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Composition heuristics and theories and a proposed heuristic for business writing

Katharine Louise Peake

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COMPOSITION HEURISTICS AND THEORIES AND A

PROPOSED HEURISTIC FOR BUSINESS WRITING

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

English Composition

———————————————

by

Katharine Louise Peake

June 2007

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June 2007

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ABSTRACT

In this work, I question the usefulness of heuristic procedures, within composition in general and writing in business in particular, as an effective aid to the generation of written, non-fiction discourse. To do that, I examine of several heuristic methods to determine their emphasis and level of efficacy in helping foster idea development, idea organization or idea explication within the environment of the social essence of epistemology. To explore this thesis' inquiry as to a possible role the use a business-directed heuristic might play in facilitating the various writing requirement in business, I examine certain heuristic procedures that have been taught, and some which still are taught, in university level composition courses. Further, I examine these heuristics in light of the theoretical environment in which they were designed and were or are used. Those theories concern how human beings acquire knowledge, specifically under a current-traditional worldview that sees knowledge made through individual interrelationships with texts and/or the self versus an understanding that epistemology results from social interaction and discourse within and across discourse communities.

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I further examine current pedagogy associated with business writing and how that pedagogy distinguishes itself from the teaching of general composition because of the essential differences in business writing from much writing required in academia and in other post-graduate professional endeavors. I describe a heuristic that addresses business writing and I discuss its efficacy against critiques of the other heuristic methods I include and against its use within a business writing setting.

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CHAPTER ONE

MODERN HEURISTICS AND THE CANONS OF RHETORIC

Purpose

This work questions of the usefulness of heuristic procedures, within composition in general and writing in business in particular, as an effective aid to the generation of written, non-fiction discourse. To do that, I consider the recent history of composition theory, investigating the reasons why heuristics as a teaching aid in composition classrooms were devalued following what is known as the "social turn" (Foster 77). To do that, I examine of several heuristic methods to determine their emphasis and level of efficacy in helping foster idea development, idea organization or idea explication within the environment of the social essence of epistemology.

Given the current understanding of the social foundation of learning and imparting knowledge in writing, this thesis explores whether there remains a place in written communication for the use of heuristics to assist writers in preparing their messages. One area where the use of heuristics may be effective is in business writing. This thesis questions whether there may be, in the business

arena, a place for the usage of heuristics to facilitate written communication.

To explore this question, I examine certain major currents of composition theory: current-traditional, expressivism, social construction, process theory, collaborative writing, and genre analysis. I look at these theories, their underlying belief in the process of epistemology, and their pedagogical implications, concentrating on the scholarship from approximately 1970 to the present. Within each theory or juxtaposed against it, I examine ideas about and practices with the use of heuristics to teach general and discipline-specific composition. These heuristic theories are Stephen Toulmin's analysis of persuasive or argumentative discourse; Richard Young's, Alton Becker's and Kenneth Pike's tagmemic grid; Kenneth Burke's pentad; Joseph Comprone's heuristic incorporating process writing theories; Linda Flower's process writing strategies; Cynthia Selfe's and Sue Rodi's heuristic and D. Gordon Rohman's heuristic for expressivist writing; and Anis Bawarshi's heuristic for genre analysis.

I examine current pedagogy associated with business writing and how that pedagogy distinguishes itself from the

teaching of general composition because of the essential
differences in business writing from much writing required
in academia and in other post-graduate professional
endeavors. I describe a heuristic that addresses business
writing and I discuss its efficacy against critiques of the
other heuristic methods I include and against its use
within a business writing setting. I believe using certain
writing heuristic processes can facilitate the thinking
process, leading to translation of that thinking into
written product. Writing in a business arena differs from
writing in a traditional academic environment because of
additional factors, for example, rules and regulations
within a company and imposed upon it by all levels of
government. The heuristic I propose, entitled FIRAC,
places these additional factors in front of a writer for
his/her consideration as part of the analytical writing
process necessitated by business circumstances.

Introduction

Aristotle discusses the five canons for discourse in
his *Rhetoric*, stating in Book I that "the subject
[rhetoric] can plainly be handled systematically" (179).
His writings and theories influence historic and

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contemporary studies in composition today. Currently, many

composition theories and pedagogies treat the first three

canons: invention, or the process of idea development;

arrangement, or how ideas are organized; and style, or what

words are chosen to convey these ideas. The final two

canons, memory and delivery, are emphasized in the

discipline of communication or speech (Reynolds, Bizzell

and Herzberg 1). This emphasis may trace its roots to the

split between the academic disciplines of English and

speech, concomitantly dividing the Aristotelian concept of

rhetoric between oral and written persuasion. In

departments of English then, rhetoric was emphasized in

writing/composition courses (Foster 14).

Aristotle writes about the canons of rhetoric

systematically, demonstrating his thesis that persuasive

communication can be taught and learned by following a

straightforward methodology. Further, Aristotle argues

that rhetorical composition reveals truth and can

demonstrate truth to an audience that initially does not

have knowledge of a particular truth (180-181). He claims,

therefore, that epistemology occurs when an individual

encounters new information via language as transparent

medium. Since Aristotle's writings have been at the core

of Western rhetorical studies, including composition, for over two millennia, the persistence of a belief in the efficacy of a systematic approach to the teaching of composition is understandable and may be, in some instances and for some purposes, valid.

Teaching composition systematically, including the utilization of various heuristic aids to writing, was a central thrust of the discipline until the 1980s when composition scholars almost universally accepted the paradigm shift from a belief in an Enlightenment view of knowledge, derived by individuals through an individual relationship with various sources of knowledge, i.e., texts and teachers, to a social epistemological understanding of how knowledge is made. In his seminal article on this subject, Kenneth Bruffee writes, "We must understand how knowledge is established and maintained in the 'normal discourse' of communities of knowledgeable peers" ("Collaborative" 640). Bruffee collects earlier writings and theories to underscore this thesis that human knowledge is created through human communicative interaction. This idea contradicts earlier views that human epistemology arises from the musings of people thinking alone (Tate 43). Because of this change of perspective, composition theory

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and praxis veered then from its earlier methodological

views of the teaching and explored pedagogies framed by

this social perspective of how knowledge is made and

communicated. Knowledge-making remains largely systematic,

building upon itself. New knowledge is added to existing

knowledge. However, this systematic process is recognized

as caused by collaboration among humans through communal

discourse ("Collaborative" 647). Along with this shift in

understanding of the genesis of knowledge, the use of

methodological heuristics to teach writing was largely

dropped.

Current-Traditional Essentialism

Current-traditional theories of writing pedagogy

perhaps trace their roots to Peter Ramus, 1515-1572, whose

teachings foreground only two of Aristotle's canons of

rhetoric: style and delivery (Winterowd 261). Hence,

writing assessment focuses on clear syntax that is

mechanically error-free. Coupled with Ramus are the ideas

of Rene Descartes, 1596-1650, that "language is transparent

and capable of expressing truth" as long as authors adhere

to the rules of logic and reason (Tate 44). Current

traditional writing pedagogy teaches modes of discourse: narration, description, exposition and argumentation.

These emphases on the correct usage of language and on learning the modes of expression evolved in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from scholarly interest in the works of Hugh Blair, 1718-1800, to teach rhetorical excellence in the service of leadership in the public arena; George Campbell, 1719-1796, stressing eloquence; and Alexander Bain, 1818-1903, the mode taxonomy (Reynolds, Bizzell, and Herzberg 3-4). The focus on correct language usage, ironically, is furthered, in the early twentieth century, by progressive education proponents who resist the upper class bias of the Harvard model of composition pedagogy, with its canon of literature. The progressive goal seeks to accommodate or acculturate the growing immigrant population to prepare them to function productively within American society. "Correctness remained a goal of writing instruction, . . . by its usefulness in the world beyond school" (Reynolds, Bizzell, and Herzberg 6). Through the teaching of literature, students would learn the essential elements of composition defined in terms of adherence to the rules of grammar and style. Donald Stewart cites Richard Young's succinct 1978

definition of current-traditional rhetoric as a view of

teaching writing that stresses language in its discrete

parts, the taxonomy of the modes of discourse, correctness

of usage and clarity in style (135).

W. Ross Winterowd draws similar conclusions in a 1987

essay that traces some of the pre-social turn theories in

composition, particularly the current-traditional emphasis

on style and delivery. One element that Winterowd

identifies as a contributing factor is "the growth of a

positivistic epistemology" (262). He cites Anne Berthoff's

1974 text, *Form, Thinking, Writing*: "The making of meaning

is the work of the active mind, of what used to be called

the imagination – that power to create, to discover, to

respond to forms of all kinds," (276). "The way you make

sense of the world is the way you write: how you construe

is how you construct" (268). Winterowd elaborates on and

clarifies this current-traditional overview of the act of

writing, citing Richard Young, illustrating a similar

theoretical leaning.

> Every writer confronts the task of making sense
>
> of events in the world around him or within him –
>
> discovering ordering principles, evidence which
>
> justifies belief, information necessary for

> understanding – and of making what he wants to
> say understandable and believable to particular
> readers. (268)

In other words, the belief in an individual making meaning through personal interactions with text or through personal experiences envisions language as simply a vehicle for representation of these individually generated ideas.

Further, James Berlin explains this theory of epistemology that he also traces to Blair, Campbell and their contemporaries, referring to the theory as "Scottish Common Sense Realism." The existence of the material world is a given; knowledge constructs through individual mental assessment of a sensory view of this material world. Truth is found through inductive reasoning and this reasoning and its resultant truth can be tested ("Contemporary" 769). So, if truth can be reached via reasoned steps, then those steps should be identified and defined in heuristic fashion. Essentialism preaches language is simply a container, as Samuel Johnson's metaphor implies, and not a way to make new knowledge (Coe 15). It emphasizes "good form," but form in its structural sense. A major criticism is that current-traditional pedagogy stresses what is correct, but not how to get there (Coe 14). To address

this seeming emphasis of formulaic structure over

considered and meaningful content, scholars such as Stephen

Toulmin, Richard Young, Alton Becker and Kenneth Pike

propose heuristics that address content and the creation of

ideas for writing.

Toulmin's Heuristic for Arguments

In *The Uses of Argument*, first published in 1970,

Stephen Toulmin proposes a heuristic to help in the

analysis and formation of reasoned argument, or "apodeixis,

the way in which conclusions are to be established" (2).

In the Introduction to his book, Toulmin states that the

impetus for his ideas is "logical practice" (6) rather than

theory. Further, his ideas fall within "the discipline of

jurisprudence" because what he proposes is to buttress

claims by making a reasoned "case" (7). Non-legal

arguments can be analogized to legal ones. In the legal

arena, it is essential that the process by which a litigant

reaches a conclusion is made clear in order to demonstrate

that the conclusion is based upon a reasoned application of

the law. Toulmin's goal is to demonstrate, likewise, that

non-legal claims, "claims-in-general," are based upon a

reasoned application of the rational process (7). Toulmin

draws on Aristotle, noting the bases of Aristotle's

teaching on rhetoric are designed for legal, legislative,

and ceremonial fora, and further states that a legal

argument today is nothing more than "a special kind of

rational dispute, for which the procedures and rules of

argument have hardened into institutions" (8). Toulmin

mentions another similarity between legal and non-legal

argumentation, and that is the measurement of its success.

Both succeed when the conclusions argued "stand up to

criticism" resulting in a favorable outcome for one side of

the dispute (8).

Toulmin draws parallels between reason and

jurisprudence and he maintains his ideas apply to many

disciplines of practice. The grounds for a particular

argument certainly differ per discipline or topic, "but

nothing led us to conclude that any special field of

argument was intrinsically non-rational, or that the court

of reason was somehow not competent to pronounce upon its

problems" (40). He maintains then the generalizability of

his ideas even though, because of differences in subject

matter, the nature of the grounds differ (96).

James Stratman uses Toulmin's heuristics for argument

to expand upon pedagogy involving sentence combining as a

way to teach syntactic structure, recognize a rhetorical

situation for writing, or analyze and create persuasive

writing. His ideas and his explanation of Toulmin's

methodology, however, argue against elements in process

theory as well as demonstrate an essentialist view of

epistemology. Writing in 1982, at the outset of the

process movement, Stratman indicates,

> [C]ontemporary instruction in invention combines
>
> Romantic tenets of inspiration with generative
>
> grammar theory: the result is a psycho-empirical
>
> program of rhetoric which asks students to
>
> evaluate their intuitions of validity and
>
> relevance primarily on the basis of stylistic or
>
> organizational features – not on the basis of a
>
> decisive paradigm for reasoning. (719)

Proponents of organizational theories such as sentence

combining praise its ability to encourage reasoned, clear

thinking. Stratman believes that without an understanding

of relevance of ideas to a topic, such theories fall short

of their stated goal. He further believes Toulmin's

heuristic can address this vacuum (719).

