Why Read What?: The Politics of Composition Anthologies

George Otte

In 1974, Arthur Applebee concluded his overview of the teaching of English with ten italicized "problems remaining." One of them was "The educative effects of the act of reading need to be defined." "Though teachers have exhibited an implicit faith that the act of reading is itself educative when they have encouraged wide reading as an adjunct of their regular program of instruction," he elaborated, "there have been virtually no attempts to formulate what exactly those effects are" (251-52).

In the last decade and a half, attempts to define the educative effects of reading have indeed been made: attempts by such estimable minds as Jerome Bruner and Bruno Bettelheim, attempts in sub-fields of English ranging from language arts (Smith) to ESL (Krashen), attempts informed by talk-aloud protocols (Haas and Flower) as well as post-structuralist theory (Kauffer and Warren), attempts sometimes positing what W. Ross Winterowd has called a "unifying theoretical basis" ("Getting It," 30) and Richard Lanham "the same series of spectra" for the teaching of writing and the teaching of literature (112).

So we can say, with rather more confidence than could be empirically justified in 1974, that reading is good for writing students. The consensus on that is remarkable. The scholarship done in the past ten years or so—the names above just top the iceberg's tip—will even tell us about how and why reading is good and what sort of reading is best. But what's concluded along these lines is too various, too context-specific, too circumscribed by theory or research design to foster easy generalizations. What's more, this is scholarship read by a limited audience, an audience of individuals who have their own (undoubtedly various) answers to the double question of my title. On such matters individual thinking differs—and differs from general practice (which is not the same thing as consensus).

What the Textbooks Tell Us

When we shift the audience and perspective by turning from scholarship to textbook production (specifically, the production of what are called composition readers or essay anthologies), there are, in Applebee's words, "prob-
lems remaining.” Consider the comp reader as a sort of answer to the question “Why read what?” and immediately context and purpose become blurred, the rift between the teaching of literature and the teaching of writing seems to widen, the educative effects of reading seem more presumed than proven, and the overarching question seems less “Why should the students be reading?” than “What can the students handle?”

That’s understandable. If there’s general agreement that reading is good for writing students but there isn’t general agreement on what to read or why, then anything can be serviceable so long as it’s presumed accessible. That’s a complicated presumption, one I’m prepared to dwell on, but the results are clear enough to anyone who opens several comp readers and compares the tables of contents. Though the genre of the essay anthology has any number of subgenres—the interdisciplinary reader, the modes reader, the thematic reader, the language reader, the argument reader, the contemporary reader, the cross-cultural reader—we find a high degree of overlap when we look past the packaging to the contents. Indeed, we find something like an emerging pseudo-canon of pseudo-literature. What we don’t find are explanations of reading that can make the move from one subgenre to another as easily as so many of the individual readings can. Inevitably, then, the apparatus of the subgenres has the appearance of oversimplification. Categories and questions make each anthology seem purposeful without clarifying (to say nothing of exhausting) the effects of reading; each specific angle leaves the general problem in blurred focus.

If comp readers aren’t all we might need or want them to be, the problem is surely to some extent due to the paradigmatic lag of practice behind theory and research, a lag documented by such scholars as Robert Connors (“Textbooks”) and Joseph Trimmer and characterized by Stephen North as the distance between the knowledge of scholars and the “lore” of “practitioners.” “Obviously, a good bit of lore gets written down, too,” says North. “The most public and visible of the writings are the textbooks, millions and millions of copies of them” (30). Who’s to blame for the gap between scholarly knowledge and textbook practice? Kathleen Welch decries “the unconscious ideological pact that has existed between writing publishers and teachers” and insists that “the change must begin with textbook publishers” (279). Not without his own complaints against publishers, Winterowd distances himself from Welch’s position by saying that, in his experience, “the first concern of editors is what their potential customers want…” (“Composition” 140). Without wanting to point an accusatory finger at anyone, I would like to focus on the thinking done neither by publishers nor by adopters but by those who presume to think for both—and for the students as well. I am thinking, of course, of those weighty yea- and nay-sayers who are only rarely mentioned in articles on textbook publishing (and still more rarely quoted): professional reviewers. And I especially want to consider what they have to say on one issue that tends to make them most prescriptive
or prescriptive, at least when it comes to comp readers and their selections: the issue of accessibility.

