

**An Analysis of Writing Assignments in  
Selected History Textbooks for Grades Seven and Eleven**

by

Charlotte P. Sellers

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**APPROVED:**

  
Daniel B. Fleming  
Co-Chair

  
Patricia P. Kelly  
Co-Chair

  
Norm R. Dodl

  
Robert C. Small

  
Warren P. Self

May, 1993  
Blacksburg, Virginia

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1993  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **AN ANALYSIS OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN SELECTED HISTORY TEXTBOOKS FOR GRADES SEVEN AND ELEVEN**

Current research in English/language arts advocates the incorporation of writing in content areas across the curriculum as a means of learning content as well as a means of evaluating content mastery. Focusing on the content area of social studies and acknowledging the importance of the text as a teaching tool, this study examined to what degree and in what manner selected social studies textbooks incorporated writing. Texts selected for the study were nationally published history textbooks which had been adopted for use in the state of Virginia at grades seven and eleven, where the teaching of United States history is mandated in Virginia.

Accompanying the basal textbook as a primary tool of instruction is the complementary teacher manual or guide. Using Britton's categories for functions of writing (i.e., Expressive, Transactional and Poetic) and Donlan's four categories of writing particular to the social studies (i.e., Reporting, Exposition, Narration and Argumentation), an analysis was made of writing assignments offered via selected social studies textbooks and their accompanying teacher manuals. Text packages selected for the study reflected those U.S. history texts adopted for use in Virginia at grades seven and eleven.

The treatment of writing in the selected textbook packages was examined to determine the reflection of current research and theory in the area of composition. Findings paralleled the national Applebee study of 1981 finding that most writing required in secondary schools was of a Transactional nature, most often requiring students to report or explain information, seldom requiring creative writing as with Narration. Moreover, examination of state and national social studies professional journals revealed relatively little support in instructing social studies educators on how to include writing in this content area.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Though traditionally the responsibility for writing instruction fell to English/language arts instructors, much has changed in this area in recent years. Once content area instructors saw a place for writing in their disciplines--as a means of evaluating mastery of learning, if for no other reason--a writing across the curriculum movement began to take hold. More and more writing assignments made their way into various content areas, requiring that students write in various forms particular to a given discipline. An outgrowth of this movement, or part of the continuing evolution of writing instruction, is the more recent distinction between two major purposes for writing in any discipline--writing to learn and writing to evaluate. The writing to learn movement has brought with it the precept that writing is a means of learning any body of knowledge and that by writing about the ideas presented one is thinking and processing and ultimately internalizing information. William Zinsser contends that "it's by writing about a subject we're trying to learn that we reason our way to what it means" (Zinsser, p. 22). Complementing this purpose of learning through writing is the writing for evaluation component whereby one can demonstrate learning and mastery through writing.

A look at some statistics on time allocated to writing in the English classroom indicates at least one reason such an arrangement was inadequate.

Writing instruction in language arts/English classes takes up typically only about 10-15 percent of the time allocated for the class, irrespective of grade level or type of school. Allocated instructional time for language arts/English (i.e., the actual length of a class period or the number of minutes designated for language arts/English instruction) typically ranges from 10-15 percent of school time. A simple calculation (i.e., 15% of 15%) yields the startling realization that under present conditions, talking about writing instruction in language arts/English means talking about 2.3 percent of school time. (Tighe & Koziol, 1982, p. 76)

Such a limitation of time spent on writing instruction in even the English/language arts setting reflects a need for greater attention to writing if it is a skill to be mastered by students.

A major reason the responsibility for writing instruction traditionally fell to English/language arts teachers was the generally held belief by content area teachers that English teachers were better trained to instruct students in the "how to's" of composition. However, there is "substantial evidence that most language arts/English teachers have had little formal background in writing and in the teaching of writing as part of their initial or in-service teacher preparation" (Tighe & Koziol, 1982, p. 77). Thus, it seems fitting that writing instruction would no longer be confined to the English/language arts domain.

With writing as only one area of responsibility of even the English teacher, there is not enough instructional time in the English/language arts block to justify such an arrangement. Based on the findings of Tighe and Koziol who cite that only 2.3 percent of school time is currently devoted to writing instruction in English/language

arts classes, it seems that there is not enough instructional time to warrant the English/language arts teacher assuming sole responsibility for writing instruction; moreover, most English/language arts teachers hold no special monopoly or expertise in writing and writing instruction to warrant such distribution of teaching responsibilities. Zinsler suggests that there are all kinds of reasons why English teachers ought to get some relief from sole teaching responsibility for writing. "One is that they shouldn't have to assume the whole responsibility for imparting a skill that's basic to every area of life. That should be everybody's job" (Zinsler, p. 13). Thus, English/language arts teachers inherited responsibility for the teaching of writing on the basis that writing is a demonstration of language mastery or function rather than a process that reflects thinking and reasoning.

