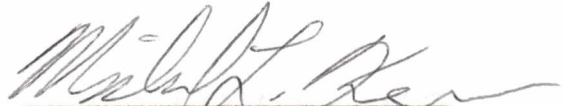
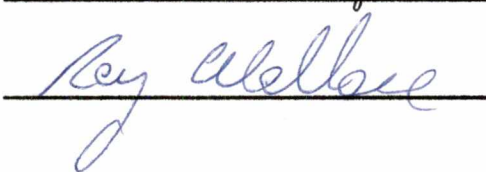


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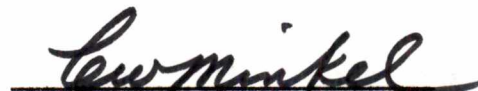
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Gregory W. Mowris entitled "Before the First Assignment: A Synoptic Discussion of Orality, Literacy, and Affect for New Freshmen English Teachers." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.


Michael L. Keene
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


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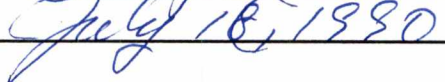
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BEFORE THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT:
A SYNOPTIC DISCUSSION
OF
ORALITY, LITERACY, AND AFFECT
FOR THE NEW FRESHMAN ENGLISH TEACHER

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Gregory W. Mowris
August 1990

ABSTRACT

Three major influences on Freshman English are the fact of orality, the nature of literacy, and the role of affect. This thesis focuses on defining these three influences from various perspectives, on how the three interact as a complex network of forces in first-term college writing classes, and especially on how knowledge of this interaction can be useful to new Freshman English teachers before they meet with their first classes.

The Dense Meaning Hypothesis is advanced as a means of increasing our knowledge of this complex of interactions as a complex. This hypothesis states that, since (1) writing about any given subject tends to improve learning in that subject, and (2) talking about writing can help to improve subsequent rewriting, then writing and talking about using language in correspondence journals and group writing conferences may increase learning about using language (where "using language" means writing, reading, speaking, listening, and thinking). A direct result of this improved learning may be a higher overall quality to students' writing in Freshman English. A research pedagogy designed to investigate the Dense Meaning Hypothesis through actual classroom experience is presented.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
One. DISJUNCTURE	5
Two. ORALITY	12
Three. LITERACY	42
Four. AFFECT	65
CONCLUSION	82
WORKS CITED	95
VITA	104

INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents two distinct lines of thought and suggestions for researching how the two might be related. The ultimate goal of such research is a new pedagogy for Freshman English.

The first line of thought is presented as a self-help manual and is addressed to an audience of new Freshman English teachers who have little or no classroom teaching experience or scholarly background in composition studies. As a self-help manual, it is intended, first, as a practical, realistic assessment of who incoming freshman writers are in terms of the emotional and intellectual equipment they bring with them to the Freshman English endeavor. It is intended, second, to be used in conjunction with whatever texts such a teacher might study as part of a "Methods of Teaching Freshman English" class.

Before the First Assignment presents what recent research has to say about three strong influences on Freshman English: the fact of orality, the nature of literacy, and the role of affect. In addition to the review of recent research in these areas, this thesis offers, in the chapters on orality and literacy, proven pedagogical means for uniting speaking, reading, and

writing in the Freshman English classroom. Finally, in the concluding chapter, suggestions are offered for ways to unite not only speaking, reading, and writing, but also orality, literacy, and affect. These suggestions are based on the growing body of evidence which asserts that that writing is a mode of learning and on the second line of thought, what this author is calling the Dense Meaning Hypothesis.

Dense Meaning

Meaningfulness of experience can be graphically represented as taking place on a continuum such that the sparsely meaningful is at one end and the densely meaningful is at the other. Thus:

Sparsely meaningful-----Densely meaningful

stop sign

epiphany/satori

As indicated above, an example of a sparsely meaningful experience might be something like an experienced driver driving up to a stop sign at an intersection. The "meaning" possibilities inherent in this situation are minimal under normal circumstances for such a driver. Either she comes to a full stop, looks both ways for oncoming traffic and, seeing none, proceeds, or she comes to a partial stop as she looks both ways for traffic and continues on her way. Coming

to a stop sign at an intersection does not normally mean other things than those two possibilities to most experienced drivers and the meaning which takes place does not usually involve more than an almost automatic reaction to the stimulus of the stop sign itself. Nothing is changed by the experience except the speed and position of the car relative to the stop sign.

A densely meaningful experience, on the other hand, is best exemplified by what, for Christians, is called epiphany, for practitioners of Zen, satori. A densely meaningful experience involves most or all of a person's experiential apparatus; it leaves a person changed.

The Dense Meaning Hypothesis states that since (1) writing about any given subject tends to improve learning in that subject (Langer and Applebee 1987), and (2) talking about writing can help to improve subsequent re-writing (Kessel 1982, Kennedy 1983, Benton and Blohm 1986, Thomas 1986, Wauters 1988), then writing and talking about using language in correspondence journals and in group writing conferences may improve learning about using language (where "using language" means writing, reading, speaking, listening, and thinking). The goal of a Freshman English class based on this hypothesis is to leave students changed, changed into more critical and creative thinkers through their having

become hyper-aware of the linguistic self interacting with others in the social environment of language use. Because the Dense Meaning Hypothesis as I am developing it has not been tested in the classroom, the partial pedagogy presented in the Conclusion is intended as a suggestion. A full-blown pedagogy based on the results of testing the hypothesis remains to be developed.

Chapter One

DISJUNCTURE

Here it is, my first batch of Freshman English papers. I settle in at my desk and start reading. A feeling of confusion creeps over me. A lot of these papers aren't really addressing the assignment I gave. I keep reading. Confusion turns to disbelief. Most of these are pretty bad. What happened to all that stuff I told them about revising? And proofreading? Disbelief turns to dismay. These papers are awful. In good conscience I could only pass a few of them. They're so full of errors, so disjointed. Why are they so bad? How can they possibly be so bad? What did I do wrong?

Why am I doing this?

This manual will attempt to answer those questions in such a way that new Freshman English teachers might be better prepared for what that first batch of papers can represent: a kind of culture shock. It presents a synoptic discussion of recent research on three major influences on Freshman English: the fact of orality, the nature of literacy, and the role of affect. Through the exploration of affect and orality, it will provide a general overview which suggests what to expect of

incoming freshmen in terms of the intellectual and emotional equipment they bring with them from high school to college writing classes. Such an explanation may help new teachers to formulate more realistic expectations of what Freshmen writers can and will do in Freshman English. Through the exploration of literacy, this manual will attempt to show how multi-faceted literacy is and what acquiring it for the academy can realistically be expected to accomplish for Freshmen writers. The aim throughout Before the First Assignment is to provide a rationale for designing not only first assignments but whole Freshman English courses which take into greater account how influential the interaction of affect, orality, and literacy is in the teaching and doing of writing. Understanding this interaction more thoroughly can only help both writing teachers and students to make more efficient use of limited time and limiting resources.

By "limited time" I mean the quarter or two, the semester, perhaps even the whole year which we have to turn our students into "writers" whose writing will be meaningful to themselves and to the academic community at large. By "limiting resources" I mean the intellectual-emotional equipment, as indicated by the two studies cited below, which our students more often than

not bring to the Freshman English endeavor.

If the most recent Writing Report Card (Applebee et al. 1990) and Reading Report Card (Mullis and Jenkins 1990) are any hint of what is to come in the near future, the limited time we have may start seeming shorter. These two reports strongly suggest that our students' limiting resources are in states either of decline or stagnation. Applebee, et al., report:

Despite some progress on some tasks, overall, students' writing performance across tasks remains low and has changed little across time. In both 1984 and 1988, substantially more than half the high school students assessed wrote a less than adequate response to five of the six writing tasks administered. Further, the extent to which students at all grade levels value writing, use it in their own lives, and engage in writing process activities remains quite limited. (8)

And Mullis and Jenkins:

The overall picture suggests a nation of students who were reading better than their counterparts did in 1971, but it must be emphasized that the progress is slight and could be short-lived. The recent trend data suggest improvements at age 17, but these gains appear to be partially a legacy of progress made by these students when they were 9. Unfortunately, 9-year-olds born more recently have shown a pattern of small but steady declines during the 1980s, perhaps foreshadowing similar declines at ages 13 and 17 in the years ahead as these students move through our educational system. (20)

As can be seen, students assessed for these reports ranged across grades and age levels (fourth, eighth, and eleventh for Writing; 9, 13, and 17 for Reading).

Given these ranges, and in the absence of any radical

restructuring of the American educational system for grades K-12, we can probably expect to see, for at least the next five to ten years, more students who are at best underprepared for the demands and expectations of college writing courses.

I think we must ask ourselves, as Archie La Pointe (Executive Director of the National Assessment of Educational Progress) has asked, "Is this okay?" (1990). Are we content with such results, such students, such a prognosis? This manual is an elaboration of one answer: No. Decidedly not. It is not okay. Something must be done.

As Freshman English teachers, we cannot do much about the writing and reading classes of the nation's primary, middle, and secondary schools. We can, instead, do a great deal with what we have: our own classes, now. Two things which we can do, and do now, are:

- * Assert to our students that Freshman English is the most important class they will ever take.

- * Act on that assertion.

Making such an assertion is easy. Acting on it is something else again. Acting on it means believing in it. Making that believing a little easier is what this manual is about.

In a nutshell, the reason why Freshman English is

the most important class our students will ever take is that Freshman English can be an arena of mind in which our students can acquire "a different habit of mind" (Bartholomae 1986:94), one more critical and more creative. By "mind" I mean cognition and affect, thinking and feeling, and the interaction between the two for which we have no word. I mean as well the interaction among thinking, feeling, and language, an interaction which writing can at least partially reveal and permanently preserve for study and analysis. It is this last quality of writing which makes Freshman English so unique and important an endeavor: in Freshman English we can focus primarily on mind, as it is exemplified by writing, rather than just on writing, as an end desirable for all in and of itself. One of the main points of this manual is that such a focus just makes good common sense. When they leave our classes, our students may or may not do a great deal of academic style writing; they will always have use for critical and creative habits of mind.

This manual will explore some ways and means of helping our students to acquire such habits. It looks first, from three perspectives, at the intellectual-emotional equipment (the habits of mind) our students bring with them to our classes, and second, at some ways to put that intellectual-emotional equipment to

better use in our classes.

Chapter Two (Orality) looks at the phenomenon of secondary orality as it relates to primary orality, as it interacts with literacy in the modern world, and as it can be put to positive use in the Freshman English classroom through exploring speaking-writing transactions.

Chapter Three (Literacy) looks at various definitions of literacy, various discussions of the consequences of literacy, and ways that focusing on literacy can be made part of the Freshman English class through exploring reading-writing transactions.

Chapter Four (Affect) looks at the role affect plays in the composing processes our students invent and modify. The discussion in Chapter Four will focus on affect as it is defined by the interaction of attitudes and beliefs. From that definition, the chapter reviews student attitudes toward writing, toward writing for a Freshman English class, and toward themselves as writers. Along with discussion of their (mostly negative) attitudes, Chapter Four stresses the importance of first changing those attitudes before we can expect better writing from them.

The Conclusion suggests ways in which the subjects of the preceding three chapters can be made to interact

in the language-thought environment of Freshman English through a pedagogy designed to facilitate testing of the Dense Meaning Hypothesis. The Conclusion offers suggested readings and assignments for a Freshman English course which is based entirely on writing and talking about using language. It is hypothesized that such a course might be the best way to unite orality, literacy, and affect into a positive and dynamic arena of mind.

