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Becky L. Caouette

On the College Front: Patrick Hartwell's "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar" and the Composition of Anthology

Patrick Hartwell's 1985 *College English* (CE) article, "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar," is the most widely reprinted article in Composition. That is, in Composition anthologies—here defined as collections of previously published articles or book chapters, intended for, one, a readership of scholars new to the field and/or, two, Composition instructors, new or experienced—Patrick Hartwell's (1985a) article appears in more anthologies and in more editions of anthologies than any other reprinted text (see Table One), including such field-defining works as David Bartholomae's (1985) "Inventing the University," Sondra Perl's (1980) "Understanding Composing," Janet Emig's (1977) "Writing as a Mode of Learning," Nancy Sommers's "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers" (1980) or "Responding to Student Writing" (1982), and Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford's (1984) "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy." Yet as ubiquitous as it is, it has received very little critical attention on the college front in the years following its initial publication. The critical invisibility of the text seems at odds with its pervasiveness in anthologies.

Such tension finds a kindred spirit in this special issue of *LAJM*, where we struggle with the two different, but connected, questions: whether or not "grammar matters" and what are the "grammar matters" that define our times. In the pages that follow, I don't profess to be able to answer either of those questions, or the many more that they spawn. While I have the data to illustrate that, at least to anthology editors and readers, Hartwell's (1985a) article on grammar does "matter," I have struggled mightily to understand the *why* behind the data. What is it about Hartwell (1985a) that is so appealing to editors, teachers, and scholars alike? What need does his essay fill? In this essay, I argue Hartwell's (1985a) article stands in as a token acknowledgement of the grammar issue as well as exemplifies modern college Composition's unease with the topic. Hartwell (1985a) gets repeatedly reprinted because, as a field, we are uncertain how else to talk about grammar within the limited space of a Composition anthology.

"Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar" regularly claims prime real estate in many Composition anthologies. Since its initial publication, "Grammar" has been republished in six different anthologies for a total of fifteen editions. Of course, since the essay was published in 1985, some of the earlier anthologies—Tate and Corbett's (1967) *Teaching Freshman Composition*, Winterowd's (1975) *Contemporary Rhetoric*, Ohmann and Coley's (1975) *Ideas for English 101*, the first two editions of Graves's (1976 and 1984, respectively) *Rhetoric and Composition*, and the first edition of Tate and Corbett's (1984) *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*—could not have access to Hartwell's (1985a) work without time travel (see Table 2). Thus, of the ten anthologies I've gathered, Hartwell's (1985a) article appears in six, and was only eligible to appear in seven (*The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* is the one anthology that his article could have appeared in—at least the second through fourth editions—and didn't). The essay also appears in fifteen of the twenty potential editions of anthologies for which it was available (although it should be noted that the first edition of the *St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing* did not contain a section of the printed articles). Thus, three-quarters of the editors who might have included "Grammar" in their anthologies did so, and often repeatedly.

When "Grammar" was first published in CE, there were six immediate responses in the CE "Comment and Response" section and one additional response that appeared a year later (see below). But since then, there has been no real critical attention paid to this text. "Grammar" has not been revisited in the

What is it about Hartwell (1985a) that is so appealing to editors, teachers, and scholars alike?

Author	Article/Chapter Title	Original Date of Publication	Anthologies/Editions
Hartwell, P.	Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar	1985	6 anthologies, 15 editions
Sommers, N.	Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers	1980	5 anthologies, 9 editions
Christensen, F.	A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence	1963	5 anthologies, 8 editions
Bartholomae, D.	Inventing the University	1985	4 anthologies, 11 editions
Ede, L. and Lunsford, A.	Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy	1984	4 anthologies, 8 editions
Berlin, J.	Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Classroom	1988	4 anthologies, 7 editions
Booth, W.	The Rhetorical Stance	1963	4 anthologies, 7 editions
Christensen, F.	A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph	1965	4 anthologies, 4 editions
Emig, J.	Writing as a Mode of Learning	1977	3 anthologies, 9 editions
Elbow, P.	Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience	1987	3 anthologies, 6 editions
Perl, S.	Understanding Composing	1980	3 anthologies, 6 editions
Braddock, R.	The Frequency and Placement of Topic Sentences in Expository Prose	1974	3 anthologies, 6 editions
Rose, M.	The Language of Exclusion:	1985	3 anthologies, 5 editions

Table 1 illustrates how many editions and overall anthologies have reprinted Hartwell (1985a) and other authors.

