CHAPTER 1

Overview of Native English Speaker (NES) Composition

Although the development of composition as a field of teaching began nearly a century ago, it focused then primarily on the teaching of grammar and literature. As recently as twenty-five years ago in high school, college, and university English composition classes for NESs (native speakers of English), teachers taught literature and students wrote about literature. The main goal of such courses was "to introduce students to literary study and in the process to correct the writing in students' literary essays according to long-established standards of grammatical, stylistic, and formal correctness" (Bizzell and Herzberg, 1987, p. 3). English teachers designed, assigned, and evaluated the product, a piece of writing about literature the class had been studying. A typical assignment required literary analysis: "Compare the character of Nick Adams in Hemingway's short story 'Fathers and Sons' (from The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories) with the character of Dexter Green in Fitzgerald's short story 'Winter Dreams' (from Babylon Revisited and Other Stories)."

Some minimal information about parameters ("three to five typewritten, double-spaced pages") and evaluation criteria ("Two sentence fragments will lower your grade") were generally given. But teachers spent little or no time teaching the students how to write. They expected their students to plan and compose their assignments outside of class, and they graded the essays on the quality of the written analysis and the "style" of writing. The teacher's written comments on assignments often focused on grammar errors and syntactic "awkwardness" with vague references to content deficiencies such as "average work" and "support your ideas."

Today composition teachers and researchers are responding to what Maxine Hairston labeled "the revolution in the teaching of writing." Based on the research and classroom application of that research over a twenty-year period, Hairston proposed a new paradigm (a common body of beliefs and assumptions held by most practitioners in the field) that was a shift away from the traditional literature-based teaching of composition. She listed twelve features of the emerging paradigm:
1. It focuses on the **writing process**; instructors intervene in students’ writing during the process.
2. It teaches strategies for **invention and discovery**; instructors help students to generate content and discover purpose.
3. It is based on rhetoric: **audience, purpose, and occasion** figure prominently in the assignment of writing tasks.
4. Instructors evaluate the written product by how well it fulfills the writer’s intention and meets the audience’s needs.
5. It views writing as a recursive rather than a linear process; the activities of **pre-writing, writing, and revision** overlap and intertwine.
6. It is holistic, viewing writing as an activity that involves the intuitive and non-rational as well as the rational faculties.
7. It emphasizes that writing is a way of learning and developing as well as a communication skill.
8. It includes a variety of writing modes, expressive as well as expository.
9. It is informed by other disciplines, especially cognitive psychology and linguistics.
10. It views writing as a disciplined creative activity that can be analyzed and described.
11. It is based on linguistic research and research into composing processes.
12. It stresses the principle that writing teachers should be people who write. (1982, p. 82; emphases mine)

In short, the major changes involved in this shifting paradigm are

- an overall focus on the **process** rather than on the **product** of writing;
- concentration by classroom teachers on composing processes rather than on literary discussion;
- focus on the writer, and on the relationship between reader and writer;
- interest in research on writing processes and classroom teaching; and
- commitment to the idea that teaching effective, successful writing is possible.

Although researchers no longer think that writing processes can be fully described by a neat paradigm, the resulting emphasis on process has amounted to a revolution in the way teachers approach writing. As a result of this revolution, the study of composition is currently considered a serious discipline and worthy of advanced

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graduate work. By 1980, at least twenty major universities, including Carnegie-Mellon, Ohio State, Rutgers, and the University of Texas/Austin, offered doctorates in composition and rhetoric; many more institutions have full-fledged master's programs (Corbett, 1987). Undergraduate English and Education majors preparing to teach English in secondary schools are often required to take a class in the methodology of teaching composition. A great variety of textbooks for rhetoric and composition studies is available to help inexperienced teachers of writing examine their teaching philosophies, construct writing curricula, and investigate and solve classroom problems.* Among them are texts such as William Irmscher's *Teaching Expository Writing* (1979), Ericka Lindemann's *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* (1987), and Robert Connor and Cheryl Glenn's *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing* (1992).

In addition to current materials and degree programs, today's teachers of composition have access to networking and new research at annual regional and national meetings of such organizations as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), College Composition and Communication Conference (4 C's), and The National Testing Network in Writing (NTNW). Professional composition journals include *The English Journal*, aimed at public school teachers; a variety of publications, such as such as *College Composition and Communication, College English, The Journal of Basic Writing, and Composition and Computers*, aimed at post-secondary teachers; and more theory-oriented publications such as *Written Communication, The Rhetoric Review, and Research in the Teaching of English*.

