Preface

Writing in the Arts and Sciences is an introduction to academic writing, reading, and studying. "The beginning writer," says Mina Shaughnessy, "does not know how writers behave." When students enter college, they are all beginners in the world of higher education. They must learn to cope with books, lectures, and papers assigned by scholars trained in a variety of fields. Each discipline has traditions that shape the reading and writing of its practitioners, but these scholarly traditions, with their specialized procedures, conventions, and terminology, may appear to the student as mysterious rites of passage. The purpose of this text is to cast light on those mysterious academic rites that until recently have been open to too few.

Although each academic discipline presents some constraints that are particular to itself, all areas of college study impose a number of subtle and unfamiliar expectations that may run counter to many students' previous experience. Even the most advanced high school student may be relatively unaccustomed to addressing absent strangers formally and at length in a tone of polite debate. Beginners in college need help in distinguishing what they already value—sincere expression—from what we must teach them to value—the communication of reasoned belief.

We have designed this textbook as a guide to these subtleties and pleasures. Learning the ins and outs of academic prose can mean the difference between success and failure not only in college but also in the larger world of professional and public activity. Most important, the traditions of liberal learning are valuable in themselves. These rites of passage may not always lead to ethical behavior, but they are still the best road to an examined life.

We believe that a composition course should be an introduction to "cultural literacy," a phrase used by the National Endowment for the Humanities to mean a literacy that enables one to participate fully in the life of our civilization. A composition course that uses this textbook will be shaped by the following principles:

1 Writing, like learning, is not an entity but a process.

2 Writing is a way to learn, not merely a means of communicating to others what has already been mastered.

3 Writing and learning are connected interactive processes. Students, therefore, need instruction and practice in cooperative procedures for learning from each other.

4 Writing in every discipline is a form of social behavior in that discipline. Students must learn the particular conventions of aim and audience within each discipline, and they must also learn to control the common conventional features of the written code: spelling, punctuation, conformity to standard English usage.

How to use this book

Writing in the Arts and Sciences is cross-disciplinary in its intention, conception, and authorship. But the book is designed for use in the English composition course, since it is there—or nowhere—that undergraduates can learn to see themselves as academic writers and readers. This textbook is designed to help you, the composition instructor, to draw on what you already know about language and the structure of discourse. When you use this book with your classes, you will still be teaching composition, not introductory courses in the disciplines, and you will be able to exemplify principles of good writing from a much broader range of material. You will also be better prepared to help students write effectively for more diverse audiences. In the past, many composition courses have depended on literary or belletristic material alone to exemplify scholarly modes of writing and thinking. This text also draws heavily on literary examples—Blake, Wordsworth, Dickens—but this literary material is juxtaposed to examples from history, philosophy, the graphic arts, dance, and from the social and natural sciences.

You may want to supplement this text with a cross-disciplinary anthology, or with just one or two additional readings—for example, Dickens's *Hard Times* or Antonia Fraser's *Royal Charles*—that would allow students to engage in further study based on the examples we introduce here. Nearly every instructor will want to supplement *Writing in the Arts and Sciences* with a concise grammar handbook. We believe that students should be taught to use such a handbook as a reference tool, like a dictionary. We believe further that grammatical terminology in and of itself is not an appropriate or useful focus for a writing course, especially not for a basic writing course. Instructors who arrange their composition syllabi according to the chapters in a grammar handbook may be neglecting the real basics of composition—the processes of academic writing and reading.

Writing in the Arts and Sciences is organized so that you can use it flexibly and creatively in your classroom. All chapters conclude with

questions and exercises that present opportunities for short activities that can make writing an integrated part of every teaching and learning day. We have provided a glossary of specialized terms and four sample papers—from history, sociology, psychology, and biology—to exemplify various types of writing that college instructors expect. Those who prefer to organize their instruction in ways different from our chapter-by-chapter arrangement can consult the index. You may prefer, for example, to assign the various approaches to revision at the same time, rather than discussing revision as that topic comes up in each of the later chapters.

The text can be divided into two major sections. The first section (chapters 1–5), "Writing to Learn," focuses on writing as a way of learning. The second section (chapters 6–14), "Learning to Write," concentrates on writing as a means of communication within various disciplines.

Chapter 1, "Studying the Academic Disciplines," presents the key idea that disciplines are not differentiated so much by subject matter as by the special perspective that each discipline brings to experience. Chapter 2, "Writing to See and To Think," explains the uses of private writing and exemplifies procedures for transforming a topic into a problem to be solved. Here we deal with a variety of invention strategies, since we believe in presenting to students numerous possible activities that can help ease the anxiety of waiting for the Muse. Because students are diverse in their learning styles and interests, we present many things to try. We are aware that one person's heuristic can be another person's writer's block. So we recommend treating this material as a set of exercises, not as a list of rules. Chapter 2 also shows students how to apply logical principles, especially those articulated by Stephen Toulmin, to improving academic writing and reading.

Chapter 3, "Classroom Writing," presents practical procedures for taking notes and for writing essay examinations. Chapter 4, "Library Resources," provides access to reference materials, not only in literature, but in the other humanities and in the social and natural sciences. Chapter 5, "Writing in the Library," explains the processes of recording, summarizing, documenting, and acknowledging the ideas of others. Our approach here is to illuminate the typical caveat against plagiarism (usually expressed in language reminiscent of the surgeon general's warning against cigarettes) by explaining traditions of honest intellectual sharing—sharing in which students can learn to participate without exploitation. Here we also present and contrast two divergent forms of scholarly documentation: the footnote/bibliography format preferred in the humanities and the author/date format preferred in the natural and social sciences.

