A FURTHER LOOK INTO THE FALL 1973 SURVEY
Ron Smith
Utah State University

I will freely admit that when I mailed the 700 questionnaires that inaugurated the nationwide survey of the composition requirement and Freshman English at four-year colleges and universities late in September of 1973, I was hoping for results that would squelch the rumors I'd been hearing. Somehow, I reasoned, it would be found that the reports of the demise of the composition requirement and Freshman English were, as Mark Twain remarked concerning reports of his death more than a decade before it happened, "greatly exaggerated." My hopes were not in most ways realized, however, as those of you will know who have read the full report on the survey's results in the May 1974 issue of College Composition and Communication. Whatever else they proved or failed to, the results brought into the open that important changes had occurred around the country in recent years. To generalize broadly, for example, they showed that compared with past years fewer four-year colleges and universities during the 1973-74 academic year had a composition requirement as such, fewer courses were required where the requirements existed, and fewer students were taking the required courses because of the greater number of exemptions permitted. Also, although the figures showed that Freshman English wasn't by any means dead, an aggregate of relevant ones showed that it had lost much of its former monolithic grandeur.

It is not my present purpose to rehash all of the statistics covered in the report in CCC; quite the contrary, I plan to deal more fully here with what can be learned from written comments made by respondents. Nevertheless, a few of the more relevant findings will clear the way. First, during the 1973-74 academic year 24% of all responding schools had no composition requirements as such compared with 1967 when under 7% had none. Also, in 1973-74 45% of the schools surveyed had a composition requirement of two or more courses while in 1967 students at 77.8% of all schools were required to take two terms of English. Additionally, 68% of all schools in the survey sampled exempted some students from the requirement where it exists, 41% of that group estimating that more students (at some schools, many more) would be exempted in 1973-74 than were exempted in 1970-71. A large reason for the latter statistic has, no doubt, to do with the appearance and widespread use of the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) equivalency tests. Finally, there was a somewhat unexpected pair of figures: 82% of all respondents reported that in 1973-74 there was a Freshman English "program" at their schools as compared to 78% who reported there was one in 1970-71.

Since writing the report for College Composition and Communication, I have spent a good deal of time in further sifting through the 491 completed questionnaires in search of reasons, meanings, implications, and perhaps new directions. While there is certainly no assurance that what I've come up with is to be swallowed whole by the profession—particularly because it has been so heavily influenced by the written comments from half the survey's respondents and not by statistical evidence alone—somewhere in what follows should be something of value for those who need and are willing to apply it to their own situations. What I intend principally to show, in a rambling way, is that there is most assuredly something to be learned from the experiences of others, that change in what we in composition have known over the years does not have to imply demise, and that more efficient input and dissemination of information about successes and failures with "programs" or situations where no composition requirement exists is indeed a necessity, at least at the present time.

As good a place as any to begin is where I left off in the CCC report. My closing projection there was that the change made apparent by the survey's statistics is not going to end very soon. More and more schools, I noted, especially state schools, will reduce their composition requirements, eliminate them altogether, increase the number of students exempted from the requirement, or combine a reduction of requirements with an increase in exemptions. The larger reason for my making the projection was the combination of many schools where changes had already been made with the fact that 45% of all state and 25% of all private schools in the survey reported experiencing pressures which for a great many could lead to such changes. A smaller but more instructive reason has its origin in the range of comments made by the respondents to the survey questionnaire.

The five comments that follow will serve to illustrate in a broad way what is in store for many composition programs and why. While they display obvious differences, they more importantly exhibit stunning similarities that should be noted. The first four are from schools where entrance requirements are described as "somewhat" or "heavily restrictive," the last from an institution where there are open admissions. "We are receiving much pressure to drop the freshman composition course," reports a respondent at a large state university where there is no school-wide composition requirement, "on the grounds that it 'does not serve the needs of the university,' and it is too expensive." Another respondent from a middle-sized state university where there is an 8-hour composition requirement states, "Our administration wants us to justify offering freshman English (composition) to all students and is somewhat obtuse about what is really an evident need for most of the students, since the high schools have not prepared them adequately. There is also pressure to make the content more 'practical.'" Still another respondent, this one at a large state university where the composition requirement is 6 hours, had this to say: "Competition for students has become rather vigorous among the four-year and junior colleges in the state.... Over the past two years, we have lost 28 faculty members due to declining enrollment. This pressure has resulted in efforts—both within the department and from the administration—to lessen (make more attractive) the required courses and standards. An special target is Freshman Composition, which all students must either take or test out of. Thus far, we have made a few compromises but mostly have resisted the pressure—a rather uncomfortable position, at best." From the Director of Undergraduate Studies in English at a well known private university of middle size, where the composition requirement is 3 hours, comes this comment: "The Dean of the Freshman Year of Studies would like us to exempt more students from the composition course. We will resist him!! And finally, a respondent at a smaller university which has a 6-hour composition requirement had this to say: "To meet demands from our campus recruiters, our administrators have unilaterally imposed the acceptance of CLEP general exams at the 50th percentile this year. The result of this move for the freshman comp. program will probably be the loss of
4-5 staff positions out of 25 over the next two years and an increased proportion of remedial students in the comp. courses. The Honors Program, which takes students above the 95th percentile on the ACT—language section—and places them in a special 2nd semester comp. course (they are automatically exempted from the 1st semester course) will be rendered obsolete by the imposition of CLEP at the 50th; students will easily test out of all 6 hours. The administration is also interested in our abandoning comp. courses and moving to individualized instruction. We anticipate, too, the institution of part-time teaching to accompany this arrangement. A further pressure on the program is the conviction by admissions directors, advisement counselors, and technical-vocational personnel that we are punitive in grading practices and unresponsive to individual student needs. (They may have some good reasons for this belief.) . . . I couldn't persuade the faculty here that the crisis was at hand. The faculty is [now] sadder and wiser . . . but we are moving toward change too slowly to save the major part of the comp. program. It is plain to see that all five respondents have reported similar situations, ones that vary only in degree from a common strand: pressure, mainly or solely external, for a change or changes that will have some effect on the composition program or course.

While it is true that generalizations based on too small a sample can be dangerously misleading, there is no considerable danger here since the five separate quotations are representative of a large additional population in which change is either coming about or being pressured for from outside the composition program. (It may or may not come as a surprise to know that this entire issue of Freshman English News, first page through last, could have been devoted to just the kinds of remarks the five examples illustrate.) With that in mind, it can be said about the five quoted statements by respondents and inferred from a great many more like situations that: (1) dissatisfaction with the results of practices within, or necessity for the extant requirement (or course if there's no requirement), is a major reason for external pressures for change; (2) financial exigencies usually underlie the pressures, whether in clear money problems being experienced by schools or in the need to compete effectively for students with other institutions in a time of declining enrollments; and (3) each such problem encountered by those in composition around the country is confronted more or less in isolation and without the benefit of the experience of others—even though many others are or have been involved in similar situations. Elaboration will evolve eventually in this article, so let me engage for a moment in what might seem on the order of a digression.

It is quite possible for administrators at schools to be indolent of composition courses, programs, their cost, complaints by students and/or faculty about them, and their results when the money is there to run them. Freshman English, as we all know too well, has seemingly always been the target of attacks from all angles. Perhaps that's the rub, though. Maybe we're too used to dismal weather to recognize when ark-building is called for. I found both amusing and somewhat distressing this observation by a respondent. "The favorite sport of some faculty who apparently have nothing better to do is launching an annual attack on freshman rhetoric. Most of them can't write either." How true and, at the same time, how dangerously uninformed of present conditions that appears to be. The "annual attacks" are no longer fun and games (if ever they were), for the stresses of slender budgets and the availability of soft targets make any composition program or courses vulnerable to external pressures unless there is proof that every dollar spent on it is unquestionably well spent. Similarly, it is hazardous at best to point defensively to waste elsewhere in the school unless there is proof that the matter of getting students to write well cannot be accomplished in other ways and more economically.

Something else I recently found less amusing than gloomily ironic was the answer I received from the editor of a major national publication in higher education when I approached him with the possibility of doing a brief article on the survey's results for his publication. He said he would be interested only if the article covered the subject of "the declining illiteracy of entering freshmen." I myself am a long way from being aware or convinced of such a phenomenon on the one hand (personal contact with students and countless discussions with colleagues in composition being less reliable than students' test scores), and was unprepared on the other, with the limitations of the survey results I had, to write to such a predetermined subject. It is a fact, though, that somewhere in the background of the trend we see of reducing or eliminating requirements in composition and increasing exemptions from them where they exist is that kind of knowledge, specifically that entering freshmen are better equipped as writers nowadays, hence the need for less required composition at colleges and universities. Just such information, doubtless in the form of copious statistics, is well known by people in admissions, recruiting, and testing offices across the nation.