With a rationale established for writing instruction being a shared responsibility among educators, the questions then arose as to how writing was to be incorporated into content areas; what role it would play in subject area instruction; and how effectively teachers could incorporate writing into their domains. In the Fall of 1982 two nationally-known experts in composition, Lee Odell and Dixie Goswami, participated in a Writing Across the Curriculum workshop at Radford University. Warren Self and Richard Murphy, English educators leading the Writing Across the Curriculum movement at Radford University, wrote that Odell and Goswami contended "writing is at the heart of every academic discipline" (Self & Murphy, 1983). Citing research on the process of writing and current theory about the process

of learning, Odell and Goswami suggested that writing should be a concern of every academic department for two reasons:

- 1) because writing is an art that students will become and remain skillful at only with continuous practice; and
- 2) because writing requires such intellectual engagement with the subject being written about that it facilitates and enhances learning. (Self & Murphy, 1983)

Thus, writing in content areas not only strengthens students' ability to write because of the increased practice but also writing is a means of learning whatever content is under study. Content area writing can meet a number of purposes:

- 1) writing is a communication skill that can, in part, be learned in content area classes;
- 2) writing offers a vehicle for doing what scholars in a particular field do as they examine information and record history, for example;
- 3) writing is a vehicle through which the student can learn content;
- 4) writing is a way of presenting or communicating social studies ideas (discoveries) to other people (readers); and
- 5) writing is a way of demonstrating mastery of the current content of the field.

In order that content areas, such as the social studies, may better assume a shared responsibility for writing instruction, content area teachers must first realize or be convinced that writing can and should be integrated simultaneously with subject matter (Dolgin, 1981). Otherwise, teachers might view writing as a tag-on to an

already overwhelming number of teaching responsibilities and, if not reject, at least resist, the inclusion of writing into their teaching. William Zinsser encourages teachers to realize that "writing is a tool that enables people in every discipline to wrestle with facts and ideas" (Zinsser, p. 49).

In the opening chapter of Plain Talk, author/editor Judy Self reviews the power of language in learning. Referencing Gagne's work, Self recounts that "85% of the knowledge and skills presented to students in school comes to them in some form of language"; she continues with the reminder that we remember only 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, and 70% of what we actually articulate. Writing is one way that teachers can give students a voice and encourage them to say what they are learning or have learned (Self, 1987, pp. 12-13).

Social studies seems particularly akin to English/language arts in the effort to emphasize communication, be it communicating past events, communicating varying traditions and ways among cultures, or communicating various political stances among governments. Writing can become a vehicle for developing thoughts and attitudes about such subjects, for learning social studies content, and for evaluating mastery of social studies content and skills. Ann Dolgin (1981) contends that "each social studies teacher may incorporate writing skills without sacrificing content." She goes on to address the common misconception held by social studies teachers that "grammar is a basic component of teaching writing." Instead, Dolgin offers the following on the writing process:

Writing should be viewed as a problem-solving or goal-oriented process. It involves the act of thinking and composing. Composing is an intellectual process which consists of a writer expressing ideas, facts, or values, and writing this material according to the rules of language--syntax, spelling and punctuation. Therefore, writing may be viewed as an act of learning and developing those basic skills which all teachers of social studies deem primary like cause and effect; distinguishing fact from opinion; and sequencing ideas in a logical and orderly way. In addition the writer develops insights into content which allows for self-discovery and the thinking process is enhanced further when the student must select, combine, and arrange ideas in effective sentences and paragraphs. (Dolgin, 1981 p. 8)

In further advocacy of writing in the content areas, Judy Ferro, an instructor of social studies methodology for the College of Idaho, contends that "a teacher must do more than teach the skills; he/she has to teach the content of each discipline through the exercise of these skills. This is the only balanced approach" (Ferro, 1980, p. 118). Ferro finds shallow the argument that writing instruction in the social studies would detract from the content of the course; she declares that

. . . social studies has been enslaved by content long enough. After all, the successful student of the social sciences must use hundreds of different skills. It is time we elevated the teaching of skills to a major goal of all social studies courses. It has taken so long because so few of the important skills are unique to social studies. Our field requires skills from English, speech, mathematics, earth sciences, accounting, physics, and many other fields. (Ferro, 1980, p. 118)

In a 1982 study which included English, social studies, and science teachers, grades 7-12, in several school districts in central/western Pennsylvania, Tighe and Koziel found that content area teachers "believed in the shared responsibility for



writing instruction but did not feel equipped or prepared to lead such cooperative efforts" (p. 78).

With attention to writing as a process that will encourage students to discover ideas and relate new material to that which they already hold in the realm of personal experience, leading English/language arts educators, in particular, are endorsing writing as a skill to be incorporated into the content areas. These educators encourage all teachers to view writing as a tool to master content and obtain an understanding and mastery of particulars in various content areas. Writing becomes a "mode of learning" and, according to Boston University's Henry A. Giroux, writing is defined "as an active relationship that mediates between the subject and the world." That is, writing is not a subject that is to be included in English/language arts or social studies exclusively. Instead, "it is a process that can be used to teach students a subject by allowing them to assume the same role as the writer who authors the books and texts that are used as learning sources" (Giroux, 1978, p. 301).

Even those content area teachers who believe in the shared responsibility for the teaching of writing, who understand that writing instruction emphasizes a process and not an additional body of content, and who believe that writing will augment what content is already there to be covered in a particular subject may need assistance in approaching writing in this multi-faceted vein and incorporating it into their courses. Contemplating the place of writing in social studies instruction, Giroux talks of the involvement that writing can afford students of social studies in their subject matter.

A body of study that emphasizes participation, as with citizenship, for example, only reiterates that priority when it uses writing to involve students in critical thinking about the topic of study at hand. By using writing in the social studies, "students have a chance to get 'inside' a subject and to think critically so that they may provide their own interpretations of the material" (Giroux, 1978, p. 307).