**Beginnings**

In 1963, to encourage research in and recognition of the young field of composition, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published its first, rather spartan survey of composition research. By the late 1960s, composition teachers were meeting, doing research, and writing about student writing processes, that is, the many complex, recursive steps (or phases) that writers move through as they construct a product (Berlin, 1990).

In *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, Ericka Lindemann defines rhetoric broadly: "[W]hen we use language in more formal ways, with the premeditated intention of changing attitudes or behaviors, of explaining a subject matter, of expressing the self, or of calling attention to a text that can be appreciated for its artistic merits, our

*The annotated bibliography at the end of this book provides suggestions for a beginning research library and for other useful source material for each chapter.*

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purpose is rhetorical" (1987, p. 37). The seminal articles and books discussed below provided the basis for the development of the field of composition and rhetoric over the last quarter-century, a development that resulted in the shifting paradigm discussed by Hairston (above). Moreover, the developments in NES research outlined below function as a background for understanding ESL research and pedagogy.

The Expressive School

As pedagogy that would instruct students in the essentials of writing began to develop, practitioners in the emerging field of composition divided into two groups. Teachers of expressive writing focused on sincerity, integrity, spontaneity, and originality in composition classrooms; students were encouraged to “discover” themselves through language (Elbow, 1991a, 1991b; Faigley, 1986; Rohman, 1965). Teachers and researchers believed in expressive, self-actualizing writing in which students “discovered” ideas and themselves through freewriting and brainstorming (Coles, 1974, 1978; Elbow, 1973; Macrorie, 1970, 1976; Moffett, 1968). Focus in the classroom turned away from the final product, the structuring of essays and correction of error, to concentrate on creativity and self-discovery through the use of journals or daybooks, in which students wrote “freely,” without the consequences of grammar evaluation, teacher-imposed topics and structures, critical comments, and, often, grades. The use of freewriting techniques that allowed students to use language as an aid to thinking and discovery supplanted impersonal prose, literary analysis, and the concentration on the product of writing that had existed in previous decades.

Peter Elbow is perhaps the best-known of the “freewriting” school. In Writing Without Teachers (1973), he encourages writers to put all their ideas on paper, quickly, without the revisions in word and sentence structure that can “interrupt” thought, and without lifting their pens from their papers. Through this freewriting, which Elbow considers a relatively risk-free way of transferring ideas into words and onto a page, students will discover both real meaning and what they want to say. This “unfocused exploring” is particularly useful in developing the writer's unique and authentic “voice,” a genuineness in the author's perception of his/her subject. One variation of freewriting, also developed by Elbow, is “looping”: freewriting for a short period of time, then re-reading and selecting the most important idea (a “center of gravity sentence”) from that brainstorming to use as a beginning for another short period of freewriting. In a 1989 article, Elbow says that he values freewriting because
it can lead to a certain *experience* of writing or kind of writing process
. . . “getting rolling,” “getting steaming along,” “a door opening,”
“getting warmed up,” “juices flowing,” or “sailing.” These all point to
the states of increased intensity or arousal or excitement. In these
states it feels as though more things come to mind, bubble up and
that somehow they fall more directly into language. (p. 60)

and *A Writing Teacher Teaches Writing* (1985b), and his many articles
(1978, 1985a 1988) have elaborated on freewriting techniques by
showing how to implement them in the classroom: by incorporating
paired student discussion and responses and, especially, by using
individual teacher-student conferencing outside of class, at each stage
of the writing process. Murray encourages teachers to limit the practice
of “authoritative teaching” and instead to practice “responsive
teaching”—that is, to respond to students’ writing, discussion, and
questions rather than to proclaim answers.

The Cognitive School

The initial shift from product to process by the expressive school
also led to research from another group of composition practitioners.
During the 1970s, cognitivists began to investigate the writing
process and process teaching; they were particularly interested in
how these processes were related to cognitive psychology and to
psycholinguistics. Proponents believed in a research-based, audience-
focused, context-based approach to the processes of writing, in which
writers construct reality through language (Britton et al., 1975;
Cognitive researchers studied how writers approach tasks by problem-
solving in areas such as audience, purpose, and the situation for
writing. Research first focused on the early stages of composing:
invention (idea generation) and arrangement (organization of
ideas). In composition classrooms, teachers also focused on the initial
stages of writing, often called pre-writing; they began to teach pre-
writing strategies that allowed their students to generate ideas and
to arrange those ideas successfully. Students were encouraged to
experiment with a variety of pre-writing techniques, including
brainstorming, freewriting, outlining, cubing, clustering (see Figure
1–1, page 6), and listing. A student using cubing, for example,
visualizes a three-dimensional block. On each of the block’s six sides is
a task that the student uses to generate ideas about her subject: describe
it, compare it, associate it, analyze it, apply it, and argue for/against it.
One contribution of the cognitivists to the field of composition was the use of "invention heuristics," first pioneered by Kenneth Burke (1945). These organized lists of questions helped writers to generate, develop, and arrange their ideas. Such lists range from the relatively simple journalistic questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how to the more complex questions of Richard Young et al.'s (1970) multifaceted "tagmemic" theory that "asks writers to view their subject (whether it be an idea, event, or object) from three perspectives: as an isolated entity, as a dynamic process, and as a fully developed system" (Tarvers, 1990, p. 3). A third heuristic based on Aristotle's "topics" often appears in composition textbooks. The following table, from Elizabeth Cowen Neeld's Writing, illustrates how classical heuristics support students' invention processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1–1 INVENTION HEURISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How does the dictionary define ______?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What earlier words did ______ come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do I mean by ______?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What group of things does ______ seem to belong to? How is ______ different from other things in this group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What parts can ______ be divided into?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6. Did ______ mean something in the past that it doesn’t mean now? If so, what? What does this former meaning tell us about how the idea grew and developed?

