
F. Prepositional phrase (e.g. after the game, in the morning)	_____	_____	_____	_____
G. Verbal phrase (e.g. participial, gerundive, or infinitive phrase)	_____	_____	_____	_____

Stylistic Study--III
(Sentence Openers-continued)

SENTENCES BEGINNING WITH	PROFESSIONAL		STUDENT	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
H. Adjective phrase (e.g. Tired but happy, we. . .)	_____	_____	_____	_____
I. Absolute phrase (e.g. The ship having arrived safely, we. . .)	_____	_____	_____	_____
J. Adverb clause (e.g. When the ship arrived safely, we. . .)	_____	_____	_____	_____
K. Front-Shift (e.g. inverted word order: The expense we could not bear. Gone was the wind. Happy were they to be alive.)	_____	_____	_____	_____

Stylistic Study--IV
(Diction)

Title of professional essay _____
Author _____

For this investigation, confine yourself to this range of paragraphs: paragraph _____ through _____. For the investigation of your own prose, confine yourself to a comparable number of paragraphs.

In A, B, and C, below, count only substantive words--nouns, pronouns, verbs, verbals, adjectives, and adverbs.

	PROFESSIONAL	STUDENT
A. Total number of substantive words in the passage.	_____	_____
B. Total number of monosyllabic substantive words	_____	_____
C. Percentage of monosyllabic substantive words	_____	_____
D. Total number of nouns and pronouns in the passage.	_____	_____
E. Total number of concrete nouns and pronouns	_____	_____
F. Percentage of concrete nouns and pronouns	_____	_____
G. Total number of finite verbs in all dependent and independent clauses in the passage	_____	_____
H. What percentage does G represent of A?	_____	_____
I. Total number of linking verbs	_____	_____
J. Percentage of linking verbs (using A)	_____	_____
K. Total number of active verbs (do not count linking verbs)	_____	_____

Stylistic Study--IV
(Diction-continued)

	PROFESSIONAL	STUDENT
L. Percentage of active verbs(using A)	_____	_____
M. Total number of passive verbs (do not count linking verbs)	_____	_____
N. Percentage of passive verbs (using A)	_____	_____
O. Total number of adjectives in the passage (do not count participles or articles)	_____	_____
P. Average number of adjectives per sentence (divide by the total number of sentences in the passage)	_____	_____

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Classroom Use of Corbett's Style Analysis

Since Corbett's method was actually developed for use in the classroom, most of our discussion of it will take place in this practical-use section. As previously stated, the flexibility of this system allows it to be used profitably for nearly any analytic purpose. You can choose to examine nothing but professional prose, but Corbett himself devised it with a specific and very rewarding classroom methodology in mind: as can be seen from the charts, he asked students to analyze a piece of professional writing and as part of the same assignment to analyze a piece of their own writing of similar length, using the same criteria for both analyses. He then asks his students to write an essay in which they compare their revealed style to that of the professional writer and comment on the likenesses and differences.

To begin this assignment, you as teacher need to choose which of the charts you wish your students to use in their analyses. Chart I, which deals with the lengths of sentences and paragraphs, is the simplest of the four and the only chart which requires almost no teaching

time in order to prepare students to use it. Chart II, which deals with the different grammatical types of sentences, requires more preparation on the part of both teacher and student. In order for the analysis to succeed, you must make certain before you begin that your students can recognize different types of sentences. Practice in sentence identification, which can be tedious, is really the only way to do this. Once more, the reader can be a useful practice tool. After you have defined simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences and exemplified them on the board, go through the reader picking out examples, asking for identifications, and discussing the different stylistic effects of sentence length and structure. After this sort of practice, students are usually conversant enough with grammatical classification to use Chart II. Just to be certain, though, Corbett includes definitions of the sentence types at the top of Chart II, and it is a good idea to reproduce them with it.

Chart III is the most complex of the charts, and while it does not call for really difficult recognitions, it is still the one most dispensed with by teachers of less prepared students. A study of sentence openers can be extremely revealing for a class of juniors or seniors, but most freshmen have trouble using the chart; I have also found that the number of different types of openers commanded by freshmen tends to be limited to three or four types at most. For upper-level students, then, this chart is fine, but for underclassmen it may not repay the time it takes to teach. If you do decide to use it, you will need to familiarize your students with its terms as you did for Chart II above.

Chart IV looks discouragingly complicated at first, but really only analyzes monosyllables, nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In order to use it you will have to give a short refresher course in grammatical nomenclature, but the terms are simple enough that this shouldn't take more than a class period. This chart can provide some fascinating comparisons, and I have found that it well repays the time you spend teaching its terms.

As a rule of thumb, I assume that advanced students--juniors and seniors--can use all four charts, that sophomores and well-prepared freshmen can grasp Charts I, II, and sometimes IV, and that Basic Writing students should probably be asked to do no analyses more complicated than those in Chart I. I have found that if students are asked to try to analyze stylistic elements that are difficult for them to grasp, the whole exercise becomes both a prolonged agony (Remember that algebra problem in 7th grade you just couldn't get?) and a useless one. You will find, if you are worried that the use of only a single chart seems unrevealing, that even one chart will provide a great deal of possible material to consider.

The charts are the mechanical element in Corbett's analytical system, but they are only given real life by the method he recommends to accompany them. Most other methods of style analysis are applied to a piece of prose, the results are tabulated and commented upon, and that's the end of it. The prose can be a professional essay or a student theme; the important activity is the analysis itself. Not so with Corbett's system. Though it can certainly be used to dissect

discrete pieces of discourse in vacuo -- he uses it thus himself in "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style" -- the pedagogical use of the more completely evolved method presented in Classical Rhetoric is much more productive: an assignment that asks students to analyze both professional prose and a sample of their own writing and then to write an essay that draws conclusions from the comparative analysis.³⁹

The essay Corbett used as the professional model in his assignment was F.L. Lucas' "What Is Style?", but almost any of the available readers has several essays that can make a valuable reference point. Obviously you will want to ask students to compare exposition with exposition or description with description rather than argumentation with narration, etc. Choose a central section of around 1000 words from the essay to be analyzed rather than an opening or concluding section--these extremities often have stylistic peculiarities that make them less fit to be models. As for the sample of student writing to be used, as previously stated it should be at least 500-600 words long, and if the students have longer peices of writing that they have done which can be analyzed, so much the better. You can ask freshmen to use a paper written earlier in the course, but a long paper from senior year in high school (not earlier-- too much stylistic change), if one has been preserved, is a better sample; not only is it longer, but the student will be more detached from it and thus more objective about it in his comparative analysis.

To complete the assignment, the student analyzes both writing samples and fills in the appropriate blanks on the assigned charts. This can be time-consuming, and I usually allow at least two or three nights to do it. A pocket calculator is invaluable for this as for all quantitative analyses, and most students have one or have access to one. When the quantitative assignments are due, devote a class to making certain that everyone has done the counting correctly by discussing and putting on the board the correct answers to the questions about the professional piece; if students have counted the professional prose correctly; they have probably also counted their own correctly. After this is done, you can assign the essays themselves, which ask each student to draw conclusions about his style from the comparison of it to the professional writer's style.

When the essays are due--and your students will probably need two weeks for this assignment--ask that the data-filled charts be attached to the ends of the essays so you can refer to them. These essays, even on the freshman level, are often extremely perceptive; Corbett calls them the "best themes" he has seen. Students come to realizations about their own writing through this comparison of it with professional writing that months of lecturing or non-personal analyses could never have produced. One warning about this assignment: after it, all other stylistic analyses seem anticlimactic to students. As John Fleischauer has suggested, after students have mastered statistical analysis, it quickly becomes a chore, and Corbett's system is complete and illuminating enough to make other systems supernumerary

if it is introduced completely and used carefully.⁴⁰

Walker Gibson's Model T Style Machine

In Walker Gibson's stimulating study of contemporary prose styles, Tough, Sweet & Stuffy, he is mainly concerned--as the title suggests--with delineating what he sees as the three major modern sorts of prose. "Extreme but familiar styles," Gibson calls them, and he characterizes the implied voices of those who use them thus: "The Tough Talker. . . is a man dramatized as centrally concerned with himself--his style is I-talk. The Sweet Talker goes out of his way to be nice to us. His style is you-talk. The Stuffy Talker expresses no concern either for himself or his reader--his style is it-talk."⁴¹ The relationship of Gibson's three extreme styles to Booth's three "corruptions" of the rhetorical stance is immediately apparent.

As Gibson point out, since the writer is not physically present to the reader, all of the reader's sense of the writer's personality will be due to the style he adopts.⁴² The three extremes of tough, sweet, and stuffy represent the three corners of the now-familiar triangular continuum that all writing will fit somewhere within. It will be useful to examine a few of the characteristics of each of the stylistic extremes Gibson identifies:

Tough Talk---Tough Talk uses a limited vocabulary and mainly short, Anglo-Saxon words. The general effect of it is curtness. It uses few modifiers, and gives the effect of trying to merely state facts and avoid obvious personal judgments. The essential element of Tough Talk is the writer reflecting how he felt, using simple

non-subordinating clauses and colloquial patterns of speech. Gibson's examples of Tough Talk at its purest are from the novels of Ernest Hemingway, because, as Gibson says, the archetypal Tough Talker comes across as "A hard man who has been around":⁴³

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.

The plain was rich with crops; there were many orchards of fruit trees and beyond the plains the mountains were brown and bare. There was fighting in the mountains and at night we could see the flashes from the artillery. In the dark it was like summer lightning, but the nights were cool and there was not the feeling of a storm coming.

--Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms

Sweet Talk---As in Booth's "advertiser's stance," the Sweet Talker is concerned with being nice to his audience, and differs markedly in this from the Tough Talker, who seems to care little for niceness. The Sweet Talker uses longer words, heavy modification (especially what Gibson calls noun adjuncts--non adjectival terms like "decorator colors" that create units of meaning), and large numbers of intensifiers. The tone of a piece of Sweet Talk is very important, since the goal of the Sweet Talker is to secure intimacy with his audience.

He does this through informal tone, a large use of the word you, any device, in fact, that can convey friendliness and willingness to please. Not surprisingly, Gibson's examples of Sweet Talk come mainly from advertisements, since Sweet Talk is the very language of advertisement:⁴⁴

Hollow legs love Foodarama living.

Your family will love it too!

With Foodarama's supermarket selection of foods on hand, your family enjoys better meals. You save time by shopping less. . .save money by having room for "specials." Entertaining's more fun because you can prepare everything in advance.

You never defrost Foodarama-either the refrigerator or the freezer.

And Kelvinator's "No-Frost" Foodarama costs less to buy and operate than a separate refrigerator or freezer. So much better living and savings are possible because of the Kelvinator Constant Basic Improvement program. It's another way American Motors brings you more real value just as in Rambler cars.

Here's the car that's all brand-new in a pleasing new size! We made Chevelle for people who like the way a small car handles and parks-yet still want wide-open spaces inside, with a good-sized trunk to match. So we put together refreshing new styling, stretch-out interior room, big choice in performance, a huge 27-cu.-ft. trunk-all in a size that's a good foot shorter than the big cars! Inside, you'll find foam-fashioned seats topped with the newest in expensive vinyls and fabrics. In most models there's a thick color-keyed carpeting that wears like iron. And a wide range of new decorator colors.

Stuffy Talk---The key characteristics of Stuffy Talk are a preoccupation with the subject, as in Booth's "pedant's stance," and a refusal to assume personal responsibility for what is being said. Stuffy Talk sounds as if it speaks for a corporation or a committee rather than for an individual, and in fact it often does. The two stylistic techniques used by the Stuffy Talker are heavy reliance upon passive constructions and "a preference for abstract nouns as the subjects of active verbs." The voice of the Stuffy Talker himself is never heard; it is always "data suggesting" or "results implying" something.⁴⁶ Gibson's example is from the Surgeon General's report on smoking and lung cancer:

In previous studies the use of tobacco, especially cigarette smoking, has been causally linked to several diseases. Such use has been associated with increased deaths from lung cancer and other diseases, notably coronary artery disease, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema. These widely reported findings, which have been the cause of much public concern over the past decade, have been accepted in many countries by official health organizations.

The potential hazard is great because these diseases are major causes of death and disability. In 1962, over 500,000 people in the United States died of arteriosclerotic heart disease (principally coronary artery disease), 41,000 died of lung cancer, and 15,000 died of bronchitis and emphysema.

Another cancer deaths, less than 3,000 in 1930, increased to 18,000 in 1950. In the short period since 1955, deaths from lung cancer rose from less than 27,000 to the 1962 total of 41,000. This extraordinary rise has not been recorded for cancer of any other site. While part of the rising trend for lung cancers is attributable to improvements in diagnosis and the changing age-composition and size of the population, the evidence leaves little doubt that a true increase in the lung cancer has taken place.

These three extreme voices are the basis of Gibson's method of style analysis, which proposes to analyze prose to find where it lies on the triangular continuum of Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy. It is important to remember that none of the extremes necessarily represents good prose. As Gibson himself says,

The three styles I have been trying to describe inevitably give rise to questions of value. Which is it best to be-- a Tough or a Sweet or a Stuffy Talker? . . . Actually, all three extremes are dangerous. Though it is clearly possible to write very well within the limits of the Tough style, it is easy to write badly too, to sound not simply curt by moronic. . . As for Sweet Talk and Stuffy Talk, it is difficult to imagine first-rate writing composed within those manners, except as parody. . . I submit, then, that all three of our styles are dangers in modern prose, in ascending order of peril. As a Tough Talker, it is all too easy to sound egocentric, or simpleminded, or plain vulgar. As a Sweet Talker, it is hard to avoid sounding chummy in a way to make most discriminating readers recoil. And as a Stuffy Talker it is almost impossible not⁴⁸ to sound as if you didn't care about your reader at all.

With the dangers of these extremes in mind, Gibson devised his "Model T Style Machine," which is designed to examine the tone of written prose to determine which extreme style the prose is most closely related to. Gibson is modest about the Style Machine, insisting that "it considers only a tiny fraction of the possibilities, it will not discriminate between good and bad writing, it is full of bugs." Despite these disclaimers, the Style Machine offers style analysts the advantages of a system that can make discerning qualitative judgments from quantitative materials. After analyzing

a great deal of modern prose, Gibson created sixteen questions from his findings that can be used to analyze writing and relate it to the continuum between Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy prose.

To use the Style Machine, first choose a piece of prose as close to 1000 words in length as possible--the Machine is geared to analyze 1000-word passages most easily. To the passage apply these questions:

- A. Questions about Word-Size--these questions require only a simple counting of syllables.
1. What is the proportion of monosyllables in the passage?
 2. What is the proportion of words of more than two syllables?
- B. Questions about Substantives--these questions investigate the use of personal pronouns and the sorts of subjects taken by verbs.
3. How many first-and second-person pronouns does the passage contain? How many imperatives ("you understood")? Count the I's and the you's separately.
 4. Are the subjects of the finite verbs mostly neuter nouns, or are they nouns referring to people? (Are they "facts demonstrate" or "I believe"?) Find the proportion of personal subjects to neuter subjects.
- C. Questions about Verbs--these questions consider only finite verbs--no participles, no gerunds, no infinitives.
5. What is the proportion of finitive verbs to total words in the passage?

6. What proportion of the finite verbs are forms of the verb to be? Do not consider to be as an auxiliary.
 7. What proportion of the finite verbs are in the passive voice?
- D. Questions about Modification
8. What proportion of the total words are true adjectives? (A "true adjective" can always be rendered in a comparative degree--fine, finer; interesting, more interesting)
 9. How many adjectives are themselves modified by intensifiers or other adverbs? (These are terms like just right, perfectly adequate, deliciously different.)
 10. What proportion of the total words are noun adjuncts? (The difference between true adjectives and noun adjuncts can be discerned by trying to transpose the term into a sentence pattern using be or seem. Thus the true adjective "tall children" can become "The children are tall," but the noun adjunct "school children" makes no sense as "The children are school" or "The children seem school.")
- E. Questions about Subordination
11. What is the average length of the included clauses? (An included clause is the linguistic term for a subordinate or dependent clause.)
 12. What proportion of the entire passage is inside such clauses?

Figure Four Gibson's quantitative findings
(From Gibson, Tough, Sweet & Stuffy, pp. 134-5.)

FACTS ABOUT THE PASSAGES

	Tough	Sweet	Stuffy
1. What is the proportion of monosyllables in the passage?	78%	68%	56%
2. What is the proportion of words of more than 2 syllables?	5%	12%	24%
3. How many first-person and second-person pronouns does the passage contain?	13 1st 21 2nd	12 1st 42 2nd	2 1st 0 2nd
4. Are the subjects of finite verbs neuter nouns, or nouns referring to people?	52N 72P	45N 70P	51N 14P
5. What is the proportion of finite verbs to total words?	11%	11%	11%
6. What proportion of finite verbs are forms of <u>to be</u> ?	36%	25%	17%
7. What proportion of verbs are in the passive voice?	4%	2%	26%
8. What proportion of words are true adjectives?	6%	11%	8%
9. How many adjectives are modified by adverbs?	4	13	5
10. What proportion of words are noun adjuncts?	1%	4%	5%
11. What is the average length of included clauses?	8wds	7wds	18wds
12. What proportion of total passage is inside such clauses?	24%	23%	32%
13. How many words separate subject and verb?	24wds	36wds	182wds
14. How frequent is the determiner the?	97	39	65
15. How many fragments? How many contractions?	2fr 16cn	20fr 24cn	0fr 0cn
16. How many parentheses, italics, dashes, question marks, exclamation points?	0P 0I 2D 1Q 0E	4P 7I 9D 8Q 5E	2P 0I 0D 0Q 0E

THE STYLE MACHINE
CRITERIA FOR MEASURING STYLE

	Tough	Sweet	Stuffy
1. Monosyllables	over 70	61-70%	60% or less
2. Words of 3 syllables and more	under 10%	10-19%	20% or more
3. 1st and 2nd person pronouns	1 I or we per 100 words	2 you per 100 words	no 1st or 2nd person pronouns
4. Subjects: neuters vs. people	$\frac{1}{2}$ or more people	$\frac{1}{2}$ or more people	$\frac{2}{3}$ or more neuters
5. Finite verbs	over 10%	over 10%	under 10%
6. <u>To be</u> forms as finite verbs	over $\frac{1}{3}$ of verbs	under $\frac{1}{4}$	under $\frac{1}{4}$
7. Passives	less than 1 in 20 verbs	none	more than 1 in 5 verbs
8. True adjectives	under 10%	over 10%	over 8%
9. Adjectives modified	fewer than 1 per 100 words	1 or more	fewer than 1
10. Noun adjuncts	under 2%	2% or more	4% or more
11. Average length of clauses	10 words or less	10 words or words	more than 10 words
12. Clauses, proportion of total words	$\frac{1}{4}$ or less	$\frac{1}{3}$ or less	over 40%
13. "Embedded" words	less than $\frac{1}{2}$ S/V combina-	less than $\frac{1}{2}$	more than twice
14. <u>The</u>	8% or more	under 6%	6-7%
15. Contractions and fragments	1 or more per 100 words	2 or more	none
16. Parentheses & other punctuation	none	2 or more per 100 words	none

Figure Five The Style Machine Criteria

(From Gibson, Tough, Sweet, & Stuffy, p. 136.)

13. How many total words separate the subject from the verb in all the sentences of the passage? What is the relationship of this number to the total number of subject-verb combinations?

F. Other Effects of Tone

14. What is the frequency of the determiner the?

15. How many sentence fragments does the passage contain?
How many contractions?

16. How many occurrences are there of these marks of punctuation: italics, parentheses, dashes, question marks, exclamation points?

These questions are the motor of the Style Machine. When Gibson applied them to the various passages of prose that had intuitively seemed to him to be Tough, Sweet, or Stuffy, he found that his qualitative intuition was borne out by the quantitative results of the questions. The questions, then, can provide an empirical method for discerning why the tone of a passage of prose strikes us the way it does. The results that Gibson got from the passages he examined are shown in Figure 3.

From these results Gibson created the key to the Style machine, a set of criteria by which any passage of prose may be measured to see whether it tends toward Toughness, Sweetness, or Stiffness. The Style Machine criteria are shown in Figure 4.

To run a passage of prose through the Style Machine, the 1000 words must be carefully analyzed using all of the questions, and then

the results must be compared to the criteria sheet. For each correspondence between the chart and the analyzed prose, mark a "one" down under the column that corresponds--either Tough, Sweet, or Stuffy. Note that some criteria are shared, so that at times you might be marking a stylistic element as both Tough and Sweet. Here are the ratings of the example passages Gibson provides that I have quoted here:

	<u>Tough</u>	<u>Sweet</u>	<u>Stuffy</u>
Hemingway passage	13	4	4
Kelvinator ad	6	13	3
Chevrolet ad	6	12	2
"Smoking"	1	4	13

It is clear that our intuitive response to each of these passages is borne out by the quantifiable data turned up by the Style Machine. While most passages fall somewhere between the three poles, nearly all prose can be seen to have a distinct tendency towards one or another.

Classroom Use of Gibson's "Model T Style Machine"

There are powerful arguments both for and against the use of the Style Machine in writing classes. The arguments for its use point to the wealth of stylistic features it analyzes and the conclusions it allows students to draw about style, their own and others'. The negative arguments complain that it is too complicated, that it takes too long to teach, and that it does not measure certain elements in student writing that contribute to its success or failure. I will remain neutral on the issue, because both positions have some truth to them.

Let's examine the arguments against use of the Style Machine first. Yes, it is true that Gibson's model is extremely complicated. The sixteen questions, which can actually require twenty-three separate counts, are at first off-putting for students because they sound too grammatical and technical; there is no question that they require a longer time to teach than Flesch's or Corbett's questions. Unlike Corbett's system, which can be truncated to fit the needs of students of different levels, Gibson's analysis comes pretty much as a package. It can be broken down, but the final product of the analysis suffers if very many of the questions are cut.

The Style Machine does take at least two weeks to teach and use, and thus seems to me to be of more use in a semester-system. (It is ideal for a two-semester composition requirement.) The process of explaining the terms of the questions, analyzing several passages in class, providing models of analyzed passages, discussing why certain passages sound the way they do, etc., is tedious at first, and until students themselves first begin to manipulate the system they are suspicious of it.

Since Gibson created his Style Machine for the specific purpose of analyzing mature prose styles, it suffers from some of the same problems as does Flesch's system: it ignores some elements in student writing that make a paper successful or unsuccessful in terms of content and even in terms of structure and organization. As Gibson admits, "it will not discriminate between good and bad writing." It cannot tell

a student if his writing is vague, or illogical, or poorly developed, because it deals only in those stylistic elements that create a voice or tone in writing.

And as such, to begin to argue for the positive side, the Style Machine has great value for teachers and students. No one has done such perceptive digging into the stylistic elements that create modern prose voices as has Gibson. Tough, Sweet & Stuffy introduces the Style Machine much more completely than this short section can hope to, and the book is worthwhile (and enjoyable) reading for teachers of style analysis. In my mind, there is no question that researching and counting up stylistic elements with the Style Machine, merely being made aware of them, gives students the awareness and some of the tools with which they can adjust their own prose and begin to find their own voices. If the class has the time to spend on the Style Machine, it can repay the investment. I particularly recommend the Style Machine for upperclassmen and higher-level freshmen; like other techniques of analysis, it is less useful for Basic Writers, many of whom have not yet acquired control over a style of any sort.

In teaching the Style Machine, the main thing to keep in mind is that it is the most contextual of the methods of style analysis in this chapter. Even more than Corbett's analysis, Gibson's depends for its sense upon students' conceptions of a stylistic continuum--in this case the triangular field whose poles are Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy. If, however, students do not get a sense of what those terms mean before they begin counting, Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy will remain merely

words for them, without connection to good or bad, desirable or undesirable stylistic qualities. To create a sense of this triangular continuum, I begin inductively by passing out dittoed sheets of the example passages--those printed here and others--and putting the words TOUGH, SWEET, and STUFFY in capitals on the board. "Which is what?" I ask, and the ensuing discussion provides evidence of the students' intuitive grasp of the concepts. Some of the defining elements mentioned earlier as hallmarks of the three styles are identified. Then I choose several passages from the reader carefully and turn to them, asking students to classify them according to the labels.

The next step is to hand out dittoed sheets that list the Style Machine questions. This is a crucial part of the process, for you will have to explain many of the elements the questions ask for. Do not scant on time for these discussions; if you have to explain things three times do so, until you are certain that all of your students can actually recognize all the elements. I have found particular problems in the understanding and identification of neuter nouns, forms of to be, true adjectives versus noun adjuncts, and subordinate clauses. One good way to introduce the questions if you have access to an overhead projector is to project a short (200 word) example on a screen and go over it using all the Style Machine questions, asking students to first do the identification and counting themselves, then checking their work by pointing out stylistic elements and counting them on the screen.

When you have ascertained to your satisfaction that your students have understood the three styles and that they can manipulate the

questions, you can pass out to them the final ditto, the Style Machine criteria sheet by which they can judge passages of prose. Chart the passage you have analyzed using these criteria (I usually use a relatively Tough passage as an example--simpler to analyze the first time around), and then you can set an assignment. Point out a passage in the reader or hand out a dittoed passage of around 500 words, asking the students to analyze it using the Style Machine questions and criteria sheet. A full 1000-word sample is not necessary for this practice exercise, but you will need to give your students at least two nights to do these first analyses--don't press them for quick work at this point and suggest that if friends or workshop groups wish to work on these analyses together outside of class, that is fine with you. Again, when the assignment is due you can check it on the overhead projector (In general, technology in the writing classroom has been, in my experience, less than helpful, but this is one situation in which the use of "media" may be worthwhile.)

After these familiarization exercises are completed, you can use the Style Machine as you wish, depending on the time the class has to devote to it. Students can be asked to analyze sections from essays in the reader, magazine articles, or passages of their own prose. You will find, and need to make your students aware, that many prose passages are mixed, containing equal elements of all the styles, and that this mixture can be a good thing. The percentage of students who analyze their own writing and find that they are Stuffy at an early age is high, as you might imagine. An assignment growing out of

analyses of their own writing is possible; as in Corbett's analysis, you might ask students to explain how and why their work fits into a particular place on the stylistic continuum. Oral reports are another possibility.

More than anything else, it is helpful to discuss the results of analyses in terms of how each element really does contribute to the voice that comes off the paper. How does the use of "the" make us feel about a writer? Why do finite verbs produce a sense of immediacy? What effect does excessive modification have on a reader's perception of a writer? If you can get your students thinking about these questions the effect on their own prose should be real if not immediate. Analyzing one or two old papers can sometimes jolt a student out of stylistic complacency into a new awareness of the constant stream of purposive decisions that produces a mature prose style.

An exercise recommended by Winston Weathers can also be related to work done with Gibson's categorizations. After you have discussed and exemplified the three prose styles, perhaps during the class days before the familiarization exercises are due, you might try this exercise. Give your students a simple phrase--"It's a beautiful day," or "Space exploration is expensive," or even the famous "Your letter has delighted me very much" (you might tell them that Erasmus found 150 ways of phrasing that thought). Ask the class to write down all the possible verbalizations of this message for ten or fifteen minutes. After each student has accumulated a sheetful of variations, have some put on the board and ask for intuitive characterizations of them as

Tough, Sweet, or Stuffy. Discuss why each seems to fit its category. This exercise can be used with any method of style categorization--it is often used with the formal-colloquial continuum--but usually works best when students have a good grasp of the categories and thus fits right into the Style Machine lessons.⁴⁹

Finally, Gibson offers a style exercise which, while it is only tangentially related to the Style Machine, produces such good results that I want to share it. The problem Gibson addresses in "An Exercise in Prose Style" is how a teacher can dramatize the effects of stylistic alternatives for his class. Gibson developed the following technique, which I have found works best for high-level freshmen or sophmores, since it calls for some knowledge of the terms of grammar.⁵⁰

Unklike other style exercises, this one begins as soon as you first meet your class. On the first day of classes, ask your students for the following short piece of writing: "Write me a few sentences in which you describe the circumstances of your birth and early life, as if you were beginning some sort of autobiography. Just a few sentences. Ten minutes." Make sure students write these in ink. Collect these writings and thermofax some of them to pass around in dittoed form during the next class, anonymously, of course. Ask students to classify the various voices created by the quotations before them. Try to get a discussion going of why the voices have the effect they do.

Next, pass out dittoed sheets containing the openings of David Copperfield and The Adventures of Augie March. Discuss with the class

the different effects of the two voices and how we read the characters they present, how we judge David and Augie from the few sentences of the openings of the novels. Focus as much as possible on rhetorical matters here--verb forms, word choice, uses of subordination, contractions, tone, organization, etc. List as many of these elements as you can on the board--make the list as long as your students can stand it. This material will all be by way of illustration that style has everything to do with "concrete matters of grammar and rhetoric."

Finally, after you have exhausted David and Augie, give your students back their initial pieces of writing, which are the openings to their own autobiographies. Ask them to rewrite these openings--twice. Gibson puts it thus:

They are not to alter their vocabulary or their content any more than convenient, but they are to follow certain rules that the class discussion has listed. For example, in their first rewriting, one might ask them to put half their verbs in the passive voice, more than half of their statements in subordinate clauses, place some subordination ahead of the subject-verb structure in their sentences, and use no contractions. Their second rewriting, of course, would proceed contrariwise: use no passive verbs, little subordination, place subordination after the subject-verb, interrupt the syntax⁵¹ with a dash or two, and include a few contractions.

When these mirror-image versions of the autobiography opening are completed, you can then do a variety of things with them: discuss selected ones in class, pass out dittoed examples, have students write essays on what the different voices sound like and why they have the

effects they have.

The point of this exercise, says Gibson, is simply to illustrate the fact of choice--that "the making of a decision about one's rhetoric has consequences." The autobiographies you will get will not be Bellow or Dickens, but they will help to free students from the illusion that there is only one voice available to them. This exercise may be, as Gibson calls it, only "a mechanical game of word-play," but it is word-play that can open up new horizons of stylistic choice.

IMITATION

According to the tenets of classical rhetoric, skill in style is acquired in three ways: "(1) through a study of precepts or principles (ars), (2) through practice in writing (exercitatio), (3) through imitation of the practice of others (imitatio)."⁵²

From the time of Isocrates and Aristotle to the present, exercises in direct imitation and in the copying of structures have been recommended by theorists and teachers of rhetoric, and today the use of imitation exercises in composition classes is enjoying a renaissance of popularity.

