

## BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO AN END

There are many ways to end a message in conversation (assuming that someone else doesn't end it for you by interrupting). One is to generalize or sum up; another is to bring reference back to present time (in narrative) or to the general present. A useful device for bringing reference to general present in talk is use of a proverb or aphorism. In this theme, there is a semi-conclusion in the form of a summing up:

over'all its all of our fault in one way or another

But that sentence evokes yet another comment:

But then again we the people....

So there is good use for an aphoristic statement:

So I would suggest that society get on the good foot

## ORGANIZATION

Writing can be planned: A writer has time for planning, and readers expect that planning will be done. The customary expectation for the "standardized written English schoolroom essay" is that it will be planned hierarchically, with alternating movements from the general to the specific and back again, in a scheme something like this:

Generalization I  
  Specification I  
Generalization A  
  Specification A  
Generalization B  
  Specification B  
Generalization C  
  Specification C  
Regeneralization of I: A, B, C

Talking is rarely planned in advance, though a plan usually emerges as speakers cooperate in the task of making meaning. And talk is organized--as organized as writing is, though not in the same way.

The theme begins, as has been suggested, as a response--either to a real or to an imagined question:

Why don't children do well? . . .  
First of all the system. . . .

The pattern of implied question and response continues: sentence 6, for example, is a second response to the first implied question. And there are explicit rhetorical questions:

Sentence 10: But what about the kids? . . .  
Sentence 14: But who get the blame?....

The use of the adversative but is further evidence of the dialectic structure of the theme. It is almost as if the writer imagines a conversing partner.

The theme is not planned as a series of movements from the general to the specific and back again. There is some analysis of generalizations for their component parts (for example, "schools," "students," "teachers," comprise "the system"); but there is no consistent hierarchical arrangement. Rather, a topic is stated--usually as a response to an implied or rhetorically stated question, and thoughts about the topic are written down more or less as they come to mind: a pattern of message-making very familiar in talking, since the speaker must retrieve information instantaneously and has no time to order it in any other than a temporal sequence.

What finally holds the theme together--or at least can in an oral rendering--is the strongly projected stance of the author: the sense a hearer (or sympathetic reader) gets of a person worrying a question of personal concern and talking about it. The multitude of connectives that assert connection between ideas, even if they do not denote explicitly what the connections are, and the management of focus, even though the focus is subject to rapid shift, also contribute to overall coherence. These, too, are strategies, however, more customary and

more effective in spoken discourse than in writing.

The theme is not, of course, a transcript of a monologue uttered in a conversational context. It was written down, and it is written text, and it consequently has features characteristic of writing as well as many characteristic of speech. Inexperienced writers produce what might be called transitional texts as they progressively learn the discourse and grammar rules of written English genres. By recognizing the oral features of texts, teachers can help smooth the transition.

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In workshops with teachers concerned with the problems of basic writers, we at the English Composition Board have had an opportunity to analyze transitional texts like "First of all the system. . ." and to work toward two results: a list of the kinds of importation from speech one can find in texts produced by basic writers; and an outline of a pedagogy for dealing with the various kinds of importation. Here is a list developed by participants in our most recent workshop:

Influences from speech may be found in all of the following:

1. Strategies for finding and shaping meaning
  - a. Predominance of dialectic organization: question and answer; assertion and counter-assertion.
  - b. Predominance of inductive movement: from example to generalization.
  - c. Predominance of personal narrative; of narrative illustration used as evidence.
2. Rhetorical strategies (speaker-audience-topic relations):
  - a. Predominance of highly personalized point of view.
  - b. Tendency to rely on an extra-linguistic context and to ignore the needs of an absent audience of readers:
    - (1) Failure to contextualize the topic;
    - (2) Failure to state crucial presuppositions;
    - (3) Tendency to assume background knowledge necessary to meaning.

3. Organizational strategies
  - a. Predominance of topic-comment arrangement.
  - b. Predominance of linear sequencing, especially temporal sequencing.
  - c. As a hypercorrection, mechanical imposition of an organizational pattern (Introduction: Three points: Conclusion) that does not fit the content or the needs of the audience.
  - d. Heavy use of connectives, especially coordinating conjunctions.
  - e. Non-denotative use of connectives (*so*, used merely as a connective with no resultive sense).
4. Manipulation of code (differences in medium):
  - a. Loosely constructed sentences, with weakly denotative adverbial openings, and with relatively empty fillers.
  - b. Use of colloquialisms and of non-standard colloquialisms; hypercorrection of forms.
  - c. Overuse of slang or of colloquial jargon.
  - d. Restricted range of word choice; repetition; use of cliches.
5. Management of the special conventions of writing (script or typographical features):
  - a. Non-conventional or uncertain punctuation.
  - b. Spellings based on pronunciation; hypercorrections showing uncertain knowledge.

A glance at the list will show the limits of error analysis when analysis is restricted to the domains of grammar and mechanics and does not extend to discourse features.

The pedagogy we have been developing places heavy emphasis on revision. Basic writers should be encouraged to create first drafts rapidly, worrying most about the problem of putting meaning into words and worrying little if at all initially about the demands of form. Once a text exists, it can be read and re-written until it more closely resembles the norms of standardized written English of a particular genre. In a classroom discussion of examples, teachers can draw from students and then make explicit the crucial differences between speech norms and writing norms; and student writers can then revise their texts. The expectation is that student writers will internalize the appropriate norms and gradually modify their first drafts as well as later ones.

There are limits and dangers in this approach. We do not know much about the more important discourse rules of speech or of writing in their various genres: those that guide the translation of intention and conception into language. Knowing little, we may state rules narrowly and apply them over-rigorously, forgetting that both talk and writing in themselves are rich in diversity. Students must be engaged in trying to state the differences and thus be helping to formulate rules. If they are so engaged

in a genuine act of discovery, we teachers acknowledge the vastness of our ignorance and thus avoid dogmatic prescription. In any work exploring differences between talk and writing, these must be the cardinal lessons: talk is every bit as good as writing; talk and writing differ only because they function differently in their human uses; sometimes writing that looks like talk is better than writing that looks too much like writing. It all depends, finally, on what a human being wants to do with her mouth or her pen.