Editors	Title	1 st Edition	2 nd Edition	3 rd Edition	4 th Edition	5 th Edition	6 th edition	Publisher
Tate, G. & Corbett E.	Teaching Freshman Composition	1967	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oxford UP
Winterowd, W. Ross	Contemporary Rhetoric: A Conceptual Background With Readings	1975	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
Ohmann, R. & Coley, W.B.	Ideas for English 101	1975	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NCTE
Graves, R.	[title changes over editions] Rhetoric and Composition	1976	1984	1990	1999	N/A	N/A	Hayden, then Boynton Cook
Tate, G. & Corbett, E. (Meyers, N. for 3 rd & 4 th editions)	The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook	1981	1988	1994	2000	N/A	N/A	Oxford UP
Connors, R. & Glenn, C. (Goldthwaite, M. for 5 th & 6 th editions)	The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing	1989	1992	1995	1999	2003	2008	Bedford/St. Martin's
McDonald, J.	The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for College Writing Teachers	1995	2000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Allyn and Bacon
Villanueva, Jr., V. (with Arola, K. for 3 rd edition)	Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader	1997	2003	2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	NCTE
Johnson, T.R. (with Morahan, S. for 1 st edition)	Teaching Composition: Background Readings	2002	2005	2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bedford/St. Martin's
Miller, S.	The Norton Book of Composition	2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Norton

Table 2 lists the different anthologies considered in my study, and chronicles the editors, titles, editions (including dates) and publishers of these anthologies.

same journal's "Reconsiderations" sections, nor did it appear in the 2002 publication *Teaching Writing: Landmarks and Horizons*, edited by Christina Russell McDonald and Robert L. McDonald (both the "Reconsiderations" section and the

For those of my readers not familiar with Hartwell's (1985a) essay, he argued against traditional grammar instruction in the classroom—the skills-and-drills that our discipline most often associated with the nebulous period when the problematically-termed "current-traditional rhetoric" ruled the classroom.

McDonalds' book revisited more canonical, foundational texts within college Composition). As our discipline ages, we will have many early articles and books to revisit and reconsider, and so of course no one journal or collection can be responsible for locating and reassessing several decades' worth of publications. However, this complete absence of critical reflection intrigues me, particularly considering the fact that we are repeatedly asking newcomers to the field—teachers and scholars—to examine this text in the anthologies we provide. Yet as a field, we have not returned to it ourselves in any substantial way. Thus we run the risk of repeating old mistakes, of misrepresenting our current stances or the debates that frame our work, or of sending incomplete, or even erroneous, messages to the next generation. We simply insert "Grammar" in anthologies in an effort to avoid revising that chapter of our history—one that might

look very different through our current theoretical, historical, and pedagogical lenses.

Additionally, when "Grammar" first appeared in 1985, it was the lead article in that issue—a clear indication of how relevant and important the editor found it. For those of my readers not familiar with Hartwell's (1985a) essay, he argued against traditional grammar instruction in the classroom—the skills-and-drills that our discipline most often associated with the nebulous period when the problematically-termed "current-traditional rhetoric" ruled the classroom. He examined the topic from several theoretical viewpoints, including cognitive, linguistic, and psychological studies, situating his argument in both newer (at the time) and more familiar methods of analysis. He spent a significant amount of time reviewing the literature, a practice that served as more than good scholarship. Since most of the research, particularly empirical studies, indicated that traditional grammar instruction was unhelpful in improving student writing, his review of literature worked rhetorically and solidified his overarching argument. It suggested that what he had to say wasn't new at all, but rather that he was synthesizing past research. In doing so, he presented five different ways of thinking about grammar and based at least three of them on work done previously by W. Nelson Francis in 1954 (Hartwell, 1985a, p. 109). He spent a great deal of time on some types of grammar, while others were easily explained in a few sentences. While I can't do justice to the more nuanced ways in which he described and argued for seeing grammar in these terms and categories, I can briefly summarize here the five types as Hartwell (1985a) saw them. Grammar 1 was defined as "the grammar in our heads"; Grammar 2 was more akin to the