Toulmin establishes his theories within the field of

argument, and compares the discipline of jurisprudence to

the making of effective non-legal arguments. To address

his concern that what he sees as shortcomings in prewriting

or invention instruction, Stratman proposes to apply

Toulmin's theories and heuristic in general composition

courses to steer away from what he views as the trend of

then common pedagogy as non-responsive to the teaching of

reasoning skills within writing (718-719). Stratman

explains that he considers Toulmin's heuristic effecting in

jump starting the critical thinking process for well-

reasoned argument or persuasive writing.

Toulmin's heuristic proposes a structure for argument

or logical reasoning that consists of claims, data,

warrants, backing, reservations and qualifiers. These

elements are defined as follows:

1. A claim is the beginning element of an argument; it

   makes an assertion and must also be justified.

2. Data are facts that justify the claim.

3. A warrant legitimizes the relationship between the

   claim and its supporting data.

4. Backing strengthens the warrant.

5. A reservation indicates an exception to the

   generalization of a warrant.

6. A qualifier conditions the claim (721-23).

In order to clarify how to identify these structures, Toulmin diagrams his arguments.

The diagram intends to visually demonstrate the effectiveness, as Toulmin asserts, of his methodology in identifying each component of an argument. It provides a path that shows how an argument proceeds, how a claim is reasonably supported, or where additional support of qualifications must be added to substantiate and justify the claim. Therefore, its heuristic utility, Toulmin claims, answers an arguer's question, "What have you got to go on?" (47), pointing to whether a conclusion can be properly supported. Because a claim and data are rarely certainties, the inclusion of warrants, qualifiers and reservations is necessary to demonstrate the potential or probability of the validity of the statement. Of benefit to using Toulmin's heuristic, Stratman states, it is that it analyzes the validity of all types of reasoned statements, whether one's own or another's that may be refuted (725).

Stratman then questions whether Toulmin's heuristic could serve not only as an analytic tool but also one for invention, even though Toulmin himself states that possibility "will not in general be so" (qtd. in Stratman

725). Stratman, however, notes that Toulmin's diagram may show the origins of the reasoning process, thus generating further ideas. Also, he states that once laid out, the elements of the diagram can give birth to questions about other knowledge that may validate or refute a claim. Because the heuristic unveils the structure of a reasoned argumentative statement it can suggest where additional data or other knowledge may be necessary. Stratman notes that frequently argumentative statements are not written in a straightforward structure, and using Toulmin's heuristic to identify its constituent parts will "help the student find something additional to say" (726-727). It will also reveal missing elements and thus the diagram "may function as a heuristic for invention by pointing to areas needing further inquiry and questioning" (726-727). Since many heuristic frameworks consist of a series of questions, Stratman's observation here demonstrates Toulmin's diagram may serve that same purpose, directing a writer's thinking process to examine and explain individual elements essential to create a persuasive whole.

As with any heuristic technique, there are criticisms that should be noted as they speak to the efficacy of the adoption of the technique. Criticisms to Toulmin's

heuristics include the observation that often students have difficulty distinguishing between a warrant and data. Toulmin responds to the observation by identifying data as explicit and warrants as implicit responses to the claim. (Stratman 722-723). Backing emerges as another area of concern. Toulmin answers this concern by noting backing makes an otherwise invalid warrant valid under particular conditions or circumstances (Stratman 723). Despite its critics, the latest edition of *The Uses of Argument* was published in 2003. Its nearly half-century longevity stands as a comment that the criticisms to Toulmin's ideas may not be universally embraced and supports my contention that there is, under unique circumstances, such as structured argumentation, a place for using heuristics to facilitate the writing process through direction of the writer's thinking.

Young, Becker and Pike's Heuristic

In 1970, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* was published. The book teaches a writing heuristic proposed by Richard Young, Alton Becker and Kenneth Pike. They base their heuristic on a set of maxims that describe their theories about human cognition and learning:

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1. The worldview of humans consists of units or symbols that are repeated (26).

2. These units, including units of experience, compose a system that has a hierarchy (29).

3. Units, however viewed, can only be thoroughly appreciated when the following are known:

   a. the contrastive characteristics of the unit against similar units;

   b. the scope of possible variations in the unit; and

   c. how the unit dovetails within the larger system (56).

4. The act of inquiry has four stages:

   a. The preparation stage consists of first an awareness that a problem exists, second an appreciation of the degree of difficulty of the problem, and last an investigation of the extent of the problem.

   b. "[A] period of subconscious activity" defines the stage of incubation. The authors describe this stage as "somewhat mysterious," (73) but by analogy argue its reality. They state that people, forgetting a name, have it pop into

their minds sometime later when they are
involved in thinking about some other topic.

c. The third stage is illumination that is the
product of the incubation stage. The examples
the authors use suggest an epiphany arising
out of serendipitous circumstances. Darwin
reads Malthus, "for amusement," and solidifies
his theory of the survival of the fittest;
Newton discovers gravity while sitting under
an apple tree, etc. (74).

d. The stage of verification consists in testing
the product of the illumination stage (75).
In general, the inquiry, or directed, critical
thinking process as a whole is recursive and
subject to error. However, error is
beneficial as a learning tool within the
process (76).

5. Units are either particles, waves or fields.
That is, the writer can choose to view any element
of his experience as if it were static, or as if it
were dynamic, or as if it were a network of
relationships or a part of a larger network.
However, a unit is not restricted to a particle or

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a wave or a field, but can rather be viewed as all

three. (122)

To clarify this maxim, the writers use an old house as

an example. Seen as a particle, it is one building. Seen

as a wave, it is dynamic either "in time, in space or in a

conceptual framework." The house, without human

intervention, will erode over time; features of the

neighborhood change, giving the house changes in space; the

historical concept of a place that houses people changes

depending upon its occupants. Seen as a field, the house

is one part in a system, the community, for example, in

which it stands (123).

6. The last maxim deals with communication. "Change

   between units can occur only over a bridge of

   shared features." The authors describe change as a

   refocus of critical thinking arising from

   interactions between authors and readers, and the

   "bridge" is something shared between the two groups

   such as experience, knowledge, or other

   characteristic of a common culture (172).

To transfer these maxims from theoretical

statements into practice, Young, Becker and Pike create a

heuristic table. They trace the use of heuristics to

Aristotle and explain that heuristics are not rules.
Rather, heuristics serve to focus the stages of inquiry,
direct the writer's thinking process, and increase the odds
for identifying solutions to problems (120). Young, Becker
and Pike's table consists of three rows and three columns.
The rows are the three perspectives: particle, wave, and
field. The columns are the three ways of knowing taken
from maxim 3: contrast, variation and distribution. The
resulting grid contains nine intersections where questions
are posed with a purpose of directing the thinking of the
inquirer about the item under inquiry. For example, at the
intersection of field and variation, the instruction reads:
"6) View the unit as a multidimensional physical system.
How do particular instances of the system vary?" (126-127).
I interpret this instruction as an intent to focus a
writer's attention on idea development as well as idea
organization.

Young, Becker and Pike situate their theories and
heuristics within an essentialist view of knowledge-making.
They describe language as "a means of communicating with
others . . . [and] one's self." Language is, under this
definition, clearly transparent as the authors indicate it
is a "system of symbols." Further, to describe the use of

the heuristic as a discovery or idea exploration process,

the authors cite the example of an individual writer using

the process and making discoveries "often without moving

from his chair" (123). This graphic image conjures the

essentialist view of individual epistemology.

Further, in describing the incubation stage of the act

of inquiry, the writers discuss the concept of individual

subconscious. They call it a Muse, imagination or

creativity, having "a greater capacity than reason for

dealing with the complex and the unfamiliar" (74). This

view of the subconscious equates to James Kinney's

definition of intuitionism. It is an individual process,

wholly segregated from the current understanding that

knowledge is generated and received through social

interactions. Kinney then develops his tagmemic theory

from Pike's linguistics research.

According to Kinney, Pike's research attempts to show

the existence of a common thought structure that supports

all languages. Pike expresses this structure in the maxims

of his theory. In particular the elements of contrast,

extent of variation and distribution represent the methods

of human thought. Kinney notes the heuristic has been used

felicitously for structural analysis of works of

literature. However, Kinney finds it lacking as a tool that writers can use when editing drafts (141-142). Additionally, Kinney objects to Pike's statements that use of the heuristic enhances knowledge-making. Kinney cites research in psychology that demonstrates human thinking processes are not simply linear or logical. Kinney concedes the heuristic is useful for invention, but notes it cannot help writers decide how to present the ideas that result from its usage (142-143). Kinney states that in addition to invention, the heuristic can help in arrangement and in situating a writer within an appropriate "rhetorical relationship" with a reader (144). Whether siding with Kinney or Pike, the heuristic targets the thinking process and attempts to steer that process toward examining ideas and statements for thorough analysis and elaboration.

In a rebuttal to Kinney, Lee Odell makes several points that both praise and criticize Pike's tagmemic. Odell notes that Pike does not contend his heuristic creates knowledge. Rather, it "guides inquiry" (146). Further, Odell refers to research done by Richard Young and Gary Tate that indicates heuristic usage can help "improve the quality of students' expository writing" (147). What

Odell recommends is further study into the use of Pike's

heuristics at all stages of writing and whether its use

parallels our knowledge of human cognitive processes (148-

149). Odell also suggests the possibility of combining

heuristics such as Pike's with Burke's pentad. In my

opinion, Odell's idea here has merit as it could strengthen

a writer's degree of audience awareness, the rhetorical

relationship between writer and reader, as noted by Kinney

and Burke.

The Burkean Pentad

In 1945, Kenneth Burke proposed his theory of

identification. People, using rhetoric, act upon each

other as a way to achieve a cohesive community. Burke

writes that "identification" can be purposeful, such as

intending audience appeal. It can, too, be an end, to

commit to the values or beliefs of any particular community

(Lindemann 54). To determine what motive a writer uses,

Burke presents his pentad.

Burke's pentad consists of five terms:

1. Act – what action occurred, either actually or only

   contemplated;

2. Scene – the context in which the act occurs;

3. Agent — who performed the act;

4. Agency — how the agent performed the act; and

5. Purpose — why the act was performed.

Burke proposes the pentad as a way to determine motivation within human relationships (Lindemann 54).

Joseph Comprone takes the pentad a few paces farther, suggesting it dovetails within process theory of composition. "[W]riting is a transcription of the process of composing ideas; it is not the product of thought but its actualization . . ." Comprone suggests that application of the five terms to the act of writing facilitates and improves this thinking process. He proposes a heuristic that involves Burkean ideas (336).

Prewriting begins the process, focusing on agent and scene with an idea of purpose. Comprone cautions against beginning writing with an outline because such outline emphasizes only act and purpose and tends to displace scene, agency and agent. Once written, the draft functions as a Burkean "terministic screen," giving the writer "a not *the* perspective" (336). The writer should then make an outline/plan in an effort to discover different terministic screens. To do that, Comprone proposes his heuristic which

is a series of questions based on Burke's pentad (337-338),
paraphrased as:

1. Action - Peers state their opinions or views on the
   writing, giving audience perspective.

2. Agent - Peers state their opinions about the
   writer's characteristics based on how the writing
   sounds.

3. Agency - The writer, with help from instructor
   and/or peers, should attempt to answer how s/he is
   achieving the self-envisioned goals of the writing,
   such as looking at structural and content schemata.

4. Scene - The writers should be encouraged to
   envision different scenes than that existing in
   their writing at this point. The writers should
   direct their thinking toward what readers might
   see. In essence, they should argue for their
   perspective while considering those of others.

5. Purpose - The writer must answer the question, "Why
   is this piece being written?" (338-339).

Comprone takes his heuristic to the revision/editing
processes by relying on Burke's use of the term
"identification" and the ratios between the five pentad
terms. "How does the writing establish a relationship

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between the verbal action itself and its context?" With

this question in mind, the writer should examine voice,

tone, form and attitude. Next, the writer should examine

the piece to ensure its purpose is discernable. Finally,

Comprone uses Burke's term "consubstantiation" to suggest

the writer should examine the writing to see where writer

and reader join (340).