Accessibility and the Institutionalization of Composition
Before letting the reviewers have their say, it's only fair (and wise, since I've been one myself and am surely addressing others) to acknowledge what reviewers represent. They are respected members of the profession, typically published scholars, outstanding teachers, past or present administrators. And the problems that make accessibility such an issue with respect to composition readers well nigh define what composition is.

First of all, to use a distinction that Robert Scholes makes in *Textual Power*, teachers of writing (unlike teachers of literature) have always been more interested in the production of texts than the consumption of them. This means that reading has consistently been conceived of as ancillary rather than central; most attention, energy, and scholarship is focused on writing. Reading is composition's weak spot. When, for instance, Burton Hatlen uncovered what he found to be "a fundamental weakness in the theoretic foundations of the New Rhetoric," he found it precisely there: "The New Rhetoric has found itself uncertain of the role which reading itself—at any rate, the reading of 'finished' pieces of work by 'established' authors—might play in the writing classroom" (60). Hatlen follows through with a tour of modern intellectual history, but the consequentiality of this deficiency—the reason it is a "fundamental weakness" and not just unfinished business—can be put simply: consumption determines production. If we are what we eat, we also write what we read.

Of course, consumption/production is one of the oppositions Scholes says we must deconstruct, and he relates it to another: literature/non-literature (5–8). The latter opposition underscores how invoking the criterion of accessibility, even undefined and unexamined (that is, in its natural state), is hardly innocent. The reader for writers (the anthology for first-year English courses) began as a way of sanctioning readings for a course that was not a literature course yet was taught by teachers (or would-be teachers) of literature. This helps to explain what a spatchcocked thing the reader for writers began as. If there was a principle of selection, besides an avoidance of "literature" that nevertheless embraced one species of prose by a Swift or an Orwell if not another, it was hemmed about by concerns about accessibility from the very first. Consider how much less sway the criterion of accessibility has always had in selection decisions for a literature anthology aimed at students at roughly the same level. No matter if the students didn't "get" *The Waste Land* (who does?); the canon dictated its presence in the literature anthology. Now that the canon is being exploded or expanded, the literature anthologists' decisions have become more complicated, but the key demand is for diversification, incorporation of the marginalized, with the consequence that accessibility may be still less of a consideration than it has
been heretofore. By contrast, the composition anthologist is made to feel
doubly constrained by some notion of accessibility from the very start, since
what must be kept in mind (apparently) is not just what students are capable
of reading but what they are capable of writing as well.

That's an odd, lopsided distinction—between texts by esteemed authors
on the one hand and students as producers of texts on the other—but it goes
a long way toward explaining why, in Richard Ohmann's words, teachers of
English have always, "somewhere in their bones, ... regarded composition as
preliminary, juvenile; whereas literature was the arena of full maturity"
("Reading" 21-22). Even and especially because we seem less and less sure
of what constitutes either literature or composition as a discipline, we are
defined by the authors we treat. Put crudely, the difference is between "great
stuff" and "kids' stuff." Small wonder that some notion of accessibility, held
at bay in considering readings for literature classes, becomes central and
constraining when it comes to considering readings meant for the writing
classroom.

I have to keep saying "some notion" of accessibility because there are a
number of notions, and so one can list a host of near-synonyms: brevity,
topicality, informality, contemporaneity, general relevance. Still,
considerations of accessibility turn out to be more prescriptive than prescrip-
tive, we might lump such considerations together as answers to the question
"Why Can't Johnny Read?" upgraded to the college level: "What Can't
Johnny Read?" The answer seems to be anything long, chronologically
distant, personally uninvolving, intellectually demanding, or historically
specific.

But I'm creating a false impression, conjuring up a consensus where in
fact none exists. Such principles of selection (or exclusion) may in fact allow
a reviewer to say of a proposed reader (as was in fact said of the one I was
involved with) that it "would never be picked by a committee as the least
objectionable." Yet there is a kind of reader to fit that bill, and the all-things-
to-all-people reader (sometimes marketed as the flagship, publishing-house
reader, and usually modes-based) is actually just one subgenre among many.
There are, as the title of one reader reminds us, ways of reading. The
marketplace, playing to unexamined practice, is the locus of a good deal of
inertia, but under scrutiny it proves no more monolithic than any single "way
of reading" can claim to be. The problem of accessibility is in large part the
difficulty of saying what's accessible.