“explicit descriptions that model the competence of a native speaker...[and which] are the goal of the science of linguistics” (Hartwell, 1985a, p. 114); Grammar 3, which he took more completely from Francis, was described by Hartwell (1985a) as “usage” and was covered more thoroughly, he suggested, by Joseph Williams’ “The Phenomenology of Error” (p. 110). For Grammar 4, Hartwell (1985a) also relied heavily on Francis’s work and the work of Karl W. Dykema, who labeled this category as “school grammar” or “the grammars used in school” (p. 110); Hartwell (1985a) noted that “Again and again such rules are inadequate to the facts of written language” (p. 119). Finally, he described Grammar 5 as “stylistic grammar,” and cited Martha Kolln’s definition of this kind of grammar as “grammatical terms used in the interest of teaching prose style” (Hartwell, 1985a, p. 124).

I summarize each of these descriptions to drive home what

...he argued that what we summarize as “grammar” in the writing classroom was a complex, contextualized process of thinking about language which homogenized grammar drills could not adequately address or teach.

I see as the merit in Hartwell’s (1985a) article. First, he provided an expansive, encompassing view of grammar. But his goal was not to dismiss grammar and encourage a classroom void of such con-

siderations. Instead, he argued that what we summarize as “grammar” in the writing classroom was a complex, contextualized process of thinking about language which homogenized grammar drills could not adequately address or teach. For Hartwell (1985a), Grammar 1 couldn’t be taught; Grammar 2 required knowledge and interest in linguistics, which was a different disciplinary field than grammar or Composition; Grammar 3 was usage, which could really only be *responded to* (or such was the argument of Williams, which Hartwell [1985a] cited); Grammar 4, as I quote above, had no place, he felt, in Composition; and Grammar 5 was about style, not grammar. Hartwell (1985a) was being particularly ironic in labeling these five different issues as “Grammar,” since he selected five parts of traditional grammar instruction and showed how they either did not constitute “grammar” or how they were grammars that simply couldn’t be taught. To make such an argument, he built on the work of others before him and acknowledged the concerns and arguments of both sides (even as he counted himself among those “who dismiss the teaching of formal grammar” [Hartwell, 1985a, p. 108]). His appeared a fair and balanced review and assessment.

The immediate—and perhaps only—critical reception of Hartwell’s (1985a) article can be found in CE’s “Comment and Response” section of subsequent journal issues. In this section, comments from select readers were published, and the writer of the article under comment was invited to respond to the comments on his/her article. For Hartwell’s (1985a) article, the first responses were published in the October 1985 issue of CE; there were four critics published, and they occupied about nine and a quarter pages of the total journal. Later, in the December 1985 issue, there was still another critic,

and another response on the part of Hartwell, totaling four pages. Still later—over a year after Hartwell’s (1985a) article was first published—there was a final respondent. While I’m sure such a large response was not unprecedented, it was remarkable for its size. Clearly, “Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar” struck a chord for more than one reader.

The six critics had some level of agreement in their criticism. Joe Williams (1985) and Carole Moses (1985) concentrated on the need for a “common vocabulary” (Moses, 1985, p. 645) when talking about grammar with students and writers. Richard D. Cureton (1985), Edward A. Vavra (1985), and Thomas N. Huckin (1986), along with Moses, focused more on what they considered sloppy or questionable research cited by Hartwell (1985a) and, at times, inconsistent use of that research to create his argument. Martha Kolln (1985), the lone commenter in the December edition, took issue with what she saw as Hartwell’s (1985a) lack of definition and the need for “clarification” of his terms and meaning (p. 877). She also took issue with Hartwell’s (1985a) use of her research and publications (as did Huckin [1986]).