Burke's own thoughts on his theories of the pentad

used as writing heuristic appear in the same issue of

College Composition and Communication as Comprone's

article. Burke comments on a writing text, *The Holt Guide

to English*, by William F. Irmscher, that suggests using the

pentad as a heuristic for student writers, but Burke's

writing applies likewise to Comprone (330). Burke briefly

traces the development of his theories on language and

symbolic action that led to his creation of the pentad:

"namely the mediaeval Latin hexameter: *quis* (who), *quid*

(what), *ubi* (where), *quibus auxiliis* (by what means), *cur*

(why), *quomodo* (how), *quando (when)*". However, Burke makes

an important distinction. He views the pentad as an

analytic method for understanding a text "already written,"

not one at some prior stage (332).

Comprone's position has merit, buttressed by Burke's

hexameter basis, especially in creation and testing of a

writer's thinking process. Assuming the response to

Comprone's question number 5 ("Why is this piece being

written?") is that there is a circumstance, event, or

exigency that demands a well-reasoned response,

consideration and development of appropriate responses to

questions 1 through 5 that helps direct thinking toward

addressing that demand. To successfully convince readers

of the appropriateness of a reasoned assessment of a

circumstance together with directed conclusions depends

upon how well audience awareness, tone, structure, content

and response to probable objection are envisioned and then

addressed (Guffey 37). Writers can, in completing a writing

task of this nature, benefit from following a heuristic

guideline to ensure these steps are not overlooked or

slighted.

The Process Movement

According to Sharon Crowley, the process movement

began in the late 1960s and continued strong throughout the

1970s. Its slogan, "Teach the process, not the product"

reflects the movement's focus change from what is written

to what writers should do to produce what is written (187).

Innovations within the process theory and its pedagogy are

that the theory itself lends a scientific credence to the

teaching of composition based on its roots in cognitive

psychology, and that the pedagogy focuses on the students

as writers. Crowley cites Maxine Hairston, writing in 1982,

that "for the first time in the history of teaching writing

we have specialists who are doing controlled and directed

research on writers' composing processes" (194). Crowley

notes, however, that even though process evolves as a

response to current-traditional theories and practices, the

two theories did and do co-exist in the teaching of writing

(191).

Process theory aims at the person writing rather than,

at least initially, at the resultant written product.

Students focus on the stages involved in the creation of a

piece of writing (Spear 4). Heuristic writing

strategies and techniques are foregrounded based on the

theory of their efficacy in modeling the thinking processes

employed by skilled writers (Carter 276). The writing

process movement also bases its teachings on the ideas that

general knowledge is transferable and adoption of general

strategies can facilitate that transferability.

Advocates of social construction, however, believe

that learning expertise in writing comes from attaining

fluency within specific discourse communities. Knowledge

results from dialogue and is influenced by social factors –

history, culture – of a particular community. Knowledge is

not "eternal, material and invariable" (Spear 5). Thus, an

individual working alone does not represent a social

construction model, and, hence, general strategies, like

invention heuristics, may not be effective under those

circumstances (Carter 267-269). The social construction

theories of writing demonstrate the crucial role of

situation/context/audience in building writing fluency and

these concepts are not stressed within process pedagogy

(Carter 277).

An important aspect in the pedagogy of the process

movement is the use of heuristics to foster discovery.

Heuristics, Crowley notes, assume an important place in the

writing of Jerome Bruner, an early process advocate, who

stresses the need for students to practice writing using

design heuristics to solve the thinking problems inherent

in accomplishing writing tasks (196). The students, Bruner

advocates, should concentrate on prewriting to establish

order upon reflection. Following on Bruner, D. Gordon

Rholman and Albert Wlecke believe that if research can identify the "principle" behind writing, then students could use this principle in addressing all kinds of writing challenges. This principle would become "the propaedeutic to all subsequent and more specialized forms of writing" (Crowley 199). These scholars write that strategies for invention can be taught and subsequently used by student writers to both discover and analyze writing subjects (Gleason 2). Essential in this argument is the commitment to the idea that these strategies involve directed thinking.

In 1965, D. Gordon Rholman taught a writing course, using heuristics in which his focus was "Pre-Writing, the stage of discovery . . . when a person assimilates his subject to himself" (106). Rholman's heuristics are intended "to impose a workable kind of form on various kinds of difficulties" (109). He centers his praxis in essentialist theory that thinking and writing are two separate activities; thinking comes before writing; ergo clear thinking creates clear writing (106). He observes that when writers are "groping" for ideas, they recognize them when they arise. A heuristic, therefore, to direct thinking toward finding that pattern of ideas is what is

required. "[I]t is in its essence a matter of rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to new insights" (107). He proposes to accomplish this goal by using a three-pronged heuristic approach.

First, students keep a daily journal in which their writing is focused through a list of questions for consideration. "We are convinced that the journal works as a method" (109). Second, Rohman encourages students to meditate but in a structured, targeted manner. Meditation is, according to Rholman, designed as another heuristic to "unlock discovery" (110). The idea is to make the abstract concrete in the sense that it becomes responsive to one of the five senses, as something that can be experienced. Third, Rholman relies on the use of analogy as a heuristic tool to understand the abstract by comparing it to something again concrete. It forces the student to reexamine a topic from a different view. "It also provides, in some instances not merely the heuristic for discovery but the actual patterns for the entire essay that follows" (111). Rholman credits his course with solid results in terms of better writing, enhanced ability to be

creative, and allowing more students access into the world
of writing (112).

Rholman and Wlecke, however, emphasize the application
of prewriting and using principles to apply structure as an
internal process within each individual writer (Crowley
200). Lester Faigley offers further insight into the
theoretical basis behind Rholman's and Wlecke's view of the
writing process. Faigley cites Rholman: "'Good writing'
must be the discovery by a responsible person of his
uniqueness within the subject." Faigley points to concepts
reflected here that mirror "Romantic expressivism":
integrity and original, individual thinking (529).

Seeing writing as a thinking act and using that idea
as a way to gauge how the thinking process of good writers
differs from that of novice writers lies behind the
research sparking the process movement. Crowley credits
Janet Emig as a strong proponent of the process movement
and cites Emig's 1971 essay, "The Composing Process of
Twelfth Graders" as the movement's quasi-official
manifesto, particularly because Emig analyzes and theorizes
about her own experiences in writing and recognizes these
experiences are identical to those of novice writers. This
theory allows Emig to discredit much current-traditional

pedagogy that gives students the idea that skilled or experienced or professional writers are somehow inspired by forces outside of themselves, when in truth they indeed struggle with the task of writing. Emig borrowed the term "recursive" from the discipline of mathematics to describe her understanding of the thinking process in which writers engage (Faigley 532). Therefore, Emig recommends composition teachers focus on the thinking process students undertake in writing rather than on an idealistic final product (Crowley 200-202).

Process theorist Linda Flower focuses on writing as a process and develops theories adapting this process for composition pedagogy. Alone and with co-author, John Hayes, Flower has conducted writing protocol research and written extensively, including multiple editions of her premier text, *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing*, on the subject of the process writers use when composing (Flower and Hayes vi). In the preface of the first edition of this text, Flower writes,

> This book, then, is a process-based rhetoric: an attempt to look at the traditional topics of invention or discovery, arrangement, and style — as well as audience analysis and persuasion —

from the writer's point of view. Many

rhetoricians from Aristotle on, and especially

the creators of the 'new' rhetoric, have looked

at their art as a process of discovery,

deliberation, and choice. This rhetorical

tradition of teaching writing as intellectual

discovery has a great deal to offer students,

One of the goals of this book, then, was to

translate our knowledge of effective written

products into a description of the process that

could produce them. (vi)

Flower's self-stated goal represents the goal of the

process movement: create an operation, the process,

students can follow that will facilitate their writing

tasks.

Flower claims that the advice to be offered in the

text is directed at solving real world problems. She

offers strategies organized into three categories: 1) the

act of composing, 2) adaptation to a reader focus, and 3)

self-evaluation and editing techniques. Flower directly

challenges tenets of current-traditional pedagogy. The

ability to write, while differing certainly among

individuals, can be learned, and it does not depend solely

on divine guidance (*Problem-Solving* 1981 1-2). She advances cognitive theory that "writing is a thinking process" paralleling "other problem-solving processes" people employ through a reliance on their background knowledge and "on a set of problem-solving strategies" (*Problem-Solving* 1981 3). Strategies Flower proposes are designed to address essential commonalities she identifies in analytical or real world writing: a focus on the reader(s) and "an underlying hierarchical organization" (*Problem-Solving* 1981 9). Flower classifies many of her strategies as heuristic guides to facilitate the steps or stages of the writing process. A heuristic, according to Flower, consists of alternative ways or methods that do not guarantee success, but rather "have a high probability of succeeding." Flower's methods or techniques arise from many disciplines and sources including classical rhetoric, science and business (*Problem-Solving* 1981 44-45).

In the text, Flower presents a transcript of a writer's spoken thoughts as this writer thinks about tackling a writing assignment, illustrating the type of protocol studies Flower undertook to identify the writing process. Since *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing* is a textbook, the sample Flower chooses represents what she

terms as "weak strategies" (*Problem-Solving 1981* 37):
trial and error, attempting to write a perfect draft, and
hoping for divine inspiration. She offers alternatives for
approaching a writing task, all of which are still taught
in texts today: brainstorming, idea development, using
notation mechanisms including hierarchal trees or flow
charts, and understanding the concept of a first draft as a
piece of writing that attempts to manifest preliminary
thoughts and ideas that will require later revision
(*Problem-Solving 1981* 37-39). These steps all concern
teaching writers to focus their thinking in directed ways
with specific outcome goals at each stage in the process.
Texts that recommend teaching writing as process include
The Bedford Guide to Teaching Writing in the Disciplines,
Professional and Technical Writing Strategies, 5th Ed.,
Writing That Works Communicating Effectively on the Job,
Business Communication Principles and Applications,
Essentials of Business Communication, 7th Ed. and Writing
Power Elements of Effective Writing.

   As stated above, *Problem-Solving Strategies for*
Writing results from research conducted on work by previous
scholars in the disciplines of composition and psychology
(Flower and Hayes 450). The authors' enthusiasm for the

results of this research stem from its combination of what

they describe as "a well-developed experimental method for

studying thought processes with a teaching method Aristotle

used – teaching the students heuristic procedures for

thinking through problems" (Flower and Hayes 450).

Protocol analysis uses transcripts of writers thinking

aloud as they write, "including false starts, stray

thoughts and repetitions" (Flower and Hayes 451). The

authors believe that heuristics that guide the thinking

process can work both in the invention and discovery

processes as well as achieving a final product (Flower and

Hayes 450). Hayes' and Flower's language reflects their

situatedness within cognitive psychology and an

essentialist view of epistemology. Their heuristics are

"scientific" (Flower and Hayes 450) and they allow users to

make "rational" (Flower and Hayes 451) decisions. Hayes

and Flower state that the results of the protocol analysis

research reveal heuristics which they have then codified

for use in teaching writing. The two benefits resulting

for writers using these heuristics are to generate ideas

and to structure those ideas directed towards particular

readers. These authors note that heuristics provide

writers conscious insight into the two, recursive, elements

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of composing: generating ideas and then refining them into
text that showcases the purpose of the writing (Flower and
Hayes 452).

Flower has refined the heuristic strategies originally
outlined in the 1977 article co-authored by Hayes. In the
1989 edition of *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing*,
Flower has categorized these strategies into eight steps or
writing processes:

1. Planning – To make a writing plan, writers need to
   attain a clear picture of the rhetorical situation
   and define their own understanding of the issue(s)
   to be addressed. These steps require self-
   education by amassing available information.
   Second, writers need to develop action and writing
   plans. The action plan illustrates the goals or
   purpose the writers hope to accomplish. The
   writing plan describes how these goals will be
   written. Flower notes these plans may be modified
   following preliminary writing (76-92). The plans
   can then be summarized into a thesis of
   "problem/purpose statement" (93-95).

2. Invention – The four subtopics here are
   brainstorming, including free writing, role playing

in an attempt to imaginatively engage readers in self-dialogue, which then is reduced to free writing or notes; using heuristics to understand the dimensions of the subject; and letting the writing rest to gain perspective on the original plans. In step 3, Flower recommends three existing heuristics: the topics of Aristotle, the tagmemic views, and analogizing through synectics (101-108).