7. Does ______ mean something now that it didn’t years ago? If so, what?

8. What other words mean approximately the same as ________?

9. What are some concrete examples of ________?

10. When is the meaning of ________ misunderstood?

Comparison
1. What is ________ similar to? In what ways?
2. What is ________ different from? In what ways?
3. ________ is superior to what? In what ways?
4. ________ is inferior to what? In what ways?
5. ________ is most unlike what? (What is it opposite to?) In what ways?
6. ________ is most like what? In what ways?

Relationship
1. What causes ________?
2. What is the purpose of ________?
3. Why does ________ happen?
4. What is the consequence of ________?
5. What comes before ________?
6. What comes after ________?

Circumstance
1. Is ________ possible or impossible?
2. What qualities, conditions, or circumstances make ________ possible or impossible?
3. Supposing that ________ is possible, is it also desirable?
4. When did ________ happen previously?
5. Who has done or experienced ________?
6. Who can ________?
7. If ________ starts, what makes it end?
8. What would it take for ________ to happen now?
9. What would prevent ________ from happening?

Testimony
1. What have I heard people say about ________?
2. Do I know any facts or statistics about ________? If so, what?
3. Have I talked with anyone about ________?
4. Do I know a famous or well-known saying (e.g., “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”) about ________? (1986, pp. 46–47)

As cognitivist theories began to affect the composition classroom, teachers shifted to a more balanced combination of process and product. Instead of concentrating exclusively on the product, as the traditionalists had, or on the personal development of the individual student through expressive writing, teachers and students worked with the phases of the writing process that resulted in a final product.

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Early Writing Process Research

Investigations by both Expressivists and Cognitivists into pre-writing processes expanded into more formal educational research that observed working writers. The method of data collection was often **case study research**: careful and detailed observations of a single case over a period of time and/or of a small group of writers during a single situation. The data were then categorized, interpreted, and reported. Many of the early studies used a “think-aloud” methodology, in which writers spoke their thoughts as they composed or planned their writing. Teacher-researchers such as Janet Emig (1977), Nancy Sommers (1980), and Sondra Perl (1980) used “think-aloud” **protocols** to study the composing processes—the writing behaviors—of students writing in secondary and post-secondary classrooms. In addition, their work examined the writing processes of both experienced and inexperienced adult writers. These researchers discovered that (a) there are many kinds of writing processes and that (b) composing is not necessarily linear. When writers are composing, they don’t always **plan**, **write**, and **revise**, but they follow a recursive pattern, often going back in their prose to previous words, sentences, or paragraphs. They return to re-read, to remember, to add or edit, or perhaps to re-capture the momentum of their writing. For many writers, the process of putting words on paper is “two steps forward, one step back,” a process of ebb and flow as they write.

The use of think-aloud composing protocols by Linda Flower (1979) and Flower and John Hayes (1980) focused on cognitive development and problem-solving. Flower and Hayes demonstrated that (a) because goals direct composing, there must be a purpose for writing; (b) simple cognitive operations produce enormously complex actions; and (c) successful writers often use a variety of composing processes, depending on the writing situation and the parameters of the task. In addition, Flower observed the differences between “writer-based” and “reader-based” prose. Writer-based prose is verbal expression written by a writer to himself and by himself. It is the working of his own verbal thought. In its structure, Writer-based prose reflects the associative, narrative path of the writer’s own confrontation with her subject. [Reader-based prose is] a deliberate attempt to communicate something to a reader. To do that it creates shared language and shared context between writer and reader. It also offers the reader an issue-oriented, rhetorical structure rather than a replay of the writer’s discovery processes. (1979, pp. 19–20)

