those who chair departments and administer schools and colleges do likewise, we are mostly moving terms around.

Those who will read this book probably don’t need to, and those who do need to read it probably won’t. (Could some of it be printed subliminally in PMLA?) That so many dedicated professionals have thought about literacy in American education so carefully, so seriously, and with, it seems, so little power or chance of having an impact is hardly uplifting. But take heart and keep reading. These writers give us the courage and the sense of community to stand up and shout, to stay on the margins, to refuse to let ourselves be devalued because of our talents as teachers or our interests as scholars. *Farther Along* is a good book to start the year with, and it may indeed help us move farther along.


Reviewed by Susan C. Jarratt, Miami University of Ohio

In his contribution to this volume, Michael Halloran claims that “writing has been a virtually invisible topic in the material history of modern culture” (155). James J. Murphy makes a significant mark in the inscription of “writing” as a subject of history with this collection of surveys of writing instruction in seven historical periods by an impressive group of scholars. These pieces are all distillations of more detailed and comprehensive work by each scholar, making the volume both an accessible introduction for teachers at all levels and a useful research tool for specialists in the history of rhetoric. With these historical surveys, the authors vividly bring before us the materiality of writing in past times, including discussions throughout of technologies of writing—waxed boards and prickers in ancient Greece, pen-making in the Renaissance. Usher’s Forms (that is, lesson plans) from an English grammar school of four centuries ago reproduced here may strike teachers with a thrill of familiarity, along with a painful image of suffering: grammar, desk work, lectures, translation, and examinations from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. with only a break for lunch. The sample of a Princeton student’s commencement address from 1772 will reassure alarmists, certain that standards of writing and thinking have declined from a golden age of student brilliance, that our writers today are not so bad.

But these essays are far more than entertaining accounts of lesson plans and technologies. Each contribution repairs another of the shortcomings Halloran cites as a legacy of our recent history: composition work in the last century revealed “little effort to develop a historical context or probe
underlying principles, and no sense that the subject is intellectually challenging and socially important” (175). One of the pleasures of reading this book comes from tracing the ways the various authors position and define writing instruction within the broader contexts of multiple discourse practices (speaking and reading, along with writing) and in terms of the shifting educational principles, ideals of citizenship, and cultural and political contexts of the various historical periods. Thus, the project carries a historiographical subtext, with contributors simultaneously describing writing pedagogy and rewriting the terms for constructing such a history.

Kathleen Welch opens the volume with a look at Greek antiquity, where the issue of writing instruction is focused as a new historical event. Accepting the orality/literacy thesis of Ong and Havelock, she sets the starting date for the inquiry at 450 B.C. with the shift in consciousness toward abstraction made possible by the Greek alphabet. This is a fitting foundation for the volume, since the relationship between spoken and written language use is taken up by all the contributors and turned around and around in the shifting lights of successive times and different places. Her finding that the central figures in fifth- and fourth-century B.C. Greek writing instruction—the sophists, Plato, and Isocrates—share similar pedagogical methods might be surprising to those who have concentrated on philosophical differences among those thinkers. Welch observes that all of them adopted small-group instruction, notetaking, the study of oral communication, and a hierarchical relationship between teacher and students.

Though women apparently did not receive higher education in classical Greece in the period under consideration, Welch reviews the slim evidence on the subject and speculates about the reasons for women’s virtual silence. Like all the authors in this volume, she sketches gender into the historical picture, even when women were excluded from participation. Though this process in most periods is a matter of noting and trying to account for women’s absence, it is a necessary and responsible first step toward the reconstruction of rhetorical pasts for women and a gendering of the largely male-dominated historical record.

Murphy's own contribution, an essay on Roman writing instruction and specifically Quintilian, is the longest in the volume and deservedly so because of the significance of Quintilian’s work both in his own time and subsequently up to our own day. Murphy formulates the writing/speaking issue as a means-end relationship: Quintilian sees both writing and reading as crucial preliminaries in the development of an accomplished orator (37-38). Introducing “rhetoric” as the term to describe the integration of language practices taught together as a faculty for engaging productively in the discourses of society, Murphy observes that “what we today call ‘composition’ had no equivalent in ancient and medieval literary theory . . . The oral-ness or written-ness of the language was regarded as less important than its wholeness in fitting the situation at hand” (33). This comprehensive treatment is
both an accessible summary of Quintilian's twelve-book opus and a thoughtful analysis of questions still very current in writing instruction. What is the relationship of theory to practice? What sequence of specific writing and speaking activities (reading, memorization, paraphrase, correction) best develops the student into a "rhetorical person"? An outline of Roman teaching methods appended to the chapter provides a useful overview of this detailed and profoundly influential system of language education.