These are the two more explicit messages this essay tries to convey: (1) Inexperienced writers, when asked to compose, use strategies and language forms that come readily to mind, especially when under pressure. The discourse strategies and linguistic forms used by inexperienced writers are likely to be

those of speech. (2) A text does not exist until someone reads it. A reader creates a text on the foundation of certain preconceptions and expectations. Teachers should learn to expect in the writing of inexperienced writers strategies and forms derived from speech. In teaching writing, it all depends, finally, on what a teacher perceives in a student's work as a reflection of competence and need. There are some talkers in all classrooms, and most of them can also learn how to write.

#### REFERENCES

Shaughnessy, Mina P. Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teachers of Basic Writing. NY: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Because she understands the logic underlying error, Shaughnessy is more capable of responding constructively to it than the teacher who can merely spot error. An indispensable book for the teacher of basic writing and a valuable resource for all writing teachers.

Coulthard, Malcolm. On Introduction to Discourse Analysis. London: Longman Group Ltd., 1977.

Introduces a variety of approaches to discourse analysis and contains a useful bibliography to other sources.

# The Language Environment of Student Writers

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Since April of 1978 faculty of the English Composition Board (ECB) have been reading essays written by undergraduates as they enter the University of Michigan for the first time. During the past four years we have evaluated approximately 20,000 samples of students' writing; we have, over time, come to recognize certain styles of writing that many of these entering college students have in common.

One style of writing, readers say, creates a "strobe light effect"; an essay contains a sufficient number of ideas but the ideas are not in an order that allows a reader to follow the writer's line of thought easily nor are the ideas connected by transitions. Because ideas are not differentiated from each other in importance nor linked well to one another, they read more like rapid-fire individual observations than thoughts that have been integrated into a unified theme governed by a consistent point-of-view. Readers refer to this style of presentation in expository writing as "chaotic" writing (Kirscht and Golson, 1).

One example is the following paragraph taken from an essay written by an entering freshman on the subject of smoking (the seriousness of the problem was to be discussed and possible solutions suggested). The writer concludes with the following four sentences (reproduced as they appeared, though I have numbered each sentence for discussion):

<sup>1</sup>More propaganda about stopping or banning cigarettes should be used. <sup>2</sup>If the younger generation was more aware of the potency of cigarettes, there would be a large decrease in the percentag of smokers. <sup>3</sup>Cigarette smoking is an unimagenative way to combat anxiety or nervousness. <sup>4</sup>Once one makes a decision to stop smoking, don't procrastinate, the delayance will only prolong the way back to achieving a healthy mind and sound body.

Here, sentences 1 and 2 combined together make a single argument: increasing the number of advertisements and testimonials about the harmful effects of cigarettes will persuade many young people to break their smoking habit. Then, however, the writer introduces a new idea, one that does not follow from the previous argument; no connection between the increased use of propaganda to prevent smoking and finding imaginative alternatives to smoking is established. Moreover, no connection between anxiety or nervousness and individuals' smoking habits is made. Finally, the writer concludes the essay by putting together two different types of sentences which have contrasting tones and intentions: first, a warning to stop smoking and, secondly, a speculation about the harmful effects of delaying to do so.

Despite the problems of coherence in this paragraph, the writer demonstrates an awareness of several sentence structures and different sorts of rhetorical strategies. When these sentences are read together, however, the reader experiences jarring shifts in content and emphasis. Taken together, the sentences lack the collective, coherent power of a sustained argument; considered individually, they are understandable. Where have our students learned this chaotic style of communication? Why does disconnected discourse sound all right to them?

One of the answers offered to these questions about students' difficulties with written composition originates from a recognition of the differences between informal conversation and formal academic writing. Those who argue for this explanation of the problem hold that inexperienced writers lack substitutions for inflections of voice and other signals speakers use to communicate meanings face-to-face; writing is extremely dif-

ficult because, they claim, the act of writing is different from the act of speaking. Novice writers have not yet learned the appropriate, and very different, vocabulary of cues experienced writers use to signal transitions between ideas, or to indicate the degree of emphasis being placed upon an idea. It is true, of course, that parallels between informal speech and formal academic writing are so few that making a transfer from speech to writing required in school is exceptionally difficult. Nevertheless, I no longer believe that by itself the difficulty of transferring the spoken word to the page accounts for many patterns of writing ECB readers find; I believe that chaotic writing, for instance, is a particular style of communication which students have learned from the language environment most teachers of writing would rather forget while they are in the classroom: television.

We must keep in mind that the language environment of our students has changed during the past several decades. In 1980 the New York Times calculated that "by the time the typical American schoolchild graduates from high school he or she will have spent 11,000 hours in school and 15,000 in front of the television tube. Another way of saying this is that American students confront two 'curriculums'--two sets of ideas and impressions that are, in some fundamental ways, diametrically opposed"("The Schools,").

Researchers tell us as well that sustained, well developed conversations occur less frequently in homes now because families spend so much of their time watching television. It can be argued, then, that television now provides a predominant and much-reinforced source of language learning for many in our society; the experience of watching and listening to television is certainly

far different from that of engaging in sustained conversations (or reading or even spending time thinking one's own thoughts). In addition, since we cannot respond to individuals shown on television as we do to those with whom we talk, we do not listen to oral communication in the same way we once did.

I believe we must pay more attention to the oral language environment television creates. To refer to Mina Shaughnessey, if our students are to have the ability to make maps of where [they are] going," they must have an idea of "where [they have] been"(Shaughnessey, 249). Therefore, we must help our students understand "what it is the language of television is saying to us"(Fiske and Hartley, 20).

Let's examine some differences between the messages we receive daily from television and the language we hear elsewhere; differences between language learning from television and ways in which we experience language otherwise are worth specific consideration.

One very familiar form of television language occurs in commercials; as many as twenty commercials are likely to be broadcast in an hour of prime television time. Because these commercial "spots" are so expensive for advertisers to broadcast and generally last only thirty seconds, television producers and writers have developed conventions of communication which eliminate both the need for transitions between units of spoken discourse as well as between the pictures we see. As viewers, therefore, we have learned, because we have been forced to do so, automatically and intuitively to supply an immense amount of information. Because we are so familiar with the genre, we fill in the blanks; consider, for instance, the following transcript of

a 30-second commercial as it was broadcast this year by CBS:

#### ILLUSTRATION I

**Kitchen scene:** A mother, father, and young son are in a kitchen eating breakfast.

**Father:** Big game tonight, huh?

**Son:** Dad, gonna be there?

**Father:** I'll be there.

**Office scene:** The father is at his desk now with his supervisor standing nearby.

**Supervisor:** Frank, I need this analysis before you leave.

We see alternating quick cuts of scenes showing son looking distressed during play of game and father absorbed in work at his desk. At the conclusion of the scenes, father arrives at the game and son is overjoyed.