Basic Writers

Late in the 1970s, social changes brought to universities many
students whose first language was not English, or was not Edited Standard English (ESE). Studies of these writers by sociolinguists and composition teachers/researchers found that these new students were worthy of respect and care; they were not intellectually deficient, but were linguistically and culturally diverse. In particular, Mina Shaughnessy’s seminal work, *Errors and Expectations* (1977), reported on her two decades of studying “severely underprepared” freshmen, whom she called **Basic Writers**, at the City University of New York. Shaughnessy studied 4,000 student essays, analyzed the errors, and posited that the cause of the error is more important than the fact of the error. Her book explained the developmental problems faced by such students, particularly those who had limited English proficiency (LEP), who were bidialectical (principally black students), and/or whose reading skills, as well as writing skills, were deficient.

What has been so damaging about the experience of BW [Basic Writing] students with written English is that it has been so confusing, and worse, that they have become resigned to this confusion, to not knowing, to the substitution of protective tactics or private systems or makeshift strategies for genuine mastery of written English in any form... Such was the quality of their instruction that no one saw the **intelligence of their mistakes** or thought to harness that intelligence in the service of learning.  

(1977, pp. 10-11; emphasis mine)

Shaughnessy recommended not only identification of student errors but also discovery of the linguistic and cultural reasons for the errors. In what was then a surprising innovation, she asked students to explain why they made the mistakes she found; she then designed her teaching around the misconceptions, misunderstandings, and lack of knowledge her students articulated. She encouraged the teaching of the conventions of academic prose, not so much because they were “correct” but because they fulfilled the expectations of the academic audience and were therefore necessary for successful communication. She focused her students’ attention on **audience expectations**, and she demonstrated the necessity of teaching coping skills designed to meet those expectations and to build student confidence.

Another result of the influx of Basic Writers and LEP students to colleges and universities, particularly under some “open admissions” policies, was the development of “writing laboratories” or “writing,” which provided additional assistance and resources for students. Writers from all disciplines began to use writing centers for help identifying and recognizing the forms of ESE that would help them in effective writing (Kasden and Hoeben, 1980; Olsen, 1984). Areas addressed in writing centers ranged from strategies for identifying audience and purpose, to sentence combining to improve the
sophistication of sentence structure, to building fluency and self-confidence, to working on grammatical correctness. Today, writing centers also provide opportunities for peer review and audience analysis (Dorazio, 1992). Although these resource centers have come under fire from those who feel that "remediation" should not be the function of post-secondary education, they have become an integral part of many institutions.

The continued influx of students whose native languages are not ESE will fuel additional research into their needs and their empowerment. More specifically, there will be research into the needs and problems of the overlapping categories of "underprepared" students, LEP students, and ESL students. Teachers will need educational experiences that will prepare them for multicultural classrooms so that they will be better able to help their students (Chaudron, 1988; Dean, 1989; Hyltenstam and Pienemann, 1985).

**Current Research Trends**

While study continues in many of the areas begun in the 1970s, some new or rejuvenated issues have appeared in the last decade: the social nature of writing, ethnographic studies of composing in the workplace as well as in schools, the use of computers in composition teaching, the work of James Kinneavy, the reading-writing connection, and composition classroom dynamics.

**The Social Nature of Writing**

In the 1980s, much research focused on the more theoretical area of the social nature of writing, of how cognitive processes function and are conditioned by social and historical forces, and how social circumstances shape the teaching—and the learning—of writing (Faigley, 1986; Fish, 1980, 1990; Lunsford, 1990). Patricia Bizzell (1982) and Kenneth Bruffee (1986) argue that knowledge itself is socially constructed, and they have examined in some detail how the situation and the social context in which writing processes are performed affect those processes. They found that any writing, whether about the self or reality, always develops in relation to previous texts and contexts, situations and experiences. In other words, the writing situation puts social and psychological, as well as rhetorical, constraints on the writer. For example, a writer involved in an automobile accident following a party would describe the accident differently for three different writing situations: (a) in a letter to her mother, (b) in a written report for the insurance company, and (c) in an essay for her freshman English professor. She would make different rhetorical choices precisely because each of these three social groups (the family, the insurance
company, and the composition classroom) construct meaning differently.

In composition research, this awareness of writing situation in academic contexts has developed into the concept of "discourse communities" (Faigley, 1985). The term discourse refers to multi-sentence chunks of language; a community is a group of people with similar values, aims, aspirations, and expectations. Because texts are almost always written for persons in restricted groups or communities, within a language community, people acquire special kinds of discourse competence that enable them to participate in specialized groups. Members [of that community] 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.