The Reviewers Speak

The reviewers' responses are the key here. Their definitions of
accessibility—an issue all contend with—are indeed various and often con-
tradictory, but I do believe that a pattern emerges, a pattern that helps to
explain gaps between theory and practice, research and experience, hopes
and realities, change and inertia.
Who are these reviewers and what are they reviewing? A few years ago, Linda Palumbo and I sent a prospectus of an essay anthology to three publishing houses, thereby garnering the twenty reviews I will be quoting from in what follows. I will try to stay away from anything that foregrounds the special character of our project, sticking to remarks I think generally significant. I should say (lest what follows be thought wine pressed from sour grapes) that two of the houses bid competitively on the project, and the one we chose saw it through to happy consummation. Consequently, though it's not all that helpful or relevant, I can reveal that the object of the reviewers' remarks was the embryonic form of what was published by Macmillan this past year as *Casts of Thought: Writing in and against Tradition*. The reviewers, by established practice, remain anonymous.

**The Reviewers and the Problem with Students**

Just a moment ago, when I was speaking of (and even proposing to bridge) gaps between theory and practice, research and classroom experience, hopes and realities, I may have seemed to privilege the former term in each case, so I want to make clear that I think the one great problem has to do with false hopes no less than a too-dim view of realities. As much as they were at variance with one another, each of the reviewers turned in a rendering of a lament I'll call "Nobody Knows the Students I've Seen," ultimately to choral effect. We consistently were told that this or that selection might work at this or that estimable institution, but not down in the trenches from which the reviewer at hand wrote. There seems to be a widespread belief that the groves of academe are full of green and shady spots but my own plot is barren and desolate; my own students aren't up to snuff. What made this general impression that each had a singularly bad lot so odd was that the publishers let us know the names of the institutions (but not the reviewers); we were surprised by the disdain expressed by some of these reviewers for their own very reputable schools (or the constituencies thereof). Having taught at three different institutions, I know student populations differ, but I also know we don't draw our students from different planets, and we may well have reached a point in the profession where we have made too much of institutional or regional barriers to what we might otherwise have in common, especially in the students we teach.

As a matter of fact, the reviewers did suggest some commonality, but the suggestion was not a happy one. Despite the sense that students locally were not what they were elsewhere, there was also a widespread feeling that those just now coming to college were chronically deficient. Though Leon Botstein, reviewing American literacy, has observed that "past conditions were never so wonderful as to condemn the future from the outset by facile comparisons" (67), a number of reviewers struck the theme that kids today just aren't what they used to be. "The students I taught twenty years ago would be up to the more challenging pieces," said one, "but not, alas, my students today."
Another slant on the deficiency of today's students seemed to resemble what Mike Rose has called "cognitive reductionism." One reviewer asked if "underclassmen" were "cognitively ready" for the sort of thinking we seemed to invite, and another wondered if our text wasn't too "left-brained." But most reviewers who suggested little could be expected from today's students took a cultural literacy tack, working from the assumption that each is too much like a tabula rasa, too difficult to teach much because he or she hasn't been taught much. "I have had little personal success in teaching Vonnegut to aborigines," one reviewer cryptically remarked (the remark was especially cryptic because we do not include Vonnegut), and another repeatedly made the wry observation that we were not being "condescending enough."

Bringing up the matter of cultural literacy too often means getting bogged down in it. I just want to note briefly two phenomena linking it with perceptions of accessibility. One is a new twist to the old distaste for excerpts. Now, it seems, students can't understand the excerpted piece because of their lack of acquaintance with the whole cloth from which it is cut, which can only be properly understood in the context of the author's entire oeuvre, which of course needs to be located in its whole tradition, which is of course really a countertradition that can only be understood with reference to . . . and so on down that hall of mirrors. The other point, which I take as evidence that this whole line of reasoning is not terribly productive, is that challenges to accessibility are always made with reference to texts that fall within the reviewers' expertise. It was not unusual for a reviewer to say that students couldn't possibly appreciate a particular issue in, say, Johnson's Preface to the Dictionary, but not a single one of our reviewers ever said anything about a piece (at least as challenging) on scientific methodology by Einstein. The more we know, the truism goes, the more we know how much we need to know. But why? What we have learned, less from E.D. Hirsch than from our own experiences with intertextuality, is that every text is, in a sense, an excerpt. We never get the "whole cloth." And so, of course, we can never give that to our students. What we can give them are texts, excerpts or not, that have a certain integrity and viability in our own contexts.