Unseen Narrator (speaks during these scenes): When you've got an important deadline you need a Honeywell Office Automation System. Using a desk-top terminal, executives can organize data, analyze statistics, and get their work done. At Honeywell, we know how important it can be to meet a deadline.

(sound of musical scale ascending in the background)

**Narrator:** Honeywell.  
You should see what we do with computers.

The dialogue between these characters conveys only enough information to reinforce the message we receive visually. The "story" is a device; it rapidly appears and then disappears from the screen. So accustomed are we as viewers to processing such rapidly-paced dramatic vignettes whose issues are quickly resolved that we ignore "unanswered" questions we would ask if this story appeared in print: Why cannot Frank return after the game to finish his work at the office? Why cannot the son be told that

his father will be late arriving at the basketball court? In fact, we have no time to question the problem as it is given nor the solution offered. And the advertiser hopes we come to believe that somehow Honeywell improves the life of a family as well as the efficiency of an office. The viewer is "taught" a great deal by Honeywell, but much that is "learned" results from our being willing to make unspoken connections between ideas.

Commercials, carefully scripted with underdeveloped plots, provide only one kind of familiar television language experience. A similar kind of language experience requiring the television viewer to create bridges between ideas is required of listeners during televised broadcasts of spontaneous live events.

Nielson ratings inform us that approximately one fourth of the vast amount of viewing time of the American public is spent looking at sports events of various kinds (Cole, 74). An exact transcript of approximately 20 seconds of reportage from the 1982 NCAA championship basketball game between North Carolina and Georgetown serves as an illustration of what popular television sports commentary has accustomed viewers to hearing:

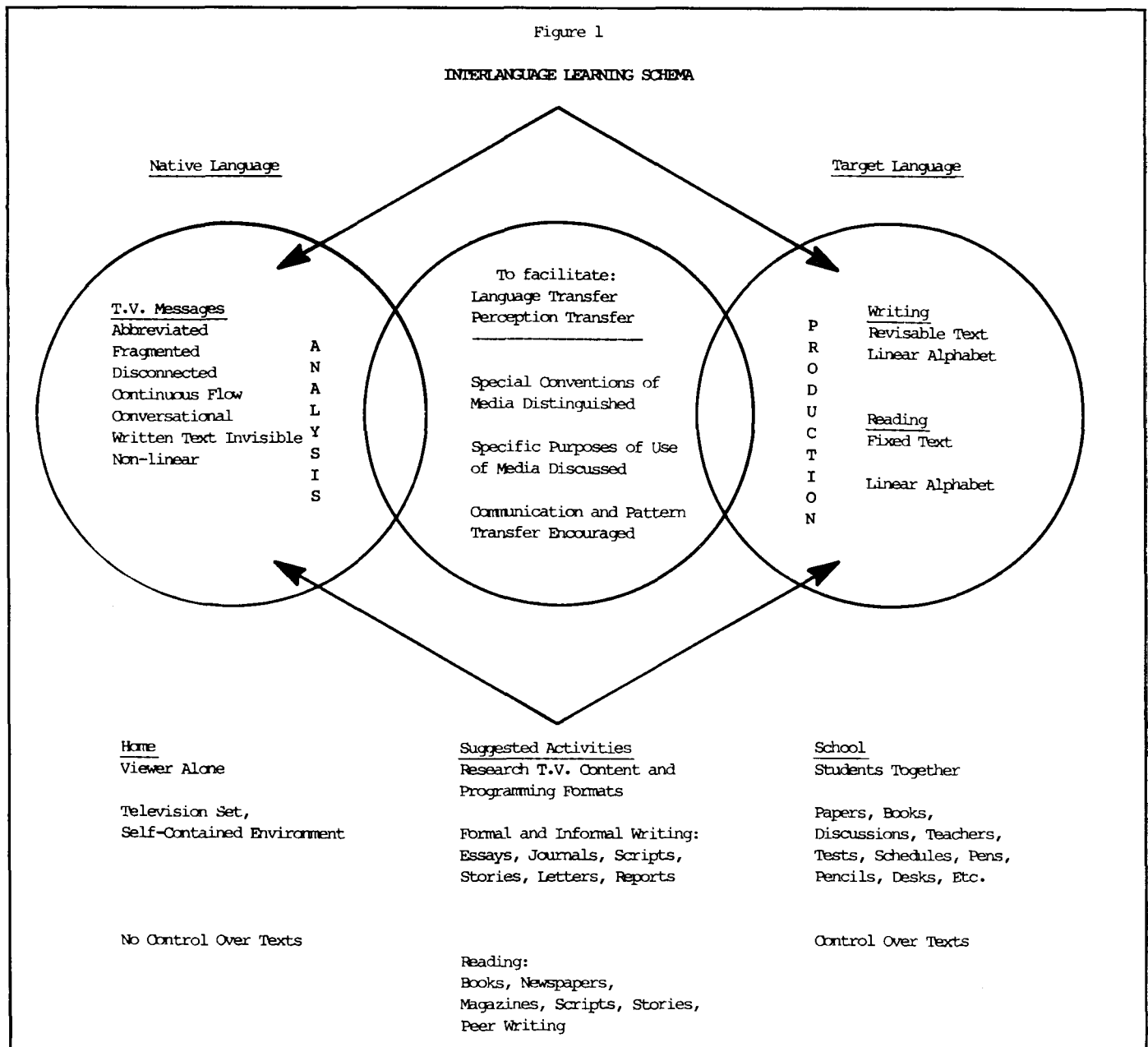
#### ILLUSTRATION II

But you can hear the big guy comin' behind ya and Jimmy Black tries to get it up on the short hop. It's not there and here comes Jordan again. We said a very dangerous offensive rebounder. What an awful feeling that's gotta be, Billy, to know that Ewing is coming down your back. He is one of the best runners for a big man I have ever seen in basketball and I think that's one of the assets he has and a lot of people don't rate it. There's Ewing. Perkins a short hook. He got it off quickly (Morris and Nydahl, 16).