There are, of course, different meanings for the term imitation, but in rhetoric it has always meant one thing: the emulation of good prose models by students wishing to improve their writing or speaking styles. The recurring word used by the ancients concerning imitation was, according to Corbett, similis; the objective of imitation exercises was to make the student's writing similar to that of a superior writer.⁵³ This similarity does not imply that the student's writing will be identical to that writing he imitates--were that to have been a real danger, imitation would not have become the pedagogical tradition that it is. The similarity that imitation promotes is not similarity of content, but similarity of form.

The several different sorts of practice in imitation that can be used in writing classes are all based on the assumption that good

writing, and especially good style, cannot be produced in a vacuum; that, in other words, good writing relies on the contextual knowledge of other good writing. As Winston Weather and Otis Winchester put it in their imitation textbook Copy and Compose, writing "is a civilized art that is rooted in tradition."⁵⁴ The assumption that imitation makes about contemporary student writing is that it is often stylistically barren because of lack of familiarity with good models of prose style and that this barrenness can be remedied by an intensive course in good prose models.

It is only lately that imitation exercises have begun to be the subject of increased attention and research. For many years, and even as recently as the middle 1970's, there was (and some still remains) popular feeling against the use of imitation in writing classes. This objection to imitation was made on several grounds, and any theorist who discussed imitation even as recently as 1977 felt compelled to defend his interest in it. Frank D'Angelo claimed in 1973 that popular feeling against imitation existed because it was perceived as "drudgery," but that is only a part of the reason for the eclipse of imitation in the Sixties and early Seventies.

The main reason for the unpopularity of imitation during those years was that it was perceived as "mere servile copying," destructive of student individuality and contributory to a mechanized and dehumanizing view of writing. The romanticism of the age reacted against any form of practice that seemed to compromise originality and the expression of personal feelings, and imitation exercises were among the most obvious indoctrinations to "tradition" and "the system,"

both of which were suspect at the time. As a result of this fear of loss of individuality and originality in student writing, those who recommended imitation had to clear it of the charges of automatism leveled against it by the age. This they did with such success that imitation seems to be making a strong comeback, aided by empirical research studies that suggest that it may exceed even the popular sentence-combining in helping students master expository prose.⁵⁵

Arguments against imitation are today being succeeded by arguments for it. D'Angelo notes that imitation connotes counterfeiting and stereotyping in most people's minds, when it should connote originality and creativity. A student who practices imitation, he suggests, "can be spared some of the fumbling of a novice writer" for forms in which to express his thoughts. "A student will become more original as he engages in creative imitation," claims D'Angelo.⁵⁶ Weathers and Winchester take the argument further:

"Originality and individuality are outgrowths of a familiarity with originality in the work of others, and they emerge from a knowledge of words, patterns, constructions and procedures that all writers use."⁵⁷

In other words, what D'Angelo and Weathers and Winchester all want imitation to accomplish is a systematic and intense exposure of student writers to models that will not only teach them "correct structure," but will rather, as W. Ross Winterowd suggests, "activate their competence" in language so that it "spills over into the area of performance."⁵⁸

The different imitation techniques, whether they consist of direct copying of passages, composition of passages using models, or controlled

mutation of sentence structures, all have this in common: they cause students to internalize the structures of the piece being imitated, and as Corbett points out, this is the key term in imitation. With those structures internalized, a student is free to engage in the informed processes of choice which are the wellspring of real creativity. William Gruber puts it succinctly when he suggests that imitation does not affect creativity but rather assists in design:

Standing behind imitation as a teaching method is the simple assumption that an inability to write is an inability to design--an inability to shape effectively the thought of a sentence, a paragraph, or an essay.⁵⁹

Imitation exercises provide students with practice in that "ability to design" that is the basis of a mature prose style.

Different Techniques of Imitation

Perhaps more than any other contemporary rhetorician, Edward P.J. Corbett is responsible for the resurgence in the popularity of imitation. His central statement on imitation and a large number of exercises in copying and creative imitation are to be found in his textbook Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, to which the reader is directed for a fuller treatment. Corbett recommends several different sorts of exercises, the first and simplest of which involves "copying passages, word for word from admired authors." This is not quite as simple as it may seem, though; in order to derive benefit from this exercise, the

imitator must follow a few rules:

1. He must not spend more than fifteen or twenty minutes copying at any one time. If he extends this exercise much beyond twenty minutes at any one sitting, his attention will begin to wander, and he will find himself merely copying words.
2. He must do this copying with a pencil or pen. Typing is so fast and so mechanical that the student can copy off whole passages without paying any attention to the features of an author's style. Copying by hand, he transcribes the passage at such a pace that he has time to observe the choice and disposition of words, the patterns of sentences, and the length and variety of sentences.
3. He must not spend too much time with any one author. If the student concentrates on a single author's style, he may find himself falling into the "servile imitation" that rhetoricians warned of. The aim of this exercise is not to acquire someone else's style but to lay the groundwork for developing one's own style by getting the "feel" of a variety of styles.
4. He must read the entire passage before starting to copy it so that he can capture the thought and the manner of the passage as a whole. When he is copying, it is advisable to read each sentence through before transcribing it. After the student has finished copying the passage, he should read his transcription so that he once again gets a sense of the passage as a whole.
5. He must copy the passage slowly and accurately. If he is going to dash through this exercise, he might as well not do it at all. A mechanical way of insuring accuracy and the proper pace is to make his handwriting as legible as he can.

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Corbett provides a number of specimen passages for imitation in Classical Rhetoric, covering prose styles ranging from the King James Bible to James Dickey's Deliverance.

For students who have spent some time copying passages, Corbett recommends a second kind of imitation exercise, pattern practice. In this exercise, the student chooses or is given single sentences to use as patterns after which he is to design sentences of his own.

"The aim of this exercise," says Corbett, is not to achieve a word-for-word correspondence with the model but rather to achieve an awareness of the variety of sentence structure of which the English language is capable."⁶¹ The model sentences need not be followed slavishly, but Corbett suggests that the student observe at least the same kind, number, and order of phrases and clauses. Here are a few of the model sentences and examples of imitations that Corbett gives:

MODEL SENTENCE: He went through the narrow alley of Temple Bar quickly, muttering to himself that they could all go to hell because he was going to have a good night of it.-- James Joyce, "Counterparts"

IMITATION: They stood outside on the wet pavement of the terrace, pretending that they had not heard us when we called to them from the library.

MODEL SENTENCE: To regain the stage in its own character, not as a mere emulation of prose, poetry must find its own poetic way to the mastery the stage demands--the mastery of action.--Archibald MacLeish, "The Poet as Playwright"

IMITATION: To discover our own natures, not the personalities imposed on us by others, we must honestly assess the values we cherish--in short, our "philosophy of life."

MODEL SENTENCE: If one must worship a bully, it is better that he should be a policeman than a gangster.--George Orwell, "Raffles and Miss Blandish"

IMITATION: Since he continued to be belligerent, it was plain that cajoling would prove more effective than scolding.

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Other contemporary proponents of imitation exercises are Winston Weathers and Otis Winchester of the University of Tulsa, whose texts Copy and Compose (now out of print) and The New Strategy of Style recommend imitation as a primary exercise.⁶³ Weathers and Winchester use a slightly more complex model of imitation than does Corbett: they ask their students first to copy a passage, then to read a

provided analysis of the model's structure, and finally to compose an imitation. They also take the practice of imitation into the composition of longer, paragraph-length passages in emulation of professional models. Altogether they provide in their texts an impressive array of models and explanations, ranging from basic sentence types through stylistically complex sentences up to dense paragraph structures. Here are several examples of their exercises:

The Elaborated
Compound Sentence

We were somewhere near Sorrento; behind us lay
the long curve of faint-glimmering lights on the
Naples shore; ahead was Capri.

George Gissing, *By the Ionian Sea*

Without affecting its basic pattern, the compound sentence can be elaborated in various ways. The number of clauses can be increased from the usual two to three and even more. The elements within the clauses can be inverted or compounded and modified in different ways. The alternatives of correct punctuation and effective coordinators are many.

The Gissing sentence coordinates three clauses of quite different design: The first is simple; the long second clause is not only inverted but also contains several modifiers; and the third is as brief as possible and inverted as well. Clearly, the compound sentence is capable of variation limited only by the writer's skill and imagination, the sentence pattern being fully as adaptable and sophisticated as any.

Copy the Gissing sentence; then compose a similarly elaborated compound sentence of three distinctly different clauses. Consider carefully what you are doing and why, for the effectively written elaborated compound sentence requires creative judgment.

Asyndeton

He has had his intuition, he has made his discovery, he is eager to explore it, to reveal it, to fix it down.

Joyce Carey, Art and Reality

We hear the hum of life in the fields; a horse champs his bit; a butterfly circles and settles.

Virginia Woolf, The Novels of Turgenev

You can stylistically modify any series, whatever its length, by manipulating the conjunctions within the series. You usually write a series with one conjunction, which comes between the last and next-to-the-last items. If you omit that conjunction, you have employed the device of asyndeton, and your series is pushed together into a more definite, single event or action or condition: The sense of time is speeded up and you have given your reader the impression that what you are talking about is one event occurring all-at-once.

In the sentence by Joyce Carey and the sentence by Virginia Woolf, you can anticipate the difference in effect if a conjunction had been used: "He has had his intuition, he has made his discovery, and he is eager to explore it, to reveal it, and to fix it down," and "We hear the hum of life in the fields; a horse champs his bit; and a butterfly circles and settles." With the conjunction the sentences are more ordinary; without it they are more compressed, more instantaneous, and more dramatic.

Copy these two sentences; then compose two sentences of your own containing asyndeton.

The Topic-Sentence- / First Paragraph

The characteristic motive of English poetry is love of nature, especially of nature as seen in the English rural landscape. From the "Cuckoo Song" of our language in its beginnings to the perfect loveliness of Tennyson's best verse, this note is ever sounding. It is persistent even amid the triumph of the drama. Take away from Shakespeare all his bits of natural description, all his casual allusions to the life and aspects of the country, and what a loss were there! The reign of the iambic couplet confined, but could not suppress, this native music;

Pope notwithstanding, there came the "Ode to Evening" and that "Elegy" which, unsurpassed for beauty of thought and nobility of utterance in all the treasury of our lyrics, remains perhaps the most essentially English poem ever written.

George Gissing, The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft

Since virtually all your paragraphs will be written around a topic sentence of some kind, your real decision is the location of this sentence. In most standard expository paragraphs, the topic sentence is stated first. Indeed, the deductive, generalization--followed-by--details pattern has so many obvious advantages and is so expected by the reader that you will rely on it routinely--except, of course, when there is clear advantage in one of the other alternatives.

In this paragraph by George Gissing, the first sentence, the topic sentence, names the subject and makes a general assertion about it: "The characteristic motive of English poetry is love of nature, especially of nature as seen in the English rural landscape." Following are four sentences which explain and support the generalization by naming several English literary works--"Cuckoo Song," "Ode to Evening," and "Elegy /Written in a Country Churchyard/"--and writers--"Tennyson," "Shakespeare"--in which this "characteristic motive" is apparent. The topic sentence is in effect restated in each of the subsequent sentences: "this note is ever sounding," "It is persistent. . . .", "habits of natural description. . . casual allusions to the life and aspects of the country," "this native music." To further emphasize the truth of his assertion, Gissing declares iambic couplet and Pope's influence. The terminal sentence expresses the thought that one of the most pastoral lyrics is also "perhaps the most essentially English poem ever written," echoing the "characteristic motive English poetry" of the topic sentence. The topic sentence is reasonably terse and straightforward, as most effective topic sentences are; the subsequent sentences are with a single exception more complex and suggestive; and the paragraph is rounded out by a magnificently long and elaborate terminal sentence, effectively climaxing Gissing's whole statement.

This topic-sentence-first paragraph is not part of a long and detailed treatment of the subject but rather a kind of allusion: a concise and, as far as it goes, complete appreciation of the love of nature revealed in English poetry.

Copy Gissing's paragraph; then compose a similar topic-sentence-first paragraph. Express a general assertion

in the first sentence, explain and support it in several subsequent sentences, echo the general assertion from time to time and certainly refer to it once again in the terminal sentence.

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The last sort of imitation exercises are called "controlled composition exercises," and are actually a hybrid, combining some aspects of imitation and some aspects of sentence-combining. Controlled composition, according to Edmund Miller, one of its supporters, is "the technique of having students copy a passage as they introduce some systematic change."⁶⁵ The changes that might be introduced can range from putting a third-person narrative into the first person to changing active to passive voice. Students are given practice in first copying the original model, making certain that every element of the copy is correct, and then are asked to rewrite it making the stipulated changes.⁶⁶

Although controlled composition was developed originally as an ESL technique, and later was picked up by Basic Writing teachers, its use in regular writing classrooms is fairly recent. Edmund Miller, in a book called Exercises in Style, has created the first book of freshman exercises in controlled composition; these exercises work on elements of composition ranging from subordination to footnote form. Here is an example of one of Miller's exercises:

Let's Hear It for Mickey Spillane

1. Watching television may be interesting and informative.
2. But reading a trashy novel is even more interesting and informative.
3. Even if you read two blood-and-guts thrillers a week, you can always count on finding them informative.
4. We learn not only from what is well written but also from what is

poorly written. 5. Reading an inadequate book improves the reader's critical skills and also his general facility with reading. 6. Watching a mindless television show like "The New Treasure Hunt," "Gilligan's Island," or "Mork and Mindy" is considerably less informative and useful. 7. This is because television is passive and aural, engaging the ear but only a small compartment of the mind. 8. Neither mind nor body gets challenged to do its best. 9. Reading, however, is always active and mental. 10. Body and mind help each other make reading even Kiss Me, Deadly or The Erection Set or Me, Hood an experience of an entirely different order from watching "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."

Directions:

I. Add the word both to each sentence, being careful to make all changes necessary for the proper use of the word but no other changes.

II. Leaving as much of the original sentence structure as possible, add the following ideas to the correspondingly numbered sentences of "Let's Hear It for Mickey Spillane," changing the phrasing of the additions as necessary for good style:

1. Movie going may be interesting and informative
2. Reading a trashy novel gives us pleasure.
3. You can count on finding even some unforgettable Agatha Christie stories read to pass the time on a plane informative.
4. What is written indifferently also teaches.
5. We improve ourselves when we read great literature.
6. "The Dating Game" is a mindless television show.
7. Film too is a medium that requires our passivity.
8. Mind and body are working at less than full strength when we watch T.V.
9. Reading opens up our minds to new ideas.
10. A revival showing of Eisenstein's film classic "Ivan the Terrible, Part I," does not give us the same sort of experience that even a second-rate book does.

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Corbett's, Weathers and Winchester's, and Miller's exercises can all serve to help students understand the context in which they create writing. Without the knowledge of what has been done by others, there can be no profound originality, Speaking of his own instruction

through the use of imitation, Winston Churchill said, "Thus I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence--which is a noble thing." If we can help our students get the structure of ordinary sentences "into their bones," the time and effort of imitation exercises will have been worthwhile.

Classroom Use of Imitation Exercises

There are a large number of ways to introduce imitation exercises into a freshman class, and you can decide how you wish to approach imitation based on the amount of time you have available. Some kinds of imitation can be done as homework, and others really need the sort of teacher encouragement that only a classroom setting can provide. One important point that applies to all sorts of imitation: if you choose to use imitation, be prepared to work with it throughout the entire term if you want results from it. Like sentence-combining (with which it shares other attributes), imitation has value only insofar as it leaves students with an intuitive sense of good discourse patterns which they can apply to all of their writing assignments.

Corbett's copying exercises are time-consuming, and since I think class time can be used more profitably, I assign them as homework after an initial introduction in class. Make up a ditto of Corbett's "rules" for copying and pass it out, and after that the conduct of the copying exercises are up to you. You can choose the passages to be copied, but I usually specify a paragraph or two paragraphs from the reader after looking to find passages that contain structures that

are worthwhile--not too simple. Three passages of homework copying per week is about the average in my classes, although you could ask for more. It is important to make clear to the students that this work is not optional, that you consider it important, and that it will have an effect on final grades. It can, of course, be graded quantitatively, but I usually conduct spot checks to make certain that no one is getting sloppy. Exact copying is important. A colleague has suggested that keeping copied passages in a notebook or commonplace book rather than keeping a journal might be a possibility, but I have never tried it.

Pattern practice of sentence structures is more difficult, and usually needs to be done in class, at least at first. After each model sentence is introduced, students need at least several minutes to compose a structurally similar sentence. You can then ask for volunteers--or draftees--to read their sentences or to put them on the board. Once again, pattern practice, whether with sentences or with longer structures, must be a long-term activity. I have tried devoting the first or last ten minutes of each class to it, and this steady application seems to produce the best results.

If you decide to use the Weathers and Winchester approach, either using their textbook or choosing your own models and dispensing with the explanation of the structure, be cautious about making students learn the names of each sort of sentence or paragraph structure. The names are useful handles for teachers, but are generally just baggage for students, and are far less important than repeated exposures to

and use of the structures themselves. I have found that the lengthier pattern drills like Weathers and Winchester's paragraph imitations or Miller's controlled compositions need more time and are best done as homework and later examined and discussed in class.

Again, if you want to use longer passages for direct copying or imitation you can choose them from the reader or from any other source, but exercises in controlled composition must be created, and the creating of them is time-consuming and requires not a little imagination. Miller's book of exercises is not widely available as this is written, but for guidance in writing controlled composition exercises, you can see the early Basic Writing text Write Me a Ream, by Linda Ann Kunz and Robert R. Viscount.⁶⁸ This text will give you enough of an introduction to controlled composition to be able to write your own exercises.

The problem of how or whether to correct a student who has obviously misunderstood a sentence or paragraph pattern and has re-written it incorrectly is an important one, and one I have yet to answer satisfactorily for myself. One of the reasons students are afraid to volunteer their responses to imitation exercises is fear of having "done it wrong" and the resulting public humiliation. The teacher must always decide whether or not the error is so gross that to let it go would seriously confuse the other students. If it is, it must be mentioned and corrected--as always, in the most gentle and humane fashion possible.

There are problems in teaching imitation. As William Gruber suggests, students are initially suspicious of the method, seeing it

themselves as destructive of their originality. They balk at the rigidity of some of the exercises.⁶⁹ Higher-level students sometimes resent imitation as baby-work, beneath their capacities (and obviously for some students it will be). You will see little improvement unless you work on the exercises regularly and expose your students to as many kinds of distinctive sentences as you can. You will have to keep reminding your students of the two criteria for successful imitation: The "further away" the new content is from the original, the better the imitation will be, and the new content must coincide perfectly with the given rhetorical model.⁷⁰ There will be times when it may seem like useless busywork to you.

But if you press on through the bad days, you will see a change, and by the time you ask your students to imitate paragraphs, your estimate of them will be revised upwards considerably--at least mine was. As Gruber says, imitation liberates students' personalities by freeing them from enervating design decisions, at least temporarily. Paradoxically, through exercises that connote servitude, you will be promoting freedom.

NOTES

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²W. Ross Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 252.

³Seymour Chatman and Samuel R. Levin, Essays on the Language of Literature (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), pp. 337-8.

⁴Louis T. Milic, "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition," College Composition and Communication 16 (May 1965), 66-69, 126.

⁵Ibid., p. 67.

⁶Ibid., p. 67.

⁷Louis T. Milic, "Against the Typology of Styles," in Chatman and Levin, Essays on the Language of Literature, p. 442.

⁸Milic, "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition," p. 67.

⁹Michael Riffaterre, "Criteria for Style Analysis," in Chatman and Levin, p. 413.

¹⁰Milic, "Theories of Style," p. 69.

¹¹Louis T. Milic, "Rhetorical Choice and Stylistic Option: The Conscious and Unconscious Poles," in Literary Style: A Symposium ed. Seymour Chatman (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 77-88.

¹²Ibid., p. 85.

¹³Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁴Winston Weathers, "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy," CCC 21 (May 1970), 144.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 144-4.

¹⁶Richard L. Graves, "A Primer for Teaching Style," CCC 25 (May 1974), 187.

¹⁷M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), p. 6.

¹⁸Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," in Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric, p. 74.

¹⁹Chaim Perelman, "The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning," in The Rhetoric of Western Thought, ed. James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, and William E. Coleman (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt Pub. Co., 1976), p. 190.

²⁰For more information on the differences between speech and writing, see Robert J. Connors, "The Differences Between Speech and Writing: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos," CCC 30 (Oct. 1979), 285-290.

²¹William Irmscher, Teaching Expository Writing (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979), pp. 133-4.

²²Albert H. Marckwardt, Introduction to Martin Joos, The Five Clocks (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1961), p. viii.

²³Martin Joos, The Five Clocks, p. 11.

²⁴Ibid., p. 40.

²⁵Ibid., p. 41.

²⁶Richard M. Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 53.

²⁷E.D. Hirsch, Jr., The Philosophy of Composition (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1977).

²⁸Edward P.J. Corbett, "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style with a Demonstration Analysis of Swift's A Modest Proposal," in Teaching Freshman Composition, ed. Gary Tate and Edward P.J. Corbett (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 294.

²⁹Winston Weathers, "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy," p. 146.

³⁰Rudolf Flesch, The Art of Readable Writing (New York: Harper and Bros., 1949), pp. 213-216.

³¹Ibid., p. 151.

³²Ibid., p. 149

³³Ibid., p. 150

³⁴Ibid., p. 9.

³⁵Edward P.J. Corbett, "Approaches to the Study of Style," p. 94.

³⁶Corbett, "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style," p. 296.

³⁷Edward P.J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 40.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 450-458.

³⁹Ibid., p. 450.

⁴⁰John F. Fleischauer, "Teaching Prose Style Analysis," Style 9 (Winter 1975), 100.

⁴¹Walker Gibson, Tough, Sweet & Stuffy (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1966), p. xi.

⁴²Ibid., p. 8.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 75-89.

⁴⁵Actual advertisements from 1966, quoted in Gibson, p. 75.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 90-95.

⁴⁷Quoted in Gibson, p. 92.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 102-103.

⁴⁹This exercise is suggested in Weathers, "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy," pp. 147-9.

⁵⁰Walker Gibson, "An Exercise in Prose Style," in Rhetoric: Theories for Application ed. Robert M. Gorrell (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1967), pp. 99-106.

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⁵²Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, p. 416.

⁵³Edward P.J. Corbett, "The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric," CCC 22 (Octo. 1971), 244.

⁵⁴Winston Weathers and Otis Winchester, Copy and Compose (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 2.

⁵⁵See, for instance, Rosemary Hake and Joseph M. Williams, "Sentence Expanding: Not Can, or How, but When," in Sentence-Combining and the Teaching of Writing, ed. Donald A. Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg (Conway, Ark.: L & S Books, 1980), pp. 134-146.

⁵⁶Frank J. D'Angelo, "Imitation and Style," CCC 24 (Oct. 1973), 283.

⁵⁷Weathers and Winchester, Copy and Compose, p. 2.

⁵⁸Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric, p. 253.

⁵⁹William E. Gruber, "'Servile Copying' and the Teaching of English," College English 39 (Dec. 1977), 493-4.

⁶⁰Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, p. 510

⁶¹Ibid., p. 533.

⁶²Ibid., p. 535.

⁶³Winston Weathers and Otis Winchester, The New Strategy of Style, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978).

⁶⁴Weathers and Winchester, *Copy and Compose*, pp. 24, 61, 86-87.

⁶⁵Edmund Miller, "Controlled Composition and the Teaching of Style," paper presented at CCCC 29, Denver, March 31-April 1, 1978 (ERIC 159 699), p. 1.

⁶⁶Donna K. Gorrell, "Controlled Composition: Sentence Manipulations for Basic Writing Students," paper presented at CCCC 30, Minneapolis, Minn., April 5-7, 1979 (ERIC 172 237), p. 3.

⁶⁷Edmund Miller, Exercises in Style (Normal, Ill.: Illinois State Univ., 1980), pp. 5-6.

⁶⁸Kinda Ann Kunz and Robert R. Viscount, Write Me A Ream: A Course in Controlled Composition (New York: Teachers College Press of Columbia University, 1973).

⁶⁹Gruber, " 'Servile Copying' and the Teaching of English," p. 496.

⁷⁰Richard L. Graves, "Levels of Skill in the Composing Process," CCC 29 (Oct. 1978), 232.

CHAPTER V

TEACHING THE SENTENCE

There is no question that the sentence is an important element of discourse. Unlike the paragraph, which has been attacked as an artificial and conventional form, the sentence is freely admitted to exist. It is, as Leo Rockas puts it, "a real unit, and the smallest unit" of discourse.¹ It is the basic unit with which we are concerned as teachers of composition; if students have mastery over it, they can probably do well as writers. The sentence is arguably the most important unit with which writing courses deal.

For most of the history of composition, writing a sentence was merely one skill among many that students were expected to master. The larger rhetorical units were considered to be just as important as pedagogic tools, and traditional sentence theory was developed in no great depth; nor were there any important teaching methods attached to it. So long as a good deal of reading was common or required among educated people, so long as tacit knowledge of many types of sentences could be assumed on the part of the student, this traditional sentence theory served satisfactorily. With the decline in basic literacy skills that began in the 1960's, however, students' intuitive knowledge of sentence types began to decline as well. Traditional sentence theory did not do an adequate job under these changed circumstances, and student prose became noticeably more threadbare in texture.

As the ability to write coherent and well-developed sentences declined, there was born as if in answer to the problem what many rhetoricians now consider to be the most important teaching innovation of our time: the school of syntactic methods. As the name suggests, these are theories and methods of instruction in writing that approach the writing process through practice in syntax: the writing of good sentences. Imitation exercises as discussed in Chapter Four can be considered a syntactic method because they do ask students to practice sentence-writing, but the two most famous and most completely tested syntactic methods are Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of the sentence and sentence-combining as evolved by John Mellon and Frank O'Hare. Both methods were born in the early to middle Sixties, at least partially in answer to the complaint that students simply could not write good sentences anymore. Both methods were developed to make students aware of what the components of a "good" sentence were and to provide practice in writing such sentences. Both were influenced to some degree by Noam Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar. Both rejected traditional sentence theory. And both have achieved measurable success in helping student write more more mature and complex sentences.

The key word in syntactic theory now is "maturity," for that has become the central desideratum of both syntactic methods: to help younger writers learn to compose sentences that compare favorably with those of more experienced writers . Francis Christensen called this goal syntactic fluency in 1963, but after Kellogg Hunt published his

study of Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels and found that intra-sentence structures could be quantified according to the age and experience of the writer, the term syntactic maturity was born.² Thereafter, the sentence-combining theorists had as their announced goals the increasing of students' syntactic maturity.

It must be remembered that syntactic maturity is not the same thing as overall quality of writing, although the two qualities are often confused. Kellogg Hunt, whose research lay behind the concept of syntactic maturity, never claimed that students who are more syntactically mature write "better."³ Theoretically at least, syntactic maturity is an evaluation of elements completely separate from overall quality of writing. "Words per clause," "clauses per T-unit," etc., do not and cannot measure tone, voice, organization, content--all of the qualitative factors that make up good writing. As John Mellon said after his sentence-combining study, "Syntactic maturity is only a statistical artifact."⁴

And yet the three most important tests of syntactic methods, those of Frank O'Hare, Donald Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg, and of Lester Faigley (all of which will be discussed in greater detail within this chapter), all found that as syntactic maturity increased in student writing, so did the overall quality of the writing as perceived by experienced English teachers. The syntactic methods tested were compared to traditional content-oriented methods and were found to produce student writing that teachers judged better on the average. Although they measure two different things, syntactic maturity and

writing quality seem to be in fact inextricably linked.

This development is a bit confusing, even for supporters of syntactic methods, who have been crowned with a success they cannot quite explain. O'Hare, while carefully avoiding inflated claims for sentence-combining, suggests that style may have a powerful immediate effect on the reader of an essay:

This final choice made by every writer is. . . frequently a syntactic one. . . The present study's findings strongly suggest that style, rather narrowly defined as the final syntactic choices habitually made from the writer's practical repertoire of syntactic alternatives, is an important dimension of what constitutes writing ability.⁵

Morenberg says of his Miami of Ohio sentence-combining study that it showed that "style is the ability of the skilled writer to control expression consciously," and he assumes that improved style gained through sentence-combining leads to improved expression.⁶ And Faigley, in some ways the most bemused of all by the problem, finally shrugs and suggests that syntactic methods "affect some part of the writing process more fundamental than the enhancement of syntactic maturity, that besides expanding the students' syntactic repertoire, these methods offer students insight into structure in writing."⁷

We do not, as you can see, quite know why syntactic methods produce overall better writing than do traditional methods, but we are certain that they do. Their success has been indisputable. W. Ross Winterowd, an early critic, wrote in 1975 that "programmed exercises are at best

dubious means of pedagogy in writing" which "take sentences out of the living context of the rhetorical situation and make them into largely meaningless dry runs," but he has now accepted sentence-combining's overwhelming and demonstrated effectiveness.⁸

Syntactic methods are particularly valuable because they allow students to work on and practice many writing skills at once. They can be used to assist students whose sentences frequently contain grammatical errors such as fragments or run-ons. They are good exercises for students who need more familiarity with intra-sentence punctuation, especially with commas. They give students control over the sentence and the options that sentence form offers. They can, in fact, provide an entire lexicon of "sentence sense" concerning the way elements work together within a sentence. As Richard Graves has pointed out, the key term in all syntactic methods is relationship.⁹

Obviously the "big news" items in this chapter are generative rhetoric and sentence-combining, but traditional sentence theory, though it may seem outdated by its more modern relatives, can still be a useful editorial tool for students, allowing them to check suspect areas of their syntax with a testing paradigm. It can also help students to rebuild flawed sentences, first identifying the flaws, then reconstructing the "existential situation" that lay behind the purpose of the original sentence, then recasting the sentence so that its form is correct yet still reflects the situation.¹⁰ Traditional sentence theory can work hand-in-glove with syntactic practice to produce good sentences that are also correct sentences.