Hartwell’s responses (one in October and one in December of 1985; one in April of the following year) were typical of writers’ responses to the comments of their peers. He thanked Williams for articulating a point Hartwell believed deserved more attention, too; for others, he rearticulated what he saw as centrally misunderstood arguments from his article, acknowledged a correction, and cited more evidence (see Hartwell 1985[b], 1985[c], 1986). In addition, for Kolln (1985), he acknowledged a difference in “perception” but went on to say that “Professor Kolln is flat out wrong” (Hartwell, 1985c, p. 878). While several of the voices seemed a bit more contentious than one would normally find in this academic venue, this didn’t seem out of place given the divisive nature of the topic at hand. Perhaps the criticism/commentary of most interest to me was Vavra’s (1985) questioning of Hartwell’s (1985a) motives. In response to the last lines in “Grammar,” when Hartwell (1985a) wrote that “It is time that we, as teachers, formulate theories of language and literacy and let those theories guide our teaching, and it is time that we, as researchers, move on to more interesting areas of inquiry” (p. 127), Vavra (1985) responded with the following:

Professor Hartwell should “move on,” as he says, “to more interesting areas of inquiry.” At least he should move on to an area of inquiry. He notes that the issue was settled for him twenty years ago. Doesn’t that mean that his inquiry stopped twenty years ago and that what he has given us is the ‘research’ of a closed mind? (p. 649)

Indeed, if “Grammar” was published in 1985 and Hartwell had taken a stance on grammar as early as 1965 (“twenty years ago,”) Vavra had a right to throw a questioning light on Hartwell’s (1985a) motivation, methodology, and conclusions. Hartwell (1985a) may have misspoken in his eagerness, or perhaps he truly did approach his research with a bias that colored his conclusions—he admitted, as I noted above, to siding with the “anti-grammarians.”

Like Vavra, that final line strikes a chord for me, as well, because I think it's a call that many have answered. Composition Studies in the twenty-seven years since "Grammar" first appeared has, indeed, moved on to new theories of language and literacy—the move to theorizing writing and considering literacy in its social context is largely what defines the decades following the essay's publication. The "areas of inquiry" in college Composition Studies are numerous, marked by more sub-disciplines than ever before. In a sense, then, Hartwell's (1985a) request has been answered.

But what do we lose by closing this avenue of inquiry? What happens? While I believe Hartwell (1985a) makes excellent arguments concerning traditional grammar instruction, I'm not sure that there aren't other ways to think about and inquire into the use of grammar—some of which he outlines himself. What does grammar mean in terms of style, for example? What is the role of linguistics in the Composition classroom? What does it mean when we respond to usage—and how do we do that?

In his *WPA* call for more empirical research for writing program administration (adapted from his excellent 2006 address at the annual CWPA Conference), Chris Anson (2008) touched on this subject in interesting ways as he lamented the dated nature of some of our empirical research and called for more such research in the near future. Anson (2008) grounded his call for action in response to a misrepresentative report issued by the Pope Center about writing in his own institution; he

want[ed] to make a case for reinvigorating the research agenda that helped to generate the field of composition studies and its related areas of inquiry. My point is this: if we continue to rely on *belief* in our pedagogies and administrative decisions, whether theorized or not, whether argued from logic or anecdote, experience or conviction, we do no better to support a case for those decisions than what most detractors do to support cases against them. Instead, we need a more robust plan for building on the strong base of existing research into our assumptions about how students best learn to write. (pp. 11-12; emphasis in original)

For Anson (2008), the call was for more data and research to answer modern day "detractors" in our field. He suggested that earlier research in the field did just that, and, indeed, we saw Hartwell (1985a) synthesize such data. But since then, we have come "to rely on belief," and that is not sufficient in the current political and educational climate. We need more.

