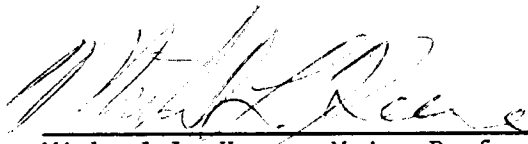
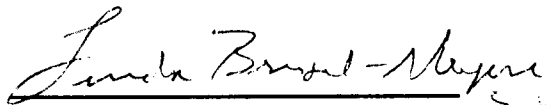


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WRITING AT THE  
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:  
A METHOD FOR ANALYZING THE INSTITUTIONAL WRITING CULTURE

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

Lydia J. Petersson

December 1988

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To John Arrin Gillies, Lysandra Noelle Gillies Petersson  
and Arrin Alexander Petersson Gillies

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This study could not have been conducted without the encouragement and cheerful cooperation of many people. Tom Collins, Sheadrick Tillman, Regina Smith, and all my co-workers in the UTK Office of Research Administration provided me flexibility and support. Mike Keene was always there to bolster my spirits and provide critical advice. He and Kate Adams, now of Loyola University, New Orleans, provided the framework to let me see unities in theory and practice, in rhetoric and technical writing. Linda Benschel-Meyers and Lori Burghardt were willing to serve on my committee despite the off-beat nature of my topic. The study participants and managers at AID were without exception helpful and enthusiastic; in particular, Marcia Bernbaum acted as guide and advocate within LAC/DR. My friend Paula Tarnapol put me up in Washington. My daughter Lys and son Alexander were amazingly patient when mommy had to spend her weekends working.

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### ABSTRACT

The development and application of theories in writing and rhetoric have been hampered by inattention to the dynamics of the document development process in non-academic settings. The inattention has in part been caused by the difficulties of conducting research in non-academic organizations. This study developed a method for analyzing the writing culture of an institution that can be applied in a variety of settings and that can be useful both to managers at host organizations and academic researchers. The method was applied to the writing system of the Agency for International Development (AID), the agency that administers the foreign assistance program of the United States Department of State.

The method that was developed was based on an analysis of the "inputs" into an organization's writing culture and the degree to which each input was either "fixed" or "variable." Inputs were divided into three broad classes: systems inputs, physical and human resources, and cultural inputs. Each class of inputs was characterized by the way in which change could be effected, as well as by its fixed or variable nature.

Data was collected through structured interviews and questionnaires administered during eight days of on-site observation at AID offices in Washington, D.C., and was used to develop recommendations for improvements in agency writing practices and procedures. In addition, implications were drawn from the data that have relevance to writing research. For instance, results showed that AID writers recognize that

certain invention-stage characteristics, such as technical correctness and discovering new ideas and insights, are relatively unimportant to the successful use of AID documents. Nevertheless, these writers are reluctant to dispense with invention-stage characteristics in their own writing.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Writing in Non-academic Settings:**

#### **Problems in Theory**

##### **1.1 Beyond Stage-Process Models: The Functional Evolution of Written Documents**

Writing theory abounds with models that divide discourse into broad genres. James Britton distinguishes the expressive, transactional, and poetic functions of language (Britton, 1975). Janet Emig calls the functions "extensive" and "reflexive" (Emig, 1983). These divisions have value as intellectual shorthand, but they are incomplete, in part because they have been constructed in academic or experimental settings and thus have not taken into account the natural document development process. As even the earliest stage-process models imply, written documents are artifacts created over time (Rohman, 1964); as writers create documents, their concerns must change at different stages. They must in turn invent ideas and lines of argument, communicate these thoughts and arguments to an audience, and, finally, transcribe the document into a form that will become part of the historical record.

I call this the "functional evolution" of written documents, and maintain that it is an objectively verifiable process that exists in some form for every completed document. The basic process of functional evolution is modified by the particular rhetorical demands of each

document. In a non-academic setting, rhetorical demands include all of the burdens placed on the writer by the institutional writing culture, including (but not limited to) the organization's "persona," the rhetorical burden imposed by the particular document genre, and the perceived needs of audience.

This is simply to say that the basic elements of the writing process--invention, communication, transcription--are modified by the specific circumstances in which a particular document is created. A writer concentrating effort on one element in place of another in response to specific circumstances helps to determine the nature of the ultimate product--whether, for instance, an academic researcher perceives the document to be primarily expressive (ideas paramount --concept paper), persuasive (argument paramount--proposal), communicative (descriptive information paramount--report), or archival (data paramount--document of record).

Because of complex rhetorical demands and human imperfection, functional evolution is seldom smooth; as a document changes from invention tool to communication tool to document of record, writer-based prose gradually becomes reader-based prose; rhetorical strategies are discovered, articulated, and incorporated into the text; and the text is edited to conform with audience expectations and cultural conventions. Communication gradually becomes more important than invention, driven by the writer's need to create an artifact that will have an impact on an audience. After the document has been completed, it creates its primary impact: it is produced, disseminated, and has an effect. Then

gradually, as it loses its primary urgency and becomes a secondary resource, the document evolves from communication tool to document of record.

The three stages and the transitions between them are sometimes clearly demarcated and easy to identify. A research proposal, for instance, may pass through the entire chronology of functional evolution within a period of a year. It may be written over the period of a few weeks or months and create a primary impact as it is evaluated by a review panel during an afternoon session. It may then be acted upon and archived within another month's time and be used as a secondary resource for project implementation or as the basis of another proposal for another year. Within eighteen months, the proposal may be obsolete. The ideas in a scholarly article, on the other hand, might be refined within the author's mind over a period of years. The article might go through several revisions before being accepted by a publisher. Its primary impact may last several years or several decades. Only then might it become an historical document, a record of someone's thought at a specific point in time. Unlike the proposal, the scholarly article may still be alive fifty years after its conception.

These examples illustrate that product, process, and circumstance must be evaluated together in order to move beyond the simple contrastive genres of discourse posed by Britton and Emig. To verify and improve theories about the writing process and to make suggestions for improving writing practices in non-academic settings, writing researchers need a full understanding of writer and document in temporal

and cultural context. But such an understanding will not be easy to obtain, in part because the time required to conduct research in non-academic settings may restrict the number of settings in which writing research is conducted.

This study was conducted to develop a method for defining the writing culture of an organization that might be easily applied to a number of settings and might be made appealing to an organization's management because of its potential for improving staff productivity. Research questions could be posed as part of the cultural evaluation, and the results reported back to the field and used for theory-building, whereas the management implications could be reported to the organization and used, it is hoped, for the improvement of practice.

Chapter 1 of this thesis describes the unique demands of the non-academic setting and surveys current research; Chapter 2 contains a description of the method developed for defining the institutional writing culture and the data collection techniques used for the study. Chapter 3 serves two purposes and two audiences. It is an example of an evaluation of an institution's writing culture and thus could serve as a prototype for a writing researcher or consultant in another organization. Because it is a prototype, details regarding methodology and results are mixed to a certain unavoidable extent. Second, Chapter 3 provides the basis for the conclusions and recommendations contained in Chapter 4, and, together with Chapter 4, will be submitted to the Agency for International Development. Chapter 5 is a short summary of the implications of the study for writing researchers.

## 1.2 Demands of the Non-academic Setting

On-the-job writing depends on individual creativity and skill, harmonious group interaction, and successful use of the final text. More than academic writing, it is geared to pragmatic ends: efficient production, effective communication, inspiration to action. Non-academic writing is a business usually undertaken by intelligent, talented professionals who, although unschooled in the process of efficiently creating, revising, and using documents, have learned to do so through practice. These professionals do not, however, spend much time contemplating the demands of a certain genre or the changing needs of audience; they lack a broad perspective on the system in which they write, rewrite, and write some more. Yet it is particularly easy for writing researchers to see the union of product, process, and circumstance in the non-academic setting. Writing is a tool that coalesces ideas and maintains the harmony of the socio-organizational group; it is a communication bridge between the authors and their audience; and it is an historical record of situation, plans, and state-of-mind at a specific chronological moment.

In 1985, Lester Faigley noted that most theorists interested in non-academic writing (there had not been many of them) had focused on textual and individual approaches. These approaches were often designed to analyze the demands of professional writing and to use the findings to improve pedagogy. Faigley suggested that researchers also needed to investigate the social dimension of writing within an organization.

Others soon began to examine the ways in which oral communication and group expectations affect writing processes within organizations (e.g., Odell, 1985; Paradis, et al., 1985; Doheny-Farina, 1986; Harrison, 1987). But many of these later studies continued to focus on the individual writer, and, although they contribute to our understanding of composing practices and social contexts, they do not integrate the textual, individual, and social dimensions of writing the way Faigley intended. In order to integrate these three dimensions, researchers need to develop a better understanding of how documents are produced in an on-the-job setting.

In addition to understanding how functional evolution works in the document development process, writing researchers need to know how other forces shape non-academic documents. For instance, collaborative authorship is commonly used in the non-academic world, and it is usually the voice of the organization, rather than the voice of the individual, that must be present in the final draft. Although individuals can legitimately "own" ideas or portions of a collaborative document, no one person can "own" a group proposal, project plan, committee report, or policy paper. Yet, writing pedagogy has been developed with the single-authored text in mind--partly because, as Paradis, Dobrin and Miller note, "very little is known about writing as a group . . . " (Paradis, et al., 1985, p. 293).

There is some very recent work on collaborative writing that will help define the practice, but at this time, on-the-job professionals are

often uncertain about what constitutes collaborative writing. They may arrive at their first jobs unprepared for the social and intellectual demands of group authorship, including, for instance, the demands of audience. At the most basic level, they may be unskilled in writing to an audience, but they may also be unable to cope effectively with audience response--how to use the comments of collaborators and primary and secondary audiences and how to shape, use, re-shape, and re-use documents to respond to the needs of different audiences. The inexperience of these young professionals in dealing with group authorship in turn affects the practice of non-academic writing.

Faigley called for researchers to study the completed text and how it influences future work in addition to studying the way texts are written. Doheny-Farina states that "research into the social process of writing traces the writer's activities through time, exploring how life experiences impinge upon [his/her] rhetorical choices" (Doheny-Farina, 1985, p. 179). Both researchers allude to the fact that writing in non-academic settings is a time-dependent and time-influenced process, taking place within individual and socio-organizational, as well as temporal, contexts. To study writing in non-academic settings, academic researchers must broaden their focus to include, in addition to individual writers reacting to personal and institutional constraints, the time-critical flow of document production. In essence, they need "real-time" models of the writing process that take into account textual, individual, and social variables.

Time influences writers in non-academic settings in several ways. The contrast between the proposal and the scholarly article used in Section 1.1 also points out how critical time is to writers in the non-academic world. The quickly produced document is much more common in business and industry than it is in academia, despite increased demand for research and publication in universities. In academia, there still may be time for individuals to correct crossed signals, for articles to be revised at the last minute because a line of thought seems incomplete. But time is a scarce commodity in the non-academic world; writers need to use every resource available to increase their efficiency. Some resources are technological, of course; computers can increase writing speed and quality. Other resources are intellectual. The engineer who agonizes over the first sentence in his report and the supervisor who criticizes her subordinate's grammar before analyzing his ideas would be better served if they understood the process in which they were taking part. Since the function of documents must change over time, the processes which produce them must reinforce, rather than act against, their evolution. It would be absurd, for instance, to ask a group to write to its audience before it had discovered what its audience was. It would be counterproductive to structure a document so that users would need to understand unstated, group-specific contexts. It would be unfortunate to destroy or archive documents in such a way that future users could not easily reach them.

Paradis, Dobrin and Miller note that writing in research organizations "is commonly viewed as a pragmatic routine of transferring

and archiving information--the afterthought of serious research activity" (Paradis, et al., 1985, p. 281). This view is the logical consequence of the way writing has been taught for the past 100 years. Traditional teaching made it seem as if writing took place in discrete parcels, as if one document were produced and then thoughts were completed, the office door were locked, and everyone retired, or as if writing were a one-way tunnel through which an author at one end shouted to the reader at the other, but never received a reply. In fact, on-the-job writing is a dynamic process that changes the future of individuals and organizations. A person writing is a person changing. An organization writing is an organization changing, growing, backtracking, forgetting, starting over. In an organization that lives by writing, no document stands alone, nor does it exist in a temporal vacuum. Documents stand as markers of joint thought and experience in a world in which individuals may serve alternately as writers, reviewers, and audience, and where they must represent the social collective in addition to themselves.

### **1.3 Current Models and Methodologies**

Theorists that have addressed writing in non-academic settings have moved in three distinct directions: some have followed traditional lines of inquiry in technical writing and have focused on texts and genres; others, following Emig and Flower and Hayes, have focused on individual composing processes; and still others have followed Faigley and have begun to examine the social aspects of writing in an organization.

Faigley discussed the three directions of writing inquiry in 1985, when he called for more research with a social perspective. He defined textual approaches to writing in terms of their preoccupation with genres, textual features, and document organization. He noted that textual research has contributed to our understanding of readability and our ability to define writing styles. He felt, however, that textual approaches were of limited use in helping us understand how documents are created and used.

Textual research is a logical derivation of the current traditional paradigm and the traditional concerns of technical writing. Its influence can be seen in textbooks, writing manuals, and software products that claim to make the user a better writer by beeping every time he/she uses a hackneyed phrase or writes a lengthy sentence. Textual approaches are attractive to the authors of writing manuals aimed at non-academic writers because they are easily organized, they are product-oriented, and they appeal to widely-held assumptions about writing.

For instance, a recent Batelle-sponsored writing manual (Sageev, 1986) that is aimed at bridging the communication gap between scientific researchers and non-technical managers devotes 42 pages of a 60-page chapter to textual concerns: organization, level of detail, conciseness, clarity, logical flow, readability (all of these are labeled "content" issues), sentence length, and choosing the right word (these are labeled "style" issues). The remaining 18 pages discuss process concerns (what the author calls "procedures for writing"),

including writing efficiency, maintaining motivation, and writing and editing the first draft. Both textual and process issues are dealt with in a "how-to" manner--the reader is inundated with suggestions for improving his/her writing ("Use action verbs;" "Divide the outline into 'timed tasks'") without being shown where these suggestions fit into the process of developing and using a document.

Despite the limitations of relying entirely on textual approaches, textual research is vital to understanding writing in non-academic settings. Few non-academic genres are pure; a proposal may be an internal document in one organization and an external document in another. In one organization it may mimic a report, relying on "objective" analysis, while in a second organization it may appear more like a concept paper, discussing all possible options and only indirectly recommending one line of action. Only by analyzing the textual genres used in a particular organization can researchers clarify the rhetorical demands placed on writers of each genre.

Faigley traced the debt of the "individualists" to the work of cognitive psychologists. He added that, for this group, a written document is "not so much a product as an outcome of an individual's cognitive processes" (Faigley, 1985, p. 235). Typical concerns of individual-based writing research are audience adaptation and composing styles. Janet Emig, Linda Flower and John Hayes have perhaps contributed the most to theorists analyzing on-the-job writing from an individual perspective. Emig pioneered the use of protocol analysis in writing research. In this methodology, informants "compose aloud,"

describing all their thoughts as they write and revise a document in an experimental setting. Flower and Hayes' fundamental research defines the importance of discovery in the composing processes of individuals.

Odell, Goswami, and Herrington use Emig and Flower and Hayes in developing a methodology they call the "discourse-based interview" (Odell, et al., 1983). Odell, et al., use this method to elicit the tacit knowledge of non-academic writers. They collect copies of a range of documents produced by an on-the-job writer, identify what they consider key features of the documents, and discuss the texts with the writer to clarify their understanding of his/her rhetorical choices. They also use protocol analysis to determine whether or not the identified types of rhetorical decision are articulated during the composing aloud process, and, therefore, whether the decision is part of the writer's tacit knowledge of his/her rhetorical situation or whether it is a conscious choice.

Although an individual approach cannot tell us everything about writing within an organization, it is important to remember that social structures are made up of individuals with varying skills, expectations, and strengths. Examining the individual in contrast to the social context, as Odell and his colleagues do, can help determine where training and other efforts may be effective in modifying the writing environment.