As in the case of the Honeywell commercial, this language of television, also accompanied by an informing picture, lacks transitions between observations--those links we expect to find in print.

And, unlike the commentary of a radio broadcast, which supplies listeners with a rich context of description while a contest proceeds, the commentary of television is predominately a mixture of objective details and subjective elaborations. We "see" the information that connects whatever statements we hear. The point is, finally, that though there is not one kind of television broadcast that has dominated the verbal world of our students, by and large, the majority of television's languages have one thing in common: they have accustomed viewers to verbal comments without verbal transitions.

My students are surprised to discover that television has acclimated them to this particular style of communication which is vastly different from the highly informative, carefully sequenced writing I know they must learn to produce for academic audiences. They are also pleased to discover that, to some extent, they have mastered the language of television. What they must do, I point out, is learn to move from one language to the other. I introduce them to the differences between television language and reading and writing by distributing the schema reproduced in Figure 1.



In some of my classes a discussion of this issue is sufficient. Introducing the idea to students that a special language environment (actually, a cluster of similar but differing languages) has influenced their own patterns of discourse is helpful in and of itself. In most of my classes, however, I pair this schema with one or more assignments that either require students to study and report upon the features of their favorite television language to the class or I ask them to analyze a "chunk" of television language I have audiotaped and transcribed into a printed text.

The bridge between the world of television and the world of written and spoken communication is a better understanding of television itself; the words we hear from television are "rather like the language we speak: taken for granted, but both complex and vital to an understanding of the way human beings have created their world" (Fiske and Hartley, 16). The teacher of writing can use television to help students escape from, or transcend, the language limits of the television medium alone.

#### REFERENCES

Fiske, John and John Hartley, Reading Television, New York: Methuen Press, 1978, p. 20.

Breaks ground in its semiotic analysis of television's messages.

"The Schools and TV: Two Kinds of Teachers," New York Times, (20 April 1980), p. 29.

One of several articles published in The New York Times, surveying the history of research into television. Speculates about links yet to be made between television and the public educational system.

Kirscht Judith and Emily Golson, Unpublished Paper, "Empty and Chaotic Essays: Are They the Products of Our Own as Well as Our Students' Errors and Expectations?" 1982.

Discusses two different types of assessment essays written by entering students at The University of Michigan: empty (too few ideas) and chaotic (ideas are not organized).

Morris Barbra and Joel Nydahl, "Sports Spectacle as Drama: Image, Language, and Technology," The Second International Conference on Television Drama, East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 25 June 1982.

Analyzes the effects upon the audience of the interaction of image, language and technology in a televised sports spectacle: the 1982 NCAA championship basketball game.

Shaughnessy Mina, Errors and Expectations in the Teaching of Writing. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Because she understands the logic underlying error, Shaughnessy is more capable of responding constructively to it than the teacher who can merely spot error. An indispensable book for the teacher of basic writing and a valuable resource for all writing teachers.

Television Today, Ed. Barry Cole. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981

Collection of essays about the content of television that raise useful issues for classroom discussions.



# A Model of Written Language Development for Teachers

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For decades, many linguists have stressed the primacy of oral language and seem to have viewed writing as simply the transcription of speech. For example, Greenberg writes in Psycholinguistics: "The linguist views writing...as a derivative system whose symbols stand for units of the spoken language" (Osgood & Sebeok, p. 9). This assumption has led some educators to believe that writing is little more than "speech written down."

On the other hand, composition teachers, especially at higher levels of education (e.g., Shaughnessy, 1977), have frequently observed that poor writing is often considered poor precisely because it seems to reflect the patterns, structures, and lexicon of the spoken language. Moreover, scholarship in still another academic discipline suggests that academic writing, at least, cannot be regarded merely as an alternate form of the spoken language. Snell, a professor of the classics, points out that philosophical and scientific discourse was deliberately created by the ancient Greeks to develop knowledge because the structures and lexicon of natural language were not suitable for that purpose. He states that academic discourse lives today in other languages "by virtue of taking over, translating and elaborating upon the original Greek" (Snell, p.50).

The claim that academic language is unlike natural language suggests that it cannot be acquired, spontaneously and effortlessly, in a natural language environment, but, instead, must be learned through deliberate exposure to it and by formal instruction in it. Indeed, the practices of most teachers of academic writing would appear to support these views. Unfortunately, what these teachers lack is a theoretical framework that supports their practices. What

seems to be needed is a model of written language development that not only acknowledges the differences between the language of formal schooling and the language of daily life but also suggests how developing writers acquire their competence with this special language. The purpose of this essay is to provide such a theoretical framework.

The model I am presenting in this essay is a synthesis of ideas that can be found in the writing of many different psychologists; however, its broad outlines have been suggested explicitly in the work of Vygotsky and Luria particularly. We might perhaps call this model an epistemological model of written language development because it seeks to explain how we come to know--and, hence, be able to use--the language of formal schooling. According to this model, writing, although initially dependent upon spoken language while students learn to decode and encode written language, becomes increasingly independent of spoken language and more influenced by written language itself. Although the language the developing writer reads is usually far richer and more complex than the language he can write, the model suggests that students' writing may gradually become like the language they read with continuous experience and instruction in reading and writing this language.

The basic assumption of the model is that oral and written language differ in both their origins and in their purposes and, accordingly, are qualitatively different in nature. Vygotsky (1978) writes: "writing...is a new and complex form of speech" (p. 118). Luria writes: "written speech (differs) from oral speech in its origins and in its structural and functional features" (p. 141).<sup>1</sup> Simon

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<sup>1</sup>Although the word speech is used in the Eng-

writes that written language does not arise as a "twin" to spoken language; it may share some common elements but requires other resources for its full development, using different means to achieve different goals (p. 323).<sup>2</sup> Bruner et al. suggest the following differences between written and oral language:

All the semantic and syntactic features that have been discussed in relation to concept formation—a rich and hierarchically organized vocabulary, as well as the syntactic embedding of labels—become necessary when one must communicate out of the context of immediate reference. It is precisely in this respect that written language differs from the spoken (p. 310).