Chapter Two

ORALITY

I would like to advance, as a sort of thought-provoking pre-condition to this chapter, the notion of teaching writing as a second language (Bartholomae 1980, 1986; Esau and Keene 1981; Horning 1987). The focus of the studies cited above is the application of second language learning theories and practices to developmental writing classes. While most of our students will not be so unprepared for college writing as to qualify completely for developmental status, most of them will qualify in enough ways as to make the notion advanced here a reasonable one.

If, then, we are not exactly dealing with writing as a second language, we are at least in the realm of writing, specifically writing Edited American English, as a second dialect. For the purposes of this chapter, two of the main ideas of such a notion can be summarized from Horning:

The central hypothesis of the theory states that basic writers develop writing skills and achieve proficiency in the same way that other adults develop second language skills, principally because, for basic writers, academic, formal, written English is a new and distinct linguistic system. (2)

Acculturation is a process of getting used to being in a new society with a new social and linguistic

structure. Many student writers must not only acculturate to the academic setting but also adapt to the formal academic language required of them.
(14)

Approaching the teaching of writing as a means of helping students to learn a second dialect can be an uplifting experience for student and teacher. For example, it can turn the endlessness of error into a positive force in the writing classroom:

Language acquisition takes place through a process of formulating and testing hypotheses about the rules of language. The learner must receive feedback on these hypotheses and continually modify them until they match those of other people using the same system...In the course of carrying out the hypothesis testing process, language users inevitably commit errors. These errors reveal the user's rules and usually occur on the redundant features of the language. (Horning 1987:20, emphasis mine)

In other words, error is not just an index of what students do wrong. It can also provide an invaluable view into their minds, into what they know about the second dialect of college writing as they are in the process of learning it. Because language use is systematic and rule-governed, what might manifest themselves as errors of usage are often a student's application of "the present language system...with reference to the target language" (Kutz 1986:392). This "present language system" is known in second language theory as an "interlanguage."

The important thing to remember about a student's

interlanguage is that it is systematic and rule-governed. As Kutz argues, an interlanguage approach to student error can provide "evidence of the student's acquisition of new language skills, and [allow] us to see a relationship between what has been taught and what the student can do" (392). For example:

'Instinctions' is the misapplication of the rule for forming an abstract noun from a verb by adding 'tion.' This student's systematic approach to word formation is seen in the creation of similar forms in other instances--'conflictions.' (Kutz 392)

Reading student texts as if they were the products of an interlanguage is another tool we can use to help students to become better writers and better thinkers. As Kutz puts it, such readings allow us "to see the strategies and knowledge the writer is using, in order to elicit and build on these in future assignments" (393). As another tool for the writing teacher, teaching writing as a second dialect can be a useful heuristic. I recommend it, not necessarily as a systematic methodology, but as a sympathetic mindset for dealing with the fact of orality in our classes.

Orality influences Freshman English classrooms mainly in two ways. First, in an obvious sense, orality is the talk that goes on. What kind of talk is it--mainly monologic or dialogic? If monologic, is it mainly the voice of the teacher which is heard? If

dialogic, is it equally the voices of the teacher and a student? the teacher and several students? Is it ever mainly the voices of students?

Second, and more importantly, orality influences the class in terms of the quality of the writing students do. In the discussion to follow, I suggest that their writing will quite often reflect the fact that they are better at speaking meaning than writing meaning, better at conversation than composition. While this chapter will argue that speaking and writing are more related than not, at least in terms of certain discourse strategies, it will also argue that speaking and writing are, most often, put to quite different uses in quite different contexts.

Conversation can be an invaluable resource in Freshman English for two reasons. First, students are (generally) already good at it; it can be used to build their confidence by giving them "expert" status in the strange new environment of a college writing class, an environment in which they are in most other respects rank beginners. Second, analysis of conversation can be used to show students why and how writing is not just talk on paper.

This chapter will examine orality in the Freshman English classroom from the following perspectives.

First, I will define secondary orality as it is related to and distinguished from primary orality. Second, I will discuss one of the major sources of secondary orality, television (and other electronic media), the impact of these media on our students, and how that impact can be put to our service in Freshman English. Third, based on an exploration of recent research into the relationship between speaking and writing, I will suggest that notions of an oral-literate dichotomy are neither accurate nor useful.

Primary Orality

Ong (1981) defines primary orality as:

the pristine orality of mankind untouched by writing or print which remains still more or less operative in areas sheltered to a greater or lesser degree from the full impact of literacy and which is vestigial to some degree in us all. (41)

Ong is describing primary orality as a stage in the evolution of human consciousness, not as a condition of individual Freshman English students. But, as he elaborates on the concept in Orality and Literacy (1982), we are hard pressed not to notice some similarity between the thinking and speaking of a primary oral culture and the thinking and writing of our students.

In a primary oral culture, thought and expression tend to be of the following sorts.

Additive rather than subordinative

Oral structures often look to pragmatics (the convenience of the speaker...[or writer]).

Aggregative rather than analytic

Oral expression...carries a load of epithets and other formulary baggage which high literacy rejects as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight.

Redundant or 'copious'

In oral discourse...the mind must move ahead more slowly [than in written], keeping close to the focus of attention much of what it has already dealt with. Redundancy, repetition of the just-said, keeps both speaker and hearer surely on the track.

Conservative or traditionalist

Since in a primary oral culture conceptualized knowledge that is not repeated aloud soon vanishes, oral societies must invest great energy in saying over and over again what has been learned arduously over the ages. This need establishes a highly traditionalist or conservative set of mind that with good reason inhibits intellectual experimentation. (Ong 1982:37-41)

The similarity between thought and expression in a primary oral culture and that of our students is noticeable because of what Ong calls "secondary orality" (1977). Secondary orality

is the orality induced by radio and television, and it is by no means independent of writing and print but totally dependent on them. Without writing and print, electronic equipment cannot be manufactured and radio and television programming cannot be managed. (Ong 1981:42)

This new orality has striking resemblances to the old in its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and even its use of formulas. (Ong 1982: 136)

Secondary orality, then, is a condition of our culture, a condition to which we are all more or less susceptible. In terms of the demands of college writing, our students are generally closer to the "more" end of the spectrum. But just because we, as Freshman English teachers, are professionally committed to print, to writing, to the advancement of culture and learning through literate strategies does not mean that we are exempt from the effects of secondary orality. We too watch television, go to movies, listen to the radio.

Nor can we take comfort from the fact that while we are not entirely exempt from the effects, still, we are not much affected. We read many, many books; we write books and articles; we engage in stimulating and erudite discourse on a daily basis. Surely the effects of secondary orality are small in our lives. Surely they are--in terms of how we deal with each other.

But the effects can be enormous and ongoing if we consider that there are many more of our students than there are of us. It is they who will leave the academy and go out to move and shake the world. Unless we can move and shake our students before they go, they will take the effects of secondary orality with them in their habits of mind.

There is another reason, equally compelling, why we

should pay close attention to the phenomenon of secondary orality, why we should get to know as much about it as we can. It is entirely possible that we are in the midst, not of a literacy crisis, but of a literacy transition.

Most persons are surprised, and many distressed, to learn that essentially the same objections commonly urged today against computers were urged by Plato in the Phaedrus and the Seventh Letter against writing...Those who are disturbed by Plato's misgivings about writing will be even more disturbed to find that print created similar misgivings when it was first introduced. Hieronimo Squarciafico, who in fact promoted the printing of the Latin classics, also argued in 1477 that already 'abundance of books makes men less studious'...: it destroys memory and enfeebles the mind by relieving it of too much work[.] (Ong 1982:79-80)

Just as the spread of writing and print were cultural transitions, perceived as wrenching and wrong by some who were there during the changes, but seen by us as necessary steps along the way to a greater good, so the contemporary ubiquity of electronic media may someday be considered only the next logical step toward a yet undefined greater good. Television, radio, video or computer games are all widespread and spreading widely. They have an effect on our thought and expression. As part of the immediate problem we face--unmindful students--they probably represent more harm than good. But as part of the evolution of consciousness, they may be value free.

In either case--the effects of secondary orality on our students or the phenomenon of secondary orality as part of the evolution of consciousness--we have to deal with secondary orality in our classes. As Costanzo suggests (below), the effects may be there in our students' writing. More important, the effects are there in the habits of mind which produce that writing. One of the prime shapers of those habits of mind is television. If we are to serve our students better, especially if we are to help them in acquiring new habits of mind, coming to a better understanding of television can only be useful.

Television and Secondary Orality

That television has an impact on our students' habits of mind seems inarguable. Common sense dictates that any activity engaged in to the extent that televiewing is in America will have some sort of impact on thought and expression. Reports on the extent of engagement vary, but all point to one conclusion: we watch a lot of TV. Costanzo (1983), citing a 1980 survey, reports that

of the time spent by adults in this country with different media, 85 percent is devoted to television and radio whereas only 15 percent is given to newspapers and magazines. And the trend clearly favors the electronic media. (181)

Williams (1986) asserts that "North American children and adults spend most of their leisure time watching television" (1). Postman (1988) offers one interpretation of what "most of their leisure time" might mean:

In the United States, children watch 5,000 hours of television before they enter kindergarten and 16,000 hours by high school's end...the average American will have seen approximately 1 million television commercials, at the rate of a thousand per week, by the age of twenty. By the age of sixty-five, the average American will have seen more than 2 million commercials. (112-13)

Subjecting Postman's figures to just simple division leads to these kinds of extrapolations: A year has 8,760 hours. Thus, Postman's statistically averaged children entering kindergarten at, say, age five, will have spent close to two-thirds of a year (57%) watching television. For five year olds, that figure also represents 11.4% of their entire lives so far. High school graduates will have spent just under two years of their lives watching television. Assuming, for the sake of discussion, thirty second commercials, then by age sixty-five, we all will have spent 16,667 hours (close to two years of our lives) watching television productions specifically and purposefully designed to change the way we think.

Again, it seems inarguable that television has an impact. Williams (1986) makes a strong case for what

that impact is. Williams and her colleagues were able to study the impact of television in a unique situation. A town in Canada, virtually without television reception, was to acquire it in a year. Williams et al. studied and tested residents of this town before and after they got television. They conducted the same study and testing of residents in two control towns (one which received a single station and one which received multiple stations). Several of their conclusions are germane to the Freshman English class. Their most general conclusion is that:

television affects viewers negatively in a variety of areas via displacement. Since the majority of North American children and adults spend several hours each day with television and discretionary time is limited, choosing to watch TV inevitably displaces some other activities. (395)

For our purposes, of course, these displaced activities may quite often be writing and reading assignments. It is easier and more fun to watch TV than to spend the same time writing a paper or reading a chapter, a fact which Williams' study addresses in terms of childrens' reading skills.

Williams' findings indicate that "TV probably slows down the acquisition of fluent reading skills. Once established, however, they do not deteriorate" (396). Based on her own study and the findings of other reseachers, Williams hypothesizes:

In the absence of television most children practice

reading enough to become fluent to the point that decoding letters, words, and phrases is automatic. Practice is hard work, and children cannot read during this stage for entertainment or information. Television provides a more attractive alternative for most children, but especially for those who have most difficulty learning to read and who need the practice most...(397)

How similar does this assessment sound to one we might make of our own students, underprepared for the demands of college and needing practice most in writing and reading?

The last area of the Williams study relevant here concerns the relationship between television and creativity as an aspect of children's cognitive development. Children in the town without television scored higher on a creativity test than did their counterparts in either of the two control towns. Two years after the nontelevision town got TV reception, the scores of children in all three towns were similar. Williams offers some explanations for these results:

Children may learn to process information at the lower levels required by television (encoding and chunking) and then use these strategies in tasks (e.g., problem solving) that require more 'mindful' approaches. TV may encourage viewers to rely on ready-made ideas, that is, to be mentally passive. In addition, time spent with television may displace activities and experiences which otherwise would be helpful in problem-solving situations. (397-8)

Again, the similarity between her analysis and one we might make of our students seems striking. I do not mean

to suggest, however, that Williams' results are automatically generalizable to the population of our students in Freshman English; Williams and her colleagues were not studying college freshmen. Nor, as Williams is careful to point out, are her results necessarily generalizable to any other population of children anywhere.