Marjorie Curry Woods' treatment of writing instruction in the Middle Ages is one of the most polemical in the volume and for me one of the most exciting. Her aim is to show how a "good, hard look" at the Middle Ages will lead a thoughtful reader to overturn certain basic assumptions about rhetoric in general. Specifically, she takes issue with George Kennedy's influential thesis (from Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Traditions from Ancient to Modern Times): that throughout time the historian finds a repeated pattern of primary oral rhetoric declining into a secondary literary rhetoric characterized by heightened attention to figure (79). Woods argues that an alternate logic of development more aptly describes language schooling in the Middle Ages, which began with tropes and figures, accompanied by exercises in memory and delivery, and only later proceeded to larger structures (dispositio), ending with inventio, theoretical content. In her account of the sexually suggestive subjects and language younger students used in composition exercises, Woods opens a window onto a difference that violates stereotypes about the period and about the "naturalness" of our own conventions—exactly the results genuinely fresh historical work should achieve.

Essays by Don Paul Abbott on English grammar schools during the Renaissance and by Winifred Bryan Horner on schooling in Great Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries demonstrate how oral modes of learning and performing have been intertwined with written instruction and with reading in our more recent past. With no clear line dividing rhetoric and poetry in the Renaissance, Abbott asserts that the period presents us with a "concentrated and unified" discourse pedagogy and implies that we might benefit from a similar reintegration of today's "diffuse and diluted" practices of language instruction. Horner explains how a gradual shift from Latin to English as the language of school took place in Scottish universities and Dissenting Academies in England. It was here, rather than in the elite but decadent Oxford and Cambridge, that "English" as a subject was created. For culturally marginalized Scots, learning received pronunciation and a traditional canon of English literature was an essential prerequisite to social acceptance in the higher classes.

Class issues concern Michael Halloran as well, who writes about American language instruction in the centuries prior to our own. Halloran charts the shift from an "oratorical culture," a term he borrows from Gerald Graff, to an emphasis on bellatoristic writing and a focus on professional expertise
on the part of a growing middle class. Because of increasing numbers of students in the new land grant colleges, as well as technical improvements in writing tools, college students in the nineteenth century were asked to write often and much. A central issue in his essay is the change from teaching writing as script for oral performance to writing for silent reading. But the movement is neither simple nor complete; both remain in contemporary writing courses. In fact, Halloran reports, reading papers aloud is more common today than at the close of the nineteenth century.

Finally, James Berlin offers an account of twentieth-century writing instruction, asserting, against the focus on the literature course in recent histories of English departments by Applebee and Graff, that courses in text production have been "an uninterrupted pursuit" in English studies in this century. For Berlin, writing instruction becomes the scene of struggles over competing claims about the purposes of education (184). He draws on his book *Rhetoric and Reality* to recount the formulation of current-traditional goals at Harvard: "mental discipline and faculty psychology in service of scientific values of precision, clarity, and conciseness—in short, of efficiency" (188). We recognize strands of current debates about curriculum and practices in the emergence of a socially oriented rhetoric at Michigan and elsewhere in response to the Yale model of liberal culture, in the formation of NCTE in reaction against Uniform Reading Lists, in the turn toward "unique individuality" between the wars, and in the development of "communication" courses and with them the Conference on College Composition and Communication after World War II. Berlin ends the volume with poststructuralist and neopragmatist approaches to discourse that find individual subjects "written" by cultural codes, the "English" course serving as a place to learn the ways these codes operate through reading and writing. "Writing instruction" has once again been redefined.

I finished the book thinking about choices among terms like "writing instruction," "composition," "discourse," and "rhetoric." Honoring the work of the language teacher by naming it very specifically is an important political gesture. But none of the essays in this volume remains within the narrow frame provided by its title. Indeed, both Halloran and Berlin help us to see the "writer" as itself a construction located in time and place. A more extensive introduction to the collection would have been a good place to examine the ways different authors interpreted the charge, to weave together elements of the seven pieces into a single narrative, or to highlight discontinuities and contradictions. I hope teachers of writing through all educational levels will be drawn to this volume by its title and will come away with a sense of the richness and complexity of speaking, reading, and writing pedagogies in historically specific contexts. This collection makes a strong case for the value of investigating those histories for help with pressing questions about the role of the English teacher, the composition curriculum, and the rhetoric program in our own historical movement.