I can't help but wonder how the store of evidence we in composition have individually amassed would look against such statistics. Why, I mean, would more than a few respond choose to mention that they now find entering freshmen generally less well prepared to write than in years gone by if that were not the case? Why is it, for that matter, that Paul Harvey in a column last summer would note that he was interviewing "double-degree graduates . . . who can't read, write or spell" if they could do those things? Why would Vance Packard, in an article in the April 1974 issue of Reader's Digest entitled "Are We Becoming a Nation of Illiterates?" say that "There is a common assumption in schools (elementary and secondary) that students will somehow absorb writing skills while doing their work in other courses" when "in most schools, papers are rarely corrected for anything except the most glaring errors in usage or spelling" if he didn't see things differently from the "declining illiteracy" point of view? Admittedly, so random and slight a selection of "proof" — better yet, circumstantial evidence — does not constitute a sound case, but I happen to agree with Thoreau's thinking when he said "Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk."

This digression, including the incipient tirade, was less off the point than might seem the case. If indeed we do think most or all students should be required to take a certain number of composition courses at college level, we had best know and be able to prove why. An administrator I know was once heard to say "There is nothing that isn't measurable." Right or wrong, someone with that kind of attitude and the power to do something with it isn't likely to accept eagerly the composition staff's word for it that most or all students need more training in writing than he thinks is worth the cost, especially if he is presented with complaints about the writing program and evidence, of whatever sort, that students really aren't gaining enough from their experience in it. He wants and may well be entitled to demand supporting evidence to the composition staff's "word." Nowadays, when the complaints begin coming in about content other than writing being part of the required course, too many credit hours being devoted to outcomes that are questionable, standards that are higher than the school's general standard, or any number of
other matters, it is quite simply time to begin serious reconsideration of whatever is in question. Otherwise, the time for absolute proof is at hand if the old policies are to be continued. The right direction is difficult to come by at such times, but once again survey respondents have something to offer us.

A respondent at a smaller state university where entrance requirements are somewhat restrictive described this situation: "Our structure is undergoing significant revisions this year. . . . students are questioning the validity of the highly structured 'rhetorical' basin for the traditional comp. class. Other faculty, I suspect, wonder about the validity of writing, per se, in an increasingly oral-oriented student culture. We are moving away from the class oriented, every-student-does-the-same-thing approach towards one that stresses personal conferences, contractual agreements, and student-initiated assignments. Half of our quarter's work is spent in conferences outside class. This, too, results from healthy student, faculty, and community pressures to individualize the class and make it more responsive to the academic and personal needs of the student." At that school there was an 8-hour composition requirement minimum at the time the comment was made. From a large state school which likewise has a somewhat restrictive admissions policy and an 8-hour requirement came this: "A few years ago we had some difficulty with a small minority of the University Senate who proposed that the comp. requirement be abolished. Surprisingly the proposal didn't receive any student support, not even in the newspaper. We had at that time instituted some new programs — special topics, film, pass/withdraw for weaker students — and we were in good shape for our defense. There were only two weak ayes on the vote. I have to report on the program at the end of every spring quarter, but there's been no difficulty since that time." Another but small state college where the requirement is 5 hours, and the entrance requirements somewhat restrictive, reported this: "There has been some pressure from administrators to eliminate Composition as a requirement of all students. They may be serious and then again they may be trying to rattle the department. We have been rattled! Last Spring the 001 course was revised and restructured (this was overdue), and this Fall we opened a Writing Laboratory which concentrates on composition students but which is open to all students in the college. 002 has also been revised to officially separate the superior students who in past years were handled in special sections of 001. I think we have fought off the attempt — real or otherwise — to eliminate our basic course from the list of required courses. If not, several of us will look for other positions!" At still another small state college, also with a 3-hour composition requirement and somewhat restrictive entrance requirements, the following was reported by the respondent: "Several members of our department feel that the current English Composition requirement is not producing students with a real ability to write. Our concern is shared by the substantial percentage of the faculty who responded to a questionnaire we distributed. Consequently, this semester an ad hoc committee in the department is developing recommendations to put before the department and the college, in hope of their being adopted before the end of the academic year, for implementation next year. We hope to increase the number of hours students devote to writing courses by establishing competency based curricula. In addition, given the deterioration of verbal skills of entering students, we hope to establish a writing skills center to which struggling students can be directed, based on their aptitude scores or faculty observation of their performance in class. At a level higher than our current composition course, we wish to offer a course in association with the major department which would have students write lengthy papers (term papers if you will) to satisfy both the competency requirements of the English Department and those of the major department. At present these are simply proposals under discussion. Given the entire faculty's increasing struggle with lack of verbal ability in students, our proposals have a strong chance of passage." While there are some obvious differences in what is contained in each of the four quotations, the similarities should be noted — sensitivity to the academic community at large and to the administrative atmosphere on campus, responsiveness to the pressures for change that exist, and no sheenliness about attempting new directions. All are requisite, needless to say, in a time of general change and financial difficulty in higher education. Without sound proof that what is being defended is best under the circumstances, attempting defensive tactics — for instance, upholding humanistic ideals against all odds, making no attempt of a significant sort to accommodate different student interests and needs, maintaining standards that are not in line with the school's general standards, resistance economy measures, and many others — are all to be classed with Kamikaze missions, I'm afraid. (Some of those pilots did survive, of course, but not many.)

As something of an exercise, it will be instructive to search for the alternatives open to the programs involved in the following set of brief comments by respondents. Each comment reveals a problem that will have to be solved in some way. What would your idea of the available alternatives be in each case? What solutions would you envision possible given differing circumstances? The size of the composition requirement, in credit hours, is in parentheses preceding each comment.

(1) "Our pressure is from the recruitment department for more exemptions from freshman composition through the CLEP program. Actually they are most concerned with being able to offer potential freshmen the possibility of exemption, not with whether or not we actually exempt them." (6) "The pressure being exerted is in the form of a skepticism on the part of the administration that we can be of any help to the business man and the technological man we are now graduating." (3) "Our faculty does not generally agree, but our Academic Dean would

Freshman English News is published three times a year at Texas Christian University. Subscription price for one year is $2.00. All articles, news items, suggestions, queries, and subscriptions should be sent to the editor. The only exceptions are articles and correspondence about two-year colleges. These should be sent directly to Lynn Troyka, whose address is listed below.

Preference will be given to brief (under 2,000 words) articles and news stories. Because footnotes are not printed, all citations and references should be incorporated into the body of the text.

Editor ....................... Gary Tate
Department of English
Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas 76129

Associate Editor .................... Priscilla Tate
Two-Year College Editor .......... Lynn Quitman Troyka
Queensborough Community College
Bayside, New York 11364

Field Editors: Barbara Agonia (Clark Community College)
Michael Boam (Sheridan College, Brampton, Ontario)
John Breton (Queensborough Community College)
Michael R. Brown (Western Michigan University)
Doe Brock (El Centro Community College)
John Clark (University of South Florida)
Joseph Comprone (University of Cincinnati)
Brian DeLaney (Blue Ridge Community College)
Frances Franklin (Cuyahoga Community College)
William A. Fry (Prince George’s Community College)
Richard Gebhardt (Findlay College)
Robert Helfman (Dean Junior College)
Walter Hodges (Mesa Community College)
Paul Nayar (Grand Prairie Regional College)
Don Tingle (Valencia Community College)
like to accede to student opinion and eliminate the requirement for composition." (9) "They all want us to lower our standards." (4) "They tell us that freshmen do not learn to write. Their sentences and general grammar, they say, are not standard." (6) "We are being pressured to lower requirements from a B average to a C average in Freshman English as a requirement for exemption from the Junior English Proficiency Exam." (6) "The Administration is 'pressuring' us somewhat to increase the number of students in the Freshman English courses or to increase the number of courses taught by the faculty." (A full-time teaching load of composition classes only at the preceding school gives each teacher a total of 60 students.) (6) "We are being urged to achieve more relevance in our courses. We need report-writing, business letters, more literature appealing to the 'now.' (Wish they knew that the 'now' will someday become the 'then')."