In order to explain how the language of beginning writing can be transformed into the language of mature writing, the model must address two critical issues: (1) how the reader derives meaning from written texts; and (2) where the writer derives meaning from in order to produce written texts. Figure 1 presents a preliminary version of the model in order to show what happens in beginning reading and writing. In this figure, and in the next one as well, the circles represent the four language processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The direction of the arrows indicates whether the process may contribute to the development of meaning and thought or to an expression of meaning and thought--or to both. As Figure 1 indicates, the language learner first derives meaning from the spoken language of others; moreover, his own speech may also contribute to the

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lish translations of Vygotsky's and Luria's statements, it seems to make better sense to understand the word as language, since neither Vygotsky nor Luria consider writing as "speech written down."

<sup>2</sup>The original passage is as follows: "La langue écrite naît chez l'enfant; parturition douloureuse. Et elle ne naît pas soeur jumelle de la langue parlée, mais nouvelle Eve, elle lui emprunte ses éléments et non pas ses ailments car elle se nourrit à d'autres sources, ne vise pas les mêmes buts et dispose d'autres moyens techniques."

development of meaning and thought. He learns to read primarily by decoding and fusing written symbols into sounds that have meanings he recognizes from his experience listening to the speech of others (Luria, pp. 411-413). Thus, as a beginning reader, he derives meaning from written texts on the basis of meaning gained from experience with spoken language. The written texts he reads with understanding may be less rich and complex than, or as rich and complex as, what he can understand aurally, but they cannot be richer and more complex than what he can understand aurally. What he understands aurally sets a ceiling on, or gates, what he can understand in written texts.

During this period, as Figure 1 also indicates, inner listening continues to develop. Inner listening refers to our ability to "hear" inner speech and would seem to be presupposed by the existence of inner speech (see Sokolov, p. 568). In the pre-school years, inner listening may simply be the internalization of external listening.

Eventually, with enough reading experience, the beginning reader no longer has to translate written symbols into sounds in order to understand the meaning they signify but can understand the meaning they signify directly. The reader now goes directly from print to meaning. Vygotsky (1978) writes:

As second-order symbols, written symbols function as designations for verbal ones. Understanding of written language is first effected through spoken language, but gradually this path is curtailed and spoken language disappears as the intermediate link. To judge from all the available evidence, written language becomes direct symbolism that is perceived in the same way as spoken language (p. 116).