An impetus for using writing in the content areas might well be the curricular mandates which dictate content to be taught and skills to be mastered at various levels of one's schooling. In the state of Virginia, a statewide, broad-based set of objectives exists in the form of the Standards of Learning (SOL's). This document lists by content areas for grade levels (K-12) objectives that are to be met by students in the areas of content, skills, and attitudes. With suggestions offered for how completion might be achieved via descriptive statements and the assessment component, Virginia social studies teachers have a common curricular resource in the Standards of Learning.

Social Studies Standards of Learning Objectives, as revised in 1989, targets five major categories of skills that are "fundamental to the goals of social studies education" (p. 36). Of the 67 points detailing social studies skills to be mastered, only two subpoints specifically mention writing. Both occur within the skill area of study skills which is subdivided into three sections. Of these is "Gather Information" which includes specific skills as follows: "write a coherent paragraph on a social studies topic" and "write a letter expressing an opinion" (p. 37).

A look at SOL's at grade levels targeted by this study, particularly grades seven and eleven, reveals little specific attention to writing. In fact, not one of the nine objectives for grade seven mentions writing in the objective or its descriptive statement. At the eleventh-grade level, two of the thirteen objectives at least suggest writing. Objective 11.9 states that "[t]he student will conduct research and present the results orally and/or in written form" (p. 31). The next objective, 11.10, states that "[t]he student will demonstrate orally and/or in written form a knowledge of physical geography and spatial relationships in the development of Virginia and the United States within the international community" (p. 32).

As generally stated within the Social Studies Standards of Learning, writing is a skill to be mastered. Yet, within targeted grade level objectives, attention to writing is often as a suggested means of demonstrating mastery of learning. However, omission of specific references to writing does not prohibit writing from being reasonably associated with many more objectives depending on teacher interpretation and implementation.

This statewide statement on learning for Virginia's students is reiterated in the September, 1992, draft of the Virginia "Common Core of Learning," "one of four major components of the long-range plan adopted by the Board of Education to give Virginia students a world-class education program for the 21st century (p. iv)." This Common Core of Learning "establishes proficiencies students should be able to demonstrate upon graduating from high school . . . with students expected to

demonstrate practical application of knowledge learned" (p. v). The "Common Core of Learning" defines attitudes, skills, and knowledge considered essential for successful functioning in the world (p. 1).

One of the four fundamental skills addressed by the "Common Core of Learning" is communication. The expectation is that students will be able to communicate accurately what they know and think. Moreover, schools are encouraged to restructure programs through tenth grade in order to focus upon basic competencies in reading, oral and written communications, math and science. While school divisions are allowed much leeway in achieving learning outcomes, the suggestion is made in this draft statement that instructional programs and sequences might well be developed so that students experience an interdisciplinary approach or experience first hand the interrelatedness of various subject areas studied.

The direction advocated by the "Common Core of Learning" includes more linkages among various disciplines, as well as the need to develop strategies for infusing fundamental skill areas, such as thinking or communication, into all aspects of instruction. That is, writing would be seen by teachers and students as a means to learn and master various disciplines and not solely as a skill of an isolated language arts curriculum.

One of the most likely places teachers will turn for assistance in treating writing in the social studies is to their textbooks and the resource guides and manuals that accompany those texts. A 1979 report from the National Council for the Social

Studies affirmed the importance of the textbook in the social studies classroom (Shaver, Davis and Helburn, 1979). Studies commissioned by the National Science Foundation on the current status nationwide of education in the areas of science, mathematics, and social studies revealed the following:

The dominant instructional tool continues to be the conventional textbook, and longtime bigsellers continue to dominate the market. . . . Teachers tend, not only to rely on, but to believe in the textbook as the source of knowledge. (p. 151)

With textbooks used as a primary instructional tool, the inclusion of writing into the social studies seems greatly to depend on how writing is addressed in textbooks.

Since teachers in content areas rely on textbooks, one might want to determine if the composition needs of the content area teachers are reflected in the textbooks. That is, do textbooks in mathematics, science and social studies assign writing, and if so, what type and how much? (Donlan, 1976, p. 3)

In an effort to ascertain the support for "shared responsibility" for writing inclusion as in the social studies, I decided to examine a sample of the state-adopted textbooks currently being used across the state of Virginia in secondary social studies classes to determine how much writing is evidenced and what kind of writing is required according to these sources.

### **Statement of the Problem**

English education, in particular, encourages the use of writing as a means of student learning as well as a means of evaluating student learning of content. The

support for writing as a teaching tool in content areas across the curriculum may be encouraged by the research of English educators, but it is necessary to look to particular subject areas in order to examine any content area's approach to, and acceptance of, a drive that will make writing an integral part of teaching and learning in its discipline.

As social studies educators are asked to share in the responsibility for teaching writing and to use writing as an important strategy for promoting students' learning of the subject, the question arises as to whether or not support systems are in place for assisting teachers in that effort. Certainly state mandates, such as Virginia's Standards of Learning for Social Studies, indicate a place for writing in social studies instruction across grade levels in the state. As reflected in the review of literature, professional journals also address a role for writing in social studies instruction. However, because the textbook continues to be the primary teaching tool for teachers, social studies textbooks and their accompanying teacher manuals need to be examined to determine if writing is being incorporated into the teaching of social studies subjects and if so, to determine what form writing is taking in the social studies. For this study, the social studies textbooks on the Virginia state-approved list formed the basis of examination.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine and describe what attention is being given to writing in the content area of social studies. The Review of Literature includes a section on social studies periodicals since 1975 and their attention to writing in the social studies since that time. Although I referenced the attention that writing in the social studies in general has received in the professional journals as well as referencing the inclusion of writing in Virginia's Standards of Learning for Social Studies, the focus of this study was on currently adopted social studies textbooks, particularly in the area of United States history. Titles of these texts are listed by grade level in Appendix A.

