

## 8 Teaching Strategies and Best Practices

The most effective teaching strategies for style no longer rest on rote exercises and drills. Teachers now focus on style “for emphasis of ideas, for readability and visual impact” (Vaught-Alexander 546) in order to present possibilities for students, rather than to impose restrictions. Contemporary scholars recommend the language of grammar not merely to observe conventions and parse sentences, but to explain how writers can achieve a style or voice through syntax and to show how style often entails the use of grammar for rhetorical effect. (This was noted the discussion of stylistic grammars in Chapter 5.) Still, a great deal of ambivalence exists among scholars about the role of grammar (e.g., mechanics, punctuation, usage) and style in writing instruction. This chapter briefly outlines persistent anxiety about style and stylistic grammars before presenting teaching methods that may allay these fears, especially in a handful of textbooks that take a progressive, dynamic approach to style.

Arguments against grammar instruction in particular often assert that it is obsolete for the field of rhetoric and composition, suggesting that writing pedagogies should focus attention elsewhere. For instance, Keith Rhodes warns that “the average first-year composition course is already much more deeply mired in a grammar pit than it ought to be,” and that “the still-emerging discipline of composition will never get a chance to do the full range of good that such a discipline could” as long as public discourse about writing portrays composition as a gate-keeping course (523). Rhodes maintains that books often touted by grammarians as evidence in support of grammatical instruction are, in fact, widely misread. These books include Rei Noguchi’s *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing*, Susan Hunter and Ray Wallace’s *The Place of Grammar in Writing Instruction*, and Constance Weaver’s *Teaching Grammar in Context*. According to Rhodes, no such

text “offers any real support for grammar lessons” (524); instead, they either make tentative claims with heavy qualifications or, in the case of Weaver, actively discourage writing teachers from explicit focus on grammar, in favor of context-based approaches.

As Chapter 5 notes, a handful of scholars resist the rhetoric of fear surrounding such sentence-level issues as grammar. Martha Kolln adamantly objects to the definitive tone of the 1963 Braddock Report in a 1981 issue of *CCC*, stating that grammar is ubiquitous in writing instruction. Moreover, she raises the point that “explicit” attention to grammar can mean many things to many different teachers and researchers. (Her textbook, *Rhetorical Grammar*, is described in this chapter’s overview of linguistic orientations to style.) Like Kolln, Laura Micciche promotes a rhetorical orientation to grammar in her 2004 article, “Making the Case for Rhetorical Grammar,” mentioned in Chapter 5. Micciche illustrates the pedagogical dimensions of this approach through a number of analyses conducted with students, one of them of George W. Bush’s 2002 speech to the UN that urges the invasion of Iraq. Micciche recounts analyzing parts of Bush’s grammar with students, closely attending to qualifying words and phrases such as “likely,” as well as ambiguous verb phrases such as “UN inspectors *believe* Iraq has produced two to four times the amount of biological agents it declared” (qtd. in Micciche 725). Bush and his speech writers carefully choose words to make uncertain indications of biological weapons appear as evidence. The speech does not lie, per se, but it leverages half-truths for as much persuasive power as is possible. Micciche’s students analyze such patterns as parallelism and asyndeton in a range of texts, and then practice imitating those patterns in their own writing. For this purpose, Micciche recommends that students keep a commonplace book to record instances of interesting language that may influence or guide their own composing. This chapter follows Kolln and Micciche’s line of thinking regarding teaching practices and textbooks, identifying how various compositionists recommend teaching style or the rhetorical use of grammar, as it may help students develop their own voices. This chapter also aims to provide a gathering and overview of teaching materials and textbooks available that address style and grammar.

An essay by Patricia Licklider offers what is currently a consensus among composition scholars on teaching sentence-level issues. As she states, so-called explicit focuses through lectures, drills, and exercises

have made no quantifiable impact on the quality of student writing. Thus, contemporary pedagogies have all but abandoned these avenues, moving toward mini-lectures, attention to sentence-level issues during the revision and feedback process, and collaborative models. These approaches enable teachers to devote individualized attention to the various aspects of student writing. As Licklider says,

I seldom teach grammar to an entire class since usually only some students need help with a particular grammatical concept. Rather, I work with students one on one or in small groups . . . . Occasionally, I may “go public” with a grammatical concept if it has ramifications that everyone in a class would find useful. (564)

Likewise, older, sentence-level rhetorics may be brought back to life in contemporary classrooms by using more progressive pedagogies. For instance, Nicholas M. Karolides adapts sentence-combining and Christensen rhetoric for classroom use, with special attention to Bonnie Jean Christensen’s *The Christensen Method: Text and Workbook* (1979), Frank O’Hare’s *Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing without Formal Grammar Instruction* (1973), and William Strong’s *Sentence Combining: A Composing Book* (1983). Echoing critics of these sentence-combining methods, Karolides describes these methods and exercises as theoretically sound, and yet “stilted and stiff . . . given both my interactive teaching style and the nature of college students” (538). Rather than throw the baby out with the bathwater, Karolides explores “a more open approach in which the writers decide how and what to combine rather than following the dictates of cues” (538). This more open approach invites students to generate their own kernel sentences, and prompts them to work in groups to complete exercises, rather than independently from an exercise book (542). To illustrate, Karolides first describes giving students a basic sentence such as “He smiled to himself as he ran,” and then asks students to add a participial phrase. In response, they generate sentences such as the following:

anticipating seeing his girlfriend  
hearing the shouts from the stands  
imagining the surprise of his parents (542)

The class might then proceed by generating similar kernel sentences, and expanding them through the addition of noun phrases, adjec-

tive phrases, or absolute phrases. This approach specifically adapts Christensen Rhetoric, in which teachers are encouraged to introduce the concept of expanding base clauses by tacking on modifiers, while leaving the actual creation and expansion of sentences up to interactive discussion and collaborative activities (something Christensen does not do). Karolides offers a few example sentences that students can study and imitate. Consider the sentence:

1. He dipped his hands in the dichloride solution and shook them,
2. a quick shake,
3. fingers down,
4. like the fingers of a pianist above the keys. (545)

Here, each modifying phrase adds new detail and information to the main clause. Karolides recommends analyzing such sentences with students to help them understand how they can use similar constructions to improve their own writing. These dynamic approaches take into account criticism leveled against sentence-level rhetorics during the 1980s, as well as the line of studies against explicit instruction in grammar. Writing teachers today would be wise to keep these critiques in mind as they craft their own lesson plans, activities, and assignments: Avoid the temptation to dictate all aspects of lesson plans. Give students a genuine opportunity to experiment with units of grammar, and resist the urge to immediately correct their possible mistakes as they do.

Sharon Myers's 2003 article, "Remembering the Sentence," also reanimates sentence-combining pedagogies from a lexical perspective. Myers's use of alternative theories of grammar conflict with Chomsky's by giving attention to "knowledge about the idiosyncrasies of words" and their morphologies (617). Myers quotes Eve Clark, that "the lexicon and syntax" of a language is "intertwined . . . each word carries with it a specification not only of its meaning (or meanings) but also its syntax, the range of constructions in which it can occur" (qtd. in Myers 617). According to Myers, sentence-combining pedagogies are effective not only because they expose students to the variability of word order, but also because they expose them to academic vocabulary and chunks of words that appear frequently in academic writing corpuses. For example, consider how words such as "analyze" and "complicate" might be altered when combining and rewriting sen-

tences. Knowing a word in all its possible forms enables a wide range of stylistic variation on the same idea. For example:

1. This paper analyzes Obama's rhetoric. It complicates previous perceptions of Obama as a far-left liberal.
2. Obama's perception as a far-left liberal is complicated by this paper's analysis of Obama's rhetoric.
3. Although he is perceived as a far-left liberal, analyzing Obama's rhetoric might complicate that picture.
4. Having analyzed Obama's rhetoric in a recent speech, one might encounter complications to the perception of him as a far-left liberal.

These variations combine two simple sentences, and gesture toward the range of options students have even in supposedly rule-governed academic discourse. They also illustrate how words—in this case “analyze” and “complicate”—can be modified to fit different syntactical arrangements and how their position in sentences can shift depending on how writers wish to phrase information.

Uniting sentence-combining pedagogies and corpus linguistics in this way, Myers proposes the use of concordances to help students acquire the academic chunks that experienced writers unconsciously integrate into their prose. In other words, chunks or stock phrases often supply academic writers with a ready-made vocabulary that is already accepted within a given discourse. Examples of chunks include common phrases such as those I have just used: “complicate the perception that” or “challenge the perception of.” Even more common chunks might include “It is likely that” or “According to this view.” (Some readers may think of Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's templates in *They Say/I Say*. These templates rely on a similar premise.) Concordances are simply lists of such phrases and the frequency with which they appear in different collections of texts, such as journals in a given field.