The direct influence of reading upon meaning--and thought, too--is shown in

FIGURE 1

ORAL LANGUAGE

WRITTEN LANGUAGE

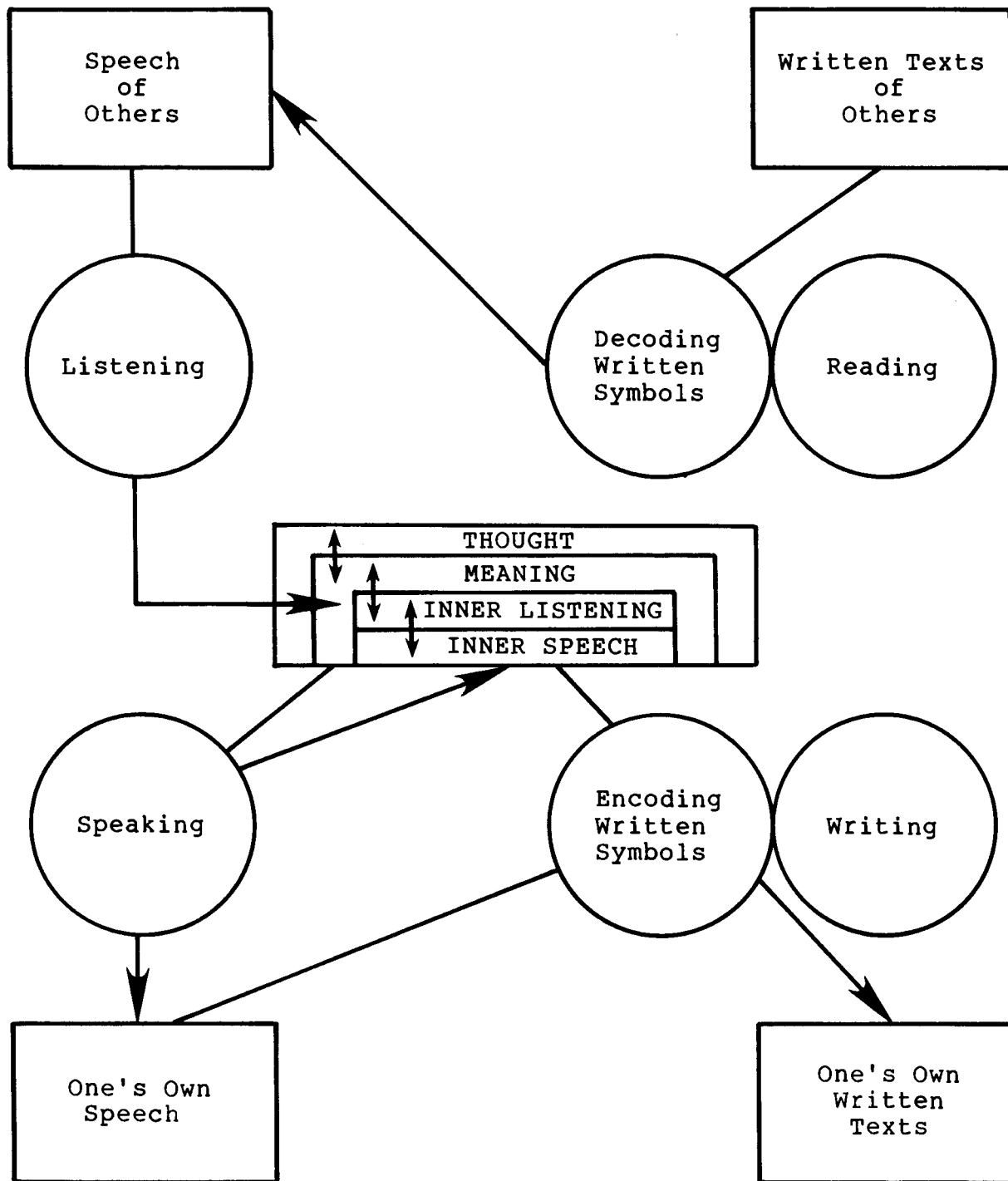


FIGURE 2

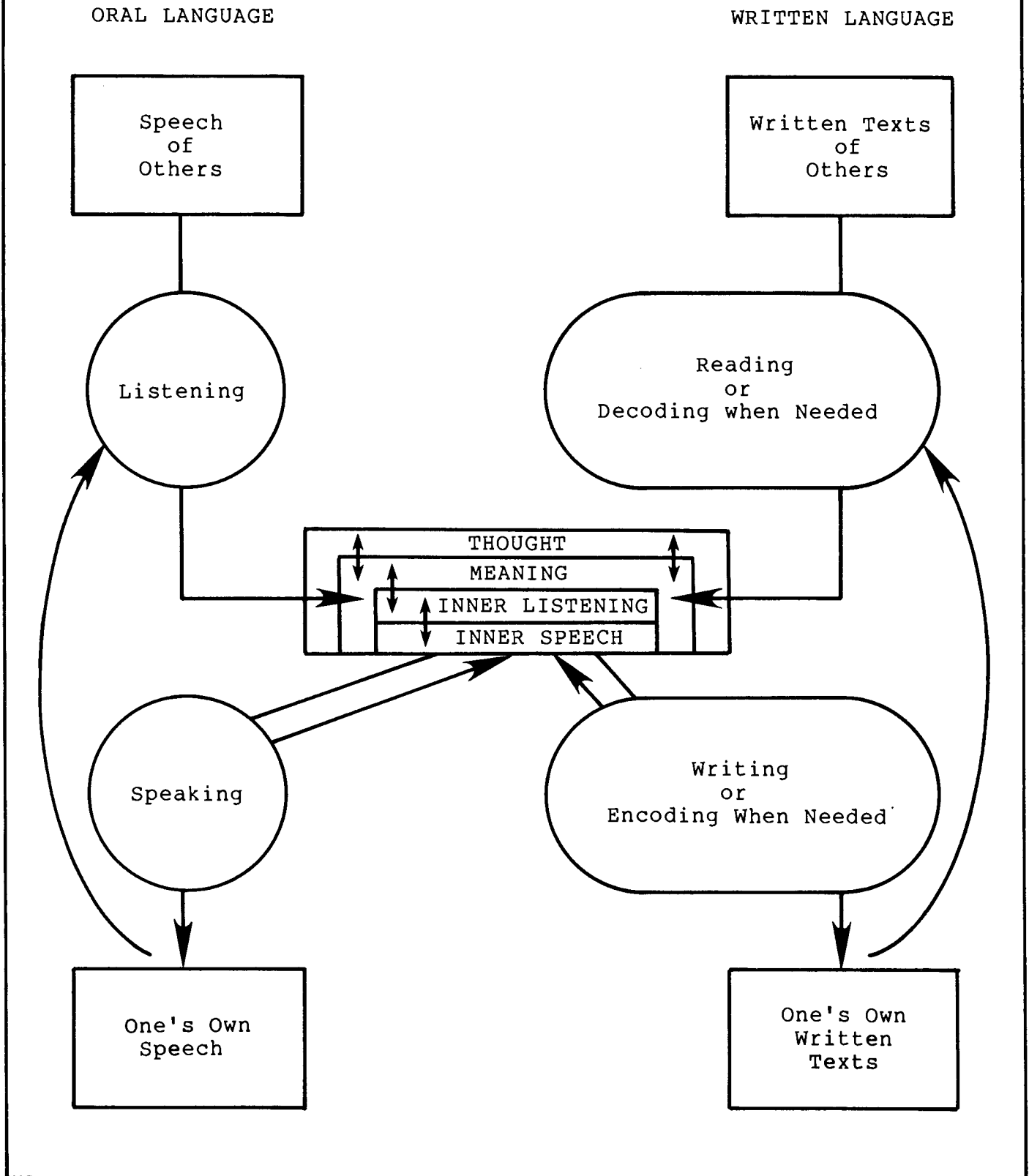


Figure 2, a more fully developed model. It is possible that the development of inner listening facilitates understanding written language as "direct symbolism."

At the point when written language can be understood as direct symbolism, something very significant can occur in the reading process. Up to this point, the reader has understood written language on the basis of his understanding of spoken language. Now, however, the reader can go beyond the limits of his spoken language experiences. His level of listening comprehension no longer sets limits on his level of reading comprehension. The reader now can learn to read written language that is richer and more complex than his spoken language.

How can the developing reader come to understand written forms and patterns of language that differ from those he has heard? In general, in almost exactly the same way he has learned to understand greater complexity in oral language--through continuous exposure. Just as the language learner learns to understand greater complexity in oral language through frequent exposure to more complex oral language, so, too, does he learn to understand more complex written language through continuous exposure to more complex written language. New meanings are gradually incorporated through frequent experiences reading them; in other words, the beginning reader uses the same processes for absorbing the lexical richness and density of written language that he uses for absorbing or internalizing more complex oral language.

How more precisely does the developing reader go beyond the limits of the level of his comprehension of spoken language? This is not spelled out by Vygotsky or Luria. One may hypothesize that the development of the reader's ability to understand as "direct symbolism" written forms of language that are familiar to him may gradually enable him to understand as direct symbolism some written forms of language that are unfamiliar to him. These newly acquired semantic/syntactic forms and structures then provide the context for the developing

reader to understand other written forms of language that are also unfamiliar to him. In this way, written forms of language that differ from forms in the reader's spoken language system function as new resources that serve to accelerate growth in understanding written language beyond the level of listening comprehension. It is in this way that literacy nourishes itself. Eventually, mature readers can absorb language visually that is far richer and denser than spoken language. (Indeed, it is difficult to listen to language that is as dense and as rich as their mature language we can read.)

Now let us turn to the development of writing. As Figure 1 indicates, the beginning writer may encode spoken language directly or he may encode from inner speech, which in the pre-school years is the internalization of external speech. In either case, the only independent source from which the beginning writer derives meaning is the spoken language. Written language that is of greater richness and complexity than the oral language he can comprehend cannot influence his writing because his experience with spoken language determines what he can understand, and hence, absorb from written texts. So long as what the beginning writer reads must be translated into meaningful sounds for comprehension to occur, his writing cannot be richer or more complex than the language he has heard. The language of beginning writing will therefore be very much like speech written down.