3. Organization – Flower suggests three strategies here, the last a recognized heuristic also used in brainstorming. First, writers should read their draft looking for words and phrases that carry additional meaning. Although the writers may understand the full significance of these words and phrases, their meaning may need expansion or development so that readers are provided with a complete understanding as well of the idea or concept that the writers envision. Second, writers should try to verbally explain to another person, in minimal words, the essence or gist of their message. If that person doesn't understand, idea development is warranted. Third, Flower recommends creating a tree diagram to reveal, again, ideas

that need development, ideas that may not be relevant and should be eliminated, and/or new ideas to be introduced (112-118).

4. Purpose – Writers need to ensure they make the purpose of their document clear to readers. To do that, the document must contain a clear problem statement/thesis. Writers should also use that thesis to evaluate the remainder of the writing. Flower recommends writers make margin notes in their draft to chart whether the main issue/thesis is thoroughly explained and results in a supported conclusion (136-145). This chapter does not appear in the first edition of the textbook. Flower includes brief advice about writing within a unique discourse community, addressing the theory of the social construct of knowledge and establishing process theory within that context (150).

5. Audience – Flower treats audience and identifies three essential traits of audience that writers must know in order to correctly frame their messages: How much knowledge on the topic do readers have and how much do they need to know; what attitudes do these readers bring to the topic;

and what are these readers' needs. Flower

recommends writers use a heuristic consisting of a

three-column list to enter information that

responds to the three questions (158-161).

Flower's introductory paragraph to the section about

audience appeal includes the following advice: "I expect

you, my reader, to *mentally* rewrite this book as you read,

making it your own with your own examples and associations

and using it for your own purposes" (175, emphasis added).

Clearly, Flower's theoretical basis remains essentialist,

even in the throes of the social turn and despite her

acknowledgement of it.

6. Reader-Based Prose – Knowing your audience is not

    enough. Writers need to focus their texts outward,

    away from themselves and toward their readers.

    This requires audience-directed thinking. Flower

    offers little here that involves a heuristic

    approach, even in simple form. Her advice is to

    establish mutually desirable goals with readers,

    create a structure directed to readers, cue readers

    (heuristic included) by using headings,

    subheadings, topic sentences, visuals and

transition, and be persuasive (188-192, 202-203, 204).

7. and 8. Revising and Editing - As with focusing on the reader, few heuristics are offered. Flower does present techniques used by experienced writers such as making multiple passes through a draft looking for global (higher order) and local (lower order) issues. She does include heuristics to eliminate unnecessary verbiage, increase verb to noun ratio, write positively and minimize passive voice (217, 228-235).

At the conclusion of her 1977 article, co-authored with Hayes, Flower makes general comments about using heuristic strategies to write and to teach writing, writing understood as a thinking process. Heuristics are not formulas but rather "powerful, but optional, techniques" that can be used throughout the stage of writing. Heuristics must be learned. When learned they facilitate the act of writing because they target a writer's thought processes. Finally, heuristics reduce the act of writing to one of a problem of communication, and show dubious, novice writers that in fact they can learn to write (Flower and Hayes 461).

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Despite the initial and continuing embrace of Flower's

and Hayes' ideas, criticism exists. Faigley summarizes

these critiques well, stating, "From a social perspective,

a major shortcoming . . . lies in the assumption that

expertise can be defined outside of a specific community of

writers" (535). Faigley references Patricia Bizzell's

objection to Flower's and Hayes' work as separating

"language from the generating of ideas." David Bartholomae,

according to Faigley, argues writing cannot be extra-

communal but instead relies on the body of knowledge and

texts arising within a given community (535-536).

Understanding the communal basis of knowledge-making,

Faigley writes, offers a way to avoid wholesale rejection

of process theory. He praises process theory because it

has expanded the pedagogy of the discipline of composition

and has allowed students to experience authorial power. He

urges the process movement to locate itself within a social

construction of writing to "reinterpret" writing as

necessarily influenced by the culture or community in which

it is performed (537).

James Reither offers a critique of the writing process

that emanates from what he perceives as important omissions

in the research and writings of process proponents such as

Emig, Flower, and Hayes. These omissions he cites from

Richard Larson:

> How does the impulse to write arise? . . . How
>
> does the writer identify the elements needed for
>
> a solution, retrieve from memory or find in some
>
> other source(s) the items needed in the solution,
>
> and then test the trial solution to see whether
>
> it answers the problem? (620)

Reither observes that process research has focused on text

to the exclusion of social influences. Reither identifies

fallacies in that approach. Instructors presume students'

background knowledge will provide writing fodder; writing

can be taught disregarding its community origins,

ideologies, experiences, etc.; and writers can self-teach a

subject through the process of writing (622). He agrees

with Lee Odell's thinking that "interpersonal and

institutional contexts" shape writing and study should

focus in these areas. Reither also cites Patricia Bizzell,

"What is underdeveloped is their knowledge of the ways

experience is constituted and interpreted" (621).

Reither's response to these perceived shortcomings is an

engagement in the classical theory of stasis:

> *Staesis* in Greek, means 'questions' or 'issues.'
> Stasis theory, formulated by classical Greek
> rhetors, is a heuristic or theory of invention
> that gives rhetors a set of questions to help
> them determine their key points of disagreement
> and agreement with their audiences in a given
> case. Ancient rhetoricians subdivided *staesis*
> into specific or definite issues, those involving
> actual persons, places and events; and general or
> indefinite issues, or matters suited to
> political, ethical or philosophic discussion.
> Hermagoras designated four major stasis
> questions: conjecture ('Is there an act to be
> considered?'), definition ('How can the act be
> defined?'), quality ('How serious was the act?'),
> and procedure ('What should we do?'). (Bizzell
> 1635)

Reither states that writing instruction must consider that
writing is inseparable from the "socio-rhetorical"
situations in which it is performed (620).

Reither argues that a study of stasis theory as it
pertains to discourse communities will provide a way to
introduce writers to the knowledge available in that

community, how they can enter the community and access that knowledge. He bases his argument on his beliefs in the social construction of knowledge and that within discourse communities writing is a social act (625). In my opinion, Reither's criticism of process and his offer of stasis as an alternative approach are two sides of the same coin. Process, as urged by Flower and Hayes, attempts to direct a writer's thinking process. So, too, does stasis through its four, consecutive heuristically-designed questions. Heuristics that serve to focus the thought process provide a lighted path for a writer to follow rather than stumble ahead amidst ill-defined shadows.

The heuristics discussed in this chapter, Toulmin's analysis of the structure of arguments, Young, Becker and Pike's particles, waves and fields, Burke's pentad, and Flower and Hayes' writing process methodology, are concerned with facilitating the Aristotelian canons of invention, arrangement and style. They all have definite, written, and some diagrammed, systems for a writer to use to assist the writing assignment. Each heuristic targets a writer's thinking process and attempts to direct it to respond to writing issues such as audience awareness, sentence structure, and idea development and expansion.

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Writing pedagogy theories discussed in Chapter 2 share some of these foci including idea generation/invention, purpose and style. These heuristics also attend to a redirection of the writer's thinking process as a way toward improving written product. Their techniques, however, differ in part, emphasizing, as in expressivism, a writer's inner voice, and, as in genre analysis, knowledge imparted through cognizance of unique social situation.

CHAPTER TWO

VOICE AND GENRE CONSIDERATIONS

The Expressivist Voice

Veering away from current-traditional pedagogy, certain composition scholars stress individual expression as a way to encourage writing students to locate themselves within the academic community and at the same time incorporate and validate their personal experiences and knowledge. This pedagogy reflects the writings of Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888, who emphasizes the importance of "the growth of students as whole persons" (Harris 24-25). Early twentieth century teachers, Edward Holmes and James Hosic, in 1911 and 1917 respectively, foreshadow the theories of scholars such as Peter Elbow, James Britton and Ken Macrorie. Holmes writes, "The effort to express himself tends . . . to give breath, depth and complexity to the child's thoughts and feelings and through the development of these to weave his experiences into the tissue of his life." Hosic echoes Holmes: "The development of the expressional power of the individual pupil should be the aim of the teacher rather than the teaching of specific forms and rules" (Harris 25). In the late 1970s and early

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1980s, Harris refers to work, such as that done by Alan

Brick, encouraging composition teachers to recognize and

celebrate students' individual voice rather than

emphasizing mechanical correctness and standardized writing

products (27).

Expressivist pedagogy encourages the development of

individual writers' voice as a way to jump start novice

writers, and "as a kind of bridge between the study of

literature and the teaching of composition." Furthering

this trend, the writings of students are viewed as

literature, representative of its author's creativity

(Harris 27). The self-discovery of each student coupled

with expression of that discovery attains pedagogical value

(Harris 29). Tracing the epistemological roots of

expressivism to Plato, James Berlin explains that since,

under a Platonic view, the material world constantly

fluctuates, knowledge is discerned by individual, internal

vision ("Contemporary" 771). Therefore, expression of

personal voice manifests the results of individual

discernment of knowledge. Berlin cites Macrorie: "Form in

language grows from content – something the writer has to

say – and that something, in turn, comes directly from the

self." Written content and thus knowledge then has been

discovered by the self and communicated by the self's authentic voice ("Contemporary" 772).

With a goal to help students enhance the ability of discovery of ideas through self-reflection, in the early 1980s, James Moffett experimented with pedagogy modeling Eastern meditation with a goal to allow voice to emerge under conditions not expected, resulting in "a disciplined self-understanding and control." With similar goals, Elbow stresses in-class workshops as fostering individual voice through compassionate peer feedback, again intended to nurture idea discovery. (Harris 30). All of these techniques, while concentrating on essential voice, aim at the thinking process, e.g., what kind of thinking can produce improvement in writing.

In 1980, Cynthia Selfe and Sue Rodi design a heuristic exclusively for use in expressivist writing. "[N]o one heuristic we know of is specifically designed for expressive composition. By expressive composition, we refer to the definition or discovery of personal identity and the expression of self through writing." They were prompted in this endeavor by their observations that many expressivist writing products do not appropriately select meaningful experiences, do not develop their ideas

thoroughly, nor express them in ways that engage readers
(169).

Selfe and Rodi state their heuristic is based upon the
work of James Kinneavy and that the heuristic envisions
three ways individual writers should examine or think about
their experiences: self-definition, social definition and
environmental definition. The resulting heuristic is a
chart or grid, with the three definitions running
horizontally and the three temporal dividers (past, present
and future) running vertically. At each intersection a
series of questions, many created by their students, prompt
writers to consider what they intend to express. For
example, at the intersection of the present with the social
definition, questions writers should consider include:
(172-173)

> What self-image do I project in my speaking, in
>
> my writing, in my appearance, and in my ways of
>
> doing things that might affect what others think
>
> of me or affect the kinds of relationships I
>
> have?
>
> How much of my inner self can others perceive?
>
> Why?

How do I view others? How accurately do I

perceive them?

Do I respect others? Value others? Why?

How do my relationships with others shape my

personality? (173)

The authors advocate the efficacy of the heuristic for

expressivist writing because it is flexible. Writers need

not approach it in a linear manner but may select

intersections appropriate to an individual writing task.

Selfe and Rodi state that by answering the questions at

any, some, or all intersections, ideas will be generated

(171). This heuristic, while focusing on idea generation,

again attempts to direct writers' thinking processes.

As criticism of expressivist pedagogy in general,

Harris notes problems as the expressivist approach

deemphasizes textual analysis and foregrounds how a text

makes its reader feel (31). Thus, "the measure of good

writing becomes its genuineness or sincerity." Harris notes

that within the evaluation of such writings the

subjectivity of the evaluator is increased (32). Harris

then asks what is the definition or criteria for evaluating

authenticity of voice? "It's like saying blue jeans are

more genuine than business suits. You can find saints and

con artists wearing both" (33). Harris thus affirms the theory that critical, analytical thinking should be the pedagogical focus for teaching writing rather than an encouragement to identify each writer's unique perspective.

Other criticism of expressivism comes from theorists including William Coles and David Bartholomae. Coles believes that expressivism cannot stand alone because of the intertextuality of writing. Not only do other texts influence a writer's treatment of subject, but also influence that writer's self view (Harris 35). The individual is not "an essence" but rather a collection of perspectives viewed in relation to others (Harris 36). Bartholomae advocates assimilation into academia to appreciate and respond to its culture. His pedagogy involves responses to assigned readings that allow personal experience as support as long as that experience relates to the issues from the readings. "[S]tudents . . . claim an authority, . . by placing themselves against competing discourses, and working self-consciously to claim an interpretative project of their own, one that grants them their privilege to speak" (160). Bartholomae believes that all writing will conform to one degree or another to its institutional environment (Harris 39). Harris agrees here,

proposing that writers neither adopt wholesale writing

"strategies or conventions" but understand their writing

builds upon what has been written within their particular

culture (45). Writing, as viewed by Coles and Bartholomae,

should critically examine societal expectations and use the

result of that thinking as scaffolding upon which to

elaborate and create new knowledge. Again, those these

views incorporate a requirement that to progress as a

writer, a student must examine and likely adjust his/her

thinking process.