Much still lies outside our ken. The debate still goes on as to whether embedding clauses or adding them produces better sentences. As advanced as our understanding of syntactic units is, we still have paid relatively little attention to the other levels on which sentences are structured: the semantic, the logical, the rhythmic.¹¹ But all this is carping; what we do know is extremely valuable. As Ross Winterowd says, we are now certain that "we have the means whereby we can help students increase their syntactic fluency. And anyone who thinks about it will realize that a high degree of syntactic fluency is an accomplishment hardly to be overestimated."¹²

TRADITIONAL SENTENCE THEORY

Many composition theories that are called "traditional" actually had their beginnings in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, but traditional sentence theory is much older. Western rhetorical theories about the sentence date back to classical antiquity and have come down to their present form in our day by a long process of accretion. They have their roots in grammar and in the oral rhetorical theories of the classical period, and because of their faraway origins, they strike many teachers today as outdated. Perhaps so, yet this is after all the teaching tradition which produced Burke, Madison, Melville, Lincoln. If teachers can cast an unprejudiced eye upon it, traditional sentence theory may not appear quite so useless as they had thought it.

For the purposes of this section, it will be less confusing if we separate the grammatical from the rhetorical components of traditional sentence theory and examine each individually.

Sentence Grammar and the Grammatical Sentence Types

English sentences consist of two parts, without both of which the sentence cannot exist. These parts are the subject and the predicate. Subjects are usually nouns, noun clauses, or pronouns, and predicates are always some form of verb:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Verb</u>
Birds	sing.
John	left.
He	weeps.

Nouns are either singular or plural, and thus have only two forms, but verbs can take many different forms. The five most common forms are these:

Simple or Infinitive:	drive, sing, go, put
Third Person Singular Form:	drives, sings, goes, puts
Presente Participle Form:	driving, singing, going, putting
Past Tense:	drove, sang, went, put
Past Participle:	driven, sung, gone, put ¹³

To be complete, a sentence must have a finite verb form and a subject, even if the subject is only "understood"; only with both of these components can it be said to express a complete thought.

According to the structure of traditional grammar, all sentences can be classified as belonging to one of four grammatical types. These types are as follows:

The Simple Sentence--This is "a sentence with one independent clause and no subordinate clauses."¹⁴ An independent clause contains a subject and a finite verb and can function as a complete sentence, while a subordinate or dependent clause cannot function as a complete sentence because it does not express a complete thought. An example of a simple sentence might be:

"Great literature stirs the imagination."¹⁵

The Compound Sentence--This is "a sentence composed of two or more independent clauses but no subordinate clauses." The two independent clauses are usually joined by coordinating conjunctions--and, but, nor, or, for, yet--or by conjunctive adverbs--also, besides, however, then, this, consequently. An example of a compound sentence is:

"Great literature stirs the imagination, and it challenges the intellect."

Notice the comma before the conjunction--it is an important mark of punctuation in the compound sentence.

The Complex sentence--This is "a sentence that contains one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses." An example might be:

"Great literature, which stirs the imagination, also challenges the intellect."

Notice in the first example that there is no comma preceding the conjunction. Complex sentences do not always call for commas to set off the dependent clauses.

The Compound-Complex Sentence--This is "a sentence that contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses." Many modern sentences are some form of the compound-complex. An example might be:

"Great literature, which challenges the intellect, is sometimes difficult, but is also rewarding."

There are, of course, complete grammatical rules for forming and discriminating these sentence types, but this is not the place for them.

Purposive Sentence Types

Along with the breakdown of sentence by grammar, another traditional classification of sentences is by purpose. Once again, there are four purposive sentence types:

Declarative Sentence--"a sentence that makes a statement."¹⁶

It formulates a single--though sometimes complex--proposition.

Examples:

"In 1945 the United Nations had fifty-one members."

OR "Despite their physical similarities, the twins had somewhat different personalities, as Ray became a Catholic monk while Victor went in for cattle mutilation."

Imperative Sentence--"a sentence that gives a command or makes a request." Unless it is a short command the sentence seldom remains purely imperative. A purely imperative sentence might be:

"Please stop talking and open your books."

An imperative-declarative sentence (mixing command with proposition) might be:

"Drop that knife or I'll fill you full of deershot."

Interrogative Sentence--"a sentence that asks a question."

It is always terminated by a question mark.

Examples:

"Which book did you like most? OR

"What were you doing to that steer?"

Exclamatory Sentence--" a sentence that expresses strong feeling."

It is nearly always followed by an exclamation point. Examples:

"Say, the study of grammar is fascinating!"

OR "God, Victor, that's the most disgusting thing

I've ever seen!"

Traditional Rhetorical Classifications

From the beginning of classical rhetorical theory the sentence has been an object of study, and although the rhetorical sentence classifications are not taught as often as formerly, they can still be useful. There are several different types of rhetorical classifications, all relating to the traditional conception of a sentence as "a single complete thought," a statement in which, as John Genung puts it, "it is requisite that. . .every part be subservient to one principal affirmation."¹⁷

The first traditional rhetorical division of sentences is into short sentences and long. No quantitative definition of long or short sentences is possible, of course; as William Minto states in his Manual of English Prose Literature, "It would be absurd to prescribe a definite limit for the length of sentences, or even to say in what proportion long and short should be intermixed."¹⁸ This unwillingness to be precise in numerical prescription is representative of traditional

rhetorical theory, but Minto and the other early composition teachers were in agreement that long and short sentences must be intermixed in order to produce a pleasing style. Short sentences were to be used in order to produce an effect of vigor and emphasis, and long sentences were used for detail and to create cadence and rhythm.

The failure to keep a balance between long and short sentences results in a corrupted style, according to Minto: "A long series of either very short sentences or of very long sentences is tiresome."

John Genung is more precise:

When short sentences predominate to excess, the style becomes flippant and abrupt, and the rhythm of it is lost. When long sentences are in excess, the difficulty of interpretation is increased, and the style becomes lumbering and heavy.¹⁹

While early composition teachers accused the short sentence of having an "abrupt effect," they did admit that long sentences were prone to more kinds of problems--". . .the faults of intricacy, prolixity, ambiguity and vagueness," as Alexander Bain, the "father" of modern English Composition, put it.²⁰

Beyond the injunction to intermix lengths, there is little to be done with the classification of sentences into long and short. Far more important is the traditional rhetorical classification of sentences into loose, periodic, and balanced. Of these three classes of sentences, by far the most important are the loose and the periodic, for taken together they represent a complete traditional taxonomy of the sentence.

The balanced structure can be either loose or periodic, and thus is not an equal or mutually exclusive class.

So far as we know, the division of sentences into loose and periodic is as old as the art of rhetoric itself. Aristotle made a distinction in his Rhetoric between "running" and "compact" sentences "The style necessarily is either running, the whole made one only by a connecting word between part and part. . .or compact, returning upon itself. . .the compact is the style which is in periods."²¹ This distinction between loose and periodic "styles" meant that one style used predominantly loose sentences while the other contained more periods. As rhetoric was developed through the classical age and into the medieval era, this conception of loose and periodic styles remained a central doctrine of sentence construction, especially since Latin constructions in the periodic style are much more common than in most other languages.

We next take up the story in the second great age of rhetorical innovation, the eighteenth century, with the first truly modern statement of the doctrine, that of George Campbell in his The Philosophy of Rhetoric of 1776. Following classical theory, Campbell claims that there are two kinds of sentences, "either periods, or sentences of looser composition, for which the language doth not furnish us a name." Campbell's description of periods and loose sentences has not been surpassed for clarity and ease of understanding:

A period is a complex sentence, wherein the meaning remains suspended until the whole is finished. . .The criterion of. . .loose sentences is as follows: There will always be found in them one place at least before the end, at which, if you make a stop, the construction of the preceding part will render it a complete sentence. 22

Campbell provides examples of typical periodic and loose constructions that express the same thought:

Periodic--"At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads and bad weather, we came with no small difficulty to our journey's end."

Loose--"We came to our journey's end at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather."

Notice that the loose sentence could be grammatically concluded after any of the underlined words, while the periodic sentences must continue to its termination.²³

Campbell's definitions of loose and periodic sentences were used throughout the nineteenth century with few changes, and the different stylistic natures of the two kinds of sentences were given close attention. Campbell had said that of the periodic and loose constructions, "the former savours more of artifice and design, the latter seems more result of pure nature. The period is nevertheless more susceptible of vivacity and force; the loose sentence is apt, as it were, to languish and grow tiresome."²⁴ This conception of the drama of the periodic sentence and the naturalness of the loose sentence continued throughout the nineteenth century. The period, says Genung, "depends for

distinction on some essential feature that is of purpose delayed," while in the loose sentence, "the principle of suspense is not observed; qualifying, explanatory, and preliminary elements are added as they occur to the mind."²⁵ And Minto states that the effect of period structure is "to keep the mind in a state of uniform or increasing tension until the denouement."²⁵

Both sorts of sentences, of course, are always found in the practice of real writers, and the predominance of one or the other helps to classify the author's style. In the nineteenth century the writings of De Quincy were said to typify the periodic style and those of Carlyle the loose; in our own day we might point to Henry James as exemplifying the periodic style and Ernest Hemingway the loose.

In the practice of most English writers, the loose sentence is far more common than the periodic. The history and nature of the language compel it, and we can even trace the decline of the periodic style in English as the French and native influences won out over the Latinate and Germanic constructions that were common in Old English. As Alexander Bain said, "The loose sentence must be frequent in English; the language not permitting the inversions requisite for the constant practice of suspending the sense."²⁷ This is borne out by the problems inherent in the periodic style when it is pushed to extremes. The reader of a sentence in Henry James' later novels, for example, sometimes feels as if the author is handing him cup after cup of hot tea, all the steaming fragile cups of which he must juggle in his mind until James

at last provides the tea-tray in his final clause. Too much reliance upon periodicity can exhaust the reader, who comes to miss the "informal ease and naturalness" of loose sentences.²⁸

The loose and periodic sentence structures are mutually exclusive, but the final traditional rhetorical classification, the antithetical or balanced sentence, can be either loose or periodic. The balanced sentence is a later development in rhetorical theory. It does not appear clearly in classical rhetoric, and then after it does appear, it is confused for a while with antithesis. Campbell discusses antithesis as a sort of periodic sentence, but Richard Whately, in his Elements of Rhetoric of 1828, states that "Antithesis has been sometimes reckoned as one form of the Period, but it is evident that. . .it has no necessary connexion with it."²⁹ Gradually over the course of the nineteenth century, antithesis came to be associated with a single type of sentence. Alexander Bain states in 1866 that "when the different clauses of a compound sentence are made similar in form, they are said to be Balanced."³⁰ John Genung makes the definition slightly more precise: "When the different elements of a compound sentence are made to answer to each other and set each other off by similarity of form, the sentence is said to be balanced."³¹

The writing of Samuel Johnson, perhaps more than that of any other author, gives examples of balanced sentences; they were habitual to Johnson. "Contempt is the proper punishment of affectation, and detestation the just consequence of hypocrisy." "He remits his

splendour, but retains his magnitude; and pleases more, though he dazzles less." Balanced sentences can sound pompous and mechanical if overused, and for that reason their use must always be limited. As Bain points out, though, they can also present the reader with an "agreeable surprise," and enliven otherwise workaday prose with an element that can be oratorical and even poetic without calling attention to itself. As Genung points out, the balanced sentence can be used for point and for introducing paired concepts, but because of its tendency to become monotonous, writers should use care in determining the frequency of its appearance.³²

These three sentence types, then, represent the traditional rhetorical classification: The English-French-descended loose sentence, which makes up 70-80% of most English prose; the Latin-and German-descended periodic sentence, which makes up the other 20-30%, and the oratorical-sounding balanced sentence, which can be either loose or periodic. All have specific stylistic effects, and all are subject to corruptions, extremes, and overemphasis if not used carefully.

CLASSROOM USE OF TRADITIONAL SENTENCE THEORY

One of the reasons for the development of modern syntactic approaches to teaching composition was the paucity of teaching strategies offered by traditional sentence theory. The sad fact of the lack of generative ability of this theory remains true today, and the best use of traditional sentences is still in the terms they supply us for describing and correcting sentence errors. Teachers should at least

be familiar with traditional sentence theory because it gives us a toolbox of terms and relationships to describe within sentences. It remains useful as a diagnostic method.

Sentence Grammar and Grammatical Sentence Types Two of the most common error types found in student essays are sentence fragments and comma splices, and these problems can be approached effectively through explanations of what makes a grammatically complete sentence. If you have students with severe fragment problems, the first thing you will have to do is explain to them methods of checking each sentence--in their case each group of words between a capitalization and a period--for a subject and a finite verb. For students with simple fragment problems, work on the verb forms listed on page can help; point out the dangerous "non-finite" forms, particularly the infinitive and participial forms.

Very often, though, fragment problems are more complex than mere lack of a subject or verb. Many fragment errors are caused by uninformed use of relative pronouns--who, which, than, what--to start sentences. These more complex fragments result from students separating sentences that should be joined, for example, "The car slowed to a stop while Joey gathered the beer cans. Which he then threw out onto the side of the road." The subject and verb form do exist in the fragment here, and it is difficult to explain to a student exactly how the decorums of the sentence form have been disturbed by lack of a complete thought. The complex grammatical explanation usually is useless, but when the fragment can be seen in isolation--"Which he then

threw out onto the side of the road."--away from its parent sentence, any student can identify it as the dreaded "FRAG."

You can use this innate sense of sentence structure that all students have by recommending a simple exercise to those with fragment problems. Simply have them read, preferably out loud, the entire rough draft of an essay, sentence by sentence, backwards. The reading can be done to a friend, to family members, or even alone. This is not, notice, a word-for-word inversion, but sentence-by-sentence, beginning with the last sentence and working to the first, reading each sentence in normal word order. This exercise allows students to read their sentences out of order and thus to see their fragments wrenched out of the context that makes them sound "all right" when read in normal order. Since most fragments are informed by the sentences which directly precede them, the student can perceive the glaring lack of a real subject or verb in what have previously seemed good sentences.

Sentence grammar, then, can be useful in dealing with sentence-fragment problems, but for problems with comma splices and their first cousins, run-on sentences, students must know more: they must know the grammatical sentence types. In order to stop writing comma splices, a student must have a working grasp of the conception of an independent clause, of a dependent clause, and of the punctuation differences between them. It also helps students to be taught the difference between compound and complex sentences. Unless you have a class with quite a few students in it who need work on splices, this work is best done on a one-to-one basis, in a workbook and in conference with the teacher.

For students who frequently write comma splices, you may have to recommend that every time a student use a comma he look before and after it to make certain what sorts of clauses he is joining, and to add a conjunction if he sees an independent clause on both sides of the comma. Students who write run-ons (and in my experience they are fewer in number than those with fragment or comma-splice problems) need to train themselves to read over each sentence and count the number of independent clauses to make certain that they can account for the placement of each one. Again, these efforts are best checked by the teacher in a one-on-one situation in which questions can be asked and activities suggested.

Aside from error problems, there are some general practical exercises that can be done using grammatical sentence types. After explaining and exemplifying each type on the board or on dittoes, you can ask students to write two or three examples of each type, correctly punctuated. The writing of such sentences does not take long, and after students look up from writing, ask for volunteers to put examples on the board. I do not spend too much time on this exercise, simply because writing a compound sentence in vacuo on command and writing one as a natural part of an essay are two quite different things. After you are satisfied that you have done all you can to give your students a working grasp of the grammatical sentence types, you can move on.

Purposive Sentence Types I have never known any teacher who had evolved a method for teaching these sentence types or any coherent reason why students should know them. Teachers can keep them in mind as useful descriptive terms, but they seem to have no pedagogic value

at all. Students seem to understand pretty well that a statement, a command, a question, and an exclamation are what they are. Speech-act theory has dealt with the nature of verbalizations in purposive terms, but not in any immediately usable pedagogic way.

Rhetorical Sentence Types There is not much more to be done with the traditional rhetorical classification of short and long sentences than the nineteenth-century composition teachers did: mention them and exhort students to intermix short and long sentences in a graceful fashion. Do not expect much from this sort of exhortation, but there will always be a student or two in your class with a tendency to write too many short, simple sentences, and focusing on this overreliance by noting it when it appears in papers can alert students to the fact that such prose sounds immature. Occasionally you may run across a student who writes too many long and convoluted sentences (sometimes with errors in their construction). This is an easier problem to deal with than that of simplicity; unlike the syntactically immature student, the "overly mature" creator of too-long sentences is usually stylistically aware. When you tell him that mile-long sentences impress you only when they are mixed with shorter ones for readability, that long sentences are hard to process mentally, he can often make the necessary adjustments fairly quickly.

The second rhetorical classification, the loose, periodic, and balanced sentences, is the most interesting. In a sense this division has been discredited because it has been ill-used, not because it is really useless. I was taught the classification as "loose, balanced, and

periodic" as if the three sorts of sentences were coequal and mutually exclusive. The three classes thus seemed arbitrary and useless to me, and not until my investigation of the history of rhetoric did I come to realize that the two important classes were loose and periodic, and that the balanced sentence had been tacked on later. I was never made to realize that loose and periodic sentences were an exhaustive classification and were inversions of one another, that the periodic sentence did not have to be ridiculously long and drawn-out, that, as Barrett Wendell says, "Every sentence that was ever composed, every sentence that ever will be, must be periodic or loose."³³

Part of the reason that the traditional classification has been ill-taught for so long is due to its susceptibility to extremes and overemphasis. The loose sentence, seemingly with little structure to speak of, could sloop along endlessly, and the periodic sentence, which was assumed to be best when it created as much "tension" in the reader as possible by extending its length, seemed mannered and unnatural. As Francis Christensen amusingly put it, "the term loose seems to be taken as a pejorative (it sounds immoral). . .and some of our worst perversions of style come from the attempt to teach. . .periodic sentences."³⁴ Then, when the unrelated "balanced sentence" was stuck in between loose and periodic, thus obscuring their necessary relationship, the ruin of the classification was hurried along. By the middle of this century it was probably taught only for lack of a better theory to replace it.

I cannot recommend traditional classification as a panacea for all students writing ill, but it can certainly be more useful than Christensen claims. The balance between loose and periodic sentences in modern American prose is steeply in favor of the loose sentence, and thus you should familiarize students with loose and periodic constructions, and with the stylistic and organizational differences between them, while suggesting that the periodic construction not be overused or carried to extreme lengths.

Begin with some simple exercises on the blackboard. Transpose a short sentence from a loose to a periodic construction without mentioning the names of the types: "We went to the store to buy some sugar" to "To buy some sugar, we went to the store." Discuss the differences between the two sentences, pointing out the fact that the loose sentence (don't call it that; proceed inductively) can be ended after "store" but the periodic sentence cannot. Have the students work with transposition of sentences for a while, both at the board and at their seats. Discuss some of the periodic structures thus created and critique them. (Christensen is right in saying that periodic sentences are liable to stylistic disease.) You can gradually work into more complex loose and periodic structures.

Finally, after the concepts of the two different sorts of sentences are established, you can name them and ask students to check the percentages of them in their own work, perhaps in an essay already done. Many, of course, will find no periodic structures at all in their papers, and the final suggestion I make concerning these sentence

types involves each essay written for the rest of the course: I suggest a percentage spread of 10% to 20% of periodic sentences in each succeeding essay, and my only stipulation is that none of these periodic sentences are to be longer than three clauses. Yes, I do get occasional stylistic monstrosities, but there are also appealing and thoughtful periodic combinations as a result of students' attempts to widen their options.

As for balanced sentences, I must admit that Christensen is right when he complains that "our students, no Bacons or Johnsons, have little occasion for balanced sentences." Similar methods to those used to teach the loose and periodic structures can be used to teach balanced sentences, but I have not found that students write them well or naturally. It may be a good idea to at least expose student writers to the balanced sentence, but I would not spend more than a day on it.

FRANCIS CHRISTENSEN'S GENERATIVE RHETORIC

The traditional theories of the sentences--the grammatical, purposive, and rhetorical classifications--continued to be widely taught throughout the first sixty years of this century. They were not of much real help to teachers in showing students how to write good sentences, but no conceptions of the sentence were offered to replace them. Not, at least, until 1963, when the late Francis Christensen, a professor of English at the University of Southern California, published what is arguably the most important single article in modern composition

theory, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence." In this article and in other works published up to his death in 1970, Christensen described a new way of viewing sentences and a pedagogical method that could be used to teach students how to write longer, more mature, more varied and interesting sentences. Since his death, his work has been carried on by his widow, Bonniejean McGuire Christensen, and by other researchers, and has been refined and tested in experiments that will be described later in this section. For now, though, let us examine the theory and the original pedagogy of "Christensen sentences."

To begin with, Christensen was certain that the sentence is the most important element in rhetoric because it is "a natural and isolable unit."³⁵ In the opening sentence of "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" he announced his intentions: "If a new grammar is to be brought to bear on composition, it must be brought to bear on the rhetoric of the sentence."³⁶ Complaining that the traditional conceptions of the sentence were merely descriptive, Christensen argued that traditional sentence pedagogy simply did not help students learn to write. "We do not really teach our captive charges to write better--we merely expect them to."³⁷ Both the grammatical and rhetorical classifications of sentences are equally barren in the amount of real assistance they give to students. "We need a rhetoric of the sentence that will do more than combine the ideas of primer sentences. We need one that will generate ideas."³⁸

And with that pronouncement, Christensen went on to explain his generative theory of the modern sentence. In order to organize the theory, he created four principles that explain the different elements

of it:

Principle one: Addition The traditional formula for a good sentence has always been to use a concrete noun and an active verb, but Christensen disputes this recipe. He quotes novelist John Erskine, who wrote in an essay,

What you say is found not in the noun but in what you add to qualify the noun. . .The noun, the verb, and the main clause serve merely as the base on which meaning will rise. . .The modifier is the essential part of any sentence.³⁹

Composition of sentences for Christensen, then, is essentially and most importantly a process of addition of different sorts of modifiers, some consisting of only a word, but the most important ones consisting of a number of words or a clause.

Principle Two: Direction of Modification Writing moves in linear space, and whenever a modifier is added to a sentence it is added either before or after the word or clause it modifies. If the modifier is added before the "head" (that is, the noun, verb, or main clause being modified), the direction of modification can be indicated by an arrow pointing forward; if it is added after the head, by an arrow pointing backward.⁴⁰ Here is an example of a sentence with the headwords underlined and the direction of modification indicated by arrows:

"With a rear fender torn loose, the battered Trans-Am slowly limped, squeaking and grinding, to the curb."

You will notice here that there are two kinds of modifiers in this example sentence. There are the close or bound modifiers of the noun and verb--"battered" and "slowly." Then there are the free modifiers or sentence modifiers-- "With a rear fender torn loose," "squeaking and grinding," and "to the curb"--that modify the clause "Trans-Am limped." The difference between the two sorts of modifiers is simple: bound modifiers are generally fixed in position, and the only choice one has about them is whether to use them at all. Free modifiers, on the other hand, are added to a clause and can be placed in many different positions in order to create different stylistic effects. Bound modifiers are said usually to be embedded, while free modifiers are said to be added.

Christensen claimed that overuse of bound modifiers is responsible for some of the worst excesses of teaching practice: what he calls the injunction to students to "load the patterns" with bound modifiers. "Pattern practice" thus sets students to writing sentences like this: "'The small boy on the red bicycle who lives with his happy parents on our shady street often coasts down the steep street until he comes to the city park.'" As Christensen says, "This will never do. It has no rhythm and hence no life; it is tone-deaf. It is the seed that will burgeon into gobbledygook."⁴¹ If noun clusters and verb clusters are not kept short, this sort of sentence can result. Heavy use of single-word bound modifiers does not necessarily make for good prose.

Bound modifiers, according to Christensen, then, have limitations in terms of helping students write varied and interesting sentences. Free

modifiers, though--modifiers added to the main clause--have a much more varied range of possibilities, and sentences created through the use of free modifiers are at the heart of Christensen's method. He calls such sentences cumulative sentences:

The typical sentence of modern English, the kind we can best spend our efforts trying to teach, is what we may call the cumulative sentence. The main clause, which may or may not have a sentence modifier before it, advances the discussion; but the additions move backward, as in this clause, to modify the statement of the main clause or more often to explicate or exemplify it, so that the sentence has a flowing and ebbing movement, advancing to a new position and then pausing to consolidate it, leaping and lingering as the popular ballad does. The first part of the preceding compound sentence has one addition, placed within it; the second part has 4 words in the main clause and 49 in the five additions placed after it.⁴²

As you can see, the cumulative sentence is a version of what traditional sentence theory calls the loose sentence; at one point Christensen even states that the cumulative sentence is the opposite of the periodic sentence.

According to Christensen, the cumulative sentence is the central sentence type used in modern prose, and this seems to be born out by quantitative studies done by Christensen and others.⁴³ Christensen praises the nature of the cumulative sentence, saying that it "is dynamic rather than static, representing the mind thinking." The main clause of the cumulative sentence explains the fact of the idea, and logically nothing more need be said, but the free modifiers "stay

with the same idea, probing its bearings and implications, exemplifying it or seeking an analogy or metaphor for it, or reducing it to details."⁴⁴ For instance, notice the free modifiers in this sentence adapted from Sinclair Lewis: "He shook his hands, a quick shake, fingers down, like a pianist." The last three phrases modify the main clause which states the whole fact of the sentence.

Since the free modifiers sharpen, focus and define the thought of the main clause of a cumulative sentence, Christensen says, "the mere form of the sentence generates ideas." It compels the writer to examine his thought and can thus be used as something more than a merely descriptive tool. We shall examine this claim of generativity in the Classroom Application section of this chapter.

Principle Three: Levels of Generality Addition and direction of modification are structural principles, says Christensen, but the structure has no real meaning until a third principle is introduced, that of levels of generality or levels of abstraction. In terms of the cumulative sentence, this principle means that,

the main clause is likely to be stated in general or abstract or plural terms. With the main clause stated, the forward movement of the sentence stops, the writer shifts down to a lower level of generality or abstraction or to singular terms, and goes back over the same ground at this lower level.⁴⁵

Put more simply, the free modifiers are more specific than the main idea, and thus at a lower level of generality, as in this example:

"The students sat silent, staring at their hands and at desktops, unable to understand the grammar, wishing the period over."

If two clauses or modifiers are at the same level of generality, they can be called coordinate; if a modifier is at a lower level of generality than the clause or modifier adjacent to it, it can be called subordinate. Cumulative sentences can be diagrammed according to their levels of abstraction with a higher number indicating a lower level of generality; higher-numbered levels are more specific than lower-numbered levels. Here are some examples:

- 1 He shook his hands,
 - 2 a quick shake, (NC)
 - 3 fingers down, (Abs)
 - 4 like a pianist. (PP)

- 1. The students sat silent,
 - 2 staring at their hands and at desktops, (VC)
 - 2 unable to understand the grammar, (AC)
 - 2 wishing the period over. (VC)

- 2 Calico-coated, (AC)
- 2 small bodied, (AC)
- 2 with delicate legs and pink faces (PP)
 - 3 in which their mismatched eyes rolled wild and subdued, (RC)
- 1 they huddled,
 - 2 gaudy motionless and alert, (AC)
 - 2 wild as deer, (AC)
 - 2 deadly as rattlesnakes, (AC)
 - 2 quiet as doves. (AC)

--William Faulkner

The parenthesized notations indicate exactly what sort of free modifier is being used; free modifiers include: RC, relative clause; NC, noun cluster; VC, verb cluster; AC, adjective cluster; Abs, absolute (that is, a VC with a subject of its own); PP, prepositional phrase. For examples of these modifiers in use, see the next section.

Principle Four: Texture This principle provides an evaluative term that can be used when the first three principles are applied to prose. As Christensen says:

If a writer adds too few of his nouns or verbs or main clauses and adds little, the texture may be said to be thin. The style will be plain or bare. The writing of most of our students is thin--even threadbare. But if he adds frequently or much or both, then the texture may be said to be dense or rich.⁴⁶

The pedagogic end of Christensen's method is to introduce students to methods by which they can increase the density of their sentences and make the texture of their writing richer. To illustrate exactly how professionals and students use cumulative sentences, it might be helpful to reprint here some of the examples that Christensen introduces in his original articles. Those not attributed were written by his students:

1 The jockeys sat bowed and relaxed,
2 moving a little at the waist with the movement of their
horses. (VC)

Katherine Anne Porter

1 The flame sidled up the match
 2 driving a film of moisture and a thin strip of darker grey
 before it. (VC)

1 She came among them behind the man,
 2 gaunt in the gray shapeless garment and the sunbonnet, (AC)
 2 wearing stained canvas gymnasium shoes. (VC)
 Faulkner

1 The Texan turned to the nearest gatepost and climbed to
 the top of it,
 2 his alternate thighs thick and bulging in the tight
 trousers, (Abs)
 2 the butt of the pistol catching and losing the sun in
 pearly gleams. (Abs)
 Faulkner

1 He could sail for hours,
 2 searching the blanched grasses below him with his
 telescopic eyes, (VC)
 2 gaining height against the wind, (VC)
 2 descending in mile-long, gently declining swoops when
 he curved and rode back, (VC)
 2 never beating a wing. (VC)
 Walter Van Tilburg Clark

1 He stood at the top of the stairs and watched me,
 2 I waiting for him to call me up, (Abs)
 2 he hesitating to come down, (Abs)
 3 his lips nervous with the suggestion of a smile, (Abs)
 3 mine asking whether the smile meant come, or go away (Abs)

1 Joad's lips stretched tight over his long teeth for a moment, and
 1 he licked his lips,
 2 like a dog, (PP)
 3 two licks, (NC)
 4 one in each direction from the middle. (NC)
 Steinbeck

1 It was as though someone, somewhere, has touched a lever
 and shifted gears, and
 1 the hospital was set for might running.
 2 smooth and silent, (A+A)
 2 its normal clatter and hum muffled, (Abs)
 2 the only sounds heard in the whietwalled room distant
 and unreal: (Abs)
 3 a low hum of voices from the nurses' desk, (NC)
 4 quickly stifled, (VC)
 3 the soft squish of rubber-soled shoes on the tiled
 corridor, (NC)

- 3 starched white cloth rustling against itself, (NC) and,
outside,
- 3 lonesome whine of wind in the country night (NC)
and
- 3 the Kansas dust beating against the windows. (NC)

- 1 A small Negro girl develops from the sheet of glare-frosted
walk,
- 2 walking barefooted, (VC)
- 3 her bare legs striking and coiling from the hot cement,
(Abs)
- 4 her feet curling in, (Abs)
- 5 only the outer edges touching. (Abs)

- 1 The swells moved rhythmically toward us,
- 2 irregularly faceted, (VC)
- 2 sparkling, (VC)
- 2 growing taller and more powerful until the shining crest
bursts, (VC)
- 3 a transparent sheet of pale green water spilling over
the top, (Abs)
- 4 breaking into blue-white foam as it cascades down
the front of the wave, (VC)
- 4 piling up in a frothy mound that the diminishing
wave pushes up against the pilings, (VC)
- 5 with a swishsmash, (PP)
- 4 the foam drifting back, (Abs)
- 5 like a lace fan opened over the shimmering water
as the spent wave returns whispering to the sea. (PP)

These four principles, then, illustrate the most important elements of Christensen's sentence theory. Although it has been converted into a complete rhetoric system, the most important component in the system is still the cumulative sentence and the use of it to increase syntactic fluency in student writing. Christensen rhetoric does not follow the traditional canons of rhetoric; instead it opts for a view that all other skills in language follow syntactic skills naturally. For Christensen, you could probably be a good writer if you could learn to write a good sentence. His most famous observation about teaching the cumulative sentence was that he wanted to push his students "to level

after level, not just two or three, but four, five, or six, even more, as far as the students' powers of observation will take them. I want them to become sentence acrobats, to dazzle by their syntactic dexterity."⁴⁷

CLASSROOM USE OF CHRISTENSEN'S GENERATIVE RHETORIC

There are few modern theories of rhetoric more argued about, discussed, praised, damned, or noticed than Christensen's. His few short articles--and all of them are contained in a book of 110 pages⁴⁸--may not have revolutionized rhetoric, but they did create an intense interest in experimentation and innovation that has helped revitalize the old art. Before we go into the classroom uses of Christensen's theory, though, it will be useful to examine some of the attacks, defenses, and tests that the theory and its attached method have attracted over the past fifteen years. It should help us in deciding whether, when, or how to use Christensen in the classroom.