The following research questions guided the development and implementation of the study:

1. What endorsement of or attention to composition do the selected textbooks and accompanying teacher manuals at grades seven and eleven of Virginia's currently adopted social studies textbooks give?
  - a. What purposes do the writing assignments in Virginia social studies textbooks at grades seven and eleven serve?
  - b. Do the assignments lean toward writing to learn/think activities or toward a means of evaluating mastery of content?
  - c. Do the selected state-adopted social studies textbooks, at grades seven and eleven, and accompanying teacher manuals, acknowledge and incorporate the writing process in their treatment of composition by either mentioning

the various stages in the process or by including assignments that make use of the various stages in the writing process?

- d. What functions or categories of writing are required by writing assignments in the selected text packages (i.e., Britton's and Donlan's categories)?
  - e. What attention to audience is made by the writing assignments in the selected text packages?
  - f. What forms do the writing assignments call for in the selected text packages?
2. How does the treatment of writing in Virginia social studies textbooks, at grades seven and eleven, and in accompanying teacher manuals, reflect current composition research and theory?

### **Limitations of the Study**

Interested in the amount and kinds of writing required in the social studies, I developed an instrument to collect information about the number of writing assignments included in selected secondary social studies textbooks and their accompanying teacher editions. Assignments were analyzed as to their intent, function, purpose, attention to the writing process, and attention to a particular audience. Texts were chosen from the state-adopted list for Virginia and were limited to grades seven and eleven, the two secondary grade levels that focus on United States history instruction. Because of its very nature to maintain a written record of



events and a nation's significant people and their accomplishments, I concluded that history texts may well offer as much attention to student writing as any of the social sciences. The curriculum at grades seven and eleven focuses on United States history. By examining text materials at these two grade levels, I could determine the attention to writing within a particular social science while having representation of both a middle-grade level as well as a high school level. Despite this rationale for the selection of texts to be studied, I am cautious in generalizing about the results of the study even to other disciplines within the social sciences.

Because of the importance of the teacher in offering writing instruction or in assigning writing in a social studies course, I am also careful to view the results of this study merely as the number of potential writing assignments within each text package. Depending on the use of these assignments made by the teacher, the results may or may not reflect the degree of writing or writing instruction actually going on in Virginia social studies classrooms. Moreover, because many of the assignments analyzed as part of this study employed cooperative learning strategies where students would work, and even write, in groups, it would be very difficult to project how much writing any particular text component would offer an individual student.

I realize in examining findings from this study that more does not necessarily mean better. That a text or text package was found to have more writing assignments than another does no more than indicate the potential there is for writing if writing assignments generate from the text source. Again, implementation of the writing

suggested in the text material is dependent upon the teachers' use of the writing components of each text.

In conclusion, I examined each student text and its complementary teacher edition or manual at the targeted grade levels. I considered that these texts and guides were likely to be the two components most teachers across the state would have access to in planning and teaching. Also, the resource materials available with any particular text varied greatly from annotated teacher editions with marginal notes, to resource binders, or multiple manuals to address various foci of a publisher. Though the attention to student texts and teacher editions only offered a common ground among the sixteen titles examined, there still existed considerable variety in format and the amount of information contained in various teacher editions or manuals. It is conceivable, though I did not encounter such, that an entire manual or component to a text package, might have offered significant attention to writing that has not been addressed by this study because it was not part of the student text or teacher edition.

### **Organization of the Study**

In an effort to ascertain what support exists for social studies teachers, particularly in Virginia at grades seven and eleven, to incorporate writing in their teaching of social studies, I undertook a study to examine writing components and writing assignments in selected texts and their accompanying teacher editions or

manuals. An instrument was developed to address various components or areas of concern related to the teaching of writing.

In keeping with current research in composition instruction, one category of the instrument addressed the purpose of the writing as either writing to learn or writing for evaluation. Another primary focus was on the attention given by an assignment or text to writing as a process rather than a finished product to result from a specific assignment. I examined writing assignments to determine what purpose each assignment fulfilled. Here, I drew from the work of James Britton and that of Dan Donlan to obtain two different perspectives on writing purposes. Categories drawn from Britton's work focused on general developmental functions of writing-- Expressive, Transactional and Poetic. Donlan's categories--Reporting, Exposition, Narration and Argumentation--offered more content specific categories of writing particular to the social studies. Following the work of Arthur Applebee, who had completed a national research study of writing in secondary schools in 1981, a category was also included in the research instrument to address audience. Though the assignment might not specifically target an audience, I categorized the assignments analyzed as intended for either teacher, self, or other. Lastly, I made anecdotal notes about the forms the various writing assignments required of student writers. For each instrument category, I tabulated statistics by text, by teacher manual/edition, and by grade level.

A second research question addressed to what degree the writing in the examined texts reflected current research. Though I drew the categories within the research instrument from current research and current composition theory, I included within the review of literature an examination of current professional periodicals in order to see what attention had been given in recent years to writing in the social studies. I particularly reviewed Virginia's state social studies journal and two leading periodicals at the national level as part of the review of literature on the topic of writing in the social studies.