Reviewers and Differing Pedagogies/Pedagogues

Speaking of "our own context" raises another host of issues. We obviously can't think of the texts we use without thinking of what we intend to do with them, and so inevitably there are differences regarding the issue of accessibility that spring not so much from perceptions of our students (as seen from institutional, historical, psychological, and sociological perspectives) as from perceptions of our own pedagogical roles. As contemporary historians of composition like James Berlin have shown, the various pedagogical philosophies deployed in composition classes present us with some broad differences indeed. Textbook publishing means accommodating these as much as possible—though sometimes that just isn't possible. Whether it was
a matter of shrewd planning or just the odds, each of the publishing houses gave us a reviewer who didn’t use composition readers because he or she didn’t believe reading had a place in writing courses. One, oddly, said the attention to “critical reading and critical thinking” was “too limiting”; one called readers “a problem in composition courses because of the diversion of valuable time”; and one frankly admitted confusion about “how readers ought to be used.”

Then there were those who were not at all confused about “how readers ought to be used” who yet proved confusing enough to us. One approved the text with the one unelaborated reservation that there were “too many selections” (rather like the Emperor’s observation, in Amadeus, that Mozart had put in “too many notes”). Another complained about a selection, not because of the selection itself, but because, “by this time the students will have read twenty-three selections by as many different authors—many of them treating other issues—and they’re bound to be confused.” (It had never occurred to us that anyone would contemplate a straight-through, skipping-nothing approach to our anthology.) We were a little concerned about the issue of accessibility, and so we reported results of our own class testing: the success one of us had had, for instance, teaching Wittgenstein to remedial students (for whom the name Wittgenstein held no terrors); the students had found the selection understandable and even fun, we reported. “Fun!” one reviewer retorted. “Fun is not a high priority among my educational goals for composition.” Another reviewer (from a community college, interestingly enough) used the remark as an occasion to comment that we seemed “unnecessarily defensive about the readings being pitched too high.” Surprised at what set reviewers off, we were also nonplused by the conflicts they created among themselves. One censured us for not providing outlines and summaries of the selections, saying “just getting the gist is impossible for some students.” Another reviewer for the same house wondered if we weren’t giving the students too much introductory information, saying “many students are crippled by the extract-the-facts approach.”

Conclusions from Confusion
Surely there’s more to be learned here than that you just can’t win. Still, it’s important to see that the confusion is real, because addressing it becomes increasingly urgent in a time of rapidly changing demographics, damning diagnoses of the state of education, and competing theories with profound ideological consequences.

I said earlier that there was a pattern, and there was. (Even confusion can have a pattern.) Its outlines can be glimpsed in the way concerns over accessibility regularly took the form of qualms about difficulty rather than experiences of it. The criterion of accessibility, however defined, seems less a judgment on a text than a prejudgment of it, less a response than an expectation. This hardly obviates the problem of perception that accessibil-
ity tends to be, however. We all know how powerful expectations, not least of all thwarted expectations, can be. Many of us have had the experience of assigning, say, a short metaphysical fable by Borges to students who feel cheated, even angered by its difficulty. Something that short must be an easy read—so goes the expectation thwarted. Our own expectations may be more sophisticated, but that's all the more reason to scrutinize them.

One well worth scrutinizing is this expectation that a problem with accessibility has been identified even if the supposed difficulty with the text is only anticipated difficulty. Considerations of the suitability of texts too often simply hover on the threshold of the texts themselves. There's scarcely any inclination to allow that something actually happens when we or our students read, that readers don't remain in the same place they began in. For the student as well as the critic, the text may be what Edward Said calls "an invitation to unforeseen estrangements from the habitual," if only when the text presents challenges (8). Reviewers' anxieties about accessibility suggest that they believe the texts assigned for students to read should not call for adaptations and adjustments on the part of the reader, just absorptions. Who would endorse (much less advance) such a model of reading in a scholarly journal these days?

A still more striking thing about the reviewers' considerations of accessibility is that they consistently excluded considerations of the students' motivation. The focus was always on what students could or should do, never on what they might want to do. The question was consistently "Can the students read this stuff?" It was almost never the students' question: "Why read this stuff?" Why indeed?