The ink was hardly dry on the large and ambitious Christensen Rhetoric Program, a full-scale work-up of Christensen's sentence and paragraph theories involving workbooks and overhead projector overlays, when the first serious critique of the Christensen theory was published in 1969. Sabina Thorne Johnson, in an article called "Some Tentative Strictures on Generative Rhetoric," admitted that Christensen offered "a revolution in our assessment of style and in our approach to the teaching of composition" but also had some important reservations

about the generative nature of the cumulative sentence. "Christensen seems to believe that form can generate content. I don't believe it can, especially if the content is of an analytical or critical nature."⁴⁹

Johnson goes on to criticize Christensen's reliance upon narrative and descriptive writing for his examples and as the basis for his theory, complaining that narrative and descriptive skills seldom carry over to exposition. She initiated a line of argument against syntactic methods that is still prevalent today: that students need training in invention and organization more than they need to know how to be "sentence acrobats." Finally, she sounded a pedagogic warning: the Christensen method is founded on the modification of bare clauses; however, "young writers seldom write sound, precise base clauses, and for them the writing of cumulative sentences is not unlike building a house on sand."⁵⁰

Christensen himself had died (of natural causes) shortly after Johnson's article appeared, and the attack on his theory led to a colorful exchange between Johnson and Christensen's widow Bonniejean which can be purveyed in back issues of College English. This debate was joined by A.M. Tibbetts, who made several telling points. Although Christensen is useful in the classroom, said Tibbetts, the claims he makes for his system are simply "not empirically true as stated."⁵¹ It is true that pattern practice with cumulative sentences can help students learn to use free modifiers, says Tibbetts, but that is only one of the skills writers need. He criticizes, as did Johnson, Christensen's "fiction fallacy," as he calls it: the idea that students should learn to write like Welty and Faulkner. Narrative and descriptive

writing, Tibbetts claims, requires no logical analysis and leads to "arty, false descriptions of adolescent mental states." If you want nothing but "sentence acrobats," Tibbetts warns, "you are likely to get what you deserve--dextrous rhetorical acrobats who dextrously tell untruths."⁵²

While he admitted that Christensen's method produced clever sentences from students, Tibbetts complained that that was part of the problem. "What we are generally after in expository writing is accuracy rather than cleverness." Finally, he articulated clearly the reservations many teachers have about the Christensen rhetoric program even today. Christensen's theory, says Tibbetts, is

not designed to teach young people how to do the most valuable things any grammar-rhetoric should be designed to teach--how to think; how to separate and define issues; how to isolate fallacies; how to make generalizations and value-judgments--in brief, how to express the truths and realities of our time, and how to argue for improvements.⁵³

This is certainly a ringing indictment, and I must follow it quickly by noting that to some degree Johnson's and Tibbetts' attacks on Christensen were a response to the rather messianic tone he adopted in his original articles. Though Christensen was never opposed to teaching invention and arrangement, the tone of his early articles suggested that generative rhetoric was the Answer, the New Rhetoric, the Rhetorical Revolution that would solve all problems. The text upon which he was working at the time of his death was even titled A New

Rhetoric, one which presumably supplanted all others. The responses of Johnson and Tibbetts attacked some of the larger claims of Christensen's theories, but both admitted that practice with cumulative sentences and free modifiers was a useful activity and could be a valuable tool in composition classes.

This admission was borne out in the early 1970's by two published reports on use of the Christensen Rhetoric Program (which, incidentally, was generally a commercial failure; it came in a heavy box, cost hundreds of dollars, and was complicated to teach). Charles A. Bond, in a rather loosely-controlled experiment, reported that there was a "statistically-significant difference" between the grades of a group of students taught using Christensen methods and those of a control group taught by conventional methods; he also mentioned that his students were enthusiastic about cumulative sentences.⁵⁴ and R.D. Walshe, teaching a group of adult night-class students in Australia (it is hard to imagine two groups of native-speaking English students as far removed from one another as Bond's American freshmen and Walshe's Australian working people), found that although some of Christensen's claims for his system were inflated, the Christensen Rhetoric Program generally worked well and was liked by his students.⁵⁵

These tests of Christensen's program were unscientific and anecdotal, and it was not until recently that a full-scale empirical research test was done on the Christensen system. As the experiment's creator, Lester Faigley, describes it, he began with two hypotheses to be tested: first, that the Christensen sentence method would increase syntactic maturity in those who used it (for a fuller discussion of the

concept of syntactic maturity, see the next section of this chapter), and second, that the Christensen rhetoric program as a whole would produce a measurable qualitative increase in writing skill (for information on the other major component of the Christensen program, his paragraph theory, see the next chapter).

Faigley tested four experimental sections and four control sections in his experiment. The experimental sections used Christensen's A New Rhetoric, and the control sections used a well-known content-oriented rhetoric, McCrimmon's Writing With A Purpose. Faigley proved both of his hypotheses true; he found that the writing produced by the Christensen program not only was measurably more mature but got statistically better average grades.⁵⁶

Johnson's and Tibbetts' reservations notwithstanding, Faigley's experiment has shown that the Christensen method works. It may not be the revolution it was originally touted as, but it remains an important technique for writing teachers. Now we can turn to the question of how it is used.

First of all, as handy as they might be for helping teachers understand Christensen's theory of the sentence, the four principles enumerated by Christensen that were covered in the last section are hard to teach to students. Introducing students to Christensen's theory in terms of its real central component--the cumulative sentence. Do not be afraid to call it by that name to students--it sounds better, as Christensen points out, than its traditional name of "loose sentence." Once students are used to the idea of the cumulative sentence, you can

introduce the four principles, all of which are certainly important, and all of which will be more accessible for students at that time.

A good way to introduce the cumulative sentence is to discuss free modifiers vs. bound modifiers. Put these two sentences on the blackboard:

"The old woman with the white hair who picks through the smelly trash in our crowded backyard gestured wildly and shrieked out joyfully."

"White-haired and beady-eyed, the old trashpicker gestured wildly and shrieked out joyfully, her work-gloved hands beating the air, her thin voice rising and cracking, the smelly trash falling around her in our crowded backyard."

Discuss the differences between these two sentences with the class ask them which is better, and why. Point out the base clause in both sentences, "the old woman gestured and shrieked." Most students will choose the second sentence as better, despite the fact that it contains no more propositional information than the first. Through this discussion, you can gradually come around to the question of bound and free modifiers and how they affect the sentences.

At this point, explanation through example is the easiest course of action. Pass out a dittoed sheet of examples of two-level cumulative sentences, either Christensen's examples or examples you make up yourself (do try making some up yourself, just to get used to writing cumulative sentences). This sheet should not include diagrammed sentences--that will come later. Type the sentences without indicating

levels of abstraction. Using this sheet of examples and transferring some sentences to the board, you can introduce the principles of addition and order of movement. Show how each of the sentences has a base clause and how the free modifiers define or specify the material in the base clause. Use arrows to show the direction of modification.

Christensen's A New Rhetoric includes an exercise for identifying free modifiers that can be used profitably at this point; it asks students to identify the two major sorts of free modifiers, initial free modifiers and final free modifiers--those, that is, which come before the base clause and those that come after it. In the example passages, the initial free modifiers are underlined once and the final free modifiers are underlined twice. Ask students to look at the example passages and then underline the Steinbeck passage in the same way:

Here is a passage from Isaac Bashevis Singer's The Estate describing the events of a Yom Kippur in the eastern Europe of a distant past:

There had been a time when Nowolipki Street had been a Gentile street, but now only Jews lived there. Yom Kippur candles shone from the windows. Jews were on their way to prayer. The men were dressed in white robes and slippers, and wore their prayer shawls under their coats. The women wore beaded capes, silk or satin dresses with trains, and their most precious jewels. In a top hat and a frock coat, his beard combed into two silver-white points so sparse that every hair could be counted, an enlightened Jew was on his way to the German synagogue, escorting a woman in a hat trimmed with ostrich plumes.
In Wola, the large red sun set among purple clouds, like plowed furrows.
 All the shops were shuttered and bolted. Even the Gentiles walked by with muted steps. The horse-drawn trolley rode past, half empty.
Not far away, on Krochmalna Street, the "Pure Prayer" was being

read to Ezriel's father, who had become blind. His mother wept at the lighting of the candles.

From Lawrence Durrell's The Dark Labyrinth:

As for Fearmax, he was concerned with problems of a different order. He lay for hours in his cabin with his eyes fixed on the ceiling. His door was always open, so that whenever he passed Baird could look in and see him there, hands crossed on his breast, collar open, staring at the paintwork. He did not appear to any meals for the first twenty-four hours and Baird wondered idly if he were having a severe bout of sea-sickness; yet his door stood open, and whenever Baird passed it he saw him lying there. Led by the promptings no less of curiosity than of courtesy, he at last tapped at the door and put his head in, asking Fearmax in his pleasant way if he could be of any use to him. For a time he did not seem to hear--but at last, with an effort, he turned in the bunk and raised himself on one elbow.

1. The sun lay on the grass and warmed it, and in the shade under the grass the insects moved, ants and ant lions to set traps for them, grasshoppers to jump into the air and flick their yellow wings for a second, sow bugs like little armadillos, plodding restlessly on many tender feet. 2. And over the grass at the roadside a land turtle crawled, turning aside for nothing, dragging his high-domed shell over the grass. 3. His hard legs and yellow-nailed feet threshed slowly through the grass, not really walking, but boosting his shell along. 4. The barley beards slid off his shell, and the clover burrs fell on him and rolled to the ground. 5. His horny beak was partly open, and his fierce, humorous eyes, under brows like fingernails, stared straight ahead. 6. He came over the grass, leaving a beaten trail behind him, and the hill, which was the highway embankment, reared up ahead of him. 7. For a moment he stopped, his head held high. 8. He blinked and looked up and down. 9. At last he started to climb the embankment. 10. Front clawed feet reached forward but did not touch. 11. The hind feet kicked his shell along, and it scraped on the grass and on the gravel. 12. As the embankment grew steeper and steeper, the more frantic were the efforts of the land turtle. 13. Pushing hind legs strained and slipped, boosting the shell along, and the horny head protruded as far as the neck could stretch. 14 Little by little the shell slid up the embankment until at last

a parapet cut straight across its line of march, the shoulder of the road, a concrete wall four inches high.

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Again, this exercise should be dittoed and done in class so that you can check students' work on it.

From this point onward, your students should begin to be able to write and manipulate cumulative sentences. You will need to continue to check their work, since they will have a tendency, especially at these early stages, to degenerate into "loading the patterns" with bound modifiers. Another possible problem to be on guard against is a tendency of students to attempt to write a free modifier and instead come up with a dangling modifier. In order to keep an eye out for these problem areas, you might begin to ask four or five students per day to prepare cumulative sentences and put them on the blackboard before class starts. The five minutes your class spends each day critiquing and discussing these sentences can pay large dividends, because this exercise gives students practice both at recognizing and at writing cumulative sentences.

The actual instruction in writing cumulative sentences is not yet over, though. The third principle, levels of generality, which is in some ways the most important, must still be examined, even while students are practicing two-level cumulative sentences on the board. Only after some practice will students be able to grasp this principle and then be able to manipulate free modifiers in a really "syntactically fluent" way.

As Christensen says, "the best starting point. . . is with two-level narrative sentences, first with one second-level addition, then with two or more parallel ones."⁵⁸ These two-level sentences, are, of course, what your students are already practicing. To illustrate how levels of generality work, distribute dittoes of the same sentences as were on the original example dittoes--this time diagrammed according to their levels of generality. You will now have to go over once again how the base clause is the center of the sentence, how it is diagrammed by marking it 1, how it is identified, how the free modifiers are identified and all marked 2 because they are a step more specific.

Although Christensen recommends that students be taught and be able to use the grammatical names of the different kinds of free modifiers, I have had only middling success with the grammatical names, and you can choose whether or not you want to teach them beyond an initial introduction. They are somewhat cumbersome, and a knowledge of them does not seem to last for most students. Without using these grammatical names, there are several exercises you can use to practice two-level cumulative sentences. The first exercise is recommended in Christensen's A New Rhetoric, and asks students to diagram sentences into two levels, separating them into elements coordinate with the base clause and into free modifiers:

- A. Copy these sentences, using indention and numbers to mark the two levels. If your instructor so directs, identify the grammatical constructions used in the second level. Observe the punctuation; put only free modifiers on the second level. You must distinguish between punctuation used to separate coordinate elements and

punctuation used to set off free modifiers.

1. The flame sidled up the match, driving a film of moisture and a thin strip of darker gray before it.
2. The horses and cattle in the fields moved quietly, a step at a time, cropping with short jerks of their heads. / W.V.T. Clark/
3. The piano player spanned the keys, his right hand flailing like Garner, his left striding like "Fats."
4. He watched /the stage coach/ go by, the four horses spanking along as the driver flicked them, the polished metal gleaming in the sun, the body swaying in the thoroughbraces as the wheels rose and fell in the rough trail. /A.B. Guthrie/
5. The men stood on the siding first on one foot and then on the other, their hands thrust deeply into their trousers pockets, their overcoats open, their shoulders screwed up with the cold. /Willa Cather/
6. Every day she found someone there, sitting upon her desk instead of the chair provided, dangling his legs, eyes roving, full of his important affairs, waiting to pounce upon something or other. /Katherine Anne Porter/
7. She was standing three steps above him, one hand on the banister, the fingers of the other splayed out against the opposite wall, leaning forward as though on the brink of flight. /Aldous Huxley/
8. The ball spun fast down the alley, hugging the right edge, then spinning slightly and curving in a long tapering arc, striking the pins with a loud crash, scattering them on the floor.

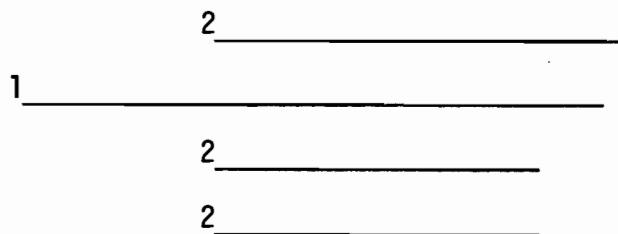
B. Recast these groups of sentences, making each group a single two-level sentence. Indent and number to indicate the two levels.

1. At the beach they waited. They watched the white filigree of foam scrape the gray shore. They listened to the sinking groan of the breakers.
2. They stood together waiting. Their faces were solemn. Their eyes were on the bunch of violets she held in both hands.
3. A little girl hopped up the stairs ahead of her parents. Her blue dress bounced with each hop. The taps on her shoes clicked on the concrete stairs and glinted in the sun.
4. The women sat down below in the theater. Their perfectly dressed hair gleams. Their backs are very straight. Their heads are carried tensely.
5. George and Helen arose and walked away into the darkness. They went along a path past a field of corn that had not yet been cut. The wind whispered among the dry corn blades. /Sherwood Anderson/
6. Savora was bending over her. His fingertips were pressed together in concern. His features were shadowed in attention. /Sylvia Thompson/

7. I padded downstairs in my socks. The boards were smooth and cool and silent to my feet. /Shirley Ann Grau/
8. In the English November fog the leaves dripped with a deadly intensity. It was as if each falling drop were a drop of acid. /Elizabeth Taylor/
9. We walked home in the cold. We walked through cold streets. We clutched our packages and our humiliation. No one dared to complain. No one was old enough to laugh. /N.H. Packer/
10. The gulls dipped and darted on the headland. The soft shine of the sun could be seen on their wings. /Willa Cather/

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The next exercise is simple. Put a line diagram of a two-level sentence on the blackboard:



Now fill in the lines with a sentence, thus:

```

      2 His head ringing from the punch,
     /
1  the champ danced drunkenly away,
     \
      2 chest heaving wildly,
       \
        2 breath coming in sharp wheezes.
  
```

Now assign the class to fill in the line diagram with material of their own, and after a few minutes have students read their sentences aloud or put them on the board. Continue this practice using different two-level diagrams:

1 _____
 2 _____
 2 _____

and 1 _____
 1 _____
 2 _____
 2 _____
 2 _____
 1 _____

You can create more of your own diagrams.

Once important factor that will have to take into account when you use cumulative-sentence practice in this generative way is the strong element of description and narration implied in the cumulative sentence. Sabina Johnson and A.M. Tibbetts were right: cumulative sentences simply do not work as well for exposition or argumentation as they do for narration and description. What this means for the generation of sentences using the Christensen method (as Christensen himself pointed out) is that generation exercises work best, "provided they are based at first on immediate observation, requiring the student to phrase an exact observation in exact language."⁶⁰

For practice in narrative writing, Christensen recommends that three-to-seven sentence narratives be constructed around activities that can be observed over and over again--"beating eggs, making a cut

with a power saw, or following a record changer's cycle or a wave's ebb and flow." Later you can go to more complex activities, and I have had some success with guerrilla theatre in the classroom: working up a short real-life psychodrama, usually with the assistance of another teacher, then performing it without introduction for the students and later asking them to describe what they saw in a narrative. (The best guerrilla theatre I can recollect involved the conceit that two TA's, my confrere and myself, had been involved in a large drug deal which had just been discovered by the police, and that we both faced imminent arrest. One student told me afterwards that had we not confessed the trick he would have turned me in after class.)

These exercises can be done at any stage of instruction in the Christensen method, but the results you will see will get more and more sophisticated as you proceed. The next stage is introduction to the multilevel sentence, the cumulative sentence with more than one level of abstraction. This subject gets complicated, and at this stage you cannot expect quick results. To introduce the multilevel sentence, pass out dittoes of examples of such sentences, diagrammed to show their different levels of generality. Point out how some of the modifiers are on the same level and are thus called coordinate, and how some are on lower levels because they modify modifiers rather than the base clause, and are thus called subordinate. Once again, go through the familiarization exercises as with the two-level sentence, first asking students to diagram example sentences and then to generate sentences to fill in given line diagrams. Here are the

multilevel-sentence exercises Christensen uses:

- A. Copy these sentences, using indentation and numbering to mark the levels. If your instructor so directs, mark the grammatical character of the levels added to the main clause.
1. Crane set up straight, suddenly, smiling shyly, looking pleased, like a child who has just been given a present. /Irwin Shaw/
 2. For once, the students filed out silently, making a point, with youthful good manners, of not looking at Crane, bent over at his chair, pulling his books together. /Irwin Shaw/
 3. She was very old and small and she walked slowly in the dark pine shadows, moving a little from side to side in her steps, with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock. /Eudora Welty/
 4. As he walked into the club he noticed them, objectively and coldly, the headwaiter beckoning haughtily, head tilted, lips in a rigid arc reserved for those willing to pay the price of recognition and attention, the stiffly genteel crowd, eating their food in small bites, afraid of committing a breach of etiquette.
 5. /The boy/ and Anse are on the porch when I come out, the boy sitting on the steps, Anse standing by a post, not even leaning against it, his arms dangling, the hair pushed and matted up on his head like a dipped rooster. /William Faulkner/
 6. He swung up into the saddle, carefully making it an easy-looking mount, slow and all in one move, his back very straight and his right leg, bent at the knee, just sliding over the cantle. /W.V.T. Clark/
 7. The vaulter sprinted down the runway, his eyes fixed on the box, his hands gripping the awkward pole, carrying it gracefully, conscious of the silent tension of the crowd investing itself in his actions; and, suddenly driving the pole into the box, he arced upward, feeling the spring of pole, his muscles pushing his weight toward the sky, his body arching at the crucial instant and jackknifing above the striped bar.
 8. They regarded me silently, Brother Jack with a smile that went no deeper than his lips, his head cocked to one side, studying me with his penetrating eyes; the other blank-faced, looking out of eyes that were meant to reveal nothing and to stir profound uncertainty. /Ralph Ellison/
 9. Some mornings Ellen wakes up by herself and comes on tiptoe down the hall to the big bedroom, her yellow sleepers faded and wrinkled, the worn feet flapping around the ankles like puppies, her fists rubbing her eyes, her senses not quite awake but guiding her surely toward the middle region of the big bed.

10. Hundreds of children with their adult overseers lined the rail behind which, in a malodorous straw-sprinkled enclosure, stood the great beasts, lumbering with heavy grace upon gray tree-trunk feet, their skins the color of fossil rock, folded and creased and pitted like oversized garments on their enormous frames. /Sidney Alexander/

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Work with multilevel sentences completes the introduction to the cumulative sentence; the job from this point on is in getting students to use cumulative sentences in their writing. After introducing the Christensen method, you must continue to emphasize the cumulative sentence if you want your students to remember and use it. The exercises that students have been putting on the board before each class help to get students practicing cumulative sentences, but more practice is needed to gain results. At this point I bring up Christensen's fourth principle, that of texture. Create some examples of thin and of dense prose that has a similar content pattern and pass them out in dittoed form, juxtaposing the thin with the densely textured passages. Then feel free to give a short soapbox speech about the advantages of dense texture and the usefulness of the cumulative sentence in students' own writing assignments. This lecture will be the end of the beginning of the study of Christensen's sentence theory.

From this point on, at least two hours per week, generally as homework, needs to be devoted to the writing of cumulative sentences if anything is to be gained. If the cumulative sentence does not become an intuitive writing habit for students, it will have no real value. Practice can be set up in a number of ways: you can supply

base clauses and ask students to modify them, or give short observation assignments to be written using cumulative sentences. But you must make certain that students do practice the work every week. Like sentence-combining, cumulative sentence work must be done often if students are to succeed.

The criticism of the Christensen technique as being less useful for teaching students to write exposition than it is for description and narration is, sadly, true. Certainly there is some carryover of skills, but I have found that cumulative sentences just naturally lend themselves to narrative or descriptive writing. Since the best cumulative sentences are based on observation, students may initially have a hard time moving to the more abstract modes of argumentation and exposition, even though those modes often do contain narration and description as elements within them. One way of helping students deal with this problem is to follow Christensen sentence work immediately with Christensen paragraph theory, an introduction to which is in the next chapter. The Christensen paragraph is based on expository paragraphs just as the sentence theory is based on narrative sentences, and the two theories work to balance one another out.

Finally, if you find Christensen's theories congenial, I recommend that you look at his original articles and investigate the entire Christensen rhetoric program as found in the texts A New Rhetoric and Christensen Rhetoric. This short overview cannot do justice to the depth of the man's theories, nor can these few excerpts do justice to the delightfulness of his writing style. Few teachers still see

the answers to all rhetorical problems in Christensen's syntactic work, but his theories remain among the strongest and most respected weapons in our arsenal.

SENTENCE-COMBINING

If there is a forefront in composition research today--at least a forefront with immediate pedagogic uses--the position certainly has to go to sentence-combining. Over the course of the last ten years no theory or technique has produced more careful empirical research, more sweeping testimonials, more acrimonious debate, or more genuine results. Sentence-combining experiments are at the cutting edge of research design in composition, and their results have moved more and more teachers to use sentence-combining exercises in their classrooms. In this section we will examine the history of sentence-combining, look at different experiments and their results, and discuss the different uses of sentence-combining exercises in writing classes.

Sentence-combining in its simplest form is the process of joining two or more short, simple sentences to make one longer sentence, using embedding, deletion, subordination and coordination. In all probability it was a tool of the grammaticus of classical Rome, but such exercises have tended to be ephemeral and none have come down to us. I have found some sentence-combining exercises dating back to the late nineteenth century which are not substantially different from some modern exercises. In 1901, John Genung's students were asked to

combine these short sentences into longer ones:

Balthazar Gerard was the murderer of Prince William of Orange. William was surnamed William the Silent. Gerard had dropped his pistols. He dropped them on the spot. The spot was where he had committed the crime. Upon his person were found two bladders. These bladders were provided with a piece of pipe. With these bladders he had intended to assist himself across the moat. Beyond this moat a horse was waiting for him. 62

Genung provided complicated grammatical directions for combining these short sentences, which must have made the exercise time-consuming. These early sentence-combining exercises were not, of course, applied with any coherent scientific methodology behind them, and although they were probably used fairly widely, they never became known as an important technique.

It was not until 1957, when Noam Chomsky "revolutionized grammatical theory" with his book Syntactic Structures, that the theoretical base upon which sentence-combining would be founded was established.⁶³ This theoretical base was, of course, Chomskian transformational-generative grammar (TG grammar), which caused immense excitement in the field of linguistics and seemed for a while to promise a revolution in the field of composition. TG grammar, which swept both traditional and structural grammar aside for a time, seemed in the early sixties to present the possibility of a new pedagogy based on the study of linguistic transformations.

In 1963, Donald Bateman and Frank J. Zidonis of The Ohio State University conducted an experiment to determine whether teaching students TG grammar would reduce the incidence of errors in their writing. They

found that students taught TG grammar both reduced errors and developed the ability to write more complex sentence structures. Despite some questionable features in the Bateman and Zidonis study, it did suggest the TG grammar had an effect on student writing.

The Bateman and Zidonis study was published in 1964, and in that same year a study was published that was to be far more important for sentence-combining: Kellogg Hunt's Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels.⁶⁴ It is Hunt's work that is the basis for most measurements of "syntactic maturity," a term which has come to be seen as an important goal of sentence-combining. To recap Hunt's study quickly: he wished to find out what elements of writing changed as people matured and which structures seemed to be representative of mature writing. To this end he studied the writings of average students at 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade levels, and expository articles in Harpers and The Atlantic. Hunt studied sentence length, but became aware that the tendency of younger writers to string together many short clauses with and meant that sentence length was not a good indicator of maturity in writing.⁶⁵ He studied clause length, and as he says, he "became more and more interested in what I will describe as one main clause plus whatever subordinate clauses happen to be attached to or embedded within it."⁶⁶ This is Hunt's most famous concept, the "minimal terminable unit" or "T-unit."

Each T-unit, says Hunt, is "minimal in length and each could be terminated grammatically between a capital and a period."⁶⁷ He gives an example of a single theme written by a 4th-grader divided up into

T-units.

Here is a sample. It is a single theme written by a fourth-grader who punctuated it as a single 68-word sentence.

I like the movie we saw about Moby Dick the white whale the captain said if you can killthe white whale Moby Dick I will give this gold to the one that can do it and it is worth sixteen dollars they tried and tried but while they were trying they killed a whale and used the oil for the lamps they almost caught the white whale.

That theme, cut into these unnamed units, appears below. A slant line now begins each clause. A period ends each unit, and a capital begins each one.

1. I like the movie/we saw about Moby Dick, the white whale.
2. The captain said/if you can kill the white whale, Moby Dick,/I will give this gold to the one/that can do it.
3. And it is worth sixteen dollars.
4. They tried and tried.
5. But/ while they were trying/they killed a whale and used the oil for the lamps.
6. They almost caught the white whale.

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The T-unit, Hunt found, was a much more reliable index of stylistic maturity than sentence length. Eventually he determined the three best indices of stylistic maturity—the average number of words per T-unit, the average number of clauses per T-unit, and the average number of words per clause. When applied to writing at different grade levels, he found that these numbers increased at a steady increment. Below is a chart that Frank O'Hare adapted from Hunt's work and from similar work by Roy O'Donnell:

Words per T-Unit, Clauses per T-unit, Words per Clause

Grade Level	3	4	5	7	8	12	Superior Adults
Words/T-unit							
O'Donnell	7.67		9.34	9.99			
Hunt		8.51			11.34	14.4	20.3
Clauses/T-unit							
O'Donnell	1.18		1.27	1.30			
Hunt		1.29			1.42	1.68	1.74
Words/Clause							
O'Donnell	6.5		7.4	7.7			
Hunt		6.6			8.1	8.6	11.5

Source-Adapted from Hunt (1970). Based on data reported by Hunt (1965) and by O'Donnell, et al. (1967).

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As you can see, the rise in these three indices over time is obvious.

The studies of Bateman and Zidonis and Hunt used no sentence-combining at all, but they did represent the bases from which modern sentence-combining sprang: the methodological linguistic base of TG grammar and the empirical evaluative base of Hunt's studies of syntactic maturity. These two bases were brought together in the first important experiment involving sentence-combining exercises, that of John Mellon. Mellon called the report of his experiment Transformational Sentence-Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition, and it was the first study to actually ask students to practice combining kernel sentences rather than merely to learn grammar. "Research," wrote Mellon, ". . . clearly shows that memorized principles of grammar, whether conventional or modern, clearly play a negligible role in helping students achieve 'correctness' in their written expression."⁷⁰ What could help students do this, reasoned

Mellon, was instruction in TG grammar plus practice exercises in combining short "kernel sentences" into longer, more complex sentences.