### **Summary**

Within the last decade much attention has been given to writing instruction and its place in content areas other than English/language arts. While some content area teachers have acknowledged a responsibility for using writing to teach their subjects and to evaluate mastery of it, there is some question about what kinds of support exist to assist them in this task.

This particular study was designed to focus on one content area--social studies--and to analyze the kind of writing being suggested in state-adopted texts at grades seven and eleven, grades where Virginia mandates the teaching of United States history. A research instrument was developed to reflect current theory and research about composition and the purposes and functions it might well serve in social studies instruction. Assignments within selected texts, and their accompanying teacher

editions or manuals, were examined to determine the kinds of writing being required by students and how such writing reflected current research and theory in the field. With the belief that textbooks remain a primary teaching tool of teachers, this study of textbook assignments is believed to be a valuable starting point in determining what place writing has in the social studies, in at least certain grade levels of social studies texts currently adopted for use in Virginia.

In an effort to determine attention to writing in the social studies and professional support offered to social studies teachers interested in incorporating the teaching of writing into their instruction, the review of literature also includes a thorough examination of leading professional journals aimed at the social studies educator both at the state and national levels. Results of the textbook analysis could then be interpreted in light of current research and theory as reflected in social studies, as well as in English, professional writings.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Literature

Education has always placed a certain premium on writing; even when education supposedly addressed only the basics of reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic, writing held a major focus, and the years have allowed writing to sustain a strong hold in the curriculum. However, the responsibility for writing instruction seemed to fall almost exclusively to the English curriculum. With recent research findings and subsequent changes in the area of writing instruction, the responsibility for including writing is coming to be viewed as a responsibility to be shared by all disciplines. According to the United States Department of Education's recent publication, What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning, "students are most likely to write competently when schools routinely require writing in all subject areas, not just in English class" (USDOE, 1986 p. 27).

One major change in writing instruction in recent years has come with the acknowledgement of and attention to the composing process. With research conducted by Janet Emig and others, educators have determined that writing is a process whereby the writer makes "language choices on paper." This concept of writing leads John Mayer et al., to determine that

. . . when looking for the appropriate place to use writing in the school environment we must first look at those areas of the curriculum that include a language component. (Mayer et al., p. 87)

Generally the composing process is divided into three stages--prewriting, writing, and postwriting, though many now believe the process is incomplete unless writers are allowed to move to a fourth stage, sharing what has been written. These stages are not exclusive nor are they steps that once addressed, are completed with movement to the next sequential level. That is, decisions about revision may occur as one composes, and even after significant composing one may pause or return to prewriting in an effort to initiate more material or more pertinent ideas for development.

The U.S. Department of Education's What Works draws upon the work of Elbow (1981), Emig (1971), Graves (1978, 1983), Hillocks (1984), and Humes (1981) to describe the writing process that is contained in "an effective writing lesson." The elements that make for an effective writing lesson are

1. brainstorming, where the students "collect information and ideas, frequently much more than they will finally use";
2. composing, the hard work of writing a first draft;
3. revising, where students re-read their work and get feedback about it so that productive changes can be made; and
4. editing, where students check the final version of their work for "spelling, grammar, punctuation, other writing mechanics, and legibility." (USDOE, 1986 p. 27)

This approach to writing instruction has yielded a great body of research in the field of composition--the process, the purposes of writing, as well as the particular place of writing in disciplines other than English.

So often writing in academic settings is used as a means of evaluating what a student has already mastered or learned. Thus, one purpose for writing is writing as a means of testing or evaluating. Another purpose for writing that legitimizes its inclusion in various disciplines is writing as a means of learning that which students do not already know. In this facet writing becomes a tool used for mastering content or making meaningful connections.

#### Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing to Learn

As educators have acknowledged the place of writing and writing instruction in disciplines other than English/language arts, writing across the curriculum movements and efforts have resulted. Initially, any movement to include writing assignments and activities in content areas was considered to be writing across the curriculum, regardless of whether or not the assignments were product based or if they acknowledged and incorporated information about writing as a process. As information has expanded about the writing process so has the function and use of writing expanded as incorporated in content areas. More recently, educators have addressed the ability not only to evaluate learning through writing, but also they have begun to explore and better understand how writing can be employed "to learn" information and skills in any content area.



In Learning to Write/Writing to Learn, authors John Mayer, Nancy Lester, and Gordon Pradl explain that "one sense of 'writing to learn' means that through writing one is learning to write; the second sense of 'writing to learn' is that writing can be a means of learning" (p. 1). In discussing writing as a means of learning, the contention is that learning involves making connections between what one has learned or mastered and what is yet to be mastered.

New information can be learned, in part, through writing about it, but only when a student connects the knowledge she possesses with the new information she's attempting to learn. If we don't ask students to make connections between what's new and what's been stockpiled through experience, we're . . . disqualifying everything they've learned before. (Mayer et al., p. 38)

Advocates of writing as a mode of learning remind us that learning, like writing for that matter, is an active process that can and should engage students in thinking, and in that sense, involve them in acquiring knowledge. Thus, writing is occurring "any time one's mind is engaged in choosing words to be put on paper" (Mayer, p. 78). This would include such activities as . . . note-taking, list-making, writing down observations, and expressing feelings as well as more traditional activities like writing lab reports, essay test answers, essays or stories (Mayer, p. 78). Such use of writing as a tool for learning a subject broadens the dimension that writing can take in the content areas. If employed in this manner, writing need not be an add-on, an additional subject to tackle in an already overloaded area. Instead, the content area teacher can employ writing as a vehicle for teaching and learning the subject at hand.