Faigley suggested that social research could overcome the limitations of textual and individual approaches to writing in

non-academic settings. According to Faigley, "Researchers taking a social perspective study how individual acts of communication define, organize and maintain social groups. They view texts . . . as links in communicative chains, with their meaning emerging from their relationships to previous texts and the present context" (Faigley, 1985, p. 236). Moreover, social writing research moves beyond issues of audience to issues such as "social roles, group purposes, communal organization, ideology, and, finally, theories of culture" (p. 236). Faigley is very interested in the "discourse community," a social unit made up of people linked by beliefs and communication strategies, in which members "know what is worth communicating, how it can be communicated, what other members of the community are likely to know and believe to be true about certain subjects, how other members can be persuaded, and so on" (p. 236). Writing, a social act that takes place within a discourse community, is vital for shaping the writer as well as for shaping the community.

Faigley cites Vygotsky's writings about inner speech, and, in fact, Vygotsky's theory could be used as an intellectual metaphor for the shaping process which a writer undergoes as he/she becomes a member of a discourse community. Just as a young child's inner storage of meaningful phrases is limited and his/her outer speech is somewhat idiosyncratic, a writer new to a discourse community must struggle to make himself/herself understood. As the child matures, or the writer is

absorbed, inner speech more nearly resembles speech production, communication is easier, and the individual's perspective may be distinguished from others.

#### **1.4 New Directions for Research in Non-academic Settings**

An increasing amount of research is being done in non-academic settings, but problems remain. New research must be well grounded in current rhetorical theory and must fully integrate textual, individual, and social perspectives. This study attempts to maintain a tri-partite focus by using texts and individual testimony to help define the writing culture of an institution. The study examines texts both as officially defined and as understood by writers in the organization. It also attempts to add a process dimension to current research by concentrating on the production of a related series of documents over time--in this case, project development documents at the Agency for International Development (AID), the agency which administers the foreign assistance program of the U.S. Department of State.

Throughout, the study attempts to remain rooted in theory in two ways: first, by examining the rhetorical demands placed on writers by institutions, texts, and individuals, and, second, by using the concept of functional evolution (an outgrowth of stage-process models of writing) as a background theory for evaluating the document development process. I am particularly indebted to the concept of rhetorical exigencies and constraints put forth by Lloyd Bitzer (Bitzer, 1968). As I see them, the rhetorical demands of the non-academic setting include

the organizational-level exigencies and constraints that are transferred to writers working within the organization (through cultural beliefs, and expectations regarding content and format). All writers juggle rhetorical and content demands, but writers in non-academic settings have the additional burden of responding to the rhetorical demands of an organization--demands with which they may not entirely agree.

## Chapter 2

### Methodology and Implications for Theory

#### 2.1 A Problem-solving Approach to Analyzing the Institutional Writing Culture

Although Faigley's call for a new kind of writing research was needed, there are certain theoretical and methodological problems that must be surmounted before social research in writing can be made fully useful. Methods that are appropriate in one discipline may be less so in a collateral discipline that proceeds from a slightly different theoretical base. Unfortunately, writing research has not yet been pulled together by a cohesive set of theories. In a way, the problem is that writing researchers are not yet a discourse community, but have differing perspectives and preconceptions. The problem is exacerbated by the administrative divisions sometimes placed between the academic subdisciplines of writing, including creative writing, technical writing, rhetoric and composition, business writing, and journalism, and between writing and those disciplines with important implications for writing, such as linguistics and literature studies.

For instance, Doheny-Farina and Odell believe that we can learn much about writing in non-academic settings by using the methodologies of sociology and anthropology, including the tools of ethnography (Doheny-Farina and Odell, 1985; Doheny-Farina, 1986). Ethnographic

methodologies include "thick description" (the exhaustive recording of observed details, particularly the actions and reactions of individuals within a group), a naturalistic rather than an experimental research setting, and minimal intervention from the observer. Doheny-Farina and Odell caution against the indiscriminate use of ethnographic methodologies, but even Doheny-Farina has fallen prey to its difficulties. In his investigation of a pseudonymous software company, Microware, Inc., Doheny-Farina observed the company's management confronting interesting business and rhetorical choices. Unfortunately, he did not distinguish sufficiently between the two types of decision. As a result, his study seemed to aggrandize the importance of the writing process and minimize the importance of business decisions ("At that moment, the failure of the executives' collaborative writing process meant the failure of the company" (Doheny-Farina, 1986, p. 173).

This lack of discrimination might justifiably enrage a business executive or management consultant. It took place, I believe, because Doheny-Farina had not constructed a theoretical model of the group writing process against which to evaluate his methodology and his extensive data. At the time he conducted his study, he was more interested in building a cross-disciplinary methodological bridge between sociology and rhetoric than with examining the precepts of rhetoric themselves. Doheny-Farina's study report contains a short summary of implications for theory building, but the points made in that section are very general. He notes that social context influences a writer's rhetorical choices; that it is important to trace a writer's

activities through time rather than at one specific moment of encoding; and that social research can help reveal how organizational "stored problem representations" arise. He agrees with Cooper and Holzman that Flower and Hayes' experimental settings remove subjects from their normal writing contexts, and, therefore, limit their ability to rely on stored problem representations. But he does not attempt to use his research to build a foundation for a theory of writing in non-academic settings.

In contrast to Doheny-Farina's sociological focus, Paradis, Dobrin and Miller used the methodologies and perspectives of business in conducting their study of Exxon LTD, a research and development division of Exxon Chemicals Company (Paradis, et al., 1985). Their methods were like those of a management consulting team; they administered questionnaires and writing tests, interviewed individuals and groups, inspected documents, observed work patterns, and discussed what they saw with supervisors and managers. Their objectives were equally business-like--they wanted to define the roles that writing played in the organization and investigate individual interaction during the production of internal documents.

Their results mirrored their management orientation. They discovered that writing was not fully utilized as a management tool and that employees were not always aware of the importance of the writing-editing cycle. They state:

Managers and supervisors often do not appreciate that editing documents provides them an important means of managing the work of employees--defining tasks, assigning them, and calling them in

--as well as shaping work results to fit established company objectives . . . many R&D employees have trouble seeing how the writing-editing cycle they repeat so frequently can deeply influence the inner workings and success of their organizations (p. 282).

The fact that Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller present their results from a management point of view does not mean that their results are not valid. On the contrary, their results are probably as valid and meaningful as Doheny-Farina's discoveries about the importance of social processes. But neither the study of Exxon ITD nor the study of Microware, Inc., tells the entire story of writing within a specific organization, as one might assume they would. Instead, the two studies relate specific findings that are meaningful within two distinct disciplines--sociology and business--but their results are not evaluated in terms of a set of theories specific to writing research. (Indeed, their theoretical assumptions from these other disciplines are often left unstated and unexplored.)

Writing researchers working in non-academic settings face a basic, unglamorous task: understanding and adapting tools from related disciplines, including the tools of ethnography that Doheny-Farina uses and the business tools used by Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller. These tools must be rigorously analyzed and evaluated, as should be the traditional tools of writing research (including text analysis, protocol analysis, broad-based survey administration, in-depth interviews, and experimental task analysis) to determine which are most appropriately applied to non-academic settings.

Researchers should also make use of the unique potentials inherent in non-academic settings. For instance, I believe that findings should be evaluated by all writers, not just those who would classify themselves as "technical writers." Anyone who spends a significant portion of his or her day writing can act as an expert witness, and researchers should investigate opportunities to gather broad-based feedback for academic theory-building.

Writing research done in non-academic settings must be made appealing to the organization in which the research is done--the "host" institution. This means that researchers will often need to take a problem-solving approach. Managers, especially in profit-making organizations, may be singularly uninterested in analytical approaches that seem to them purely academic. Managers seek to increase the efficiency and profitability of their organizations, not to aid academic scholarship. They may not even recognize the importance of writing within their organizations. If they do, they are more likely to be interested in having their organization's writing problems analyzed and solved than in serving as subjects for a study with no tangible outputs.

In response to this reality, I sought to develop a method for analyzing an institution's writing culture that could benefit both host institutions and writing researchers. In order to benefit host institutions, the method had to be more like Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller's than like Doheny-Farina's--it had to be more business-based than sociology-based. It also had to be problem-oriented, including a component for making specific recommendations for improving writing

practices in the host institution. On the other hand, the method had to be based on the theory-and-knowledge base of writing and rhetoric and had to allow researchers to collect data that would advance the academic study of writing.

The method that evolved over the course of the study was based on an analysis of the "inputs" into an organization's writing culture and the degree to which each input was either "fixed" or "variable." Inputs were divided into three broad classes: systems inputs, physical and human resources, and cultural inputs. Each class of inputs was characterized by the way in which change could be effected, as well as by its fixed or variable nature.

Systems inputs are relatively fixed and are unlikely to be changed solely to increase efficiency of communication. These inputs include the organization's formalized structure, its broad rhetorical purpose and rhetorical constraints, and, often, the genres of the organization's written documents. For instance, many businesses must produce an annual report for legal purposes; some get new business only by writing proposals. These genres are a fixed part of the organization's writing system--although their format and method of production may be modified, the genres themselves cannot be eliminated. (The ways in which documents are used within an organization, however, are determined by cultural factors and are therefore cultural inputs.) Systems inputs can be modified only at the highest organizational levels, and then only as a result of significant and recognized need.

Physical and human resources include the writing background, skill level, and training of personnel; available support technology; and physical infrastructure (such as office design). This class of inputs includes the "raw materials" of the organization's resource base but not its acquired culture. For instance, staff writing fluency would be included but not staff attitudes toward writing, since writing fluency is a skill and may be learned independently, whereas staff attitudes toward writing are values that are determined to a much greater degree by the values of the organization.

Physical and human resources are somewhat fixed inputs, although the degree to which they are fixed can vary significantly between organizations, or even between separate units of a single organization. One unit may have high staff turnover and a relatively large operations budget. Another unit may retain staff for twenty years and have difficulty purchasing computers. Thus, although systems inputs may be generalized for an entire organization, physical and human resources must be analyzed for each organizational unit of interest.

Some changes in an organization's physical and human resources can be made at a lower managerial level than can changes in systems inputs. Typically, personnel selection criteria and allocation of resources can be modified with approval of mid-level management, and these same managers can make recommendations for acquisition of new positions and changes in training programs. Nonetheless, an organization's physical and human resources are modified only over time and in response to a felt need.

An organization's formal and informal reviewing structure and organizational and individual beliefs about writing are cultural inputs into the writing system. Beliefs about writing are partly determined by the organizational culture that newcomers encounter and absorb (Faigley, 1985), but no newcomer enters an organization with a blank slate--individual beliefs are also important. A newcomer learns such things as the organization's structures for collaborative writing and review, the importance of harmony or disagreement in the review process, and the role that written documents play in the organization's innovation process. He or she learns about document genres, including the expected format and rhetorical purpose of each. But the newcomer seldom receives direct instruction about these matters (with the possible exception of document format), and at times the individual may find that the organization is in conflict with his or her beliefs about writing.

Each individual takes up a position regarding such topics as the characteristics of "good" writing, proper composition practices, and the overall importance of writing within the organization; this position is based on the newcomer's previous beliefs and his or her perceptions of the organization's expectations. The process of absorbing the organization's writing culture is thus highly variable, and there is no guarantee that individuals will come to harmonious conclusions. If they do not, disagreements about writing can be a significant source of inefficiency and stress in an organization.

Cultural inputs are very important factors in determining the success of an organization's writing system but may also be the most fixed of all inputs, since changes in an organization's culture require changes in behavior and few people welcome behavior modification. Cultural changes may be attractive to upper management, however, since the capital investment required is usually small. Unfortunately, the organization's eventual investment in time and effort could be significantly greater than would first appear--cultural change is effected through analysis and understanding of the status quo followed by formal and informal training and attitude leadership.

## **2.2 Data Collection**

Data for the study was collected through structured interviews and questionnaires. Most data was collected during eight days of on-site interviews and observation at AID offices in Washington, D.C. In addition, I benefited from discussions with AID employees and consultants who were not study participants and from a familiarity with AID built up over eight years of formal and informal contact. This familiarity was vital for establishing agency contacts, securing approval to do the study, and soliciting the cooperation of study participants. It helped me to establish a quick rapport with informants, to understand terminology unique to the agency, and to understand the implications of evaluative statements. Several written documents were also important information sources. In particular, AID Handbook 3 (particularly Chapter 2, "Project Identification: The

Project Identification Document" and Chapter 3, "Project Development, Analysis and Presentation") was vital for defining systems inputs.

### **2.2.1 Study Population**

The study population consisted of eleven AID direct-hire employees and one contractor. To the extent possible, the population was balanced for experience level and AID position. All participants but one were employed at a single office within the Latin America/Caribbean (LAC) Bureau. The LAC Bureau has a reputation for high-quality, high-production work. Of the twelve informants, eight were male and four were female. Six different job classifications were represented: Office Director, Division Chief, Deputy Division Chief, Development Officer, Development Intern, and Consultant.

### **2.2.2 Documents Studied**

This study examined the project development process and documents, especially the Project Identification Document (PID) and the Project Paper (PP). These are only two of perhaps thirty program, project development, project implementation, and administrative document genres regularly produced at AID. Conclusions about project development documents are not directly transferable to other AID genres. However, the general conclusion that project development genres are rhetorically complex and need to be modified implies that other AID genres should be examined for rhetorical clarity.

### **2.2.3 Instruments**

Two interview instruments and one questionnaire were developed (Appendix 1) and all informants were interviewed at least once. Twelve

completed baseline interviews and eight completed exit instruments. In addition, three completed questionnaires that examined the informants' attitudes toward selected documents as they were being written.

Baseline interviews were conducted in March, 1988, and exit interviews took place three months later. Depending on each informant's preference, interviews were conducted in the office provided to the researcher during the study period or in the participant's office.

#### 2.2.3.1 Baseline Data Interview Instrument

The baseline interview instrument collected data about informants' writing duties, experience, and attitudes. Administration time varied from thirty minutes to one hour. The first group of questions (#1-#3) assessed the extent to which writing was used in the Agency. The second set (#4-#7) requested information about the informant's preparation in writing.

Questions 8, 9, and 10 were the heart of the baseline instrument. Respondents evaluated ten document qualities (e.g., conciseness, technical correctness) in terms of their importance for the successful use of an AID document. They were also asked to name which of the ten qualities were most and least dispensable in their own writing. The last six questions assessed the informants' attitudes toward writing at AID--they were asked about their own and others' writing skills and about changes in their writing and reviewing techniques during the time they had been employed at AID. Informants were also asked to define major constraints to writing well at the agency.

The informants were particularly intrigued with the questions that assessed the importance of document qualities. Many repeated the words "successful use" to themselves as they puzzled over the questions, and several expressed interest in others' responses. They took less time with and seemed less interested in the questions about major constraints to writing at AID. Most had answers readily at hand, however, for the questions about changes in their writing and reviewing practices since coming to AID. In the speculative realm, the differences in the informants' response to the sections may tell us something about their institutional writing culture. "Successful use" was an important concept to them but they had not thought much about it before the baseline interview. "Constraints to writing" seemed much more difficult and bound up with non-writing considerations. But they had already given at least some thought to the ways that working at AID had influenced their writing.

#### 2.2.3.2 Draft Report Form Questionnaire

Three new project papers (PPs), a project identification document (PID), and a strategy statement were identified as documents of interest for the study, and at least one author and one reviewer for each document was asked to complete a draft report form after each major draft cycle during the three-month data collection period. The draft report form contained questions about the composition of the writing/reviewing team, the document's primary audience and exigency, problems encountered during the draft cycle, and the logistics of the writing process. These questions were designed to elucidate information

about AID's institutional writing culture and were intended to help create a "natural history" of a number of project documents.

The draft report form was also designed to examine the invention/communication transition in the writing process. I planned to examine this transition as a critical point in the functional evolution of a document. I formed the following hypotheses:

1. Few non-academic writers or reviewers of documents have articulated to themselves the idea that documents should evolve from invention tools to communication bridges.
2. More experienced and more skilled writers and reviewers unconsciously understand this evolution, and concentrate their efforts on invention in the early stages of document development, and on communication in the later stages of document development.
3. Misunderstandings and miscommunication about the evolution of document function can lead to severe frustrations within writing groups.