(Faigley, 1985, p. 12)

In his article "Inventing the University," David Bartholomae contends that different communities can be expected to have different perspectives and audience expectations, so many students have difficulty with the multiple communities' conventions of academic writing.

Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion—Invent the university, that is, or a branch of it, like history or anthropology or economics or English. The student has to learn how to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community.

(1985, p. 34)

In other words, because students lack the language, the experience, and sometimes even the awareness that the academic community has cultural, social, and rhetorical expectations, they are often involved in a constant struggle just to communicate.

In the examination of discourse that is socially constructed and evaluated, some researchers have called for the empowerment of students, and have argued vehemently against the belief that Basic Writers are cognitively deficient or "remedial" (Hull and Rose, 1989; Rose, 1985a, 1985b, 1989). Glynda Hull et al. suggest that teachers can "inadvertently participate in the social construction of attitudes and beliefs about remediation which may limit the learning that takes place in our classrooms" (1991, p. 300). Instead, these researchers view Basic Writers as unfamiliar with the discourse community that evaluates them, and their errors as systematic gaps in their knowledge.

To belong to a discourse community is to belong to a knowledge community. Teachers must therefore help students learn how to "search beyond their own limited present experience and knowledge". 

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to find ways to immerse writing students in academic knowledge/discourse communities so they can write from within those communities” (Reither, 1988, p. 144).

Ethnographic Research and Composing Processes

Many of the composition issues of the 1980s lent themselves to ethnographic study: observers enter a specific setting to collect data and to analyze writing processes and practices in specific work-related and culture-related communities—the job, the family, and the classroom (see Brannon, 1985; Crandall, 1981; Harrison, 1987; Scribner and Cole, 1981). Clifford Geertz (1973) called this kind of research “thick description”: writing a detailed account of what ethnographers observe, then studying the accounts to discover and understand what happened in order to “reduce the puzzlement.” Susan Florio and Christopher Clark (1982), for example, examined the functions of writing in one elementary school classroom, while Kenneth Kantor (1984) studied composing processes in a secondary school creative writing class from three perspectives: as a participant observer, an interviewer, and an examiner of student writing. In one of the best-known ethnographic studies, Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms (1983), Shirley Brice Heath reported on her ten-year study of working class families in two communities in the Carolina Piedmont. Among other areas, Heath investigated and interpreted the differences and relationships between attitudes and expectations concerning literacy—reading and writing—at school and at home. Another important ethnographic study by Lee O’Dell and Dixie Goswami (1982) examined literacy in the workplace; they studied eleven workers in a social services agency whose jobs required a substantial amount of writing.*

Ethnographic studies of the cognitive development of student writers and composing processes have produced much of the recent research in the field. Mike Rose (1985b) and Linda Flower (1989) examined cognitive and emotional problems in the composing process that result in “writer’s block” and offered strategies for overcoming those problems. Peter Smagorinsky demonstrated the relationship between background knowledge and the composing process through the use of protocol analysis (1991). Other researchers and teachers focused on the effects of audience analysis on student writing and on

*Some ethnographic studies incorporate aspects of empirical research, which is distinguished from the qualitative, descriptive, holistic research of ethnography by its attention to quantitative data that are analyzed, often by statistical means. O’Dell and Goswami, for example, also statistically analyzed six textual features of their participants’ writing.

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the use of audience specification in writing assignments (K.Black, 1989; Redd-Boyd and Slater, 1989). Still others studied revision processes (Faigley and Witte, 1981; Flower et al., 1986), which they identified as being as recursive as composing processes. These researchers differentiated between experienced and inexperienced writers, and between surface changes, called editing, and the more significant text-based changes—revisions—that affect the content of the writing. Nancy Sommers, in a retrospective article on revising research, put it simply: “You can't just change the words around and get the ideas right” (1992, p. 26).

Computers and Composition Teaching

The use of computers in the teaching of writing was originally limited to word processing, which benefited students by providing easy correction and revision. Editing programs provided spelling checkers, diction flaggers, and readability scores that assisted students with textual errors.* During the past decade, the use of computers in composition teaching has grown dramatically. Software programs and teacher-designed computer exercises that prompt the writer to compose and revise and then offer suggestions for improvement have become available (Anandam, 1983; Bacig et al., 1991; Collier, 1983; Davis, 1984; Haas, 1989; D. Rodrigues, 1985). Comment files and networked computers allow students to review each other's drafts, and allow teachers to comment on and evaluate student prose (Dalute, 1985, 1986; Jansen et al., 1987; Joram et al., 1992; Mabrito, 1991; Marshall, 1985; Schwartz, 1985; Varone and D'Agostino, 1990).

