

FEPC TEXTBOOK SUBCOMMITTEE: 1st report on Readers -- Frost

The books submitted for consideration fell naturally into the following categories: I. Garden variety Readers

II. Thinkers Readers

III. Writers on writing

IV. Essays per se

In this report I shall, in each section, list in general order of excellence (in my often qualified judgement) the texts which I recommend we consider.

I hereby serve notice that this report will be badly typed and will feature Elizabethan spellings.

I. Garden variety Readers:

This category of Reader is that most commonly used in 306. Generally it features a series of mostly contemporary essays, organized either thematically or by the rhetorical modes, with appended apparatus and a separate teaching manual. We are currently using The Bedford Reader and The Little, Brown Reader. These appear first on the list.

The Bedford Reader: 1985. Audience: general freshman. Org.: rhetorical modes w/ theme index. Apparatus: Q&As on language, writing strategy (+) Suggestions for writing; Postscripts on Process (++) . Contents: Fresh, air of currency, 2-12 pp., rich variety, very readable, no fiction, separate classics section. Manual: very usable. (SURVEY: HIGH POSITIVE RESPONSE)

Little, Brown Reader: 1983. Audience: gen. freshman. Org: thematic w/ rhetorical index. Apparatus: stresses reading analysis and invention. Contents: Wide selections: short views, essays, fiction, poetry, aphorisms, pix; broad range of authors, subjects, w/ some classics. Strategy: stresses selections that "engender" and "enable" communication. Manual: Analysis and suggestions for writing. (SURVEY: HIGH POSITIVE RESPONSE, ESP. TO RANGE OF PROSE-FICTION-PIX)

Norton Sampler: 1985. Audience: gen. freshman up. Org.: rhetorical, no theme index. Apparatus: Emphasizes analysis: content, structure, diction; compares essays to each other; good assignments (++) . Strategy: emphasizes writing process with authorial comments on essay strategy (++) . Contents: wide-ranging, cross-field, generally short, some classics, special essays "Writers on Their Process" (++) . Manual: OK, seems unnecessary.

(GARDEN VARIETY READERS CONT.)

Perennial Reader: 1984. Audience: gen. fresh. and up (+). Org.: Rhetorical, no theme. index; initial section "Writers on Writing" (++) ; 4 classics appended. Apparatus: Very comprehensive--Qs on purpose, audience, writer's process, mode, Qs for discussion, good assignments, vocab. (++) . Contents: Very up to date on current comp. theory and research in writing instruction; puts forth own theory and process of teaching (?); Good range of essays, 2-8 pp. Strategy: Non-Kinneavean, but to this reader this presents no problem or conflict with 306 syllabus. Manual: none.

Holt Reader: 1984. Audience: gen. fresh. Org.: Both rhet. and theme; each chapter ends with student essay; Ch. 12: "Further Readings" (classics w/out apparatus). Apparatus: Sequential: analysis → paragraph building → essay building → writing topics; quite specific. Contents: essays, some fiction; intros. to each ch. dwell on rhet. modes and use essays from chapt. as specific examples (+); 4-10 pp. Strategy: Aims at provoking discussion, model imitation, author context, previewing reading. Manual: Includes help on relating contents to each other thematically.

Mc-Graw Hill Reader: 1985. Audience: gen. fresh. Org.: Thematic, w/ Rhet. index. (Themes really fields). Ch. 1-3: models of reflective prose; Ch. 4-12: writing in fields. Apparatus: uniform 10-question format tightly linked to manual--comprehension, style, strategy, discussion, writing. Contents: Exceptionally good range of authors, even international, contemp. and hist., classic. (++) . Glossary. Strategy: stresses field writing--economics, social process, media, arts, etc. Manual: tightly tied to apparatus; purports to be "complete teacher's guide" and I agree. Probably good for beginning AIs.

Harbrace College Reader: 1984. Audience: gen. fresh. and up. Org.: 3-part: Rhet. modes, themes, chronology, w/ rhet. index. Apparatus: Emphasizes diction, sentences & paragraphs, content & organization; good suggestions for writing. (Overall doesn't seem to hang together too well??) Contents: Lots of good, standard authors, broadly based, very teachable and versatile (+); 3-10 pp. Strategy: can be used as sole text or reader. Manual: none.

The Compact Reader: 1984. Audience: gen. fresh. Org.: Rhet. modes, no theme index. Apparatus: Lots--emphasizes meaning, purpose and audience, method and structure, language, writing topics. Contents: some classics, old favorites, and new essays; comfortable, predictable, teachable essays and authors. Intial sample essay (Woolf's Moth) used for reading, analyzing, invention, etc. working toward student essay. Strategy: moves from basic to complex in each chapter, complements rhetoric texts, emphasizes weeding for writing. Manual: Generally very good (+), especially section on combining reader with supplementary materials (St. Writers at Work, periodicals, media, etc.)

## II. Thinkers' Readers

This category of reader stress the essay not so much as a model for writing than as a source of invention. It places emphasis on analysis, thoughtful response, and discussion rather than on modes, apparatus, or manual. We are at present using The Conscious Reader, which heads the following list.

The Conscious Reader: 1985. Audience: Gen. freshman and up: appeals to a wide range of reading sophistication. "Psychological" organization may make this suitable to the freshman age group. Org. : Thematic, w/ rehet index. Apparatus: Does not emphasize writing strategies but rather thoughtful and penetrating analysis of essay content; takes for granted that readers know (or have been taught) rhetorical strategies and have a general level of sophistication in literary analysis (e.g., they understand tone, metaphor, point of view, etc.); general thrust of apparatus is writing in response to nonfiction. Contents: Wide variety of selections, w/ stellar cast of authors (eg, Woody Allen, Machiavelli, Nabokov, etc.), broad historical and cultural emphasis, wide variety in essay length, with some long essays, good and teachable fiction selections (++) . Strategy: development of "conceptual literacy" in students by exposing them to "literate essays and imaginative literature," emphasizing relation of self to culture, history, etc. Manual: Ties in reader with rhetorical strategies; useful. (SURVEY: VERY MIXED REACTIONS)

Harper & Row Reader: 1985. Audience: Gen. freshman and up (+); serious address. Org.: Not rhet. modes or themes, but language and idea centered; chapters arranged by "Perspectives," eg. economics, religion, etc.; material within chapters moves from simple to difficult, and from short to long. Contents: Super (+++): broadly historical, extremely thought-provoking, good biogs. on authors, best authors; good variety in length, with some long essays; some poetry, some classics, some contemporary; rather windy introduction that will work for some, however. Apparatus: heavy-duty on thoughtful response to content. Manual: none.

A World of Ideas: 1983. Audience: Gen. freshman and up. Org.: Field, w/ no rhet. or theme index. Apparatus: highly analytical and discussion oriented, with good writing topics (++) . Contents: Lovely Big Fig longish essays w/ portraits, biogs, and further reading section; highest quality history/culture selections on political, social, psychological, scientific, philosophical, literary, etc. subjects. Strategy: Rhetorical (see manual), but authors/ideas predominate. Rhetorical mode introduced in each intro. Manual: Rather advanced, not for the beginning instructor.