Ultimately, students wishing to acquire an academic style must balance a desire for expression with the need for disciplinary acceptance. Although the last chapter devoted a great amount of attention to difference and deviation, we can never completely do away with style as the accommodation of norms. Lexical grammar and the study of concordances at least avoids the trap of conforming to arbitrary

rules, and instead helps students appreciate how the use of chunks can improve their styles and still permit a degree of flexibility and voice, if used appropriately. Students can then combine these stock phrases with their own writing in a variety of ways (as shown through the example about Obama's speech). Myers explains that this approach works especially well for English as a Second Language (ESL) students because it provides structure and an empirical reference of commonly appearing words and phrases with which native speakers are already familiar.

These approaches to style and grammar can be further re-animated by applying recent work on language difference, including translanguaging and World Englishes, as described in the last two chapters. For example, consider the phrase "talking with a girl." In American English, it has only one literal meaning. In Jamaican English, however, the phrase serves as a euphemism for sex. At the 2012 Watson conference, I attended a presentation in which a WE researcher described the interactions between an American teacher and Jamaican student who had written in a paper that "I started talking to this girl and she got pregnant." This sentence is grammatically correct, but it may strike American readers as stylistically incoherent. How does talking to someone lead to pregnancy? The presenter did not criticize the teacher for lack of familiarity with Jamaican English idioms, but argued for awareness of global Englishes that call for negotiation, instead of correction.

My own reading of this moment sees it as an opportunity to discuss the writer's style. Rather than changing this somewhat charming sentence, alternatives might include the use of semantic items in different combinations of sentences that use clauses or phrases to define what "talking to a girl" means. For example, the writer might experiment with syntax by writing: "So I started talking with this girl, what Americans would call 'going steady with,' and then she got pregnant." The writer maintains the student's original choices, and American readers are invited to appreciate such phrases stylistically—as part of the writer's voice, and thus important to the content. Ultimately, the student might learn that he can craft a unique style by experimenting with American and Jamaican English. Thus, a stylistic approach to World Englishes promotes the strategic use of linguistic resources, seeing how a decision to use one set of conventions in a different context is itself creative and expressive.

T. R. JOHNSON AND *THE RHETORIC OF PLEASURE*

Chapter 2 presented T. R. Johnson's historical views on the role of pleasure in debates on rhetorical style, and his argument there contains the inception for his more pedagogical project. Johnson argues in his 1999 *JAC* article, "Discipline and Pleasure: 'Magic' and Sound," that English departments too often celebrate their own disciplining mechanisms and ability to inflict pain as proof of their legitimacy as a discipline. This tendency is symptomatic of a larger academic suspicion of pleasurable writing or discourse with roots in the Platonic-sophistic split, one that directly impacts students, since they are usually the first victims of the need to prove our disciplinary status through the regulation of writing. In his book, *The Rhetoric of Pleasure*, Johnson refers to a study showing that as much as 85% of students associate academic writing with dread, rules, mistakes, sterility, and the impersonal (62). In light of this information, Johnson asks, "How do we create [a] . . . classroom in which convention appears flexible, negotiable, and open to address?" (449). The question echoes Lu and Horner's approach to style through language difference, though Johnson turns to the classical tradition for solutions.

Johnson's *The Rhetoric of Pleasure* offers an answer to this question, and includes detailed accounts of his own approach to teaching style that are accompanied by students' reactions to the material. The pedagogy offered here avoids treating stylistic devices as a body of knowledge or characteristics of finished writing, and sees style via process pedagogies as Lenora Woodman argued for in a 1982 issue of *JAC*. As Johnson states, his approach "advocates multiple drafts, and, at the same time, considers the ways the formal feature of finished products—stylistic figures, schemes, tropes—can actually play a powerful role in the drafting and revising process" (25).

When introducing stylistic devices from the classical tradition, Johnson refrains from testing students on such devices, and instead explains that they should "try to use at least two of these when you write your short homework papers", and that "you will be required to use eight of them in your longer essay assignments" (38). Johnson's philosophy focuses on what style can offer students, encouraging them to take more pleasure in their writing. Moreover, Johnson carefully distinguishes literary training from more general composition courses, stating that "my goal is not simply to get them to produce heavily styl-

ized language, such as we might find in the Bible or Shakespeare, but rather to practice these devices as a kind of interim measure toward listening to and thinking about their prose more carefully” (40).

As Johnson admits, his students are not initially receptive to the idea of style. Many are intimidated by the Greek and Latin names, and also by the sheer number of devices. A majority of students resist the difficulty and “hassle of dealing with language as carefully as I required” (42). An inductive approach to style appears to dissolve some of the tension, as Johnson leads them through exercises that follow different schemes without identifying the device by name. For instance, here is how he teaches students chiasmus (reverse word order) on the day that first drafts of a major paper are due: First, students identify a compelling passage in their paper and articulate a contrary thought or emotion. Then, as he narrates,

I gave them some time to think, and then I said, “Now, try putting the two terms of this conflict together under a single label, a label that pins down not their opposition, but the connection between them, the thing they share.” Again, I gave them some time to think and said, “Now that you’ve got this term that binds them together, jot down what you think might be the opposite of this term.” I then asked them to retrace these steps and come up with a sentence in which the two key terms of the first half of the sentence were repeated in reverse order in the second half . . . Needless to say, they struggled. After a few minutes, though, several of them were ready to share their attempts, and, as we jostled these examples to fit the form, more of the students began to catch on. The students soon began to bring an extraordinary energy to this task . . . One student, Jessie Courville, said that working on her chiasmus was triggering so many new ideas and possibilities for her paper that she felt as if her mind was about to “boil over.” (43)

It may be difficult to replicate the enthusiasm that Johnson attributes to most of his students. However, Jessie’s experience, in which a stylistic device “triggers” new ideas, illustrates precisely the connection between style and invention that classical rhetoricians and more contemporary theorists, such as Christensen, have always sought.



Johnson follows this activity with a major writing assignment that asks students to analyze the endings of two essays and to compare them in terms of the writers' styles, specifically what rhetorical devices are used and how they contribute to the authors' tones or voices. This major paper also requires students to use eight rhetorical devices in their own writing. The paper is designed to push students to see the relationship between style at the sentence-level and the larger emotions or moods they help generate in a piece of writing. Once they complete first drafts, students then spend time in peer review workshops, focusing on content as well as style. At one point, Johnson distributes a single student's paper to the class for group work, and has each group review a different paragraph and present suggestions. During class discussion, the various groups debate the essay's degree of focus, regarding its tendency to shift away from key themes at the end of each paragraph, and whether or not this needs revision.

Johnson's book integrates style into every stage of the writing process, not merely the end. Teachers might think of several methods to accomplish this that build on Johnson's work. For instance, they might ask students to routinely incorporate different stylistic devices into their papers, and to keep a journal on how such experimentation affects their thinking about their topics. Asking students to recast conflicting sources or positions on an issue in a research-based paper via *antithesis* or *paronomasia* might help them see the two competing ideas more starkly. Such realizations can lead to an evolved research question, the realization of a need for more research, or a stronger thesis statement. If students are required to use stylistic devices in their papers, then directions for peer review could encourage students to focus primarily on how their use of style creates a voice that strengthens or weakens their overall persuasiveness.

A pedagogy that revives style also revises the idea of play, magic, and wonder— notions that Johnson returns to throughout the book. Thus, *The Rhetoric of Pleasure* joins other contemporary works that encourage a reorientation of style away from correctness and conventions, showing the practical steps that teachers can take to reinstate the sentence in the field. This conception of style as possibility and play is conducive to the way sentence-level issues are approached in a range of other fields that inform teaching materials and textbooks. The next several sections of this chapter explore textbooks taking progressive approaches to style. They are organized according to three

main disciplinary orientations: linguistics, classical rhetoric, and mixed approaches.

### TEXTBOOKS: LINGUISTIC AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACHES

A number of textbooks employ grammatical terminology to explain aspects of style for college writing students, all of which fall into the category of stylistic grammars, explained in Chapter 5. These books employ the language of grammar directly in order to account for style in professional and student writing. They often directly state their debt to linguists and linguistic frameworks, as Virginia Tufte does when referring to Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar. Exposure to basic sentence types or patterns, as they provide much of the content for her book as well as Martha Kolln's *Rhetorical Grammar*, come directly from Chomsky's foundational work. As Tufte acknowledges, sentence patterns or "kernels" are responsible for language's "incredible versatility as a creative resource" (10).

Martha Kolln's *Rhetorical Grammar* is entirely devoted to sentence-level issues, and emphasizes the impact of grammatical decisions on audiences in different situations. As discussed in prior chapters, Kolln approaches grammar rhetorically, explaining parts of speech as tools for constructing effective sentences. As Kolln states in the introduction, her book takes a "functional point of view . . . that [grammar] can be taught and learned successfully if it is done in the right way and in the right place, in connection with composition," rather than "for remedial purposes," and therefore as "a Band-Aid for weak and inexperienced writers" (xii). The book is divided into five parts. The first part begins with basic elements of sentence structure that Kolln terms "slots" (e.g., subject, predicate, clause) and basic sentence patterns. Each chapter introduces new patterns and terms, such as conjunctions, complex and compound sentences, coordination, subordination, and parallel structure. The second part builds on these basic terms, and introduces strategies for sentence cohesion, rhythm, tone, and diction. The third and fourth parts focus on particular aspects of voice and style, such as verb choice and stylistic variation through the use of absolute phrases and free modifiers. The final part provides an overview of punctuation, followed by a much-needed glossary of grammatical terms.