Current software programs also analyze texts quantitatively by identifying discourse features such as word frequency and sentence length, and by providing information for statistical analysis concerning student use of language, changes from draft to draft, and number and type of revisions (Hull, 1987; Reid and Findlay, 1986; Smith, in press). Studies of computer-based revision strategies (Bridwell, Sirc, and Brooke, 1984; Dalute, 1986) reported the increased ease of revision with computers, and Dawn Rodrigues and Raymond Rodrigues (1989) demonstrated that using computers in the teaching of composition, whether in a full-time computer classroom or as a supplement to a writing class, changes the roles of both students and teachers. Computer conferencing and networked group work among students


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also changes the classroom environment, prompting classroom community and collaborative learning (Shriner and Rice, 1989; Thompson, 1989). Kate Kiefer and Charles Smith (1984), working with a Bell Laboratories series of text-analysis programs, the Writer's Workbench, empirically analyzed the number and types of revisions made by college freshmen working with and without computers. Kiefer and Smith reported that student editing skills increased as a result of computer-assisted instruction, and that students thought that computer use made revisions and writing easier.

With the expansion in the numbers and use of computer laboratories and computer classrooms in the teaching of composition, new research will continue to seek better ways to implement technology and to develop better writers through collaborative learning and individual teaching and learning styles (Schwartz, 1985; Selfe, Rodrigues, and Oates, 1989; Shriner and Rice, 1989). In a large-scale study of the use of computer classrooms in composition classes, for example, Stephen Bernhardt et al. (1989) assessed the broad, measurable effect of using computers to teach introductory college composition courses. Results paralleled prior research in two important ways. They indicated that the use of computers was favored attitudinally by the students and that students revised essays at levels substantially higher than the control group. Current computer network technology can create an interactive classroom that supports Murray's and Elbow's student-centered teaching methodologies and reinforces Bruffee's and Bizzell's notions that knowledge and discourse are socially constructed.

**James Kinneavy and Traditional Rhetoric**

For many teacher-researchers, the '80s offered an opportunity to reexamine the concepts of classical rhetoric, particularly as they were interpreted by James Kinneavy in his article "The Basic Aims of Discourse" (1969). Kinneavy organized discourse into four main types or **aims**: reference, persuasive, literary, and expressive. Each kind of discourse has a different aim and emphasis:

- **reference** discourse emphasizes the **subject**
- **persuasive** discourse emphasizes the **reader**
- **literary** discourse emphasizes **language**
- **expressive** discourse emphasizes the **writer**

In his determination of differing discourse purposes, Kinneavy also distinguished between **means** and **ends**. Methods of developing discourse, such as comparison/contrast, definition, and cause-effect, were, according to Kinneavy, means to the end (that is, modes) and should not be the aim of discourse. Instead, writers should identify the
aims of their discourse—for example, to explain, to argue, or to explore—and then use the modes necessary for successful communication.

Applied by researchers, teachers, and textbook authors in the ‘80s, Kinneavy’s paradigm has resulted in the virtual abandonment of the “comparison/contrast essay” and the “definition essay” in some composition classrooms because (a) these modes should be used as means, not ends in themselves, and (b) such discourse forms do not exist in the real world (Hagaman, 1980; Harris and Moran, 1979). Instead, students in Kinneavian composition classes may use several of these modes within a single essay (Cooper and O’Dell, 1978; Kinneavy, McCleary, and Nakadate, 1985; S.D. Reid, 1992a). Students in these classes also focus on the purpose of the discourse—the reason the writer decides to compose. Their aims discipline their purposes. When both aim and purpose are taught, the focus is on the social function of the product: explaining or reporting (referential discourse), arguing or problem-solving (persuasive discourse), or remembering or observing (expressive or literary discourse). The concepts of audience and purpose, of communicating competently, are paramount; composing processes are taught in a rhetorical context.