The implication is, of course, that if we can identify a source of misunderstanding in the group writing process, we can begin to eliminate it. Furthermore, if we can identify a way in which highly skilled and less skilled writers differ, we can raise the skill level of the less skilled writers by showing them more adaptive strategies.

The draft report form contained the list of ten document qualities that had appeared in the baseline instrument. In the draft report form, however, informants were asked to determine, in rank order, which qualities were most important to them during that draft cycle. In the hypothetical best case, all writers and reviewers would concentrate on invention-related qualities during the early stages of document development and on communication-related qualities during later stages.

Unfortunately, only a few informants completed the draft report forms --not nearly enough to reach even tentative conclusions about the hypotheses. All informants apologized for not completing the forms; in most cases, lack of time was cited as the problem. In addition, the development of two of the identified documents of interest was delayed beyond the data collection period and a third document was put on hold indefinitely.

#### 2.2.3.3 Exit Interview Instrument

The exit interview was constructed to address questions and problems raised during the course of the study. First, participants consistently mentioned document problems apparently caused by the conflicting rhetorical demands of project document genres. The genres, therefore, had to be clearly defined before solutions could be suggested. Second, the poor return rate from the draft report forms and the fact that some of the identified projects of interest were rather atypical made it difficult to know whether the normal pattern of project document development had been accurately elucidated. Furthermore, it had become clear that it was vital to distinguish between the project development process and the collaborative writing process.

During the exit interview, informants were asked to describe a "typical" project development effort at an AID mission and to distinguish between problems in document development caused by failures of the project development process and those caused by failures in the collaborative writing process. In addition, at the end of the interview, informants were briefed about my preliminary findings and

asked to respond. No informant responded negatively to the preliminary findings; a few suggested avenues for further study.

#### **2.2.4 Database and Data Analysis**

A database constructed in the Enable software system facilitated analysis of key variables in the baseline and draft report form data (Appendix 2, Database Input Screens). Other variables, such as reported time spent on writing tasks and the proficiency rating assigned to the "typical" AID writer, were tallied by hand, as were informants' comments.

The sample in this study was small, and the data from the draft report forms was insufficient to test the database thoroughly. Enough data was available from the baseline instrument, however, to demonstrate the utility of using database software to analyze writing research data. For instance, I was readily able to group the ten document characteristics into invention-level, primary revision-level, and secondary revision-level concerns and to contrast the informants' ratings on both the characteristic and group levels.

### **2.3 Implications for Writing Research: Method and Results**

This study was somewhat unusual in that it was designed to develop and analyze a method for understanding the institutional writing culture rather than to examine hypotheses about that culture. The results were a method and a description of a particular writing culture which may have value on two levels--first, as a prototype for the examination of other writing cultures, and, second, as contrastive evidence for theory

building. Several points in the following chapters may be worth examining further. The most important, perhaps, is the finding that AID writers recognize that certain invention-stage characteristics, such as technical correctness and discovering new ideas and insights, are relatively unimportant to the successful use of AID documents, but that they are nevertheless reluctant to dispense with them in their own writing. If writers personally value document characteristics that they feel are unimportant to the success of the document from the organization's point of view, the likely results are frustration and inefficiency. Second, the sequential review model of document development has important implications for those doing work on collaborative writing in non-academic settings. It would be interesting to contrast organizations in which the sequential review model predominates with organizations in which the collaborative writing model is more common.

In addition, the problems encountered in collecting information through the draft report forms has important methodological implications. In the end, almost all information for this study was collected through one-on-one personal interviews which were arranged several hours to several days in advance. At times, participants had to be literally tracked to their offices in order to schedule an appointment, and even the most dedicated respondents with the greatest interest in writing issues had difficulty finding time to complete the sixteen-question draft report forms. This technique was satisfactory, given the importance of individual perceptions in analyzing the writing

culture and my prior knowledge of AID. But, unfortunately, not all kinds of information can be gathered by personal interview. To validate and examine the concept of functional evolution, for instance, a naturalistic, non-intrusive method for gathering data is essential. If the results of this study are any indication, however, relying on participants to complete questionnaires is not the answer.

## Chapter 3

### Defining the AID Writing Culture: Systems

#### Inputs, Physical and Human Resources, and Cultural Factors

#### 3.1 Organizational Structure

The Agency for International Development administers the United States economic assistance program in the developing world. The agency traces its history to the Marshall Plan established after World War II to assist in the rebuilding of Europe. It took its present name in 1961, when the Foreign Assistance Act combined the International Cooperation Administration and the Development Loan Fund. The Foreign Assistance Act is AID's authorizing legislation, and all agency activities are carried out within its guidelines.

AID designs, funds, administers and evaluates education, health, and agricultural and rural development projects under bilateral agreements with host countries. Until 1973, the agency conducted most projects with its own personnel; the agency employed hundreds of agriculturalists, engineers, health professionals, and educators who worked in the field. The "New Directions" legislation, passed by Congress in 1973, mandated a reduction in force and a switch to a more indirect approach to project implementation. AID staff continue to design development projects and to coordinate country programs, but project implementation is carried out primarily by host government

institutions and by consulting firms, individuals, and universities who competitively bid for project contracts.

### 3.1.1 Rhetorical Stance and Constraints of the Organization

The agency is many things at once: a federally-financed organization whose mission is defined and regulated by Congress; an arm of the U.S. Department of State carrying out the foreign policy of the Executive branch; and, last but not least, a humanitarian relief agency. The agency's rhetorical stance is similarly complex, driven by the twin exigencies of urgent international need and the domestic imperative for satisfying Congressional representatives and constituents from all points on the political spectrum. The AID Challenge, a public-relations brochure put out by the AID Bureau for External Affairs, explains the Agency's multi-purpose role in terms that appeal to both the philanthropic instincts of the political Left and the private-sector, nationalist interests of the Right:

Why Foreign Aid? A child in Latin America learns to read . . . An infant dying of dehydration is spared due to a simple new technology that combines sugar, salt and water . . . A family in Asia opens a small business . . . A farmer in Africa grows more food . . . . . assistance also serves U.S. national security interests . . . U.S. foreign aid enhances regional security, promotes economic development, encourages the growth of democratic institutions and stimulates commercial relations with the Third World (p. 3).  
 . . . . . Foreign aid programs support more than five million American manufacturing jobs in all 50 states and create new markets for U.S. products abroad (p. 5).

Foreign aid is at times a controversial expenditure, and the Agency constantly seeks to put its funding in perspective:

The 1987 foreign aid program totals less than 1% of the overall federal budget or about \$6 billion. These funds support over 1,500 development assistance programs in 70 countries . . . The amount of money spent on foreign assistance by the United States per year is considerably less than what the American people spend for alcoholic beverages, cosmetics or toilet articles.

Contrasting American expenditures for modern products like household cleaning supplies (\$25 billion) with pictures of skinny children in mud-baked fields, The AID Challenge implies that foreign aid money is well-spent by comparison.

The agency's rhetorical stance focuses attention on the urgent problems addressed by its programs and on the relative cost-effectiveness of foreign aid and diverts attention from the agency's process for selecting and administering projects. The Aid Challenge contains only a single sentence on the subject: "Development assistance is administered by AID in the form of loans and grants" (p. 10). Yet the project development process is considerably more at issue in the agency than is its overall rhetorical stance. Many AID employees are former Peace Corps volunteers and nearly all seem to believe strongly in the importance of foreign aid, but the project development process is a problematic issue because of the many constraints the agency faces in developing and administering its program.

AID receives its budget from and is accountable to the U.S. Congress. Study participants at the upper levels of management noted that they spend an increasing amount of time dealing with Congressional inquiries; similarly, a significant level of effort is required to meet the needs of Congressional delegations when they visit USAID missions

overseas. Furthermore, Congress sometimes uses the Congressional "earmark" to target funds directly to a favored recipient (this is becoming common in many federal agencies). Finally, compliance with the regulatory and legislative requirements imposed by Congress consumes staff time and at times restrains innovative action.

Since AID is not a private foundation but part of the federal bureaucracy, the agency is governed by handbooks designating in detail what program actions can and cannot be taken and what documents must be produced to adhere to federal regulations. Much of the importance of writing stems from AID's status as a bureaucracy--but that status is also a built-in constraint to innovation. Little emphasis is placed on innovation in either program or document development, and this helps determine the role of writing in the agency.

### **3.1.2 The Project Cycle**

Except for those funded by Congressional earmarks, most projects go through a lengthy development process beginning in the host country. The idea for a project may come from the AID Mission Director, an AID officer in the mission's program or project development office, a technical officer, or from someone in a host country agency. The idea may originate in a sector analysis or other feasibility study or spring full-grown from someone's head--there is no restriction on ideas at this stage other than the normal caution of staking one's reputation on a new activity.

Although a brief description of proposed new projects appears for programming purposes in each mission's yearly Action Plan, project

development begins in earnest during the "project identification" stage. A few AID officers make a practice of circulating some form of concept paper, such as a preliminary "logframe" (logical framework, a standard AID tool for project analysis), but the first required document in the project approval process is the Project Identification Document, known as the "PID." PIDs are reviewed first within the mission and then in Washington, and if approval is secured, a Project Paper or "PP" is developed. The PP becomes the basis for funding authorization and subsequent obligation of funds through requests for proposals and the contractual agreements that are used to carry out the project. Eventually, it becomes the official document of record of the project, from which future activities are developed.

In addition, at least once during the PID stage and once during the PP stage an issues paper is written as part of the formal review and approval process. Issues papers are usually written by someone in the Project Development Office. They summarize the weaknesses of the project at its current stage of development and discuss potential conflicts with AID policies and procedures.

### **3.1.3 The Project Identification Document (PID)**

According to official agency guidance in AID Handbook 3, the PID is a fifteen-page, preliminary project proposal that "serves as a bridge from programming analysis in such documents as the Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS) and Annual Budget Submission (ABS) [now renamed the Action Plan] to project development and subsequent financing decisions" (p. 2-1). The PID is designed to ensure that the proposed

project will conform with agency policies and mission priorities, and is a crucial first step in project definition and development.

Rhetorically, the PID is a demanding document because it serves multiple purposes. It is both concept paper and proposal. As a concept paper, the PID

should move from programming generalities to project specific[s] . . . it should establish what goals are to be supported and purposes achieved by the project; identify intended beneficiaries; give preliminary indications of the shape and cost of the perceived project; and identify major issues (p. 2-1).

As a proposal, the PID should

convince AID management that the preliminary proposal has merit, that it seems better than alternative solutions to the problem, and that it makes sense to devote personnel and financial resources to further develop the project (p. 2-1).

The preliminary, concept-building nature of the PID, which is what makes it a concept paper, demands that writers place emphasis on careful, objective analysis of the problem and on the link between the project and previously approved program directions. It asks that all issues and project alternatives be raised and thoroughly discussed. To be persuasive, on the other hand, writers may need to minimize the importance of some issues or be vague about controversial topics. Writers are asked to convince an audience of the soundness of a project at the same time that they are asked to inform an audience about the preliminary findings of a needs analysis, and those two demands sometimes conflict. As a result, writers may produce a document that is general enough to avoid strong objection, but that therefore serves neither of the PID's two purposes.

One study participant noted the difficulties of defining a set of objectives early in the project development process, when mission personnel are anxious not to promise too much; document language in one example had to be revised from "the project will train" to "the project may train."

Study participants implicitly understood the competing demands of the PID, but did not articulate the rhetorical difficulties inherent in a mixed-purpose genre. Participants recognized the importance of persuasion, and felt that the PID should be used more often as a group invention tool than it currently is. Of the seven participants who completed the exit interview, four said that at present the main purpose of the PID was to "inform" or "specify," while three said that the main purpose was to "persuade" and no one thought the main purpose was to "discuss." But three participants thought the main purpose of the PID should be to discuss project issues, and two more thought that discussion should be the secondary purpose of the genre. One participant noted that the PID should "define a development problem instead of being an advocacy document."

Yet participants agreed that PIDs had to be at least somewhat persuasive to be effective. Five felt that PIDs are somewhat persuasive documents and two thought that they are highly persuasive; only one person felt that they should be more persuasive than they currently are, and no one thought that they should be less persuasive. Participants were split on the subject of whom the PID is designed to persuade; three thought PIDs were most often aimed at Mission management and three felt

they were aimed at AID/W management. One participant noted that it depends on where the project is to be approved (since 1985, most projects can be approved at the Mission level). Five participants thought that the PID should be aimed primarily at Mission management, with the Mission responsible for quality control, whereas one stated that writers should always assume that the document may have to be reviewed in Washington, and should add the appropriate level of detail. One participant thought that the PID should be aimed at the project design team and should provide a framework for project development.

The conflicting demands of persuasion and invention and differing understandings of the PID's audience are sources of difficulty in the genre. The PID is not a consensus-building or collaborative invention tool, because writers are asked to take a stand and persuade an audience --which is an adversarial rather than a consensus-building activity. Moreover, when writers at AID missions are asked to consider mission management as their primary audience, they are being asked to persuade a group that is part of both the project development team and the document development team. If, as several study participants suggested, project development documents are becoming "watered down" since the delegation of project approval responsibilities to the missions, this may be why--not that mission directors are consciously loosening quality control standards, but that there are pieces of the rhetorical puzzle missing. A mission director's priorities as secondary reviewer and primary audience may conflict. As secondary reviewer, she is part of the document development process; as primary audience, she is

asked to distance herself from it. As secondary reviewer, she is charged with assuring document quality for all purposes, including those of secondary audiences; as primary audience she is asked only to make sure that the document serves her own purposes. The problem is exacerbated because there is no one serving on the document development team whose primary responsibility is maintenance of document quality.

#### **3.1.4 The Project Paper (PP)**

If the PID is the document that seeks authorization for project development, the PP is the document that reports the results of the project development effort. It is, according to AID Handbook 3, "the basis for approval of the project by the appropriate AID official" and "a historical record of the original project rationale, description of project elements, analyses supporting the proposed design and initial project implementation and monitoring plans" (p. 3-30). By the time the PP is approved, project elements usually have been repeatedly reviewed and refined, both orally and in writing; momentum is with the project, and PP approval is almost inevitable. When PPs are not approved, it is almost never because they have failed to communicate well, but instead because of serious flaws in project design. In other words, the project rather than the PP is approved or disapproved.

The PP might seem at first glance to be a more demanding document than the PID. Including appendices, it may be 120 pages long or more, and it is considerably more detailed than the PID. But since most PPs are now approved in the home mission, the PP has lost any persuasive purpose that it may have had when final approval was given in

Washington. As a result, inventing persuasive lines of argument is of secondary importance to the writer of a PP; since the genre is rhetorically simpler than the PID it is also easier to write, and few study participants reported difficulties with PP writing tasks (problems with PP development were most often problems of collaborative writing).

The PP is, however, an important communication tool--it is the final, approved version of a project design which serves as the basis for project agreements between the U.S. government, represented by the AID Mission Director, and the implementing agency (a host-country agency, private voluntary organization, or private-sector firm). PP writers have a long-range responsibility to these organizations to present a coherent, easy-to-understand document, but since PPs are not formally evaluated for their communication value, writers who are pressed for time are unlikely to spend much of it editing their PPs.

### 3.1.5 Issues Papers

Issues papers as a genre are much less clearly defined than PIDs or PPs. There is no official format specified for issues papers, and they are written as needed to clarify technical, strategic, and design issues and present them to a review committee that has not necessarily studied the project in detail. Most commonly, an issues paper is written by someone other than the primary author of a document; one is prepared before the review of the PID and one before the PP review.

According to study participants, issues papers vary widely in format and quality, and it was evident from responses during the exit

interview that there are subtle but critical differences of opinion about the genre. Six of seven participants stated that at present issues papers are written primarily to discuss; five felt that they should remain discussion documents (the remaining participants felt that the genre should inform rather than discuss). This would seem to imply that the genre should be somewhat objective and even-handed in its treatment of issues--but participants were evenly split about whether or not issues papers are and should be persuasive documents. One respondent stated that issues papers are not intended to be persuasive, but might be persuasive as an unintentional consequence of the facts presented. A second participant, who felt that issues papers are highly persuasive, noted that whoever writes the issues paper controls the response to the project by selectively focusing on or ignoring issues. That participant felt that the genre should be objective and analytical and should not advocate or argue against a project. A third participant felt that it was permissible for an issues paper to advocate the approval of a good project, but that the writer should take a neutral stand on flawed projects.