(6) "We are under pressure, from inside and outside the department, to design some kind of a uniform test in order to determine whether a student is ready to pass our composition courses." (6) "The claim is made that we don't really teach students to write, that too much time is spent on 'literature' in the beginning comp. courses, that not enough time is spent on drill in fundamentals—punctuation, spelling, etc." (6) "The Academic Vice-President of the university, much to the distress of a large portion of the faculty, has shown considerable preference for terminal, vocationally oriented programs (most of which are doing only moderately well) and has sought to dilute general education/ liberal education requirements. Particularly, he has sought allies to abolish or drastically restrict widely-required courses like Freshman English but, surprisingly, he has found few allies on the faculty. His rationale seems to be an extraordinarily simple-minded application of the current fad for 'career education,' but it runs counter to the movement of the university. . . . We in the English Department see ourselves as vociferous advocates and defenders of liberal education through Freshman English and similar courses taught in a humane and intellectually stimulating manner. Our local opposition we see as the 'trade school' mentality in a few administrators and faculty members."

Seeing so weighty a collection of problems as that reminds me of what was said, as the final curtain came down, by an older woman who sat behind me during a New York stage performance of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? "Who needs it?" she groaned. "I've got troubles of my own!" Unfortunately, we in composition won't be doing ourselves, our students, or our colleagues much good if we groan in similar fashion without making at least mental notes for use when the occasion is right (or wrong, depending on how you react to dilemmas). I should think well-thought-out notes would be useful concerning what to do when standards are questioned, when more exemptions are urged, when course content is objected to, when murmurs about eliminating or reducing the composition requirement are heard, when dissatisfaction with results occurs, when test options are demanded, when an increase in class size and/or teaching load is suggested, when anti-humanist ruminations are a threat, and so on. I feel, however, based on my experience with the 491 completed survey questionnaires, that we in composition are too often prone to suffer our individual fates in isolation and too seldom with proof, information, alternatives, and forethought. We yearn for a universal answer to that problem of what to do with the composition course when no two of us come closer to agreement with any frequency. I personally don't understand a comment like "No one knows what Freshman Composition should do, how it should be done, or whether it does any good." It was made by a respondent, though, and it depresses me to hear reactions of that sort from professionals. If we're unable to make a better go of it than that, unable to come up with sound evidence of our accomplishments and with information about what the alternatives are, we're in desperate trouble.

A respondent at a small private college had something to say which seems to me to reflect the very heart of what I've said—not because it supports my contentions but because it underscores their necessity. "There will be no freshman writing requirement after this year," he begins. "A sophomore test will be given—then a special writing course offered for those not passing the test. This all goes into effect 1974-75. I think economy was a major factor in the decision to do this. Too much faculty time being spent on first year writing, so some people thought. The idea, I must add, met with majority faculty approval—though not with the English staff's approval." If I've read that correctly, there can be no doubt that the composition staff had little say in the changes that were made at that school. Before the point was reached where changes were deemed necessary, there had to be some doubt by the faculty at large as to whether the composition course work that was required of students was producing the desired result. It would seem to be illogical that a successful program should be tampered with unless there was reason to believe that little, if anything, would be lost by making the change from a freshman-level writing requirement to a sophomore-level one for those students who are unable to pass a test. Don't misunderstand. I'm not trying to say there's anything wrong or right about the change. All I'm suggesting is that there was a reason for it, however weak or strong, and it was done without the approval of the faculty in English. Where was the department's proof that the program was doing the job well and economically? If that proof wasn't available in the form of post-course test scores or clear evidence of students' writing ability, why was the program maintained by people in English without their feeling a need for changes before those outside the department felt it their responsibility to do something about matters? Did the English staff not know the budget was tightening? Did they have too little knowledge of the available alternatives to be able to spot possibilities for efficient, effective changes within the program they had? The questions, you can be sure, are far more important to those of us far from that front than their answers. The answers will generally be locked in by specific time and place, be limited in their applicability elsewhere, but the questions will always be props for constructive discussions anywhere if allowed to be. And that's important.

Gradually and with consideration, and as a result of having lived long with those completed questionnaires, I have come to the conclusion that many of us in composition view our role as that of defenders of a standard, a standard of written communication at college level that cannot and will not be overthrown. Well, the evidence uncovered in the survey shows that it is being overthrown, and the corpses of defenders are turning up nearly everywhere we look. I really wonder why this must be so. After all, doctors know that periodic chest x-rays are essential, but they're not pulling in people physically to see that what is best is accomplished. Yet many of us have developed the habit of mind that says certain kinds of requirements in composition are the only way we can be sure students will know how to write adequately, and we are willing to defend that habit of mind to the death. Even though, as Mark Twain once said, habit is "not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time," we are not in the best of all possible positions to play the coaxing game. We have to be ready and armed with proof and knowledge of alternatives at all times, and we have to be willing to renovate our opinions of how the business of being sure students can write ought to be handled,
The most successful new Freshman book of the year!

Popular Writing in America
The Interaction of Style and Audience
Edited by DONALD McQUADE, Queens College, City University of New York, and ROBERT ATWAN, Educational Testing Service, Princeton. Widely adopted in universities, colleges, and junior and community colleges across the country, this text offers teachers exciting possibilities for introducing students to the various approaches to writing. Selections drawn from advertising, newspapers, magazine articles, best sellers, and classics represent the many forms of writing students see everyday and which shape their own use of language.

"This is a beautiful book—and seems to have the most potential I've ever seen as a text for composition courses."
--C. Fanning, Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts

"Excellent compilation—very useful as general reference—and in writing instruction."
--Edwin Emery, University of Minnesota

"A good solid collection; i especially like the visual sections."
--William H. Young, Lynchburg College, Virginia

"One of the most exciting books I've seen in a long time."
--Dorothy Stewart, Alma College, Colorado

"An excellent anthology with excellent categories of investigation. Very useful for introductory writing courses."
--C. W. Bassett, Colby College, Maine

"A superb book that maintains academic integrity while presenting language in its more recognizable forms."
--Ralph W. Pease, Sam Houston State University, Texas

"An exciting collection of material that should fill many needs of both teachers and students."
--William Glasser, Skidmore College, New York

An Instructor's Manual outlines some of the possibilities for using POPULAR WRITING IN AMERICA and includes questions which are appropriate for both discussion and writing exercises.

1974 672 pp. 59 illus. paper $5.95

Writing Without Teachers

"Elbow challenges the conventions assumed by our repetitive textbooks and, in the process, offers something that those texts do not offer: matter for serious thought about the processes of writing and learning."--Richard L. Larson in College Composition and Communication

PETER ELBOW, Evergreen State College. The author outlines an innovative approach which can be practically applied to all types of writing from fiction and poetry to reports and lectures.

"A book that should become for contemporary students what Strunk and White has been for a more rule-oriented generation, an inspiration, a vade mecum, a bible."
--Barry Spacke, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

1973 196 pp. paper (A Galaxy Book) $1.95

Style
Writing as the Discovery of Outlook

RICHARD M. EASTMAN, North Central College. This book develops an approach to writing based on two complementary premises that style is outlook and that outlook is discovered through the act of writing itself. Through the choices and experiments the student makes with vocabulary, syntax, audience, and structure, he expands his own powers of discovery.

STYLE is a highly flexible text which can be opened and used at any point. Each of the twenty-one short chapters can be encompassed in one assignment and the exercises provide abundant material for analysis and for imitation of models.

1970 298 pp. paper $3.50

Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student
Second Edition

EDWARD P. J. CORBETT, Ohio State University. "It looks good enough to devise a special course around."
--Alan T. McKenzie, Purdue University

"This volume is a relief for someone who has been searching for a serious composition text. Corbett does an excellent job of actually applying rhetoric to modern writing."
--John F. Plummer, Ill, Vanderbilt University

"Teach[es] student and professor more about the practice of writing and literature than any other text I know."
--Ronald Christ, Livingston College, Rutgers University

1971 671 pp. $8.95
—Thirty-one short stories and four novelettes are arranged in four thematic sections. Includes valuable appendices on the formal elements of fiction and on alternative critical approaches. Instructor's Manual available.

—Thirty short stories, fifteen by men and fifteen by women, explore all aspects of male-female relationships. Includes a general introduction and biographical notes on the authors. Instructor's Manual available.