Despite this disclaimer of interest in teaching students to memorize grammar, Frank O'Hare shows that Mellon actually asked the seventh-graders he used in the experiment to learn "a quite difficult set of grammatical rules," including transformational terms like T: rel, T: gerund.⁷¹ The students were taught these rules and then asked to use them in signaled sentence-combining exercises with rather complicated TG directions. Here is an example of one of Mellon's exercises:

SOMETHING used to anger Grandfather no end. (T:exp)

SOMETHING should be so easy. (T:fact--T:exp)

The children recognized SOMETHING. (T:infin)

SOMETHING was only a preliminary to SOMETHING
sometime. (T:wh)

He insisted SOMETHING. (T:gerund)

They had had enough pepermints. (T:fact)

He gave them still another handful. (T:gerund)
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Without going into the rules that Mellon asked his students to learn, it is difficult to explain how this exercise is to be done. Essentially, the transformational direction at the end of each kernel sentence showed how that sentence needed to be changed to fit into the combination, and the SOMETHING direction showed where information from other kernels was to be included. The sentence that Mellon's students were to create

from this set of kernels goes like this: "It used to anger Grandfather no end that it should be so easy for the children to recognize that his insisting that they had had enough peppermints was only a preliminary to his giving them still another handful."

This sort of sentence-combining exercise may seem difficult, but Mellon's experiment was a success. Using Hunt's data on normal growth in writing maturity, Mellon found that his experimental sentence-combining group showed from 2.1 to 3.5 years' worth of syntactic growth while his control group did not show even a year's growth. Sentence-combining was established as an important tool in helping students write more mature sentences.

Some questions, though, still remained and were not answered by a later minor study done on 4th-graders by James Ney.⁷³ Since Mellon had had to spend so much time teaching the principles of TG grammar in order to allow his students to work his complex exercises, there was doubt as to which activity--learning the grammar or doing the exercises--had gotten the results. After all, Bateman and Zidonis had gotten error reduction--admittedly not scientifically measured growth--from mere TG grammar instruction alone. How much importance did the sentence-combining exercises really have?

These questions were put to rest once and for all in 1973, with the publication of Frank O'Hare's research monograph Sentence-Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction. This study, which was the spark that ignited the sentence-combining boom, showed beyond a doubt that sentence-combining exercises, without any

grammar instruction at all, could achieve important gains in syntactic maturity for students who used them. Again testing seventh-graders, O'Hare used sentence-combining exercises with his experimental group over a period of eight months without ever mentioning any of the formal rules of TG grammar. The amount of time spent on the combining exercises was considerable but not excessive; as O'Hare notes, "The sentence-combining treatment lasted an average of one hour and a quarter per week in class, and the students spend about half an hour per week on related homework assignments."⁷⁴ The control group was not exposed to sentence-combining at all.

The type of sentence-combining exercises used in O'Hare's study were related to Mellon's exercises, but O'Hare wanted to avoid the cumbersome TG nomenclature of the signals in Mellon's exercises. To achieve this goal and yet still give suggestions that would help students work the exercise, O'Hare devised a simpler, non-grammatical signalling system for his study. Here is an example of one of his exercises:

SOMETHING led to SOMETHING.

James Watt discovered SOMETHING. ('S + DISCOVERY)

Steam is a powerful source of energy. (THAT)

Britain established an industrial society. ('S + ING)

In O'Hare's exercises, the transformational cues of Mellon were replaced by easy-to-understand word-change-and-replacement directions, while the SOMETHING directions still indicated where information from other kernels was to be placed. The student doing one of these exercises was asked to bring the parenthesized term to the front of the sentence it followed and use it to change what needed to be changed in order to effect the combination. In the example, the first kernel gives the general shape of the sentence to be created. Bringing each direction to the front of the sentence it follows and making the connection implied by the first kernel leads to the combined sentence which is the correct answer: "James Watt's discovery that steam is a powerful source of energy led to Britain's establishing an industrial society."

Some of O'Hare's later exercises did away completely with parenthesized cues and substituted a system of eliminating repeated words and underlining words to be kept:

The alleys were littered with bottles and garbage.

The alleys were between the apartment buildings.

The apartment buildings were dismal.

The bottles were broken.

The garbage was rotting.

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This exercise specifies those words which will be needed in the final combined sentence by underlining them. By discarding those parts of the later kernels that are not needed, we get the final combination: "The alleys between the dismal apartment buildings were littered with

broken bottles and rotten garbage."

O'Hare's test measured six factors of syntactic maturity and found that "highly significant growth had taken place on all six factors." His experimental group of seventh-graders, after eight months of sentence-combining, now wrote an average of 15.75 words per T-unit or more than Hunt had reported as the average for twelfth-graders.⁷⁷ The other factors were similarly impressive. Just as important as the maturity factors, though, were the results of a second hypothesis O'Hare was testing: whether the sentence-combining group would write compositions that would be judged better in overall quality than those of the control group. Eight experienced English teachers rated 240 experimental and control essays written after the eight-month test period, and when asked to choose between matched pairs of essays, chose an experimental-group essay 70% of the time. These results suggest that sentence-combining exercises not only improve syntactic maturity but also affect perceived quality of writing in general.⁷⁸

The O'Hare study revived sentence-combining, which had been languishing, as a pedagogic tool. A follow-up study by Warren E. Combs found that the gains in writing quality that were produced by O'Hare's methods persisted over time and were still notable as long as two months after the sentence-combining practice had been discontinued.⁷⁹ Textbooks began to appear using using sentence-combining exercises, notably William Strong's Sentence-Combining: A Composing Book and O'Hare's own Sentencecraft. There remained now only one important question about sentence-combining: was it useful for freshmen in college, or were they

too old to be helped by the practice it gave? There was no doubt that it worked at the secondary-school level, but an article by James Ney in 1976 describing his attempts to use sentence-combining in a freshman class cast doubt on the technique's usefulness for eighteen-year-olds.⁸⁰ Some teachers who had tried small doses of sentence-combining in freshman classes reported no noticeable change in student writing. Were college students too old for syntactic methods?

The last question was answered in 1978 by the publication of a large and impressively rigorous study conducted at Miami University of Ohio by Donald A. Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg. This college-level study used ninety of William Strong's "open" or unsignalled sentence-combining exercises and others created by the Miami researchers. These "open" exercises give no directions on how best to complete them, and thus there is no "correct" answer or combination. Here is an example of an open exercise from Daiker, Kerek and Morenberg's textbook, The Writer's Options:

1. You make your third or fourth bathroom trip.
2. It is during a hard night of drinking.
3. It is your first hard night of drinking since final exams.
4. You notice "Sex kills--Come here and live forever,"
5. It is written in purple crayon on the wall.

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They could be rewritten, "During your third or fourth bathroom trip during your first hard night of drinking since final exams, you notice 'Sex kills--come here and live forever' written in purple crayon on the

wall during your third or fourth bathroom trip." As you can see, there are several methods of combining these sentences; this opportunity for creative combination can appeal to college students.

Daiker, Kerek and Morenberg's experimental and control groups each consisted of six sections of college freshman, and their experiment was conducted over a fifteen-week semester.⁸² The Miami researchers found that their experimental group, like O'Hare's, evidenced both statistically meaningful gains in syntactic maturity and a gain in overall quality of the writing they produced. Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg's sentence-combining group moved during the experiment from a high-twelfth-grade level of syntactic maturity to a level approximating high sophomore-or junior-level writing skills. This study proved finally that college freshmen are not beyond the stage at which sentence-combining exercises can help them become better writers, but it also suggested that the exercises must be done fairly intensively even on the college level if gains are to be forthcoming.⁸³

A summary of this length cannot possibly hope to do justice to all of the available material on sentence-combining. The literature grows so fast it is difficult to keep up with it; an entire large conference was devoted to sentence-combining in 1979, and scores of experiments have been conducted using it in the last three years. The success of the method has provoked nasty quarrels about who "owns" it now. Revisionist histories of the technique have been published by people with axes that have grown a bit dull and need touch-ups at the grindstone. Everyone, it seems, wants a piece of the pie now that it has been proven so tasty;

only a few, like Strong and O'Hare, have remained above the battle. These quarrels and debates can be safely ignored by new teachers of writing (and indeed, by any teacher who, like me, is repelled by the backbiting, self-serving underside of our profession), who need only know that sentence-combining works and that we can teach it using methods that have now been perfected.

CLASSROOM USE OF SENTENCE-COMBINING

Sentence-combining is an attractive teaching tool, but before you begin to teach it there are a number of decisions you must make concerning your commitment to it as a method. The first is how much time you are willing to give to sentence-combining out of each week of class time. For a long time it was conventional wisdom that while sentence-combining could be a useful part of a complete rhetoric program, "common sense suggests that it can't be the one and only instructional strategy."⁸⁴ Lately, though, such influential figures as Kellogg Hunt have begun to suggest that sentence-combining has proven so useful that it should take up all class time; that "in every sense, sentence-combining can be a comprehensive writing program in and of itself, for at least one semester."⁸⁵

This sounds a bit like the more messianic claims of early and enthusiastic supporters of Christensen's rhetoric. My great respect for Hunt notwithstanding, it seems to me unwise to entrust all of our eggs to one basket, even if that basket is as secure as sentence-

combining seems to be. There are just too many other necessary skills involved in writing well. As John Mellon puts it now:

No matter how much better the writing in an all-sentence-combining class, compared holistically with that in a traditional class, I would have to assume it could be better still were the sentence-combining lessons paired with lessons on invention and the structure of argument. 86

For newer teachers, practice in teaching other elements of rhetoric is important as well. It is not by syntax alone that man lives.

How much sentence-combining is enough, then? As a minimum figure, assuming a ten-week quarter or a fifteen-week semester, I would estimate that two hours of sentence combining activity per week is necessary. O'Hare's seventh-graders practiced slightly more than two hours per week, but had eight months in which to practice. The Miami study had students practice sentence-combining for three hours per week in class as well as in homework. When I first used sentence-combining in a writing class I found that my students perceived it as busywork until I made it a large element of the work in class each week; only then did they believe that I was using it for a purpose and not because I was too unimaginative to think of anything else to do in class. As a rule of thumb, then, plan to devote at least two hours per week, both in class and as homework, to sentence-combining activity, and if you can afford more, so much the better.

These hours are not, once again, all classroom hours; in fact they should not be. Class time is precious and must be well used. I generally

use class time for discussion and comparison of different combinations of kernel sentences but ask students to actually work on the combinations at home. Occasionally, of course, new problems or new sorts of combinations can be presented in class, but class time is better used by discussing why one combination is stylistically smoother than another than by merely answering problems.

The way you divide up your class time for sentence-combining is up to you; there are several methods, each of which has assets and liabilities. It is possible to use a portion of each day's class time for sentence-combining practice, or to devote one or two days out of each week to it exclusively. If you choose the former method, be aware that anything less than fifteen minutes per day is probably not enough. Twenty minutes a day worked best for me. The time at the beginning or end of each class is most natural, but choose one class segment and stick to it, because it is important to establish a psychological rhythm, to make sentence-combining an important and valid part of the course. If you choose the latter method, be prepared to deal with absenteeism on sentence-combining days, at least initially. You may have to devise an absence policy for sentence-combining days--at least I did. Students seem to have an initial distrust of syntactic methods that can only be overcome by time.

The next question that arises about sentence-combining teaching is really a complex of questions: What do you do in class during sentence-combining times? To answer this question several others must be brought up: What kinds of sentence-combining problems do you want to use, and what book or series of exercises should be chosen to provide

them?

As the previous section has suggested, there are two types of sentence-combining problems that can be used in classrooms. They are "cued" or signalled problems like Mellon's and some of O'Hare's, and "open" or unsignalled exercises like those used by Strong and the Miami researchers. Cued exercises have only one really "correct" answer, and they suggest it by using signals within or at the end of certain of the kernel sentences. Mellon's complex TG grammar signals are no longer used, of course; instead simple word-cues and underlining instruct the combiner, as in this example from Frank O'Hare's Sentencecraft:

The next letter comes from a viewer.
 The viewer doesn't understand SOMETHING. (WHO)
 A polar bear would know SOMETHING somehow. (HOW)
 A polar bear is living in the arctic region.
 The sun never sets in the arctic region. (WHERE)
 The bear is to go to sleep sometime. (WHEN TO)

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The only really correct answer to this problem is the following sentence:

"The next letter comes from a viewer who doesn't understand how a polar bear living in the arctic region, where the sun never sets, would know when to go to sleep."

Open exercises, on the other hand, merely present a series of kernel sentences and rely on the intuitive grammatical sentence. Some open exercises are so simple that for all intents and purposes they have only one correct answer, as in this example from William Strong's text

Sentence-Combining: A Composing Book:

The trout were blanketed.
 The trout were called rainbows.
 The blanketing was with ferns.
 The ferns were green.
 The ferns were sweet smelling. 88

The answer to this exercise is: "The rainbow trout were blanketed with green, sweet-smelling ferns." Other open exercises can be more complex and admit of a number of answers, as in this example from Daiker, Kerek and Morenberg's The Writer's Options:

The vampire's existence may not appeal to many people.
 The appeal is conscious.
 But the all-important promise of life after death strikes a chord.

The chord is deep in our unconscious.
 The chord is the powerful will to live.
 This is despite the cost. 89

Although there is no one "right" answer to open exercises, the range of acceptable answers is limited, as you will see if you try to combine these kernels. They can be rewritten, "The vampire's existence may not appeal consciously to many people, but the all-important promise of life after death strikes a chord deep in our unconscious: the powerful will to live, despite the cost." Another possibility is, "The vampire's existence may not have conscious appeal to many people, but the all-important promise of life after death strikes a chord of the powerful will to live, despite the cost, that is deep in our unconscious."

Both cued and open exercises have advantages and disadvantages. Cued exercises give students help in combining sentences and can be

more easily done by inexperienced students than can open exercises. On the other hand, they can sometimes be boring, especially for more experienced or advanced students.⁹⁰ Open exercises allow more freedom of choice and are more involving for the teacher, but they can confuse students whose syntactic skills are lower-level, leading to grammatically incorrect combinations and frustration on the parts of the students. Which sort of exercises, then, should be used?

I agree with Frank O'Hare and John Mellon that the decision cannot be a matter of "either/or." Both sorts of exercises are needed for most classes, the open exercises for better students who can manipulate them well, and the cued exercises for slower students who need more direction. Open problems keep up the interest of students who want some element of creativity in their exercises, while cued exercises "cause all students to practice particular structures in the mature, full-sentence configurations present in the original model."⁹¹

And where to obtain sentence-combining exercises to use in the classroom? I have already mentioned three major textbooks presently available: Strong's Sentence-Combining, O'Hare's Sentencecraft, and Daiker, Kerek and Morenberg's The Writer's Options. Strong, the first commercial sentence-combining text, contains only open-format exercises presented in "whole-discourse" blocs--that is, each group of kernels is related to other surrounding groups, so that when all the groups are combined the result is a single coherent paragraph or short essay. This contextuality can make the exercises more involving for students.

O'Hare contains both cued and open exercises organized by levels of embedding skill, which grow increasingly more complex as the book proceeds. The exercises are not "whole-discourse," but instead are meant to work on one combining skill at a time. Unlike Strong, who provides only the problems themselves, O'Hare provides short lessons on how to combine, how to use the signals each exercise group contains.

Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg is specifically subtitled "College Sentence Combining," and contains problems that are geared more to college students in terms of their content, but in format the exercises are similar to Strong's. The Writer's Options contains only open exercises, but gives grammatical information and examples of completed problems. This text is meant to serve as the main text for a freshman class rather than as a supplementary text, and thus discuss rhetorical and organizational strategies as they can be related to sentence-combining as well as with traditional syntactic concerns. Whether this ambitious approach works well remains to be seen; early reports on use of the book seem mixed.

The newest and in many ways the most ambitious of the available sentence-combining texts is The Writer's Work, by Dean Memering and Frank O'Hare.⁹² This text, which is a combination rhetoric and sentence-combining, offers the only complete approach available presently to sentence-combining: signalled and open exercises, as well as imitation exercises and paragraph combining exercises. It also contains Memering and O'Hare's fascinating concept of "chunks " of sentences. It gives more complete guidance to the beginning teacher than any of the other texts mentioned here.

The teacher can, of course, choose not to use any of these books and can instead create his own sentence-combining exercises. A word of caution, though: do not expect that you can merely break down any old sentences into kernels and give these to your students to combine. The available texts are all carefully organized to proceed from simple to complex embedding tasks, and so should any course in sentence-combining be. I would suggest as a minimal background reading course Mellon's study, O'Hare's study, and Charles Cooper's "An Outline for Writing Sentence-Combining Problems" if you want to create your own signalled sentence-combining program.⁹³

Once you have decided on an exercise format and on the book or books you wish to use, the question still remains of how to teach sentence-combining. There are no absolute answers, but I can at least suggest the methods that have worked for me and for others.

First, begin with cued exercises and gauge student response to them. After explaining the sentence-combining process and how the cues work, assign six or eight problems per night as homework, then use class time the following day to go over the answers. Ask students to read their answers or put them on the blackboard. From this sort of practice you can find out how well students are doing at cued combination. If they seem to be comfortable with signalled exercises you can begin to go to open exercises, and here is where class discussion of different combinations can be really helpful. If you have access to an opaque projector (or an overhead projector, if thermofax facilities are available) you can use that to compare different student combinations of the same kernels and discuss the different stylistic effects of each.

These discussions and comparisons are of the utmost importance, because sentence-combining is much less useful if it is merely an at-home activity that you examine quantitatively to make certain it has been done. Ask questions in class about style, about why one version is more effective than another; talk about clause placement, organizational matters. If students feel they have a better version than any of the reproduced ones, encourage them to volunteer it. Make certain that students are aware of their option of not combining if they feel they have a stylistic reason. If you see problems, or if some of the students seem to be struggling, supplement the open exercises with cued problems, and spend some time nailing down basic additions, deletions, embeddings, transformations, and punctuation changes.

These activities must be done regularly. As I have tried to suggest throughout this section, attitudes toward sentence-combining are an important element for both students and teacher. If the students feel that sentence-combining is "babywork" and that the teacher has no real rationale for it, they will do as minimal a job on it as they feel they can get away with. If the teacher feels that students are bored by and resentful of sentence-combining, he may be tempted to jettison it and try something else. The cycle of discouragement can be begun by either students or teacher, and once begun it is very hard to escape.

On the other hand, if the teacher makes it clear from the beginning that sentence-combining is an important part of the course, that it has been proven to make students measurably better writers and to improve their grades, and that he is committed to spending a good amount of time

working with and discussing it, then the students will follow his lead. They will feel as if they should give it a chance as well, will work on it with feelings of enlightened self-interest, and in time will even come to like it. As the Miami researchers point out, sentence-combining makes the act of writing psychologically central in a course, and as a result the discussion surrounding sentence-combining always focuses on the best choices to make when writing.⁹⁴ It is a cliché among sentence-combining researchers that the majority of students in good sentence-combining classes place high value on the exercises and feel that they were really helpful.

The lesson of sentence-combining is simple but extremely important: as Frank O'Hare says, "writing behavior can be changed fairly rapidly and with relative ease."⁹⁵ Sentence-combining is not a panacea for all writing ills; it will not turn Basic Writers into high-level students overnight; it should not be the only content in a writing class. But it is, when used with care and patience, one of the most promising and important techniques available to teachers today.

NOTES

¹Leo Rockas, "Abstract and Concrete Sentences," College Composition and Communication 14 (May 1963), 98.

²Kellogg W. Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1965).

³Max Morenberg, "The Elusive Nature of the Relationship Between Syntactic Maturity and Writing Quality," paper presented at CCCC, Minneapolis, Minn., April, 1979, p. 3.

⁴Quoted in Morenberg, p. 8.

⁵Frank O'Hare, Sentence-Combining: Improving Student Writing without Formal Grammar Instruction (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1973), p. 74.

⁶Morenberg, p. 8.

⁷Lester Faigley, "Problems in Analyzing Maturity in College and Adult Writing," in Sentence-Combining and the Teaching of Writing, ed. Donald A. Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg (Conway, Ark.: L&S Books, 1979), p. 99.

⁸W. Ross Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 338.

⁹Richard L. Graves, "Levels of Skill in the Composing Process," CCC 29 (Oct. 1978), 229.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹¹See, for instance, Thomas S. Kane, "The Shape and Ring of Sentences: A Neglected Aspect of Composition," CCC 28 (Feb. 1977), 38-42.

¹²Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric, p. 337.

¹³Paul Roberts, English Sentences (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1962), pp. 19-25.

¹⁴John E. Warriner and Francis Griffith, English Grammar and Composition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), p. 66.

¹⁵This and the following grammatical classifications are from Warriner, pp. 66-68.

¹⁶This and the following purposive classifications are from Warriner, p. 68.

¹⁷John F. Genung, The Practical Elements of Rhetoric (Boston: Ginn and Co. 1886), p. 176.

¹⁸William Minto, A Manual of English Prose Literature (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1892), p. 7.

¹⁹Genung, Practical Elements of Rhetoric, p. 185.

²⁰Alexander Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric (London: Longmans, Green, 1877), p. 94.

²¹Aristotle, Rhetoric trans. Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932), p. 202.

- ²²George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (Boston: Charles Ewer, 1823), pp. 424-6.
- ²³These examples from Campbell, p. 425n.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 427.
- ²⁵Genung, Practical Elements, pp. 146-188.
- ²⁶Minto, p. 5.
- ²⁷Bain, p. 92.
- ²⁸John F. Genung, Outlines of Rhetoric (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1901), p. 213.
- ²⁹Richard Whately, Elements of Rhetoric (London: B. Fellowes, 1841), p. 356.
- ³⁰Bain, p. 94.
- ³¹Genung, Practical Elements, p. 191.
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- ³³Barrett Wendell, English Composition (New York: Scribners, 1891), p. 85.
- ³⁴Francis Christensen, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," CCC 14 (Oct. 1963), 155.
- ³⁵Francis Christensen, "The Course in Advanced Composition for Teachers," CCC 24 (May 1973), 168.
- ³⁶Christensen, "Generative Rhetoric," 155.

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³⁸Ibid., p. 155.

³⁹Quoted in Christensen, "Generative Rhetoric," 156.

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⁴¹Ibid., p. 156.

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⁴³See also Francis Christensen, "The Problem of Defining a Mature Style," English Journal 57 (April 1968), 572-9, and Lester Faigley, "Another Look at Sentences," Freshman English News 7(Winter 1979), 18-21.

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⁴⁵Ibid., p. 157.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 157.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 160.

⁴⁸Francis Christensen, Notes Toward A New Rhetoric (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

⁴⁹Sabina Thorne Johnson, "Some Tentative Strictures on Generative Rhetoric," in Contemporary Rhetoric, ed. Winterowd, p. 357.

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⁵¹A.M. Tibbetts, "On the Practical Uses of a Grammatical System: A Note on Christensen and Johnson," in Rhetoric and Composition: A Source-book for Teachers, ed. Richard Graves (Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Books, 1976), p. 142.

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⁵³Ibid., p. 145.

⁵⁴Charles A. Bond, "A New Approach to Freshman Composition: A Trial of the Christensen Method," College English 33 (March 1972), 623-627.

⁵⁵R.D. Walshe, "Report on a Pilot Course on the Christensen Rhetoric Program," CE 32 (April 1971), 783-9.

⁵⁶For the complete experiment see Lester L. Faigley, "Generative Rhetoric as a Way of Increasing Syntactic Fluency," CCC 30 (May 1979), 176-181.

⁵⁷Francis and Bonniejean Christensen, A New Rhetoric (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 16-18.

⁵⁸Christensen, "Generative Rhetoric," p. 159.

⁵⁹Christensen and Christensen, A New Rhetoric, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁰Christensen, "Generative Rhetoric," p. 159.

⁶¹Christensen and Christensen, A New Rhetoric, pp. 39-40.

⁶²Genung, Outlines, pp. 184-5.

⁶³O'Hare, Sentence-Combining, p. 5.

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⁶⁵Kellogg W. Hunt, "A Synopsis of Clause-to-Sentence Length Factors," in Rhetoric and Composition, ed. Graves, p. 111.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 111.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 112

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁹O'Hare, Sentence-Combining, p. 22.

⁷⁰John Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1969), p. 22.

⁷¹O'Hare, Sentence-Combining, p. 11.

⁷²This example from Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining, p. 129.

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⁷⁵Ibid., p. 86.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 90.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 62-73.

⁷⁹Warren E. Combs, "Sentence-Combining Practice: Do Gains in Judgments of Writing 'Quality' Persist?" Journal of Educational Research 70 (July, 1977), 318-321.

⁸⁰James Ney, "The Hazards of the Course: Sentence-Combining in Freshman English," The English Record 27 (1976), 70-77.

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⁸⁷Frank O'Hare, Sentencecraft: A Course in Sentence-Combining (Lexington, Mass.: Ginn and Co., 1975), p. 81.

⁸⁸William Strong, Sentence-Combining: A Composing Book (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 109.

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⁹⁰Donald A. Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg, "Using 'Open' Sentence-Combining Exercises in the College Composition Classroom," in

Sentence-Combining and the Teaching of Writing, ed. Daiker, Kerek,
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⁹²Dean Memering and Frank O'Hare, The Writer's Work (Englewood Cliffs,
NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980).

⁹³Charles R. Cooper, "An Outline for Writing Sentence-Combining
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CHAPTER VI

TEACHING THE PARAGRAPH

The paragraph as we use it today is a relatively recent form. It was unknown in antiquity (so far as we know), and began to appear in its present form only in the seventeenth century, as the craft of printing grew more polished. Initially, paragraphs were not indented, nor were they the relatively small units we now recognize. In manuscripts and early incunabula, paragraphs were long stretches of discourse, sometimes covering several pages. Rather than being marked off by indentation, they were divided by the familiar mark ¶ (indicating para-graphos--Greek for "mark outside") in the left margin.¹

As printing came more and more to be the method of transmission of written materials, the exigencies of the process (the size of the printing plate, the construction of the form holding the lines of type) dictated a single clean left margin. As a result, the present form of marking paragraphs by indentation came about. At the same time, the stretches of discourse marked by the indentation became smaller and smaller, until they gradually stabilized at the length we now use.

All of this happened more or less as accident and circumstance dictated. There was no theory of the paragraph as it shaped itself over time; it seems during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to be undergoing a form of Darwinian natural selection. It is not

mentioned by any of the neo-Ciceronian or Ramist rhetoricians of the seventeenth century and gets no real treatment from the three great rhetorical theorists of the eighteenth century, Adam Smith, George Campbell, and Hugh Blair. It was not, in fact, until as recently as 1866 that the Scottish logician and educator Alexander Bain formulated rules for the production of correct paragraphs in his text English Composition and Rhetoric.²

The "organic model" of the paragraph that Bain invented, in which every part contributed toward the whole of the paragraph, was not immediately noticed, but within twenty years it had become immensely influential, especially in America. Every textbook used some version of it, and it became the cornerstone of what I will call traditional paragraph theory. This theory was little questioned until the Fifties and Sixties, when a rising complaint that Bain's paragraph theory was reductive and not terribly useful produced a new theoretical interest in the paragraph. Theories about the structure of paragraphs were propounded by Francis Christensen and Alton L. Becker, and at the same time attacks on the paragraph as an essentially conventional and arbitrary form were heard from Paul C. Rodgers and Willis Pitkin. The following sections cover traditional, Christensen, and tagmemic paragraph theories; in this introduction, therefore, I would like to discuss the anti-paragraph work of Pitkin and Rodgers, who in some ways lay a groundwork for paragraph theory even as they deny the importance of the paragraph.

Both Pitkin and Rodgers make the point that discourse is not made up of either sentences or paragraphs; it is rather made up of

segments that may sometimes be coterminous with paragraphs but often consist of several paragraphs.³ Pitkin calls these segments "discourse blocs" and Rodgers calls them "stadia of discourse," but they are in agreement that blocs or stadia mark off obvious ends and beginnings. The discourse bloc, according to Pitkin, is identified by what he calls junctions, "those moments in the meaningful continuum where we can say 'To this point we have been doing X; now we begin to do Y'"⁴ Rodgers' idea of how discourse is marked off is somewhat similar:

Like music, writing is a complex sequence of events in time. Subordinate patterns occur within the sequence, many of them interpenetrating and partly coinciding with others. The writer has at his disposal various punctuation devices with which he can tag and call attention to some of them. The paragraph break is only one such device, the most emphatic.

About all we can usefully say of all paragraphs at present is that their authors have marked them off for special consideration as stadia of discourse, in preference to other stadia, other patterns, in the same material. "At this point," the writer tells us with his indentation, "a major stadium of discourse has just been completed. Rest for a moment, recollect and consider, before the next begins." . . . Paragraph structure is part and parcel of the structure of the discourse as a whole; a given stadium becomes a paragraph not by virtue of its structure but because the writer elects to indent, his indentation functioning, as does all punctuation, as a gloss upon the overall literary process under way at that point. Paragraphs are not composed; they are discovered. To compose is to create; to indent is to interpret.⁵

For Rodgers, the paragraph indentation is a mark of punctuation, and can no more dictate what comes before or after it than can a comma.

"Paragraphs are not composed; they are discovered. To compose is to create; to indent is to interpret." These statements sum up Rodgers' beliefs about paragraphs, beliefs that are supported by our own

awareness of how we write. All of the formulae for the composition of paragraphs discussed in this chapter have been claimed to be to some degree generative, and in a limited sense, perhaps they are, but inductive study of real paragraphs shows that all of these theories on how the paragraph is constructed cover only a few of the types of real paragraphs. Insistence on topic sentences or levels of generality or equivalence chains can be helpful tools in discussing the makeup of paragraphs, but they do not locate or identify the nature of the Paragraph. Every deductive formula, in other words, is reductive as well.

The point of Rodgers' argument is that paragraphing is an intuitive process, one that inherently resists efforts to "generate paragraphs." Rodgers would contend that you can no more generate paragraphs without a discourse than you can generate cookies without a sheet of cookie dough. And indeed, you will probably find that too much insistence upon formal "generation" of paragraphs in an essay forces students into an artificial, stilted style. Applications of any of the following paragraph theories to generation of multiple-paragraph essays will be, I predict, a failure.