Other participants expressed frustration at the range of formats used in issues papers. One noted that he had seen issues papers consisting solely of thirty items in bullet format and others composed of rambling, unedited discussions of inessential matters.

The PID is rhetorically difficult to control because of conflicting uses; the issues paper is difficult to write because the culture has not

sufficiently defined its rhetorical purpose. It could be that those who construct a concise list of bulleted items are attempting to make the genre an objective, informational report of key issues. Those who take an advocacy role or argue against a project may feel that they have been asked to synthesize the issues and take a stand. And those who construct rambling documents feel that they should discuss the project in an informal manner in order to uncover any possible issues that the review committee may pick out. None of these hypothetical authors is necessarily a "bad" writer--each is simply responding to his or her own set of rhetorical imperatives.

### **3.2 Physical and Human Resources**

AID's physical resources vary from office to office and mission to mission. In general, each division or sector office has a separate area, and a typical layout includes five or six private or semi-private offices for professionals lining each side of a central corridor containing desks for clerical staff. Professionals seldom have their own computer terminals; remote terminals hardwired to a central Wang computer are usually clustered in groups of two or three in the central corridor or in a small computer room. These clusters were originally designed primarily for the use of clerical staff, although an increasing number of AID professionals use them to compose.

Because computers are often located in traffic paths, people composing on them are frequently interrupted by visitors and ringing

telephones. Several study participants mentioned that they work after hours when the office is quiet or at home when they need to compose an important document.

Of the twelve participants who completed the baseline interview, eight had Master's degrees and four had Ph.Ds. Bachelor's degrees were most often taken in business or the social sciences (history, economics, political science, anthropology). One participant had an undergraduate degree in philosophy and three had degrees in biology. Most had taken their Master's degrees in administrative fields (economics or agricultural economics, public administration, international affairs). Of the four Ph.Ds., one was in psychology, one in education, one in African history, and one in public health.

The participants' educational backgrounds were consistent with the needs of AID work. Most of them were social science generalists with international interests; they were talented, dedicated individuals who believed in the principles of global interdependence and the moral justice of foreign aid. Many were former Peace Corps volunteers; some have experience through other government agencies or private voluntary organizations. Nearly all had overseas experience before they joined AID. Their academic preparation gave them some familiarity with a technical field, but only one of the twelve had what an academic might consider to be a full technical expertise (B.S., biology, M.A., nutrition, Ph.D., public health) in a field in which she was currently working. According to the New Directions initiative, however, full technical expertise is not what the agency requires of its professional

staff. Instead, AID professionals need skills for program and project design, implementation, and evaluation--skills in administration, management, and writing.

Many of the study participants had preparation in administration and management through academic work in business, public administration, or economics. Few, however, had formal academic preparation in writing. Of the twelve participants, only three had academic writing preparation in addition to freshman composition and content-course writing. (One of the three had taken a senior-level expository writing class, one had taken a technical writing course, and one had a Master's degree in literature). By far, the participants had received most of their writing practice on the job, either before or since coming to AID. Five, or a little under half, reported extensive on-the-job writing before coming to AID. In addition, four reported that they had received extensive support from colleagues and supervisors in learning to write for AID, and four more stated that they had received some support from colleagues and supervisors. Only one reported taking formal AID writing courses--he had taken a 40-hour administrative writing course and a 24-hour course entitled "Effective Writing for Professionals."

The writing experience of study participants was quantified by constructing a point-based scale. Points were assigned on the following basis:

| <u>Experience</u>                  | <u>Points assigned</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Each upper division writing course | 1                      |
| Master's degree                    | 2                      |
| Ph.D.                              | 3                      |

|                                                                            |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Each year AID experience                                                   | 1     |
| Each year other professional experience<br>with substantial writing duties | 1     |
| Each AID document type written                                             | 0.25  |
| Each AID document type reviewed                                            | 0.125 |
| Each writing training course                                               | 0.5   |
| Each other substantial writing experience<br>(e.g., personal writing)      | 1     |

On this scale, experience ratings ranged from 10.00 to 23.20, and roughly reflected relative AID position (Table 3-1). It is difficult to say if these numbers translate into judgments about writing competence, since the study did not include a component for evaluation of writing. However, seven of the twelve study participants said that they felt that poor writing preparation was a major constraint to writing well at AID, and six thought that it was or had been a major constraint for themselves.

Although clerical support for writing was not the focus of this study and none of the participants was from the clerical staff, clerical resources do need to be taken into account when assessing an institution's writing culture. Both in AID/W and at missions, most clerical staff are in a different personnel category than AID professionals. At AID missions, most are locally hired contractors, usually host country nationals with a good command of spoken English, and are not part of the Foreign Service system. A few are AID professionals' spouses. In Washington, clerical staff are part of the Civil Service.

Only top-level managers have secretaries assigned directly to them; most clerical staff are part of a division or office pool. The number

**TABLE 3-1**  
**WRITING EXPERIENCE, SKILL RATINGS,**  
**AND ON-THE-JOB WRITING TIME OF STUDY SAMPLE**

| POSITION TITLE        | WRITING<br>EXPERIENCE<br>RATING | SKILL<br>RATING | ESTIMATED<br>TIME SPENT<br>WRITING | ESTIMATED<br>PERCENTAGE OF<br>WRITING TIME<br>SPENT |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|                       |                                 |                 |                                    | COLLABORATIVELY                                     |
| Office Director       | 23.20                           | 8.50            | 10%                                | 10%                                                 |
| Division Chief        | 22.68                           | 8.00            | 47%                                | 60%                                                 |
| Division Chief        | 16.75                           | 7.50            | 50%                                | 10%                                                 |
| Division Chief        | 19.75                           | 8.50            | 5%                                 | 1%                                                  |
| Deputy Division Chief | 20.88                           | 8.00            | 40%                                | 5%                                                  |
| Development Officer   | 21.63                           | 8.50            | 40%                                | 50%                                                 |
| Development Officer   | 18.63                           | 8.50            | 40%                                | 20%                                                 |
| Development Officer   | 17.88                           | 8.50            | 35%                                | 75%                                                 |
| Development Officer   | 15.63                           | 7.00            | 25%                                | 25%                                                 |
| Development Intern    | 13.38                           | 5.00            | 33%                                | 90%                                                 |
| Development Intern    | 10.00                           | 7.00            | 10%                                | 0                                                   |
| Consultant            | 16.00                           | 8.50            | 75%                                | 95%                                                 |
| HIGH                  | 23.20                           | 8.50            | 75%                                | 95%                                                 |
| LOW                   | 10.00                           | 5.00            | 5%                                 | 0                                                   |
| AVERAGE               | 18.03                           | 7.79            | 34%                                | 37%                                                 |

of clerical support personnel available to each office varies. Secretaries still do some word processing from handwritten copy, but an increasing number of professionals do their own input. In missions, secretaries from the project development office are most often the ones who have final responsibility for project development document production and are often used as a resource for document translation.

### **3.3 Beliefs about AID Writers**

Most of the study participants believed that AID professionals were slightly better than average writers. On a scale of 0 to 10, they gave the "typical" AID writer an average proficiency rating of 6.4. Scores ranged from a low of 4.5 to a high of 8. They were even more confident about their own writing abilities. Ten of the twelve participants who completed the baseline interview believed that they were more skilled than the typical AID writer, and six of the ten believed that they were "significantly" more skilled than the typical AID writer. The participants gave themselves an average skill rating of 7.8; scores ranged from 5.0 to 8.5. The participants' confidence is in line with a popular belief that the LAC Bureau is the "best" bureau in the agency. One of the two participants who rated himself less skilled than average was the participant from outside the LAC Bureau; the other was a new hire who was finding it difficult to adjust to his new writing culture. (It would be interesting to examine the belief about the LAC Bureau from objective evaluations of writing samples. Although this study did not include a component to assess participants' writing skills, a cursory

examination of writing samples gave no evidence to suggest that the non-LAC participant was any less skilled than the LAC participants. In fact, the non-LAC participant was the only one who had sought out and voluntarily taken agency training courses in writing.)

A second popular belief was not reflected in study data. Although project and program officers have the reputation of being better writers than technical officers, technical officers in the sample were no less confident in their abilities than were their colleagues. The study sample was too small to make valid conclusions about this point; there is, however, a potential source of conflict between self-confident, superior-feeling project and program officers and equally self-confident technical officers.

### **3.4 Beliefs about Writing at AID**

Roughly half of the study participants reported that the writing they do is significantly different from what they had expected to do when they were hired. Most of the rest said that they had had no expectations or had not realized that writing would be such a major part of their work at AID. Those who found it different from what they had expected noted that AID writing is less technical than they thought it would be. One participant was frustrated by the lack of comparative evaluation of project approaches. A second noted that "there are often general assumptions about the importance of a subject or the reasons for pursuing a certain course of action that are not stated." Another participant discussed the agency's reliance on "broad-brush

descriptions" adding that "we have a sense that people understand what we mean by the broad-brush, general statement--but perhaps they don't." A fourth participant called AID writing "pro forma" and said that most often form is more important than content; this person, along with several others, noted that there is tremendous pressure to conform to others' expectations of what is appropriate writing. Despite their expectations, nearly everyone agreed that AID writing was different from what they had experienced in academia. In contrast, they felt, AID writing was more concise and to the point, but one participant noted that in academic writing the "intention is to present a logical sequence of arguments that lead a reader to a desired conclusion--you don't always see that in an AID document." And unanimously, study participants felt that their writing had changed since coming to AID.

Of the twelve participants, five felt generally positive about the changes in their writing--they felt that they had become more clear and concise in their writing. One noted that he focuses more now on the decision that will be made and the information needed to make that decision. The other seven participants had somewhat mixed feelings about the changes in their writing. Two agreed that their writing was now better for AID purposes (less "stylistic" and more concise and readable) but felt reluctant to classify their AID writing as categorically "better" than what they had done before. Two others felt that they had become poorer writers. One stated that he had at first noticed an improvement in fluency, but now felt that he was becoming less precise and less creative. Another respondent stated that her

writing had become full of jargon and devoid of adjectives, and that she had found "prioritize" and "finalize" creeping into her vocabulary. Another participant noticed that he was beginning to change his vocabulary to exaggerate the importance and impact of the projects he was writing about--"the farmers have become the agricultural sector," he stated. "Writing at AID is being a plodding soldier," a final participant said. "There's no room for creativity. Creativity will be smothered by clearances."

#### **3.4.1 Importance of Writing**

Despite their misgivings, study participants had largely reconciled themselves to bureaucratic realities and recognized that producing documents was an integral part of their work. As one participant put it when asked how much time he spent writing: "The whole job is writing." He modified that statement after a moment, however, adding that he seldom had the time he needed to write. In the end, he estimated that he spent 45% to 50% of his time writing, including the time he spent conceptualizing. Other participants had similar difficulty distinguishing between the time they "should" spend writing and the time they could actually devote to it. At least two noted that their best writing time came after office hours, when they were not distracted by telephones, visitors, and new crises. Participants' estimates of the percentage of time they actually spent writing varied from 5% to 75%--although half of the participants estimated that they spent between 35% and 50% of their time writing.

Study participants had written and reviewed an astounding number of AID document genres; on average, they had written 12.5 different types of documents and reviewed 13 types, ranging from relatively brief cables to Country Development Strategy Statements and Congressional briefing papers. Even relative newcomers had written a variety of documents. A participant who had been at AID for only 10 months had already written and reviewed 12 different types of documents. (Project development documents, which are the focus of this study, make up only three of the 21 genres mentioned by study participants.)

#### **3.4.2 Role of Writing in Consensus-Building**

In the exit interview, each study participant was asked to discuss a "typical" project development effort in which he or she had been involved at an AID mission. Participants were asked to list primary and secondary authors and primary and secondary reviewers for both the PID and the PP and then discuss problems that came up during the course of project development and document writing.

When asked about project design problems, participants responded with a variety of strategic, technical, logistical, institutional, and interpersonal difficulties. Most of these difficulties had to do with the process of building consensus within project design teams, within missions, between missions and host government counterparts, and, to an extent, between missions and AID/W. Consensus-building takes place through both written and oral means--through oral and written reviews of draft documents and through informal discussions and formal project review meetings. Although it may be rare to plan a formal strategy for

building project support, study participants recognized the importance of consensus-building, especially when a new project is being developed in a sector or geographic area in which personnel have little experience.

For instance, one study participant described the difficulties in designing a project to upgrade an edible oil extraction plant shortly after the reopening of the AID mission in an Asian country. In all, project design took two years and went through three PPs. Problems began with a feasibility study. The team leader had interpersonal problems with a contractor and effectively isolated him from contributing to the study. The study was highly technical, as was the first PP, which involved the same team leader. This time, the team leader isolated the team's macro-economist. The resulting PP may have been technically feasible, but economic and institutional factors were not sufficiently addressed, and the PP was not approved by AID/W.

The second PP was written by senior project design personnel sent from AID/W. The consensus-building failure was different this time. Although the project designers recognized the importance of institution-building, they did more talking than listening. Without much input from the mission, they designed a project that was turned down by the host government. The third PP was successful. The project team was larger and had a good mix of technical and project development personnel. The team coordinated with the host government, and the only major difficulty the team faced was lack of time.

Other participants mentioned less dramatic examples of consensus-building failures. In one case, a technical officer was too busy to assist much in the writing of a PID for which she had earlier played a key role. Thus, there was "no feeling of ownership of the product--she felt free to criticize the PID she had helped produced." Others mentioned the difficulties in building consensus within a mission, including the difficulties of getting input from administrative support personnel such as contracts officers, economists, and mission controllers. One participant noted that it was sometimes difficult even to build consensus within top mission management; she had been involved in a project in which mission managers had different ideas about what they wanted and provided contradictory guidance. As a result, she was involved in numerous re-writes.

Occasionally, the most carefully laid consensus-building plans go awry. One participant described a painstaking process of clearing early logframes and PID drafts with everyone involved in the project development process--only to run into problems when a new contracts officer felt that her PID raised contracting issues that the former contracts officer had not questioned.

Not all participants mentioned failures in the consensus-building process. For instance, one discussed a difficult effort which had been initiated by top mission management. Project design had to be carefully coordinated with five counterpart agencies which were not anxious to work together. In this case, writing played a minor role in the most critical consensus-building activities--most cajoling and negotiating

took place orally--but was important as a tool for communicating the decisions reached that allowed the integration of competing project demands. The study participant who provided this example noted the difficulties of striking a rhetorical balance at both the PID and PP stages.

The above examples illustrate both the importance of the consensus-building process and the complex ways in which writing may be involved in it. Writing difficulties are often a symptom of blocks in consensus-building, as in the edible oil plant and the contradictory guidance examples. Writing may be used as a tool to enhance consensus, as was attempted in the project with the contracting issues, or it may be used as a tool to solidify a tentative consensus, as in the example with the five counterpart agencies.

But two things are notable about the relationship between writing and consensus-building at AID: first, the extent to which the process of developing a project is confused with the process of writing a project development document, and, second, the extent to which forms of minor writing, such as logframes, concept papers, and expanded outlines, are overlooked as tools to enhance the collaborative invention process. Both problems are in part caused by the sequential review model of writing which many AID writers and reviewers employ, in which nearly complete documents are submitted to superiors who may or may not respond with substantive comments. The other source of conflict is the nature of AID genres themselves, which are geared more to communication than invention and which are rhetorically complex. But, as a cultural rather

than a systems input, the sequential review model is less clearly defined, and, perhaps, more difficult to alter.