What I do mean to suggest is that, in terms of statistical probability, our students have watched a great deal of TV in their lives to date and are probably continuing to do so. As they have watched, they may have contributed to a general stunting effect in their development as writers, readers, and thinkers. But they have also developed a certain facility for making sense of the complex symbol system which any given TV show represents; they have developed what Salomon (1983) calls "tv literacy" (67).

According to Salomon, tv literacy is "a set of skills that develops to match the medium's demands" (67). These skills are usually mastered by the age of nine and further elaboration of them beyond that age is not necessary for children to successfully comprehend what they watch. Perhaps because of the ease of comprehension, tv literacy involves, on the one hand, an unwillingness to "invest much effort in elaborating

televised material" (75), but contains, on the other, the potential for transferability. As Salomon states:

When programs demand the elaboration of material, youngsters can and do invest more mental effort in elaborating tv material and thus come to learn more from it. It follows, then, that practice in applying more general skills to tv could benefit other literacies. Children who practice inference making, internal chunking, or integration of many discrete units of information with tv material should reflect the results of such practice in, say, their writing. But this expectation assumes that they actually apply such skills to tv. Our initial research suggests that unless tutored or guided, they do not do so, and thus they miss the opportunity to practice these skills while televiewing. (76)

In Freshman English, we can help our students not only to practice the skills of inference making and integrating many discrete units of information but to transfer these skills to the more academically meaningful activity of writing as well.

Transferring Electronic Literacy to Writing

Just as a bit of food for thought, I would like to begin this section by returning briefly to Ong's definition of primary orality:

the pristine orality of mankind untouched by writing or print which remains still more or less operative in areas sheltered to a greater or lesser degree from the full impact of literacy and which is vestigial to some degree in us all. (1981:41)

It is perhaps one of the supreme ironies of technological advancement in America that television, a product of the

complexity of thought made possible by high literacy, is at least in part responsible for secondary orality. Or to put it another way, TV is one of the reasons why our students are "sheltered to a greater or lesser degree from the full impact of literacy."

Costanzo (1983), discussing Ong and secondary orality, suggests some of the evidence of television's effects which shows up in our students' writing.

Consider, for example, the structural features of most television programming. The shows are intrinsically formulaic; from game shows to the soaps, they thrive on predictable patterns of characterization and organization...Whether we watch sit-coms, talk shows, or commercials, the underlying principle is repetition rather than development of new ideas...Television, then, is ritualistic rather than analytic, a loose collage of familiar themes and forms rather than a single-minded linear investigation of a subject. So if our students' papers seem to jump from one idea to another as if switching channels, if they leave out steps as if we were supposed to supply them as a matter of ritual, if they are short on supportive details and long on cliches, it may be that the underlying consciousness is still geared to the cadences of casual conversation or the television tube. (184)

Costanzo and others provide suggestions for ways to use the "cadences of...the television tube"; as will be shown in the next section, the "cadences of casual conversation" may not be as far removed from writing as we think.

In order to use the effects of television and movies, of video and computer games, of our students'

abilities to make sense in conversation, we must first recognize these things for what they are: evidence of skill in using language. As Comprone (1982) argues, our students know how to use writing; they are simply unpracticed in doing so. Conversely, they are quite skilled in secondary orality. Comprone goes on:

The oral composer, in an advanced oral culture was, by nature and training, invested with cultural authority and a belief in the social significance of what he or she was doing. (4)

It is the sense of being "invested with cultural authority and social significance" which the studies cited in the preceding section suggest is so often missing from our students' writing. They come to us with little or no sense of authority as writers. At the same time, they come to us already skilled as language users, already skilled in language ways that matter. In order to help them bridge the gap between secondary orality and college writing, perhaps they need to be vested with language using authority from the outset of their Freshman English experience.

An effective way to make this investment is to point out to them what skills they already have and to explore how these skills might be useful to them as writers. Blanchard (1988) suggests a multi-media approach. Our students are already TV and video game literate; they are

quite often computer literate as well (if not as word processors, then as game players). Why not use these literacies to examine and learn from print and writing literacies?

Costanzo (1985) goes much deeper in looking for relationships between video or computer games and writing. It is not enough that our students know how to play these games, and that we can relate their knowing how to our classes. More important is recognizing what "knowing how" might mean to them.

Within the rule-governed world created by a video game, the child knows that progress and mastery are possible. This may explain why many children find the video arcade so attractive. Inside they can take command of consistent, finite worlds when outside lies a world of physical imperfection, moral ambiguity, and psychological complexity that they can't control. (517)

Outside, as well, lies Freshman English, a complex, ambiguous environment of writing which often holds, for our students, little promise of control.

Costanzo goes on to discuss computer adventure games as being even more useful resources for Freshman English. Computer games give the player even more control than video games, but they also ask more from the player in terms of problem solving and decision making. Costanzo's description of a computer game sounds quite similar to a student's first few weeks of Freshman English.

...these games typically begin with the player's

disorientation. You arrive as a stranger and must identify your goals, chart the terrain, interact with other characters, look for clues, and integrate what you learn into a growing body of knowledge. (518)

Finally, Costanzo (1983, 1986) reports on his success with using analysis of film and cinematic composing techniques as an analogue to written composing. Our students know how to make meaning out of a movie; they can think visually in sophisticated ways. By directing their attention beneath the entertainment value of the film to how the visual image is composed, we can help them to be, as Salomon (cited above) puts it with regard to televiewing, "tutored or guided" to see the relationship between visual composing and written composing.

These approaches can create a powerful heuristic out of what our students already know. As an immediate means of providing comfort in a strange and unsettling environment, such approaches give them something to write about which is both familiar and, in the micro-culture of the Freshman English classroom, socially significant. But, more important, as a means toward the end of their continuing to use written language to make knowledge outside that micro-culture, such approaches can help them to see writing as not so formidable, as having a meaningful relationship to them and to their goals.

Oral-Literate Interaction

As mentioned at the close of the preceding section, what our students already know about electronic media can be a powerful resource for a Freshman English class. Another, equally powerful resource is available in the expertise students already have as speakers and conversationalists. In order to tap into this oral expertise for the betterment of our writing classes, we must first have some understanding of how speaking and writing, the oral and the literate, are both different and similar. On the basis of that understanding, we can build a positive use of speaking-writing relationships into our classes. For the purposes of Freshman English, one of the most important differences between speaking and writing has to do with prestige and the problems which can result from according writing too much of it. In a highly literate culture (such as the academy), not only is writing privileged as the communicative standard, but a particular dialect of English is privileged as the written standard. The arbitrariness of this privileging must be stressed in Freshman English: writing as a communicative standard and Edited American English as a written standard are useful conventions, but they are not anywhere graven in stone as the standards. As Goody (1987) puts it:

Only by understanding the degree of arbitrariness in the choices we make for any system of writing can we appreciate the problems of teaching that skill. The difficulty of speakers of non-standard English is not that their speech differs from a fixed code which one can uncover by analytic procedures but that it differs from class or regional forms, the initial choice of which, while not exactly arbitrary, was largely a function of power. And it is a difficulty that arises in an acute form only in choosing one dialect out of many for the purposes of constructing a system of writing. (271)

Written languages have to select out one of many speech forms and the consequences are important ...Whatever the feedback of written forms on patterns of speech, this discrepancy remains a fundamental handicap in the process of literate education, especially for children whose families do not equip them with a form of speech that approximates to the written construct. (237-8)

Many, perhaps most, of our students aptly fit that closing description to some degree. It is important to remember, and to make plain to them, that, yes, writing does represent arbitrary conventions and standards. Yes, such conventions and standards will seem foreign and will be difficult to master. And, most emphatically yes, mastering them can grant access to and membership in a powerful and influential discourse community, a community rich in ideas and potential for good.

One of the inherent difficulties in helping our students to master the written dialect of the academy is that, for so many of them, speaking and writing are a dichotomy. From their perspective, writing, especially

writing in the dialect of Edited American English, might almost be considered a "learned language" in the sense in which Ong (1977) discusses Learned Latin: a language spoken by many but by none as a mother tongue and only by those who could write it.

It is a fair enough perspective. No one learns or uses Edited American English without writing it. But it can be a counterproductive perspective, granting the dialect an iconic status it does not necessarily deserve, and in the process too greatly devaluing the "alternative path to knowledge" which orality represents (Goody 1982). Certainly, as Halliday points out,

writing systems tend to engender conformity once they come into general use; partly for convenience, and partly because the development of writing tends to be associated with normative processes anyway--the emergence of a literary, religious, learned, or general 'standard' language that is highly valued (and therefore to be kept 'pure') (1985:29-30)

But keeping Edited American English "pure" takes a lot of vigilance. It is quite a different activity from helping students learn to use the "dialect" of writing to make meaning for the academy. And it is an effort doomed from the start. The written language changes and adapts just as the spoken does, though not so quickly. To cite a current example: there is a growing tendency in newspapers to divide line-ending words according to column width rather than sound or dictionary sanctioned

syllable length (resulting in a word like "trapped" being divided as "trappe-d"). While this is a convention of computer-edited printing and not one of the act of composing, it still results in a visual manifestation for the reader which no dictionary or grammar handbook would condone. Yet newspapers carry a certain authority as representatives of the standard "dialect" of Edited American English. Our students read newspapers. Can we assume they will not be influenced by what they see there? If they divide line-ending words in ways similar to what they have seen, whose error is it? What kind of error is it? Is it an error at all?

My point is that, in order to make writing more accessible as a "dialect" in which useful meaning can be made, it might be worthwhile to deal head on with the difference in prestige between speaking and writing, . We might devote class time early in the term to discussing and writing about how and why Edited American English is the prestige dialect, about how it is only one dialect among many, and about how it is a living dialect, adaptable and subject to change. Our students need to be convinced that writing in Edited American English is also an "alternative path to knowledge," not an icon which can be approached only with fear and foreboding and used only with the greatest care.

Another important difference between speaking and writing concerns function. We put speaking and writing to different uses in order to accomplish different things. With speaking, at least in conversation (as opposed to giving a prepared lecture, for example) the interpersonal function is primary; conversational speaking tends toward greater involvement with an immediate audience and toward context as a primary source of meaning. Thus, meaning during conversation derives from such things as shared experiences and paralinguistic cues to interpretation. With expository writing (as opposed to writing personal letters, for example), the logical or ideational function is primary; because the intended audience is usually neither present nor well known to the writer, the meaning derivable from shared experiences or paralinguistic cues must be written into the text. Expository writing tends toward a different kind of involvement with audience and toward the text itself as a primary source of meaning. Thus, with the kinds of writing generally demanded of our students, meaning often derives more from content than context (Olson 1977, Chafe 1982, Tannen 1982b, 1983).

The implication of these functional differences, for Freshman English, is that student writers who are more comfortable with conversation, and more skilled at it

than writing, may tend to assume more shared context with the reader than they put down on paper. Thus, for example, it is not that our students have no sense of audience but that the sense they do have is mismatched for the function of expository writing.

Helping our students to make a better match--between the skills they have and the demands which writing for college places on them--can be made easier if we recognize and use these fundamental differences between speaking and writing. In addition to how they differ in terms of prestige and function, however, speaking and writing are also similar in many ways. Exploring these similarities can be equally useful to us as we strive with our students toward making that better match between their skills and the demands of college writing.