**Interest Versus Accessibility**

One of the reviewers observed that "accessibility does not guarantee interest." Truer words were never spoken. Though we might question how much may be gained in displacing one protean criterion with another, one clear advantage is that, whereas questions about accessibility invite us to ponder a troublesome given (students' presumed capabilities), interest (which we all acknowledge to exist chiefly where it's motivated) is something a text, a program, a teacher can do something about. And what is interesting? What are good answers to the students' question, "Why read this stuff?" The easiest way to begin answering such questions would be the French way: to begin answering in the negative, saying what interesting is not. While the use of readings in writing classes is very much on the rise, some uses are clearly in decline—indeed, moribund. One demise was heralded with the very title of Robert Connors' Braddock Award winning article, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse." Oh, the modes are still very much with us (the fruits of analysis masquerading as the seeds of creation), but imitative attention to them, what I call the "Here is E.M. Forster; go now and write likewise" approach, has failed to work for too many for too long to have many devotees
left. (It's hard to imagine anyone these days electing to do a new modes-based reader.)

Then there's what a friend calls "the Louvre approach," the idea that we ought to walk through an anthology of readings as if it were a kind of art gallery, stopping to marvel at the fine nuance here, the boldness of execution there. These days (whatever its currency in lit courses) this approach has had its day in composition; few words for a composition reader are more damning than "belletristic." Of course, there are the exceptions that prove the rule. Lynn Z. Bloom, concerned about "the status of the currently lowly belletristic essay," finds she must argue for "the possibility, as well as the desirability of teaching belletristic essay writing" (89, 95). And though Chris Anderson's *Style as Argument* proposes to provide "a thorough critique of the pieces that appear in freshman readers," it is open to attack on precisely those grounds: "When have you last seen a Capote or Mailer piece in such texts?" asks Douglas Hesse. "More broadly, the trend in readers appears to be away from prose of this type" (244).

In moving away from the admiring and imitative approaches, the profession has effected the decline of two of the three uses of readings Mina Shaughnessy decried when she wrote that a reading text too often functions as "a 'classic' or a 'model' or a 'priming pump'" in writing classrooms (223). That last use—"priming" students by making readings catalysts for class discussions—can also be an abuse, but many class observations suggest to me, at least, that instructors increasingly tend to treat a text as an exercise in working an audience, not as a single idea surrounded by the verbal equivalent of so much styrofoam packaging. We seem to be moving beyond the idea that the only connection students can make with a text is agreement or disagreement with a reduction of it billed as its "thesis."

**The Virtue of Difficulty**

If the reductive, imitative, and merely admiring approaches fail to define what makes reading interesting for writing students and their teachers, what succeeds? Surely one especially heartening development—particularly because it comes close to suggesting that nothing breeds interest like accessibility's opposite, difficulty—has been the publication (and the fairly enthusiastic reception) of David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrofsky's research-based reader, *Ways of Reading* (now in its second edition, though I quote from the first). Its editors advocate "strong readings" of "strong texts"—texts defined as leaving "some work for a reader to do" (9). This is not an advertisement for *Ways of Reading* any more than it is for the reader I'm involved with—I suspect that what is described in *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* as a pedagogy "that turns meaning over to the students" is (and/or ought to be) more constrained than Bartholomae and Petrofsky allow—but their reader seems to me a significant and perhaps decisive step in the right direction.
Going a step further will necessarily entail elaborating on that quibble with Bartholomae and Petrosky's pedagogy. They are insistent that all readings are misreadings—particularly Bartholomae, and particularly in a piece titled "Wandering: Misreadings, Miswritings, Misunderstandings." "Making something" of texts hardly becomes a free-for-all in such a pedagogical scheme since what counts most is learning the academic ropes, gaining entrance to and then inhabiting (maybe even putting an addition on) the conventions of what constitutes a good (mis)reading. But this becomes so much less a matter of what texts do than what's done unto them that something vital may be obscured, if not lost.