The Reading-Writing Connection

The proposition that reading and writing are integrally linked as skills and as makers of knowledge has been the focus of researchers for decades. Such investigation has been further informed by research that shows that reading is an active, not a passive, experience. In addition, research has shown that correlations exist between effective readers and effective writers (Britton, 1985; Salvatori, 1983; Tierney and Pearson, 1984); that reading is a form of learning (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1984a, 1984b; Berthoff, 1985); and that reading and writing have common cognitive processes (Flower et al., 1990; Spivey, 1991). Marion Crowhurst demonstrated empirically the relationships between reading and writing persuasive discourse (1991). Louise Rosenblatt calls the relationship between the writer and the reader the “transactional paradigm”: the human activity in which “the individual and the social, cultural and natural elements interfuse” (1988, p. 8). That is, in similar ways, the writer actively discovers and constructs meaning, interpreting and re-interpreting information for a reader, and the reader reconstructs and rediscovers that meaning by actively bringing her world knowledge and experience to the text (Horowitz, 1988; Smith, 1987; Spivey, 1987). In this paradigm, “text [is] no longer simply an artifact of the writing process but is the primary and essential link between writer and reader ” (Huckin and Flower, 1990, p. 347).
In this constructivist view of the reading process, readers comprise "interpretive communities" that are analogous to the "discourse communities" of writers (Garrett-Petts, 1988). The reader brings to a text the sum total of all prior knowledge and experience—what some reading researchers call schemata: conventional knowledge structures that are activated under various circumstances, in the interpretation of what we experience (Hare and Fitzsimmons, 1991; Meyer, 1982; Meyer and Rice, 1982). "[R]eading of texts is an active event: it necessarily entails the bringing of prior knowledge to bear upon what is read. [Readers use this knowledge to enter into a] transaction with the text that makes the resulting understanding and interpreting individual and unique" (Purves, 1988, pp. 69-70). Interpretation is, then, a problem-solving process. More experienced readers may respond by using strategies that try to account for the writer's intentions and the writing situation as well as the meaning of the text (Comprone, 1986; D'Angelo, 1986; Haas and Flower, 1988). "Reader response" research, which investigates the cognitive relationships between reading and writing, will continue to affect the composition classroom (Clifford, 1991; Haas and Flower, 1988; Hansson, 1992; Kirsch, 1989; Rosenblatt, 1988; Sheridan, 1991).

**Individualization and Collaboration in the Classroom**

In the 1980s another area of research began that continues to have direct impact on the teaching of composition: the investigation into classroom dynamics and into individualization in learning styles, composing processes, and classroom interaction. Stephen Witte (1987) and Muriel Harris (1989), for example, describe differences between multidraft writers, for whom freewriting, drafting, discovering, selection, re-drafting, and dramatic revisions are crucial to clarifying their thinking and writing a quality text, and single-draft writers, who plan intensively before writing anything and "see" words, sentences, and paragraphs in their heads. Studies have also continued in the theoretical and practical bases for collaboration in the classroom:

1. cooperation between teacher and students in identifying processes, class objectives, and evaluation criteria for assignments (Bishop, 1992; Fleckenstein, 1992; Jensen and DiTiberio, 1989);
2. student group work and peer review of writing that provide the students with authentic audiences, discussion that leads to discovery, and necessary peer feedback (Freedman, 1992; S. D. Reid, 1992b; Tebo-Messina, 1989; Trimbur, 1989); and
3. metacognition—the raised and shared, articulated awareness of students and teachers about what they are doing and why they are doing it (Reither, 1988).

*Overview of NES Composition*
In a collaborative classroom, teachers are responsible for task setting, for classroom management, and for stimulating student learning; students, on the other hand, are responsible for the intellectual negotiation that results in their taking charge of their own learning (Weiner, 1986).

**Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)**

This movement, which has occurred periodically in the field of composition for fifty years, has returned. Rather than confining the teaching of writing to freshman composition courses and other English department writing courses at the college level, writing across the curriculum advocates “writing-intensive” courses in all disciplines, with the recognition of writing as fundamental to discipline-oriented learning. “Write-to-Learn” programs stress the value of writing in chemistry and psychology as well as English classes. Students “pre-write” about upcoming topics in order to activate their schema (background knowledge) about that topic; they summarize assigned reading in their “learning logs” and synthesize lecture notes, then analyze in writing what they have learned. The newest movement toward writing across the curriculum is closely linked with vocational writing and the social movement in composition teaching. Proponents believe that students in all disciplines need intensive writing preparation for entrance into and empowerment in those discourse communities across the university and beyond (Bartholomae, 1985; Fulwiler, 1988; McLeod, 1986, 1989; Russell, 1987, 1990; Walvoord and McCarthy, 1991).

**Testing and Assessing Writing**

Testing the writing skills of NESs involves having students write about a topic (as opposed to discrete-point grammar testing). Issues of interest to both researchers and classroom teachers—topic design, directions, content-fair topics, purposes for testing, and evaluation methods—have been discussed for decades (Brossell, 1982; Cooper and O’Dell, 1977). Current research systematically describes holistic scoring procedures,* parameters for test design, the links between purposes for testing and purposes for evaluation, and statistical procedures for measuring valid and reliable test instruments (Greenberg, 1981; Huot, 1990; McKendy, 1992; Purves, 1992; Ruth and Murphy, 1984, 1987; E. White, 1986, 1990). New research will continue discussion in these areas and will include the social aspects for testing: the benefits of testing for students, respect for writers from differing backgrounds, and

* Holistic scoring involves the assigning of a single score to a piece of writing based on a “whole” reading of the essay. See Chapter 9 for further discussion.