Kolln's *Rhetorical Grammar* is well-known because of her plain-spoken views on the importance of grammar in writing instruction during the 1980s, and also because of its depth and specificity. However, teachers may want to preview a variety of other linguistic or grammatical approaches to style before adopting this book. Kolln's discussion of grammatical concepts and sentence structure, even after helpful definitions, may alienate students. Consider her description of a particular sentence as having "a participial phrase as the postheadword modifier" (212). Kolln's framework of slots to describe sentence parts such as subjects and predicates can seem unnecessarily complicated and cumbersome for teachers who are simply trying to introduce basic grammatical terms to first-year writing students. In many ways, the book is incredibly demanding in its expectation for readers to carry forward terminology from one chapter to the next, wading through dense analyses of relatively short passages. As such, *Rhetorical Grammar* may work best for intermediate and advanced writing courses and for teachers who already have a relatively strong foundation in grammar. That said, the book might work well as a teacher's reference for any course, given its comprehensive coverage of sentence structure, punctuation, and diction.

Some textbooks informed by linguistics express a need to radicalize academic writing style. In one of the most recent books, *The Well-Crafted Sentence*, Nora Bacon defines style as both "a range of voices" and as series of qualities that make one work "distinct from the work of any other writer" (6), and also as the ability to write clearly and concisely. Speaking about academic writing in particular, Bacon maintains that "it's time that we raised our expectations for style in academic writing" to not merely include clarity and accuracy, but also "grace, rhythm, wit, and power" (15). To accomplish a clear but distinct voice in academic writing, Bacon identifies the need for "mastery of sentence structure [grammar] to imagine a range of options for expressing an idea" (11). As such, the book is organized into separate chapters about clauses and modifiers, active voice, sentence coordination and parallel structure, different types of phrases and free modifiers, appositives, and sentence variety.

Each chapter defines these grammatical terms and explains how they can assist writers in developing a sense of style. In Chapter 8, Bacon defines an appositive phrase as "a noun phrase that appears in a sentence next to another noun phrase referring to the same person

or thing” (125). She explains how appositives supplement information in sentences, help identify people efficiently, define terms, provide examples, and help to restate ideas. The chapter provides examples of each application:

1. I'd like you to meet Jerry Allen, my brother-in-law from Texas. (Supplementing information)
2. Sir Frederick Ouseley, a former professor of music at Oxford, for example, “was all his life remarkable for his sense of absolute pitch.” (Identifying people)
3. Gordon B, a professional violinist who wrote to me about tinnitus, or ringing in his ears, remarked matter-of-factly that his tinnitus was “high F-natural.” (Defining terms)
4. The pitch is bundled in with other attributes of the note—its timbre (very importantly), its loudness, and so on. (Filling in examples)
5. Fought in April 1862, Shiloh marked a new departure in warfare, a level of death and destruction previously unknown and unimagined. (Renaming with a twist)

Each chapter also concludes with a set of exercises that ask students to identify syntactical structures in passages, and then to use these patterns to rewrite or combine sentences. In Chapter 8, Bacon gives students five sets of sentences to combine by using appositive phrases. Although similar to books discussed later in this section, Bacon's book stands out in its use of essays (included in the back of the book) that model the sentence structures and their contribution to each writers' voice. Every chapter identifies several examples from these texts, and analyzes them for their use of sentence structures for rhetorical effect, thus contributing to that writer's distinctive style or voice. Bacon includes a table indicating how each essay corresponds to various chapters on aspects of syntax. For example, a passage from Barack Obama's speech, “A More Perfect Union,” illustrates effective use of clauses, sentence coordination, and parallel structure. David Sedaris's “Genetic Engineering” demonstrates effective use of verbal phrases. Amy Tan's “Mother Tongue” demonstrates effective use of adjectival phrases. Oliver Sacks's “Pap Blows His Nose in G: Absolute Pitch” demonstrates effective use of appositive phrases, as shown above.

In *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, Joseph Williams and Greg Colomb acknowledge the influence of linguists such as Halliday and

Chomsky. This book conveys a progressive attitude compared to many other textbooks devoted to issues at the sentence and paragraph levels. The authors downplay the importance of correctness, instead promoting choice. Authors choose between “better and worse,” not between “right and utterly, irredeemably, unequivocally Wrong” (11). Effective style is not about observing arbitrary rules such as beginning sentences with “but” or “and,” but in understanding when to do so and what impact doing so will have on different types of readers. The authors also recognize that “Standard forms of a language originate in accidents of geography and economic power” (12), leaving writers in the position of needing to learn dominant rules to achieve “selective observance” (13) and apply them for their own purposes. In turn, the book relies on an understanding of clarity not in the Aristotelian sense of conveying ideas in the plainest language possible, but in a pragmatic and ethical sense, where writers try to imagine and reproduce the effects that professional writing has on them as readers. In other words: Write for others the way you want others to write for you.

The authors encourage stylistic complexity rather than grammatical correctness, saying “Your readers want you to write clearly, but not in Dick-and-Jane sentences” (43). Thus, each chapter presents different aspects of style and grammar in terms of the constant tension between clarity—a judgment made by readers rather than a timeless quality of the writing itself—and the writer’s desire for self-expression. As they maintain, “like the word *clarity*, the words *choppy* and *disorganized* refer not to the words on the page, but to how we *feel* about them” (67). In addition to sentence-level aspects of style, the book offers a lesson in global-cohesion, for instance, describing effective paragraphs in two parts: issue and discussion. In the issue part of paragraphs, authors introduce a “promise,” and then deliver on it through explanation, support, or specification in the discussion part.

These twelve lessons include analysis of passages and a plethora of short exercises asking students to rewrite and edit prose. Each lesson follows a pattern: first, introducing a principle; providing illustrative examples and analysis; and then staging a series of revision activities. The end of the third chapter, on the importance of clear subjects and active verbs versus confusing nominalizations (noun-ified verbs like “investigation”), presents the following sequence of sentences, and asks student to “Analyze the subject/character and verb/action”:

There is opposition among many voters to nuclear power plants based on a belief in their threat to human health.

Many voters oppose nuclear power plans because they believe that such plans threaten human health. (33)

In the first sentence, the verbs “oppose” and “belief” appear in a nominalized form, making the sentence somewhat static and unclear. The second sentence presents the character—in this case, voters—as the main subject and relies on active verbs rather than static ones, such as “is.” Once students grasp this concept, they can move on to a more complex exercise that asks them to choose verbs from a list to compose sentences in active and nominalized forms, and to consider the effects of each sentence as they revise back and forth (34).

Every lesson presents part of a graduated sequence of exercises that prompt students to compose and revise rather than simply regurgitate rules or identify stylistic and grammatical errors. The exercises encourage students to learn style in the context of their own writing. The book also includes an appendix that students will find accessible and straightforward about punctuation and source citation, in which Williams and Colomb explain conventions in everyday language.

An outgrowth of a previous textbook, titled *Grammar as Style*, Tufte’s textbook, *Artful Sentences*, takes an almost identical approach to Kolln’s, with two significant differences: one lies in Tufte’s abundant attention to literary prose throughout, and the other in her focus on “syntactic symbolism” in the fourteenth chapter.<sup>49</sup> *Artful Sentences* may work best as supplemental or recommended material for an advanced writing course in fiction or creative non-fiction, but especially in workshop-based courses with self-motivated students. The prevalence of literary analysis and the absence of exercises may make it less appealing for first-year composition instructors. Though the book is not a difficult read, it does not often make direct references to concrete writing situations that first-year students and teachers often look for. Such contexts need to be supplied by teachers or students.

Tufte’s central principle for much of the book rests on sentence types and slots, and she describes them in much the same way as Kolln

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49. Tufte’s *Artful Sentences* is similar in content and structure to her earlier textbook, *Grammar as Style*. I discuss *Artful Sentences* because it is more widely available for purchase by students. *Grammar as Style* is available in libraries, but appears to be largely out of print and in limited availability.

and Williams. Tufte's book draws on more than a thousand literary authors in order to illustrate these types and slots. The examples are also often accompanied with brief, almost perfunctory stylistic analysis that focuses on the use of rhetorical devices in particular sentences, such as metaphor, metonymy, and parallelism. In the first chapter, Tufte synthesizes discussion of four sentence types, reading them "in context" to explore such stylistic qualities (19). For instance, she attributes the power of Thomas Merton's writing to the placement of "forceful, violent verbs that contribute to the loud excess" (21). Tufte also provides a section devoted to sentences that blend multiple types, as in an excerpt from Jack Finney's *The Woodrow Wilson Dime* that contains a sentence that "has a base clause [technically an intransitive one], with both left-branching and right-branching free modifiers" (33). Tufte explains how such clauses bring a sentence "into a firmer perspective" (33) and, because the terms "transitive" and "intransitive" refer to verb structures in particular, they can describe simple sentences consisting of a single clause, or compound and complex sentences consisting of multiple ones.