Transferring Speaking Skills to Writing

Recent work in discourse analysis suggests that the relationship between speaking and writing, between the oral and the literate, is not one of dichotomy. Indeed, even Havelock, certainly one of the scholars most often cited in support of the oral-literate dichotomy notion, has recently suggested that the relationship is historically not one of either-or (1986). Rather, the alphabetization of Greece which occurred roughly between

the time of Homer and that of Plato represented "two idioms woven into one, but of separate genius, the one designed for immediate communication, the other for serious preserved communication" (65).

"Two idioms woven into one" is the operant metaphor for the findings of discourse analysis with regard to orality and literacy. Tannen, investigating oral and literate strategies in spoken and written narratives, asserts:

Quintessentially literary devices (repetition of sounds and words, syntactic structures, and rhythm) are shared by written literary language and ordinary spontaneous conversation because both are typified by subjective knowing and by focus on interpersonal involvement. (1982b:1)

Green (1982) supports Tannen. Based on her analysis of the colloquial and literary uses of inversion constructions ("Here comes the bus"; "Such is the terrible man..." [119]), Green finds that

While inversions of one sort or another are distributed over the whole range of spoken and written language, it is not along the spoken-written dimension, but along...a colloquial-literary dimension, which cuts across the spoken-written classification. (151)

In examining oral and literate strategies in spoken and written discourse, Tannen (1983) speculates that

A particularly fascinating aspect of the notion of oral and literate strategies is the possibility that strategies that have been characterized as oral may be the most efficient for both writing and reading...The ability to imagine what a hypothetical reader needs to know is...an

interactive skill. Reading is a matter of decoding written words. But the act of reading efficiently is often a matter not so much of decoding (though this skill must underlie any reading) but of discerning a familiar text structure, hypothesizing what information will be presented, and being ready for it when it comes. By making maximum use of context, good readers may be using oral strategies. (91)

Heath (1982), discussing her long term study of the nature of orality and literacy in two communities, defines what she calls a "literacy event" as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (93). Because literacy events in Trackton (one of the communities she studied) are occasions for oral group negotiations of meaning (front porch readings of the newspaper; discussing how best to fill out a job application), Heath argues that Trackton is neither oral nor literate, but both. She suggests, rather than an oral-literate continuum, two continua, oral and written, whose "points and extent of overlap, and similarities in structure and function, follow one pattern for Trackton, but follow others for communities with different cultural features" (111).

Finally, to return to Tannen for a summarizing comment:

Thus, individuals and groups are not either oral or literate. Rather, people have at their disposal and are inclined to use, based on individual habits as well as social conventions,

strategies associated with either or both in speech and writing. (1982a:47)

We might read, for "individuals and groups," Freshman English students and Freshman English classes. Our students have their individual habits of use. Our classes are a context within which evolve social conventions of use. What our students write within this context can be treated as literacy events. Oral and literate strategies interact, not only in everyday speaking and writing, but also in the more controlled and focused speaking and writing of our classrooms.

How can we more heavily emphasize orality? By not privileging the literate to the exclusion of the oral. On the one hand, the literate is not qualitatively better than the oral. The two are qualitatively equal, functionally different. And always, the two are context-bound, defined from any perspective by the demands of the situation.

On the other, as has been noted, our students arrive in our classes as accomplished oral meaning-makers. To ignore this fact is to do them and the class a disservice. In the same way that their electronic literacies can be useful as ways in to writing, so can their skills at speaking meaning. By putting their speaking skills to work in Freshman English, our students

can help us, they can help each other, and most importantly, they can help themselves.

Perhaps the best way to put students' speaking skills to work is also the most obvious: more talking about writing and about why writing is important both in and out of college. By this I do not mean more lecturing from the teacher. I mean the collaborative learning potential of more conversation among the students. Dividing students into writing groups and conducting group writing conferences can generate a great deal of focused, controlled, and useful conversation.

Gere and Abbott (1985), in their study of the language of writing groups, studied fifth, eighth, and eleventh-twelfth graders. Russell (1985), looking at the relationship between peer conferencing and revision, studied sixth graders using peer conferencing as an integral part of a daily writing class. Both of these studies found that the students, even the younger ones, were quite capable of both focusing on the content of writing and effective conferencing.

In terms of the specific kinds of discourse such groups might generate, Kennedy (1983) found that "speaking about a particular topic, in a controlled situation, will prove beneficial to subsequent writing on the same topic" (69). Along the same lines, Benton and

Blohm (1986) examined question type and question position as catalysts for revision. They found

a significant main effect...for question position. Regardless of question type, results indicate that writers can benefit from questions following initial writing that enhance conceptual elaboration of base-level ideas during writing revision. (98)

Finally, Thomas (1986), studying freshman writers, found that discussion focused on writing helps students move from being

speakers who are conversationally oriented to writers who are aware of how other minds perceive the world and who can adapt their writing to the needs of an imagined audience. (Abstract)

Thus, it would seem that writing groups and group writing conferences can enhance both the quality of writing and the quality of the writing experience. Such groups provide a real audience to complement the imagined one students work with while composing alone.

But in a larger sense, they can also enhance the quality of the learning experience. In their study, Gere and Abbott found that older students "developed a language for talking about writing. In other words, they were enlarging their capacity to understand about writing as well as to understand how to write" (374). It is this "language for talking about writing," or for talking about reading or listening or thinking, which is ultimately the most important language of Freshman

English. It is this language which Green refers to in discussing the differences between "knowledge of language, which all speakers have, by definition, and knowledge about the language (or knowledge of language use)" (1982:151). Of the latter, she says that it is

a kind of knowledge of culture, and may be acquired much more slowly than knowledge of the language ...Some people are more sensitive to it than others, and it is a good part of what makes some people more articulate than others. (151)

Part of our job as Freshman English teachers, perhaps the most important part, is to be "more sensitive to it than others" and in so being, to use the resources of orality to help our students become more articulate of mind.

In the next chapter, the resources of orality are blended with the resources of literacy. Chapter Three amplifies the discussion begun here on collaborative learning and provides examples of how to help students use the various literacies they already have as they work toward greater and greater powers of articulation in being "literate" for the academy.

Chapter Three

LITERACY

As the last chapter suggests, there are many literacies of which we might speak today, TV and computer literacies being only two of the more important ones on the current American scene. To be defined at all, literacy must be defined in a context of use. Thus, if there is one constant which emerges from a comparative reading of current literacy theory, it is the simple assertion that, to paraphrase Oxenham, literacy must be for something (1980:6). Part of Freshman English is helping students to define and believe in what that "something" might be. In order to make the most sense of literacy for the purposes of Freshman English, this chapter will explore the subject from three perspectives, narrowing from the broadly historical to specific classroom practices. First, a brief look from a historical perspective at some real effects of some real achievements in mass literacy will demonstrate why we should call into question some traditional assumptions of the inherent value of "literacy." Second, various current definitions of literacy will be discussed in relation to one another and to Freshman English. Third, the nature of reading and the relationship between

reading and writing will be discussed both in theory and in terms of Freshman English classroom practice.

Effects of Literacy: Real and Idealized

Popular, and to a certain extent scholarly, notions of literacy tend to assume that widespread literacy in any given population will result in such things as economic development, participatory democracy, syllogistic reasoning, individualism, and alienation (Graff 1987). These assumptions are based on a definition of literacy which posits a cause-effect relationship between learning to read and write and achieving the personal and societal states listed above. In fact, however, mass literacy does not result necessarily in anything more than mass literacy. As Pattison puts it:

Liberalism argues that by teaching a man to read and write, you also teach him to think. The experience of past centuries suggests...that this premise is not true. It would be more correct to say that by teaching a man to read and write, you teach him to read and write. He has learned mechanical skills, but the acquisition of those skills in itself gives him no special insight into the creative or advantageous use of those skills. (1982:173)

The "experience of past centuries" to which Pattison refers is discussed in comprehensive detail by Graff (1987). Based on a sociohistorical analysis of literacy

from the origins of Western literacy to the present, Graff's argument is that "literacy can be understood only in terms of its historical development" (1987:vii). In presenting his interpretation of that historical development, he repeatedly demonstrates that basic reading and writing are not isolable as necessary and sufficient causes for the consequent rise of improved thinking and a better life. For example:

In the history of the Western world, one may distinguish the roles of private and public schooling in the attainment of high rates of popular literacy, as well as the operation of informal and formal, voluntary and compulsory education...High rates of literacy have followed from all these approaches in different cases and contexts. The developmental consequences are equally varied.

The example of Sweden is perhaps most important in this respect...Under the joint efforts of the Lutheran church and state, reading literacy was required under law for all persons from the seventeenth century. Within a century, remarkably high levels of literacy existed--without any concomitant development of formal schooling or economic or cultural development that demanded functional or practical employment of literacy, and in a manner that led to a literacy defined by reading and not by writing. (1987:12-13)

Drawing on more recent examples, Graff points out the incredible progress which has been made for literacy in such countries as North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, China, Tanzania, and Nicaragua because of well-organized "literacy campaigns". However, he argues, it "would be hard to demonstrate that the degree of literacy

improvement was equaled by increases in indexes of well-being, democracy, and other social changes" (1987:377-8). This difficulty of demonstration is not so surprising when the literacy progress made in these countries is viewed from a broad historical perspective.

Throughout history, the provision of literacy skills to reform either individuals or their societies rarely has been linked to notions of people using these skills to achieve their own ends. To the contrary, reformers advocating the extension of education to the populace have attempted to restrict the ability to read to learning a particular text or doctrine. They commonly feared that unbridled literacy would lead people to new visions, to new ways of perceiving and naming the world that were not acceptable. (Arnove and Graff 1987:7)

Graff's historical analysis of literacy in the West makes it clear that popular assumptions about the inherent value of literacy are simply not based on fact. This is unfortunate since quite often political action for the diffusion of literacy is based on these assumptions. Especially today, when literacy seems to be in such a state of transition (Pattison 1982:206-7; Lakoff 1982:240), when America has an estimated 60 to 75 million adults who are either completely or functionally illiterate (Kozol 1985:9), when students continue to arrive in Freshman English classrooms with marginal literacy skills, especially today, assumptions about the value of literacy must be based on knowing what is and is

not true about the nature of literacy. Graff states the case succinctly:

Until recently, scholarly and popular conceptions of the value of the skills of reading or writing have almost universally followed normative assumptions and expectations of vague but powerful concomitants and effects presumed to accompany changes in the diffusion of literacy. For the last two centuries, they have been intertwined with post-Enlightenment, 'liberal' social theories and contemporary expectations of the role of literacy and schooling in socioeconomic development, social order, and individual progress. These important conjunctures constitute what I have come to call a 'literacy myth.'

Along with other tenets of a world view dominant in the West for most of the past two centuries, the 'literacy myth' no longer serves as a satisfactory explanation for the place of literacy in society, polity, culture, or economy...Now is the time to ask new questions that may lead to new views about literacy and its roles. If the present teaches us nothing else, we must heed the lesson that the presumed places of literacy and schooling are neither sacrosanct nor well understood. (1987:3)

While Graff has called for new questions, others have begun providing answers. The next section explores some of the various current definitions of literacy represented by these answers as they relate to each other and to the demands Freshman English places on our students.

Definitions of Literacy

Since the turn of the century, definitions of literacy have become steadily more context-oriented as they have become less focused on belletristic uses of

language in a formal literary canon (Trachsel 1984:4).

For example, in 1896, a report published by Harvard assumed that reading a few good works would somehow mystically result in better thinking and expressing:

...the student, by becoming familiar with a few works holding a high place in English literature, would acquire a taste for good reading and would insensibly adopt better methods of thought and better forms of expression ("Twenty Years of School and College English," cited in Trachsel 1984:4, emphasis mine).