Just as the process of writing any single project is both recursive and self-contained, so the structure of our textbook is both recursive and self-contained. Chapter 1, in that sense, presents a self-contained, paradigmatic view of the writing process. That theme is then played with disciplinary variations in each of the nine chapters in the second section, "Learning to Write." The second section consists of three parts, "Writing

in the Humanities," "Writing in the Social Sciences," and "Writing in the Natural Sciences." The chapters in each of these parts suggest strategies for writing apprentice versions of professional papers within the disciplines. Thus, we have written these parts as self-contained units so that you can select the material most appropriate to your own composition program.

Instructors at a polytechnic might teach chapters 1–5 and then go right on to chapters 12, 13, and 14, "Writing in the Natural Sciences." Instructors teaching a composition course that is coordinated with core courses in the humanities might supplement chapters 1–5 with chapters 6, 7, and 8, "Writing in the Humanities." Instructors who teach classes that include numerous social science majors might concentrate on chapters 9, 10, and 11, "Writing in the Social Sciences." Instructors teaching composition in professional programs might choose to emphasize the problem-solving papers discussed in chapter 8, the case studies taught in chapter 10, and the laboratory reports explained in chapter 13. Ideally, in a full-year composition course, instructors would concentrate on chapters 1–5 in the first semester and then on chapters 6–14 in the second. Students who work through the entire text will gain more than writing instruction: they will have an introduction to processes of thought in the liberal arts and sciences.

Pronouns

We struggled—agonized—over our policy on pronouns, to the point of irritating every one of our preliminary reviewers, all of whom are sympathetic to feminist principles. We have thus removed from the published text our democratic, but distracting, sprinkling of "she's," unless "she" refers specifically to a particular woman named in the text. We use the second person whenever possible and the third person plural most other times. But in those remaining instances when we are compelled to refer to a single unnamed student or teacher, we resolve our dilemma by reference to Mina Shaughnessy, who writes in *Errors and Expectations*, "After having tried various ways of circumventing the use of the masculine pronoun in situations where women teachers and students might easily outnumber men, I have settled for the convention, but I regret that the language resists my meaning in this important respect. When the reader sees *he*, I can only hope *she* will also be there" (p. 4).

Acknowledgments

We are indebted to Mina Shaughnessy for much more than her policy on pronouns. Her generous intellectual spirit was the earliest inspiration for this project. All five of us regard *Errors and Expectations* as a guide for college teachers in all disciplines, as we consider humane and rational higher education in the late twentieth century. Shaughnessy's work, along with that of James Kinneavy and Kenneth Bruffee, provides the theoretical

framework for the practical activities exemplified in this book. We had opportunities to talk with Professors Kinneavy and Bruffee—and even more significantly to talk with one another across the disciplines—because of an institutional development grant awarded to Beaver College in 1977 by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Several of the scholars who reviewed our manuscript in draft stages have enacted Bruffee's principles of collaborative learning. Frederick Crews, Paula Johnson, Richard Larson, and Harvey Wiener took time away from their own projects to write perceptively to us about ours. This book is immeasurably better because of their detailed suggestions and because of the comments offered by Margaret Belcher, Edward P. J. Corbett, Harry Crosby, Peter Hearn, Mort Maimon, Rob Mortimer, Calvin Nodine, and Barrie Van Dyck, who kindly looked at sections of our work in progress.

Several ideas in this text were clarified through discussions with Albert Anderson, Linda Flower, Maxine Hairston, John R. Hayes, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Donald McQuade, Ellen Nold, Harriet Sheridan, and Richard Young. Our friends on the faculty and in the administration at Beaver College have provided an atmosphere in which a cross-disciplinary project could be carried forward without working at cross purposes to the institution. We are especially grateful in that regard to William Bracy, Helen Buttel, Josephine Charles, Helene Cohan, David Gray, Norman Johnston, and Bette Landman.

Among the many students who worked with us, we want to single out Karen Anderson, Jana Cohen, Elizabeth Czyszczon, and Kathy Mackin, who helped us as much by their enthusiasm for our project as they did by their assistance in our research. Patricia Kehoe and Linda Harrison typed various stages of the manuscript. Marie Lawrence coordinated our research assistants, typed and telephoned, but, most important, kept her good humor with five coauthors, some of whom could be absent-minded professors, misplacing on Thursday what had been carefully photocopied and collated on Wednesday.

John Wright, Richard Garretson, Richard Larson, Frederick Crews, Harvey Wiener, and Donald McQuade have taught us that the world of textbook publishing can share Mina Shaughnessy's commitment to humane values in teaching. And Paul O'Connell, John Covell, and the entire staff at Winthrop gave us the most valuable gifts of all: time, respect, and informed attention to the integrity of a new and challenging project.

As anyone who has ever been a coauthor knows, the greatest challenge of all was to the friendship that existed among the five of us. Finally, we want to thank each other for being even better friends today than we were in those other days when we retreated daily into the territoriality of our academic departments.