### 3.4.3 Sequential Review versus Collaborative Writing

In the project development efforts discussed by study participants, PID core writing groups (lead and secondary authors) ranged in size from one to four members; PP writing groups ranged from one to five individuals. Primary review groups were usually made up of three to six people, most often including the technical office chief and project development office chief, a legal officer, and a contracts officer (the controller and mission economist were also mentioned as potential reviewers). Upper-level mission management most often constituted the secondary review group--the Mission Director and Deputy Mission Director. Writing teams were not designated as such, but rather as project design teams with responsibilities to document their efforts. Secondary reviewers were not usually considered to be part of the writing team, but, instead, as members of the primary audience. Personnel in the writing and review groups sometimes changed during the course of project development. In fact, one participant mentioned how surprised and dismayed she was when a new contracts officer showed up at a crucial review meeting.

Despite the consistently high number of writers and reviewers involved in project development efforts, study participants varied widely in their estimates of the time they spend writing

collaboratively. Participants' estimates of the percentage of their writing time devoted to collaborative writing ranged from 0% to 95%, and were evenly distributed throughout that range.

Part of the range in responses is because participants in the study were personnel currently working in Washington--several people indicated that their estimated percentage of collaborative writing time would be higher in a mission. But another reason for the range in responses is that participants were uncertain about how to define collaborative writing. Few seemed to consider that reviewers could be part of a writing team; others stated that none of the writing they did was collaborative because each person took responsibility for certain sections of a project document. In general, the terms "group writing" and "collaborative writing" seemed to conjure up images of people huddled together over a computer terminal creating a document from scratch.

A manager who was interviewed but who was not a study participant defined the process of sequential review and thus singled out an important cultural input. This manager stated that, in his opinion, AID does no collaborative writing. Instead, during the sequential review process, the primary author of a document provides a framework to which others respond; the draft is revised, then reviewed at a higher organizational level, reacted to, returned to the primary author, revised again, and reviewed again at a still higher level. Final document review and approval occurs in an executive review meeting, after which the document should reflect a consensus opinion (although

opinion is weighted toward the higher end of the organizational spectrum).

Sequential review is an attractive model for reviewers. It allows them to act as "impartial" judges of document quality and does not require a large amount of time. At a certain level, sequential review is necessary--it is obviously impossible for reviewers at the highest levels to participate in every collaborative writing group. But when sequential review is used as the dominant method of document production, it can be counterproductive.

The manager who supported the idea of sequential review felt that controversy in the project development process is good, that unrestricted debate is healthy. Unrestricted debate, however, relies on a certain equality among the parties. The problem with the sequential review model is that it can pit a single, relatively low-ranking individual against a continuous series of higher-ranking reviewers. The result is a trial-by-fire that, depending on the personalities involved, can be a productive learning experience or a gradual descent into intransigency and resentment.

Most study participants saw the sequential review process in punitive terms rather than as an open debate. Criticism is seldom easy to take in the best of circumstances, and few people have been taught in school to take criticism of their writing constructively. Instead, English teachers traditionally key grades to the number of red marks on

the page, and little differentiation is made between content criticisms and mechanical errors--in fact, mechanical errors may be seen as more serious.

Consciously or unconsciously, writers and reviewers may follow the review model that they have learned in school, concentrating on the negative and on mechanical errors. And, in fact, nearly all study participants expressed frustration at the kind of review their documents routinely received. One participant noted that she had circulated a document draft, received responses that were limited to pointing out typographical errors, and then been assailed in a review meeting for unresolved content issues. This type of problem raises a question about the differences between oral and written review practices. Written reviews do take more time, and, perhaps, more thought. One problem with the current practice of sequential review at AID may be that it relies too heavily on comprehensive written reviews early in the document development process to resolve content issues.

The distinction between a sequential review model and a collaborative writing model might seem slight at first. In both cases, there may be primary and secondary authors. In both cases, the document will be reviewed and approved by appropriate managers. The largest distinction is in the conception of the writing and review team. In a sequential review model, authors and reviewers may be adversaries at all levels; in a collaborative review model, primary and secondary authors,

primary reviewers, and clerical support staff are part of a core team, jointly responsible for development and production of a quality document.

At AID, it is common practice to designate a project design team. But a project design team is not necessarily the same thing as a collaborative writing team. A project design team may need an economist, a forestry specialist, a project development officer, and a private sector specialist. Together, they may provide all the expertise necessary to conceive of and design a high-quality project. But they do not necessarily have all the expertise necessary to produce a high-quality project document--for that, a team must have people with an understanding of document purpose and audience, people with writing skills, people with editing skills, and people who can type, and all of these people must work well together.

That is not to say that the economist may not be an innovative thinker, or that the project development officer may not be a good writer. But these people must understand that they are, in a sense, serving on two different teams at once--one to design a project and another to produce a document. Each person must understand his or her role on each team and be able to distinguish and separate the investment in each role.

The project design team must uncover the facts necessary to draw valid conclusions about the development problem they are addressing and must come up with an innovative approach to solving that development problem. To accomplish these two things they should use writing as one

of several invention tools. The collaborative writing team, on the other hand, is charged with communicating a set of ideas to a broader audience. To do this they must understand their ideas and their rhetorical implications (including significant themes and compromises that the project design team has made), must clarify details, and must put these ideas and details into a form that will be easily comprehended by readers.

These two broad sets of tasks demand continuous role-shifting for individuals serving on both teams, as well as continuous shifting between the invention and communication stages of document production. As Gordon Rohman found when developing his stage-process model, invention tasks come up even at late stages of the writing process. However, if invention issues have been dealt with early, when all team members have on their project design "hats," the amount of role-shifting will be minimized and the team can gradually shift its focus from invention to communication.

Two groups who are not usually thought of as part of the project design team are also essential to the collaborative writing process. The first group is made up of all primary reviewers (e.g. at AID, office directors). In the sequential review model, all reviewers are part of the audience, and, therefore, potential adversaries. Ideally, a writer gradually co-opts the audience during a consensus-building process, but, should the consensus-building process fail, the writer is left without support. In a collaborative model, on the other hand, primary reviewers are part of the core team, invested with responsibility and interest in

a successful outcome. The scope of their actions is not substantially different than if they see themselves as part of a sequential review model--they still review drafts and team direction, but the writing team uses them as a resource instead of as an audience. They personally participate in at least some working sessions, providing guidance about content and rhetorical strategies and mediating between the interests of competing groups. A crucial element is to have reviewers representing different interests present at the same working session early in the document development process.

A second group critical to successful collaborative writing is clerical support staff. Clerical personnel should not be thought of as adjuncts to the document development process, but as part of a team. Like other members of the team, their time must be scheduled in advance and their contribution to the writing process recognized.

#### **3.4.4 Characteristics of Good Writing**

During the baseline interview, study participants were asked to rate the importance of ten writing characteristics to the successful use of an AID document on a scale of 0 (no importance) to 10 (vital to successful use). Then they were asked to name which of the ten they would do without if they had to abandon a characteristic entirely in a given document--this characteristic was called the "most dispensable" characteristic--and which characteristic they would keep if they could save only one in a given document. This characteristic was called the "indispensable" characteristic. Two ranking lists were developed from the responses. The "importance-to-use" list ranked characteristics by

the numerical sum of all participants' ratings. Sums ranged from a high of 109 to a low of 60 (see Appendix 2). The "indispensability" list ranked characteristics by the difference between the number of participants who named it as the indispensable characteristic and the number who ranked it as the most dispensable characteristic. Differences ranged from +3 to -3. Rankings of characteristics by both criteria are shown in Table 3-2.

Characteristics were randomly listed in the interview instrument, but were divided for purposes of data analysis into three classes: invention concerns; primary-level revision concerns; and secondary-level revision concerns. Invention concerns include those characteristics of good writing that are ideally dealt with early in the document production process and that are critical to the content of the document: presentation of new ideas and insights; technical correctness; a complete understanding of the problems addressed in the document; and well-reasoned, persuasive arguments. Primary-level revision concerns involve characteristics that are necessary for document coherence and completeness, including the introduction of material in a logical, expected sequence, the presence of the right level of detail for the intended audience, and conciseness (no redundancy in thought or word). Secondary-level revision concerns include characteristics that are often dealt with at a revision or editing stage late in the document production process. These include grammatical correctness, a readable style, and clarity of expression (a somewhat vague term that is nevertheless frequently used in writing handbooks).

**TABLE 3-2**  
**RANKING OF DOCUMENT CHARACTERISTICS**  
**BY TWO CRITERIA**

|                                                             | <b>IMPORTANCE TO USE</b><br>(X OF 10) | <b>INDISPENSABILITY</b><br>(X OF 8) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>INVENTION CONCERNS</b>                                   |                                       |                                     |
| WELL-REASONED, PERSUASIVE<br>ARGUMENTS                      | 3                                     | 2                                   |
| TECHNICAL CORRECTNESS                                       | 5                                     | 1                                   |
| COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF<br>THE PROBLEM                    | 6                                     | 2                                   |
| NEW IDEAS AND INSIGHTS                                      | 10                                    | 6                                   |
| <b>PRIMARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS</b>                      |                                       |                                     |
| INTRODUCTION OF MATERIAL IN A<br>LOGICAL, EXPECTED SEQUENCE | 1                                     | 4                                   |
| RIGHT LEVEL OF DETAIL FOR<br>THE INTENDED AUDIENCE          | 2                                     | 6                                   |
| CONCISENESS; NO REDUNDANCY IN<br>WORD AND/OR THOUGHT        | 7                                     | 5                                   |
| <b>SECONDARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS</b>                    |                                       |                                     |
| CLARITY OF EXPRESSION                                       | 4                                     | 3                                   |
| READABLE STYLE                                              | 8                                     | 7                                   |
| GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS                                     | 9                                     | 8                                   |

This segment of the baseline interview yielded some of the most interesting data of the study. The sample of twelve was too small to make valid conclusions about absolute ranking of individual characteristics, but seemed to indicate that, as a group, primary-level revision characteristics are much more important to the successful use of AID documents than are invention and secondary-level revision characteristics. Despite the high rankings they gave primary-level revision characteristics, however, AID writers are reluctant to dispense with invention-related characteristics, and rate them as personally less dispensable than primary or secondary-level revision concerns.

In addition, the data seems to indicate that there may be important individual variation in belief about what constitutes good AID writing, and, therefore, potential sources of conflict in the writing and reviewing process (seven out of twelve participants named "differing definitions of and/or expectations about writing quality" as a major constraint to writing well at AID). Finally, discrepancies in the importance-to-use rankings and the indispensability rankings imply that the participants use different criteria to judge what is important to them as readers and writers. This may be because the participants are not entirely comfortable with the demands of reader-based writing at AID--demands such as placing form above content.

#### 3.4.4.1 Invention Concerns

As a group, writing characteristics related to invention ranked between primary- and secondary-level revision concerns in the list of

characteristics important to the successful use of an AID document and contained the overall lowest ranked characteristic, but the group also ranked highest in the indispensability rankings (Table 3-3). This may indicate that although content deficiencies are difficult to define and readers feel that they can be surmounted, AID writers recognize the importance of invention characteristics and are reluctant to dispense with them in their own writing. In addition, 75% of study participants felt that they had too little time to come up with new ideas and compose first drafts; this implies that the invention stage is problematic for AID writers. Not only are they dealing with characteristics that are important to them but not to their organization, but they also have little time in which to work through their invention needs.

Of the four invention characteristics, only well-reasoned, persuasive arguments were universally considered important to successful use. All of the respondents rated persuasive arguments as critical (25% of respondents) or very important (75% of respondents) to the successful use of an AID document. Persuasive arguments ranked third in the importance-to-use list and tied for second in the indispensability rankings.

Technical correctness was first in the indispensability rankings. Three individuals felt that technical correctness was the indispensable characteristic and no one felt that it was the most dispensable. The discrepancy in the two rankings was due to relatively low ratings by two individuals in the importance-to-use section and illustrates the difficulties of subjecting a small data sample to numerical analysis.

**TABLE 3-3**  
**INVENTION CONCERNS:**  
**IMPORTANCE-TO-USE AND INDISPENSABILITY**

|                                                        | NEW IDEAS<br>AND INSIGHTS | TECHNICAL<br>CORRECTNESS | COMPLETE<br>UNDERSTANDING<br>OF THE PROBLEM | WELL-REASONED<br>PERSUASIVE<br>ARGUMENTS |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| RESPONDENTS<br>WHO RATED<br>CONCERN AS:                |                           |                          |                                             |                                          |
| CRITICAL TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(9 OR 10)             | 0                         | 50%                      | 33%                                         | 25%                                      |
| VERY IMPORTANT<br>TO SUCCESSFUL<br>USE (7 OR 8)        | 17%                       | 25%                      | 42%                                         | 75%                                      |
| SOMEWHAT<br>IMPORTANT TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(5 OR 6) | 58%                       | 8%                       | 17%                                         | 0                                        |
| NOT VERY<br>IMPORTANT TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(2 TO 4) | 25%                       | 8%                       | 8%                                          | 0                                        |
| DISPENSABILITY<br>SCORE                                | -1                        | 3                        | 2                                           | 2                                        |
| IMPORTANCE-TO-<br>USE RANKING<br>(X OF 10)             | 10                        | 5                        | 6                                           | 3                                        |
| DISPENSABILITY<br>RANKING<br>(X OF 8)                  | 6                         | 1                        | 2                                           | 2                                        |

The discrepancy is important, however, because it points out a critical difference in individual opinion about the necessity and the possibility of attaining complete technical correctness.

A similar, although less pronounced, discrepancy exists in the ratings for complete understanding of the problem. Seventy-five percent of the respondents (9 individuals) felt that the presence of a complete understanding was critical or very important to the successful use of an AID document, but 25% (3 individuals) felt that the characteristic was only somewhat or not very important to successful use. This, of course, could be due to varying definitions of "complete understanding." But, as with the ratings for technical correctness, no one felt that complete understanding was a dispensable characteristic, and two people felt that it was the indispensable characteristic. As a result, it tied for second with well-reasoned, persuasive arguments for the indispensable characteristic rating.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the presentation of new ideas and insights was ranked as the least important characteristic for the successful use of an AID document. This accords with individual comments about the bureaucratic desire for conformity and the routine nature of most AID documents. Nonetheless, although no one rated new ideas and insights as the indispensable characteristic, only one person felt that it was the most dispensable characteristic, and, as a result, it tied with presence of the right level of detail for seventh in the indispensability list.

#### 3.4.4.2 Primary-level Revision Concerns

Study participants recognized the importance of revision but felt they had too little time to devote to it: seven of the twelve participants felt that lack of time to revise was a major constraint to writing well at AID and five felt that it was a major constraint in their own writing. Characteristics tied to primary-level revision were rated as most important to the successful use of AID documents, but, surprisingly, received only mid-level indispensability ratings (Table 3-4). Introduction of material in a logical, expected sequence was ranked overall as the most important characteristic to successful use, and the presence of the right level of detail for the intended audience was ranked second. This would indicate that, as document users, study participants wanted to find information quickly and easily, where they expected to find it, and they wanted to read documents that contained the right level of detail for their own needs. As writers, however, they were less concerned with these matters than they were with invention and content issues.

Only one person named introduction of material in a logical, expected sequence as the indispensable characteristic, and one person named it as most dispensable. No one felt that the right level of detail was the indispensable characteristic, and one person thought that it was the most dispensable. Although they realized that within a bureaucracy form can equal content, AID writers were personally unwilling to be entirely reader-oriented.