Tufte's final chapter explores the concept of "syntactic symbolism," the organization of clauses and sentence patterns to convey an action or experience more viscerally to readers. Tufte states that "a syntactic symbol is a verbal, syntactic pattern intended to be read for a nonverbal movement or development of some kind: language arranged to look or sound like action" (271). Here, the sentence types and slots, including all kinds of free modifiers, offer writers ways of choosing and ordering words to achieve a "bringing before the eyes" or, more appropriately, a "bringing before the ears" similar to the vividness that Aristotle discusses in Book III of the *Rhetoric* and in the *Poetics*. Because *Artful Sentences* appears to be geared toward advanced classes in literary writing, few references to classical rhetoric appear in Tufte's discussion of the many techniques that other scholars describe as classical schemes.

Although the book is not necessarily appropriate for a first-year composition course, advanced students may be refreshed that the book refrains from condescending directives and its tendency point to "quick tips." Finally, the book contains passages from linguistically diverse authors, including Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, Chinua Achebe, Julia Alvarez, Jamaica Kincaid, and Maxine Hong Kingston. Rarely, though, does it apply linguistic analysis to the translingual fea-

tures of these texts, showing how the writers negotiate the syntactical and stylistic expectations of two or more dialects or languages. As noted throughout the reference guide, such analysis would need supplemental material and preparation by the teacher.

Donna Gorrell's *Style and Difference* describes a writer's style as the negotiation of, adherence to, and deviation from conventions in grammar, syntax, and punctuation. On the one hand, writers need to observe principles of sentence coordination, subordination, variety, and rhythm. On the other, writers need not observe arbitrary rules from lore about beginning sentences with conjunctions, ending them with prepositions, using contractions, or splitting infinitives. Gorrell's book is divided into five parts: In the first part, Gorrell overviews many similar elements of grammar as Kolln, Tufte, and Williams. Part two of *Style and Difference* stands out from these previously-discussed texts by explaining nine different myths of usage. For instance, Gorrell examines passages from contemporary writers effectively use passive voice. Gorrell also interrogates myths about comma splices and sentence fragments, again providing numerous examples of published writers who violate these prescriptions.

The most striking myth Gorrell deflates concerns pronoun agreement. As she states, the argument against using "they" as a singular referent "overlooks the history of *they* usage, it also overlooks the historical and current acceptability of another pronoun, you, that has both singular and plural senses" (141). As Gorrell explains, the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists several uses of "they" as a generic singular pronoun before 1850, when Britain passed a law requiring "he" as the only acceptable singular pronoun. Another striking chapter encourages writers to use first- and second-person pronouns like "I," "us," "we," and "you" for rhetorical effect, while another encourages students to write in sentence fragments.

Gorrell explains the acceptability of these stylistic decisions while describing their rhetorical effects. For example, fragments are not simply permissible—they can be used to draw attention to ideas, ease transitions between paragraphs, and break complex sentences up into manageable bits (127–129). As observed by many writing teachers, students often write awkward and wordy sentences when trying to observe many of these prescriptions and, as such, feel needlessly anxious and uncomfortable when writing academic papers. Parts three and four of *Style and Difference* discuss conventions of grammar and punctuation



that still permit some decision making. As Gorrell states, “punctuation marks [are] a feature of style. Some people use more commas than other people do, but in general we use fewer commas today than in times past” (182). Writers might choose to combine two clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction. They might choose to combine these same two clauses with a subordinating conjunction. They might combine them by making one a free modifier, or even combine them without a comma at all. Consider variations of a sentence Gorrell uses from Rachel Carson’s *The Sea around Us*:

1. The gases began to liquefy, and Earth became a molten mass.
2. The gases began to liquefy. Earth became a molten mass.
3. Because the gases liquefied, Earth became a molten mass.
4. The gases began to liquefy, making Earth a molten mass.
5. Earth began to liquefy; Earth became a molten mass.<sup>50</sup> (qtd. in Gorrell 185)

Different writers and readers prefer different variations, and these are but a few possibilities. The main point is that these sentence variations are all grammatically correct and, for Gorrell, knowledge of punctuation enables rhetorical strategy and decision-making, not merely accuracy.

To instill this mindset in students, Gorrell provides a few exercises at the end of each chapter. Many of them are short, and involve either analysis or revision of passages. Several times, Gorrell presents a passage from a contemporary work of creative non-fiction, with punctuation marks and other features numbered, asking students to make arguments for why the author chose a particular type of clause, comma, semicolon, or period over another option. I have had some success with these types of exercises in my own teaching, having students work in groups to analyze paragraphs from a variety of readings. For instance, we recently performed an in-class close reading of parts of Clifford Geertz’s “Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” focusing on the author’s use of subordinating clauses and modifying phrases to add narrative detail. Teachers can take this approach with almost any

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50. The variations on this sentence are mine. Gorrell only uses the original sentence to illustrate how punctuation contributes to style by helping to mark clause boundaries: “The gases began to liquefy, and the Earth became a molten mass” (qtd. in Gorrell 185).

work of literary or academic writing. It is not so different from what the Greeks and Romans did—presenting model texts for analysis before exercises in imitation.

Matthew Clark's *A Matter of Style* states up front that it presumes a degree of basic knowledge about style and grammar; it does not provide exercises like many other textbooks. However, its strengths lie in providing clear explanations of the effects of grammar on style, and in offering abundant examples from literary fiction and academic prose. Clark writes without the methodical structure of Kolln and Williams, analyzing passages without stopping to explain terms such as adverbial phrase, prepositional phrase, or subordinate clause. For example, he critiques a passage from Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, in which the subject and predicate are interrupted by subordinate clauses:

The difficulty that I felt in being quite composed that first evening, when Ada asked me, over our work, if the family were at the house, and when I was obliged to answer yes, I believed so, for Lady Dedlock had spoken to me in the woods the day before yesterday, was great. (qtd. in Clark 21)

Although Clark recognizes that the passage is technically accurate, in terms of grammar, he explains how the “verb phrase ‘was great’ is too far from its subject” (21). There is no real definition at all of subjects, predicates, or clauses—Clark makes clear that he is writing for an advanced audience. As such, he is more interested in diving directly into possible revisions that solve this stylistic dilemma. Rather than providing one possible revision, he offers two that readers might find clearer:

1. The difficulty that I felt in being quite composed was great that first evening . . .
2. That first evening—when Ada asked me over our work . . . for Lady Dedlock had spoken to me in the woods the day before yesterday—the difficulty that I felt in being quite composed was great. (21)

The first revision makes a simple change in moving the phrase “was great” to the main clause, making the sentence a cumulative one: a main clause with several modifying phrases added to provide more detail without confusing the main idea. The second revision relies on punctuation, fencing off more detailed information with dashes so

that readers can more clearly identify the introductory clause and the main idea before the first dash and after the second.

Attention to prose rhythm sets Clark's book apart from most others. Thorough but concise, Clark begins with an enumeration of poetic and prose meters and a brief history of theories of prose rhythm in English. Ultimately, he advises readers that while these terms can be somewhat helpful, "I am not sure . . . that a theory of prose rhythm is possible" because "one has to [also] consider the lengths of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences," among many other variables (31). Nonetheless, the book provides a few examples to help attune students' ears to how these variables work together, as in an analysis of the opening passage from Don DeLillo's *White Noise* that describes college students on move-in day. In addition to its metrical elements, Clark shows how lists of items such as "boxes of blankets, boots, and shoes, stationery and books, sheets, pillows, quilts," and so on are marked by a "careful balance of longer and shorter phrases, as well as rhythmic variation created by the lengths of different words and word combinations" (33). In the vein of Fahnestock, the book also examines passages for style at the paragraph level, as Clark focuses on the strategy of repetition to create links and signposts that give paragraphs coherence. For example, he discusses a paragraph from Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* for its repetition of key terms such as "moral," "contemporary," "disagreement," and "interminable" to generate coherence between the central ideas of paragraphs (138).

*A Matter of Style* might also fit with books influenced by classical approaches to style. Clark devotes two chapters to figures of speech, taking more time to define devices such as *polyptoton* (using a word in different grammatical forms), *polysyndeton* (overuse of conjunctions), and *asyndeton* (absence of conjunctions). He illustrates these devices through discussions of passages. For instance, Nabokov uses polyptoton in *Ada* when he writes "the collected works of unreclected authors" (55). Anne Rice uses asyndeton in *Interview with the Vampire* when she writes, "It took a moment for the boy to wipe his forehead and his lips with a handkerchief, to stammer that the microphone was in the machine, to press the button, to say that the machine was on" (60).

