

REFERENCE GUIDES TO RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Series Editor, Charles Bazerman

REFERENCE GUIDES TO RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Series Editor, Charles Bazerman

The Series provides compact, comprehensive and convenient surveys of what has been learned through research and practice as composition has emerged as an academic discipline over the last half century. Each volume is devoted to a single topic that has been of interest in rhetoric and composition in recent years, to synthesize and make available the sum and parts of what has been learned on that topic. These reference guides are designed to help deepen classroom practice by making available the collective wisdom of the field and will provide the basis for new research. The Series is intended to be of use to teachers at all levels of education, researchers and scholars of writing, graduate students learning about the field, and all who have interest in or responsibility for writing programs and the teaching of writing.

Parlor Press and The WAC Clearinghouse are collaborating so that these books will be widely available through low-cost print editions and free digital distribution. The publishers and the Series editor are teachers and researchers of writing, committed to the principle that knowledge should freely circulate. We see the opportunities that new technologies have for further democratizing knowledge. And we see that to share the power of writing is to share the means for all to articulate their needs, interest, and learning into the great experiment of literacy.

EXISTING BOOKS IN THE SERIES

Invention in Rhetoric and Composition (2004, Lauer)

Reference Guide to Writing across the Curriculum (2005, Bazerman, Little, Bethel, Chavkin, Fouquette, and Garufis)

Revision: History, Theory, and Practice (2006, Horning and Becker)

Writing Program Administration (2007, McLeod)

Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics (2008, Long)

Argument in Composition (2009, Ramage, Callaway, Clary-Lemon, and Waggoner)

Basic Writing (2010, Otte and Mlynarczyk)

Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy (2010, Bawarshi and Reiff)

Basic Writing

George Otte and Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk

Parlor Press

West Lafayette, Indiana

www.parlorpress.com

The WAC Clearinghouse

<http://wac.colostate.edu/>

Parlor Press LLC, West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

© 2010 by Parlor Press and The WAC Clearinghouse
All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America

S A N : 2 5 4 - 8 8 7 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Otte, George.

Basic writing / George Otte and Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-60235-174-5 (pbk. : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-1-60235-175-2
(hardcover : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-1-60235-176-9 (adobe ebook) -- ISBN
978-1-60235-177-6 (epub ebook)

1. English language--Rhetoric. 2. English language--Grammar--Problems,
exercises, etc. 3. Report writing. I. Mlynarczyk, Rebecca. II. Title.

PE1408.O77 2010

808'.042--dc22

2010008778

Series logo designed by Karl Stolley. Copyediting by Jessica Williams.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Parlor Press, LLC is an independent publisher of scholarly and trade titles in print and multimedia formats. This book is available in paperback, cloth, and Adobe eBook formats from Parlor Press on the World Wide Web at <http://www.parlorpress.com>. For submission information or to find out about Parlor Press publications, write to Parlor Press, 816 Robinson St., West Lafayette, Indiana, 47906, or e-mail editor@parlorpress.com.

The WAC Clearinghouse supports teachers of writing across the disciplines. Hosted by Colorado State University's Composition Program, it brings together four journals, three book series, and resources for teachers who use writing in their courses. This book will also be available free on the Internet at The WAC Clearinghouse (<http://wac.colostate.edu/>).

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Series Editor's Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Charles Bazerman</i>	
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xv</i>
1 <i>Historical Overview</i>	3
The 1960s	4
The 1970s	7
The 1980s	18
The 1990s	27
2000 and Beyond	37
2 <i>Defining Basic Writing and Basic Writers</i>	41
Early Definitions	42
Basic Writing as a Fix-It Station	43
Basic Writing as a Back Formation of First-Year Composition	44
A Sense of Mission and Purpose	47
Adjustments and Revisions	50
Cognitivist Definitions	50
Contextual Definitions	51
Prescribing Without Defining	54
Initiation as a Goal	55
Problems with Initiation as a Goal	59
A Point of Crisis	61
The Vulnerability of Basic Writing	63
The Crisis as Reflected in the Journal of Basic Writing	64
Climate Change for Basic Writing	67
Responding to Calls to Eliminate Basic Writing	67
"Our Apartheid"	69
Context-Contingent Definitions	70
"Basic Writing at a Political Crossroads"	71
Capitulating on Definition	73

3	<i>Practices and Pedagogies</i>	78
	Error	80
	Teaching Complication 1: The Need for Complexity	82
	Teaching Complication 2: The Need for Tolerance	83
	Teaching Complication 3: The Need (Still) for Correctness	84
	Teaching Complication 4: The Need for Process Analysis	85
	Teaching Complication 5: The Need for Interpretation	86
	Teaching Complication 6: The Need for Negotiation	88
	Teaching Complication 7: The Need for (and Lack of) Consensus	89
	Assessment	90
	Teaching to the Test	91
	Teacher Resistance to Institutionally Imposed Testing State-Mandated Testing	94
	Teaching	99
	The Importance of Process	100
	Cognitive Schemes and Their Limitations	101
	A Grab Bag of Instructional Strategies	103
	<i>Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts: A Redefined Teaching Project</i>	105
	The Politics of Identity	110
	Literacy as a Social Practice	114
	Experiments in Mainstreaming	117
	The Fragmentation of the Teaching Enterprise	118
4	<i>Research</i>	122
	Error	123
	Insights from Linguistics	123
	Error Analysis	125
	Upholding the Standard	127
	Changing Attitudes toward Error	128
	Error Recognition	129
	Assessment	132
	Foundational Work in Mass Testing	133
	Disillusionment with Holistic Assessment	135
	Not How to Test, But Whether	138
	Alternatives to Established Assessments	139
	High Schools as Gatekeepers	141
	Process	142
	Writing Process(es)	144
	Thinking Process(es)	145
	Cognition or Discourse Conventions?	148

Academic Literacy	151	
Attitudes and Identities	156	
The Conflict Within, the Conflict Without		158
Case Studies of Conflict and Struggle	160	
5 <i>The Future of Basic Writing</i>	163	
Political Portents	164	
Questioning the Value of Remediation		164
Real-World Repercussions	167	
Basic Writing Under Siege from Within	168	
Arguing for Abolition	168	
The Great Unraveling	170	
Basic Writing Revised	172	
Public Policy and Basic Writing	172	
Alternative Program Structures	174	
Basic Writing for the Twenty-First Century		179
Anticipating the Need	179	
Examining Costs and Benefits	182	
<i>Appendix: Basic Writing Resources</i>	189	
<i>Works Cited</i>	197	
<i>Index</i>	221	
<i>About the Authors</i>	223	