**TABLE 3-4**  
**PRIMARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS:**  
**IMPORTANCE-TO-USE AND INDISPENSABILITY**

|                                                        | INTRODUCTION OF<br>MATERIAL<br>IN A LOGICAL,<br>EXPECTED SEQUENCE | RIGHT LEVEL OF<br>DETAIL FOR<br>THE INTENDED<br>AUDIENCE | CONCISENESS;<br>NO REDUNDANCY<br>IN THOUGHT<br>OR WORD |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| RESPONDENTS<br>WHO RATED<br>CONCERN AS:                |                                                                   |                                                          |                                                        |
| CRITICAL TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(9 OR 10)             | 75%                                                               | 67%                                                      | 33%                                                    |
| VERY IMPORTANT<br>TO SUCCESSFUL<br>USE (7 OR 8)        | 25%                                                               | 25%                                                      | 33%                                                    |
| SOMEWHAT<br>IMPORTANT TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(5 OR 6) | 0                                                                 | 8%                                                       | 17%                                                    |
| NOT VERY<br>IMPORTANT TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(2 TO 4) | 0                                                                 | 0                                                        | 17%                                                    |
| DISPENSABILITY<br>SCORE                                | 0                                                                 | -1                                                       | -1                                                     |
| IMPORTANCE-TO-<br>USE RANKING<br>(X OF 10)             | 1                                                                 | 2                                                        | 7                                                      |
| DISPENSABILITY<br>RANKING<br>(X OF 8)                  | 4                                                                 | 6                                                        | 5                                                      |

The one primary-level revision concern that participants felt was not terribly important to successful use was conciseness. Overall, it ranked seventh in the importance-to-use list and sixth in the indispensability list. Several respondents noted in the interview that AID documents had a certain level of redundancy built into them. Yet one person did name conciseness as the indispensable characteristic and two named it the most dispensable characteristic. This points again to a certain level of individual disagreement about desirable document characteristics.

#### 3.4.4.3 Secondary-level Revision Concerns

Secondary-level revision concerns were ranked as the least important characteristics for successful use and the most dispensable characteristics for writers (Table 3-5). Only clarity of expression ranked relatively high; it was fourth in both lists. Grammatical correctness was ranked ninth of the ten characteristics in importance to use and, somewhat surprisingly, a readable style was ranked eighth (one participant noted "well, AID documents aren't particularly readable, and we seem to get by"). This was consistent with indispensability rankings--three respondents each named the characteristics as most dispensable, and, although one participant named readable style as the indispensable characteristic, the negative designations were enough to rank readable style ninth and grammatical correctness tenth in indispensability.

Despite the generally low importance assigned to secondary-level revision concerns, individual variation in response was significant.

**TABLE 3-5**  
**SECONDARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS:**  
**IMPORTANCE-TO-USE AND INDISPENSABILITY**

|                                                        | GRAMMATICAL<br>CORRECTNESS | READABLE<br>STYLE | CLARITY OF<br>EXPRESSION |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| RESPONDENTS<br>WHO RATED<br>CONCERN AS:                |                            |                   |                          |
| CRITICAL TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(9 OR 10)             | 17%                        | 25%               | 33%                      |
| VERY IMPORTANT<br>TO SUCCESSFUL<br>USE (7 OR 8)        | 42%                        | 42%               | 67%                      |
| SOMEWHAT<br>IMPORTANT TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(5 OR 6) | 33%                        | 25%               | 0                        |
| NOT VERY<br>IMPORTANT TO<br>SUCCESSFUL USE<br>(2 TO 4) | 8%                         | 8%                | 0                        |
| DISPENSABILITY<br>SCORE                                | -3                         | -2                | 1                        |
| IMPORTANCE-TO-<br>USE RANKING<br>(X OF 10)             | 9                          | 8                 | 4                        |
| DISPENSABILITY<br>RANKING<br>(X OF 8)                  | 8                          | 7                 | 3                        |

Both grammatical correctness and a readable style received high ratings of ten and low ratings of two in importance to use; the average rating for both was seven and the mode rating (three individuals each) was eight in each case. Nonetheless, it was clear from the data that editing concerns were not particularly important to the study participants, either as readers or as writers.

#### 3.4.4.4 Limitations of the Analysis of Desirable Document Characteristics

Important qualifications must be placed on the conclusions reached as a result of the ratings given the characteristics of good writing. First, the study sample was very small for a quantitative analysis. In addition, the study was originally planned to follow up the importance-to-use rankings with an examination of the characteristics that participants actually focused on during various stages of the document development process. Although not enough draft report forms were returned to complete this portion of the study, such an examination would be important to determine the extent to which writers switch from writer-based to reader-based concerns during document development, and, therefore, how important the discrepancies in the present rankings are.

### 3.5 Summary: AID's Institutional Writing Culture

It might be tempting to classify AID's writing culture as a typical bureaucracy. Certainly, data regarding cultural inputs indicates a

pressure toward conformity, a hierarchical document review system with multiple clearance levels, and widespread internal jargon and standardized catch-phrases. And certainly, the writing culture has evolved in response to systems-level rhetorical constraints imposed by the need to satisfy Congress and the uncertain placement of foreign aid in the U.S. public's list of priorities.

But creating cultural classes--even for writing systems--tends to diminish the importance of the culture itself, reducing it to a data point from which to make sweeping generalizations. It also implies that there is little value in making suggestions for change, since the imperatives of the class will predominate in the end.

This chapter has contained the data and observations to support a general way of looking at writing at AID, a way that takes into account the many factors that influence the role and practice of writing at the agency. Writing is always a time-consuming, difficult activity; at AID, it consumes the professional lives of a large number of talented individuals. Recognizing the central role that writing plays at the agency, the following chapter offers concrete suggestions for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of writing practices at AID.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Writing in the Project Development Process:**

#### **Suggestions for Improvement**

#### **4.1 Systems Inputs**

##### **4.1.1 Problems**

Systems inputs are by definition difficult to change, since they require that modifications be approved at high organizational levels. Two such inputs were found to be significant factors in the AID writing culture, but of the two only one has any reasonable possibility of change. The complicated rhetorical constraints that AID faces as it attempts to satisfy Congressional, Executive, and private sector interests and adhere to myriad Federal regulations are fixed, beyond the control of even the AID Administrator. The genres that the agency creates and the uses to which it puts them are more under its control and could be modified either officially, through changes in the guidance in the AID handbooks, or informally within bureaus. Informal changes would require only bureau-level suggestions for appropriate focus and use of project development genres.

##### **4.1.2 Directions**

To make the most effective use of staff time, AID management should seek to develop genres that facilitate consensus-building in the project

development process, recognize invention patterns, and minimize confusion between the project development and collaborative writing processes. Second, it should recognize that AID writers will continue to face difficult rhetorical decisions and should place more emphasis on development of rhetorical strategies in conjunction with project development. Finally, it should recognize that the large number of variables in AID's writing system make rigid document guidelines impractical. For instance, the length of project development documents should ultimately be determined by the scope and complexity of the project, not by the general page length guidelines set up in the handbooks.

#### **4.1.3 Recommended Actions**

The following actions are recommended:

- the use of logframes and other invention tools should be encouraged;
- the PID should be changed from a mini-PP to an action memorandum that proposes a project development plan;
- issues papers should be used as consensus-building documents rather than advocacy pieces;
- the standard PP outline should be changed to recognize the needs of different audiences and to enhance the genre's use as a document of record;
- AID Handbook 3 should be edited for clarity and style and should distinguish between advice and legal imperatives.

##### **4.1.3.1 Pre-PID and Project Paper Invention Tools**

Project development teams should be encouraged to use such invention tools as logframes, outline processors, and freewritten

concept papers as forms of "minor writing." These tools can be used to clarify ideas, solidify consensus, and uncover rhetorical strategies, but the results should not be considered formal written documents. They may be quickly written and use incomplete sentences; little attention needs to be paid to grammar or style, although they must contain enough structure to be relatively unambiguous. Reviewer response should be limited to matters of content, although "content" should be broadly interpreted as including technical, strategic, and institutional matters.

"Content" also includes rhetorical strategies; writers and reviewers should carefully examine the documents for potential lines of argument, although they do not need to expand the lines formally unless they are particularly complicated. It may be enough, for instance, to develop a bullet-list of themes that can be referred to when writing the PID and PP. This list can be checked during an appropriate editorial stage to ensure thematic consistency within the document. Invention documents can be used as PID annexes to show the direction of project thought, but should never be editorially reviewed.

#### 4.1.3.2 Project Identification Documents

As the genre now stands, the PID has a split personality; it is part concept paper, part project proposal. It should be neither. The PID is too long and is too formal to be a concept paper, but it is too short and comes too early to be a project proposal. Concept papers should not be required to sustain an argument over fifteen pages plus annexes; a concept paper should be an early consensus-building tool or

individual thinkpiece. Since a concept paper is an invention tool rather than a medium of communication, it is unrealistic to expect it to contain a carefully crafted argument, no matter how many drafts it goes through (unless it goes through so many drafts and becomes so amplified that it is no longer a concept paper). But the PID would not be appropriately a concept paper even in shortened form, because the PID serves too formal a function: it represents the first official approval of a potential project.

There is a tendency to make the PID a pre-PP, to include in brief or draft form all of the elements of a PP. In fact, the PID outline given in the handbooks reinforces this interpretation. But the PID may act against consensus-building if it becomes a mini-PP. Instead of presenting general concepts and inviting comment during project development, a prematurely articulated PID can invite attack, reduce the credibility of the writers and entrench their positions.

Instead of masquerading as a concept paper or a skeleton of a PP, the PID should be what its name implies--a brief action memo identifying a potential project area and requesting formal authorization to go ahead with project development. This kind of project development proposal is what the writers of AID Handbook 3 most often seem to have in mind for the PID. The PID should be a project development proposal, not a project proposal. Its persuasive content should be limited to a justification of the need for work in the proposed project area in the light of programming priorities and to the presentation and justification of a project design strategy. The writers should not have

to convince an audience of the soundness of a project approach--the PID is, instead, the proposal to go ahead with the development of an approach. And the PID should not have to define a specific project, only outline the shape of a project area. It is a logical outgrowth of the general project planning that takes place in the Action Plan.

But the writers should be able to convince an audience that there is reasonable expectation that they (meaning the project design team) will be able to complete a Project Paper that presents a well-crafted, programmatically coherent, feasible project. To do this, they need to show that they have an understanding of the technical and institutional ramifications of working in the project area and that they have a plan for addressing current information gaps. The PID should include a component that spells out the personnel needs for the project design team and the expected timeline for project development. It should clearly indicate which offices must be involved in project design and review (including administrative support offices) and the expected level of involvement. Key project design personnel should be specified by name whenever possible.

In changing the focus of the PID from project content to the project development process, some people might argue that AID's technical role is trivialized. But in fact, this change in focus reflects rather than leads the change from direct to indirect implementation and recognizes that project design is one of the most significant things that AID writers do. This is not to say that there is no role for technical analysis, but this is properly done at a later

stage than the PID. If projects were identified solely on the basis of "greatest effect on greatest numbers" or "most innovative approach," there would be reason for the PID to be driven by technical factors. But document genres must harmonize with the reality of an institution's life, and AID's reality is that it operates under the constraints of U.S. and host government political systems. New projects are identified for a variety of reasons, few of them technically based.

The change in focus I suggest also recognizes the realities of audience. At neither the AID/W or mission levels do managers need to be convinced of the significance of, say, increased agricultural production. Conditions in most AID countries are severe enough to be able to justify almost any project in almost any sector on at least some grounds. What AID managers need to be convinced of is that a project fits previously set program directions (leaving it to other days to justify the program with Congress) and that it deals with the multitude of factors that can cause project failure. Were the PID a proposal to an outside agency it would, in fact, need to convince its audience of the significance of the problem it addresses. But internal AID project documents should not attempt to assume the rhetorical burden of justifying AID's existence. Ideally, they should reflect a confidence that AID personnel are addressing difficult problems in as systematic a fashion as possible.

#### 4.1.3.3 Issues Papers

Issues papers should be used as consensus-building, group invention documents, not as advocacy pieces. When the writer of an issues paper

takes an advocacy position, too many questions can be raised about the author's selection of the issues. There should never be a doubt in anyone's mind that all potential issues have been raised and fairly addressed. The writer should not attempt to resolve issues and should not become too attached to a position; instead he or she should raise issues for the consideration of the group.

Issues papers are documents of convenience, allowing all reviewers to approach a PID or PP on an equal basis, without spending an extensive amount of time in document analysis. They are often written quickly, on short notice. The format of issues papers should reflect their function and production reality. They should have a standardized format--perhaps an outline form based on classes of issues--so that writing and reviewing are simplified. A well-thought-out format could be used as the basis for the issues meeting agenda.

The impulse to advocacy should not be entirely ignored, however; issues papers as currently conceived provide an admirable amount of latitude, and closely argued issues papers have the potential to be the most creative documents in the agency. A mechanism should be developed to encourage individual written responses to PIDs and PPs, but these documents should not take the place of an objective outline of issues.

#### 4.1.3.4 Project Papers

The Project Paper should be a completed project design, not a proposal. It is a fiction to equate the PP with a document written by people in one institution and objectively reviewed by people in a second institution who have no stake in the approval decision. In fact, PPs

have the weight of thousands of hours and dollars of agency effort behind them and must be seriously deficient to be disapproved. The PP is more like a final research report than a proposal; it reports the results of the project design team's efforts. Like a paper that reports the results of a research project, the PP must place a premium on communication. Although it presents the results of an invention process, it need not mirror the invention process in structure.

Because it summarizes a project design effort and presents that design for future action, the PP serves two audiences. These two audiences are clearly recognized in AID Handbook 3. AID management needs the document for quality control and evaluation and to add the project to the program base. Mission personnel and contractors need the PP as a practical implementation guidebook. Thus the PP looks backward to the charge given the project design team and reports the results of its efforts. It also looks ahead to those who will implement the project.

The needs of the two audiences should be kept in mind and the standard PP outline (AID Handbook 3, p. 3-31) modified accordingly. One section of the PP should concentrate on the needs of AID management and another section should be designed to serve those involved in project implementation. The section directed to management should provide a justification for the project approach and sufficient detail about the project for management to be able to evaluate the project approach and relate it to programming priorities, but this section does not need to define the project in exhaustive detail. The following outline could be

used as the basis of an updated PP design (parenthetical comments describe changes of emphasis from the present PP standard outline):

#### 1.0 Project Data Sheet

#### 2.0 Draft Project Authorization

#### 3.0 Project Design

- 3.1 Summary Project Description (a one-page narrative summary of project site, participants, and proposed actions).
- 3.2 Rationale for Project Approach (a summary of the project design team's methodology and conclusions. Details relevant project design history, the selected project approach, any approaches that were considered but discarded, the involvement of beneficiaries in project design, and relationship of selected approach to current program priorities. Key project arguments and themes should be articulated in this section and elaborated throughout the document. Includes summaries of technical analyses as appropriate).
- 3.3 Project Goals (a brief narrative or chart listing expected project results).

#### 4.0 Implementation Plan

- 4.1 Project Elements (a detailed description of each project element, e.g., services, goods, training. Each element or sub-element should have a separate section).
- 4.2 Project Responsibilities (a detailed description of responsibilities for project execution).
- 4.3 Implementation Schedule (a description, including figures and tables, as appropriate, of expected project schedule. Includes procurement and staffing plans if applicable).
- 4.4 Cost Estimate and Financial Plan
- 4.5 Conditions and Covenants
- 4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

#### 5.0 Annexes

##### 4.1.3.5 AID Handbook 3

AID Handbook 3 contains useful information obscured by wordiness and poor design. The handbook should be edited for clarity (eliminating

the many "theretos"), organization (separating practical advice from old AID hands from legal imperatives), and layout (streamlining page design and increasing ease of reference).

## **4.2 Physical and Human Resources**

### **4.2.1 Problems**

AID development officers try to cope with an extensive and demanding variety of written documents with relatively few physical resources to support their efforts and no professional writing support staff. AID personnel come from a variety of geographic and disciplinary backgrounds. Conflicts about writing and editorial style are common, and nearly everyone is expected to be an expert writer/editor. Although experienced AID staff members recognize the constraints and needs of bureaucratic writing, a number resent the restrictions placed on their writing and this may affect their ability to produce reader-based documents easily. Few training opportunities in writing are available and little help is given to incoming AID officers to help them learn about the institutional writing culture.

### **4.2.2 Directions**

Overall, AID management should recognize the vital role writing plays in the development and implementation of AID projects and should respond with the appropriate level of resources, both physical and human. Those who are asked to perform functions vital to the writing system--from writing to editing copy to formatting a document on a word processor--should have access to training in necessary skills and should

be provided comprehensive guidance about AID approaches to document development.

#### **4.2.3 Recommended Actions**

First, AID management should do everything in its power to provide the basic tools of modern writing to all staff members who write or type --a word processor and fast draft-quality printer at every desk.