According to Toby Fulwiler, editor of The Journal Book, "teachers in subject areas . . . have found that when students write about course readings, lectures, discussions, and research materials they understand better what they know, don't know, want to know--and how it all relates to them" (1987, p. 6).

Denny Wolfe and Robert Reising, writing on the topic of "Writing for Learning in the Content Areas," encourage teachers to consider the potential of writing in their content area classes by reminding them that "writing permits us to see, reconsider, evaluate, hone, shape, and revise what we say into a more precise representation of what we mean" (p. 1). Such use of writing puts learners more in control of their own thoughts as they communicate those thoughts whether it be with themselves or with others. Wolfe and Reising argue that

. . . as long as schools persist in using writing almost exclusively as a way of testing (e.g., 'Tell me what you know') rather than as a way of learning (e.g., 'Write to clarify and interpret what you think you understand or do not understand'), the vast potential of writing for learning cannot fully be realized. (1983, p. 1)

In his essay entitled "Writing as Learning," Sheridan Baker talks of the power of writing. He states that "having to write about something is our most effective means of learning about it, grasping it for ourselves as we try to explain it to others" (1983, p. 227). Because writing holds such potential for discovery, Baker goes on to say that writing belongs in every classroom. And, Toby Fulwiler, in his essay in Forum: Essays on Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing, gives writing another across-the-board endorsement by saying "writing is the basic stuff of

education" (p. 274). Fulwiler feels that writing has been neglected by schools and in its place has been put "passive reception of information." By reestablishing writing to its rightful place throughout the schools, students are allowed the opportunity to become active learners, and the business of learning strikes a much needed balance (p. 274).

### Writing in Content Areas/Social Studies

With so many educators demanding that writing be incorporated into subjects throughout the school, an examination is needed of just how much writing does take place in content areas across the curriculum and, more particular to this study, in the social studies. Arthur N. Applebee of Stanford University headed up a major study of student writing conducted from the office of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and largely funded by a grant from the National Institute of Education on writing in the secondary schools. This study examined writing in the content areas as well as in English. This multi-dimensional study conducted from 1979-80 combined "observational work in classrooms, interviews with students and teachers, and wide-scale surveying with a questionnaire" (p. xii).

Combining the results of these various strands of research into his 1981 report for NCTE, entitled Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas, Applebee paints a rather grim picture of the status of writing in American secondary schools. Applebee found in observations that "writing activities occupied a major proportion of class time in all of the subject areas" (p. 30). Yet, the writing was

dominated by mechanical and informational uses of writing which would include such writing or writing-related activities as short answer or fill-in-the-blank assignments. Such writing-related activities were most often used in mathematics, science, and social science classes. More specifically, "only 3 percent of lesson time was devoted to longer writing requiring the student to produce at least a paragraph of coherent text," (p. 30), and this writing of at least one paragraph in length was most likely to happen in an English class. Less than one-half of one percent of lesson time was devoted to personal and creative uses of writing. Student interviews supported Applebee's observations by yielding that informational uses of writing, including note-taking, were the most prevalent tasks assigned and that imaginative or creative writing was limited for the most part to English class.

The Applebee study also looked at what emphasis was placed on the writing process in writing instruction. Little prewriting was observed with the usual situation being one where three minutes would elapse between the time the teacher made the assignment and the time students began to work. In the case of social studies teachers involved in the study, the most common prewriting strategy to be employed was to allow students to begin writing in class so that the teacher could field questions that would arise. Over 37 percent of social studies teachers approached prewriting in this fashion (p. 79).

Concerning teacher responses to student writing, most social studies teachers, (71 percent), indicated that they routinely responded to student writing by pointing out

errors of accuracy in student writing. The second greatest concern for social studies teachers was over mechanical errors, with 68 percent of social studies teachers responding to students about their mechanical deficiencies.

On the audiences provided for writing assignments, social science teachers seemed to follow the trend of other subject areas by having the teacher in an evaluative role, "to react and grade." Seventy-five percent of the social studies teachers responding indicated that this was the sense of audience for whom their students wrote. Only 3 percent of the social science teachers indicated that they allowed other students to serve as audience for student writing.

Thus, it seems that writing in the social sciences, according to the Applebee study, reduces to largely writing-related activities of an informational nature or purpose rather than writing/thinking activities. Denny Wolfe and Robert Reising hit at the heart of Applebee's implications for social studies with the following:

Thirty-nine percent of the time students spend in social studies classes is given to note-taking, generally in preparation for short-answer responses to study sheets and fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice tests of factual information . . . . Students spend more time taking factual notes in social studies than in any other school subject. (p. 39)

In response to this devotion for the informational, writing-related activities by social studies teachers, Wolfe and Reising offer research-based reasons that social studies teachers should go beyond the notetaking and the fill-in-the-blank exercises. Citing Beyer and Brostoff out of Social Education, four reasons are proposed for

expanding writing instruction and use in the social studies. In essence, English teachers cannot do the job alone; writing ability is generally connected to the context in which it is practiced; writing is a means of achieving clarity of thought; and, writing improves thinking as writers must make decisions about ideas committed to paper (p. 39).