Anson (2008) spoke specifically to research in grammar. While he grounded his argument in the more mammoth publication of George Hillocks (1986), *Research in Written Communication* (1986), Hartwell (1985a) did warrant a mention in Anson's (2008) article. In his discussion of possible alternate responses to the Pope article other than "laugh[ing it] off" (Anson, 2008, p. 16), Anson (2008) asked readers to "Consider, for example, a response rendered in and supported by *theory*" and went on to list several ways to do that, including the suggestion "that the grammar of a language is not learned

explicitly (Hartwell)" (p. 16, emphasis in original). He reminded us that "Hillocks' meta-analysis . . . exists in a tradition of composition research that urges continued inquiry" (Anson, 2008, p. 22). Anson (2008) acknowledged "That direct grammar instruction has negligible effects on learning to write or improving writing ability is so foundational that is it [sic] not worth much continued exploration in the field," and went on to note all the ways that we could build on Hillocks' work in the field of grammar research because "countless questions remained about the role of grammatical knowledge in learning to write"; he provided an extensive list of suggestions (pp. 22-23).

Hillocks (1986) "urge[d] continued inquiry" while Hartwell (1985a) suggested that inquiry in relation to grammar instruction is a dead-end. And yet, Hartwell's (1985a) article is the one that repeatedly gets reprinted. Of course, part of this is convenience—an article lends itself to anthologizing so much better than a larger book that would have to be excerpted out (particularly difficult in a "meta-analysis" such as Hillocks). While Hillocks (1986) might provide a platform to build on, Hartwell (1985a) does not.

So we come back now to the questions that began this essay—why does Hartwell (1985a) continue to be reprinted? On one hand, we see that he defined various types of grammar and effectively dismissed them from being taught as "grammar" in the college Composition classroom (they may, as in the grammar that

is style, be taught in a different way). On the other hand, we see that he ended debate about the "current-traditional" model of grammar instruction—rote

drills decontextualized from the actual writing that students do. Following the publication of "Grammar," debates about grammar in the Composition classroom were significantly reduced in the more mainstream college-level journals of Composition Studies. As Anson (2008) pointed out, it's a topic we, as a field, have not really returned to in any quantitative, research-based way.

Instead, we continue to print Hartwell's (1985a) article. "Grammar" serves as the token article in many of these anthologies when it comes to issues of grammar instruction. Given the confines of space, and the massive undertaking of compiling at least 150 years of journal articles, chapters, manuscripts, memos, calls, statements, letters to and from the editor(s), responses, records and minutes from proceedings and meetings, and ephemera, something has to be left out, and other works and texts must take on the task of representing as much or as many opinions as possible. When speaking of literary canons, John Guillory (1993) noted that "Canonicity is not a property of the work itself but of its transmission, its relation to other works in a collocation of works" (p. 55), and suggested that the real value is what the work represents. In the case of tokenism, we need to acknowledge what other

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works are being represented by the inclusion of one or two articles or chapters (in this case, perhaps the longer Hillocks [1986] work is represented by the more anthology-friendly Hartwell [1985a] article).

Context matters: when reprinted in an anthology, an article or book chapter reads differently than when it was originally published in a journal or book. Organization, placement, editorial decisions (of omission, addition, abstraction), comments, headings, etc. all richly affect how we view the