Heuristics at the Social Turn

Before the social turn (1979), Janice M. Lauer offers

what she terms a "metatheory" (268) on the value of using

heuristics in a composition course. "The chances of

discovering insight increase through the use of heuristic

models" (268). According to Lauer, these "models" consist

of either a set of questions or a sequence of operations

that a writer performs in order to expand that writer's

views on a topic. To be of use to realize this goal, Lauer

suggests essential criteria these heuristics must

demonstrate. These are the ability to be used for 1)

varying writing tasks; 2) any unique audience or rhetorical

stance; and 3) providing a "generative capacity" that helps

the writer envision the topic from multiple perspectives

that in turn provide new insights and new ideas to be used

in the writing process (268-269). Envisioning a topic in

different ways or under different lights presupposes a

conscious act on the part of the writer to change thinking

at each topic review.

Lauer's theory also places emphasis on the purpose or

intention of a writing. It sees this purpose as joining in

a continuing discourse with a community of similar writers.

These communities serve to frame the content and manner in

which the writing emerges. The purpose then of this

writing mirrors the culture, in its broadest sense, of the

community (Harris 98).

The Social Turn

Advocates of individual cognitive theory emphasize the

efficacy of teaching general or universal strategies as an

aid to improving students' writing abilities. This view

contrasts with an acceptance of a social construction of

knowledge, that "knowledge is constituted by a community

and that writing is a function of a discourse community"

(Carter 266). Bruffee explains that social construction of

knowledge views the concepts of fact, reality, truth and
thought as "symbolic entities" that exist because a
community has generated or constructed them ("Social" 774).
A cornerstone of the cognitive view of knowledge generation
is that an essential truth exists that can be built upon by
individual theory, research, experimentation, etc.
Conversely, social construction sees "only an agreement, a
consensus arrived at for the time being by communities of
knowledgeable peers" ("Social" 777). Knowledge results
from dialogue. Communication is the creation of knowledge.
Sensory understanding is not knowledge until the results of
that understanding are interpreted through language
(Berlin, "Contemporary" 774). "Language does not
correspond to the 'real world.' It creates the 'real world'
by organizing it, by determining what will be perceived and
not perceived, by indicating what has meaning and what is
meaningless" (Berlin, "Contemporary" 775). Language thus
assumes the primary position of epistemology. It puts data
or information in terms of relationships to something that
is already known or understood. Therefore, a view that
general/universal writing strategies can be generally and
universally effective is considered anachronistic and

reductive because it seemingly ignores the context of any particular discourse community (Carter 266).

One explanation that is worth considering to indicate heuristics' decline from common pedagogy is the way knowledge was and now is seen. Kinney writes that through a view of epistemology, three ways of knowing can be identified: "empiricism, rationalism, and intuitionism" (352). These ways are then defined as methods to amass knowledge by 1) empiricism – sensing it as a direct result of physical experience; 2) rationalism – using reason to discover items of information by thinking in a linear pattern from general principles; and 3) intuitionism – the type of receipt of knowledge encapsulated in Descartes' words "cogito ergo sum" (352-354).

What these three methods have in common is they are envisioned to be performed by an individual either receiving new information from an external source or musing about information known and realizing a new bit of information or knowledge from that musing. This view of knowledge-making has foundations within the scientific method of analysis. There are truths that can be discerned through reasoning and this knowledge can then be described in writing. Language here is a medium only, used to

describe the knowledge that has been uncovered through the reasoning process (Spear 4).

Ironically, the beginnings of the current understanding of the social construction of knowledge began in Thomas Kuhn's writings about how knowledge is understood in the discipline of science. Kuhn posits that instead of the commonly held view that scientists, through theory, research and experimentation, discover bits and pieces of new knowledge, they assume new ideologies through their communal study and discourse about theories, research and experimentation. (Bruffee, "Social" 774). The idea then of individual cognition or essentialism constitutes the antithesis of the theory of a social foundation of knowledge gathering, building and making.

Collaborative Writing Theory

In conjunction with or mirroring the social turn in composition theory, much scholarship and pedagogy reflects collaborative writing. Theories suggest collaborative writing helps students understand important concepts including awareness of audience, the relationship between writers and readers, and the epistemology of social discourse (Gleason 3). One of the main proponents of

collaborative learning is Bruffee. He champions this pedagogy on several grounds, one that "Students' work tended to improve when they got help from peers" ("Collaborative" 638). Likewise, he notes the helpers also learn from the experience of editing the writing of others.

Learning to grow intellectually on an individual basis, Bruffee argues, requires growing within a community, and that growth is measured by the ability to function within and enhance the community's interactions ("Collaborative" 640). This idea applies to writing as well. "Writing is a technologically displaced form of conversation" ("Collaborative" 641). Bruffee therefore insists that collaboration be included in composition pedagogy as it is essential to provide the "social context" within which students can learn to function and enhance a community. Further, this learning experience better prepares students to enter a professional community after their graduation ("Collaborative" 642; Lunsford 66). In addition to providing proof that making knowledge is indeed a process of human interaction, writing collaboratively can often be a sort of group heuristic because the synthesis of input from various participants requires organization and

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revision to create a coherent finished product. That

coherence requires conformity of structure, tone, etc. that

writing heuristics, such as Flower's, include, and that

coherence is achieved through collaborative thinking with

its accompanying increase in the group's knowledge.

Genre Analysis

Current theory and pedagogy, including heuristics,

about the significance and the multiple roles genres serve

within human communication gives focus to how knowledge

within any community is made and transferred. Looking at

the uses of genres as "dynamic patterning of human

experience" may assist in understanding and learning more

effective methods to communicate in writing. People

reading and writing within any unique social situation have

expectations about the kind of information they receive or

transmit when a particular genre constitutes the vehicle

for the information. In addition to expecting information,

people infer other items of significance from genre

including purpose, writer, reader, style, tone and context

(Devitt 573-573). People thus make these inferences

because of their background knowledge.

Anis Bawarshi defines genres then as "typified

rhetorical ways communicants come to recognize and act in

all kinds of situations" ("The Genre" 335). They understand

that the genre they are about to read or write concerns a

social situation of a same or similar nature to one

occurring in the past. Genres act in a recursive manner as

communication facilitators. "Knowing the genre means

knowing not only . . . how to conform to generic

conventions but also how to respond appropriately to a

given situation." This knowledge encompasses not just

topic but how that topic should be presented in terms of

degree of explanation and support, type of syntax and

vocabulary to be used, format, and other elements (Devitt

576-577). In addition, genres convey ideologies.

Because genres reflect socially constructed

situations, they reflect the ideologies inherent in those

situations. The selection of a genre includes a selection

of purpose, and purpose includes ideologies, as encompassed

in social situations, as its impetus (Bawarshi, "The Genre"

339).

In her article, "Generalizing about Genre: New

Conceptions of an Old Concept, Amy Devitt cites M.A.K.

Halliday's writings on genre that present genre as a

situation. Situation includes a field, the action that is occurring; a tenor, the participants; and a mode, the role of language that unifies the situation. Further, Halliday associates genre with the social construction of knowledge within any particular social context. Here Devitt makes an interesting observation in response to what she identifies as a "problem" with genre analysis, and that is the origin of the situation to which genre responds. "Genre not only responds to but also constructs recurring situation." Since a genre responds to a situation, it implicitly refers to that situation, and, therefore, writing within genre creates the situation. "By selecting a genre to write in, . . . the writer has selected the situation entailed in that genre." Devitt concludes her theory by affirming the interconnectedness of situation and genre and thus also affirms their position within a social constructionist view of language and knowledge (577-578). To buttress her beliefs, Devitt writes about the fluidity of genre, indicating it responds to changing social situations. People can change a situation, use language in novel ways and reformulate existing genres to deal with those changes (579).

Bawarshi expresses like opinions on the roles genres

assume in making knowledge within their community of

writers and readers. "[G]enres are both functional and

epistemological – they help us function within particular

situations at the same time they help us shape the ways we

come to know these situations" ("The Genre" 340). Because

the language used within a genre responds to a unique

situation, it gives form to appropriate rhetorical action,

and the genre so formed signals its function.

Bawarshi stresses the generative function of genres,

citing Aviva Freedman. "[G]enres themselves form part of

the discursive context to which rhetors respond in their

writing and, as such, shape and enable the writing" ("The

Genre" 341). Since genres reflect societal ideologies,

they prescribe socially-accepted manners of rhetorical

behaviors, and thus guide writers in generating language to

further the ideologies. Genres allow both readers and

writers to participate in socially recognized discourse and

help form authority within that discourse ("The Genre"

343). People use genres to communicate and the roles they

assume within that communication are dictated by the

genres. These roles represent the ideologies and behaviors

expected and sanctioned by the community in which the genres act ("The Genre" 348).

Because genres reflect community expectations, genre analysis dovetails with a goal of the process of writing, audience focus. Devitt cites Bakhtin who views primary genres as contributing to more involved, secondary, genres. Experienced writers use primary genres within their process of composition. These primary genres are an understanding on the writer's part of the societal expectations of the secondary genre (581). Since the text offers socially-accepted rhetorical actions, it is functional as well. Its function is determined by the social context. The text then reflects the culture and ideologies of the community in which it circulates (Bawarshi, "The Genre" 348-349).

In addition to explaining why he believes genre analysis represents an important turn in the elucidation of the study of composition and rhetoric, Bawarshi advocates using genre analysis in college writing programs. "[G]enres, when analyzed, contribute to our understanding of how and why writers invent." If students are introduced to the analysis of genres, it can help them situate their writing because such analysis reveals the purpose, style, tone and social context of a writing task. (Re-Placing

145-146). Bawarshi recommends genre analysis as pedagogy

because it stresses writing invention, not as an individual

act of writer and text, but instead with the "genred sites

of action" where the writer then becomes an actor in

furthering the purposes and goals delineated within the

genre (*Re-Placing* 149). Relocating invention from an

individual writer to a genre necessarily places the writer

within a particular socially constructed situation.

> Within genre, the writer rhetorically acquires
>
> certain desires and subjectivities, relates to
>
> others in certain ways, and enacts certain
>
> actions. Genres, in short rhetorically place
>
> their writers in specific conditions of
>
> production. It is within these conditions of
>
> production, within genres, that invention takes
>
> place. (*Re-Placing* 153)

Writers are no longer alone, searching text or their own

thoughts for ideas. They are rather placed within

locations that are rhetorically shaped, within which they

can engage in focused invention by having the relationship

between social construction and textual construction made

visible. Writing thus envisions and enacts the real world

connection between writing and furthering purpose (*Re-Placing* 154-156).

Bawarshi then proposes a heuristic to instruct writers to analyze genres. The heuristic contains four stages.

1. Writers must gather samples of the genre they intend to analyze. "The more samples you collect, the more you will be able to notice patterns within the genre."

2. Writers must study the situation from four different perspectives;

   a. To identify the setting, attention should be paid to where (in what medium) the genre usually appears and if it typically interacts with other genres.

   b. An analysis of the subject requires noting the topics and what issues or questions are examined.

   c. Human users of the genre are identified and common characteristics as well as common circumstances are studied. In addition, what jobs or what roles both readers and writers are involved in must be recognized as well as when within those roles the genre is employed.

d. Responding to questions of when and why is this genre written and read reveal the motivation and purpose behind its usage.

3. Identification of the textual patterns means looking for common features among the samples of the genre. These features are:

   a. Included and excluded content;

   b. Types of support for assertions;

   c. Categories of rhetorical moves;

   d. Organizational or structural schemata;

   e. Layout and format;

   f. Sentence structure; and

   g. Style and vocabulary.

4. This stage is recursive as it combines stages 2 and 3 by listing a set of questions intended to suggest connections between the patterns of the genre and its situation. These questions focus on the significance of the patterns that reveal the socially constructed ideologies of the readers and writers. Analysis of the patterns within the rhetorical setting should indicate important variables that explain both these patterns and the setting. These variables include the ideologies of

the community, the membership of the community, the

actions that are socially acceptable and those that

are not, and the actions that are either

facilitated or discouraged.