What then, you may wonder, is the use of trying to teach any of these paragraph theories, if the paragraph is an intuitive form? Why shouldn't we just give our students' intuitions free rein? Most importantly, because there are informed and uninformed intuitions. The intuition informed by years of reading and a solid unconscious grasp of the methods used by English prose to break up discourse will be able to generate paragraphs that probably need little revision. Most

freshmen, however, have uninformed intuitions. They have been exposed to little reading, and few of them read for recreation; as a result, they have no rich field of experience to rely on. If they imagine a paragraph, it will quite possibly be a newspaper paragraph or a paragraph in an advertisement. They are quite capable of generating discourse, but the problems of ordering it and breaking it up are difficult for them because they have had little experience with English prose.

Because of the conventional nature of the paragraph and students' lack of experience with it, you will find that the theories of the paragraph in this chapter will be most useful to your students in the ordering and revision of rough-draft material that they have generated without consulting the theories. Throughout this chapter my implicit position is that the paragraph, as Barrett Wendell said of the sentence, is a subject of revision, not of prevision. Some of these theories will generate discrete paragraphs, but paragraph generation is really best used as a practice exercise. Trying to move paragraph generation from the endlessly inventive (albeit often uninformed) and flexible domain of the intuition to the dry, creaky factory of the conscious mind is not a productive step; such a transfer must be intuitive. The existing paragraph theories are simply not complete enough to be used generatively.

But if these theories are incomplete, if discourse is actually composed of blocs or stadia rather than of paragraphs, you may ask now, why do we bother at all with paragraphing, intuitive or otherwise? The roots of this answer lie in cognitive psychology, but in simple terms,

the answer to that query is that we insist upon paragraphing because the reader demands it. The fact that the paragraph is a recent phenomenon does not cancel out the fact that its use immediately spread out until it was universal. Whether the paragraph is a "real" structure in terms of its formal relation to the whole discourse is not our concern; what is important to us is that the paragraph developed in response to real needs of readers for breaks in the discourse on which they are working.

The paragraph, then, is a device that we use for the reader's convenience, and that is how to teach it. The formal properties given to it by the paragraph theories are helpful, but ultimately it is there to keep the reader pacified. We have all had experiences with paragraphs too long and too short. The reader looks at a page-long paragraph and groans inwardly, because he feels that he is about to be worked hard by the author--that the paragraph is long because what it is talking about is detailed, and the reader will have to labor before he emerges at the bottom. Similarly, a page of exposition with nine or ten short paragraphs can also be discouraging to come upon--the reader feels that he is about to be bombarded with a hail of ideas, many not as well developed as they might be. As modern prose style becomes more terse and telegraphic, short "punch-paragraphs" seem to be growing in popularity, but this does not mean that we should support short paragraphs in student writing.

On the average, a typescript page of normal expository prose contains between three and five paragraphs. This is the sort of prescription that makes paragraph formalists howl, but is valid for all of that. Occasionally a writer can make do with as few as two paragraphs per

page or as many as perhaps six, but three to five is the average, and to let your students know that immediately is often helpful to them. If you specify that sort of restriction, you will at least be making certain that a student whose essay contains pages with eight paragraphs will check those paragraphs carefully for form and content. None of these rules is absolute (no rule in paragraphing is absolute) but they are all good guides; if a student breaks the rules of length or form he should be made aware of the transgression and be able to defend his rule-breaking (at which point you call it "transcendence of mechanical restrictions"--if the student can prove his case).

By contending that the paragraph is mainly a device used to promote reader pacification, I do not mean to suggest that paragraphing is completely arbitrary or that the structural theorists whose work fills this chapter have nothing to offer. That is far from the case. Readers have definite expectations about the content and form of paragraphs as well as about their length, and the degree to which readers concur in dividing up an unbroken stretch of discourse shows that paragraph structure does play a large role in reader expectations.

This was illustrated in the famous experiment conducted in the late Sixties by Frank Koen, Alton Becker, and Richard Young of the University of Michigan.⁶ The article containing their results, "The Psychological Reality of the Paragraph," is convincing in its assertion that paragraphs are not arbitrary semantic units. Koen, Becker, and Young gave their subjects long pieces of discourse without indentations and asked them to mark the paragraph boundaries. When the discourse was normal English prose, the subjects agreed with each other at a level of 80%. More

convincingly, when all nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in the unbroken discourse were replaced with nonsense words, agreement on paragraph breaks was still 75%, indicating that the paragraph is a psychologically real unit that depends on both formal and content-based cues for its identity. This finding disproves Rodgers' contention that many paragraphs are indented by their authors in a completely arbitrary way, but it does not add much to our positive knowledge of how readers recognize different sorts of paragraph cues. We are still in the land of intuition.

The fact remains that we do not have a comprehensive theory of the paragraph. All of the theories in this chapter answer the question partially; certainly Bain with his paragraph unity, Christensen with his levels of generality and Becker with his topic restrictions are all on the right track, but as of now we do not have a theory that controls all of the grammatical and semantic cues that make up paragraphs. If we had one, it would probably be too complicated to teach. Alton Becker says that paragraphs are marked by "grammatical, phonological (if read aloud), lexical and rhetorical (or logical) features, as well as by punctuation," and any comprehensive paragraph theory would have to deal with all of those considerations.⁷ So far no one has attempted it.

You will find that there are recurring patterns of problems that your students will show in their paragraphing. These can be grouped into three main areas: paragraphs that are too short or thin in texture, paragraphs that are too long and try to cover too much material, and incoherent paragraphs that mass together unrelated information.

Students who write paragraphs that are too short--that is, paragraphs that contain only one to three normal-length sentences, are often unconsciously copying in their own writing the models with which they are familiar: advertising copy and newspaper style. Both of these sources use what Frank D'Angelo calls "overdifferentiated paragraphing," that is, short paragraphs used for the effect of rapid movement through quickly digestible information.⁸ The paragraph structures of ads and newspaper stories are not logical; they are constructed with specialized psychological ends in mind. They are effective within their limited range, but are bad models for expository prose. In the hands of students, short paragraphs become choppy, interruptive, and annoying in their continual insistence on a new start even when the material doesn't warrant it.

All three of the paragraph theories outlined here approach the problem of short paragraphs, but perhaps Christensen's work is most directly concerned with solving it. A writer of short paragraphs needs to be told about levels of generality and paragraph density. In some cases, the crux may not be one of underdeveloped paragraphs but of uniformed choice about where to indent. The student will then need to learn to ask himself, in Pitkin's terms, "Am I done showing the reader X and ready to begin Y?" or "Does this indentation serve a purpose? Why is it here?"

The most natural way of dealing with overly long paragraphs-- paragraphs that run on and on, even over obvious junctures--is to divide them up yourself with red ¶ marks and hope that the lesson will sink in. Usually, it won't. Writers of long paragraphs are usually

completely unaware of the traditional uses of the paragraph, and need to be acquainted with the paragraph as both a structural and as a conventional form. They under-differentiate their paragraphs because they see their whole discourse as a rush in which they have to say something--anything. You will often find problems in the larger structure of essays by students who write overlong paragraphs; a lack of knowledge of paragraph form usually is a signal of lack of knowledge of larger forms, and a student suffering from too-long paragraphs may need special help with other aspects of writing, particularly with invention and argumentation.

If the essays a student writes have few problems except for the paragraphing, the problem is easy to solve: showing the student how to spot topic sentences or high levels of generality will help him differentiate his own work. If there are larger organizational problems, however, settle in for a long hard struggle to introduce conventions.

Incoherence is fairly common among freshmen: their paragraphs will be approximately the right length, but will skip from idea to idea, resulting in a jumbled mass of information that is irritating to read. This problem often is the result of a hit-and-miss composing process in which slapping down the requisite number of words on paper is more important than making sure they fit together. Students often see each sentence as discrete and thus fail to see the importance of forcing them to hang together.

The traditional topic sentence-and-development paragraph model is one way of dealing with this problem; it forces students to question the placement and purpose of each sentence in the paragraph and to police

themselves. Many students, however, have a difficult time with the "methods of development" that are central to the classical model, and for those students a perspective on paragraphing developed by Richard L. Larson in his article "Sentences in Action: A Technique for Analyzing Paragraphs" may be helpful.⁹

The central point of Larson's article is that every sentence in a paragraph has a function. The most common roles are: state, restate, expand, particularize, exemplify, define, describe, narrate, qualify, concede, support, refute, evaluate, identify a cause or result, compare or contrast, summarize, conclude. These are not, Larson points out, mutually exclusive roles.¹⁰

Teaching students to recognize these roles and to use them to check their sentences and paragraph development in first drafts can be very useful to promote coherence. Larson suggests three questions to ask about each sentence in a paragraph:

1. Is the role of each sentence in the context of the surrounding sentences evident to the reader?
2. Do the words that connect the sentence to surrounding sentences accurately characterize that role?
3. Is the role useful? That is, would the paragraph do its work as effectively without the sentence as it does with the sentence?¹¹

When students learn to question the role of each sentence, the extraneous sentences gradually get pared down and transitions appear more frequently.

These are the problems that the following theories can help to solve. As stated above, though, none is perfect. All of the paragraph theories and models in this chapter are necessarily limited; we have not yet reached the paradigmatic stage of paragraph theory. This fact may make you chary of teaching any of these models as the truth about paragraphing. Since we know these models are incomplete, how can we teach them as if they were reality? How can we be prescriptive when we know that professional writers create paragraphs that ignore all of these models?

The answer I give myself is that despite the limits of these models, they do give students a structure that will create coherent paragraphs. These student paragraphs may not be professional, they may not be stylistically brilliant, but they will be understandable and will be solid bases upon which a student can build. As the early paragraph theorist Helen Thomas said in 1912 about topic sentence placement, "The artist can afford to diverge from this rule. The mechanic cannot."¹² Our task is to teach mechanics who may someday become artists. Once the limiting rules are mastered they can be transcended, but only those who know the law can afford to live without it. If you are honest with your students about the limitations of the "rules" you set, you need never apologize for being prescriptive.

THE TRADITIONAL PARAGRAPH

If there is at present a single ruling conception of the nature and construction of the paragraph it is the one that originated in 1866

with Alexander Bain and has come down to our time, changed but slightly, in many popular composition texts. This conception of the paragraph I will call, for lack of a better term, the traditional paragraph structure. That designation is meant to suggest merely that it is the oldest and most entrenched theory of the paragraph that we have. It consists, in the simplest terms, of a topic sentence which announces the main idea of the paragraph, followed by subsidiary sentences which develop or illustrate the idea introduced by the topic sentence.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there was no theory and little mention of the paragraph as an element of discourse throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; even throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the composition texts devoted most of their energies to the composition of sentences. The era of the paragraph opened in 1866 with the publication of Alexander Bain's English Composition and Rhetoric, in which the paragraph got its first lengthy treatment. Bain had made a minute examination of the work of the great essayists of the early nineteenth century and, he claimed, had found similarities in the structure of most of their paragraphs.

According to Bain, the paragraph is "a collection of sentences with unity of purpose" which "handles and exhausts a distinct topic." He created six ironclad rules for the construction of correct paragraphs, and these rules were at the heart of his system. Here are Bain's rules:

1. Explicit Reference: The bearing of each sentence upon what precedes shall be explicit and unmistakeable.
2. Parallel Construction: Consecutive sentences that repeat or illustrate the same idea should be formed alike, as far as possible.

3. Topic Sentence: The first sentence, unless obviously preparatory, should indicate the subject of the paragraph.
4. Consecutive Arrangement: Each statement should follow the plan of the paragraph and be in its appropriate place.
5. Overall Unity: A paragraph should possess Unity which implies clarity of purpose and forbids irrelevancies and digressions.
6. Subordination: As in the sentence, a paragraph should maintain a due proportion between the principal subject and subordinate statements.¹³

As Paul C. Rodgers has pointed out, this is a model of paragraph construction based on the construction of sentences.¹⁴ Bain himself calls paragraphs "expanded sentences," and this idea of the paragraph possessing the same sort of organic unity as the sentence soon became popular and remained so. Through the next hundred years, statements about the unity of the paragraph, with each part contributing specifically to the whole, were found in nearly every composition text.¹⁵ If Bain's formula sounds familiar, it is probably because somewhere, sometime, you were taught a version of it. Most of us were.

The problem with Bain's original formulation was not that it contained easily identifiable errors, but rather that it was extremely rigid. Bain claimed that his six rules had been derived inductively, but as his formula gained popularity--and it did, especially in America, become immensely popular with teachers of composition--it also lost some of its inflexibility. As the nineteenth century progressed, Bain's general definition was subscribed to and extended by writers of composition manuals, and his formula remained basically sound while losing some of its rigidity. Here are some paragraph definitions from a variety of

sources that were collected in 1912:

A paragraph is a short passage of written discourse containing a complete and unified statement of a particular point. . . .A paragraph is the extreme limit of the expansion of a single articulated idea; an expanded sentence which contains a topic corresponding to the subject of a sentence, and predicate matter corresponding to the predicate of a sentence. . . .A paragraph is the most complete expanded form of articulated speech, which still must confine itself to the expression of one idea. . . .A group of sentences related to each other and to the central idea is called a paragraph.¹⁶

One of the best and most complete sentence-based definitions was that of Scott and Denney in their text Paragraph-Building:

A paragraph is a unit of discourse developing a single idea. It consists of a group or series of sentences closely related to one another and to the thought expressed by the whole group or series. Devoted, like the sentence, to the development of one topic, a good paragraph is also, like a good essay, a complete treatment in itself.¹⁷

For all of the writers who followed Bain, the major bone of contention was (and remains) the question of the nature and placement of the topic sentence. It is obvious to every reader that although classically formed paragraphs may be numerically predominant, the first sentence of a paragraph is by no means always the topic sentence. Bain's disclaimer, "unless obviously preparatory," was not enough to include paragraphs that clearly were constructed with the topic sentence in the middle, or at the end. Here was a point on which Bain's formula was clearly lacking, and the composition manuals tried

to deal with the question of the "topic-sentence" or "thesis-statement", as they called it, in different ways.

In a remarkable little book that was published early in this century, A Study of the Paragraph, Helen Thomas tries to reduce paragraph writing to mathematical exactness, to "present the paragraph in the light of a Geometry Proposition" and prove that "the underlying structure of the paragraph as well as of the Geometry Proposition is definite and formal."¹⁸ For Thomas, the "subject-sentence" usually came first in a paragraph: "Subject Sentence: Paragraph = Subject: Composition." She felt that in teaching the paragraph we can insist on topic sentences being first in the paragraph despite our knowledge that professional paragraphs do not always follow this rule; for Thomas, as for many present-day teachers, students need mechanical skills that become too complex to teach if we insist on trying to get our students to mirror absolute reality.

Scott and Denney were more liberal about topic-sentence placement, and their views reflected those of many other teachers of composition. While not prepared to give up the idea of a topic sentence--"The theme of the paragraph is usually expressed definitely and unmistakably in one of the sentences, called the topic-statement"¹⁹--they did not insist on its being placed first. Their topic-statement could be found first in a paragraph, last, both first and last, and finally merely "implied"; the implied topic did not even have to be spelled out concretely in a sentence. This was the beginning of the questioning of the idea of the topic sentence that has continued into our own day.

There is no doubt at this point that the topic sentence as a prescriptive entity is no longer absolute. In one of the most obvious successors to the mantle of Bain, James McCrimmon's popular textbook Writing with a Purpose, the idea of the topic sentence has declined over successive editions until by the current sixth edition we get this tentative statement: "Often the topic of the paragraph is stated in a sentence at or near the beginning and called the topic sentence. But even when no topic sentence is stated, the sentences within the paragraph are bound together by a common subject matter."²⁰ Here the topic sentence seems anything but absolute.

This melancholy, long, withdrawing roar of the Sea of Faith in the Topic Sentence has several reasons behind it. The work of Rodgers, Pitkin, Christensen, and Becker in the Sixties cast doubt on the underlying premises of the traditional model, the central element of which is, of course, the topic sentence. And in 1974, in an article published just before his death, the respected rhetorician Richard Braddock found in an inductive survey of modern prose that only 13% of the expository paragraphs of professional writers begin with traditional topic sentences.²¹ In a less formal study, William Irmischer asked his graduate students to try to verify Braddock's findings; like Braddock, they encountered difficulties in defining a topic sentence, but their results indicate that some general statement of topic is common about 40-50% of the time.²² Clearly the topic sentence is by no means an ironclad certainty as far as professional writers are concerned.

The followers of Bain in the late nineteenth century accepted his general definition and his topic-sentence thesis, but quickly reduced

his six paragraph rules to three. John Genung called these three qualities that the paragraph contained "Unity, Continuity, and Proportion":

A paragraph. . .constitutes the development of a single topic; hence, a fundamental quality is unity. This development is made by a connected series of sentences; hence, another requisite is continuity in the thought. And the fact that it is the orderly development of a topic implies systematic progress; hence a third requisite is proportion between the parts.²³

Another important early composition teacher was Barrett Wendell, who called the three important qualities "Unity, Mass, and Coherence."²⁴ In our own day, many composition texts still refer to the three main qualities of the paragraph, now usually called Unity, Coherence, and Development or Emphasis, as if they were rules from heaven. The legacy of Bain and of his follower John Genung is little known.

In the methods of paragraph development proposed by traditional theorists, we again find little that is really new. Bain was more concerned with delineating the general shape of paragraphs than with discussing methods of development at any length (he seemed to feel that each subject taken up in a paragraph naturally suggested its own method of development), but by 1900 his followers had come up with a number of suggestions about how topics should be developed. Scott and Denney list as their main methods of development:

1. Particulars and details--by giving more detailed, less general information about the topic than is supplied by the topic sentence

2. Definitive statements--defining terms that the topic sentence has introduced
3. Comparison and illustration--introducing information through comparison of unknowns to knowns
4. Specific instances or examples--giving concrete support to abstract contentions
5. Reasons--supplying the argumentation behind a contention
6. Applying a principle
7. Cause and effect--develops reasons for an effect²⁵

As you can see, these methods of development recapitulate within the paragraph form most of the classical topics of invention. These proved to be complex and difficult to teach, and in our own time the methods of development have been simplified and made more responsive to form than to content, as shown in McCrimmon's methods of development:

1. General to particular--from general statement (read "topic sentence") to supporting details which explain or illustrate. Topic sentence at beginning.
2. Particular to general--from a series of explanatory or illustrative statements to the conclusion drawn from them. Topic sentence at end.
3. Whole to parts--enumerates the parts of a topic, treating them as equal--sometimes called "enumerative". Topic sentence at beginning or end.
4. Question to answer, effect to cause--usually follows the general-to-particular pattern. Topic sentence usually implied.²⁶

Although McCrimmon seldom stresses the use of the topic sentence, its importance is strongly implied in all of the ways he proposes that

paragraphs be developed. The topic sentence may have been robbed of its theoretical centrality by research, but it is still the most important element in forming the traditional paragraph, for the simple reason that without it much of the pedagogic usefulness of the traditional model would be gone. As Arthur Stern has pointed out, different conceptions of the "topic sentence" are also at the heart of the two other paragraph theories in use today.²⁷

CLASSROOM USE OF TRADITIONAL PARAGRAPH THEORY

As I contended in the introduction to this section, it is important that you make clear to your students before you begin that the paragraph is best used as a tool for testing and revising the material that they have written intuitively, that it is not a form that generates paragraphs in essays very well. You can ask them to generate separate paragraphs with traditional theory, but if you try to teach it as a generative form for essay-writing you run a real danger of hopelessly frustrating those students who try to use it. As Frank D'Angelo points out, some writers are more likely than others to be able to apply their half-conscious awareness of paragraph structure to their writing as they write, but they will group ideas in some way. Teaching the traditional paragraph is just one tool you can give your students with which they can check their "natural" idea groupings against a concrete model.

The Topic Sentence

Despite the fact that the traditional topic sentence, placed first in the paragraph, has been called into question as a common form used by professional writers, it is still a keenly useful teaching tool. The fact that professional writers have learned to transcend traditional topic-sentence paragraph structure has little to do with its viability as a learning structure for freshmen. Our task is not to make our students professional writers in ten weeks, but to make them more aware of the most efficient training structures of language. Make clear to your students that as they progress in skills and become more expert at dividing discourse they may find situations in which the topic sentence is of no use. Until they are sure they do not need one, however, it is best to insist on one.

Inexperienced writers, as Carol Cohan points out, often have a hard time defining the "main idea" that the topic sentence is supposed to represent. She suggests a teaching strategy for the topic sentence which presents it as "that sentence which implies a question to be answered by the rest of the paragraph." Cohan suggests the following procedure for helping students organize supporting detail around a topic sentence, which you can ditto off and pass out to your students before topic-sentence work:

- (1) Turn the topic sentence into a topic-sentence question, beginning with why, how, to what extent, or any other similar question. (A question which elicits a yes or no answer does not work.)
- (2) List the answers to that question.

(3) Judge each item in the list on the basis of whether the item does or does not answer the topic-sentence question.

(4) If the statement does answer the topic-sentence question, accept it. If it does not, decide whether the information the statement contains must be restructured to deal more directly with the question or whether it must be rejected.

(5) Rewrite the accepted items on the list to form smoothly flowing sentences that will build the paragraph.²⁸

Placement of the topic sentence does not have to be Bain-rigid, but the topic sentence as the first sentence in the paragraph is still the commonest and most natural mode. The next most widely used mode places the topic sentence last. Teaching students how to use the implied topic sentence is time-consuming and not worth the effort until they are able to use explicit topic sentences and group the sentences in their paragraphs around them.

These are the characteristics of the topic sentence:

First, it isolates and specifies the topic or idea that the rest of the paragraph will be concerned with.

Second, it is usually the most general sentence in the paragraph, and is able to act as a "general heading" for all of the other sentences.

Third, it usually incorporates, at least implicitly, a transition from or to the paragraph that precedes or follows it.

In short, it is the master-sentence, the touchstone against which all the other sentences in a paragraph can be checked to see if there is a relationship between them and the topic sentence. Teach it to your students as the most obvious checkpoint we have when we test an already written paragraph for the necessary elements of unity, development,

and coherence.

Unity

Paragraph unity, says Bain, "forbids digressions and irrelevant matter," and teaching your students to write simple expository paragraphs that do not include digressions or spontaneous sidetracking is one of the most important accomplishments a teacher can try for in ten or fifteen weeks. You may not get beautifully developed or absolutely coherent paragraphs from all of your students, but if you can teach unity successfully you will have done good work; unified paragraphing is a skill you should be able to see grow.

The most common technique for beginning to teach paragraphing is by the use of examples, either in a text or on dittoed handouts, of paragraphs with obvious topic sentences. Discuss in class the elements that identify the topic sentences. After the concept of the topic sentence has been introduced in this controlled format, you are ready to go on to topic sentences in their natural habitats, either in less carefully chosen dittoed handouts or in a reader, if you have assigned one.

At this point you can begin asking your students to specify relationships between the identified topic sentence and all of the other sentences in the paragraph. Spotting the topic sentences is not hard (most of them are at the beginning of the paragraph), but specification of relationships is not so easy. Once the topic sentence of a paragraph is identified, the other sentences fall into place as either contributing to that main idea or as separate from it. You can talk about why the sentences not part of the main idea are in the paragraph--and be

prepared to explain to your students why seeming disunity in professional writing can be allowable, while student paragraphs must be unified. You should be able to point out some professional paragraphs that are hurt by their disunity as well as some which seem immune.

At this point it is helpful to find some actual student examples of disunified paragraphs. Ask your officemates if they have any old student essays around, or check to see if your department has a file of old essays or if your director of composition can help. Seven or eight seriously disunified paragraphs on a thermofax ditto should be plenty to make your point--that in the hands of the experts lack of unity can be harmless, but in the hands of novices it is a disaster.

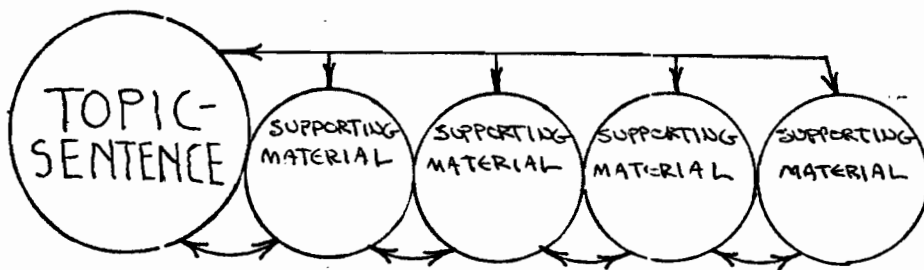
Go over these paragraphs one by one asking about the specific sentences that make the paragraph lack unity. By the time you've finished with that, the students should be familiar enough with the idea of paragraph unity to go over some of their old writings and do a unity check on their own work. The next step is to ask them to use topic-sentence-and-development formula on their own rough-draft paragraphs, testing them for unity of subject. If you are satisfied that they have grasped the concept, you can go on to introduce the different forms of paragraph development.

Development

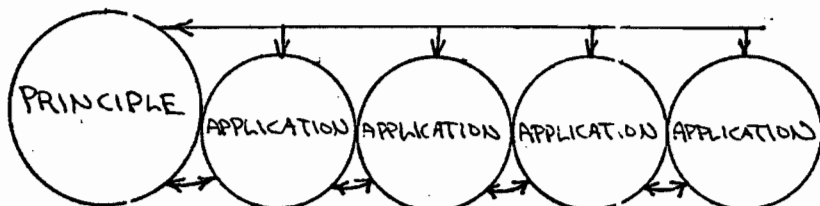
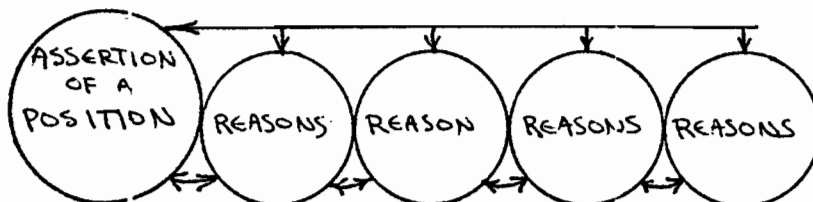
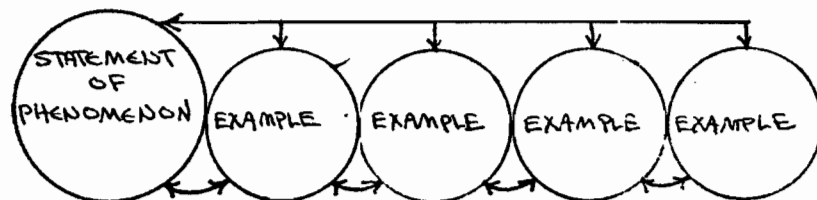
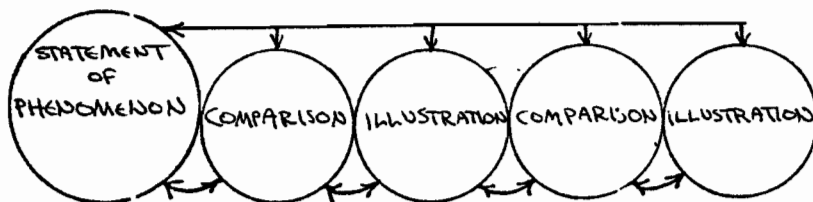
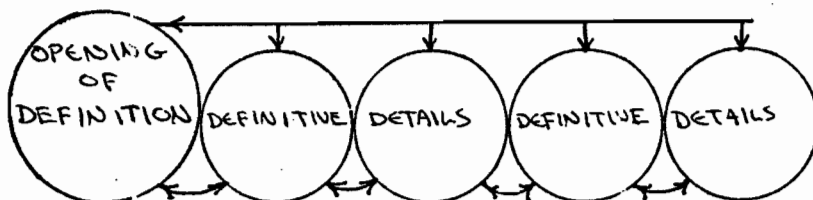
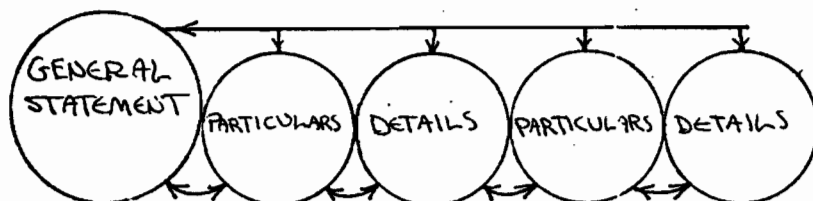
When discussing the development of paragraphs, it is best to stress the topic sentence not only as a statement of the subject of the paragraph, but also as the most general, most comprehensive sentence within it. This way you can reduce the main sorts of paragraph movements down

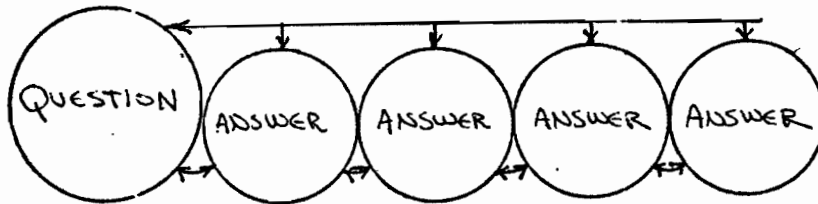
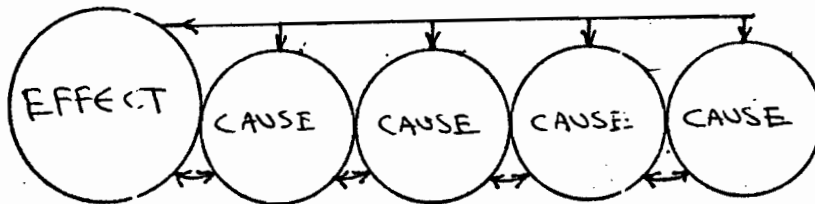
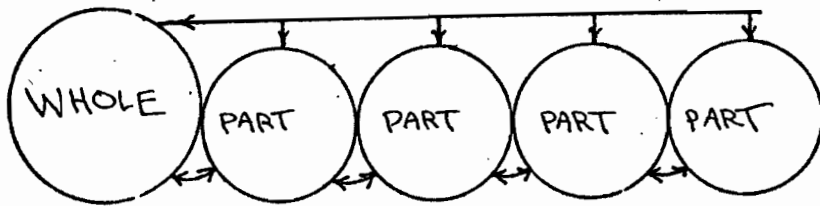
to two: the inductive and the deductive. This sort of simplification is, of course, reductive, but although it simplifies, it does not falsify; it also makes teaching paragraph development far easier, because you can diagram the movement of information in a paragraph with relative ease.