**Classroom Implementation**

Theory derived from research in an applied field such as composition should be applicable—and then applied—in the classroom. Nevertheless, the impact of research on the classroom has been incremental rather than dramatic, manifested most visibly in the decrease of literature-based freshman composition courses and the increase of skills-based courses with nonfiction essays and/or student essays as models and for discussion. Textbooks and syllabi have been developed that allow students to discuss composing ideas and strategies in the classroom that can then be incorporated into successful communicative prose. In many classes students work together, teaching each other and discussing the reading of texts and of peer drafts; teachers organize and facilitate those discussions. In-class pre-writing and revision processes, and a focus on what Wayne Booth (1963) called the conscious balance between writer, subject, and audience, has become more important. As a result, the concepts of **authentic purposes and audiences** have begun to dominate the composition class (Durrant and Duke, 1990; Shriver, 1992).

In keeping with the concepts of collaborative classrooms and shared responsibility for learning, teachers often ask for student input concerning writing tasks and evaluation criteria for those tasks. They require their students to identify not only audiences, purposes, and subjects but also their intentions: what they think they have accomplished in any writing task, what they consider weaknesses and strengths in any of their written products, and what revisions they think they need to make in those products. In other words, today's freshman composition teachers give students **ownership** of their writing and their learning, as well as multiple opportunities to discover and to articulate what they are doing and why they are doing it.

**Conclusion**

In the last decade, the roles of traditional product-bound teaching and expressive writing have begun to decline in composition classrooms. Although one or the other of these methodologies still prevails in some classrooms, many teachers and researchers have begun to implement a more balanced approach to the teaching of writing. In many composition classes, students are taught the essential elements and processes of writing and are encouraged to discover and extend their writing proficiencies. In addition, the concepts of audience and
purpose as well as subject matter are stressed. The product, the final paper, will never again be the solitary focus of these composition classes, but it has assumed its rightful position—at the end of a significant number of intermingled, recursive writing processes. The curriculum in many composition programs includes all phases of the writing process, from the design of the assignment to individual generation of material, to issues of arrangement and presentation that fulfill the expectations of the audience, to the final product, with equal importance.

Discussion Questions

1. Consider the teaching of writing you have experienced personally as a student writer. Which approach(es) discussed in this chapter were used? The product approach? The expressivist? The cognitivist? The process? A combination? How successful was each approach?

2. In a small group of peers, discuss your writing and revising processes. Are you more a freewriter or an outliner in your idea generation process? Do you have multiple strategies for drafting? What are your strategies? Be specific.

3. In a small group of peers, share the evaluation or remembering paper you wrote in response to Writing Question #1 or #3 below. Take notes that might aid you as you begin to form your philosophy of teaching writing.

4. What are your attitudes toward small group and/or collaborative work? Discuss with your peers the reasons for your attitudes.

5. What new ideas about composition and rhetoric did you encounter in this chapter? Which of those ideas interests you? Which do you agree or disagree with? Why? Which of the ideas in this chapter could have helped your writing when you were in high school? Which might have been detrimental? Why?

6. Re-read Maxine Hairston's twelve features of the shifting paradigm in composition teaching at the beginning of this chapter. Which of these do you think are most important? Why?

7. What experiences have you had with computers and writing? What is your opinion concerning the use of computers in an ESL writing class?

8. Have you had any experiences with Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and/or with writing-intensive courses outside the English Department? If so, describe and evaluate those experiences. If not, predict what some of the advantages and disadvantages of a WAC program might be.
Writing

1. Think about several pieces of writing you have done during the past five years. Choose one that you thought was most successful or interesting or challenging or frustrating. Using the Kinneavian approach of “aims,” write a brief “remembering” essay that details the process you used to write that piece and describes what made that piece of writing successful, interesting, challenging, or frustrating.

2. Choose one of the ideas or issues discussed in this chapter (such as collaborative learning, writing centers, writing across the curriculum). Read three of the relevant articles cited in this chapter. Make an annotated bibliography of the articles to share with your peers.

3. What kind(s) of writing tests have you taken? Choose one test and analyze its success or failure in terms of topic design. Was the topic interesting? Were you able to address it in the time assigned? Were you satisfied with the results of the test? Why or why not?

4. Write a brief essay that analyzes the group discussion you participated in Discussion Question #2 (above). What did you learn? How did you feel about the discussion? Was it beneficial? Why or why not? Be specific.