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work. When anthologies choose to supply some scholarship on grammar instruction—and the majority of them do—they turn to Hartwell’s 1985 article as a resource. Hartwell (1985a) also stands in for discussions on correctness, error, and usage, among other topics, and, on occasion, can be a representative for style. Hartwell (1985a) has been classified under subheadings as diverse as “Style—Writing Sentences” and “Grammar” (McDonald, editions one [1995] and two [2000], respectively); “Responding to and Evaluating Student Writing” (Morahan and Johnson, edition one [2002], and Johnson, editions two [2005] and three [2008]); “Style” and “Perspectives 2000” (Graves, editions three [1990] and four [1999], respectively), the latter despite the fact that Hartwell’s article was published in 1985, and Graves’s fourth edition was published in 1999; “Talking in Terms of Discourse: What It Is, How It’s Taught” (Villanueva, editions one [1997] and two [2003]); and, in Miller’s [2009] Norton edition, under the larger heading of “Theories of Composition” and the subheading of “Common Topics of Invention.” As readers can see, this illustrates a wide range of possible uses of Hartwell’s (1985a) article. Some of the placements seem to be obvious, some puzzling, and some complete misrepresentations of Hartwell’s (1985a) work.

Such diversity brings to light the real usefulness of tokenism. By reducing an article or book chapter to a fragment of its total argument or purpose, editors can thereby situate it or interpret it broadly. If context is crucial when anthologizing, texts can be convincingly included just by virtue of their placement and surroundings. Thus editors can make decisions about how best to organize their anthologies and select materials based on those selections, or they can choose their selections and find ways to shoehorn them in. Yet despite the many ways that Hartwell (1985a) is classified in these anthologies, he is often one of the only, if not the only, nod to grammar instruction in the writing classroom. Hartwell (1985a) stands in for decades of neglect and avoidance in the field at the college level; he is the Miss Havisham of grammar in college Composition Studies.

The pedagogical implication of practicing tokenism is this: all facets of a sub-discipline or issue are never fully explored. That’s not surprising to anyone who has ever taught from, or even read, an anthology. Nor is it surprising to anyone who has had to teach a survey class (or any class, for that mat-

ter). Something always gets left out; a story is only partially told. A modern liberal arts education rarely allows complete “coverage” of any topic. In fact, I doubt we know what that would look like.

So “Grammar, Grammars and the Teaching of Grammar” appears as the token article on grammar, and in that inclusion, something get excluded. Such is the genre of the anthology. But beyond that, the continued inclusion of Hartwell (1985a) serves two purposes: it effectively ends debate—and thus inquiry and research—on grammar instruction for those new to the field (instructors/scholars) and it allows those within the field to avoid or outright dismiss the topic altogether.

I have assigned “Grammar,” from anthologies, in a course, and I have never made further discussion of grammar a priority of the course. For me, Hartwell (1985a) is the token article, the beginning and end of the discussion. And yet, as a Writing Program Administrator (WPA), I can say without hesitation that the role of grammar instruction is the biggest topic of conversation with many of the groups that I serve: students in classes, faculty inside and outside the department, parents, administrators, and the public. In my former position, where I trained teaching assistants, that was what many of them brought to Orientation—questions that conflated the teaching of grammar with the teaching of writing. As my current institution moves to a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) sequence, that is the assumption (and fear) that I hear more frequently from other departments and faculty. And, as one colleague said to me during a discussion of a sophomore-level service course (taught by English for the School of Management), “You teach them the grammar and mechanics. We’ll take care of the rest.”

My point here is that when we critically reflect on the inclusion of “Grammar” in so many anthologies, what matters in grammar—and how we convey that—becomes very complex. Do we, for example, include Hartwell (1985a) so that we can avoid talking about grammar issues with others, and thereby preemptively dismiss criticism about the absence of traditional grammar instruction in Composition classrooms? Is it an unwillingness to engage in continued inquiry in the field, even if, as Anson (2008) argued, that inquiry is necessary—that new questions are emerging? Is it possible that the message that Hartwell (1985a) conveyed—that traditional grammar instruction as we knew it has no place in the modern classroom—is a dated argument that we nevertheless continue to promulgate by our anthologizing of the article? Or is it that Hartwell’s (1985a) article does what it needs to do in the space we have available in these anthologies? Such questions that have not been answered elsewhere point, I argue, to Composition’s unease with this topic on the college level and with our desire to present one article, one perspective, as the definitive one in the field. My research, coupled with this special issue and arguments from such critics as Anson (2008), indicate that it might be time to reexamine such a stance.

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