—"Certainly the best book I have seen for introducing the narrative in all its forms. Selections are excellent, and the discussions are invaluable."
—Robert Willis, East Stroudsburg State College

**The Experience of Fiction**

Richard Abcarian and Mervin Klotz, editors

**Contents—**

_Innocence and Experience:_ Nathaniel Hawthorne, My Kinsman,ajor Molineux; Joseph Conrad, The Secret Sharer; Stephen Crane, The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky; Sherwood Anderson, I Want to Know Why; James Joyce, Araby; Ernest Hemingway, The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber; Frank O'Connor, My Oedipus Complex; Flannery O'Connor, Good Country People.

_Conformity and Rebellion:_ Herman Melville, Bartleby the Scrivener; Franz Kafka, A Hunger Artist; Hermann Melville, A Hand; Yuri Daniel, Hands; Philip Roth, Conversion of the Jews; Harlan Ellison, "Repent Hertequini!" Said the Tickleman.

_Love and Hate:_ Petronius, The Widow of Ephesus; D. H. Lawrence, The Horse Dealer's Daughter; Proust's Kafkazow, In a Grove; Jean Toomer, The Sun; William Faulkner, Dry September; Doris Lessing, To Room Nineteen; James Baldwin, Going to Meet the Man.

_The Presence of Death:_ Edgar Allen Poe, Ligeia; Leo Tolstoy, The Death of Ivan Ilych; Ambrose Bierce, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge; Guy de Maupassant, Two Friends; Katherine Anne Porter, The Jilting of Granny Weatherall; Bernard Malamud, Idiots First; Shirley Jackson, The Lottery; Yukio Mishima, Patriotism.

_Appendices:_ Reading Fiction; Three Critical Approaches: Glossary of Literary Terms; Recordings and Films.

February 1976 approx. 480 pages, illus. $4.95 (tentative), paperbound

**Men and Women**

An Anthology of Short Stories
William Smart, editor

**Contents—**

_Discoveries:_ James Joyce, Araby; Elizabeth Parsons, The Nightingales Sing; Jeremy Larner, Oh the Wonder; Bernard Malamud, The Magic Barrel; Isak Dinesen, The Old Chevalier; Eudora Wyley, Lively.

_Marriages:_ Peter Taylor, Reservations: A Love Story; D. H. Lawrence, The White Stocking; Katherine Anne Porter, Rape; Grace Paley, An Interest in Life; Doris Lessing, A Man and Two Women; Cyrus Colter, The Beach Umbrella.

_Exploitations:_ Kristin Hunter, Debut; Doris Lessing, One Off the Short List; Ring Lardner, Ex Partes; William Melvin Kelley, The Dentist's Wife; Ernest Hemingway, The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber; Joyce Carol Oates, Accomplished Destines.

_Awakenings:_ Joyce Cary, A Good Investment; Katherine Mansfield, A Dull Pleasure; Kay Boyle, Astronomer's Wife; Elizabeth Bowen, Songs My Father Sang Me; Claude Mo Key, Truant; D. H. Lawrence, Samson and Delilah.

_Pressures:_ Jean Stafford, A Country Love Story; Anton Chekov, The Lady with the Dog; Paula Marshall, Brooklyn; Henry James, The Beast in the Jungle; Doris Lessing, To Room Nineteen; D. H. Lawrence, Cadre of Chrysanthemums.

March 1976 approx. 320 pages $3.95 (tentative), paperbound

**Form in Fiction**

An Introduction to the Analysis of Narrative Prose
David Hayman and Eric S. Rabkin, editors

**Contents—**

_Narrative Person:_ Edgar Allan Poe, The Black Cat; Isaac Babel, The Sin of Jesus; Alan Paton, The Wide Long; Jean Toomer, Beck; Anton Chekov, Gooseberries.

_Status of Narrative Prose:_ Ray Bradbury, April 2000: The Third Expedition; Ken Kesey, They're Out There; Julio Cortazar, Axloli, James Joyce, A Mother.

_RESOLUTION:_ Graham Greene, The Innocent; Jorge L. Borges, The Library of Babel; Allan Robbe-Grillet, The Secret Room; Gertrude Stein, Miss Furr and Miss Skeene.

Components of Narrative: How Crane Got His Blue Eyes (Estada Folkalde); Hubert Selby, Jr., And Baby Makes Three; Honoré de Balzac, Maison Vauquer; Norton Juster, The Trumpet of the Swan; John Barth, Oval-Sea Journey; Joyce Carol Oates, Boys at a Picnic.

_A Generic Sampler:_ Amos Tutola, The Complete Gentleman; Robert Crealy, The Lover; Italo Calvino, All at One Point; Robert Cooper, The Brother; Louise-Ferdinand Ceine, This Was Vacation; Janus Auster, Truth Universally Acknowledged; John Dos Passos, Fighting Bob.

_Stories For Further Analysis:_ Sherwood Anderson, Hands; Samuel Beckett, Four; Heinrich Böll, Across the Bridge; Richard Brautigan, Horse to the San Francisco YMCA; Samuel Clemens, The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County; J. P. Donleavy, Throw Molotow; Nathaniel Hawthorne, Wakefield; Tommaso Landolfi, Pastoral; H. P. Lovecraft, Cool Air; Yukio Mishima, Three Million Yen; Juan Rulfo, Because We Are So Poor; Samuel Tenenbaum, The Man Who Went to Heaven.

Published 1974 352 pages $5.95, paperbound

For a complimentary examination copy or further information, please write to:
St. Martin's Press
P.O. Box 5352, New York, N.Y. 10017
INTRODUCING
THE INTRODUCERS!

If you teach an introductory English course—literature, composition, or reading—we can offer you and your students some of the finest reading and writing available, help your students develop their own skills, and prove that the introductory course can be dynamic and stimulating.

JUST PUBLISHED

**Paragraphs and Themes, Second Edition**
P. Joseph Canavan, Mount San Antonio College
January 1976  Paper  352 pages
A revision of a successful “paragraph rhetoric,” designed to be a step-by-step guide to basic writing assignments. The book begins with an overall view of the short theme and the longer piece of writing, moves through a detailed treatment of the different kinds of paragraphs, emphasizing the ways of gaining unity, completeness, order, and coherence, and finally discusses the skills and techniques of structuring thought by narration, description, and exposition. Well-paced exercises, assignments, and suggested writing projects carry out each stage of instruction.

JUST PUBLISHED

**Reading Power**
James I. Brown, University of Minnesota
January 1976  Paper  400 pages
A well designed workbook of readings and exercises written for students with deficiencies in vocabulary and comprehension. A short story, timely action-oriented articles from leading magazines, and fourteen selections on reading improvement written by the author are accompanied by exercises which lead students through step-by-step improvement of basic reading skills.

AVAILABLE NOW

**The Inquiring Reader with Exercises**
Second Edition
Idelle Sullens, Edith Karas, and Raymond Fabrizio, all of Monterey Peninsula College
1974  Paper  454 pages
A rich diversity of materials—fascinating examples of all kinds of modern writing in four major genres—introduces students to a vast range of literary styles and concerns. A combination workbook-text approach encourages students to put to immediate use the new skills, knowledge, and perception acquired in their reading.

AVAILABLE NOW

**Drama in the Modern World: Plays and Essays, Alternate Edition**
Samuel A. Weiss, University of Illinois, Chicago
1974  Paper  614 pages
A selection of outstanding plays from the modern repertory, accompanied by critical essays that illuminate the playwrights or the particular work. The masters of the theatre—Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw, O'Neill, Pirandello, Lorca, Brecht, and Ionesco, Schnitzler, Eisenstein, and Gordon—are represented.

AVAILABLE SOON

**The Heath Introduction to Poetry**
with preface and a brief history by Joseph de Roche, Northeastern University
April 1975  Paper  480 pages

For more information call toll free 600-225-1366. In Massachusetts call collect 617-862-6650.

D.C. Heath and Company, 125 Spring Street, Lexington, Massachusetts 02173
D.C. Heath Canada, Ltd., Suite 1408, 100 Adelaide Street, W., Toronto, Ontario M5H 1S9
The Prentice-Hall Handbook for Writers, now in its 6th Edition, has outsold even its own previous edition in the first year of sales. More than 275 schools have already adopted this reference book/textbook and new adoptions are coming in all the time.

Over 1,100,000 new copies of the P-H Handbook have been sold new to students and countless numbers of copies have been passed along or resold to be used by even more students. This Handbook has guided several generations of college students through the intricacies of the English language and the craft of writing with expression, clarity and purpose.