Beyer and Gilstrap remind social studies educators about the appropriateness of writing in this particular content area since "writing is a social act." They continue with:

. . . [writing is] a purposeful interaction between someone with something to say and someone to whom the information is being related. Social studies thus serves as a most useful arena in which to develop and use writing, since one of its prime functions is to develop the skills of and knowledge about social interaction. (p. 3)

Though social studies may seem under attack for its failure to incorporate writing into its instruction, social studies teachers are not solely to blame. Even the 1979 Revision of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines fail to mention the value of writing as a means of accomplishing goals and objectives. Though guideline #5 addresses "learning activities that should engage the student directly and actively in the learning process," its nine subpoints omit mention of writing as such a learning activity. Follow-up explanation of the guideline does mention such examples of writing as "writing a poem" or "writing a policy decision" but these are no more than isolated activities mentioned among numerous other possible activities that do not necessitate writing (p.

270). Citing the "National Writing Assessment Report," Wolfe and Reising point a finger at textbook publishers for their responsibility to, and in this case failure to, communicate new ideas and trends.

### Textbooks/Assignments

Wolfe and Reising, drawing from the National Writing Assessment Report, purport that "publishers represent a conservative force in the teaching of writing" (p. 2). They go on to say that "it is very difficult to get publishers to incorporate new ideas into their writing textbooks . . . because [they] are afraid to take economic risks" (p. 2). So the teacher relying on the textbook to guide instruction may find little in the area of writing and the application of current research findings about writing instruction. According to Toby Fulwiler in Teaching With Writing, studies suggest that generally "writing has an ill-defined and haphazard role in the curriculum" (1987, p. 3).

According to Mayer et al., writing assignments are a critical aspect of the writing task and they "must be sensitive to the development of writing abilities, to the process of writing, and most importantly, to the learning objectives of the teacher and the course content" (p. 111). Again, if textbook publishers are slow to incorporate new ideas into their textbooks, social studies texts may fall short in offering assignments that take into account student writing abilities, writing as a process, or writing as a mode of learning as well as a means of evaluation. Mayer et al., suggest that an assignment should include the following: clear directions, learning objectives,

procedures throughout the composing process, and an indication of audience for the piece (p. 113).

James D. Williams, in Preparing to Teach Writing, suggests that successful writing assignments are developed in a "sequence" so as to incorporate skills and information that students have achieved previously with new information being learned. Williams goes on to say that a "well written assignment" will make clear to students "what they are supposed to do, how they are supposed to do it, who the students are writing for, and what constitutes a successful response" (Williams, 1989, p. 235). Along this same line, Joseph A. Naumann in his article entitled "Letter Writing: Creative Vehicle to Higher-Level Thinking," advocates "structuring the assignment" so that a teacher can increase students' use of higher-level thought processes. Naumann challenges the teacher to clearly conceptualize and organize a writing assignment so that students can be led to employ progressive levels of a thinking taxonomy such as Bloom's taxonomy (1991, p. 198).

An examination of content area textbooks could verify whether or not textbooks are in fact deficient in their treatment of writing assignments or if they are beginning to reflect current composition research. Dan Donlan, an English educator interested in writing in content area textbooks, has done research on the types of writing assignments that are found in social studies textbooks. He has determined four categories of writing that are reflected by textbook writing assignments in content areas such as the social studies.



### Donlan's Categories of Writing in Social Studies Texts

Dan Donlan at the University of California, Riverside, conducted a survey in 1974 that indicated that teachers in all content areas did assign writing; this survey included social studies teachers. In fact, "almost 90% of the social studies teachers surveyed assigned some sort of writing other than essay tests and short answer questions" (1976, p. 2). Though 41 percent of the social studies teachers surveyed felt that writing was the responsibility of the English teacher, 82 percent felt that the responsibility for writing should be shared by content area teachers.

Donlan determined that four types of writing were assigned in the social studies. The distribution of writing assignments according to Donlan's survey was as follows:

. . . narration (41% of those surveyed), exposition (88%), argumentation (53%) and reporting (82%), even though there was a tendency for these writing assignments to be short (300 words and under) but frequent (13 or more per year). (Donlan, p.2)

In a complementary survey of 43 social studies textbooks housed at the two curriculum centers at UCR, Donlan determined the following breakdown of writing assignments: 44 percent were examples of Reporting; 46 percent were examples of Exposition; 6 percent represented Narration; and, 3 percent were examples of Argumentation.

Reporting constituted 170 assignments, 44 percent of the surveyed assignments. Of this type of writing assignment Donlan explains that little more than the recall of basic information is demanded of the writer. "Reporting demands very little from the

student in the form of original or critical thinking" (1976, p. 6). Citing examples of the kinds of writing assignments that denoted Reporting, Donlan offers these assignments:

- 1) Write a report on the history of international conflicts between Tsarist Russia and China.

(The students locate information on the two countries in the required time period and describe the conflicts. All of the information for the report is 'translated' from the author's words to the student's words. Note the lack of critical thinking that is required.)

- 2) Make a list of the most important ideas that you have encountered in your study of China.

(Although the 'study' of China may have involved original and critical thinking, the act of compiling a list of important ideas already learned is relatively simple. The instructor could demand more in this assignment by having the student define 'important' and judge the ideas according to the definition.)

- 3) List the products of France's various industries on a chart under the headings such as farming, manufacturing, etc.