Twenty years later, a follow-up report based on an analysis of English education at twenty American universities still subscribed to the formal definition of literacy put forth by Harvard (Trachsel 1984:5). By 1977, however, a report from the American College Testing conference for that year indicated the beginnings of change. While acknowledging that literacy skills were still being taught according to the formal definition of the Harvard report in most secondary and post-secondary schools, the conference members urged that these instructional methods be replaced:

...conference members advocated an educational reform that called for schools to adopt a set of functional criteria that took into account the social use of language as defined by the students' own needs. Ideally, the conference participants agreed, the primary concern of language arts programs at all levels should be language itself--particularly as it is used in social contexts--and more attention should be paid to the role of appropriateness and social judgment in language use. (Trachsel 1984:6)

During the 1980s, much work was done which attempted to refine the notion of "social use of language as defined by [people's] own needs." Scribner and Cole (1981) set the tone for much of what was to follow by demonstrating that literacy acquisition and schooling have often been quite distinct from one another and that many of the consequences thought to follow from the acquisition of literacy are more likely the result of schooling. They also introduced the very useful term "literacy practices" as a replacement for "literacy skills":

By a practice we mean a recurrent, goal-directed sequence of activities using a particular technology and particular system of knowledge. We use the term 'skills' to refer to the coordinated sets of actions involved in applying this knowledge in particular settings. A practice, then, consists of three components: technology, knowledge, and skills...Literacy is not simply learning how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use. (236)

The difference between seeing literacy as a practice and seeing it as a skill is made clear by Street (1984). Street uses the term "literacy" to refer to "the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing" (1). He distinguishes between two models of literacy, the autonomous and the ideological. The autonomous model describes literacy as a set of skills which are discrete, isolable, and teachable in such a way that, once they

have been taught in succession, they may all then be combined into a widely generalizable ability with written language.

The model tends, I claim, to be based on the 'essay-text' form of literacy and to generalize broadly from what is in fact a narrow, culture-specific literacy practice...The model assumes a single direction in which literacy development can be traced, and associates it with 'progress', 'civilisation', individual liberty and social mobility...It isolates literacy as an independent variable and then claims to be able to study its consequences. These consequences are classically represented in terms of economic 'take-off' or in terms of cognitive skills. (1-2)

Contrasting with the autonomous model is what Street calls the ideological model of literacy. The ideological model has the following characteristics:

- 1 It assumes that the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded;
- 2 literacy can only be known to us in forms which already have political and ideological significance and it cannot, therefore, be helpfully separated from that significance and treated as though it were an 'autonomous' thing;
- 3 the particular practices of reading and writing that are taught in any context depend upon such aspects of social structure as stratification (such as where certain social groups may be taught only to read), and the role of educational institutions (such as in Graff's (1979) example from nineteenth century Canada where they function as a form of social control);
- 4 the processes whereby reading and writing are learnt are what construct the meaning of it for particular practitioners;
- 5 we would probably more appropriately refer to

'literacies' than to any single 'literacy';

6 writers who tend toward this model and away from the 'autonomous' model recognise as problematic the relationship between the analysis of any 'autonomous', isolable qualities of literacy and the analysis of the ideological and political nature of literacy practice. (8)

The ideological model of literacy is nicely summarized by the following definition from UNESCO, cited in Winterowd (1989):

A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community, and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to use these skills toward his own and the community's development. (7)

As Winterowd says, the definition, "takes account of the reader-writer as an individual with personal goals for development, and as an active participant in the destiny of his or her community" (7). Perhaps such a definition, of "literate person" rather than of "literacy", is ultimately more useful for all concerned since it takes automatically into account the wide variety of social contexts and practices within which literacy might be defined.

One of those social contexts, of course, is Freshman English, a context which combines literacy with schooling into its own unique set of literacy practices. Such a context demands at least the beginnings of a definition

for what will constitute a "literate person." That is, when is a person literate in Freshman English? What counts as literacy practices in Freshman English? Of course, the answers to those questions will vary widely, depending on the teachers, the students, and the schools queried. But perhaps most could agree that the following three "literacies" might constitute a bare minimum which any Freshman English class could profitably include.

First, there is the literal sense of "literacy", to have "knowledge of letters and of their use in reading and writing" (Erickson 1988:205). As Graff puts it, literacy in this sense means "the basic abilities to read and write," a definition which he expands somewhat elsewhere to "basic or elementary levels of alphabetic reading and/or writing" (Arnove and Graff 1987:1). As the two Report Cards cited above indicate, it is this literacy which most students bring with them to Freshman English, and which teachers must help students to improve on in order for the other two kinds of literacy to be of maximum benefit. (Some ways and means of bringing about such improvement are discussed in the next section.)

Second, there is "literacy, as being lettered [which] has to do with strategy and prestige" (Erickson 1988:205-6).

This prestige is partly due to the strategic power that comes from mastery of an information

communication system. This prestige also is derived from values of aesthetics and moral virtue which mask the issue of power. (Erickson 1988:206)

Unmasking "the issue of power" is one of the more potent uses of time in Freshman English. If teachers sometimes despair of helping students see Freshman English as something much greater than a required course in writing, it is to the issue of power that they might turn for inspiration. The issue is almost as multi-faceted as literacy.

For example, there is power in the sense of the "disproportionate power invested with the literate throughout history (priests, oracles, poets, doctors, lawyers, professors)" (Robinson 1983:8). There is the power of the workplace "to discriminate against individuals who do not speak and write Standard English, as undefined as that variety of the language may be..." (Walters 1984:9). In other words, if our educational system fails to hold

students responsible for the ability to produce and understand the standard language, especially in its written form, the workplace will--despite protests from sociolinguists across the land--continue to do so. (Walters 1984:9)

Most importantly, there is the power to know in greater depth and more exquisite detail the meaning of being alive, here, now. It is in this last sense that Coles speaks of offering writing as

an avenue to a special kind of power, the only power I know that is uncorrupting and that for my money it therefore makes any sense to have: the power to choose with awareness, to change and to adapt consciously, and in this sense to be able to have a share in determining one's own destiny. (1983:253)

Once convinced of the inherent and valuable power of literacy, perhaps students can be convinced as well to explore the third sense of the word most useful in Freshman English, other classes and life after college.

This last "literacy" is considerably more comprehensive than either of the other two senses of the word, involving not only reading and writing, but speaking and listening as well. It is this sense which Richardson refers to when he uses the term "critical literacy":

...the requirements [of reading and writing activities]...to be appropriate for college students, should emphasize critical literacy, as defined by two criteria. First, the requirements should be associated with well-articulated educational goals and, second, should involve high levels of independent thinking. (Richardson, et al. 1983:5)

...critical literacy [is] the use of reading and writing within a particular setting to achieve an identifiable goal. Thus, critical literacy [is] the product of an interaction between students, faculty and their environments rather than an individual trait measured by a standardized examination. (Richardson 1985:4)

In helping students to achieve critical literacy, we help them to realize the fact that such interactions must go

on, in different ways in different environments, for learning to take place. We also help students to see how they can profit from these interactions by being more conscious of the crucial roles they play in them.

These three literacies, then, (literacy as basic reading and writing; literacy as strategy and prestige; literacy as context-specific social interaction) can be the minimum core with which any Freshman English class might be concerned. Of course, literacy as writing (whether basic or not) is, by definition, the concern of Freshman English anyway. But concern with reading, in the sense of becoming better at it, and concern with the other two senses of literacy presented here, is perhaps not so widespread as the overriding focus on essay-text writing literacy. The next two sections present discussion on the nature of reading and several methods for uniting reading and writing in Freshman English in such a way that all three suggested literacies can be both strongly operant and mutually reinforcing.

The Nature of Reading

While there are many good reasons for making reading theory a greater part of Freshman English, my favorite is both the simplest and most literal: "You can read without writing, but you can't write without reading" (Murray

1982:141). This reason is so simple it may seem obvious beyond the need for mention, but it is that very obviousness which makes mention necessary. It is easy to forget the obvious, or to take it for granted. It is easy to assume that students already know how to read in ways effective and efficient enough for college, or in ways specialized enough for Freshman English. But reading for revision, reading as an editor, most especially reading for understanding--the kinds of reading "you can't write without"--are not easy. They demand a fairly sophisticated, metalinguistic awareness of the social nature of both reading and writing, an awareness which students quite often do not have. Helping students to achieve that awareness can be made easier by, first, discussing with them how reading works and, second, by demonstrating the social nature of reading and writing through collaborative learning practices in the classroom (discussed below).

Smith (1985), in discussing the psycholinguistics of reading, suggests that the process of reading is one of hypothesis-testing which involves an interaction between visual and nonvisual information. Visual information is what is available to the reader on the page; nonvisual information includes:

an understanding of the relevant language,
familiarity with the subject matter, and some

general ability in reading...Visual information disappears when the lights go out, nonvisual information is in your head already, behind your eyes. (14)

The relationship between visual and nonvisual information is one of reciprocity:

The more nonvisual information you have when you read, the less visual information you need.

The less nonvisual information you have when you read, the more visual information you need.

Expressed more colloquially, the more you know already, the less you need to find out. (Smith 14-15)

This reciprocal interaction between visual and nonvisual information takes place because, when we read, above all else, we read to make sense, rather than non-sense. This assertion may seem as obvious as the quote from Murray cited above, but again the very obviousness of it is why it demands attention. As Smith puts it, "The only way to read is at the level of meaning ...[but]...students are often expected to read material that is not meaningful to them (no matter how much sense it makes to the teacher)" (40).

Reading at the level of meaning involves what Smith calls "informed guessing" or "prediction" (25), by which he means "the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives" (78). As we read, we predict, based on nonvisual information, what will come next in terms of making the

most sense of what we are reading.

...prediction is asking questions--and comprehension is getting these questions answered...Comprehension is not a quantity, it is a state--a state of not having any unanswered questions...comprehension is relative,...it depends on the questions that an individual happens to ask...(78-9)

Smith's work suggests two important things for Freshman English. First, in order to increase the nonvisual information which "secondary orality" students bring to both reading in general and to particular readings in class, we might encourage and practice revision reading:

For most readers, revision is an unheard of experience. Observations of secondary students reveal that most readers view reading competency as the ability to read rapidly a single text once with maximum recall. It seems that students rarely pause to reflect on their ideas or to judge the quality of their developing interpretations. Nor do they often reread a text either from the same or a different perspective. (Tierney and Pearson 1983:270)

Reading for revision in order to build up a larger and larger store of nonvisual information might be time well enough spent that we could afford to join students in the "...pursuit of a second draft of a reading...allowing time for pausing, reflecting, and reexamining..." (Tierney and Pearson 1988:270).

Second, since comprehension is a relative state, we might increase both comprehension and learning among

students through the use of collaboration in our classes. In a collaborative atmosphere, where comprehension is recognized as a relative thing, students may be more likely to risk making their idiosyncratic predictions in public. As Smith says:

There must be a chance of being wrong [for learning to take place]. It is obvious that there is nothing to be learned if you know you are right; you know it already. (85)

In order to learn you must take a chance. The probability of learning is highest when there is a fifty-fifty chance of being wrong; if you are likely to be right nine times out of ten you will have the opportunity to learn only one time in ten. But [students] may become reluctant to learn because they are afraid of making a mistake. (90-1)

This fear of making a mistake can be greatly lessened. And the possibilities for learning can perhaps be as greatly enhanced. In a classroom atmosphere based on the notions that reading and writing are collaborative or social acts (Bruffee 1983), that knowledge is a social construct (Bruffee 1984, 1986), and that the Freshman English class itself is a discourse community, students who are willing to risk (therefore likely to learn) can be much easier to find. The next section presents some ways and means of creating such a classroom atmosphere.