There are many features that help make this the ideal Handbook for you and your students. Designed as an easy reference guide in the preparation, correction and revision of papers, it classifies the standards and conventions of good writing in three ways: a full index, a detailed table of contents and a correction chart on the end-papers of the book. These features offer easy student access and enable you to direct student attention to specific essentials in correcting and revising papers. There are many practice exercises, explanations and examples of grammatical errors, important chapters on The Whole Composition, Effective Paragraphs, The Library and The Reserach Paper, all of which are especially beneficial.

1974 516pp. $6.50

For further information on this text and a free reader's guide write: Robert Jordan, Dept. J81, College Division, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

To mark the 1,100,000th copy of the Prentice-Hall Handbook for Writers, by G. Leggett, D. Mead and W. Charvat, author Dr. Glenn Leggett (center) president of Grinnell College, Iowa, was presented with a silver tray. Honoring Dr. Leggett are Howard M. Warrington (left), Board chairman of P-H, and Donald A. Schaefer, Board member and president of the College Division.
Writing Well
Donald Hall
University of Michigan
WRITING WELL is a basic composition text that is very simply written. It is lucid, readable prose and it covers the fundamentals of good composition while stressing the importance of clarity and emotional honesty. It includes over a hundred lively illustrative excerpts—drawn mainly from the works of leading contemporary writers—and numerous imaginative exercises that students enjoy doing.
Paper 324 pages 1973 $6.50

Patterns of Exposition 4
Randall E. Decker
This newest edition of the highly successful PATTERNS OF EXPOSITION retains the format, organization, and abundant apparatus of the previous editions, but adds twenty-three new selections (many of them anthologized for the first time) from such established contemporary writers as Woody Allen, Tom Wolfe, Gail Sheehy, and Barbara Tuchman. The book is divided into ten sections, each defining and illustrating a different rhetorical pattern. A final section contains three essays of longer length that combine previously-discussed patterns.
Paper 384 pages 1974 $5.95

Questions of Rhetoric and Usage
Second Edition
Kenneth S. Rothwell
University of Vermont
Completely re-written to include a broad spectrum of contemporary writing samples, a new chapter on styles and anti-styles, a new section on writing about films, and an expanded chapter on writing about literature, the Second Edition of QUESTIONS OF RHETORIC AND USAGE is an eminently practical, student-oriented freshman composition text. Rothwell has kept in mind throughout the book the kinds of questions students ask and the kinds of writing they are most likely to do—i.e., essay exams, literary and film criticism, the library research paper.
Paper 317 pages 1974 $4.95

Subject and Structure
An Anthology for Writers
Fifth Edition
John M. Wasson
Washington State University
This new Fifth Edition of a widely-adopted anthology retains the popular, well-tested framework of the first four editions; a joint focus on subject matter and rhetorical method, 47 of the 88 selections did not appear in the previous edition; 20 of them are drawn from imaginative literature, which allows the student to write on genres other than the essay and also provides a useful transition to a more comprehensive study of literature. Each of the book's nine sections is preceded by one of Professor Wasson's much-praised introductions on the rhetorical method being used. Instructor's Manual.
Paper approx. 512 pages
February 1975 $5.55 tent.

A Short Guide to Writing About Literature
Third Edition
Sylvan Barnet
Tufts University
Designed to bridge the gap between analytical reading and critical writing, and to provide a transition from basic exposition to literary criticism, Barnet's SHORT GUIDE has become a leading guide to writing about literature for college students. Prof. Barnet has added sections on essay examinations and the research paper to the new Third Edition. He has also changed a number of the professional essays that demonstrate the effective use of critical vocabulary in writing about fiction, drama, poetry, and film.
Paper approx. 256 pages
December 1975 $3.95 tent.
Handbook of Current English
Fourth Edition
Porter G. Perrin / Jim W. Corder, Texas Christian University

Complete, concise, and current—three reasons why this handbook of grammar and composition is indispensable for freshman English students and why it’s an automatic, habit-forming reference for use throughout the college years and beyond.

Prepublication reviewers say—
"Clearly, Handbook of Current English belongs . . . among those handbooks which may be termed innovative. And its inclusion . . . of so many of the standard methods and tactics warrants the additional label complete."

". . . the presentation of such usually tedious material as punctuation, mechanics, and spelling is . . . quite readable and interesting."

"The Introduction—a discussion of language development reflecting recent studies—is one of the very best on such material that I have ever read; it is eminently comprehensive and comprehensible."

"These exercises that require a suitable context for the revised sentence are excellent. They are something of a breakthrough; at least I have never seen anything like them."

January 1975, 544 pages, paper, approx. $5.50, with Instructor’s Manual

Writer’s Guide and Index to English
Fifth Edition
Porter G. Perrin / Wilma R. Ebbitt
1972, 765 pages, paper $7.50, with Instructor’s Manual

Strategies of Rhetoric
Revised Edition
A. M. Tibbetts / Charlene Tibbetts
University of Illinois
1974, 383 pages, paper $6.50

Commanding Sentences:
A Charted Course in Sentence Writing
Helen Mills, American River College
Wayne Harsh, University of California, Davis
1974, 324 pages, illustrated, paper $5.75, with Instructor’s Manual and Test Items

Writing About Literature
Revised Edition
B. Bernard Cohen, University of Missouri, St. Louis
1973, 273 pages, paper $4.35

Speaking for Ourselves
American Ethnic Writing
Second Edition
Lillian Faderman, California State University, Fresno
Barbara Bradshaw
January 1975, 640 pages, illustrated, paper, approx. $5.95, with Instructor’s Manual

Seven Contemporary Short Novels
Second Edition
Charles Clerc / Louis H. Leiter, University of the Pacific
January 1975, 732 pages, paper, approx. $5.95

Essays, short stories, letters, and poems
Finding a Voice
Jim W. Corder, Texas Christian University
1973, 796 pages, illustrated, paper $7.95

What Is the Short Story?
Studies in the Development of a Literary Form
Revised Edition
Eugene Current-Garcia / Walton R. Patrick
Auburn University
1973, 532 pages, paper $5.50

For further information write to
Jack Bevington, Advertising Department
Scott, Foresman College Division
1800 East Lake Avenue
Glenview, Illinois 60025
whatever “renovate” might happen to mean at any time in a changing world.

I have also come to the conclusion that too many of us automatically respond to those words “no composition requirement” with fear, trembling, and panic (Ares is with the bad guys, isn’t he?). There is ample reason for doing so, for going from something to what appears to be nothing is akin to leaping into the abyss after having known solid earth for a lifetime. This does not alter the fact that the move to no composition requirement is a major alternative we should all not only be aware of but have considerable information about. Once again, respondents have something to offer through their comments, two separate sets of them this time.

The first group of comments, which represents a selection of nine from quite a few more like them, comes from schools of various sizes, from those with under 2,000 students to those with more than 14,000. All have somewhat or heavily restrictive entrance requirements (as opposed to open admissions), and seven of the nine are private schools. “Freshman English is no longer required,” begins the first. “However, the demand for the course has increased each year since we dropped the requirement, and we have sophomores, juniors, and even seniors electing it. We have had to add sections to accommodate the numbers of students who feel they need the course.”

“Despite the fact that Freshman English is optional, the program is thriving.” “The university-wide Freshman English requirement was dropped in Fall 1969. We replaced Freshman English, a two-semester course, with a two-semester composition course and another two-semester Advanced Composition offering. Both are open to students at any level of their undergraduate work and are heavily enrolled even without the coercion of a requirement.” “Our present program of composition and other introductory courses attracts just as many students as we used to enroll when students were required to take at least ten hours of English.” “There is also evidence that students in larger numbers than anticipated are electing courses (such as Freshman Composition) that were formerly required.” “At our school, students are required to take 6 hours of English, 3 of which must be literature. None of the 6 hrs. is required to be Freshman English. However, we have more than 100% of our freshman class who choose to take Freshman English 112 and 123. Dared if I can explain it. Preconditioned I suppose.” “We have no composition requirement as such but estimate that about 70% of our students take comp. even so.” “We have not noticed any significant change in the writing ability of our students since we dropped the requirement.” “Four years ago, general university requirements were abolished here. The only requirements for graduation are the completion of 120 hours of undergraduate credit and fulfillment of the requirements of the student’s chosen major. As a result of this change, freshman and/or conventional composition courses are no longer required. We thought this might be catastrophic for our registration in this department, but it has not been largely for two reasons: (1) We carefully revamped our basic writing courses and retitled them to avoid the stigma of ‘freshman English.’ We now have three types of basic writing courses: one, ‘Self Exploration through Writing,’ a basically unstructured course focused on autobiographical and psychological writing; two, ‘Writing about Society,’ a writing course focused on contemporary social problems as subject matter for themes; three, ‘The Art and Craft of Writing,’ a course fairly close to the conventional rhetoric course. The students have responded to our change, and we dropped perhaps only four or five sections or so of basic writing. In addition, upperclassmen have enrolled in these courses so that the ‘freshman’ stigma was removed, too. (2) Advisers in other departments have still registered their students in our basic writing courses on sound pedagogical reasons: some departments urge their students, some advise their students, a few require English as part of their major.”