The most common method of paragraph development is the deductive form. The topic sentence in this form is first in order, followed by material that expands upon, defines, or illustrates it. This is what McCrimmon calls the "general-to-particular" movement of a paragraph, and can be diagrammed as a series of circles related to one another and to the master-circle at the beginning:

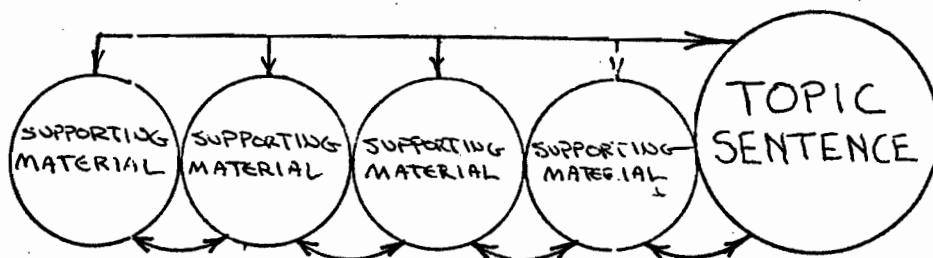


This "freight-train" diagram can hold many sorts of development structures, and you will have to introduce your students to the most important ones by passing out dittoed handouts of the diagrams. All of them, you will notice, use arrows to indicate the fact that all the developing sentences must be related to the idea expressed in the topic sentence:





These deductive paragraphs all work from general to particular, but there are no rules that claim that they always have to; it is obvious that nearly all of them could be turned upside down and made into inductive-paragraph developments, formulae that draw a general statement out of a collection of particulars:



Although the deductive development is most common, your students should be aware of, and be able to recognize, both methods of development. You can draw these diagrams on the board one by one, explaining how each method of development works, and then either find examples in your textbook or look through the reader for paragraphs that exemplify each type of development.

The next step is to ask your students to write single paragraphs using each kind of development. This will actually be easier than finding pure examples of each kind in a reader, since, as we know, the traditional paragraph is not common in its pure form in modern prose by professionals. Once your students can control each structure, they should be able to recognize each when it appears in their own writing.

At this point, I must sound a warning. This factor of paragraph development can be a two-edged sword for students; too little emphasis upon it will leave them without adequate idea of how the classical paragraph works, but too much emphasis on it will freeze their work into traditionally "correct" but stilted modes. Once again, emphasis on the editing possibilities of these methods of development rather than on their generational potential is called for. Getting your students to ask themselves questions like, "Have I given enough reasons here for the assertion in my topic sentence?" or "Are all the parts of the whole entity in my topic sentence here?" is what you want to do. If you have done that, you can go on the last characteristic of good traditional paragraphs, what Bain called "explicit reference" and what we have come to call "coherence."

Coherence

The easiest way to explain paragraph coherence to your students is to demonstrate that every sentence must relate somehow, either directly or indirectly, to the sentences that surround it. If this practice is not respected, the results are a choppy and irritating prose that seems to proceed in fits and starts. As Barrett Wendell puts it, the general principle behind coherence is this: "Matters closely connected in thought should be kept together, matters distinct in thought kept apart."²⁹

Incoherent paragraphs, as McCrimmon points out, are a result of "thinking out the implications of the topic one sentence at a time, without considering the relationships among the sentences."

If you ask for typed essays from your students, as I do, you may find that some incoherence problems result from your students trying to compose on the typewriter; they figure that if they can make their rough draft and final draft the same piece of work they will be ahead of the game, but are unaware that typewriter-composing is a fairly high-level skill. A demand for longhand rough-drafts, turned in with the final typescripts, might be in order.

The diagrams introduced in the previous section can be of use in explaining coherence as well. The smaller arrows connecting the circles at the bottom indicate the relationship each sentence must have to the one preceding it.

Calling attention to the need for paragraph coherence and trying to teach it are, unfortunately, two different things. Paragraphs are rendered coherent by a large number of devices, most of them subtle and

difficult to teach. They include different forms of repetition and reference backward and forward, and you can find an ample account of most of them in modern rhetoric texts. You can make your own decision on which to teach, but the single most easily taught device for promoting coherence is, I have found, the use of transitions and transitional markers.

These words and phrases cannot by themselves, of course, create ordered relationships among sentences where there are none. Most freshmen, though, have a little-used but effective grasp of the references implied by these terms, and thus can use them as reminders of the necessary relations their sentences must have. You should be sure to stress the fact that transitions are used for establishing the following relationships:

1. Between the topic sentence of a paragraph and the topic of the preceding paragraph.
2. Between the topic sentence and the sentences that develop it.
3. Between the developing sentences in the paragraph.

While transitional markers are only one of the coherence devices used by writers, and while not every sentence will include one, your students should be able to manipulate the major ones. They include the following:

To link related ideas between sentences or paragraphs:
and, also, likewise, so, in like manner, first, secondly, again, besides, then, too, further, moreover, furthermore.

To link unrelated or opposing ideas between sentences or paragraphs: but, else, otherwise, but then, still, yet, only, nevertheless, at the same time, on the other hand, conversely, despite this fact.

To conclude or wrap up a section or essay: in short, in a word, in conclusion, to sum up, as a result, in other words.

A good exercise to introduce the use of these markers and to get students to see their necessity is to ditto off three or four well-structured paragraphs that rely heavily on transitional markers for coherence--with the markers excised. Ask your students to supply words or phrases that would make the paragraph more coherent, less choppy. Ask why they selected the ones they did, and from that discussion you can introduce the lists above. Then have them go over some recent papers they have done for you, checking to see if they can fit the markers into any of the sentences or paragraphs profitably.

Once again, these are only the most teachable, not the most important of the reference systems promoting coherent paragraphs. The most helpful thing you can do for your students is to emphasize over and over again how important it is to check every sentence in their paragraphs to make certain it somehow relates to the sentences around it. If they can get used to this sentence-by-sentence testing procedure, they can improve their paragraphs.

These three elements, unity, development, and coherence, make up the teaching strategy for the traditional paragraph theory. The traditional paragraph has made generations of teachers uncomfortable with its rigidity and its inability to deal with a large number of real sorts of paragraphs that do not follow its prescriptive structure. The retreat from teaching it has not, however, been due to its having been superseded by the Christensen or Becker paragraph models, both of which

also have their limitations, but rather by our growing lack of confidence in any product-oriented model. The hidden feeling seems to be that the traditional model has been shorn of its claim to represent The Paragraph, and therefore is somehow morally bankrupt and should be soft-pedaled, if taught at all.

Yes, it does have its problems. The paragraph is not, pace Helen Thomas, a Geometry Proposition. But the essential design of the Bainian organic paragraph, while admittedly not an absolute, has been able to introduce thousands of students to some control-element against which they could measure their efforts. In the hands of a good teacher, it can be as effective as either of the other paragraph models. The traditional paragraph may not be The Truth, but it contains enough of the truth about how we control sections of discourse to give freshmen a good deal of the guidance they need.

FRANCIS CHRISTENSEN'S GENERATIVE RHETORIC OF THE PARAGRAPH

The Christensen theory of the paragraph grew directly out of Francis Christensen's work with cumulative sentences, which was covered in the last chapter. After the success of his theory of sentences as differing levels of generality, each including a base clause and free modifiers, Christensen strove to apply a similar technique to his analysis of the paragraph. The result was his now-famous article, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph," which appeared two years after his "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," in 1965. This article

was the opening gun of an important re-evaluation of paragraph form and structure that took place in the middle Sixties, mainly in the pages of College Composition and Communication. Other important contributions were made to this debate on the paragraph by Paul Rodgers and Alton Becker, who were mentioned in the Introduction to this chapter, and by Virginia Burke, David Karrfalt, and Josephine Miles.³⁰

There are some similarities between the Christensen model of the paragraph as put forth in his article and the classical model of the paragraph. Both see the paragraph as a system of related sentences organized in some way by a master-sentence, usually at the beginning of the paragraph. The difference lies in the nature of the relationships between the sentences within the paragraph. The classical paragraph form claims that all of the sentences must be logically or semantically related to one another, while Christensen says that the sentences in a paragraph can also be related formally or structurally, by the concept of levels of generality.

The topic sentence in a classical paragraph is also called the subject-sentence or thesis-sentence. It can be in different places within the paragraph, but in strict classical theory it always announces the subject of the paragraph no matter where it is placed. In the Christensen model, the topic sentence is always the first sentence of the paragraph. It does not necessarily announce the subject, and is defined only as the most general sentence in the paragraph. Like the base clause of a cumulative sentence, the topic sentence is "the sentence whose assertion is supported or whose meaning

is explicated or whose parts are detailed by the sentences added to it."³¹

In an acute bit of criticism, Christensen rejected the traditional model, stating that the "methods of development" that characterized the traditional paragraph were no more representative of real underlying paragraph structure than they are of the structure of essays. They were in actuality the topics in rhetoric in a simple form, said Christensen, and he charged that no one ever wrote a paragraph (except under duress, perhaps) by constantly checking to see whether his paragraph was conforming to an official "method of development."³²

In other words, the classical paragraph, according to Christensen, is not generative. This charge may certainly be true, but here I should sound an opening warning about the Christensen method. Teachers who have had experience using the Christensen method of teaching paragraphs have generally found that, despite its hopeful name, Christensen's paragraph rhetoric is no more "generative" than the classical model. It may not require as much attention to the semantic relationships of developing sentences as does the classical paragraph, but attention to formal and structural properties can be just as conscious and "unnatural" an activity. With this sense of the limitations of Christensen paragraphing in mind, though, it can be an extremely effective system to teach for limited generation and revision purposes.

The Christensen system is based entirely on the semantic and syntactic relations between sentences, relations that exist due to different levels of generality or abstraction. A paragraph, according

to Christensen, is an expanded cumulative sentence whose components are related, as are those of the sentence, by coordinate and subordinate relationships. Christensen reduced his paragraph findings to four points, similar to those describing cumulative sentences, that define the unit as he saw it.

1. No paragraphs are possible without addition. In expository writing one sentence cannot, under normal circumstances, be an acceptable paragraph.

2. When a supporting sentence is added, we must see the direction of modification or movement. Assuming the first sentence of the paragraph to fulfill the same function as the base clause of a cumulative sentence, we have to be able to see what direction the modification of it takes--whether the level of generality of a sentence is the same as or lower than that of the one before it.

3. When sentences are added, they are usually at a lower level of generality. This is not an absolute rule, but is usually the case; as we saw in the classical paragraph, sentences that develop a topic are usually more specific than the topic sentence in their relation to the topic.

4. The more sentences added, the denser the texture of the paragraph.³³ The paragraphs we too often see from students lack density--those one-sentence paragraphs are not as rare as they should be--and one of the greatest strengths of the Christensen method of paragraphing is to get students to see this thinness when they revise their work. There can, of course, be too much of a good thing in

paragraph density, but most of the time our job is irrigating deserts, not trimming back jungles.

The Topic Sentence

In some ways Christensen harks back to Bain's absolute dicta in his position on topic sentences. For Christensen, "the topic sentence is nearly always the first sentence of the sequence" of structurally related sentences that make up the paragraph. It is the sentence from which the other sentences in the paragraph hang, so to speak, the sentence whose level of generality cannot be exceeded without starting a new paragraph. There may be sentences equally general in the paragraph, and sentences more specific, but a more general sentence "breaks the sequence. The paragraph has begun to drift from its moorings, or the writer has unwittingly begun a new paragraph."³⁴

Christensen is of course aware of the "revisionist" theories of the classical topic sentence, which allow it to be placed anywhere in the paragraph, or even implied, but his topic sentence is not affected by these arguments. It is just a different animal. In his own study of contemporary paragraphs, Christensen found that the unit he calls the topic sentence occurs almost invariably at the beginning of a paragraph sequence. Unlike the thesis-statement of classical paragraphing, the Christensen topic sentence often does not state the thesis of the paragraph clearly. It may only suggest it, or it may be nothing more than a signal sentence that moves up to a more general level of statement than that of the previous sentence to show that a new chunk of discourse is about to begin. It may be a statement, or a

fragment, or a question. The only important thing about it is that the reader gets the signal: "New level of generality; we're about to start something new."

The structure of the paragraph after the topic sentence, according to Christensen, can take a number of forms, all of which are marked by the relationships established by each sentence to the topic sentence and the other sentences. Like the relationships between clauses that Christensen identified in his cumulative sentences, the relationships he sees between sentences in a paragraph are either coordinate or subordinate. There are two sorts of simple sequences, simple coordinate and simple subordinate, and then there is the most common sequence, the mixed sequence, in which both coordination and subordination are used.

Be sure that you don't confuse the terms coordinate and subordinate with the common grammatical usage of them. In the Christensen theory, coordinate sentences are equal in syntactic or semantic generality, while subordinate sentences are lower in generality--are more specific or concrete--than the sentences which precede them. Coordinate sentences emphasize and enumerate, while subordinate sentences clarify and exemplify. As Christensen says, "Sentences in a paragraph are coordinate when they have the same function, when they stand in the same relation to a superordinate sentence. . .A sentence in a paragraph is subordinate to the one next above--or to a set of coordinate sentences next above it--when it makes some kind of comment on it."³⁵

Simple Coordinate Sequence

The simple coordinate sequence paragraph has only two levels: that of the topic sentence and that of the other sentences, which are coordinate with each other in terms of generality. It is the rarest and least used of all the sequence types, because it usually produces a repetitive effect more common in speeches than in expository writing. The paragraphs below are examples; the numbers indicate levels of generality, with the lowest number equalling the highest level of generality:

- 1 This is the essence of the religious spirit--the sense of power, beauty, greatness, truth infinitely beyond one's own reach, but infinitely to be aspired to.
 - 2 It invests men with a pride in a purpose and with humility in accomplishment.
 - 2 It is the source of all true tolerance, for in its light all men see other men as they see themselves, as being capable of being more than they are, and yet falling short, inevitably, of what they can imagine human opportunities to be.
 - 2 It is the supporter of human dignity and pride and the dissolver of vanity.
 - 2 And it is the very creator of the scientific spirit; for without the aspiration to understand and control the miracle of life, no man would have sweated in a laboratory or tortured his brain in the exquisite search after truth.

--Dorothy Thompson, "The Education of
the Heart" (quoted in Christensen)

- 1 I prescribe ridicule.
 - 2 It is an equitable response to the likes of Ralph Nader or Betty Friedan.
 - 2 It is a soothing emollient for our peculiarly troubled national spirit.
 - 2 Ridicule does not elevate nonsense to any higher level than that at which it is emitted.

- 2 It is entertaining and far more edifying to the public discourse than the facile dissimulations now rampant there.
- 2 Ridicule is the compliment lively intelligence pays to jackassery.
- 2 It is a national treasure certified by Mark Twain, beloved by millions, and eschewed only at great peril.

--R. Emmett Tyrell, Public Nuisances

Simple Subordinate Sequence

The simple subordinate sequence introduces multiple layers of semantic or syntactic generality, in theory an infinite number of layers. The notable feature of the simple subordinate sequence is that it progresses constantly from element to element and does not return to a higher level of generality. Once again, this is not a sequence often found in nature, since it tends to introduce a large number of disparate ideas in one paragraph and does not stop to give details of any of them. It is often found in the introductory sections of expository pieces outlining the main ideas that will be covered. Here are two examples, the first of which is quoted by Christensen:

- 1 The process of learning is essential to our lives.
 - 2 All higher animals seek it deliberately.
 - 3 They are inquisitive and they experiment.
 - 4 An experiment is a sort of harmless trial run of some action which we shall have to make in the real world; and this, whether it is made in the laboratory by scientists or by fox-cubs outside their earth.
 - 5 The scientist experiments and the cub plays; both are learning to correct their errors of judgment in a setting in which errors are not fatal.

6 Perhaps this is what gives them both their air of happiness and freedom in these activities.

--J. Bronowski, The Common Sense of Science

- 1 Cheddar is the best known cheese throughout the United States and the one most commonly made in factories.
- 2 The Cheddar process was brought to America by English immigrants.
- 3 Similar to Cheddar cheese are Pineapple, English Dairy, Sage cheese, and California jack cheese.
- 4 The Cheddar cheese process as employed in the factories to-day has been modified and improved since it was first introduced into this country by the early immigrants.
- 5 The following description includes only the practices as found in the factories today if whole milk is used.
- 6 Skimmed-milk Cheddar cheese is discussed later.

--Charles Thom & Walter K. Fisk, The Book of Cheese

Mixed Sequences

As I have suggested, simple paragraph sequences are not common. The simple coordinate sequence is particularly rare, but it is also rare to see a good paragraph move from element to element without stopping to return to a previous level. Most paragraphs utilize some form that mixes coordination and subordination, that rises and falls in its levels as the need arises.

- 1 It was obvious that the primitive methods of discipline which had reached their apogee under the domination of Keate were altogether incompatible with Dr. Arnold's view of the functions of a headmaster and the proper governance of a public school.
- 2 Clearly, it was not for such as he to demean himself by bellowing and cuffing, by losing his temper once an hour, and by wreaking his vengeance with indiscriminate flagellations.
- 2 Order must be kept in other ways.

- 3 The worst boys were publicly expelled, many were silently removed, and when Dr. Arnold considered that a flogging was necessary, he administered it with gravity.
1. For he had no theoretical objection to corporal punishment.
2. On the contrary, he supported it, as was his wont, by an appeal to general principles.
3. "There is," he said, "an essential inferiority in a boy as compared with a man"; and hence "where there is no equality, the exercise of superiority implied in personal chastisement" inevitably followed.

--Lytton Strachey, Eminent Victorians

There are mixed sequences based on coordinate sequences and, much less frequently, mixed sequences based on subordinate sequences; the difference is that mixed coordinate sequences, like the example above, move back and forth in levels of generality rising and falling as they need to. Subordinate sequences, on the other hand, move continuously toward more specificity by placing new sentences only at equal or lower levels of generality. As Christensen says,

...in a coordinate sequence the repetition of structure is itself emphatic and a climactic order by its very nature is a movement from less to more emphatic. In a subordinate sequence the order is from the more to the less inclusive, from the biggest box to successively smaller boxes, so that the paragraph seems to be petering out. But at the same time it moves from the abstract or general to the concrete or specific. . .with an effect something like that of a camera moving in for a close-up.³⁶

Christensen gives these examples of each type:

MIXED SEQUENCE-BASED ON SUBORDINATE SEQUENCE

- 1 The purpose of science is to describe the world in an orderly scheme or language which will help us to look ahead.
- 2 We want to forecast what we can of the future behaviour of the world;
 - particularly we want to forecast how it would behave under several alternative actions of our own between which we are usually trying to choose.
- 3 This is a very limited purpose.
 - 4 It has nothing whatever to do with bold generalizations about the universal workings of cause and effect.
 - 4 It has nothing to do with cause and effect at all, or with any other special mechanism.
 - 4 Nothing in this purpose, which is to order the world as an aid to decision and action, implies that the order must be of one kind rather than another.
 - 5 The order is what we find to work, conveniently and instructively.
 - 5 It is not something we stipulate; it is not something we can dogmatise about.
 - 5 It is what we find; it is what we find useful.

--J. Bronowski, The Common Sense of Science

MIXED SEQUENCE-BASED ON COORDINATE SEQUENCE

- 1 The other [mode of thought] is the scientific method.
- 2 It subjects the conclusions of reason to the arbitrament of hard fact to build an increasing body of tested knowledge.
- 2 It refuses to ask questions that cannot be answered, and rejects such answers as cannot be provided except by Revelation.
- 2 It discovers the relatedness of all things in the universe--of the motion of the moon to the influence of the earth and sun, of the nature of the organism to its environment, of human civilization to the conditions under which it is made.
- 2 It introduces history into everything.
 - 3 Stars and scenery have their history, alike with plant species or human institutions, and nothing is intelligible without some knowledge of its past.
 - 4 As Whitehead has said, each event is the reflection or effect of every other event, past as well as present.
- 2 It rejects dualism.
 - 3 The supernatural is in part the region of the natural that has not yet been understood, in part an invention of human fantasy, in part the unknowable.

- 3 Body and soul are not separate entities, but two aspects of one organization, and
Man is that portion of the universal world-stuff that has evolved until it is capable of rational and purposeful values.
- 4 His place in the universe is to continue that evolution and to realize those values.

--Julian Huxley, Man in the Modern World

Christensen warns that some paragraphs have no topic sentence--the implied topic sentence once again--but that such paragraphs are rare in student writing. More common are paragraphs which have sentences in them that are not part of the sequence, that are introductory or transitional. This non-sequential nature is usually recognizable by semantic signals rather than syntactic ones:

(Intro) Most discussion of the issue bogs down in minutiae about when human life begins or when the fetus can be considered to be alive, etc.

1. All this is really irrelevant to the issue of the legality (again, not necessarily the morality) of abortion.
2. The Catholic antiabortionist, for example, declares that all he wants for the fetus is the rights of any human being--i.e., the right not to be murdered.
1. But there is more involved here, and this is the crucial consideration.
 2. If we are to treat the fetus as having the same rights as humans, then let us ask: What human has the right to remain, unbidden, as an unwanted parasite within some other human being's body?
 2. This is the nub of the issue: the absolute right of every person, and hence every woman, to the ownership of her own body.
 3. What the mother is doing in abortion is causing an unwanted entity within her body to be ejected from it.
 3. If the fetus dies, this does not rebut the point that no being has a right to live, unbidden, as a parasite within or upon some person's body.

--Murray Rothbard, For a New Liberty

And finally, Christensen warns us, some paragraphing is just illogical and cannot be easily charted using his method.

CLASSROOM USE OF CHRISTENSEN'S GENERATIVE RHETORIC
OF THE PARAGRAPH

Christensen originally called his paragraphing system "generative" because he was certain that by insisting on the use of more complex coordinate and subordinate structures the teacher could get his students to "generate" denser paragraphs. His system freed the teacher from having to teach the complicated "methods of development" of the classical paragraph and relied instead on structural as well as content-based semantic cues. It was a genuinely new way of viewing paragraph form, and Christensen was certain it would revolutionize rhetoric.

The revolution has not been completely successful. The Christensen paragraphing method, while genuinely useful, is neither as easily teachable nor as useably generative as was hoped. It can, like the classical paragraph, be used to great advantage to help your students write discrete paragraphs, but, also like the classical paragraph, it has serious problems when students attempt to use it as a generative tool for constructing paragraphs that must fit together into an essay. Once again, we are aware that we do not consciously assemble paragraphs this way ourselves. For students, the question of whether they should use a coordinate or subordinate sequence can be just as blocking as trying to decide between using

cause-and-effect development or definition.

As Christensen developed his paragraph method, it is essentially descriptive, not generative. He analyzed hundreds of professional paragraphs and discovered many common structural traits, elements of which are undoubtedly real. Since the method is descriptive, I have found that it is best used--as are all of the other theories of the paragraph--as an after-the-fact device for editing and testing paragraphs that have already been generated intuitively. I suspect that one of the reasons for the slow acceptance and surprising ignorance of Christensen's theory is that more was claimed for and expected of it than it could deliver. Christensen said it would generate essay-content paragraphs; ergo, if the theory were valid at all it would be as a generative theory. It did not work brilliantly in that capacity, and many members of the profession gave up on it.

This is in a sense ironic, because the Christensen theory can, as I mentioned previously, be generative of paragraphs treated as single pieces of writing. It is fine for demonstrating how paragraphs can be made denser in texture, and is specifically called for in the treatment of short-paragraph problems--the thinness of texture that so many freshman essays suffer from. First let us examine the generation of single paragraphs, and from there move on to Christensen theory in use as an editing tool.

Generating Paragraphs

Before anything can be done with the Christensen method of paragraphing, your students have to become familiar with the concepts of levels of generality and of coordination and subordination. If you have previously taught Christensen's sentence theory, that is a natural place to start; the parallels are obvious. If you have not, begin by handing out a dittoed sheet that contains examples of cumulative sentences graphed according to the Christensen method and matching paragraph structures graphed similarly. Stick with relatively simple sequences at this point--nothing long or hard to follow in its structure.

Start with the concept of the topic sentence. The topic sentence does not usually need too much stress as long as you point out that the topic sentence is always first in the sequence and that it is usually a fairly general statement. Merely pointing out its existence and placement should be enough for the time being, because you have to establish its meaning contextually through an explanation of coordination and subordination before the idea can really come to life.

The best way to explain coordination in sentences is to stress the fact that coordinate sentences "put like things in like ways," that they have the same relationship to the topic sentence.³⁷ Your examples should include simple coordinate sequences that utilize parallel constructions, since parallelism is nearly always a sign of coordination, but make certain that you demonstrate how coordination

can work without parallelism as well. Point up the fact that coordinate sentences do not comment on each other, but on previous material.

Subordination is best explained in terms of clarification or exemplification. A subordinate sentence is usually more specific than the one that precedes it; as Christensen says, a sentence is subordinate to the one above it "when it makes some kind of comment on it." In a subordinate sequence, as Christensen points out, each sentence is a comment on the sentence above it, and a mixed subordinate sequence is created by "any doubling or multiplying of examples, causes, reasons, or the like." You need not place too much stress on differentiating mixed coordinate from mixed subordinate sequences, though; even Christensen admits that "it is of no great moment to settle whether a mixed sequence is coordinate or subordinate; these are just convenient terms to designate recurring configurations."³⁸

After you have explained these terms, get right down to the analysis of paragraphs. You can choose paragraphs at random from the reader if you are using one, but the best technique initially is to ditto off paragraphs that you have chosen as not being too difficult and that illustrate different sorts of sequences. Begin with a simple short sequence, and work up to more complex mixed sequences. Your instructions to the students should be as simple as possible at this stage. Illustrate an analysis on the blackboard and ask the class to help by making suggestions. Try this as an approach:

"First, assume that the first sentence in the paragraph is the topic sentence. It may not state the thesis or subject of the paragraph; just look at it as the signal-sentence that announces a new level of generality and gets the paragraph started. Write it at the left margin of a piece of paper, numbered 1.

Now examine the second sentence. Does it continue the idea or structure of the first sentence or does it comment on the idea or structure of the first sentence? If it continues the idea or structure of the first sentence, it is parallel or coordinate with the first sentence. If, as is usually the case, it comments on, or refers to, or clarifies the idea or structure of the first sentence, it is subordinate to the first sentence. In that case, number it 2 and indent it one half-inch when you write it down under the first sentence.

Look at the third sentence. Does it continue or comment on the first sentence? If it does not continue the ideas or structure of the first sentence, compare it to the second very carefully. If it comments on the structure or ideas of the first sentence, ask how it relates to the second sentence. If it continues the structure or ideas of the second sentence, it is coordinate with the second sentence. Number it 2 and write it directly under the second sentence. If, however, it comments on, refers to, clarifies, etc., the structure or ideas of the second sentence, it is subordinate to the second sentence. Number it 3 and indent it a full inch when you write it down under the second.

Continue this sort of analysis with the rest of the sentence in the paragraph. The essential test will always be the question of whether the new sentence continues or comments on the sentences above it. Remember that you must compare it to each of the sentences above it, because it may be returning to continue or comment on a level that is two or three sentences higher. Don't be afraid of getting to level 5 and then having to return to level 2. Paragraphs constantly rise and fall in levels of generality. Just make certain that you keep checking each new sentence against all the sentences that precede it."

This is a point in the course when oral discussion can really help to clarify students' understanding. There will be quite a few disagreements on the numbering of sentences at first, and if you can get students arguing with each other in favor of the levels they have assigned to sentences, the whole concept will come clear to

them faster than if you lectured on it for hours. There may be some sentences that are genuinely impossible to assign levels to with complete certainty, but as you go from simple to complex sequences, discussing each one, spend as much time as your students need to be able to follow; they should gradually get over their initial distrust of the novel concept of "levels of generality," and feel more comfortable with the theory.

At that point, you can turn them loose in the reader or in hand-outs that contain more difficult sequences. Let them apply their analyses to exposition in the rough. Occasionally you will strike a paragraph that has no topic sentence or that has introductory or transitional material in sentences at the beginning that are not part of the sequence, and at those points you need to explain that the Christensen paragraph is a theoretical general model, not an absolute rule.

Finally, you should be ready to get your students to generate some paragraphs using the model. Suggest the paragraph sequences that they should follow at first by giving a list of sentence directions.³⁹ Start with a coordinate sequence:

Write a topic sentence. (You may want to suggest one that contains a plural term such as reasons, causes, uses, etc.)

Add a sentence that supports it.

Add a second supporting sentence.

Add a third supporting sentence.

Conclude with a final supporting sentence.

As a sort of diagram you can put this sequence on the board in this form:

1. _____
2. _____
2. _____
2. _____
2. _____

Then you can work up to a subordinate sequence:

Write a topic sentence.

Qualify that sentence. (Write a sentence that comments on the first sentence.)

Add a specific detail.

Add another detail.

Qualify that detail.

On the board this sequence looks like:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Last, try mixed sequences. These are more difficult because they require planning ahead and a division of concepts. Give your students a topic sentence to work with the first time through:

Write a topic sentence that has two components.

Qualify that sentence.

Add a specific detail.

Add another detail.

Qualify the topic sentence again.

Add a detail to this qualification.

Add another detail.

Qualify that detail.

And this paragraph diagram looks like this:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
3. _____
2. _____
3. _____
3. _____
4. _____

If things have worked out to your satisfaction thus far, this is the point at which you should let your students create their own sequences

and write their own paragraphs. A good checking exercise is to ask each student to write out his generated paragraph in normal form and give it to a classmate to analyze. If the analysis differs from the original plan, the students can confer and try to find out where their perceptions diverge.