Each stage of Bawarshi's heuristic asks questions that

intend to direct the writers' thinking to the various

elements of the genre to be noted. Writers' responses to

these questions clarify the schemata of the genre as well

the rhetorical situation that both encourages and

constructs its usage. Using the heuristic, Bawarshi

argues, provides an arena where writers "can access and

inquire into the interplay between rhetorical and social

actions" (*Re-Placing* 158-161). Bawarshi believes that this

arena fosters invention because writers can invent within a

discourse setting where the purpose of their writing is

made clearer (*Re-Placing* 163-164).

Both Bawarshi and Devitt readily acknowledge criticism

of genre analysis. Both cite the historical definition of

genre as applied to literature as a basis that grounds much

of this criticism. Genre has been used as a way to sort or

classify literary works, making genre play "a subservient

role to its users and their (con)texts" by way of

comparison of one text to an existing group of similar

texts, thus creating a sense of standard format or literary formula common to that group of texts (Bawarshi, "The Genre" 336). This critique assumes a separation of form from content and, according to Devitt, appears to relate to the reading rather than the writing of texts. Further, it echoes the essentialist view of knowledge-making where genre becomes an inert vessel to hold content. It is a "product-based concept" resulting in a largely held view that good writers are those who can write outside of the vessel (574). Devitt states, however, that "Historical changes in generic forms argue against equating genre with form." Forms evolve but their classifying delineator does not.

Genres instead mix form, content and context, thus making meaning within their unique social setting (Devitt 575). The mixing of form, content and context constitutes what Bawarshi terms "the sociorhetorical function of genres," explaining that genres are not static vessels holding content but forms that guide and facilitate the achievement of effective communication (Bawarshi, "The Genre" 339).

Devitt notes a related criticism that "genre can become deterministic," in effect relegating writers to a

subordinate status. She attributes this criticism to an

Enlightenment view of epistemology and argues rather that

the historical interrelationship of texts provides impetus

to current and future textual production. Because language

and genre are inherently forms of expression, they exert

constraints. But, because writing comes from a social

foundation, writers exhibit selection within genres and

genres, as mentioned above, evolve as a result. Further,

genres are not static; they mirror changes in societal

situations. "Genre is truly . . . a maker of meaning"

because of its ability to respond to as well as create

social situation (579-580).

Criticism of Heuristics

Critiques of heuristics are not confined to the post-
social turn era. In 1977, Susan Wells takes on two

popularly used heuristics: Francis Christensen's rhetoric

of the sentence and Pike's tagmemics. Wells frames her

critiques within the theory of the individual's empirical

relationship to epistemology. She centers her observations

around what she finds in common within these two heuristic

models, and that is an emphasis on the building of

"ascesis" among its users by advising them to use a series

of questions or methods to develop ideas. In other words,
both heuristics overlay a disciplined approach upon the
writer while he/she examines a topic using either heuristic
(467).

These questions, Wells finds, lack thoroughly defined
criteria, and in such a condition they do not measure up to
their advertised universal usage as writing invention
strategies. Wells writes proper tools for invention must
treat "the value of the information and attitudes that
invention procedures generate" (468-469). With
Christensen's methodology, Wells sees it encouraging only
the relationship of an individual to his/her thoughts and
discouraging evaluation of the appropriateness of the ideas
that arise from this metacognitive perspective (472).
Wells finds fault with Pike's tagmemic method of inquiry as
well. Basically Wells writes it is helpful in establishing
a hierarchy of ideas which she states is an essential
feature of the process of invention. The method's
limitation, however, lies in its inability to compare ideas
contradictory to the central thesis it purports to analyze
(473-474). Both Christensen's and Pike's heuristics, Wells
writes, do not serve to address similarities or contrasts
of abstract relationships between topics. On a supportive

note, Wells comments that both systems encourage writing that is focused and clear. She feels, however, that reliance on heuristics may discourage experimentation with forms of writing that foreground qualities not generated by the use of heuristics (475-476).

Mike Rose, likewise, questions the efficacy of a variety of writing heuristics because, in a study Rose conducted of undergraduate writers, he finds using heuristics can cause writer's block. Rose writes that the act of writing "is a highly complex problem-solving process" (390). Particular students use different "loose heuristics" (398) in the process of writing, but, with not always beneficial results.

Comparing heuristics to precise mathematical rules such as algorithms, Rose writes that in a task as imprecise as writing, heuristics are "the most functional rules available to us" (392). He differentiates between plans and heuristics. Plans include heuristics and have criteria to evaluate whether outcomes conform or not to the goals of the plan. However, the students involved in his "more clinical than scientific" (390) study used heuristics, rules and plans in their writing processes. Rose discusses the work of Flower and Hayes in developing problem-solving

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strategies and heuristics to aid in the writing process,
but Rose writes these and similar plans and/or heuristics
can contribute to blocking some writers. The results of
his study reveal writers block can occur 1) if heuristics
are followed as strict laws rather than as optional aids;
2) if heuristics are not clearly stated; 3) if heuristics
from a methodological discipline, such as physical science,
are carried over without modification to a more qualitative
discipline; 4) if plans reflect a "'closed system' kind of
thinking"; 5) if students resist external feedback; and 6)
if conflicting rules lead not to curiosity and a resultant
inclination to resolve the conflict but instead to
"immobilization" that the student perceives as a stalemate
(398-399). To remedy situations such as the above, Rose
recommends students should be instructed on which
rules/heuristics are appropriate for any given writing
assignment (400).

Another writer critical of both structured and free
heuristics is John Hagaman. Writing in 1986, he notes that
students find highly formulaic heuristics such as the
tagmemic grid very difficult to apply because they "often
are so abstract, acontextual and complex" (22). Hagaman
defines activities such as free writing, brainstorming, and

creating analogies as free heuristics, but he notes
students often minimize their efficacy because for some
students these activities seem natural and enjoyable,
hardly the stuff for serious academic attention. On the
other hand, Hagaman includes defenses for the use of these
heuristics citing Young who states the grid is not simply a
mechanical device. Writers who use it also rely on
"intuition, relevant knowledge and skill" (22). Hagaman
also echoes Elbow's position that free writing is a first
stage thinking activity from which more ideas and
organization of ideas should flow. Therefore, Hagaman
recognizes that heuristics offer the possibility of
assisting writers in some instances.

Hagaman thus proposes the use of progymnasmata from
Cicero as a way to enhance writing invention or idea
generation by combining structured and free heuristics.
The progymnasmata contains fourteen "language exercises"
beginning with imitation of story telling and ending with
development of a thesis that argues for or against an
existing law. Between these two activities, students learn
to develop ideas, refute or augment argument, compare and
contrast, and define. These lessons are common to writing
heuristics generally, and to those treated in this paper.

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Hagaman says that although the progymnasmata has a defined structure, the individual activities allow individual free expression to some extent (24-25). "Even more important it is sequenced to guide the student through several patterns of thinking" (25). The author believes teaching this heuristic fosters guided thinking. Again, reference to the thinking process is central here as with other heuristics, such as that of Flower. Focused thinking can produce focused writing.

Berlin, writing in 1988, confronts the theories of current-traditionalism, the process movement, expressivism and social constructionism, finding, among other issues, these theories reflect ideologies that favor "one version of economic, social, and political arrangement over other versions" ("Rhetoric" 477). His essay focuses on the underlying ideologies that these composition theories foster. Of interest to this study are Berlin's comments on the work of Flower and Hayes in *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writers*. Since this work foregrounds heuristic writing strategies still widely used, Berlin's critique can be examined in evaluating Flower's and Hayes' heuristics as well as the use of writing heuristics in general.

Berlin notes that Flower and Hayes operate within an essentialist view of knowledge acquisition. "The mind is regarded as a set of structures that performs in a rational manner, adjusting and reordering functions in the service of the goals of the individual" ("Rhetoric" 482). In addition, Berlin states that the goals of the recommended process are those selected by its authors rather than by writers who utilize the recommended strategies. The strategies themselves model intuitive steps that skilled writers employ, but, Berlin writes, their use does not guarantee success. "Heuristics are only as good or bad as the person using them" ("Rhetoric" 482). Further Berlin criticizes the underlying theories of Flower and Hayes about language. It is a system of signs that corresponds to a rational worldview, tying back to the rational structure the heuristics attempt to achieve. Berlin analogizes the heuristic process to an ideal capitalistic corporate environment where problem-solving equates to profit.

Although Berlin disagrees, Crowley mentions a renewal in the study of traditional rhetorical invention that incorporates heuristics as pedagogical elements for the initial element (invention) in the writing process.. Of

note here are two elements: (1 the view of invention broadens to recognize it can and does occur at any and all stages of the writing process; and (2 the use of heuristics is adopted to facilitate the invention process. Crowley discusses the heuristics commonly used: the classical topics, the tagmemic model, free writing, and ideas such as brainstorming and dual-entry journaling (207-209).

The long-term fate of the first two heuristic models, Crowley explains, is limited. Using the teaching of classical rhetoric crossed with the then accepted theories of epistemology. "Ancient invention . . . drew on communal epistemologies that privilege the commonplaces; . . . what everybody knew" (209). These ideas do not parallel current-traditional beliefs in knowledge-making by individuals in concert with texts. Crowley praises the Young, Becker and Pike heuristic as a "well-founded theory of invention," (210) but its complexity may have precipitated its general disuse. In addition, since this heuristic stresses looking at subjects from multiple perspectives, it clashes with the current-traditional view of writing as a linear operation (210).

Although the process movement and the recognition of the social establishment of knowledge-making advanced

composition theory and pedagogy, this social turn did not

affect the demise of essentialist beliefs and practices.

College students are still taught modes of writing, are

still expected to narrow topics and are still expected to

comply with textbook lessons on using correct language

forms (Crowley 211-212).

Expectations for writing at the college level differ

in various respects including between disciplines, across

curricula, within assignments, etc. Commonalities on the

other hand appear in the heuristics discussed in this

chapter. These similarities include development of ideas

with concomitant supportive reasoning; appreciation of

audience with consideration of elements like tone, style

and format selected to address a particular audience; and

writing that clearly expresses its author's intent and

meaning. Operating under an understanding of the social

essence of knowledge-making underscores the need for clear

communication, in any media, because knowledge is created

through mutual understanding of what is communicated.

Clarity of meaning is valued in business writing where

outcomes can be often empirically measured and mutually

understood issues facilitate reasoned decision-making.

Chapter 3 discusses expectations for writers in a business

environment and presents heuristics that are responsive to those writing expectations.

Clarity, conciseness, organization, and mechanics are high priorities for business communication because of the usual purposes of such written communication. These purposes are oriented to solving problems or taking advantage of opportunities; business writing intends action on the part of its reader(s). The intended action should consider ramifications or consequences.

To work toward recommendations for reasoned action, taking into consideration many factors affecting analysis of circumstances and then writing for business, I propose a heuristic, modified from a method long used to help law students and legal practitioners analyze legal situations and then write a clear synopsis of that critical thinking process. This heuristic, the FIRAC, presents users with options for ways to view macro components of the analytical process involved in determining and recommending appropriate action to address a business-related issue. Within each macro element the heuristic includes a variety of micro concerns that may or may not apply to a particular issue. Using the FIRAC heuristic may be beneficial in business situations that require analytical thinking and

subsequent documentation with appropriate action oriented

recommendations as a result.

CHAPTER THREE

BUSINESS WRITING AND A HEURISTIC

Looking at Writing in Business

The heuristics I discuss in Chapter 1 are offered as methods or processes to help writers learn and then produce writing that contains thoroughly developed ideas that are arranged to lead readers on an unobstructed path from subject introduction to conclusion. These ideas, additionally, should be expressed in a style that is consistent with audience expectations for that particular piece of writing. The theoretical climate in which these heuristic pedagogies appear is one that views the thinking to writing process as occurring between an individual writer and his/her cognitive interrelations with text. By contrast, the heuristics examined in Chapter 2 recognize a different understanding of how knowledge and ideas progress from generation to documentation. This knowledge is the result of human interaction within communities. Knowledge and ideas are generated by the interplay of people with each other via all media of communication. One such community, generally, with industry- and company-specific subcommunities, is the arena of business. The expectations

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of communication within this arena differ in certain areas from those of composition for an academic audience. One such difference is that the impact of communication in business presupposes that action will result and thus sees written communication as a foundational method for generating desired action.