What most needs foregrounding in writing classes, it seems to me, is writing as a communicative (and so two-sided) act, a social transaction, a transmission incomplete without some reception. All readings were also writings, shot through with sometimes contradictory intentions, constrained by contexts, audience-bound. Readers who are also writers need to look at readings in light of this rhetorical drama. In support of this point, I might invoke a fashionable source of citations and inspiration like M.M. Bakhtin, but I would rather cite Mina Shaughnessy, who noted that the problem with teaching readings as finished and closed-off products is that

when a student writes his papers, it does not occur to him that he is a writer producing reading; he remains a writer producing writing. This alienation of the student writer from the text robs him of important insights and sensitivities, for it is only when he can observe himself as a reader and imagine that a writer is behind the print of a page that he imagines his own situation as a writer. (223)

The likelihood of this desideratum depends on the reading, and so we return to the matter of a principle of selection. My own experience has taught me that, while every utterance demands a response, some textual utterances demand them more than others, and the more demanding a text is in this sense, the better. The texts that "work" do so not because of their subject, their vocabulary level, their history or lack of it, their length, but because they say something the students feel the need to come to terms with. A flurry of rhetorical questions and challenges by Nietzsche is more apt to "work" (in this sense) than a smoothly polished boyhood recollection by E.B. White. The language energy of a chapter by Dickens is more likely to grab a student than a well-crafted piece in a recent New Yorker.

Since these are big names I'm dropping, I need to stress that nothing is a greater obstacle to a text's capacity to demand critical responsiveness than uncritical reverence, and so canonized texts have to be humanized, historical distance has to be acknowledged and traversed, hostility or uncertainty or power invested in the audience has to be reinvested. This is less work than it might seem—texts (especially of the sort I'm considering) testify to their contexts to a considerable extent—but it does involve acknowledging what is
both dangerous and obvious: that our students are not the contemplated
audiences of far and away most of the readings we give them.

The Problem of Audience
Just because something is obvious doesn’t mean it’s unimportant. Audience
has always been a problematic consideration in composition classes, no
doubt in part because of the politics of the writing classroom. Once,
reviewing rhetorics, Richard Ohmann was shocked to find that

the student is not to see himself as already having a relationship with his readers; readers
are selected or imagined or invented, arbitrarily, along with subjects, theses, and patterns.
"When we come to write we must decide who and what our audience is." Decide? What
kind of writing have “we” undertaken to do, that we have not conceived an audience as
integral to it? The anomaly is sharpest in one book which takes students through the
selection of a topic and the framing of a thesis, and then says, “At this point in your
planning, you need to consider two further aspects: audience and purpose.” It is
necessary to “identify” the audience, because its background will affect the content and
organization of the composition. The student who follows this plan is asked to proceed
a long way in developing his ideas before envisioning the social situation in which he is
to give them utterance. (English 164)

Any arena of instruction advising students to play so fast and loose with
the idea of audience (while, no doubt, they fret about the “real” but many-
masked audience waiting in judgment) is sure to muddy the idea of audience
when it comes to readings. Selections are naturalized, neutralized,
dehistoricized. If they are not trendy, they must be timeless. They represent
types of writing or writers, not the contexts from which they sprang. Sartre,
of course, knew better and said so, reminding us that “all works of the mind
contain within themselves the image of the reader for whom they are
intended”—a thought even anthologists would do well to keep in mind (71).

No wonder accessibility is a problem and source of confusion. The
writers we esteem and discuss, the writers we would have our students esteem
and discuss, are not writing for our students. Their calls to thought or action,
their pleas and defenses, their confessions and accusations are gauntlets
thrown down to other audiences. The problem of accessibility is no more a
judgment on our students than it is a judgment on these authors. Since, false
modesty aside, we can say it isn’t our problem, we can also resolve that it
shouldn’t be a problem (certainly not the problem) for our students. We are
all professional adepts at insinuating ourselves into rhetorical situations in
which we were not active or even envisioned participants. Reading in which
the construction of meaning is not also the reconstruction of context and the
second-guessing of intentionality has to seem horribly impoverished to us, if
we can conceive of it at all. Reading for us is time-traveling, mind-reading,
hypothesis-testing, persona-shifting. We would like to cultivate this same
imaginative reach, this same rhetorical adaptability in our students, both as
readers and as writers. We know, of course, this takes work. Reflecting on
all that reading has to teach about writing—much of it learned subliminally, to be sure, but very little of it learned easily—should make accessibility less of a focus of concern. The real issue seems to lie elsewhere: not what our students may be presumed to have access to, but what they may be interested (perhaps less by predisposition than by instructional design) in gaining access to.

Baruch College—CUNY
New York, New York

Works Cited


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**ATAC Elections**

Elections for officers of the Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition will be held at the ATAC special interest session of the Conference on College Composition and Communication convention in March 1992. Please send nominations and self-nominations to Irene F. Gale; Department of English; University of South Florida; Tampa, FL 33620-5550. All nominees must be present at the special interest session.