Second, it should come to an informed decision about the desirability of development officers acting as ad hoc editors. Based on that decision, it should provide the guidance and personnel necessary to clearly delineate the collaborative writing roles to be played by various staff during project development. Finally, any revisions in the training program should be designed to recognize and capitalize on individual writing strengths, to increase staff consensus about what constitutes good AID writing and rhetoric, and to help new hires learn about AID's institutional writing culture. Specific recommendations are given in conjunction with the discussion of cultural inputs in Section 4.3.

### **4.3 Cultural Inputs**

#### **4.3.1 Problems**

Perhaps the most important cultural input to AID's writing system is the sequential review model of document preparation and the confusion between the project development process and the collaborative writing process. As a result, potential conflicts exist every time a project team shapes itself into a collaborative writing team: who is the lead writer? is this the same person as the team leader? is he/she a good

writer? who will edit the document? who is responsible for ensuring that the document has a consistent voice and that themes are stated and developed throughout the document? in case of conflicts over style or format, who has the final say? who is doing the typing? does everyone take copy changes to that person, or just the team leader? are reviewers concentrating on substantial content concerns? are reviewers making comments in such a way that they seem punitive instead of constructive? will team personnel, including reviewers, remain the same throughout the document preparation period, or will some become unavailable or be reassigned?

A second significant cultural input is a felt emphasis on technical content and correctness that sometimes conflicts with bureaucratic necessity. Study participants showed that they were uncomfortable with their multiple roles as applied development researchers, communicators, and diplomats. For instance, they understood that documents should be short, concise, and aimed at the generalist--but they felt uneasy about the documents that resulted, feeling that they presented "watered-down" versions of the issues and were insufficiently focused on technical details. At the same time, they complained about documents that were too technical and difficult to relate to program and project objectives. In sum, agency personnel have not struck a happy rhetorical balance between the demands of message, audience, and writer.

#### 4.3.2 Directions

AID management should lead the move toward a collaborative writing model rather than the present sequential review model of document development. A sense of group involvement and mutual investment in outcomes should be encouraged, rather than relying on an open intellectual give-and-take to emerge from the sequential review model. A priority should be placed on maintaining the continuity of the project/document development team throughout the PID and PP period, and clear guidance should be given for the development of an effective, efficient document development team.

In addition, AID writers should be assisted in developing strategies to reach an acceptable balance between the needs of content and audience and to be comfortable with their sometimes conflicting roles. Training in rhetoric may help them develop communication strategies, but only in the context of a continuing agency-wide dialogue about AID's role in development research and implementation.

#### 4.3.3 Recommended Actions

The following actions are recommended:

- document managers should be used to increase the efficiency of the document development process and to act as expert resources for assuring document quality and appropriateness for multiple uses;
- the document development team should be clearly designated and distinguished from the project development team. Writing roles should be defined;
- AID staff should be provided appropriate, on-site training in writing and editing, and new hires should be given a clear understanding of writing processes at AID.

#### 4.3.3.1 Document Managers to Facilitate Document Development

Early in project development, the collaborative writing group must be clearly defined and distinguished from the project development team. The writing group should include a person responsible for large issues such as thematic coherence, macro-organization, incorporating the correct level of detail, and adherence to agency guidelines. The writing team should also have a single person responsible for document editing (grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, graphics form, consistency in style, typography); this does not need to be the same person as the one who deals with issues of content. Third, the team needs a person responsible for document production--ensuring that section drafts are delivered regularly to word processors, that needed production materials are on hand, and that, overall, the document development process is running as smoothly as possible.

At the present time, all these functions may be carried out by a single person--a contracted team leader or a Project Development Officer, for instance. But these are writing matters, not project development matters, and the time that a PDO, team leader or other technical expert spends on them is time taken away from project development. It is no wonder, then, that thematic consistency and document editing are sometimes overlooked by project development teams; their primary interest, and rightfully so, is in preparing a project rather than a document.

Some progress could be made by adding a typical writing task breakdown to the project development guidance currently given in

AID Handbook 3. However, it would be far better to include a document manager on all project development teams--someone to act as coordinator, editor, and document troubleshooter. Given training in writing, rhetoric, and management, a variety of people could act as document managers. The position could be an excellent training ground for IDIs, could provide meaningful employment for AID spouses, and advancement potential for talented host country employees.

In addition to relieving team leaders of many non-project related responsibilities, the document manager would serve as a resource for solving writing dilemmas. At this time, there is no consistent "voice of authority" available to arbitrate grammatical or stylistic disputes (not even the GPO Style Manual or The Elements of Style!). Carefully selected and trained document managers could serve as a resource to writers throughout a mission or office, and not only on minor points of grammar. They could also help resolve the multiple-roles dilemma of staff and management. By becoming resources with experience in transforming writer-based into reader-based prose, they could help technical personnel reach their own compromises between content and bureaucratic constraints. They could relieve mission managers of some of the responsibilities for document quality that are inherent in their role as secondary reviewers, resolving the conflict inherent in using mission management as both part of the document development team and as the primary audience for the document. Finally, they could help arbitrate with the most constraining resource of all--time.

#### 4.3.3.2 Designating the Document Development Team

The following discussion is based on the assumption that document managers are available. If they are not available, coordination, editing, and production responsibilities must be taken over by the lead author, who must assign tasks as needed. In any case, AID personnel and contractors must learn to agree to disagree about minor points of style, aiming only for consistency within a particular document, and should rely much more on style guides than they presently do.

A typical writing task breakdown given in AID Handbook 3 might include the following:

- |                                                                 |                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ● Lead author                                                   | PDO                                                                                     |
| ● Secondary author                                              | Technical officer                                                                       |
| ● Secondary authors                                             | Contracted technical experts                                                            |
| ● Document editing,<br>writing coordination,<br>quality control | Document manager                                                                        |
| ● Primary reviewers                                             | Technical and project development<br>office chiefs, legal officer,<br>contracts officer |
| ● Secondary reviewers                                           | Mission director, deputy mission<br>director                                            |

Following this sort of general guideline, the document manager should develop and make available a work breakdown structure for each document development effort, including names and detailed writing responsibilities of all team members. Substitutes for all team members should be designated in advance and these substitutes should be kept informed of document developments.

Typically, the lead author should have overall responsibility for the technical correctness of the project and the project document, including adhering to AID policies, assuring the soundness of the project approach, coordinating project development with other efforts, and securing input from host country counterparts. The lead author should identify key constraints, project themes, and strategies and, assisted by the document manager, should ensure that they appear in the final document. The lead author might draft the project rationale, some project description sections, and technical sections as appropriate.

Secondary authors should assist the lead author in assuring the quality of the project approach and the technical correctness of the project. They should assist in identifying key constraints and project themes and should cooperate with the lead author and document manager in incorporating them into the sections that he/she drafts. Secondary authors might be responsible for drafting the technical project description components and analyses.

The document manager should be responsible for coordinating work and input of authors and reviewers. The document manager should serve as a non-technical mediator between divergent points of view (this would be an excellent exercise for new hires). The document manager should work with the lead author to ensure document quality (including the quality of the rhetorical and organizational approach). He or she may draft document sections or compile sections from existing documents and may flesh out expanded outlines developed by lead or secondary authors. The document manager edits the final draft for grammar, sentence

structure, punctuation, and adherence to AID document guidelines, assists the lead author in adhering to document schedules, and serves as liaison with clerical and production personnel.

Primary reviewers should review drafts and advise the lead author on the project's technical approach, policies, and constraints. Primary reviewers should suggest alternative rhetorical approaches if necessary, but they should not review documents for editorial or organizational concerns. Instead, they should serve as internal peer reviewers--supportive colleagues who have an interest in assisting in the development of a high-quality project approach. Their suggestions should be made and taken constructively.

Secondary reviewers have organizational responsibility for project and document quality. They should view themselves as team members and resources for project development. Like primary reviewers, they should limit themselves to constructive comments and, in general, should comment only on matters of content. Of course, they are finally responsible for all document matters if the lead author and document manager should be seriously negligent.

#### 4.3.3.3 Comprehensive Training Program in Writing

At the present time, a limited program of writing workshops is available in Washington but no organized effort is made to train new hires, to provide training to contract personnel, or to offer Mission-based training. A comprehensive training program in writing would provide half-day on-site workshops in technical writing and rhetoric for present employees and a shortcourse in technical writing,

rhetoric, and the AID writing culture for IDIs and other new hires, and would arrange for long-term training in technical writing and rhetoric for document managers.

Focused workshops should be provided on-site (at AID missions and AID/W) on topics such as developing an expanded outline, analyzing and communicating a rhetorical stance, revision techniques, techniques for incorporating consistent themes in documents, and writing and editing processes in the AID context. IDIs and other new hires should take a shortcourse in technical writing and editing that covers at least the following topics:

- writing processes at AID;
- major AID genres: purposes and appropriate writing methods;
- revision in stages;
- sentence combining and rewriting;
- writing with word processors;
- technical editing processes;
- separating technical review from editing;
- levels of edit;
- grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation review;
- graphics editing;
- editing efficiency (proofreading marks, working with typists and production personnel);
- on-the-job writing coaching; and
- organizing collaborative writing efforts.

Permanent document managers (in contrast to IDIs who might rotate through the position) should have long-term academic training in advanced technical writing and rhetoric. Like their colleagues in business and industry, they should consider themselves professional writer/editors with collateral expertise in a particular content area--in this case, the art and science of development.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### for Writing Research

Although this study was limited in size and scope, I believe that it produced some interesting implications for further work in non-academic settings. Most important, perhaps, it revealed a need to re-evaluate stage-process models of writing in order to provide the temporal anchor necessary for applying theory to practice. I used a basic three-phase model called "functional evolution" to suggest that the document development process involves invention, communication, and transcription, and that all documents evolve from invention tools to communication tools to archival records during their "life cycle."

The model was useful for following Faigley's suggestion to integrate textual, individual, and social variables in non-academic writing research. For instance, it allowed me to define the rhetorical demand of AID document genres by examining their relative emphasis on invention, communication, and historical documentation. It allowed me to see the need to distinguish between the invention of project content and the communication of that content, two matters that are frequently conflated by both AID writers and writing researchers. The model was also useful for examining the document qualities valued by AID writers,

allowing me to deal with three broad categories of document qualities rather than to make distinctions between ten distinct document qualities.

The functional evolution model is, of course, very general and in need of refinement. For instance, theorists might dispute using one model for both the cognitive stages of a writer developing a document and the physical stages of document production. But the model's generality is also its strength; few would deny that both writers' ideas and the transcribed words change with successive drafts and that, ideally, there is a greater unity between them when a document is published than when it is first drafted.

Whatever theoretical model they use to inform their work, writing researchers must be more aggressive in entering a variety of non-academic settings and in using their experience to develop appropriate methodologies for collecting naturalistic data. In this study, I went to a relatively small Federal agency with which I was familiar; I collected data through one-on-one interviews and participant-completed, mail-in questionnaires and found that the interviews were much more reliable data sources than were the questionnaires. Overall, I tried to be problem-oriented, to seek reasonable solutions to the problems faced by a group of non-academic writers. To do this I had to define the writing culture in which these writers worked, taking into account when making recommendations which of the inputs to the culture could be most easily altered.

An apparent inconsistency was found between the document characteristics that AID writers valued and those that they felt were most useful to the organization. The results indicated that AID writers personally valued invention-stage characteristics, such as technical correctness and a complete understanding of the problem, but that felt primary-level revision concerns, such as the introduction of material in a logical, expected sequence, were most important for the successful use of AID documents. This finding warrants a directed study. Does this inconsistency exist in other non-academic organizations, and, if so, does it affect writers' composing strategies?

The data also seemed to indicate that there was a significant individual variation in writing beliefs at AID. Is this true in other organizations? To what extent is variation in belief a part of the institutional culture and to what extent is it predetermined by education?

It became obvious during the course of the study that writing researchers must be careful to distinguish between the writing process and the content development process when analyzing document development problems. At AID, the types of problems encountered in document development seem to be largely determined by the genre of the document; problems with Project Identification Documents were most often consensus-building, group invention problems (such as disagreements over the technical feasibility of the project). Problems with Project Papers were more often collaborative writing problems, although some content problems remain.

Finally, there are implications for collaborative writing research inherent in the distinction made between the "sequential review" model and the "collaborative writing" model of document development. Although it might seem intuitively obvious to look at any multi-authored document as taking place under a collaborative writing model, different organizations may have very different definitions of proper collaboration or even deny that group writing takes place. Again, it would be interesting to contrast AID with other organizations: how common is the sequential review model? Are there organizations in which two models of group writing coexist? Does the sequential review model cause significant misunderstandings between writers and reviewers? As with other facets of non-academic writing research, the questions are still more numerous than the answers.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1**

**INSTRUMENTS USED**

Research Project in Writing at  
the Agency for International Development:  
Interview Instrument

Section I: Baseline Data from Writers and Reviewers

Informant Code \_\_\_\_\_

1. In your current position at AID, what kinds of documents do you write/review? What kinds of documents have you written/reviewed in previous AID positions? (Check all that apply, even if your contribution is/was minor.)

| Currently         | Previously          |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Write      Review | Wrote      Reviewed |

PIDs

PPs

Project  
Authorizations

Grant  
Agreements

PILs

Project  
correspondence

Semi-annual Project  
Reports

CDSSs

Action Plans

Action Memos

Information Memos

Policy Papers

Issues Papers

Material for  
Congressional  
Presentations

Cables

Other (specify)

2. Which of these documents do you routinely write by yourself, with only minor contributions and changes from others?
3. Overall, what percentage of your time do you spend writing? What percentage of this time is spent writing group-authored documents?
4. In what discipline(s) were your college degree(s)?
5. How long have you been with AID? (X years since 19XX)  
What is your current position?
6. What kinds of formal and informal writing preparation did you have before joining AID? (examples: college courses, on-the-job writing, personal writing)

7. What kinds of formal and informal writing preparation have you had since joining AID? (examples: college courses, in-house seminars, support from colleagues and supervisors, personal writing)

8. In your opinion, how important are the following qualities to the successful use of a completed AID document? Rate each one on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = the use of the document is not affected by the absence of this quality; 10 = the document is a complete failure if it lacks this quality).

- \_\_\_\_\_ Conciseness; no redundancy in word and/or thought
- \_\_\_\_\_ Presentation of new ideas and insights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Presence of the right level of detail for the intended audience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Technical correctness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction of material in a logical, expected sequence
- \_\_\_\_\_ A complete understanding of the problems addressed in the document
- \_\_\_\_\_ A readable style
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grammatical correctness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Well-reasoned, persuasive arguments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clarity of expression
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

9. If you had to give up one of the above qualities completely in a given document, which would it be?

10. If you could keep only one of the above qualities in a given document, which would it be?
11. Rate the "typical" AID writer's writing proficiency on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = no proficiency; 10 = complete proficiency).
12. Would you place yourself at about this same level, above it, significantly above it, below it, or significantly below it?
13. What do you see as the major constraints to writing well at AID?

In General

For Self

Poor writing preparation

Too little time to come up  
with new ideas and compose  
first drafts

Too little time to revise

Poor guidance and/or understanding  
about document content  
(e.g. development issues)

Poor guidance or understanding  
about document intent  
(e.g. who will read each  
document and how he/she will  
use it)

Poor guidance or understanding  
about document style and  
organization (e.g. AID and/or  
disciplinary conventions)

People at AID have  
differing definitions of and/or  
expectations about writing quality

No major constraints to writing well  
at AID

Other

14. Is the writing that is done at AID different from what you expected when you were hired? If so, in what way?
15. Has your writing changed since coming to AID? If so, in what way has it changed?
16. Has the way in which you review documents prepared by others changed since coming to AID? If so, in what way has it changed?

## Section II: Draft Report Form

To be completed after you finish writing or reviewing a draft.

Document \_\_\_\_\_ Date Draft Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Informant Code \_\_\_\_\_ Date Form Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Draft # \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. What was your function on this draft?

\_\_\_\_\_ Primary author

\_\_\_\_\_ Secondary author

\_\_\_\_\_ Minor contributor

\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer, read only

\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer, read and wrote comments

\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer, read and rewrote portions of draft

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. If you rewrote portions of a previous draft, what portions did you concentrate on? Why did you concentrate on these sections?