What is obviously common to those nine comments from respondents at schools where there is no composition requirement as such is best described by the word “satisfaction.” Instead of considering them further at this point, let’s defer additional judgments until we’ve seen a second group of nine comments.

This group is not comprised of a selection from quite a few responses like them. It is, rather, the group of all responses received that reflect some dissatisfaction, no matter by whom, with no composition requirement. The nine are again from a wide variety of school sizes, six of them private schools, all of them having somewhat or heavily restrictive entrance requirements. “Other faculty complain about incompetence in English; and they rarely take advantage of opportunities to refer students to a remedial course, an option always available.” “There is considerable pressure from the administration, some faculty, and some students to reinstate a required full-year course in English Composition.” “Freshman Composition is a departmental, not a university, requirement. About half the departments require at least one semester of Freshman Composition. All departments recommend it, as does the university. There is pressure from the administration and some faculty to reinstate it as a university-wide requirement.” “The faculty would like us to require two terms rather than one term of Freshman English.” “Our students are required to score above the 25th percentile on a proficiency exam when they enter as freshmen, or to take a remedial grammar and composition course through our ‘learning center.’ This system is working poorly, and we find that we must teach composition in almost every literature course offered. A new Freshman Program in one of the schools on campus places a heavy emphasis on writing skills, but this element of the program is distinctively subordinate to the program’s content. It is too early to say whether or not composition can adequately be taught on this catch-as-catch-can basis. We will follow up the freshmen who went through our program to see what, if any, carryover can be observed between the required course and their later performance on papers and essay exams.” “Because we teach in formal class work only the few students who indicate by test that they have little chance of college success without help. Many non-English faculty are enraged that we will not certify their students as competent writers by a one-semester freshman course so that the faculties in major departments will not have to worry about certifying their seniors as literate. We resist on the basis that literacy is a university faculty responsibility, not the private responsibility of the English Department.” “We abolished the Freshman Composition requirement five years ago. There is an introduction to literature course that includes some writing and there are elective courses in composition and creative writing. Some faculty want the requirement restored, but the English Department insists that this is a college requirement, not to be carried solely by them.” “Some faculty, very dissatisfied with the achievement of undergraduates in written expression, have suggested that perhaps a return to the former six-hour ‘literature and composition’ requirement might be an improvement. Efforts by us to have individual departments handle composition for their majors (we do desire freshmen to declare their major on entrance; it works out adequately in most cases) have met with no response.” “There is always a muted rumbling about returning to the old comp course that was last taught in 1965-66 (required of all freshmen without exception), but given the fact that none
(or few) of our faculty really knows anything about teaching composition, it is probably just as well that it remain out of the curriculum."

Before any generalizations can be made concerning the two groups of comments, it must be re-emphasized that both groups consist mainly of private schools and in neither group is there a school with open admissions. (For something on the matter of open admissions, see the GCC report, especially p. 141.) These should be kept in mind, along with the knowledge that there are a host of possible factors that make each school questionable in its applicability elsewhere.

With those admonitions before us we can move ahead to the generalization that "no composition requirement" and chaos are not automatically to be paired off as a cause and effect relationship. The simple fact that there are more comments like those in the first, satisfied, group that could be brought in as evidence and no more like the ones in the second group indicates quite clearly that it should be possible to go from a composition requirement to none, with integrity, almost anywhere. That is certainly not to be taken as a suggestion, of course, but as a statement based on the evidence of successes. The fact that some have failed and that some will fear the abyss may only mean they need to learn more about the abyss and about those who have leaped, Kazantzakian fashion, into it. The more graphic the evidence we have from satisfied "survivors," the better. At present there is too little of the evidence in circulation, hence part of the reason for my earlier intimation that we in composition need an efficient system of input and dissemination of information, particularly in these hectic times.

Closely related to that generalization is another: what lies behind satisfaction with no composition requirement on one hand and dissatisfaction with it on the other has much to do with the planning of the change, the implementation of the plans, and the maintenance of the no-requirement situation. I find it hard to think otherwise than that a major division between what made the first group of comments possible, and the second, can be found in the following: (1) how effectively or ineffectively the dropping of the requirement was planned for to avoid chaotic results, (2) how the plans were nurtured or not from the drawing board to their activation, (3) how well or poorly the plans were maintained in action, (4) how quickly necessary modifications were spotted and made (or overlooked), and (5) how the unavoidable tendency toward normlessness was controlled and even averted. It is apparent that advisement of students, the design of optional and elective courses, teaching in those courses, and, probably most important of all, reeducation of the entire faculty were all instrumental areas. Along these lines, it is impossible to overlook that a major factor revealed among the comments in the second group is the breakdown, somewhere, of an intention to shift responsibility from those in the composition program when there was a composition requirement to others around the campus when the requirement was eliminated. It should be reasonable to assume that others on campuses where there is no composition requirement have as much obligation to make the situation work (without cheating students and without destroying standards, that is) as those in composition programs formerly had and, further, that it is the responsibility of those who are administrators to see to it that it does work. I have no trouble whatsoever in seeing wishy-washiness as a genuine hazard in place of that, though. As a matter of fact, I'm reminded of a recent "Peanuts" cartoon in which Lucy, during a neighborhood baseball game, is standing beneath an approaching fly ball and calls off her fellow outfielders with: "I think maybe, perhaps, hopefully, if everything goes right and nothing unpredictable happens, possibly I've got it." If enough faculty and administrators around campus react that way to their newfound responsibilities in a no-composition-requirement setting, there's no hope. Leaping into the abyss (or catching fly balls) is not for the faint-hearted.

It goes without saying that other generalizations are possible, but enough have been ventured to meet Delacroix's famous minimal criteria: "One line has no meaning; a second is needed to give it expression." The point is not that the move to no composition requirement is the only move acceptable but that it is definitely an alternative among many to be kept in mind—with pertinent supporting evidence.

By now it should be clear that I have been attempting to show, in this article, that what we can learn from the experiences of others is the need, especially at this time, for a heightened awareness of what is going on, what has gone on, and, as best we can, what will go on elsewhere that involves the composition requirement and programs. The situation in higher education today is such that at times change appears to be all that is permanent. We need to adapt to the notion and realize that we are as likely to be affected as any other group of professional educators, probably more so. Lower division requirements are being done away with or are being drastically modified. Where they are, we have to be ready to change with them or be effective in our opposition. Budgets are being revised downward or have leveled off as a reflection of enrollment trends and inflation. The battle for funds does not exclude composition programs as too sacred, so we must know what to do when the time comes that the funds are threatened. Accountability is demanded, competency and performance bases are "in," the roles of computers and television loom ever larger, equivalency credit is being granted in unprecedented ways and in unlikely percentages, and with the arrival of equal opportunity (open admissions) standards are no longer unchallengeable. We have to be involved, knowledgeable, and flexible with these and the many more that are turning up almost daily. We can be if we'll begin by developing those systems of information input and retrieval that we have.

Composition programs that have not anticipated or responded sensitively to external pressures have very often failed to, it seems to me, because those who run or are influential within them have not really known what to do, either in changing or in proving what is best. The feeling that "what we have is best" is fine as long as it is accompanied by the information and evidence that will prove that it is and as long as it takes into consideration all of what went into causing the pressures. The attempted discrediting of the bases for the pressures is a tactic that is only as effective as the evidence in favor of the composition program or courses is sound. Once again, it is only through the efficiency of rapid input and dissemination of information that we will know when to fight and know when to give in.