Altogether, what Clark's book may lack in terms of definitions, exercises, and activities, it makes up for in terms of voice and an abundance of examples. Clark demonstrates a deep sense of the history of

style, and he often includes relevant historical context that rounds out each chapter. For instance, discussion of George Saintsbury's *History of English Prose Rhythm* does more than enough to outline the problems of thinking about prose style merely in terms of meter, as described above. Students may appreciate Clark's ability to balance terminology, history, and illustrative analysis, and *A Matter of Style* would serve as a suitable book for teachers who want to learn more about style and are interested in developing their own exercises and short writing assignments based on the book's numerous passages and accompanying analysis.

#### APPROACHES INFORMED BY CLASSICAL RHETORIC

The fourth edition of Edward Corbett's textbook, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, co-authored with Robert Connors, remains a rich text for use at the undergraduate and graduate level. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* is an appropriate textbook for a range of advanced undergraduate and introductory graduate courses on rhetorical theory; though, the book is ideal for courses emphasizing historical contexts. (It contains an entire chapter on histories of rhetoric through the twentieth century.) Corbett and Connors's approach suits teachers of rhetoric who have knowledge of the subject in its Greco-Roman contexts, and who want to attune their students to the role of style among the other canons.

The first three chapters of the book cover invention and arrangement, with a substantial fourth chapter devoted to style. At the outset, the authors not only reject a view of style as mere ornament of thought, but they also reject any interpretation of classical rhetoricians to that effect. As they state,

It is difficult to determine just which school of rhetoric gave currency to the notion that style was ornament or embellishment, like tinsel draped over the bare branches of a Christmas tree, but it is certain that none of the prominent classical rhetoricians—Isocrates, Aristotle, Demetrius, Longinus, Cicero, Quintilian—ever preached such a doctrine. (338)

Such a doctrine is damaging to students, the authors claim, and the broader goal of the chapter is to redefine the relationship between grammar, usage, and style in order to help students gain control over

their writing at the sentence level. What follows may be a refreshingly clear consideration of the difference between grammar and style, replete with concrete examples.

The authors explain that grammar deals with what is possible or impossible in a language, while rhetoric (and style) provides a method for judging the effectiveness of different grammatical organization of the same words. For instance, the sentence “He already has forgiven them for leaving, before the curtain fell, the theatre” is grammatically accurate but stylistically awkward and confusing (341). The authors set usage apart from grammar, and trace it back to George Campbell’s definition of “good usage” as following what was reputable, national, and present. It is usage, and not grammar, that precludes “dialectical words, technical words, coinages, and foreign words” (346), and so is an aspect of writing that requires judgment and experience rather than persistent adherence to rules.

The authors warn against a preoccupation with usage, admitting that “If American schools had been as much concerned with grammar, logic, and rhetoric, as they have been with ‘good usage,’ the quality of student writing today might be better than it generally is” (348). The authors elaborate on style in terms of diction, rhythm, sentence patterns, and figures of thought and expression. This portion extends for roughly fifty pages, as the authors introduce various sentence types, simple techniques for marking stresses in prose for euphony, and a condensed catalogue of stylistic devices. Although this section is thorough, it remains focused on how these various methods help students study and learn from professional writers in order to improve their own compositions.

Corbett and Connors’s textbook contains an entire chapter guiding students through a series of imitation exercises. In the 1971 *CCC* article, “The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric,” Corbett explains and rationalizes the classical approach to imitation that led to this chapter. In the article, Corbett defines the triadic theory of classical writing education as consisting of imitation, practice, and theory. Students first desire to imitate (*imitatio*) certain arts or sports, acquiring basic skills. They then engage in practice (*exercitatio*) to improve those basic skills, and finally set out to learn the theories (*ars*) that enable mastery. Although “not many records of imitative practices in Greek and Roman schools are extant,” Corbett manages to construct a set of teaching practices for imitation by turning to six-

teenth and seventeenth century texts that describe imitation exercises (245). These exercises consisted of Analysis and Genesis. First, the instructor led students through “a close study of the model to observe how its excellence follows the precepts of art” (245), an activity sometimes referred to as prelection. Quintilian describes the same process in *The Orator’s Education* at length (2.5.6–16). The close analysis could move sentence-by-sentence—similar to the explication conducted in rhetorical analysis or close readings today—or it could explicitly focus on a single key feature of a model (figures of thought, for example) that students would emulate. Afterward, students moved to the Genesis stage to measure or copy the passage exactly, emulate a model’s form, paraphrase it, or set out to write something more loosely inspired.

Corbett presents his own version of an imitation pedagogy that involves three stages: First, students copy passages from their own selection or from a selection of models provided in the textbook. Second students imitate the patterns of model sentences. Third students introduce variations on these sentences by recombining clauses. The textbook then provides a list of reminders to students, such as: “You must do this copying with a pencil or pen”; “You must not spend too much time with any one author”; “You must read the entire passage before starting to copy it”; and “You must copy the passage slowly and accurately” (425). The ultimate goal of the three-phase sequence is “to achieve an awareness of the variety of sentence structures of which the English language is capable,” and to venture beyond the safe but limiting structure of short, simple sentences (443). Corbett concludes the chapter on style by stating that analysis and imitation of professional writers “can make you aware of the variety of lexical and syntactical resources which your language offers” (447).

Echoing Quintilian, Corbett warns students about “servile imitation” and issues a series of cautions about these exercises regarding “spend[ing] too much time with any one author,” as it would inhibit “developing one’s own style by getting the ‘feel’ of a variety of styles” (425). The ideal for Corbett is to copy a passage a day for a month or more. Examples of the second and third exercises especially contest the notion that imitation does not engage invention. For example, the sentence imitation exercises only require students to imitate the form. Students must supply the *content* of the sentences:

Model Sentence: I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I

could learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

Imitation: I greeted him politely, although I planned to challenge him repeatedly, to assess his reduction, to test whether he could discriminate what was expedient in each situation, and, after I had probed him thoroughly, to announce that we had no place for him in our organization. (555)

The difference in content between these two sentences shows an ability to imitate with a difference. Corbett encourages students to engage in wordplay by imitating and improving on the model passages, rather than conforming to them.

The depth and breadth of Corbett and Connors's discussion of grammar, usage, and style is often meticulous, if not dense, and it focuses on history as much as practical writing advice and assignments. The chapter on imitation may appeal to composition teachers, given its practical orientation, with an adequate though not overwhelming contextual explanation about the importance of imitation in the classical tradition. Nonetheless, the model passages include only a few multilingual authors, and none of them demonstrate a great degree of multilingual or multidialectal prose. The monolingual dimension of these passages somewhat contradicts the critiques of usage elsewhere in the book. As such, this book may function much better in training teachers, orienting advanced undergraduate and graduate students to the importance of style, and serving as an aid or supplement, rather than as a primary textbook in introductory level undergraduate courses.

In 1999, Corbett and Connors published a much shorter textbook, titled *Style and Statement*, covering much of the same territory on style, but without discussion of the other canons. The book breaks style down into sub-components: grammatical accuracy, diction, clause and sentence types, prose rhythm, and figures of speech. Here again, the authors explain where grammar and style overlap and depart—grammar dealing with what is possible, and style dealing with what is rhetorically effective. (Again, they show that sentences can be grammatically accurate but not stylistically appropriate, depending on readers' tastes.) In the section on rhetorical figures, the authors provide a lengthy list of devices with definitions and examples. The book does not provide many exercises, other than the description of a project in which students analyzed published essays for sentence and paragraph length, comparing them to their own writing (34). A follow-up exer-

cise asks students to count sentences according to simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex, again making comparisons to their own writing. Almost half of the book is dedicated to imitation, including model passages from a slightly more diverse body of writers, ranging from Washington Irving and Jane Austen to M. Scott Momaday, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, Richard Rodriguez, and Toni Morrison. The setup is simple: Students first copy passages by hand, analyze them, and then imitate the sentence patterns. Teachers interested in taking a classical approach to style, but are hesitant to adopt all of classical rhetoric into their courses, may appreciate this shorter book, and find it a useful supplement to other readings.

Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee's textbook, *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, rivals Corbett and Connors's in terms of historical depth, but it employs the *progymnasmata* as well as imitation exercises. In general, the book is an appealing alternative to Corbett and Connors's book. Crowley and Hawhee write in a more inviting voice, and often make more of an effort to relate principles of classical rhetoric to contemporary politics and popular culture. The book treats all five canons of rhetoric, with an entire chapter devoted to style, and another to imitation. The authors provide an overview of the history of style, noting its emergence as early as the Homeric era and its later classification into four virtues (correctness, clarity, appropriateness, and ornament). The most thorough treatment regards the virtue of appropriateness in terms of *kairos* (rhetorical time). As they state, for Roman rhetoricians (namely Cicero), "propriety was not something that can be made into a list of hard and fast rules. Cicero defined propriety as 'what is fitting and agreeable to an occasion or person'" (253). They go on to say that "Cicero favored a situational propriety, one that comes closer to the Greek notion of *kairos*" as employed by the sophists (254). They quote Cicero at length from *De Oratore* on the different uses of style for "deliberative speeches, panegyrics, lawsuits and lectures, and for consolation, protest, discussion and historical narrative, respectively" (3.5.211–212).