Examples of Reading-Writing Transactions

Hesse, drawing on the work of Bruffee, defines "discourse community" as follows:

Its main appeal is through common sense, and its basic assertions--that members of language-using groups (defined by a common profession, academic discipline, or interest) write in certain forums about characteristic things in characteristic ways deemed acceptable by other members--require no proof beyond our comparing Philological Quarterly with Physics Reports. Furthermore, the idea of discourse communities is rooted in an intellectually stimulating concept of knowledge, one in which knowledge is defined not as the embodiment in language of ultimate, objective truth but as a construct generated and transformable by communities of like-minded peers...[A]s Kenneth Bruffee has pointed out [1986:778], the concept is politically very attractive to writing teachers because it makes their jobs more important. It transforms language from a medium of understanding to the center of understanding.
(84)

In turning his writing class into a discourse community, Hesse has his students write as both insiders and outsiders about the subject of the course--"discourse communities". He combines the pedagogical approaches whereby students "learn and practice the conventions of actual discourse communities" (84) with "having [students] create their own discourse community 'in here,' in the classroom" (85).

The crucial importance which such a discourse community can assume is made clear by Goleman (1986) in her discussion of Heath's (1983) work with fifth graders

in rural South Carolina:

In short, these students [who are comparing folk planting wisdom with its scientific counterpart] are having a rare experience where the dialogical struggle among languages has become the school's project and process, where the student as ethnographer can become a student of his own language so as to become a student of others' ways with words, as well. (Goleman:136)

Freshman English classrooms set up as discourse communities may encourage more development of critical literacy than traditional classrooms because the former are more conducive to conversation and group work linking reading and writing. Wauters (1988), working in such a classroom, has had great success with a technique she calls "non-confrontational critiquing pairs" (156). In this technique, students work together as editing pairs doing written critiques of peer papers which have been chosen at random. Once the written critiques are returned, student authors may ask the editing pairs for oral clarification of their comments and suggestions. Wauters claims the technique is most valuable for the frankness it allows students "when they are not confronted with a nervous or defensive student author" (159), but at least as valuable is the strong sense of audience it helps to develop.

...student authors learn the tough but necessary lesson that their writing must stand on its own. It can be eye-opening for them to discover how their writing comes across to their audience when they are not there to justify its merits or excuse

its flaws. (159)

Another technique exploring the reading-writing transaction in a discourse community setting is "Reader-Writer Junction" (Kessel 1982). In an ingenious adaptation of a reading instructional technique ("Directed Reading/Thinking Activities," Stauffer 1980:184-213), Kessel has her students meet in groups with multiple copies of a student text opened only to the first paragraph. After the author reads the first paragraph, each group member in turn predicts what will come next. As the predictions are either close to or far from what has actually been written, the author gets an eyewitness feeling for how the writing is perceived by a real audience, for what effect it has on them and why. The technique builds a strong sense of audience and provides a built in motivation to revise, since students want to know, "What can [I] do to make them understand?" (16).

In addition, "predictive intervention" (13, Kessel's formal name for the technique) is living proof "that the reading process is a psycholinguistic guessing game, an interaction of mind with text..." (13), just as Smith (cited above) asserts. Finally, using predictive intervention can help students "learn from reading what expectations particular genres fulfill" (14).

A tutorial student twelve years old but reading at a level of 2.5 gave a marvelous and intricate prediction for a story we were reading. When asked what made her think of all that, she said, 'Well, it's a Hardy Boys mystery, and they always get into big trouble and then they get saved, or one saves the other.' That is genre knowledge...Some of your students may read everything as if it were a narrative, having developed no useful set of expectations for exposition. (14)

Having extolled the virtues of exploring reading-writing transactions to help students develop critical literacy in discourse community Freshman English classrooms, I will close with two brief cautionary notes. First, there is always the possibility that students will take the idea that a discourse community generates and transforms knowledge to mean that they can write whatever and however they please, as long as they collectively "authorize" the writing. To this assumption that "everything goes", must be countered "everything goes somewhere" (Kutz 1986:386). Writing a letter to friends or family will authorize different literacy practices than writing for the academy. Writing for the academy means recognizing that the academy too is a discourse community, and one with greater authority than the discourse community of any given Freshman English class.

This fact is made quite plain by Miller (Anderson et al. 1990). Teaching students how to write for the academy means recognizing that the "academy" is not a

single discourse community to which we can send our student writers, confident they are ready for any writing task, once they have passed our classes. As Miller discovered when her Freshman writers went out into the rest of the academy to write, students "encountered many classroom cultures that defined both learning and 'academic literacy' very differently than our writing course had" (11).

The 'discourse community' defined in composition was rarely reproduced later because students and teachers in other introductory-level courses operated in two very separate and often conflicting rhetorical worlds. These worlds diverged in their views of appropriate uses of language--including talk and listening as well as reading and writing--because students and teachers often imagined their roles, and each other, from opposing views of what counted as 'teaching' or 'learning.'
(11)

On the one hand, Miller's experience is further support for the notion that knowledge is a social construct. As such, it is also further support for the practice of making students aware of this approach to knowledge. On the other hand, the fact that "academic literacy" is not necessarily generalizable from Freshman English even across the rest of campus is further support for the central importance of "critical literacy" in the Freshman English endeavor. If we can help students to achieve a vital awareness of the "interaction between students, faculty and their environments" (Richardson

1985:4), we can better prepare them to deal effectively with the inevitable, confusing, and often contradictory overlap of discourse communities' literacy practices on campus and in the workplace.

The next chapter presents a discussion of recent research on attitude and the role of affect in writing. Before students can achieve critical literacy, their often negative and debilitating attitudes toward reading and writing have to be turned around. Students need to be convinced that critical literacy is a game worth the candle, that it is not only strategically but personally empowering.

Chapter Four

AFFECT

The role of affect in the writing process has only recently begun to be studied by composition researchers and teachers. What studies there are, however, point clearly to an influential role for affect in the writing lives of our students. That the affective domain--emotions, attitudes, beliefs--plays a powerful part in writing should probably come as no surprise. Even a cursory reading of any of the volumes of Writers At Work: The Paris Review Interviews (Plimpton 1986) indicates how central emotional tension is to the creative processes of professional writers. Indeed, it may be the tension itself which most influences how and why such writers work. As Brand reports, they are driven to write by emotions of intense interest and excitement; by depression, loneliness, and frustration; by a desire to use writing to work all these emotions out into coherence (1985-86:8).

There seems to be a tension, a collision that arises when positive and negative feelings are juxtaposed. Writers have described in remarkably compatible terms seemingly incompatible feelings like euphoric despair, exhilarated depression, and wild happiness. (Brand 1985-86:8-9)

Just so our students are experiencing a kaleidoscope

of confusing, often conflicting emotions (Schwartz 1987). These emotions are the result of being suddenly in a new environment which demands fairly instantaneous acculturation of them if they are to succeed. They have gone from being seniors, on the top of the social heap, to being freshmen, on the bottom. They may have few, perhaps no, friends for a number of weeks into the term. They may be living in quite close quarters with someone they met only on the first day of registration. They may be overwhelmed by the much faster pace at which college work is expected to be done relative to what they were used to in high school. All of these various and sundry factors can combine into an ongoing situation which can be quite debilitating. For example, Schwartz discusses the freshman situation from the perspective of "several life issues central to the development of adults" (1987:2):

Identity: a sense of self and place that each adult gains as an individual. Theorists believe that a crisis of identity recurs whenever an individual faces a major transition.

Intimacy: a relationship based on mutuality and adding support in times of transition.

Autonomy: a set of individual attitudes and ways of doing things. Autonomy involves the perception that individuals control their own destiny. Those who think otherwise are often reduced to apathy, passivity and indecisiveness and are unable to respond positively in a transitional moment.

Competency: a sense of being fit. Major transitions

call competency into question. (3)

In other words, the situation of incoming freshmen can be rife with the kinds and variety of emotions which professional writers seem to thrive on. As this chapter will show, however, many freshman writers do not thrive on them, at least not in the sense we are most interested in--using emotional tension to produce quality writing. One of the main reasons for this is that they are neither professional nor experienced writers and they have not learned to have faith in writing as a means of resolving emotional tension or discovering new truth (Gay 1983:9). By exploring and better understanding the affective domain in Freshman English, we can help them to gain that faith.

Understanding the collaboration of emotion and cognition in writing is both fundamental and far-reaching. It is in cognition that ideas make sense. But it is in emotion that this sense finds value. Without such priorities we could not think. The more comprehensive our understanding of the affective and cognitive content of discourse in any form, the more likely it will reflect their true interpenetration. (Brand 1987:442)

This chapter is dedicated to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of affect in Freshman English. To that end, the chapter will first define the term "affect." From that overview, it will refine the definition through a discussion of how attitudes and beliefs interact in the affective domain. The chapter

concludes with a review of recent research that indicates how we might expect our incoming students to be feeling about writing and writing classes.

Definition of Affect

Briefly, "affect" refers to "qualitatively distinct feeling states that have physiological and behavioral properties" (Brand 1985-86:9-10). In calling for more research into the relations between cognition and affect in the writing process, Brand suggests that "positivistic psychology has been too 'cold' to carry the entire motivational burden [for human activity]" and that a more expansive theory is needed, one that would unite the "cognitively blind but arousing system of affect with the subtle cognitive apparatus" (5). She calls such a theory "hot cognition."

Essentially what hot cognition means is cognition colored by feeling. To [hot cognition] theorists, practically all human experience implicates affect in some way. The meaning of events is governed by what we feel and the options available to us for its expression. (5)

McLeod (1987) refines this definition further by distinguishing between "cold" and "hot" affective states:

The term 'affective' refers to the domain of emotions and feelings. These can vary in intensity from 'cold' (preferences, moods, attitudes, where the organism is not highly aroused) to 'hot' (emotional states characterized by activation of

the autonomic nervous system--tense muscles, increased heartbeat, sweaty palms). (427)

Finally, Zajonc (1980), after a review of psychological literature on affect, gives it roughly equal status with cognition:

...affective judgments may be fairly independent of, and precede in time, the sorts of perceptual and cognitive operations commonly assumed to be the basis of the affective judgments...It is concluded that affect and cognition are under the control of separate and partially independent systems that can influence each other in a variety of ways, and that both constitute independent sources of effects in information processing. (151)

Whatever we choose to call it--the affective domain, hot cognition, the role of affect--it is part and parcel of being human. Thus it is part and parcel of writing, a uniquely human activity. Understanding it better is a demanding task, but one well worth the effort for the richer classroom interactions, perhaps more fully human habits of mind, such an understanding might enable. As Brand puts it:

Any new knowledge about affect will not simplify our understanding of writing. Emotions are complicated and often invisible...[but our] students should know what emotions can and cannot do during writing. [They] need to be familiar with both the emotional and intellectual cues they experience that tell them when they are ready to write, ready to stop, and ready to do a number of things in between. (1985-86:11)

Helping students familiarize themselves with the emotional cues of their writing processes depends on a

certain willingness on their parts to engage with writing as a useful activity in the first place, to engage with it as something more than a mechanical operation on language designed to justify getting a grade. Such engagement in turn depends on students' attitudes toward writing. As the research discussed in the next section strongly suggests, quite often students' attitudes toward writing are not particularly positive.

Affect: Attitudes and Beliefs

Affect influences Freshman English primarily in terms of attitude--toward writing in school, toward writing outside of school, and toward the self as a writer. In many cases, students' attitudes toward these three things are neither positive nor productive. In order to facilitate the acquisition of new habits of mind through writing, often we must work to develop our students' attitudes toward writing. In order to do that, we have got to know something about how attitude works.