It well may be, as Stephen K. Bailey observed in an article entitled "Combating the Efficiency Cultists" in the June 1973 issue of Change, that "our supreme obligation is to remind ourselves and our public and private benefactors that a partially unquantifiable and inherently untidy system of higher education must routinely make legitimate demands upon the treasuries of the purse in order to nourish the treasures of the mind and spirit." Maybe so, but we in composition cannot meet this obligation blindly. Without clear knowledge of what we're doing and what others are, how well we're doing it and how well others are, and why we're each doing it the same or differently, we will be easy prey for the "cultists" and all comers. If there's one thing the survey's results and comments by respondents have shown, it's just that.
RECLAIMING THE IMAGINATION
Ann R. Berthoff
University of Massachusetts at Boston

Teachers of composition are necessarily pragmatists, but they are also given to theorizing, often without any clear notion of the philosophical implications of one theory or another. Writing about writing, English teachers generally seek to justify new approaches (each destined to be “viable” for about three terms) by zealous appeals to experts, especially those considered to be scientists. Psychologists are the usual favorites, but the views and pronouncements of others are seriously cited: systems analysts, computer engineers, ethologists, students of consumerism, amateur psychanalysts, media specialists, et al. Richard M. Coe tells us in “Rheticoric 2001” (Freshman English News, Spring, 1974) that ‘‘scientists have the data necessary for evolving (what the Club of Rome calls) new forms of thinking.’’ It is Mr. Coe’s view that English teachers should facilitate communication by translating the various technical jargons into commensurable and comprehensible language.” But of course the working concepts we need for teaching English will not be produced by translating one jargon into another or even by the easy transfer of concepts from one discipline to another.

What we need, it seems to me, is an epistemology — as pragmatic as we can make it. The challenge is to develop what Paulo Freire identifies as the basis for an education that returns us to our humanity, namely, a “pedagogy of knowing.” Composition teachers need to ask how the composing process is an act of knowing; how what we do when we compose is related to what we do when we make sense of the world, when we interpret our experience, when we “get it together.”

This power of the human mind in action used to be called imagination. In developing a pedagogy of knowing, we will need to reclaim the concept of imagination by declaring, first of all, what it is not: Imagination is NOT the opposite of an “intellectual” faculty or mode; Imagination is NOT merely, or necessarily, “personal” expression; Imagination is NOT an entertaining relief to be enjoyed after the serious work of problem-solving: its creations are NOT necessarily vague or dreamlike or formless; nor are they beyond the reach of critical response.

Next, we could identify and demonstrate certain defining characteristics, among them the following: 1) The active mind — imagination — is involved in seeing, feeling, thinking; there is a continuum that includes perception and conception. The Kantian formulation is that precepts without concepts are empty and concepts without precepts are blind. 2) The active mind — imagination — functions in either of two modes: the non-discursive in which abstraction proceeds without successive generalizations to produce, for instance, images; or the discursive mode which depends on conscious, deliberate generalization to produce, for instance, models. We don’t see a chair by generalizing consciously about it; nor does an artist paint a chair by generalizing; percept and painting are non-discursive symbols: 3) What the active mind — imagination — creates and discovers in the process of abstracting are forms. We may call those forms the contents of consciousness, or symbols, or something else, but in any case they mediate our experience: we know nothing from them as.

Teaching composition as itself an act of knowing would dramatize the notion that there is a continuum of acts of mind by which we make sense of experience; by which we understand what we read, interpret what happens, order and organize our impressions — and write them down. The forms which the mind discovers are consonant with the forms of apprehension. Reality appears to us in temporal and spatial forms and in terms of causal relationships; for as long as we are mortal and take up space, time, space and causality will be the categories of understanding. Composing is knowing: what we teach is that how we construe is how we construct.

Here are two definitions which because they stress the conceptual nature of reading and writing can guide us in developing a pedagogy of knowing. I. A. Richards offers as a subtitle for his book How to Read a Page, How to REAP a Page. He has a Briton’s crazy delight in puns, but the point is sharp: we gather meanings as we read. Josephine Miles defines a composition as “a bundle of parts.” What we do when we compose is what we do when we tell, show, argue, dance, sing, reminisce, draw, pray: we bundle parts. How do we get the parts and how do we bundle them? We name (depict, gesture, create metaphors), compare, define, and re-name; we arrange and re-arrange and thus create meanings; we use words which are, as Susanne K. Langer reminds us, “our most ready and powerful symbols.”

In this enterprise of teaching composition as a process involving the active mind, we will need to know how to account for language, what it is and does. The notion that language is “a communication medium” only begs the question. In order to substantiate this empty notion, English teachers frequently count on the terminology of communication (information) theory. But is it an advance to speak of “information-oriented systems,” as Mr. Coe suggests we should? Information in communication theory has nothing to do with fact, statement or meaning. Max Black explains in The Labyrinth of Language that “information is defined entirely in terms of probabilities of occurrence of component symbols.” Some teachers may consider that it clears the air to call a poem a “communication situation,” but in a semantic context, to say nothing of a literary context, both terms are problematical.

Language is not one medium among many — the trivializing conception fostered by communication theory — but the ground of any and all mediating systems: language is anterior to media and is, in fact and in logic, their precondition. What is called “non-verbal communication” takes place in a linguistic world, a world built by language; any other assumption should be vigorously challenged by English teachers.

With its beguiling jargon of “input” and “encoding” and “feedback” and “linearity,” communication theory encourages the pernicious notion that we “have” ideas which we hold in data banks until we find the right words. It is a notion that does not advance us beyond that outdated rhetoric which has us think in terms of putting what is-we-have-to-say in persuasive, appropriate, correct or merely painless terms; it is a notion entirely consonant with the standard freshman assumption that composition is a matter of devising an outline of a topic and then going over it “to put in the words.”

Communication theory is not to our purpose, if that is to be understanding the relationship of language and thought: attempts to adapt the diagrams and schematic representations of communication systems, as designed by computer engineers, prove it. For instance, Mr. Coe, though he has just declaimed against dividing and classifying as “outmoded forms of thought,” distinguishes “internal communicative relationships (perception-cognition-expression)” from those he calls “external (sender-message-receiver).” What looks like a formulation is really a muddle. For one thing, between sender and receiver there is SIGNAL, not MESSAGE: the distinction between the two is, as Richards has noted, the pons asinorum of linguistics. "Messages," he reminds us, "are generated by contexts." That is to say, messages result from intentions and interpretations; messages are composed and construed; they are not encoded and decoded like signal flags flown on a line. Watergate, in my opinion, could teach us and our students more about signals and messages and intention and interpretation and
context than a world of information theory.

Reliance on communication theory foretells discovery of the active mind's interpretive, constructive, abstractive functions, the imagination's mediating power. In order to avoid what Richards calls "a way of thinking — of proceeding, rather — as though composing were a sort of catching a non-verbal butterfly in a verbal net, as though comprehending were a releasing of said butterfly from the net," we will need to have at the ready another, stronger conception of language as the "supreme organ of the mind's self-ordering growth." Man is the language animal, the animal symbolicum, no more like the computer than he is like the internal combustion engine or the spinning wheel. The alternative to a rhetoric of the machine is not a rhetoric of the computer; it is the rhetoric of natural process, of growth and development.

If we can reclaim the imagination and forget about communication theory, we surely can develop a pedagogy of knowing. And what are the classroom consequences? We insist that speaking, whether in the form of role-playing or old-fashioned discussion, is at the heart of the composition class. We teach writing as dialogue with the self and others because dialogue is central to dialectic, "the continuing audit of meaning." We generate names by learning to see and to think deliberately; we develop lists into statements and queries (100 starts teach more than 20 races to the tape); we create oppositions at all levels, from syntactical forms to argument and narrative; we define by recognizing the constraints of purpose, point of view, context. We make the composing process itself a means of discovery, a speculative instrument, a critical method and a way of making meanings. We teach reading and writing together; critical and creative writing together, at least in the freshman course; and we devise every writing assignment or experiment in composition as an occasion for learning what it means to say that the world man inhabits is created by language.

We begin with the complex — that is where our students "are" — and that means learning the uses of chaos. Everything has to happen all at once or it's likely not to happen at all. If what we aim for is not present in elemental form from the start, we won't get to it over some magical bridge-of-one-hair. The notion, for instance, that "analysis" and "comprehension" are super-skills which result when you add up "basic skills" is a fantasy of the education industry. We can't get from one to another phase in any rational way, or from one mode of writing to another, if we have no conception of their relationship. There are no bridges from "creative" writing to anything else, so long as "creativity" is seen as the logical opposite of all other uses of the mind. The unis we plan should present not just "elements" of writing — a little logic, a little word study, some discussion of argumentation — but their relationship to the process of knowing; the parts of a composition course should be bundled. The sequence is better represented in the figure of a rheostat than by an old-fashioned adding machine.