More so than in other classically oriented textbooks, Crowley and Hawhee emphasize the proto-generic aspects of classical style. Neither Cicero nor Quintilian exhaustively defined the corresponding mixtures of style to different types of speeches and texts, but that was because, even within these proto-genres, one had to attend to the kairotic configuration of audience, situation, and speaker. No precise under-



standing of genre as rhetorical situations typified over time emerged in classical Greece (see Miller “Genre as Social Action”). The closest notion was the three levels of style, as discussed in the second chapter of his book.

Crowley and Hawhee manage to accomplish a great deal of what Corbett and Connors do, but in fewer pages. The chapter on style contains definitions and examples of figures of thought and expression, illustrating with examples from antiquity as well as contemporary articles on topics like social media that are of interest to students. The authors also devote attention to the relationship between stylistic devices, grammatical parts of speech, and aspects of voice, such as the rhetorical effects of using first versus second or third person. The authors discuss how manipulating diction and syntax can achieve different levels of distance or intimacy within texts, making language direct or indirect, implicit or explicit, and objective or emotional.

Every chapter is accompanied by one of the *progymnasmata*, designed specifically to scaffold and rehearse the treatment of the other canons. Therefore, *Ancient Rhetorics* is successful in its synthesis of style and invention. While it discusses the terminology of style in a single chapter, it engages issues such as clarity and expression early on, and the progression of exercises invites experimentation with amplification and use of different figures as students hone their rhetorical skills by responding to prompts about contemporary, socio-political issues. For example, the second chapter includes a discussion of the exercise *chreia* (anecdote), and gives several steps based on Aphthonius’s manual for expanding a brief account of a moment from history or poetry:

- Begin with praise of a famous speaker or doer of deeds.
- Explain or paraphrase the famous saying or action.
- Supply a reason for the saying or doing.
- Compare and contrast the famous saying or doing to some other speech or event.
- Add an example and support the saying or doing with testimony.
- Conclude with a brief epilogue. (53)

Some exercises provide students with more contemporary material for amplification; for example, the third exercise at the end of the second chapter:

3. Choose a song lyric by your favorite musical artist and cast it as a *chreia* (remember that the distinguishing mark of *chreia*

is that the saying is attributed to a particular person or group of people—this could well apply to a band). Then amplify the lyric according to Aphthonius's instructions. (54)

Most of the original exercises in the classical handbooks ask students to amplify, shorten, or paraphrase passages from classical literature. Adapting them as Crowley and Hawhee do mainly involves substituting the source material. Instead of asking students to paraphrase famous Athenian speeches or passages from epic poems, teachers might ask students to choose material from their own daily readings and experiences. The exercises of narrative, fable, *chreia*, and description are especially conducive to such experimentation. The exercises provide the framework for amplification, style manuals provide lists of tropes and figures to experiment with, and students may provide idioms and proverbs from their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The only drawback of the textbook is the same one that affects many others—the somewhat national and monolingual approach. The authors draw largely from socio-political debates and readings from the US, without much of a global perspective that would prompt students to negotiate other cultures and languages. Nonetheless, teachers can augment the chapters as discussed above with readings, passages, and discussion topics that attend more directly to language difference as a source of style.

Writing teachers looking for an appropriate text on style for first-year composition may find Holcomb and Killingsworth's *Performing Prose* more approachable, more affordable for students, and easier to integrate into a syllabus. One of the most recent textbooks on style, *Performing Prose* is written for advanced undergraduate and graduate students and scholars; however, it is easily adaptable to a first-year writing course. The authors draw largely from classical rhetoric, but also from sociolinguistics and performance theory, and they explain basic principles and provide a brief historical context. For instance, they reference work by linguists Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short to distinguish between stylistic variance and stylistic value and to reconcile tensions between form and meaning. Stylistic variants refer to "alternate expressions for roughly the same thing," and values refer to "the consequences (what is gained and lost) by choosing one alternate over another" (2). Writers balance variant and value when writing for different rhetorical situations that have their own unique configurations of time, place, audience, and purpose. In some cases, rephrasing

a sentence does not significantly alter the meaning; in other cases it does. Holcomb and Killingsworth advise teachers and students to negotiate the two.

The third chapter in particular engages the dynamic between convention and deviation in a way that promises to enlighten students and teachers. Working with the idea of style as deviation from a norm, the authors develop an understanding of how norms emerge within communities of writers and readers. These norms are summarized as five “conventions of readability” about prose:

- It is active.
- It flows.
- It organizes for emphasis.
- It uses familiar language.
- It is concise (41).

Holcomb and Killingsworth’s explanation for each of these conventions does not insist on adherence, but instead intends to help students decide how to deviate from these norms in effective, rather than random or arbitrary, ways. The authors provide an example from James Watson and Francis Crick’s Nobel Prize-winning essay on DNA, illustrating how “The authors preserve many key features of scientific style, notably the technical terminology and frequent use of the passive voice,” meanwhile making unconventional moves such as “the use of first-person plural” and a “greater frequency of action verbs” that “adds a sense of urgency and excitement to the presentation” (51). The authors are careful to point out that such style gained them fame but also infamy, as other scientists responded negatively, seeing such direct, enthusiastic language as egotistical.

Discussions and exercises treat style as a set of tools that enable choice within different rhetorical conventions, rather than imposing a single set of conventions and demanding conformity. Each chapter includes two or three substantive exercises that often involve substantial writing of at least three or more paragraphs. For example, at the end of the third chapter, on deviation and convention, the authors ask students to compare two reviews of the same film regarding how they adhere to or depart from stylistic conventions for the review genre. As they explain, “variations [in style] often depend on the venue in which the review is published: a review appearing in the *New Yorker*, for instance, will likely differ stylistically from one found in *Rolling Stone*

or *Entertainment Weekly*" (54). A subsequent exercise asks students to then write their own review based on observations regarding their stylistic analysis of reviews in different genres. The exercise encourages them to "look for opportunities to deviate in terms of either structure or style" (55).

The fifth chapter, on style in the classical tradition, includes exercises that ask students to rank contemporary prose according to Cicero's continuum of plain, middle, and grand styles. Another exercise in the same chapter asks students to imagine themselves as an expert on a topic of their choosing, and have been asked to write three short essays for different occasions: a simple instructional lesson, an entertaining lecture, and an encomium of the subject itself (83). As these examples show, the exercises reinforce a view of style as part of the invention process, often helping to determine the shape of one's prose in response to different rhetorical situations.

In this sense, the textbook a similar philosophy of many others discussed here. However, *Performing Prose* is unique for its attention to what the authors refer to as the textual, social, and cultural areas of style (4). This framework is explained in the introduction, is used to explore style through interactions of writers and readers, and is also used to account for how "verbal patterns . . . circulate in, and gain resonance from, the broader cultural context," becoming "rituals of language" (10), such as the "emphatic repetitions" (9) and sometimes metaphorical language often employed routinely and therefore expected in religious and political addresses. The authors do not cite Bakhtin, but an idea of style as delimited in different ways in different genres appears to drive much of their advice to students and teachers. Holcomb and Killingsworth work from the classical idea of style as entwined with the other canons, especially invention and delivery; as such, they focus on the varying demands for different types (or levels) of style in different rhetorical situations and genres.

Although geared toward upper-level writing courses, Holcomb and Killingsworth's book may be the most suitable of the classically oriented texts for first-year writing courses. At the same time, the book may require some additional planning in order to serve as a successful introductory text for first-year students. Although the chapters themselves are direct, concise, and clear, the exercises often assume advanced literacy and knowledge of genres. Consider the activity from chapter three, in which students are asked to consider the sty-

listic conventions of magazines such as *The New Yorker* and *Rolling Stone*. While upper-level English majors and graduate students likely read these magazines, or are at least familiar with their conventions, in my experience, first-year college students do not usually read either of these magazines, and probably do not read film reviews. For the exercise to make sense, teachers will need to devote at least two or three class meetings to readings and explorations of the film review genre, assigning reviews from such magazines as readings.

In some cases, I take the general principles and basic ideas behind Holcomb and Killingsworth, and devise my own in-class activities that are more accessible to non-English majors and less advanced students. In one class, I adapted principles and exercises from the third chapter to the conventions of Amazon product reviews—a genre more familiar to young adults. I had students form groups and read conventional Amazon product reviews, and then read satirical reviews of products like Amazon’s banana slicer or the Justin Bieber singing electronic toothbrush. Students first analyzed how satirical Amazon reviewers parody the norms of regular reviews. Students then searched the site for other products, and wrote their own satirical reviews. Finally, groups then presented and discussed their stylistic decisions in terms of adherence to and deviation from norms.