In a 2003 study, Aimee Whiteside reveals that the ability in business to communicate effectively in writing is not just important, it is essential. The study focuses on twelve elements necessary to achieve successful outcomes within a white collar position in business. Six of these twelve constitute abilities to communicate with number one being communicating in writing (310).

In his essay, "What Survey Research Tells Us about Writing at Work," Paul Anderson clarifies the expectations for writing in business by presenting the results of several research projects concerning, as the title makes clear, the types, the processes, the expectations and the opinions of business professionals concerning writing within a business environment. First, the types of writing or the genres most often written are inter-company memoranda and reports and extra-company letters and reports. In accomplishing these writing tasks, audience is

a prime concern and differs from most academic writing

because most business writing "must address a variety of

kinds of readers, not just one or two kinds" (55-56; Dias

et al. 9). To address these various audiences, business

writers need to focus on issues including tone, content,

and rhetorical stance because the characteristics of these

audiences include rank or position within and without of

the company, degree of knowledge about the subject, and the

action the writer intends individual readers to take. To

address these multi-faceted and varying audiences, writers

often write multiple versions of the same correspondence

that will be sent to these various recipients (56-58). The

studies covered in the essay find that in order to

accomplish business writing tasks, writers spend

considerable time in the process of composing: invention

or planning, draft writing and revising/editing. Of

interest is the finding that while involved in a writing

process, 96% of respondents indicated that they discover or

identify new information or knowledge (47-48).

Furthering his inquiries about the unique requirements

and expected outcomes of writing for business, the author

identifies four of the most common reasons for business

writing:

1. To objectify a situation so that its essential

   elements and interrelationships can be analyzed.

2. To instruct others.

3. To enable individuals to make contact with others

   who are higher up in the organization or on the

   outside.

4. To establish accountability (63).

Further, what elements most valued by business managers and

supervisions in the writing itself to accomplish these

purposes are clarity, conciseness, organization, grammar

and spelling in that order (54).

To examine the processes, purposes and essential

elements of writing in both academia and in business,

academic scholars at two Canadian universities collaborated

on a research project. They concluded that the purposes of

writing in these unique institutions are indeed different

because of the "complex political and social dimensions

that influence and define writing practices and

expectations" (Dias et al. 10). Writing in academia they

describe as largely separated and apart from societal

expectations outside of universities while writing in

business settings is intrinsically bound to "the goals,

occasions and contexts that engender writing." Business

writing is done in furtherance of the attainment of the
goals or purposes of the business (Dias et al. xi).

Also noted is the frequent collaborative writing done
in business work arenas. The reasons that promote
collaborative writing include the multiplicity of readers,
mutual revisions and critique of drafts, often done under
strict schedules, ghost writing and expertise-specific
genres frequently appearing in different sections of a
single document. (Dias et al. 9; Anderson 50-51).

> "[A] report produced by a newly hired employee of
> a small company may have been commissioned as a
> result of a meeting at which several questions
> driving this report were discussed. Earlier
> reports may have been consulted, relevant
> information may have been garnered from fellow
> workers via e-mail, a spreadsheet program may
> have produced informative tables and up-to-date
> analysis, and the structure and organization of
> the report, initially derived from company
> guidelines and model reports, may have been
> shaped by unexpected contingencies and inquiries
> and suggestions from coworkers and managers.
> (Dias et al. 32)

Collaborative writing is a common occurrence within businesses. The setting of such writing activity comports with current appreciation for the communal nature of epistemology within any community. Such a writing environment, however, is not the norm in academia.

A similar set of observations is offered much earlier by Lester Faigley and Thomas Miller. Studying newly employed college graduates working in business environments, these authors find approximately 75% of their respondents write collaboratively and such writing usually incorporates multiple revisions often due to the multiplicity of audiences to which the final written product is directed (566-67).

Collaborative writing and multiple audiences are not typically required in academic writing. Rather, the writing Faigley and Miller discuss is a model that incorporates diverse perspectives and contemplates future action(s).

Because writing in business intends action and because it often involves multiple readers and writers, its motive is social. Social expectations of readers and writers are, as Bawarshi and Devitt argue, revealed by selection of a writing genre. Dias, et al. stress the role genres serve

in the business environment, writing, "The concept of genre we work from acknowledges regularities in textual form and substance as the more obvious features of genre, but goes on to examine the underlying, non-textual regularities that produce these regularities in texts" (20). Business genres are social actions with the situation or context embedded within them because for both readers and writers they establish a common and understandable context for the message (20). In essence they frame the writing situation and suggest other considerations such as structure, style and tone. Genres also provide a way for newcomers to join the business discourse community through use of the genres. They teach the purposes of the community and how to further these purposes by adherence to the culture of the community (22). Genres serve here as heuristics themselves that teach these newcomers how communication takes place within their business setting. In addition, all members, through mutually recognized and known genres, continue to grow by learning and making knowledge in their unique social setting (29). Business genres then demonstrate the existing body of community knowledge, and facilitate, along with collaborative writing, the expansion of that knowledge (31-32).

Another significant difference between academic and business writing revolves around the law. As Dias, et al. note, "First, students have no need to produce legally valid records, nor occasion to perform acts for which they will be held to account. Their writing rarely serves purposes of making a record in any sense that relates to legal or financial accountability" (226). On the other hand, business writing or business texts are records. These records can serve as evidence in resolution of disputes, whether such disputes reach the level of formal litigation. Business records constitute a paper trail showing past actions of the writer as s/he represents the business entity (Dias et al. 226-227). For that reason, business writers must consider additional elements not usually looked at in a traditional college writing class. These additional elements include a review of the facts of any event or circumstance against the exigency occasioning the writing. In that mix, internal and external rules or regulations must also be considered.

A Proposed Heuristic for Business Writing

Law students and practicing attorneys must analyze fact situations as they relate to applicable statutes and

prior, relevant judicial decisions. Further, these analyses are documented in writing for various purposes such as evaluation of the likelihood of one party prevailing or not in a dispute or presenting argument to a judge. The analysis and the conventional written documentation is in the IRAC form: "I" is issued identified; "R" is applicable rules; "A" is analysis of the issues and rules as they apply to the facts under consideration including identification of counter positions or arguments; and "C" is a conclusion demonstrating the results of the analysis (Sutherland 162-205). Since the FIRAC heuristic is based on the IRAC model in a legal factual analytical situation, it is particularly useful in helping business writers make connections between business fact situations and business, often largely rule-mandated, paths of action. I suggest a modified version of the IRAC structure as a heuristic for use in analysis and written documentation of business issues. The heuristic structure is presented in Figure 1 below:

FIRAC→

(F) FACT(S)   (I) ISSUE(S)   (R) RULE(S)   (A) APPLICATION(S)   (C) CONCLUSION(S)

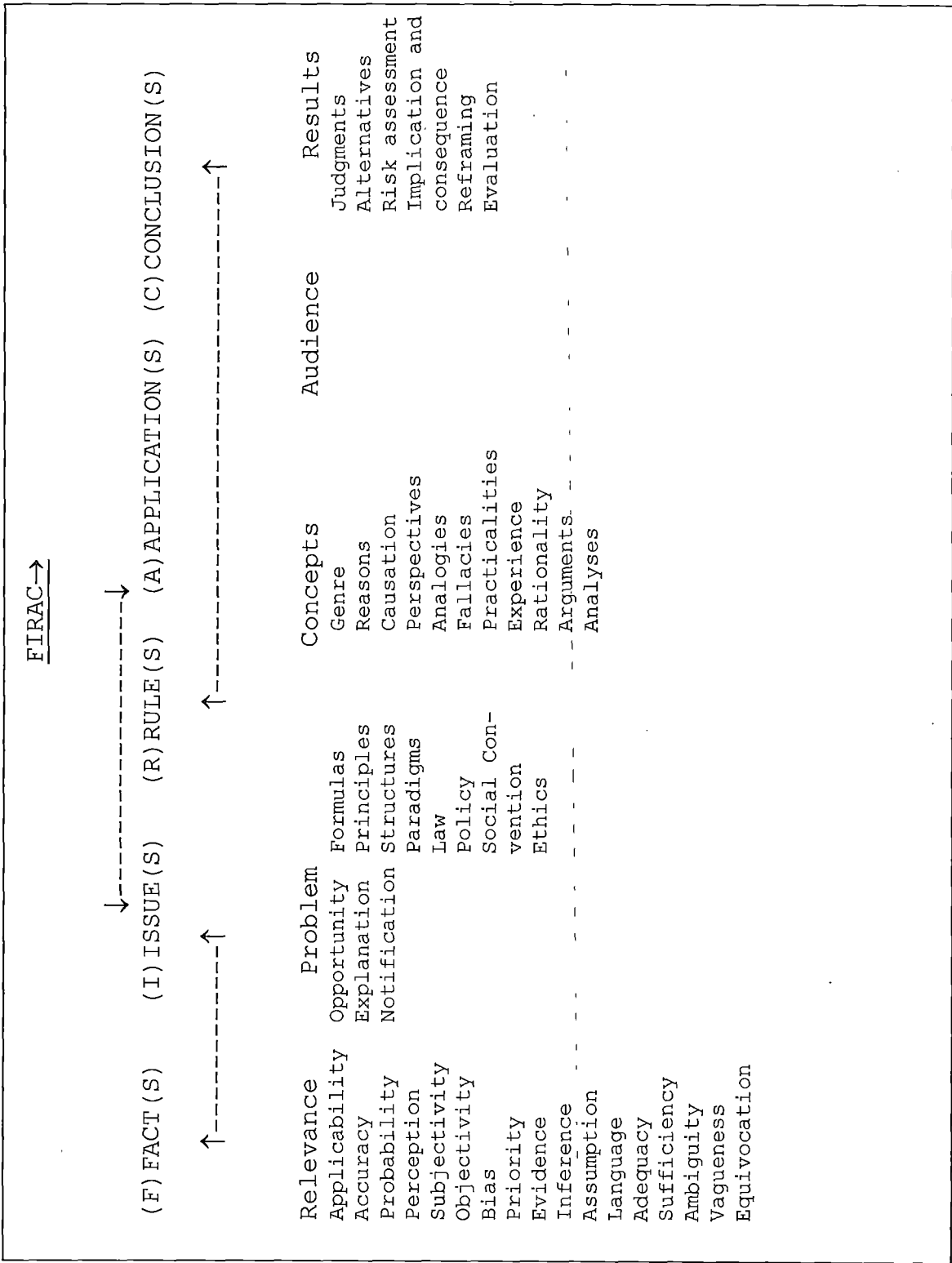| Relevance	Problem	Concepts	Audience	Results
Applicability	Opportunity	Genre		Judgments
Accuracy	Explanation	Reasons		Alternatives
Probability	Notification	Causation		Risk assessment
Perception		Perspectives		Implication and
Subjectivity		Analogies		consequence
Objectivity		Fallacies		Reframing
Bias	Formulas	Practicalities		Evaluation
Priority	Principles	Experience		
Evidence	Structures	Rationality		
Inference	Paradigms	Arguments		
Assumption	Law	Analyses		
Language	Policy			
Adequacy	Social Con-			
Sufficiency	vention			
Ambiguity	Ethics			
Vagueness				
Equivocation				

Figure 1: Heuristic Structure

Writing for business differs from other discipline-specific writing requirements in several ways. "Business writing tends to reflect the values of the workplace" (Cox, Bobrowski, and Spector 63). These workplace values include the necessity of operating within the parameters of a plethora of rules both external, such as government regulations, and internal, unique corporate policies, for example. "Law and business decision making are intimately related" (Collins 118). Therefore, much business writing involves analysis of situational facts and circumstances, problems or opportunities juxtaposed against all relevant rules. The FIRAC heuristic can be helpful in such an analytic and documentary process.

Facts are assessed against the issue(s) to determine the essential nature of the analytic and writing exigency. The words in the Facts column suggest areas for consideration of factors determining the weight or importance each fact merits. Next, the writer needs to take into account what rules are applicable to the facts and issues. Again, the words in the Rules column suggest areas of evaluation. Under Applications, the words listed suggest analytic choices for interpretation of the facts, issues and rules. Finally, the Conclusions column offers

avenues toward resolution, and, if necessary, further fact-finding. The arrows remind the writer that analysis and documentation is not a linear, but a recursive process. The process of writing is not linear. The process is circular involving continuous moving from ideas to text to revised text, and not in linear order. "First, the process of writing is recursive rather than linear" (Fajans 6). Additionally, nothing in the FIRAC heuristic is domain-specific, and thus it is not limited by any particular subject matter or content area. Rather, the structure serves to focus attention on processes by which business issues/problems/opportunities can be identified and appropriately analyzed.