The human mind with its reflexive powers is the only teaching machine we need, the only audio-visual aid we can count on; with it, we can apprehend our apprehensions; criticize our criticisms; comprehend our comprehensions; rearrange our techniques for arranging. We can develop consciousness of consciousness because the human mind has, as Richards puts it, the power of feedback. "No chimpanzee thinks he thinks," (Auden) but human beings can, as Coleridge urged, know their knowledge. Studying composition as first of all the work of imagination is a chance for discovering the role of language in all acts of knowing. It is this epistemological dimension of language which is being discovered when a student gets the point of the legendary query "How can I know what I think until I hear what I say?"

The idea that composition has anything to do with anything else is a novelty to the majority of our students, I would say. Our job is to create the occasions for their learning just what is involved in the exercise of imagination and for discovering that whatever it is, they were born knowing how.

(Note: I have cited I. A. Richards throughout this comment because what he has to say to English teachers is indispensable for developing a philosophy of language which, as I have been arguing, is all-important if we are to reclaim the concept of imagination. His three most recent books are all published by Harcourt; two are in paperback editions: Speculative Instruments (HB 128); So Much Nearer; Design for Escape (HB 148).

ON THE DANGERS OF CUTTING THINGS INTO LITTLE PIECES
(or "Remember the Rumble Seat and the Classroom Teacher?")

Ralph E. Loewe
Cuyahoga Community College

Long before the present purveyors of profound paradigms with perfectly planned parameters penetrated the profession, teachers worked with systems. We called them curriculums, syllabuses, and lesson plans. And, oddly enough, we were accountable to the students, parents, school, the Board of Education and to ourselves.

Many of us were fairly systematic. We analyzed our subjects rather carefully, and we often separated subject matter into its components in order to explain it better. We tested different approaches, found what worked and what didn't work, and we changed our methods accordingly.

There were some, of course, who were not systematic and others who were too systematic, but in a period of war, growing social changes, unrest, and in the face of ever-changing public attitudes about education, it was surprising that teachers could teach at all. No one can really attest to our success or failure, because more money went into how to rustproof garbage cans than went into educational research in the forties and early fifties. But after Sputnik the country got scared, research money became available, and serious questions were raised about how we were teaching. This period of high interest in education and the resultant influx of money into the schools was, however, short-lived. The Vietnam War changed the nation's priorities. All spending but war spending came under strict public scrutiny. Taxpayers took out their mounting frustrations against the rising tax burden on school levies; businessmen and legislators demanded accountability; and the researchers and a new breed of educators responded with techniques that they considered "measurable."

Since teachers had long questioned the possibility of accurately measuring teaching ability and had consequently strongly resisted moves toward merit increments, the educational planners placed their emphasis on measuring subject matter. Teaching systems were devised that took many forms: machines, programmed texts, packaged courses, and computers, all dispensing handy, ready-to-use, easy-to-test modules. The expeditors could then easily measure the input of the instructor (if he still remained) or the mechanical dispensers of information, as well as the "take-out" of the students. Next.

Thus, the pendulum has swung towards mechanization. In many cases it has gotten stuck, and it appears that, too often, people who don't know much about teaching are setting the clock.

The promise of those who promoted the various systems
methods was that the systems would make the teacher more effective, relieve her from repetitious, tedious work. On the contrary, as many of us feared, it appears that in most cases the systems have separated the experienced teacher from direct contact with students, making her a manager of tutors and machines instead of a teacher, and in many cases eliminating her entirely.

The results can be extremely serious, perhaps dangerous, for in the process of dissecting, bisecting, and trisecting, of analyzing, modularizing, compartmentalizing, and computerizing, many of the systems managers have lost sight of the wholeness of things: the whole subject, the whole teacher, and most important, the whole student.

The modularized approach tends to stress form rather than substance, token knowledge rather than in-depth knowledge. By its nature the emphasis is on what is testable, measurable. The emphasis is on evaluation and grading. The best example of this is the wide proliferation of the short answer test, which has almost completely replaced the essay question in many subject areas. Here the student picks and chooses answers instead of expressing and developing his own.

Those who most proclaim the benefits of systems teaching wave the banner of individualization. But is it really individualizing when educators substitute machines, sets of programmed materials, and inexperienced tutors for experienced, mature teachers? Can one better show his unique abilities on a standardized test or on a theme? Is the systems approach really more individualized or merely more measurable — or merely cheaper?

This, oddly enough, brings us back to the classroom teachers. Before we turn all of them in for shiny sets of computers in automated learning laboratories, it might be worth taking another look at them and what they can do. Here, of course, we focus on the English teacher in particular, but most of what follows applies to teachers in general.

Among the values that one can contribute to good teachers are that they have wider knowledge and experience than the students. They have usually seen more of life and the world. They have read much more and studied a much greater variety of subjects more intensively. They can thus relate a poem to other subject areas, to literature, and to life. Because they have evaluated thousands of compositions, they are usually good judges of what is good, what is exceptional, and what is poor work. They know what to expect of the student at a given level and what skills the student must have in order to function in the succeeding English class and in other subjects.

They know how the various parts of their subject fit into the whole and how to help the student move from one part to the next and yet keep aware of what he is doing and why he is doing it.

Because the English class is one of the few places where the student pours out his ideas, the English teacher in particular is in a good position to see the student as a whole person rather than as No. 00-7245a, taking Segment E of Physics II. (The counselor is supposed to deal with the whole person, but his load is usually too great, and he doesn't see the student as often as his teacher does.) The English teacher can see his student act and react in class; he can follow his student's progress through his compositions, and he can get an up-close view through individual conferences.

An English composition can reveal much about the student's reading ability, his ability to organize and develop ideas. It can reveal his biases, his intellectual flexibility or rigidity, and sometimes his neuroses or even psychoses.

Class discussion can help a student learn the many-sided-ness of issues, can help him learn to think and respond more quickly, can help indicate his relationships within a group. To the teacher it can reveal seemingly obvious problems such as speech defects, eye troubles, hearing difficulties that may influence a student's performance; it can also indicate that a student has greater potential than that indicated by his written work; it can reveal shyness or anti-social behavior.

Individual conferences can help the student get on paper ideas that may be "stuck" in his head. Such conferences often dramatize to the instructor that he is dealing with a warm, flesh-and-blood entity, not Susy, line 6 in the gradebook. Susy is having trouble with her boyfriend; Mrs. K. has three children and no husband; George Z. is being sued by his mother; Henry is recovering from a nervous breakdown and needs much encouragement.

The English teacher is not a psychiatrist or a counselor, but she can learn a great deal from her students when she deals with them as whole human beings, when she realizes more clearly that English is only one aspect of their lives. This interaction helps her to be more responsive, to be able to develop more meaningful methods and materials.

"But individualized teaching does all this, this personalized teaching much better," the systems people say. The answer is that good teachers have individualized for years by giving extra assignments to the advanced students and extra help to the weaker one, and in many other ways.

"The computer deals more even-handedly, more objectively," say the systems folk. Does it deal even-handedly, objectively, or mechanically? In a society that is becoming increasingly mechanized, does not human warmth and concern take precedence over so-called efficiency?

Perhaps the answer lies in compromise. Much more time and effort should be spent by the efficiency experts (another term from the past — remember "rumble seat?") in improving the selection, training, working conditions, evaluation, and pay of teachers than in attempting to replace them with un-tutored tutors, programs, and computers.

The "super" learning center should be replaced by the extended classroom in which the teacher maintains his direct contact with the student but (as was promised) is augmented by tutors, programmed materials, and the computer, by secretarial help, student assistants, and time to think and plan. The teacher should diagnose the student, assign him to whatever special help is needed, use the classroom itself as a vital teaching method, and continue to maintain personal contact with the student.

If the teacher, who knows the whole subject and sees the whole student, is thus provided with the training and tools, we may truly individualize.

Should we, on the other hand, move relentlessly forward into mechanization, we may achieve greater "efficiency" and economy, but we should not delude ourselves about providing a better education for our children.

I stand with Maxwell H. Goldberg, who says in Cyberration, Systems, and the Teaching of English, "A central responsibility, then, for us as English teachers, is to help our students assert their bit of fiat by encouraging them to develop strength, finesse, and imaginative courage in eliciting and fulfilling their own formative nature. To accept this challenge is, at the same time, to relegate learning systems to their appropriate role in the teaching of English — that is, a secondary role — as adjunct not as main or exclusive agent of instruction."

(This article may not be reprinted without written permission from the author.)