Gay (1983) defines attitude as "a learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably toward an attitude object or concept (writing, for example)" (20-21). Further, attitude is multi-dimensional, implicating cognition, affect, and behavior. The cognitive dimension "represents an individual's beliefs

or perceptions about an attitude object" (21). The affective dimension "represents the degree of positive or negative feeling an individual has toward an attitude object" (21). The behavioral dimension "represents actual behavior with regard to an attitude object or an individual's intentions to behave in particular ways" (21). Finally, these three interact in a dynamic relationship such that a "change in one dimension has the potential to affect another dimension" (21).

Attitudes are based on beliefs, which are in turn based on information about ourselves and the world around us. Beliefs may be the result of "direct experience (descriptive beliefs)," may be "indirectly inferred (inferential beliefs)," or may "involve accepting the conclusions of authorities, such as newspapers, books, television and teachers" (10). Attitudes are formed by a process of building up an interaction among those beliefs we hold most strongly.

A single belief is not a reliable indicator of attitude. Attitude is determined by salient beliefs--those which we hold most intensely. We might consider each salient belief as weighted according to strength. The stronger the belief, the higher it appears in the hierarchy of beliefs. The sum of these weighted beliefs finally tips a person's attitude in one direction or another. (10)

Beliefs are not static; they may be changed "on the basis of disconfirming evidence from outside sources"

(11). Thus, attitudes may also be changed, but only through an ongoing process of intervention and reinforcement, for "[e]ven if an intensely held belief is revised, attitude will not necessarily change, since attitude is determined by more than one salient belief" (11).

Belief revision (and attitude change) is a process. Initially, a prior belief may be called into question and a new belief may be tentatively formed. A belief may be formed on the basis of one source--direct experience, for example. However, if this new belief is not reinforced, either through more direct experience and/or another source, then it is not likely to become salient and replace a prior belief, particularly if the prior belief was intensely held over a long period of time. If a new belief does not become hierarchically dominant, then it will not significantly affect attitude, since attitude is determined by salient beliefs. Reinforcement, then, plays an important role in belief revision and attitude change. (23)

For example, students may believe, as the ones in Gay's study did, that "good writers know what they want to say before they write" (97). For them, this was a salient belief and contributed to their negative attitudes toward writing. If the opposite of this belief could be demonstrated to them through the analysis of multiple drafts of a published piece of writing, they might tentatively change their belief. But if the tentative change were not reinforced through other such analyses, of their own writing as well as that of others, the tentative change will fade to insignificance and

their attitude toward writing will not change.

If students' attitudes toward writing are generally positive, of course, the necessity for change is either minor or nonexistent. In the cases of the three students in Gay's study, however, the attitudes toward writing were negative to the point of interfering with their writing performance. Such attitudes need to be changed and it is most up to the teacher, as the resident expert in a writing class, to facilitate the process. Unfortunately, Gay also found that "these students' attitudes toward writing were shaped, to a great extent, by their teachers' attitudes" (4). The teachers referred to taught the three students in high school and the students were in college writing classes when Gay worked with them, but the cautionary note she sounds is still relevant for the new Freshman English teacher; the negative attitudes toward writing our students might arrive in our classes with can be changed for the worse as well as for the better.

Teachers not only need to recognize the role of attitude in the development of writing abilities but also to understand how attitudes toward writing are formed--specifically, the role beliefs play in the complex process of attitude formation. Above all, teachers need to be aware of the powerful role they play in shaping students attitudes toward writing. Teachers cannot intervene effectively if their teaching is guided (or misguided) by an oversimplified model of composing and by misconceptions about the act of writing. (5)

The main purpose of this manual is to enrich new Freshman English teachers' models of composing and conceptions about the act of writing. To that end, I would urge all of us who teach writing not to discount Gay's results and suggestions because, for example, she was dealing with only three students. As the following discussion of other recent studies indicates, her students may be representative of a majority.

Writing: Student Attitudes and Beliefs

Perrin (1982) worked with high school students by evaluating and grading papers according to college standards. He followed up on the return of the papers by visiting the classes to discuss with students and teachers what they should expect in Freshman English and how better to prepare for it. In talking with the high school teachers, he found they often

commented on the dread with which their students looked forward to college writing. They suggested quite often that their emphasis on writing was not always supported in other classes and that their attempts to deal with developed ideas and clearly defined support were often met with youthful resistance and sometimes indifference. (410)

Burkland and Grimm (1984) investigated students' responses to teachers' written comments on papers by asking one hundred ninety-seven students in six sections of Freshman English, "How do instructor's comments make

you feel?" They based their inquiry on the idea that teachers

know what effect we want our comments to have. We'd like to think that what we write on student papers fosters a positive attitude about writing. We want our comments to give students a sense of themselves as able writers and capable revisors as well as a realistic sense of the amount of work it takes to write well. (10)

What they found was that "[m]ost students have no feelings one way or another about teacher comments on student writing" (12). They conclude that most students "...were clearly telling us that their feelings are not as closely connected to their writing as we expected" (12).

Williams and Alden (1983) offer a possible explanation for this lack of connection. In their study of motivation in writing classes, they surveyed three hundred freshmen at the University of Southern California. They classified their subjects into two groups, extrinsics (those who wrote only for the grade and were other-directed, as by a teacher-as-evaluator) and intrinsics (those who wrote in order to learn to write well and were more self- than other-directed) (104-6). They found, first of all, that almost three-fourths "of all subjects reported that their desire for a good grade is what causes them to work hard on an assignment" (109).

Of the students classified as extrinsically motivated, 90% would not take Freshman English if it were not required, 80% simply do not like to write, 82.6% never write if the writing is unrelated to school, and 50% never revise their writing (108). Extrinsics are uninterested in teachers' comments; 72.1% believe that grading is totally subjective even though without grades, 58% said "their level of effort would decrease" (109). 59.4% "stated that they had never wanted to write about something just because they were interested in it" (111). Finally, 85.3% of the extrinsics said they wait until the last minute to write no matter how much time they have to complete an assignment. Of course, so do 67.6% of the intrinsics (110).

Anson (1985), looking at the dimensions of purpose in college writing, came to conclusions which support Gay's that attitude toward writing affects writing performance. Based on a case study of four student writers, Anson found that

students' purposes for writing are closely tied to their 'models' of writing--sets of ideational constructs which relate to students' conceptions of writing as an academic and, ultimately, a social activity. At the highest level, these models either inhibit or enhance the students' thinking processes by restricting or opening up possibilities for more specific purposes within and beyond the texts they are producing. (13)

As a result of his conclusions, Anson calls for writing

teachers to "pay more attention...to what our courses are doing to the way students think about writing, not only to the way they go about doing it..." (26).

Olson (1986) echoes that call. He surveyed over one thousand students at seven different two and four year schools in the southeastern United States. His questions concerned the use of euphorics (marijuana or alcohol) during writing, the nature of student writing environments (use of radio/stereo or TV), and amount of time spent on writing. It is this last category which is most germane here. Of those surveyed, 45% spent one to three hours on a paper; 38% spent three to five hours; only 17% spent over five hours. Olson's results support the general thrust of this discussion, that students view writing as not that important to their lives, not worth much of their time. He concludes:

If this study reveals anything, it is that our present conception of the writing process is limited. We must not restrict our investigations to academic and procedural elements of the process of writing. It is essential, above all, to remember that composing prose is a human activity, done by humans, for humans. (236)

Ronald and Volkmer (1989) agree. In arguing for a greater understanding of (and consequent teaching based on) the real writing processes of real students engaged in real rhetorical situations, they paraphrase Olson.

People...come before writing, not vice versa.
Rather than attempt to make our students conform to

an abstract version of the writing process, we should make our abstractions conform to our students' actual writing processes. Inferior as these processes may be to the ideal conceptions, we must admit, if we are honest, that they are all we have. (93)

Based on surveying and discussing their students' "actual writing processes," they found that such processes tend to be "more influenced by contextual factors than by strictly textual ones" (85). Writing and the writing class are only part of the rhetorical situation which includes, but is not limited to, such other elements as the demands of other classes, campus life, jobs, homesickness, friends. Writing takes place during TV shows, between phone calls, in the wee, blurry hours of the morning. As Ronald and Volkmer suggest,

without enough time for writing, it's difficult for students to do much planning, and the rhetorical situation may be reduced from thinking about an imagined audience and purpose to the goal of 'getting this paper done' for a particular teacher by a particular time. (87)

In order to get the paper done, their students are "quite savvy about appearing to follow the processes outlined in class, but on their own, the students rely on personal strategies to compose a paper" (90). Some go so far as "to copy a paper sloppily in pencil in order to be able to turn in a 'rough' draft with a final" (90). And it is grades, more than anything, which influences their students, like those in the Williams and Alden study, to

get the paper done (91).

Martinez and Martinez (1989) reached conclusions quite similar to those of Ronald and Volkmer. In a study designed to compare student/teacher values, Martinez and Martinez surveyed, observed, and interviewed the members of two ethnically mixed developmental writing classes taught by the same teacher. They found a considerable mismatch between the values of the students and those of the teacher, so considerable that they saw "the very real possibility that the teacher's attempts to motivate her students had the opposite effect" (107).

While the teacher placed an extremely high value on school in general and upon the basic writing class in particular, the students saw learning as only one of several important activities in their lives, some of which had prior and competing claims on their time and energies. To the teacher, class attendance and the completion of assignments were base line behaviors--the beginning point of effort and evidence of students' commitment to succeed. To the students, commitment to the class could begin when commitment to family, friends, or jobs had been satisfied; they saw the base line on which to build success as a balance of school, social, and work activities. (107)

Finally, to conclude this section, Tobin (1989) analyzed the roughly five hundred metaphors for composing he collected from one hundred twenty Freshman English students over a two year period. He found that their metaphors changed as their writing classes progressed, and changed for the better. But we are concerned here

with incoming students' attitudes toward writing, so it is the metaphors from early in the term that are of most interest. Tobin's new students' metaphors expressed 'dissatisfaction and frustration by demonstrating a sense of aimlessness, of wasted time or motion, of activity for no reason" (448). They respond with "the idea of writing as a journey, as a means of discovery,..a dominant metaphor for professional writers and writing teachers,"...but..."these student journeys are very different; they are not pleasure trips or pilgrimages, but journeys without end" (448). They are pointless journeys which students go on "...because they have no choice." Tobin's students continually describe writing "as an impossible puzzle they must solve, a maze or imprisonment from which they must escape" (448). Escape is not easy, by any means; most students do not feel at all in control of the situation.

...so many of these student writers complain of being propelled, blown, and carried by forces over which they have little or no control...For students ...this lack of control, like the writing process itself, is not voluntary, and many emphasize frustration with their helplessness and lack of power...Even those students who emphasize their active role and freedom of choice in the process often see writing as superficial, cosmetic, ultimately external. (449)

For all these negative attitudes, though, Tobin's students did recognize, in a perverse sort of way, some

kind of value to writing.