How is the language of the beginning writer transformed into the language of more mature writing? Here one may hypothesize that the development of the ability to understand written language directly, together with frequent reading experiences at progressively more difficult levels, enables the developing writer to internalize written forms of language that differ in quality and density from the language he experiences aurally and, eventually, to use or reproduce them in his writing. With sufficient experience and instruction in reading and writ-

ing, the mature writer can produce language that is far richer than the language he speaks. (Indeed, we cannot easily produce language orally that is as dense and as rich as the language we can write.) By positing a source of influence on meaning that is not gated by the writer's level of listening comprehension, the model in Figure 2 accounts for the writer's ability to use or produce language that is richer and denser than his spoken language.

As suggested by Luria, inner speech develops even more after the onset of literacy training. Thus, Figure 2 also shows the direct influence of writing upon inner speech. Luria writes:

Because it delays the direct appearance of speech connections, inhibits them, and increases requirements for the preliminary, internal preparation for the speech act, written speech produces a rich development of inner speech which could not take place in the earliest phases of development (p.143).

Because meaning and thought are related but not identical in this model (see Sokolov, Bruner et al., pp. 43-44), the direct influence of writing upon inner speech and inner listening means that meaning and thought are also enhanced by writing.

Finally, Figure 2 shows that what one has written becomes in its own right a text to be read and "listened to" directly. Critical reading of one's own text during the revising process may become at least as great a stimulus for mental activity and intellectual development as the reading of others' texts. Ong asserts that written words make possible "psychological operations so complex as to defy total description" ("Beyond," p. 8).

It is important to note that in this model, speech itself is affected by written language development. However, it is possible that the longer established habits of speech, the speed with which it must be produced, and its lack of perman-

ence probably keep speech less complex than writing at all levels of development. The relative slowness of writing and the objectified nature of written language enable the writer to produce or work out forms of written language that the nature of spoken language precludes.

What are the pedagogical implications of this model? If the significant characteristics of mature written language are not present in spoken language and are therefore not a part of the language learner's natural language environment, then the density and richness of mature written language cannot be absorbed through oral language experience and practice. Teachers will need to provide students with regular exposure to increasing levels of textual density to help them absorb the lexical richness and density of written language (see Stotsky, forthcoming, for a discussion of this issue). They will also have to provide them with regular practice in writing about their own ideas and what they are learning about the world around them to help them use this language and develop mastery of its resources. Note that this model does not suggest that students should not engage in oral language activities; such activities are valuable for their own sake. What the model does imply is that oral language experiences are not a substitute for reading and writing experiences.

The model of written language development that I offer here accounts for the knowledge the mature reader/writer has of the language he understands and uses. The model is based on the assumption that the structure and substance of written language is qualitatively different in nature from the structure and substance of spoken language. Although experience with spoken language determines meaning in beginning reading and writing, the model indicates that the relationship may be very different at higher levels of literacy development; not only may reading and writing influence each other, but they may also influence meaning in oral language as well. In effect, the model postulates a reciprocal relationship,

even a multidirectional one, among the four language processes: oral language may influence written language, written language may influence oral language, and reading and writing may each enhance the other directly in different but equally profound ways. Because the model not only supports the goals and activities of teachers of academic writing but is itself supported by empirical evidence (e.g., see the review of the literature by Stotsky, 1982), it may be useful as a theoretical framework for both pedagogy and research. Moreover, because this model suggests how literacy at its higher levels provides readers and writers with a wealth of resources to think with and about, it can help us to explore how the mind develops new meanings and creates ideas that previously did not exist.

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Explains how psycholinguistic theory accounts for the understanding of natural language and describes research that supports that model.

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Because she understands the logic underlying error, Shaughnessy is more capable of responding constructively to it than the teacher who can merely spot error. An indispensable book for the teacher of basic writing and a valuable resource for all writing teachers.

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A Russian psychologist reviews studies on internal speech and thinking, suggesting that they are not identical and that reading and writing as well as speaking and listening are the sources of the formation of internal speech.

Stotsky, Sandra. "A Review of Research on the Relationship Between Reading and Writing: Directions for Further Research." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, November, 1981, and at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, April, 1982.

A comprehensive review of the literature examining the influence of reading on writing, the influence of writing on reading, and correlations between measures of reading ability and reading experience with measures of writing ability.

"Types of Lexical Cohesion in Expository Essay Writing: Implications for Teaching the Vocabulary of Academic Discourse." College Composition and Communication, (Forthcoming).

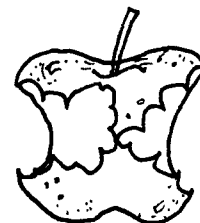
A critique and revision of Halliday and Hasan's scheme for analyzing lexical cohesion, together with a lengthy discussion of the implications for teaching reading and assessing growth in writing.

Vygotsky, Lev. Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

A collection of Vygotsky's writings on the development of perception, attention, memory, language, and play, and some implications for education.

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Vygotsky explores the intersection of thought and language by analyzing the dynamic nature of children's understanding of word meaning.





# Resources in the Teaching of Composition

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## Books

Our focus in this issue will be chiefly upon a group of anthologies which appeared in the past few years and deal with a range of issues in the teaching of composition, from theories of how people write to curriculum design, testing and measurement, and classroom practices. While all of these books contain articles which merit particular attention, the essays in one book seem to raise issues sweeping enough to demand a review of some individual pieces. The book is:

The Nature and Measurement of Competency in English. Ed. Charles R. Charles R. Cooper. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1981.

A collection of essays ranging broadly over the issues of measurement and assessment in English, including articles on competence in reading, media competency, and the politics of minimum competency as well as an overview of the issues and articles on language competence and competence in writing.

I especially want to draw attention to three articles in the book: Cooper, Charles R. "Competency Testing: Issues and Overview."

Reviews the background on the competency-testing movement and the issues it raises of influence on instruction, competency-based education, test limitation, grade-level testing, expectation levels, remediation, forms of competence, and centralization. Appendix includes NCTE Resolutions on Legislatively Mandated Competency-Based Testing and Excessive Focus on Sub-Skills.

Mellon, John. "Language Competence."

Describes language competence as a natural linguistic process and distinguishes it from language performance skills learned in school. Delineates those seven skills as: communicative skills, fluen-

cies, discourse skills, critical and appreciative skills, orthographic skills utilized in reading and writing, and self-governance skills. Discusses implications for teaching and testing and offers suggested readings for a background in language learning and testing.