Like *Classical Rhetoric and Ancient Rhetorics*, Frank D’Angelo’s *Composition in the Classical Tradition* draws on the *progymnasmata*. While the first two books serve as comprehensive rhetorics, and Corbett’s curtails discussion of the exercises in favor of imitation, D’Angelo’s focuses exclusively on the twelve (or fourteen, depending on the handbook) preliminary exercises used by Roman educators during late antiquity. In the introduction, D’Angelo lays out principles for the exercises, explains their use in preparing students for the three branches of oratory (deliberative, forensic, ceremonial), and discusses how each exercise and accompanying mode of speech is deployed within a particular branch, as well as how the exercises provide training in literary genres. For instance, he explains narrative as preparing students for the narrative portion of deliberative and forensic speeches that “comes right after the introduction and before the arguments” (22)—in turn, these are followed by proposition, confirmation, refutation, and conclusion (themselves subjects of subsequent exercises).

Stressing the relevance of the exercises beyond rhetoric and oratory, D’Angelo points out that while “the exercise in praising and blaming

belongs to the ceremonial genre of rhetoric, it is also related to literary forms such as tragedy, epic, elegiac poetry, comedy, satire, and parody” (17). Each chapter explores a different exercise through a brief definition of its purpose, and is followed by model passages, discussion questions, and exercises that prompt students to edit and rewrite short passages using the modes of persuasion from that exercise.

D’Angelo discusses style throughout the textbook, but without a thorough consideration of figures seen in Corbett and Connors or in Holcomb and Killingsworth. D’Angelo’s text never introduces or defines any stylistic devices, such as schemes or tropes, and they do not appear in a glossary. This absence may undermine the overall effectiveness of the book, as it frequently asks students in discussion sections to analyze passages for their rhetorical methods. In some cases, such as the chapter on description, it calls on students to “analyze and discuss in class the techniques Homer uses to describe ‘The Slaying of the Suitors’” after describing only how the passage “has all of the features of a vivid description of action—motion, direction, and force” (47). The discussion section here contains eighteen questions, six of which ask students to analyze or describes specific techniques. Thus, it seems to assume a great deal of prior knowledge.

Another slight contradiction appears in the choice of model passages. The introduction to the book highlights the multicultural origins of Greco-Roman literature to justify its value and prominence in each chapter. However, the claim that Greco-Roman literature served as a well-spring for other cultures risks the very Eurocentricism and cultural arrogance that it hopes to avoid. Moreover, a majority of the more contemporary passages are pulled from newspapers and, though compelling, do not represent or engage linguistic and cultural diversity as fully as they could. As the discussion of other classically influenced books indicates, this problem runs throughout textbooks advocating classical style. For teachers adopting all or portions of this book, it is easy enough to replace the models with other passages. In this sense, the main value of the textbook lies in its precise and methodical presentation of the exercises and their role in rhetorical training, both in antiquity and today.

## MIXED APPROACHES

Richard M. Eastman's textbook, *Style: Writing and Reading as the Discovery of Outlook*, works from the basic idea that a writer's style indicates an attitude or outlook toward a given subject. Eastman's approach to style links it with invention—he shows how style surfaces in a writer's decisions about how to select and present information. Different interpretations of the same reality lead to different ways of presenting that information; for Eastman, this constitutes a key part of style beyond the level of sentences and passages.

While other textbooks take a bottom-up approach to style, emphasizing how stylistic decisions contribute to an overall tone or voice, Eastman takes a top-down approach, focusing on how someone's stance or perspective on a situation influences their stylistic decisions (e.g., diction, sentence structure, uses of metaphor). The book discusses style in four parts: on the relationship between style and outlook, style and audience, style and language, and style and larger patterns of organization. The first three chapters of Part I show how various outlooks manifest in the selection of details and the presentation of information. As Eastman illustrates, an infantry officer stresses the defensive aspects of a garden, seeing bushes and trees as places to take cover, whereas a civilian might describe the beauty of the flowers and foliage. A student who acs an exam may select and present different details on a test than a student who barely passes. The successful student may choose to talk about his or her score, while the barely successful student may complain about the questions and focus of the test.

The fundamental idea of style as outlook informs Eastman's discussion of audience and language patterns in Part III and Part IV of the book. Writers not only make stylistic decisions from their own outlooks, but also regarding the perceived outlooks of different audiences. Eastman uses the example of explaining vaccines to first graders, who may emphasize pain and promises of health over aspects that adults may find more relevant, such as cost and effectiveness (50). Therefore, the audience's outlook informs the selection and presentation of information, including more micro-level issues of diction and sentence patterns. Eastman's discussion of language patterns and diction covers a lot of the same territory as other books, but the explanation of their importance to outlook makes it unique.

Eastman's sequencing of exercises may require substantial alteration for contemporary college students, especially first-year writers. For example, the preview chapter asks students to "point to exact details of word-choice or sentence structure" (10) when analyzing passages for their outlook, while, several chapters before, Eastman explains such concepts as diction or syntax. If students were able to analyze sentence structure decades ago, today most of them need more orientation to grammatical concepts before they can be expected to do so. Other exercises seem slightly dated. For example, Eastman asks students to visit the vegetable section of a supermarket and write a short description from different perspectives, such as the manager, an elderly couple, or a child (28). Another exercise asks students to combine and rewrite roughly ten sentences from a "paranoid dramatist" in order to convey "an incoherent and highly perturbed state of mind" (29). Yet another exercise asks students to analyze lines from Shakespeare's and Dryden's respective dramatizations of Antony and Cleopatra to discuss the authors' larger outlook on the historical figures (29). In the chapters that focus on grammar, syntax, and paragraph coherence, Eastman asks students to study and imitate passages from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, William Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury*, and Samuel Beckett's *Molly*.

These exercises seem pitched to upper-level English majors, not necessarily college students in first-year composition who are unlikely to have read any of these works, much less find compelling material in the paranoid ranting of a dramatist. As such, contemporary college writing teachers may find the general premise of many exercises useful, but their actual content unsuitable or inappropriate for students or for course outcomes aimed at the acquisition of academic discourse. Rather than dismiss the exercises altogether, teachers might present their basic structure to students and permit them to supply the content. Have students work in groups to identify a popular character and find ten statements the person made, and then follow Eastman's original instructions to organize the statements into a passage that shows the person's outlook on an issue. Instead of going to the supermarket, students might pick a place on their own to write about from three different perspectives. Instead of studying and imitating literary passages, students might work with excerpts from essays and books by public intellectuals who present a more academic outlook on issues of general importance.



For example, I am currently planning for students to study and paraphrase a short op-ed piece on Miley Cyrus written by a sociologist at the University of Washington. Although a great deal of superficial and reactionary coverage emerged from Miley's sexually provocative dress and dance routine at the Video Music Awards in 2013, sociologist Pepper Schwartz discusses the media discourse around it for underlying messages about American sexuality and media representations of children and teenagers. One of my activities involves having students compare the sociologist's outlook on Cyrus's performance to the outlooks of non-academics. This question provides an occasion to see how an academic outlook calls for a more academic vocabulary, complex sentences, and a serious, analytical tone. Contemporizing many of Eastman's exercises can prompt students to understand that even ostensibly superficial issues about celebrities can provide the subject matter of more serious outlooks.

Tom Romano's *Blending Genre, Altering Style* serves less as a textbook, and more as a teachers' guide for creating multi-genre paper assignments. Addressed to teachers, Romano approaches style as the selection and arrangement of genres within a single paper. These genres range from fiction, poetry, and drama to photographs, letters, and recipes. The book provides little information about style in terms of figurative language, rhythm, or syntax. Instead, it devotes chapters to individual genres such as short stories, dialogue sequences, different subgenres of poetry, and model essays. These essays illustrate how authors carry topics and themes across several genres, over eight to twelve pages. One essay Romano provides consists of recipes, diary entries, poems, and conversations written in the form of a screenplay.

The basic idea behind Romano's book is helpful, in that it treats style as a means of negotiating and understanding genres. Yet, the book does not appear to develop links between genre and style. For instance, a short chapter on the conventional research paper merely recognizes the value of the "voice that argues and illustrates and extends thinking in a logical progression of language and ideas . . . the voice that understands the power of thesis statements and knows how to incorporate powerful secondary sources" (88). Romano shares no other thoughts about integrating the conventions of research-based writing with fiction or poetry. None of the model essays attempt such synthesis. Nor does Roman go into depth about how various genres produce their own stylistic conventions.

Teachers need not assign multi-genre papers, per se, in the somewhat flat-footed method Romano explains, with papers stitched together from one- or two-page snippets that emulate other genres. Some students may even find such assignments simplistic and naïve, given their own literacy experiences in cyberspace that has, if nothing else taught, us the blurred lines between many types of texts. Instead, teachers might begin by rupturing the research-based essay, showing how it can take up the conventions of other genres—fiction, poetry, drama—while still sustaining a complex, thesis-driven argument with secondary sources. Jody Shipka’s book, *Toward a Composition Made Whole* describes the over-arching project of multimodal scholarship in this regard, encouraging teachers to explore “the ways in which writing intersects and interacts with other semiotic systems,” such as the “selfie” described in Chapter 6 (137). A complete composition course should ultimately have students compose multi-genre projects like those Romano describes, but be even more open to “visual, auditory, olfactory, or tactile modes” (138). Shipka describes a range of projects in which students integrate text with these other genres and mediums, including essays inscribed on physical objects like ballerina shoes, board games with advertisements, and comic strips. For each assignment, students complete a “statement of goals and choices” that asks them to reflect on their decisions to incorporate different media (113).