The FIRAC heuristic and its usage addresses the first three canons of Aristotelian rhetorical instruction: invention, arrangement, and style. The last of these three is addressed through references under Applications to genre and audience. Further, using this heuristic can and does facilitate writing because it, as many other writing heuristics, prompts the writer to consider the facts of a situation against many other elements inherent in making a recommendation for or justifying a business decision. Even if the heuristic is not used in a collaborative writing

environment, which it certainly can be, its references to relevant rules, applications and contingent results necessarily involves consideration of the business community as a whole including its rule-occupied environment and body of knowledge.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, heuristics in the teaching of writing have been criticized on several fronts, especially following the social turn in composition theory leading to the understanding that language is not a transparent medium for the exchange of ideas or knowledge, but that through social interaction using language, knowledge is made. This heuristic prompts its user(s) to consider the social sources of the facts and the social implications of conclusions. This thinking process is accomplished by the analysis of the facts to the business issues and all relevant internal and external, rules. Using the FIRAC heuristic forces the writer to consider implications beyond his or her position and job duties because it requires reviewing all applicable rules, which as stated before, include laws, administrative regulations and explicit and implicit company policies and past company practices.

By contrast, heuristics have been taken to task as restricting creativity. I argue that instead the FIRAC heuristic encourages creativity through its multiplicity of suggested perspectives. These many perspectives should also encourage, rather than block, writing because of the many avenues that can be analyzed. However, as with other heuristics, its usage diminishes in the editing process because the heuristic does not operate like a thesaurus to help in word selection. It does, though, serve well during a revision stage of writing because it encourages reassessment of ideas against possible alternative or counter possibilities. There is a synergy between the processes of issue analysis through critical thinking and the rhetorical choices for expression of the results of such analysis.

Such a synergy is identified by Stearns, et al. who find that successful placement and tenure in business managerial positions required high competency in written communication skills. Such competency, however, does not simply include the ability to express content with clarity. Rather, such requirement encompasses the ability to assess and solve problems and to persuade others that the recommended solutions are valid and should be adopted

(Stearns 213-14). To effectively solve a business problem
and to then persuade others of the efficacy of the solution
requires critical thinking skills that can be translated
into action-oriented communication: "domain content and
rhetorical awareness" (Stearns 216). The FIRAC heuristic
facilitates this process as it mandates identification of
both facts and applications, the latter including
rhetorical considerations of audience, genre, and
perspectives.

Assessment of the Business Writing Heuristic

The FIRAC model provides a heuristic that facilitates
business writing skills by providing critical thinking
choices. By using the FIRAC structure, business writers
can critically analyze the salient issues, evaluate the
facts that operate on the issues and that are, in turn,
determined through corporate and public policies to arrive
at well-reasoned evaluations for appropriate action. These
writing actions are primarily accentuated through the five
main elements of the FIRAC chart. In addition, the FIRAC
structure points the way to non-contextual writing
considerations including audience awareness, presentation
of evidence, effective voice and rhetorical selection.

These considerations are addressed by various words listed beneath the main elements. For example, audience is listed under the Applications column. Evidence is listed under the Facts column as are components that pertain to what evidence is selected (relevance, accuracy or priority) and how that evidence may be viewed by its audience (perception, bias or assumption). Writers are reminded about a selection of voice and style by subcategories that include language, explanation and audience. Subcategories also point to the selection of appropriate rhetoric as suggested by objectivity, paradigms and social convention.

Writing for the society of business entails paying attention to factors such as awareness of the actions of competitors and the parameters of internal and external policies, rules and regulations. In addition, business writing is goal/action oriented writing. "Everything you write has a purpose. You want your reader to know, to believe, or to be able to do something when he or she has finished reading what you have written" (Oliu, Brusaw, and Alred 5). Of course, the goal/action underlying the writing is determined by business necessity. Such necessity occurs at all stages in the operation of any business, private for profit to government entity.

Necessities arise to address problems, to pursue avenues of

opportunity, or to explain or instruct, for example. In

responding to any necessity, business writers need to

motivate their readers toward taking a specific action that

ranges from simply understanding or learning additional

information to implementing a business change, and that

motivation, to be effective, must consider how current

reality – facts – influence problems or opportunities, how

then that confluence is shaped by rules, and what action(s)

can or should result. Such an analytical operation almost

always, in business, is reduced to writing. Thus, the

FIRAC heuristic can guide both the analysis and its written

documentation.

"One of the reasons for the centrality of heuristic .

. . is its central role in the *conscious* generation of what

we need to discover in order to know or become convinced"

(Rivers 525). Certainly, using the FIRAC heuristic or any

heuristic does not guarantee flawless analyses or perfect

written expressions of the outcomes of such analyses. In a

business setting, often not all contingencies upon which a

decision must be made are known with absolute certainty.

In such a common business event, using the FIRAC heuristic

stimulates critical evaluation of known facts, issues and

rules and suggests several avenues of analysis. Also, the

FIRAC heuristic may be useful in mitigating criticism that

simply identifying facts, issues and rules is a necessary

but not sufficient predicate for appropriate thinking

because such aspects do not necessarily require evaluation

(Browne and Hansen 518).

The FIRAC heuristic, while certainly as with all

heuristics, is "*a* not *the* perspective" (Comprone 336).

FIRAC does not promise perfect analysis or flawlessly

executed writing. FIRAC, however, does respond to criticism

voiced against other writing heuristics. Unlike Toulmin

and Young, Becker and Pike's heuristics, FIRAC is not

difficult to understand nor use. There are five main

categories, with subcategories under each listed to suggest

varieties of approach. The arrows visually remind users

that, just as in human thought, the heuristic should be

used recursively. Stylistic reminders are present as well.

FIRAC is both an analytical and a writing tool.

FIRAC counters critiques of Flower and Hayes'

heuristic in that FIRAC's whole structure mirrors the

social context in which it operates, always prompting the

user to reflect on the social situation under view. FIRAC,

as differentiated from Selfe and Rodi's heuristic, stresses

selection of evidence and development of voice. In

response to criticisms of genre theory, FIRAC suggests

genre to remind the writer of form; however, the remaining

prompts concern content, style and audience, for example,

clearly merging form and content. Answering general

critiques of heuristics, FIRAC not only welcomes but

insists the writer consider other points of

view/perspectives/opinions.

FIRAC considers a diverse set of writing and thinking

concerns that face a writer in a business setting. Its

design is straightforward, not abstract, as are most

business writing situations. The heuristic does not

prevent writers from making reasoned choices about content,

form or any other element of writing. The FIRAC heuristic

simply serves to direct critical thinking about resolution

of a business issue and setting forth that resolution for

others to read and consider.

Coe stresses that heuristics generally (and he uses Burke's

pentad and journalism's five Ws as examples) are valuable

tools in discovery and content consideration. He readily

points out that heuristics are restrictive, but through

restrictive thinking, efficiency is increased because the

thinking is focused on relevant material. Coe also argues

that the focus on discipline-specific structure strengthens

a social epistemology because thinking and analysis are

directed to the social rhetorical customs of that

particular discourse community (Coe 18-19). Arguable,

then, in a business discipline, this line of reasoning

carries through. If the business thinker-writer focuses on

the business facts, issues and rules in a manner that

directs specific analyses and evaluation, the likelihood is

greater that appropriate business conclusions will be

reached.

Conclusion

To explore this thesis' inquiry as to a possible role

the use a business-directed heuristic might play in

facilitating the various writing requirement in business, I

examine certain heuristic procedures that have been taught,

and some which still are taught, in university level

composition courses. Further, I examine these heuristics

in light of the theoretical environment in which they were

designed and were or are used. Those theories concern how

human beings acquire knowledge, specifically under a

current-traditional worldview that sees knowledge made

through individual interrelationships with texts and/or the

100

self versus an understanding that epistemology results from social interaction and discourse within and across "communities of knowledgeable peers" (Bruffee, "Collaborative" 640).

The former view, current-traditional, traces its genesis to the theories and teachings of Aristotle who argues that his canons of discourse - invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery - can be taught and subsequently used in the creation and dissemination of persuasive communication. This view of how human knowledge is amassed is furthered by scholars including Ramus, Descartes, and the eighteenth and nineteenth century Scotch writers, Blair, Campbell and Bain, among others. Focus here is on the unique creative imagination presumed operational within each individual, and the interplay of that imagination with intellectual stimuli which results in an unveiling of a truth. Against this backdrop, notable writing heuristics are proposed including Toulmin's process for argument analysis, Young, Becker and Pike's ideas for expanding perspective, Burke's theory of identification that focuses on communication as a series of human actions, and the heuristics arising from research into the process

writers employ from idea inception through finished product.

All of the above-mentioned heuristics attempt to treat the thinking processes of their users. Toulmin wants writers to dissect the structure of argumentative statements with a goal of recognition of their discrete parts. Scholars, such as Stratman, who advocate acceptance and use of Toulmin's process claim efficacy in understanding the idea of relevance of support toward subsequent creation of persuasive communication. Young, Becker and Pike encourage writers, through the use of their particle-wave-field heuristic, to expand perspective. In other words, by viewing elements of a writing situation as both differing individually and in relation to other elements, writers' thinking processes are stimulated and expanded, resulting in enhanced creation and evaluation of ideas. Burke's pentad, especially as used by Comprone, operates on writers' cognition by directing their view on human motivation with an outcome that proposes an expanded perspective of concerns of audience, tone, structure, context and purpose. Process pedagogy, as advocated by Flower and Hayes, bases its heuristics on research done on the thinking processes of writers. These heuristics

attempt to model the results of that research as it is

understood to reflect strategies on which writers depend to

solve multifaceted challenges that writing situations pose.

To further determine whether any or a heuristic may be

of service in advancing writers' abilities to address such

challenges, I review additional heuristic systems that are

advocated at about the time of and after the social turn.

These systems are a heuristic used to broaden writers'

self-expression and genre theory. Composition pedagogy

also concerns writing within a collaborative environment as

such environment foregrounds the communal essence of

epistemology which at the same time heightens audience

awareness through the interaction of people working

together to achieve a cohesive writing purpose. Selfe and

Rodi's expressivist heuristic is employed to assist in

invention, to direct writers' thinking toward making

appropriate choices of ideas about which to write and

toward complete explication or development of those ideas.

This heuristic targets writers' thinking. Genre theory

focuses as well on the thinking of writers as it directs

such thinking to the social context prescribed by any

particular writing genre. Because any unique genre

suggests context and content, it triggers thinking toward

the creation of appropriate writing to satisfy those issues.

Within a business environment, content and context differ from themes usually treated in academic composition classes. This difference results from the exigencies of writing for business: setting forth the elements of an event or circumstance so that it can be assessed and addressed, providing training or instruction, notifying employees and/or business associates, and establishing responsibility and creating a record. Business writing is goal oriented, intended to propel the organization toward more successful outcomes. Audience also differs as it often is multi-party; people with various responsibilities need to keep abreast of all or part of the information being conveyed. Because of unique areas of expertise within a business organization, writing is again often done collaboratively. Unlike a writing assignment for a college composition course, businesses must consider extra-situational influences in the form of competition and regulation, among other such concerns. Taking concerns of general composition including idea generation and development, structural schemata, and style and tone as

well as the unique requirements that writing within

business demands, I proposed a heuristic called FIRAC.

This FIRAC heuristic is adapted and modified from a

model used within the legal field for analysis and writing.

FIRAC, like the other heuristics I discuss, attempts to

direct writers' thinking processes. It contains five main

elements: facts, issues, rules, applications and

conclusions. Within each element, subcategories are listed

for the purpose of focusing thinking on factors that may,

depending upon the particular business situation or event,

change or affect the main elements. Via bi-directional

arrows, FIRAC users are reminded that thinking or analysis

of a business writing concern, followed by its

documentation, is not a linear task; it is circuitous and

recursive.

The FIRAC heuristic chart attempts, as do the other

heuristic methods discussed, to focus or direct writers'

thinking about the many elements needed to produce a piece

of correspondence that successfully accomplishes its

purpose. FIRAC, again as with any heuristic system or

process, is not a writing panacea. Writing heuristics

attempt to focus thinking critically upon the task, to

improve those writers' chances, by offering alternative

avenues of thinking, to produce a product that comes

closest to meeting its intended goals.

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