3. Listed below are some qualities that one might look for in a completed AID document. As you wrote or reviewed this draft, on which of these qualities did you concentrate the most? Rank your attention to the following qualities by putting a "1" next to the quality on which you concentrated the most, "2" next to the quality on which you concentrated second-most, etc. If a quality was not important or was of very minor importance to you at this stage, put a "0" in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Technical correctness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conciseness; elimination of redundancy in word and/or thought
- \_\_\_\_\_ New ideas and insights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right level of detail for the intended audience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction of material in a logical, expected sequence
- \_\_\_\_\_ An understanding of all the elements of the problem
- \_\_\_\_\_ A readable style
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grammatical correctness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Well-reasoned, persuasive arguments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clarity of expression
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

4. Who did you expect would write and review this draft (titles)?
5. Were these assumptions correct?
6. At this stage, who do you expect will approve the final document?  
Read the final document? Use the final document?
7. Which of these do you consider to be your primary audience?
8. What is the single most important thing for your primary audience to understand about the problem you are writing about?

9. Did you have any problems writing/reviewing this draft? Check all that apply and explain the two most significant problems.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Motivation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conflicts with others about content
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conflicts with others about style
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conflicts with others about organization
- \_\_\_\_\_ Needed more information about the issues important to this document
- \_\_\_\_\_ Needed to adapt or clarify the information that I had
- \_\_\_\_\_ The people I needed to talk to about this draft weren't available
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other problems (specify)

Explanation of the two most significant problems:

10. At this point, how do you feel about this document? Will the final product be average, better than average, or poorer than average? Are you about as far along as you expected to be, further along than you expected to be, or not as far along as you expected to be?

11. What tools did you use in writing/reviewing this draft? Check all that apply.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Pen and paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Typewriter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Computer/word processor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Style manuals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dictionary
- \_\_\_\_\_ AID manuals or handbooks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written outlines (formal or informal)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed similar documents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Used language and/or ideas from other documents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Graphics/sketches
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal notes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Others

12. Where did you write or review this draft?

13. How long did it take you to write or review?

14. Were you interrupted? About how often? Did the interruptions have to do with the document you were writing or reviewing?

15. Did you write or review sequentially? If not, in what order did you write or review portions of the text?

16. What other documents are you writing or reviewing now?

## Section III: Exit interview

A. Think about the PIDs, PPs, and issues papers you have been involved with, and then circle the response to each statement that you feel most accurately describes the way the documents function or should function at AID.

1. PIDs are written mainly to:

inform.      persuade.      discuss.      specify.      coordinate.

2. PIDs should be written to:

inform.      persuade.      discuss.      specify.      coordinate.

3. PIDs contain the following level of detail:

high.      medium.      low.

4. PIDs should contain the following level of detail:

high.      medium.      low.

5. PIDs are persuasive documents.

Yes, highly persuasive. Yes, somewhat persuasive. No, not persuasive.

6. PIDs should be persuasive documents.

Yes, highly persuasive. Yes, somewhat persuasive. No, not persuasive.

7. PIDs are aimed primarily at the following audience:

Mission management. AID/W management. Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

8. PIDs should be aimed primarily at the following audience:

Mission management. AID/W management. Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

9. PPs are written mainly to:

inform.      persuade.      discuss.      specify.      coordinate.

10. PPs should be written to:

inform.      persuade.      discuss.      specify.      coordinate.

11. PPs contain the following level of detail:

high.              medium.              low.

12. PPs should contain the following level of detail:

high.              medium.              low.

13. PPs are persuasive documents.

Yes, highly persuasive. Yes, somewhat persuasive. No, not persuasive.

14. PPs should be persuasive documents.

Yes, highly persuasive. Yes, somewhat persuasive. No, not persuasive.

15. PPs are aimed primarily at the following audience:

Mission management. AID/W management. Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

16. PPs should be aimed primarily at the following audience:

Mission management. AID/W management. Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

17. Issues papers are written mainly to:

inform.      persuade.      discuss.      specify.      coordinate.

18. Issues papers should be written to:

inform.      persuade.      discuss.      specify.      coordinate.

19. Issues papers contain the following level of detail:

high.            medium.            low.

20. Issues papers should contain the following level of detail:

high.            medium.            low.

21. Issues papers are persuasive documents.

Yes, highly persuasive. Yes, somewhat persuasive. No, not persuasive.

22. Issues papers should be persuasive documents.

Yes, highly persuasive. Yes, somewhat persuasive. No, not persuasive.

23. Issues papers are aimed primarily at the following audience:

Mission management. AID/W management. Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

24. Issues papers should be aimed primarily at the following audience:

Mission management. AID/W management. Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

B. Think about a "typical" project development effort that you were involved in at an LAC mission, then answer the following questions.

1. Whose idea was the project?

2. Who was involved in writing the PID? (lead and secondary authors, primary reviewers)

3. Who was involved in writing the PP? (lead and secondary authors and primary reviewers)

4. Who wrote the issues papers?

5. What project design problems came up from the time the project idea was first raised until the PID was completed? (technical, institutional, strategic, interpersonal, logistical, etc.)?

6. What problems came up in writing the PID?

7. What problems came up in working out the project details at the PP stage?

8. What problems came up in writing the PP?

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **DATA AND DATABASE INPUT SCREENS**

AID WRITERS DATABASE  
BASELINE AND DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT DATA

INFORMANT CODE KK

BASELINE DATA COMPLETE? Y      POSITION TITLE Ag Development Officer

EXPERIENCE RATING 15.63      SKILL RATING 7.00

BASELINE EVALUATION OF USEFUL DOCUMENT CHARACTERISTICS:

|                                                                    |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Conciseness 5                                                      | New ideas and insights 5            |
| Right level of detail 9                                            | Technical correctness 7             |
| Logical, expected sequence 9                                       | Complete understanding of problem 7 |
| Readable style 9                                                   | Grammatical correctness 7           |
| Persuasive arguments 8                                             | Clarity 9                           |
| Other depends on document; orig. more imp. on strat. stat. than pp |                                     |
| Least important quality IN                                         | Most important quality ST           |

DRAFT INFORMATION  
WRITER'S/REVIEWER'S FUNCTION VS. FOCUS

Document Title US/Japan ODA      Draft Number 1

Retrospective Data? N      Number of days to complete this draft 0

Informant's function on this draft SA

Sections Informant concentrated on: "Indonesian section on Natural Resource  
\_s. The section was too specific to one area of possible collaboration  
\_only. Did not include other areas (rural roads, irrigation) as sectors for  
\_ possible collaboration."

Writing sequence:      Reviewed Indonesia. Reviewed Philippines. Added por  
\_tion to Indonesia. Critiqued Philippines. Reviewed India.

-  
-

Qualities informant concentrated on: #1 IN #2 TC #3 UN #4 ST #5 DT

## Database Input Screens

### Screens 1 and 2

# DRAFT INFORMATION: AUDIENCE AND EXIGENCES

Primary audience READERS OF FINAL DOCUMENT. Chief, ANE/TR; Deputy, ANE/DP,  
\_ Chief&Dep, ANE/TR/ARD. People in DP. Desk officers.

Primary exigence "There are areas of mutual interest to US and Japan."

-  
-  
-

Writing and reviewing problems: #1 MI #2 #3 #4 #5

Explanation of problems: Lack of direction re: content, format, what oth  
\_ers doing on report. Want to avoid repetition. Want to give context. Hav  
\_e little info (tho it exists in agency) of how Japanese view collaboration,  
\_particularly in AID-type activities.

Present document rating AVR Perceived progress ALO  
Tools used WP, PN, Background reports Location OFFICE  
Time spent on draft 2 Number of interruptions 10 Draft-related? N  
Number of other documents informant working on now 10

## OTHER COMMENTS

#1 qualities: less important were conciseness, grammatical correctness, cl  
\_arity. Did not take well-reasoned, persuasive arguments into account.

-  
-

#2

-  
-

#3

-  
-

#4

-  
-

## Database Input Screens

Screens 3 and 4

## INVENTION CONCERNS

| EXPERIENCE<br>RATING | NEW IDEAS<br>AND INSIGHTS | TECHNICAL<br>CORRECTNESS | COMPLETE<br>UNDERSTANDING<br>OF THE PROBLEM | WELL-REASONED,<br>PERSUASIVE<br>ARGUMENTS |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 23.20                | 5                         | 10                       | 7                                           | 8                                         |
| 22.68                | 7                         | 9                        | 6                                           | 8                                         |
| 21.63                | 5                         | 5                        | 4                                           | 8                                         |
| 20.88                | 7                         | 8                        | 10                                          | 10                                        |
| 19.75                | 6                         | 9                        | 10                                          | 8                                         |
| 18.63                | 5                         | 7                        | 10                                          | 9                                         |
| 17.88                | 6                         | 9                        | 8                                           | 7                                         |
| 16.75                | 3                         | 9                        | 8                                           | 10                                        |
| 16.00                | 2                         | 10                       | 9                                           | 8                                         |
| 15.63                | 5                         | 7                        | 7                                           | 8                                         |
| 13.38                | 5                         | 8                        | 7                                           | 8                                         |
| 10.00                | 4                         | 3                        | 6                                           | 7                                         |
| <b>SUM</b>           | 60                        | 94                       | 92                                          | 99                                        |

**SUMMARY:  
INVENTION CONCERNS**

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|                               | NEW IDEAS<br>AND INSIGHTS | TECHNICAL<br>CORRECTNESS | COMPLETE<br>UNDERSTANDING<br>OF THE PROBLEM | WELL-REASONED,<br>PERSUASIVE<br>ARGUMENTS |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| HIGHEST RATING                | 7                         | 10                       | 10                                          | 10                                        |
| LOWEST RATING                 | 2                         | 3                        | 4                                           | 7                                         |
| AVERAGE RATING                | 5                         | 8                        | 8                                           | 8                                         |
| MODE RATING<br>(# OCCURENCES) | 5 (5)                     | 9 (4)                    | 7 (3)                                       | 8 (7)                                     |

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## PRIMARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS

| EXPERIENCE<br>RATING | INTRODUCTION OF<br>MATERIAL<br>IN A LOGICAL,<br>EXPECTED SEQUENCE | RIGHT LEVEL OF<br>DETAIL FOR<br>THE INTENDED<br>AUDIENCE | CONCISENESS;<br>NO REDUNDANCY<br>IN THOUGHT<br>OR WORD |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 23.20                | 9                                                                 | 8                                                        | 8                                                      |
| 22.68                | 9                                                                 | 9                                                        | 9                                                      |
| 21.63                | 7                                                                 | 5                                                        | 10                                                     |
| 20.88                | 10                                                                | 10                                                       | 10                                                     |
| 19.75                | 10                                                                | 10                                                       | 3                                                      |
| 18.63                | 10                                                                | 10                                                       | 7                                                      |
| 17.88                | 8                                                                 | 10                                                       | 4                                                      |
| 16.75                | 10                                                                | 10                                                       | 7                                                      |
| 16.00                | 9                                                                 | 7                                                        | 6                                                      |
| 15.63                | 9                                                                 | 9                                                        | 5                                                      |
| 13.38                | 10                                                                | 8                                                        | 10                                                     |
| 10.00                | 8                                                                 | 9                                                        | 8                                                      |
| <b>SUM</b>           | 109                                                               | 105                                                      | 87                                                     |

**SUMMARY:**  
**PRIMARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS**

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|                               | INTRODUCTION OF<br>MATERIAL<br>IN A LOGICAL,<br>EXPECTED SEQUENCE | RIGHT LEVEL OF<br>DETAIL FOR<br>THE INTENDED<br>AUDIENCE | CONCISENESS;<br>NO REDUNDANCY<br>IN THOUGHT<br>OR WORD |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| HIGHEST RATING                | 10                                                                | 10                                                       | 10                                                     |
| LOWEST RATING                 | 7                                                                 | 5                                                        | 3                                                      |
| AVERAGE RATING                | 9                                                                 | 9                                                        | 7                                                      |
| MODE RATING<br>(# OCCURENCES) | 10 (5)                                                            | 10 (5)                                                   | 10 (3)                                                 |

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### SECONDARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS

| EXPERIENCE<br>RATING | GRAMMATICAL<br>CORRECTNESS | READABLE<br>STYLE | CLARITY OF<br>EXPRESSION |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 23.20                | 5                          | 7                 | 7                        |
| 22.68                | 8                          | 8                 | 10                       |
| 21.63                | 6                          | 9                 | 8                        |
| 20.88                | 7                          | 10                | 10                       |
| 19.75                | 10                         | 8                 | 8                        |
| 18.63                | 8                          | 7                 | 10                       |
| 17.88                | 9                          | 8                 | 8                        |
| 16.75                | 8                          | 6                 | 7                        |
| 16.00                | 2                          | 6                 | 7                        |
| 15.63                | 7                          | 9                 | 9                        |
| 13.38                | 6                          | 5                 | 7                        |
| 10.00                | 5                          | 2                 | 8                        |
| <b>SUM</b>           | 81                         | 85                | 99                       |

**SUMMARY:**  
**SECONDARY-LEVEL REVISION CONCERNS**

|                               | GRAMMATICAL<br>CORRECTNESS | READABLE<br>STYLE | CLARITY OF<br>EXPRESSION |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| HIGHEST RATING                | 10                         | 10                | 10                       |
| LOWEST RATING                 | 2                          | 2                 | 7                        |
| AVERAGE RATING                | 7                          | 7                 | 8                        |
| MODE RATING<br>(# OCCURENCES) | 8 (3)                      | 8 (3)             | 7 (4)                    |

| <u>Position Title</u> | <u>Experience<br/>Rating</u> | <u>Skill<br/>Rating</u> | <u>Least<br/>Important<br/>Quality</u> | <u>Most<br/>Important<br/>Quality</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Office Director       | 23.20                        | 8.50                    | DT                                     | TC                                    |
| Division Chief        | 22.68                        | 8.00                    | GC                                     | CL                                    |
| Division Chief        | 16.75                        | 7.50                    | CL                                     | PR                                    |
| Division Chief        | 19.75                        | 8.50                    | CO                                     | UN                                    |
| Deputy Division Chief | 20.88                        | 8.00                    | CO                                     | UN                                    |
| Development Officer   | 21.63                        | 8.50                    | GC                                     | PR                                    |
| Development Officer   | 18.63                        | 8.50                    | ST                                     | CL                                    |
| Development Officer   | 17.88                        | 8.50                    | OR                                     | TC                                    |
| Development Officer   | 15.63                        | 7.00                    | IN                                     | ST                                    |
| Development Intern    | 13.38                        | 5.00                    | ST                                     | CO                                    |
| Development Intern    | 10.00                        | 7.00                    | ST                                     | OR                                    |
| Consultant            | 16.00                        | 8.50                    | GC                                     | TC                                    |
| High                  | 23.20                        | 8.50                    |                                        |                                       |
| Low                   | 10.00                        | 5.00                    |                                        |                                       |
| Average               | 18.03                        | 7.79                    |                                        |                                       |

### VITA

Lydia J. Petersson spent the first 17 years of her life in Syracuse, New York, graduating from William Nottingham High School in 1971 and attending the State University College of Forestry and Environmental Science at Syracuse University for one year. She spent the next several years traveling and working from a home base in Englewood, New Jersey. In 1974 she and her first husband, Peter Jorgensen, purchased forty acres in rural Morgan County, Tennessee, and they later built a log cabin on the property.

In 1976 the author returned to academic studies, enrolling at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1979, with an honors degree in English. Her senior thesis was entitled "The Influence of the Chinese Language on the Poetry of Ezra Pound." She married John Gillies in 1979 and, with him, worked as a research associate in The University of Tennessee Department of Agricultural Economics for nine months, developing a shortcourse for international students on the agricultural development experiences of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

In 1980, the author's husband accepted a position with the Agency for International Development. In 1981, they were sent to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and in 1983 they returned to the United States when she accepted a position with the Office of Research Administration at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She began work on her Master's

degree in 1985 and received the Master of Arts with a major in English in December, 1988. The author and her husband have two children, Lysandra, born October 1, 1982, and Alexander, born August 31, 1986.