In various classes I have taught, students compose their own versions of *The Daily Show* in response to current events, produced post-modern retellings of fairy tales in the form of graphic novels, and published digital research papers as blogs. Such assignments expose students to different stylistic conventions, and prompt them to reflect on and engage with style through navigating multiple genres and mediums. Through workshops, conferences, and feedback, teachers can help students make local and global decisions about when to employ an objective, analytical tone, versus when to reinforce such analysis with a more personal or outspoken voice.

Lanham’s *Revising Prose* engages “bureaucratic writing,” a term that refers to wordy sentences often written in the passive voice with an excessive number of prepositional phrases and circumlocutions. In the first three chapters, Lanham constructs what he calls the “paramedic method” for students to use to edit for conciseness and precision (41-42). The method consists of eight short steps that instruct writers to chart and mark their sentences for issues such as “prepositional-

phrase strings” that inhibit a writer’s rhythm and, in turn, make prose difficult to understand, often clouding even the writer’s own thinking about a given issue:

1. Circle the prepositions.
2. Circle the “is” forms.
3. Find the action.
4. Put this action in a simple (not compound) active verb.
5. Start fast—no slow windups.
6. Read the passage aloud with emphasis and feeling.
7. Write out each sentence on a blank screen or sheet of paper and mark off its basic rhythmic units with a “/.”
8. Mark off sentence length with a “/.”

The rest of the book illustrates how this method can be applied to different types of professional writing, including business prose, legal prose, and technical prose. The end of the book presents roughly thirty “diagnose and repair” exercises in which students apply the paramedic method to problematic passages, and then rewrite them.

Although loosely informed by grammar and classical rhetoric, Lanham admits to sacrificing theoretical accuracy for practicality. According to his own method, when diagramming a sentence, he states that, “I don’t claim this division is linguistically correct, whatever that might mean. Just the opposite. It is a quick and easy method any of us can use to chart our own reading of a passage to imagine how our voice might embody the prose rhythm” (45). Thus, the book does not discount other approaches to style and grammar, though it does claim to be the simplest and most effective for making students conscious of the impact writing has at the sentence level.

Many teachers have incorporated the paramedic method into their own teaching and feedback practices without necessarily using the textbook. Because of its simplicity, the paramedic method may appear on almost countless writing center handouts and online tutorials. For instance, the popular Online Writing Lab maintained by Purdue University has kept a page on the method for years. Many of the most experienced writers and editors, especially journalists, readily follow the basic principles of the paramedic method. Yet, the paramedic method is not without its shortcomings. Sometimes writers use circumlocution and indirect language for emphasis. Phrases like “What I mean by that is,” or long prepositional chains like “the house at the end of the street

on top of the hill across town” add clarity or spontaneity, rather than fog. Moreover, simply shortening sentences can eviscerate a powerful statement. Imagine applying the paramedic method to Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, a speech loaded with majestic metaphors that nonetheless rely on long stretches of prepositional phrases. Likewise, passive constructions that use “is” and “was” are sometimes simpler and more straightforward than contorting a sentence around an active verb. Even Lanham might admit that there is nothing stylistically awkward about the sentence, “That house is made of wood,” and that it is probably clearer than saying, “Someone made that house out of wood.” The difference between foggy, bureaucratic writing and clear, precise writing in these terms lies in knowing when certain constructions work and when they do not. As I tell my students, such judgment takes years of development and feedback that begins in a college composition class, but does not end there.

Noah Lukeman’s *A Dash of Style* addresses aspiring creative writers, but its basic principles about punctuation as stylistic tools equally apply to academic writers. Promoting the use of punctuation as an “art form” (1), Lukeman treats punctuation marks in three major sections. The first section covers periods, commas, and semicolons. Lukeman conflates period use with sentence length, advising writers that the frequency of periods reveals the style of a writer or character. Short sentences contribute to a straightforward, crisp, and action-oriented style. Meanwhile, longer sentences imply complexity of thought, depth, and slower internal conflicts. The second section covers colons, dashes, parentheses, quotation marks, and paragraph and section breaks. The third section covers exclamation marks, ellipses, and hyphens.

Exercises at the end of each chapter may be useful to both creative and academic writers, as when Lukeman asks readers to write page-long sentences that may help them “find a new narration style” or “more creative freedom” (41). Other exercises prompt writers to experiment with punctuation marks by rewriting passages from their own work, inserting more commas, removing all commas, extending and expanding sentences, and noting how each punctuation mark affects the rhythm and pace of sentences. Although Lukeman relies on illustrations from literary works, and often refers to novels and short stories in the exercises, the same principles about punctuation for purpose—rather than correctness—may help college students learn to play with the conventions of academic writing. The book frequently reminds

readers that there are multiple correct ways to punctuate a sentence, and that writers can develop a voice by exploring the wide range of possibilities.

The main weakness of Lukeman's book is that he rarely defines grammatical concepts such as clauses, phrases, modifiers, or even sentences. The book may be useful for teachers who want to develop a more aesthetic approach to punctuation, one that influences their approach to teaching mechanics or commenting on such issues in student papers. However, other books such as Kolln's, Williams and Colomb's, and Holcomb and Killingsworth's may be more effective as actual classroom texts. Unlike Lukeman's book, these texts take the time to define grammatical terms, and explain more clearly how grammar (not punctuation alone) functions as a component of style.

### FINAL THOUGHTS ON TEACHING STYLE

As this chapter's examination of textbooks shows, style is not a matter of editing or proofing at the end of the composing process. Writers should see style as a valuable means of persuasion and as a method of discovering ideas. The more teachers stress the idea of style as part of writing processes, as an opportunity to develop a voice and an appreciation for difference, the richer that writing will be. There are a number of strategies and techniques to take away from this book:

1. Integrate style into the curriculum at multiple points, and make it an explicit topic by assigning readings and adapting exercises and activities from the books discussed in this chapter.
2. Assign essays, books, and speeches that demonstrate lively academic styles. Try to assign a linguistically and culturally diverse range of authors.
3. With students, analyze the sentence patterns, uses of rhythm, and figurative language in these works.
4. Assign in-class or out-of-class activities in imitation. Give students credit for completing them, but consider commenting or responding rather than "correcting" these compositions. Have them imitate a wide variety of authors.
5. Encourage or even require students to use stylistic devices (e.g., tropes, figures, and schemes) in major assignments.

6. Assign low stakes and high stakes assignments that ask students to compose in a range of genres (e.g., reviews, letters, emails, essays, research papers, editorials, photo-essays). Have them analyze the stylistic conventions of these genres and then experiment with them in their own writing.
7. Encourage special consideration to digital genres and their stylistic conventions. Have students compose tweets, memes, and status updates with attention to their stylistic constraints and possibilities.
8. Assign reflective essays that ask students to discuss their views about style and how other assignments may foster a greater awareness of the rhetorical impact of linguistic choices on their writing.

For those teachers who adopt them, these guiding principles bring style out of the shadows of college writing classes, helping to improve students' writing while also perhaps increasing their satisfaction in producing the academic texts required for success. Teachers may find responding to and evaluating student writing less laborious—less about “correcting errors”—and instead provide comments that help students achieve a balance between convention and expression, or conformity and deviation. Given the long and turbulent history of style, it would be naïve to think that this book will instantly transform teaching practices nationwide. However, even a handful of teachers adapting a handful of these approaches will affirm the message of this book—that style can be inventive and meaningful, and that it merits serious attention from teachers and researchers concerned with the effects of language.

Table 1. Table of Textbooks

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Linguistic Approach</b>	<b>Classical Approach</b>	<b>Mixed/ Other Approach</b>	<b>Exercises/ Activities</b>	<b>Course Level (Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced)</b>
<i>Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace</i>	x			x	Intro/ Intermediate
<i>Classical Rhetoric for Modern Students</i>		x		x	Intermediate/ Advanced
<i>Style and Statement</i>		x			Intro/ Intermediate
<i>Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students</i>		x		x	Intermediate/ Advanced
<i>A Matter of Style</i>	x	x			Advanced
<i>Rhetorical Grammar</i>				x	Intro/ Intermediate
<i>Performing Prose</i>					Intro/ Intermediate/ Advanced
<i>Artful Sentences: Syntax as Style</i>	x				Advanced
<i>Composition in the Classical Tradition</i>		x		x	Intro/ Intermediate
<i>Revising Prose</i>			x		Intro/ Intermediate
<i>The Well-Crafted Sentence</i>	x			x	Intro/ Intermediate
<i>A Dash of Style</i>			x		Intermediate/ Advanced
<i>Style: Writing as the Discovery of Outlook</i>			x		Intermediate/ Advanced