Odell, Lee. "Defining and Assessing Competence in Writing."

Defines competence in writing as "the ability (1) to discover what one wishes to say and (2) to choose the appropriate language, sentence structure, organization, and information to achieve a desired purpose with a given audience," examines existing procedures for measuring writing ability, and suggests alternative ways of measuring competence.

Another book which touches on the issues discussed here from the perspective of Great Britain is:

Stibbs, Andrew. Assessing Children's Language: Guidelines For Teachers. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1979.

Discusses the principles of assessing language and evaluates the testing and examining now being practiced in England. Offers case histories of children's language-use. The following books are remarkable for the quality of the explorations they provide of topics pertinent to the teaching of writing. The first is a research project about the writing students are asked to do and the remainder are anthologies of theory and research, all containing practical implications for the classroom.

Applebee, Arthur N. Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas. NCTE Research Report No. 21. Urbana, IL: NCTE 1982.

Describes a study "designed to (1) describe the writing secondary school students are asked to do in six major subject areas, (2) examine teacher's pur-

poses and techniques in making writing assignments, and (3) illustrate the extent to which the characteristics of these assignments varied with subject area, grade level, and patterns of instruction." Discovers a discouraging lack of writing opportunities for students and preponderance of poor instruction. Makes recommendations for the improvement of the teaching of writing, including a good annotated bibliography of sources which provide strategies for incorporating writing into content area instruction.

Cognitive Processes in Writing. Ed. Lee W. Gregg and Erwin R. Steinberg. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary symposium on cognitive processes in writing, this collection offers a section on theoretical approaches, including "Identifying the Organization of Writing Processes" by John R. Hayes and Linda S. Flower, explaining and illustrating protocol analysis, and "Development in Writing" by Carl Bereiter, suggesting possible stages and offering a tentative model of skills systems integration. A second section has several articles on writing research and application, including "Teaching Writing by Teaching the Process of Discovery: An Interdisciplinary Enterprise" by Lee Odell.

Exploring Speaking-Writing Relationships: Connections and Contrasts. Ed. Barry M. Kroll and Roberta J. Vann. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1981.

A collection of essays exploring the relationship between speaking and writing in a variety of ways, offering a linguistic analysis, a reading perspective, a cultural perspective, a descriptive phenomenological view, and articles from the perspectives of business, media, EFL, hemispheric function, and development.

The Language Connection: Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum. Eds. Toby Fulwiler and Art Young. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1982.

Offers twelve essays and an annotated bibliography drawing on the resources of the interdisciplinary experience at Michigan Technological University. Emphasizes writing as a means of learning and balances theory and practice directed at the use of writing and reading for learning across the curriculum.

Reinventing the Rhetorical Tradition. Ed. Aviva Freedman and Ian Pringle. Canadian Council of Teachers of English. Conway, Arkansas: L & S Books, 1980.

Evolving from the 1979 COTE Conference on "Learning to Write," this collection gathers together papers by 19 participants, and the editors provide a useful overview of the issues of the volume. Articles include "The Tacit Tradition: The Inevitability of a Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Writing Research" (Emig), "Polanyi and the Contexts of Composing" (Watson), "Shaping on the Point of Utterance" (Britton), and articles by Kinneavy, Murray, Bertoff, Corbett, Winterowd, Butturf and Sommers, and others. The articles are arranged by their implied or expressed place in the rhetorical tradition, but they are not necessarily explicit investigations of rhetoric, *per se*, so much as explorations in the theory and pedagogy of modern composition teaching.

The range of books specifically directed at a classroom pedagogy has been broad in recent years and the books below are representative of that range, dealing with subjects as specific as basic writing, technical writing, and curriculum design, and topics as broad as dealing with the volume of student work.

Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1979-1980: How to Handle the Paper Load. Ed. Gene Stanford. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1979.

Offers good, classroom-tested practices in journal writing, teacher involvement in place of evaluation, student self-editing, responding to students, and alternative audiences, all designed to keep students writing while lowering the amount of teacher reading and evaluating.

Courses, Components, and Exercises in Technical Communication. Ed. Dwight W. Stevenson. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1981.

Addressed to technical writing teachers, this anthology details whole courses, major segments of courses, and individual exercises and relates classroom teaching to the world of business, industry, and government.

Cramer, Ronald L. Children's Writing and Language Growth. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1978.

A textbook on the language arts for elementary-middle school teachers, offering an overview of language acquisition and learning, the relationship among the language arts, and a host of ideas for classroom teaching of the language arts.

Lindemann, Erika. A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers. NY: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Provides an overview of recent research in composition by discussing the composing process, synthesizing the essentials in rhetoric, cognition, and linguistic theory, and describing ways of teaching writing with all this background in mind; includes a section on "Teaching as Rhetoric," dealing with making and evaluating writing assignments and designing writing courses.

The Teaching of Technical Writing. Eds. Donald H. Cunningham and Herman A. Estrin. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1975.

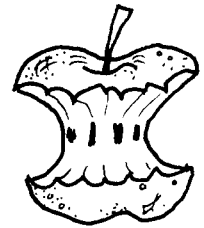
A solid collection of articles on teaching technical writing, divided into sub-categories which define technical writing, discuss curriculum and student needs, offer a wealth of teaching ideas, and even treat technical writing as an art. One section debates the relationship of freshman composition and technical writing.

Three Language-Arts Curriculum Models: Pre-Kindergarten Through College. Ed. Barrett J. Mandel. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1980.

The book is divided into sections for each stage of schooling, elementary, middle, secondary, two-year college, and four-year college. Each section is an introductory essay and then essays by advocates of three types of curriculum: competency-based, emphasizing mastery; process-based, emphasizing discovery; and heritage-based, emphasizing culture and literary tradition.

Wiener, Harvey S. The Writing Room: A Resource Book for Teachers of English. NY: Oxford University Press, 1981.

A guide for beginning teachers of basic writing, emphasizing the practical approaches that have worked for Wiener, and including a superb annotated bibliography on basic writing prepared by Theodore Sheckels.



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\*FORMING/THINKING/WRITING

...NG FROM HERE TO THERE: Writing and Reading Poetry

Florence Grossman

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