You will probably feel so successful at teaching the generation of paragraphs using the Christensen model by this time that you may be tempted to assign the Christensen method as a prerequisite to all formal writing of the class. I can only repeat my earlier warning: the Christensen method is disappointing when freshmen try to use it in essays. Complex questions of essay development, transitions from paragraph to paragraph, and flow of exposition or argument are just not dealt with by the Christensen model; it tends to produce essays in lovely paragraphs that don't fit together well. Experiment if you want, but caveat rhetor.

Paragraph Revision Using the Christensen Model

After you have reached the point at which your students are comfortable analyzing and generating discrete paragraphs--and reaching this point may take up to two weeks--you can concentrate on using the Christensen method in real writing situations, for the revision and editing of intuitively-generated paragraphs. The analyses allowed by the Christensen method are extremely useful in showing students how the sentences in their paragraphs work or do not work together. Although the whole progression from analysis to generation to revision

of paragraphs may not be necessary for an understanding of how to use Christensen paragraphing as an editing technique, it does guarantee a familiarity with the analytical process that makes revision easier.

The application of the Christensen model to already generated paragraphs is not difficult. The single most important step is the actual dissection of each student paragraph into coordinate or subordinate sequences. To perform this analysis, direct your students to constantly apply these three question-types to the paragraphs they have written intuitively:

1. Is this sentence coordinate with the ones above it or subordinate to them?
2. If it is coordinate:
 - A. How does it relate to the topic sentence?
 - B. How does it relate to the other sentences on its level?
 - C. Does this concept need further explanation with a subordinate sequence?
3. If it is subordinate:
 - A. How does it relate to the level above it?
 - B. How does it relate to the other sentences on its level?
 - C. Is it complete as it stands or could it use further explanation with a coordinate or subordinate sentence?

Using these questions, students can pick through their intuitively-generated paragraphs weeding out sentences that are not related to the topic sentence or to coordinate sentences, and deciding whether given sequence is full enough developed.

Christensen paragraphing does take time to teach. Most students are initially uncomfortable with it, and some will hate it throughout. It has its limits, but it does work well within them. Students able to apply the Christensen model will not present you with the thin failures or the incoherent masses of information that intuitively written paragraphs often are. If you want, you can ask for a diagram of each paragraph along with the essay to make certain that the revision method has been used and that the students know where every sentence fits. Christensen paragraphing may not be the revolution in rhetoric its creator envisioned, but used properly, it will help your students to create sound paragraphs.

TAGMEMIC PARAGRAPHING

Like tagmemic invention, tagmemic paragraph theory evolved from the linguistic work of Kenneth Pike, whose theories of tagmemic linguistics became the raw material for his theories of composition. Linguistics has always been primarily a descriptive discipline, devoted to careful analysis of existing phenomena, and this descriptive nature characterizes tagmemic paragraph theory as well; it was originally developed as a post facto descriptive tool for use on "paragraph-level tagmemes." As a result, despite the fact that it can be used generatively for certain kinds of practice exercises, tagmemic paragraphing, like the other paragraph theories we have discussed, is primarily useful as an editing tool.

Tagmeme, as you may recall from Chapter Two, is the term that Kenneth Pike invented to describe the central component of his linguistic theory. Simply put, a tagmeme equals a functional slot to be filled plus a class of possible fillers of the slot.⁴⁰ Tagmemic paragraph analysis posits an expository paragraph as a series of slots, all of which can be filled by any one of a whole class of fillers. The position of each sentence in the paragraph indicates a slot, and tagmemic paragraph theory specifies both the slots that make up the paragraph and the kinds of sentences that make up the filler classes of the slots.

Alton L. Becker, who has done most of the work using tagmemic paragraph-analysis, says in his article "A Tagmemic Approach to Paragraph Analysis" that tagmemic analysis allows an examination of the relationship of the parts of a paragraph as well as a mere description of the parts themselves, which is the domain of the classical paragraph.⁴¹ He cautions, though, that tagmemic analysis, as it has been evolved so far, cannot describe all of the content-based aspects of paragraph structure; in addition, Becker's work thus far has concentrated on expository paragraphs, excluding rigorous examination of other modes of discourse. With these caveats in mind, let us look at what tagmemic paragraph structures are.

Becker began his investigation of the paragraph with the assumptions that, as he says, "(1) most paragraphs are conventional units, not completely arbitrary ones. . .and (2) paragraphs are, to use tagmemic jargon, multi-systemic. . ." ⁴² He found three major patterns in expository paragraphs, two of which are closely related. They are:

T -- Topic

R -- Restriction

I -- Illustration

P -- Problem

S -- Solution

Q -- Question

A -- Answer⁴³

According to Becker, these patterns can be derived inductively by giving students examples of expository paragraphs and asking them to divide them up into sections that seem significant. Becker found "a striking percentage of agreement" about the important divisions, "especially after students have partitioned enough paragraphs to recognize recurring patterns."⁴⁴ The three patterns, in different configurations, can take in most expository paragraphs in English.

The most common expository pattern that Becker's students found was composed of some version of TRI--Topic, Restriction, and Illustration. None of these slots is absolutely limited to one sentence, but the T slot generally is filled by a single sentence (our old friend the topic sentence in yet another form), and the R slot is often also a single sentence. In its simplest form, TRI consists of a sentence that states the topic generally (T), a sentence that qualifies or restricts that general topic, narrowing down its meaning (R),

and a sentence or group of sentences in which the restricted topic is illustrated or exemplified on a more specific level (I). The first example is supplied by Becker, the second by this author:

(T) The English Constitution--that indescribable entity-- is a living thing, growing with the growth of men, and assuming ever-varying forms in accordance with the subtle and complex laws of human character. (R) It is the child of wisdom and chance. (I) The wise men of 1688 moulded it into the shape we know, but the chance that George I could not speak English gave it one of its essential peculiarities--the system of a Cabinet independent of the Crown and subordinate to the Prime Minister. (I) The Wisdom of Lord Grey saved it from petrification and set it upon the path of democracy. (I) Then chance intervened once more. (I) A female sovereign happened to marry an able and pertinacious man, and it seemed likely that an element which had been quiescent within it for years--the element of irresponsible administrative power-- was about to become its predominant characteristic and change completely the direction of its growth. (I) But what chance gave, chance took away. (I) The Consort perished in his prime, and the English Constitution, dropping the dead limb with hardly a tremor, continued its mysterious life as if he had never been.

--Lytton Strachey, Queen Victoria

(T) One day my little London doctor advised me to try the stomach pump. (R) The word frightened me, but I found it was only a syphon and not a pump. (I) One had to push an india rubber tube down one's throat, pour a quart or so of warm water into the stomach through a funnel, depress the funnel below one's waist, and the water would come out, carrying all the impurities and undigested food. (I) The first time I did it with the help of the doctor, and the immediate relief cannot be described. (I) From feeling extremely ill, I was perfectly well in a moment. (I) I had got rid of the peas that the doctor had recommended and I could not help grinning as they came out with the water, proving that his prescription had been bad.

--Frank Harris, My Life and Loves

As in Christensen's paragraph theory, the concept of levels of generality is important in tagmemic paragraphing. Each slot in the TRI pattern is usually filled with certain types of sentences, and a shift from one slot to another is also usually also a shift in levels of generality. As Becker states,

. . .the T slot can be filled by a simple proposition, or by a proposition implying a contrast, comparison, partition, etc. The R slot is frequently a restatement of T at a lower level of generality, a definition of T or a term in T, a metaphoric restatement of T, etc. The I slot can be filled by one or more examples (often in a narrative or descriptive pattern), an extended analogy, a series of specific comparisons, etc. For each slot there is a general function and a set of potential fillers.⁴⁵

In the example paragraph, the T slot is filled by a proposition, a general statement of fact introducing the stomach pump. The R slot is filled by a more specific definition of the device, and the I slots by further definition and examples in a narrative pattern.

The second major pattern found by Becker is PS, Problem-Solution, of which QA, Question-Answer, is a subset. Unlike the TRI pattern, PS has only two slots: the P slot, which states the problem to be solved or the effect to be explained, and S, which provides the solution or the causes of the effect. If the S slot is lengthy or complex, it is likely to be filled by a TRI pattern of some sort; the TRI structure is generally found in some form in every paragraph of any length.⁴⁶

Here is an example of a paragraph which uses all of the slots:

(Q) It is not difficult to envision a network of private, unsubsidized and unregulated railroads and airlines, but could there be a system of private roads? (Q) Could such a system be at all feasible? (A) One answer is that private roads have worked admirably in the past. (P) In England before the eighteenth century, for example, roads, invariably owned and operated by local governments, were badly constructed and even more badly maintained. (P) These public roads could never have supported the mighty Industrial Revolution that England experienced in the eighteenth century, the "revolution" that ushered in the modern age. (S)(T) The vital task of improving the almost impassable English roads was performed by private turnpike companies, which beginning in 1706, organized and established the great network of roads which made England the envy of the world. (R) The owners of these private turnpike companies were generally landowners, merchants, and industrialists in the area being served by the road, and they recouped their costs by charging tolls at selected tollgates. (I) Often the collection of tolls was leased out for a year or more to individuals selected by competitive bid at auction. (I) It was these private roads that developed an internal market in England, and that greatly lowered the costs of transport of coal and other bulky material.

--Murray Rothbard, For a New Liberty

These, then, are the two major patterns into which expository paragraphs fall. By far the most common form is TRI, but that pattern can also appear inverted into an IRT form--an inductive form that proceeds from specific to general (Becker makes the interesting observation that students who were asked to evaluate paragraphs out of context preferred IRT paragraphs over TRI by a large margin.

Perhaps it is the desire for instant gratification--having examples or narration dumped in your lap without having to work through abstractions first.) Other common permutations are TIRI, ITR, and TRIT.⁴⁷ You will notice that the I is the floating slot, and that T precedes R in most cases. R is in some ways the optional slot, but

Becker found that the R slot "tends to be deleted more often in poor student paragraphs than in high-quality expository writing."⁴⁸

The problem of identification of the slots through examination of their differing levels of generality has been attempted, if not entirely solved by Becker's theory. He proposes the notion of identification of levels of generality by identification of what he calls equivalence classes or equivalence chains within paragraphs.⁴⁹ Equivalence chains are chains of words and phrases in paragraphs that have the same referents.⁵⁰ Their primary task is to promote paragraph coherence, but they can often be divided into general and particular chains, what Becker calls head and attribute chains.⁵¹ Consider the following paragraph:

(T) In the last few weeks the German U-boats, having largely abandoned the gun for the torpedo, have descended from the torpedo to the mine. (R) This is about the lowest form of warfare that can be imagined. (I) It is the warfare of the I.R.A., leaving the bomb in the parcels office at the railway station. The magnetic mine, deposited secretly by the U-boat under the cloak of darkness in the approaches to our harbors, or dropped by parachutes from aircraft, may perhaps be Herr Hitler's much-vaunted secret weapon. It is certainly a characteristic weapon, and one that will no doubt be forever associated with his name. More than half our losses in the last month have been due to the magnetic mine, but two-thirds of the total losses from the use of this mine have fallen not upon belligerents but upon neutrals. In fact, in the third month of the war, neutral losses by mine have been twice as great as British losses, and neutral losses of all kinds have been one-third greater than belligerent losses. These losses have fallen upon Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Belgian, Finnish, Yugoslav, Dutch, Greek, Italian, and Japanese vessels, who have had to pay a heavy toll for remaining in friendly relations with Germany. So far as the sea war is concerned, German friendship has proved far more poisonous than German enmity.

--Winston Churchill, "The War at Sea," Dec. 6, 1939

In this paragraph, the lexical head of the paragraph is the word mine, which begins an equivalence chain that covers the whole paragraph. . . lowest form of warfare, warfare of the I.R.A., magnetic mine, deposited secretly, Hitler's secret weapon, characteristic weapon, this mine, losses by mine.

The main attribute chain has to do with the shipping losses. This class is subsidiary to the class of mine, and has its domain only in the I slot of the paragraph. . . half our losses, total losses, neutral losses, these losses, heavy toll.

In general, the head chain of the paragraph is introduced in the T or R slot, and controls the shaping form of the paragraph. It is the only chain in some paragraphs with a short or simple structure. In longer or more complex paragraphs, there may be a head chain and several attribute chains; the attribute chains are marked by the fact that they begin in the R or I slot and end in the I slot.

CLASSROOM USE OF TAGMEMIC PARAGRAPHING

Of the types of paragraphing discussed in this chapter, tagmemic paragraphing may be the easiest to teach. Partially its teaching ease is due to the limited number of concepts it employs, and partially it is due to the admittedly exploratory and unfinished nature of the theory itself. Francis Christensen complained that Becker's terms were "far from adequate," and stated that "a complete taxonomy of the paragraph in these terms would have to be far more elaborate."⁵²

Becker himself admits that he has not yet explored some crucial areas of paragraph construction, and a result of this tentative nature of the theory is that it is both easy to absorb and incomplete. Although Becker in his article deals with the analysis of paragraphs, Ross Winterowd has proposed that tagmemic paragraphing has limited generative uses, so we will examine its use in both generating and editing paragraphs. Like the other paragraph models, its use is more productive in the latter mode than in the former.

As in the use of any model, the first step is complete familiarization of your students with the terms of tagmemic paragraphing and their meaning. Make up dittoed sheets with at least three examples of each of the common paragraph patterns--different versions of simple TRI and PS/QA patterns. The natural introduction to these labels is to describe how they were discovered--by inductive investigation on the part of students like themselves. This might also be a good time to discuss the paragraph as a psychologically real unit and to describe the Koen, Becker, and Young experiment which confirmed the paragraph as a sharable unit.

Go over the handouts and analyze each of the example paragraphs orally, explaining how each slot works and how they all work together. It is probably best to stay away from the vocabulary of technical tagmemic terms at this stage of the game--too much use of "slot" and "equivalence chain" and "lexical head" tends to leave your students worried about terms rather than substance. In particular, note the relationship of the T and R slots and the fact that the I slots do not

follow the T, but only the topic idea as it is restricted and defined in the R slot.

Analyzing the PS/QA patterns is easy, but you will be doing your students no favor if you give them to understand that PS or QA are found often without some form of TRI embedded within them. Choose your examples of PS/QA carefully, making certain that they include both simple and embedded patterns.

At this point you will have to make a decision about introducing the IRT, TIRI, and ITR patterns. They are certainly used by professional writers, but I have found that adding the extra complexity to the concept at this time can be dangerous--the better writers can take to the changed patterns, but the strugglers have a hard time, often giving the whole thing up with a sigh and a despairing glare at the ceiling. You will have to decide how you want to handle it based on your perception of how well your students have absorbed the simple patterns.

The next dittoed sheet you hand out will be carefully chosen paragraphs that are not marked or divided, and the exercise will be a controlled duplication of Becker's original experiment: your students should be able to divide these paragraphs into TRIPSQA slots with a fair amount of consistency. Start with a simple TRI or PS pattern, then work into an embedded PSTRI pattern, and finish up with a complex $PS_1T_1RI_1I_2S_2T_2RI$ or something equally complicated. If your students have trouble with this exercise, keep doing similar ones until they grasp the method; this is the keystone of all that comes after it.

Once students recognize the slots in "tame" paragraphs, set them loose in the reader on selected pages. You will have to carefully choose the selections in the reader best for this--if a selection is too narrative or argumentative it may be difficult for students to dissect. Try assigning a page rather than a specific paragraph. After the paragraphs have been divided, ask for volunteers to explain their divisions. This is a good point in which to initiate a discussion like the one I mentioned in Christensen paragraphing, in which students can argue with each other about which slots sentences should fill. ("Look, it restricts that topic!" "Nah, it illustrates it. Look at that main idea. . ." "It's a solution but also an illustration." etc.) Argument about formal properties is not always easy to elicit, but this method allows categorizations simple and real enough to be involving for students.

If you feel as if things are going well here, you can introduce the idea of equivalence chains in paragraphs. I call them "idea chains" when teaching them. It is not hard to point out how they work to make a paragraph coherent; tracing them as words and concepts through several paragraphs is usually enough to do it. Differentiating head and attribute chains is not usually worth it, since the idea you want to get across is not layers of generality but methods of making paragraphs cohere. This idea will be useful later on, especially in the revision of their paragraphs.

At this stage your students should be able to manipulate the TRIPSQA patterns fairly well, and you are ready to move on to application to their own writing.

Tagmemic Paragraph Generation

According to W. Ross Winterowd, TRIPSQA can serve as a set of "form-oriented topics," asking students to create content for formal slots of whose existence we are certain. He opposes these formal topics to the usual content-oriented topics such as classical topoi, Burke's Pentad, etc, in which the slots ask for content-based fillers.⁵³

The main problem with form-oriented topics is not in generating single paragraphs but in generating whole discourses out of the paragraphs. No formal rhetoric beyond the paragraph has yet been put forward that is not so reductive and schematic that it makes writing somewhat robotoid. Like Christensen paragraphing, which is also a formally-oriented method of paragraph generation, tagmemic paragraphing can produce single paragraphs but has trouble tying them together. This problem is not hard to understand; the conceptual demands of an essay are linked directly to the conceptual demands of each paragraph, but the formal demands of an essay (insofar as we have been able to chart them) involve considerations that are only tangentially related to the formal demands of a paragraph.

This fact does not mean that you should skip the generation of paragraphs using tagmemic methods. Once again, as in the Christensen method, learning to manipulate the terms in a generative mode helps students to use them in the revision mode.

Asking for the generation of formally-ordered paragraphs is not difficult. First you provide a subject or an idea on a general topic--apartment or dorm living, local bars, college requirements, nuclear

energy--and ask your students to brainstorm it for a minute or so. They should not need much time; explain to them that all they have to generate is a simple proposition concerning the topic. The proposition generated will be the T slot of their paragraph.

After the T slot has been written, ask them to write an R slot, reminding them that the R slot can be one or two sentences and that it must narrow or define the general proposition advanced in T.

Finally, ask for sentences that illustrate or develop the restricted topic. Start with paragraphs with only one or two I slots and gradually work up to more I-slot sentences.

From this simple beginning you can work into generating a simple PS/QA paragraph, an embedded PSTRI pattern, and eventually more complex patterns. You can ask for patterns as complex as you want, but Winterowd's suggestion that the permutations get extremely complicated ($TR_1R_2I_1I_2$, I_1I_2TR) can be counterproductive.⁵⁴ Complexity for its sake can discourage students, especially those who fail to grasp the ideas it embodies. Our thought-processes do obey formal rules, but if form is given too much precedence over content it becomes sterile; the writer becomes, in Paul Rodgers' words, only "a rhetorician manipulating formulae in his notebook."⁵⁵

Tagmemic Paragraph Revision

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the paragraph methods herein are useful for editing the body paragraphs in an essay, not the introductory or concluding paragraphs. Make this clear to your

students especially about tagmemic paragraphing, because the patterns it describes are antithetical to the usual patterns of opening and closing paragraphs. Each body paragraph in the essays they write, on the other hand, should have some identifiable agglomeration of TRIPSQA and should be analyzable sentence by sentence and labeled accordingly.

Tagmemic paragraph revision assumes that the students are familiar with the tagmemic terms. To begin the revision process and get students acclimated to it, start by assigning a three-paragraph essay to be written in class. Give them a subject to write on--I often use the phrase "Why I Don't Read" as a topic suggestion--and tell the students not to worry about topics or restrictions as they write, merely to write a short essay of about three paragraphs as they normally would. The writing should take nearly the whole class period, and when it is over you should collect the essays. You don't have to read them; just hang on to them. This forced disengagement will give the students some objectivity, distancing them from the essays to a small degree (this "cold-storage" idea is used by many professional authors, over longer periods of time, of course).

Next time the class meets--ideally the interval should fall over a weekend--hand back the essays to the students who wrote them (as always, keep mum about the fact that you haven't read them--students always take papers more seriously if they think the teacher has an eye on them). Ask them to number each sentence in the essay and then to analyze each paragraph using the TRIPSQA method, marking the number of each sentence with the slot it fills on a separate sheet of paper.

If they hit a sentence that seemingly fills no slot or seems extraneous or like a part of another paragraph, it should be marked X. This process should take about fifteen minutes.

When all the students have completed their analyses, ask them to exchange essays and then do the same tagmemic analysis on each paragraph in the new essay they have received. After this is completed, the students should hand back their essays and compare their analyses. Talk about this can take up the rest of the class period; there is usually a fair amount of disagreement and clarification. "But I meant. . ." "But you said. . ."

If you have not introduced the concept of "idea chains" this is the time to do it. For homework that night ask each student to underline in red the "idea chains" that make each paragraph in his essay cohere and to eliminate or rewrite any sentence that was marked X. Collect these revised essays and look them over quickly to make certain that the tagmemic method has been used correctly. At that point, the short essays may not be brilliant, but their paragraph structure should be sound.

The next step is to ask your students to analyze the paragraphs in an older essay. The first one they wrote for you is the best and most illuminating to use. When they have analyzed it for paragraph structure you might offer them a chance to rewrite it for a better grade if you feel up to grading it again; if not, merely ask them to mark each sentence. What you should insist on here is not any specific pattern of slots, but on a coherent approach to whatever

pattern is used. Warn against the TI pattern, for instance, which is common in primitive paragraphs. Insist that PS/QA paragraphs embed a TRI to increase their density. Make certain that the I slots always refer back to the T or R slots by the use of red-underlined "idea chains." Get the X sentences out or get them rewritten.

After going through all of these stages, you are ready to ask your students to perform tagmemic analyses on their rough drafts prior to typing them; this is the ultimate and the only realistic use to be made of the TRIPSQA method. Enforcing this suggestion is up to you. If you want to check to make sure it is being done, you can ask students to hand in their tagmemically-analyzed rough drafts along with their typescripts. This is also a handy way to make certain that rough drafts are being produced.

If you have led your students through these steps you should begin to see a real improvement in the structure of their paragraphs. Short, thin paragraphs should gradually fill out, incoherent paragraphs should tighten up, and disunified paragraphs should drop their dead limbs as what Becker calls "the organic nature of the paragraph" become clearer to your students.

At about this time you may be getting uncomfortable once again with the prescriptive nature of this approach; indeed of all of the approaches in this chapter. I, too, am somewhat uncomfortable; all I can suggest by way of palliative is that by this rigid prescription or paragraph form, we are giving more than we are taking away. Those students who will be writers, those who will approach the task meaning

to say something in their own voices for a specific end--those, that is, who will eventually wish to write with quality and without compulsion--those students will eventually transcend rigid formal rules. They will read and practice writing, and the variable nature of the paragraph as it is used by professionals will become part of their repertoire.

Those students, on the other hand, who are writing under protest, whose personalities or careers will never demand much self-generated writing, will get from your prescriptions a useful technique that they can apply to any piece of expository writing that school or the world ever demands of them. To paraphrase Helen Thomas, the artists will learn to break the rules, while the mechanics will always have them to lean upon. In the final analysis, a grasp of the rules seldom ever holds anyone down, and used rightly, the rules can help keep people up.

NOTES

¹Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., "A Discourse-Centered Rhetoric of the Paragraph," College Composition and Communication 17 (Feb. 1966), 3.

²For the history of the "organic paragraph, see Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., "Alexander Bain and the Rise of the Organic Paragraph," Quarterly Journal of Speech 51 (Dec. 1965), 399-408.

³Rodgers, "A Discourse-Centered Rhetoric of the Paragraph," and Willis L. Pitkin, Jr., "Discourse Blocs," CCC 20 (May 1969), 138-148.

⁴Willis L. Pitkin, Jr., "Discourse Blocs," p. 139.

⁵Rodgers, "A Discourse-Centered Rhetoric of the Paragraph," pp. 5-6.

⁶Frank Koen, Alton L. Becker, and Richard Young, "The Psychological Reality of the Paragraph," Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior 8 (Feb. 1969), 49-53.

⁷Alton L. Becker, "Symposium on the Paragraph," CCC 17 (May 1966), 58.

⁸Frank D'Angelo, Process and Thought in Composition (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1977), p. 220.

⁹Richard L. Larson, "Sentences in Action: A Technique for Analyzing Paragraphs," CCC 18 (Feb. 1967), 16-22.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹²Helen Thomas, A Study of the Paragraph (New York: American Book Company, 1912), p. 28.

¹³Alexander Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric (New York: American Book Co., 1887), pp. 91-134.

¹⁴Rodgers, "Alexander Bain and the Rise of the Organic Paragraph," p. 403.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 402.

¹⁶Thomas, A Study of the Paragraph, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Villiers Denney, Paragraph-Writing: A Rhetoric for Colleges (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912), p. 5.

¹⁸Thomas, A Study of the Paragraph, pp. 12-13.

¹⁹Scott and Denney, Paragraph-Writing, p. 28.

²⁰James M. McCrimmon, Writing With A Purpose, 6th ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), p. 84.

²¹Richard Braddock, "The Frequency and Placement of Topic Sentences in Expository Prose," Research in the Teaching of English 8 (1974), 301.

²²William F. Irmischer, Teaching Expository Writing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 98.

²³John Genung, Practical Elements of Rhetoric (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1886, p. 194.

²⁴Barrett Wendell, English Composition (Boston: Scribners, 1891), p. 122.

²⁵Scott and Denney, Paragraph-Writing, pp. 31-48.

²⁶McCrimmon, Writing With A Purpose, pp. 88-92.

²⁷Arthur A. Stern, "When Is A Paragraph?" CCC 27 (Oct. 1976), 253-257.

²⁸Carol Cohan, "Writing Effective Paragraphs," CCC 27 (Dec. 1976), 364-5.

²⁹Wendell, English Composition, p. 135.

³⁰See "A Symposium on the Paragraph," in the May 1966 issue of CCC for particularly illuminating discussion by Christensen, Becker, Rodgers, Josephine Miles, and David H. Karrfalt (CCC 17), pp. 60-87.

³¹Francis Christensen, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph," CCC 16 (Oct. 1965), 146-156.

³²Francis and Bonniejean Christensen, A New Rhetoric (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 127-8.

³³Christensen, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph," p. 145.

³⁴Ibid., p. 145.

³⁵Christensen and Christensen, A New Rhetoric, p. 142.

³⁶Ibid., p. 149.

³⁷Ibid., p. 164.

³⁸Ibid., p. 153.

³⁹This exercise was adapted from Frank J. D'Angelo, Process and Thought in Composition, p. 243.

⁴⁰See Kenneth L. Pike, "A Linguistic Contribution to Composition," CCC 15 (May 1964), 82-88.

⁴¹Alton L. Becker, "A Tagmemic Approach to Paragraph Analysis," CCC 16 (Dec. 1965), 237-242.

⁴²Alton L. Becker, "Symposium on the Paragraph," p. 70.

⁴³Becker, "A Tagmemic Approach to Paragraph Analysis," p. 238.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 238.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 239.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 239.

⁴⁷Richard E. Young and Alton L. Becker, "Toward A Modern Theory of Rhetoric: A Tagmemic Contribution," Harvard Educ. Review 35 (Fall 1965), 465.

⁴⁸Becker, "Tagmemic Approach," p. 240

⁴⁹This concept is from Zellig S. Harris, Discourse Analysis Reprints (The Hague, Mouton and Co., 1963), pp. 7-10.

⁵⁰W. Ross Winterowd, The Contemporary Writer (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975), p. 113.

⁵¹Becker, "Tagmemic Approach," p. 241.

⁵²Francis Christensen, "Symposium on the Paragraph," CCC 17 (May 1966), 63.

⁵³W. Ross Winterowd, Contemporary Rhetoric: A Conceptual Background With Readings (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 44-45.

⁵⁴Winterowd, The Contemporary Writer, p. 134.

⁵⁵Paul C. Rodgers, "Symposium on the Paragraph," CCC 17 (May 1966), 75.

APPENDIX: TWO COURSE DESIGNS

APPENDIX: TWO COURSE DESIGNS

While there are innumerable ways of planning and designing a course, I have found that they all break down into either a heavy stress on syntactic skills--skills involving sentence-writing and stylistic choice--or content skills--those involving the ideas and arrangement of ideas in a piece of writing. These two basic course designs are illustrated here only as rough sketches of how a course might be put together. The illustrated structures are shown as ten-week quarter-system courses, but each could be stretched out to semester-length without any trouble. The illustration here is keyed to the chapters in this book--where the model merely lists "Paragraph," the reader can fill in that term with any of the methods listed in the chapter on paragraphing--traditional paragraphing, Christensen paragraphing, tagmemic paragraphing, etc. And so on with the other chapters.

Each week of the model lists three lessons: a Primary, a Secondary, and a Tertiary. This allows the lessons to be eliminated in order of their priority if a teacher runs short of time. This is a hierarchy, and it should not be taken to mean that class time each week is divided equally among the lessons listed.

Course Model Emphasizing Content Skills

<u>Week</u>	<u>Primary Lesson</u>	<u>Secondary Lesson</u>	<u>Tertiary Lesson</u>
1	Invention	Paragraph	Style Imitation
2	Invention	Paragraph	Style Imitation
3	Arrangement	Paragraph	Style Imitation
4	Invention	Sentence	Style Imitation
5	Invention	Sentence	Style Imitation
6	Arrangement	Sentence	Style Imitation
7	Arrangement	Sentence	Sentence
8	Invention	Style Analysis	Sentence
9	Invention	Style Analysis	Sentence
10	Arrangement	Style Analysis	Sentence

Course Model Emphasizing Syntactic Skills

<u>Week</u>	<u>Primary Lesson</u>	<u>Secondary Lesson</u>	<u>Tertiary Lesson</u>
1	Sentence	Style Imitation	Invention
2	Sentence	Style Imitation	Invention
3	Sentence	Style Imitation	Arrangement
4	Sentence	Style Imitation	Invention
5	Sentence	Paragraph	Invention
6	Sentence	Paragraph	Arrangement
7	Sentence	Paragraph	Arrangement
8	Sentence	Style Analysis	Invention
9	Sentence	Style Analysis	Invention
10	Sentence	Style Analysis	Arrangement

The following abbreviations occur frequently:

<u>CCC</u>	:	<u>College Composition and Communication</u>
<u>CE</u>	:	<u>College English</u>
<u>EJ</u>	:	<u>English Journal</u>
<u>FEN</u>	:	<u>Freshman English News</u>
<u>NCTE</u>	:	<u>National Council of Teachers of English</u>
<u>RTE</u>	:	<u>Research in the Teaching of English</u>

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