

FOREWORD

During my more than 30 years of teaching writing to international, bilingual, Generation 1.5, and other students, I have been introduced to, and attempted, all of the major pedagogical approaches. In the 1950s and early '60s, when the teaching of writing became an issue separate from the teaching of language, we were introduced to the current-traditional methods, product-based approaches in which focus on correct form dominated our work (see Johns 1997). When writing mattered and wasn't just a reflection of speech (see the audiolingual method), we were interested, first of all, in perfect representations of words and sentences. Weideman (2000) refers to this period in language teaching history as "scientific": teachers "proceeded in a lockstep fashion, teaching bits of language from the grammatically simple to the grammatically more complex" (5). Our colleagues in first language composition and the work in contrastive rhetoric also introduced us to simple discourse forms. Comparison-contrast, cause-effect, and narrative were three forms that we taught, in a lockstep manner, as structures for essays. There seemed to be only one ESL (and novice student) composition book, *American English Rhetoric* by Robert Bander, published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, that we were given to use in our composition classes. A typical chapter title was "The Expository Composition: Developed by Comparison and Contrast."

Influenced in the 1960s by world events and remarkable changes in the United States, we began to question the approaches that concentrated solely on form and correctness, considering them to be too constraining for the students we were attempting to liberate. Thus, there occurred in composition instruction (and elsewhere) a major paradigm shift: from focus on perfect sentences and perfectly structured texts to the students, writers drafting and redrafting their assignments to solve rhetorical problems through texts. The learner-centered "process" movement, which continues to be basic to many composition programs, concentrated its efforts upon developing the learners' search for meaning and their writing processes. Rather than devoting time to perfection in student writing and stamping out errors, the teachers encouraged

meaning-making, drafting, revising, and redrafting, all taking place in a collaborative environment where students peer reviewed each other's work. Students were encouraged throughout the process to reflect, thus developing a metacognitive awareness of their individual ways of approaching, and solving, their rhetorical problems. For some students and many teachers the process movement has, in fact, been liberating. As we now know so well, perfection and form are not all there is to successful writing.

However, there's another side of the process story that needs to be considered as we teach novice and second language students, many of whom do not yet control the registers or syntax of academic or professional Englishes. Jim Martin (1985), an Australian theorist, argues that the process movement has benefited only certain groups of students: those who are sufficiently familiar with the text products ("the genres") required in professional or academic context. Martin maintains that process approaches "promote a situation in which only the brightest, middle-class, monolingual students will benefit" (61) since they are the ones who have already begun to be initiated by their families or their elite schools into the academic and professional discourse communities they plan to enter. As Anyon (1980) and others have noted, most schools are already structured by social class, preparing selected students for certain types of professional lives. Support of these class disparities has no place in our composition programs.

So what do we do? We attempt, in some way, to close the gaps among rich, middle class, and poor as well as between those who speak and write English in various registers with ease and those who don't. In the theory and practice that is typical of post-process methodologies, a variety of pedagogies designed to achieve these ends have been developed. Some of those efforts follow the work of the New Rhetoricians in North America (see, e.g., Coe 2002), individuals who believe that to understand writing, a person must first understand the context and community in which the writing takes place. Others, such as the Australians and English for Specific Purposes practitioners, argue that we must teach the functional relationships between what a text should do linguistically and its purposes for the communities in which it will be read or published. In the Australian context (see Feez 1998), curricula have been designed to demonstrate these functional relationships at the text ("genre") and sentence levels. Both text structure and syntax are shown as contributing to success of a text in a specific context.

The Writing Template Book addresses the needs of students who are preparing for high-stakes assessments in contexts where they have

little time to consider their writing processes. It provides for students and teachers three types of templates: the *thesis*, the *introduction/roadmap*, and the *summary*, representing three essential elements in essay structures that are frequently required in high-stakes examinations, nationally (the SAT[®]), internationally (the TOEFL[®] iBT), and more locally, in many city, state, and provincial examinations. Initially, this volume will be useful for novice and ESL/EFL students as they attempt to write under these timed, and stressful, assessment situations. However, the volume can also provide the “training wheels” for writing sentences and paragraphs in a variety of genres for a variety of contexts. Throughout, the author makes the connections between essential discourse functions of essays and other genres (e.g., introduction, argument) and the structures of sentences and paragraphs that work. He provides a number of syntactic possibilities (see, e.g., Conclusion Templates) that teachers (and students) can vary according to prompts or tasks. He demonstrates how these templates can assist students to produce a text that is comprehensible even if errors are made (Roadmap Template Examples with Student Errors, pages 49–51). Fully as important are the vocabulary alternatives, some of which are quite sophisticated. In the *Do you Think* Introduction Template (page 45), for example, the author lists seven adjectives (*fascinating*, *difficult*, *tough*, *thought-provoking*, *interesting*, *multi-dimensional*, and *provocative*), each of which has a somewhat different semantic value. This type of exercise enables teachers and students to examine the differences among the choices, thereby indicating author stance on the issue (see Hyland 2005).

As Kevin B. King notes in his introduction, “one size does not fit all.” This book cannot possibly illustrate the large variety of sentences that fulfill the functions in written texts. However, what it will do for students—and do it well—is get them started, giving them opportunities to explore the syntax, vocabulary, and functions of sentences and paragraphs in the assessments that determine their futures.

Using this volume, teachers can

- introduce and encourage student practice of one or more possibilities in an essential functional category (e.g., Proposition Template, Hedged Disagreement), varying the language and syntax as the students become more proficient
- select one of the sentences produced by students in their practice and work through a paragraph that follows from that sentence

- assist students in modifying the sentences produced to respond to new, but related, prompts
- encourage students to find examples of sentences and paragraphs that serve the same function in authentic texts from the worlds in which they live
- help students to continue to practice sentence variation, particularly in response to a variety of tasks and prompts—so that eventually they will not need the training wheels provided in this volume

As I attend conferences such as that on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and talk to my colleagues who teach native speakers, I notice that textbooks with templates that serve rhetorical functions have entered their worlds, as well. *The Writing Template Book* is an excellent contribution to our pedagogical worlds, particularly for our novice and ESL students who are preparing for high-stakes examinations.

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