Again and again incoming freshman writers describe writing as doing something they hated--going to a doctor's check-up, doing household chores, doing homework--because it is good for them. (449-50)

That students recognize writing as some sort of intellectual castor oil, beneficial but pretty distasteful, is all to the good. They are the products, as we are, of a highly literate culture in which writing does have value. They have understood the fact that writing and meaning interact in important ways in our culture since they were quite young. That they understand it, and appreciate it, however perversely, gives us a place to start working with them to change their attitudes toward writing so they are better equipped to use writing as a means to acquiring the critical literacy so necessary for making a success of themselves in school and beyond.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented, in the form of a self-help manual for new Freshman English teachers, an extensive overview of recent research into three major influences on Freshman English classes: the fact of orality, the nature of literacy, and the role of affect. For the sake of ease of definition and discussion, these three have been presented here in separate chapters, as if they were independent of each other. In fact, however, the most important general conclusion which should be drawn from this overview is that, as a rule, these three influences operate as one. In any given Freshman English class--or, for that matter, in any given Freshman English teacher or student--orality, literacy, and affect exert influence on performance not as three discrete forces but as a complex network of interactions. As this thesis indicates, much is known and understood about the three as discrete entities, both in general and as they operate in writing classes. Little study has yet been done, however, on the three as a complex. Thus, it is the specific conclusion of this thesis that more research needs to be undertaken which focuses on the interaction of orality, literacy, and affect in Freshman English classes. It is felt that such studies, which

could unite the insights and research methods of linguistics and rhetoric into what might be called the pragmatics of composition, could greatly enhance our understanding of how and why people who often would not choose to write, and who do not think of themselves as writers, go about accomplishing the act of writing.

One way of studying the interaction of orality, literacy, and affect in the Freshman English classroom would be to test the Dense Meaning Hypothesis. To that end, the remainder of this thesis provides, first, suggestions for a pedagogy which would facilitate the testing and, finally, suggestions for the kinds of research questions which such a study might profitably address.

Suggestions for Pedagogy: Readings and Assignments

That writing is a useful tool for learning has been an assumption of composition teachers and researchers for some time now. It is only recently, however, that evidence has begun to accumulate which offers proof for the assumption: writing is a mode of learning.

Langer and Applebee, after an extensive investigation of the learning which takes place as writing shapes thinking, offer a succinct summary of that evidence:

First, the more that content is manipulated, the more likely it is to be remembered and understood. In general, any kind of written response leads to better performance than does reading without writing. Within groups of students who complete the same tasks, students who write at greater length tend to perform better than students who write less, even after allowing for a general tendency for better students to do better at everything.

Second, the effects of writing tasks are greatest for the particular information focused on during the writing. (1987:130)

Thus, if writing is a mode of learning, and if the effects of writing are greatest for the information focused on during writing, then writing about writing should be a particularly effective way for our students to learn how to write. In the same way, writing about orality or literacy or affect should be a particularly effective way for our students to come to terms with and overcome the negative influences these three factors can have in Freshman English. Finally, writing about writing, demanding as it does both metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, should strongly facilitate the acquisition of new (more critical and creative) habits of mind.

The idea that writing about writing is a valuable tool for Freshman English classes is neither new nor unique. Most current textbooks encourage students to keep journals and to analyze and define their own writing processes as they go about completing their writing

assignments. The pedagogy suggested here, however, would, first of all, focus the formal assignments themselves not only on writing about writing, but also on writing about using language (by which it is meant writing and reading, speaking, listening, and thinking). Second, this approach would have students write about using language not in personal journals, but in correspondence journals (see below). In fact, such a written conversation, along with the spoken conversation of group writing conferences (see Chapter Three above), is centrally important in this Freshman English class. Thus, the pedagogy presented in this chapter is very much in keeping with the position taken by the National Council of Teachers of English on teaching composition (1984):

Students learn to write by writing. Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students' own work should be the central means of writing instruction...Textbooks and other instructional resources should be of secondary importance.
(613-14)

Suggested readings and assignments. Full bibliographic information for all readings is in the "Works Cited" section below. In keeping with the idea that revision is just as valuable for reading as it is for writing (Tierney and Pearson 1983:270), the number of readings is fairly small. The number of times they are

read, and the differing perspectives they are read from, however, are matters for the class members (teacher and students) to figure out as the literacy practices of the class evolve and are defined and clarified.

The following suggested readings represent a starting point for any given teacher. The list can, of course, be changed to suit personal tastes. The only requirement for inclusion on the list is that the reading be directly concerned with language about using language. The readings are presented here in an order which corresponds with that of the preceding three chapters. It should always be borne in mind that the order of presentation is arbitrary and that the presentation of orality, literacy, and affect as three distinct entities is a fiction. It is easiest in this context to discuss them as such, but they are parts of an organic whole. This whole is made up (starting, arbitrarily, from our perspective at the academy) of students interacting with teachers as all interact with and within the culture at large. The suggested readings are:

Ong, "Literacy and Orality in Our Times"

Costanzo, "Writing and Thinking in a Postliterate
Society"

Bartholomae, "Inventing the University"

Smith, Reading Without Nonsense

Tierney and Pearson, "Toward a Composing Model of Reading"

Anderson, et al., "Cross-Curricular Underlife: A Collaborative Report on Ways With Academic Words"

Ronald and Volkmer, "Another Competing Theory of Process: The Students'"

These readings would be the secondary text of the class. The tertiary text would be whatever grammar handbook is currently in use for Freshman English in the given department. By naming it the tertiary text, I do not mean to belittle its importance as a resource: one of the main goals of the class is for students to become facile with the Edited American English of the academy which such handbooks by and large represent. By naming it a tertiary text, I mean that it should be consulted as a resource only after a great deal of writing has already been done. It is that great deal of writing which is the primary text of the class; such a text can only come from what students write in their correspondence journals and in their responses to formal assignments.

A correspondence journal is a series of letters written between two students during the course of the term. The correspondence is kept in a single notebook which they pass back and forth on a regular basis (every

class meeting, for example, or every other). For the purposes of this pedagogy, the correspondence journal would be focused always on writing about using language. Students would be free to express any opinions they might have and explore any directions their interacting ideas might take them in, but they would be required to keep that freedom of expression and exploration within the confines of metalanguage and metacognition. Thus, the correspondence journal as I am defining it would not be the place for discussions of students' sex lives or drinking prowess. It would be, however, a perfect place to discuss the mating language of college freshmen or the effects of alcohol on reading ability. Correspondence journals should be collected and responded to on a regular basis (perhaps every two weeks or so). In this way, teachers can make sure the journals are staying within the confines of "writing about using language."

Formal assignments would, like the correspondence journals, be focused on the general topic of using language. Each assignment, in its final draft, would be required to meet the grammatical and structural standards of Edited American English sanctioned not only by the individual teacher's department (usually English) but also by the institution at large. After all, the point of writing about using language is always twofold: to

increase metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness in each student, both as an individual and as a functioning member of overlapping discourse communities, and to become more facile with the demands and constraints of "academic literacy" as it is defined from a multi-disciplinary perspective (Anderson et al. 1990).

The following assignments represent, again, only a starting point, a suggestion of the kinds of "writing about using language" assignments which might be designed to create a positive union out of orality, literacy, and affect. In order to avoid having such assignments devolve into merely expressive writing, the class discussions, group writing conferences, and correspondence journal writing accompanying the assignments would have to focus consistently on the notion of personal development through social interaction (Vygotsky 1962), especially the social interaction between writer and audience.

1. Tell the story of your development as a writer since the tenth grade. Consider the answers to the following questions as sources for your essay. What kind(s) of writing were you required to do most often in school? What kind(s) of writing did you ordinarily engage in on your own? Do you see any relationship between these two kinds of writing? What were your teachers' attitudes toward writing like? Did they seem to enjoy it? In grading, did they focus on grammar and correctness most or on the content and quality of your ideas? Which focus do you prefer--correctness or content? Why? What are your own attitudes toward writing? Do

you enjoy it? Why or why not? Do you think your teachers' attitudes might have influenced yours? How about your parents'? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

2. Spend some time during the next week paying close attention to (and taking notes on) the ways people talk in the following settings: casual conversation among friends, TV conversation on a sitcom, TV conversation on a soap, TV conversation on a talk show. What similarities do you notice among the various conversations? What differences? How do you account for the existence of these similarities and differences? Aren't we all speaking the same language and using the same rules of talk? Based on your analysis of similarities and differences, what conclusions do you reach about the effect(s), if any, of TV on the structure and content of casual conversation? Did you notice, for example, people trying to sound like a favorite character from a TV show? Or did you notice words or phrases from a TV show being made part of people's working vocabulary?
3. Describe yourself as a reader. Use the answers to the following questions as sources for your essay. What do you generally like to read? Why? What kinds of things do you not like to read? Why? If given the choice between reading a book or seeing a movie based on the same book, which would you do? Why? Do you think you read differently for this class than you do for your other classes? If so, how and why? If not, why not? How do you prepare for a test in one of your other classes? How do you read as part of that preparation? Do you re-read whole chapters? Just what you've highlighted? Just your notes? How does reading for test preparation differ from reading for pleasure? How does reading for test preparation differ from reading your correspondent's letters? If a test and your correspondent's letters both demand written responses from you, would you say that your responses to the different reading situations are the same? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. Based on your experiences in this class, as well as on your experiences as a writer and reader in

your other classes, write an open letter to members of a senior, college-bound English class back at your high school. What should they expect from their first term in college? What should they expect from Freshman English? How should they prepare for it? What has worked so well for you that you would urge them to try it? What mistakes have you made that you would warn them against? Could you sincerely assert to them that writing is important? What reasons can you give to support your assertion?

5. Write a memorandum to the Director of Freshman English. The following questions are designed to help get you started. How well did you understand the relationships among the readings, class activities, and writing assignments? How did you rate yourself as a writer before this class began? How do you rate yourself as a writer now? How close is the match between your rating and your teacher's rating of you (based on comments and grades)? What reasons can you give for any mismatch between the two? What are the best things about the course as it has been done this term? What things need to be changed? Since you have almost completed this Freshman English course, you and your classmates have achieved a certain expert status as Freshman English students. From the perspective of that collective expert status, what constructive criticism can you offer to the Director for the program as a whole?

Suggestions for Research

The assignments outlined above are designed to move students into a face to face confrontation with the fact of orality, the nature of literacy, and the role of affect. They are meant to bring students, through this confrontation, to a heightened awareness that using language is central to their lives, especially to their

lives at the academy. The assignments are designed as well to facilitate research into how orality, literacy, and affect interact as a complex whole in Freshman English. Through the study and analysis not only of student writing from such a class (drafts, final drafts, and correspondence journals) but also of transcriptions of tape-recorded group writing conferences, such questions as the following could be addressed:

1. Does writing about writing improve students' attitudes toward writing? If so, does an improved attitude, so derived, contribute to their becoming better writers?
2. Starting from Beaugrande (1981), what is the relationship between spoken conversation about developing text and textuality? Between written conversation about developing text and textuality?
3. Starting from Vygotsky (1962), can personal development as a writer be enhanced through the social experience of examining that development with other developing writers?
4. What effect does "narrow reading," that is, reading which is focused throughout the term on one general topic area (Krashen 1985), have on the general reading abilities of Freshman English students? What effect does it have on their writing abilities?
5. Following Krashen (1985), what effect does what we

might call "narrow writing," that is, writing which is focused throughout the term on one general topic area (see Vance 1937), have on the writing abilities of Freshman English students? What effect does it have on their reading abilities?

6. What positive relationships between narrow reading and narrow writing can be found and used in Freshman English classes?

7. What relationships exist between "thick description" (Geertz 1973) and what we might call "thick discussion" (from correspondence journals and group writing conferences)? Can these relationships be put to positive use to help students become, both individually and collaboratively, ethnographers of the "culture" of critical literacy? Will students-as-ethnographers be better writers than students taught to write in more traditional ways? If so, how and why?

8. Finally, will the "cooperative principle" of spoken conversation (Grice 1975) be naturally invoked for the written conversation of correspondence journals? If so, in what ways might the principle, so invoked, be useful as a tool for writing classes? If so, what more does its occurrence in written conversation tell us about the relationship between speaking and writing?

As these questions, and others like them, are answered, more and more of the complex interaction of orality, literacy, and affect in Freshman English will come to be understood. Increased understanding of this complex, as a whole, offers Freshman English teachers another means of knowing more, not only of writing and of writers, but of the very center of our classes--the writer writing.

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