(Once having located information, student records it in chart form. Even the establishing of categories doesn't require too much critical thinking.) (Donlan, p. 5)

Most of the assignments in the survey were of the Exposition type with 46 percent, or 178 assignments, being of this type. By Donlan's definition, "exposition involves explanation, explanation of an idea or a historical occurrence." Comparing Exposition to Reporting, he goes on to say that unlike Reporting, Exposition "usually composes something original with a relatively new or 'fresh' point of view." The

kinds of activities that the writer might engage in would include some form of critical investigation, assimilation of material, and synthesis of points of view. Examples of assignments that Donlan labeled as Exposition include the following:

- 1) Make up a list of questions about current problems in metropolitan areas. Then conduct a survey concerning opinions on these questions.

(This assignment requires originality, imagination, motivation. Students develop their own questions and actively seek answers.)

- 2) Write a composition of 2 or 3 paragraphs in which you tell what might have happened in the United States if the Constitution had not been ratified by the states.

(This assignment asks the student to take data from the text, study the temperament of the times, and make projections on historic events given a set of alternative situations.)

- 3) (A student is presented with a picture.) Write a paragraph for a history book, using the information you can get from the picture.

(Sorting out major and minor visual clues, the student composes a paragraph assimilating these clues into some perspective.) (Donlan, p. 4)

Though Donlan basically defines Narration as story telling, he further explains the category by saying that Narration can take many forms such as the joke, the anecdote, tall tale, legend, myth, short story, short short story, drama, or story poetry. Good Narration, according to Donlan, "involves plot (with rising action, high point, falling action, denouement or surprise twist) and character building." Some assignments that he pinpoints as Narration follow:

- 1) Write a short skit about one controversy in the Constitutional Convention.

(Students translate text material into dramatic form. Assignments require students to understand the conventions of drama, including staging and dialog. If the skit is performed even more is demanded in the way of memorizing and oral interpretation.)

- 2) Write a story from the view-point of a runaway slave caught in the North awaiting return to the South.

(Students use historic data as setting for a suspenseful[sic] or reflective story told from a point of view which will be a challenge for the student to assume.)

- 3) Rewrite a portion of a Greek play or poem and present it to the class.

(Students must have enough knowledge of poetic and dramatic form to transpose literary selection from formal to informal language.) (Donlan, p. 6)

Finally, 12 assignments, or only 3 percent of the assignments surveyed, asked the students to write in the form that Donlan calls Argumentation. Donlan offers that Argumentation occurs when a student defends or attacks in detail an idea or belief. Examples of assignments that asked students to engage in Argumentation were as follows:

- 1) Make a list of the ways in which you think segregation may harm black students and the ways in which it may harm white students.

(In effect, this 'list' could form the basis for an attack on segregation. Its focus on harmful effects directs the students to assume the negative point of view.)

- 2) Write a composition using the theme, 'Why I like and admire John Quincy Adams'.

(As with the previous assignment, student assumes a point of view and defends it.)

- 3) Write a report either recommending or not recommending that more land be made available for transportation.

(A report that makes recommendations is an argument. Again, the student is asked to take a stand and defend it.)  
(Donlan, p. 7)

In an effort to further clarify these categories, Donlan cautions the reader that it can be "difficult to discriminate between Exposition and Argumentation and between Narration and Argumentation." He suggests that one watch for what he terms "deceptive" language. For instance, the word "report" might initially lead one to label an assignment as an example of Reporting, when, in fact, the essence of the assignment is very different. Note that an assignment that asks the student to prepare a report in which he/she takes a stand on an issue is an example of Argumentation rather than Reporting. Though the assignment employs the term "report" in its description, the actual focus of the assignment is on the stance taken by the student writer on a particular issue.

Donlan's interest in writing assignments in the social studies, whether they be contained in texts or originated by teachers, is not just a general endorsement that writing belongs in content areas such as social studies. Rather, his major interest is in targeting the kinds of writing that students are required to do in particular content

areas so that content area teachers will know which skills and abilities that they need to teach students so that their students may effectively complete writing assignments. In the case of Reporting, he reminds teachers of the importance of instructing students about paraphrasing so that a report does not result in plagiarism or result in no more than a copy of a source. By categorizing those kinds of writing generally utilized in a content area, teachers can concentrate their teaching of writing on those particular types of writing. This should make for more effective use of writing by students and it should also reassure a content area teacher about his/her role in teaching writing in the context of teaching a content area other than English.

Donlan's categories of writing in the social studies yield a rather traditional grouping of types of writing or modes of discourse. Not only is this a reflection of teachers' slow-to-change approach to writing as they sponsor it in their teaching or assignments, but also it is a reflection of textbooks remaining steadfast in the tried and true. With the current research in composition and the information that it is yielding about the composing process, a look at the work of James Britton and others offers an alternative or more expansive view of what transpires when one composes. While Donlan's work focuses upon the products resulting from student writing, Britton's work focuses upon the process and development of writing as experienced by student writers.

### Britton's Functions of Writing

James Britton and his British colleagues undertook a study of the development of writing abilities in children aged eleven to eighteen under the auspices of the Schools Council Project based at the University of London Institute of Education, 1966-71. It was their aim "to produce something a little more adequate than the time-honored text-book categories of narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative" (Britton, 1975 p. 1). Concerned that these traditional rhetorical categories were "derived from an examination of the finished products of professional writers" and did not address the idea that writing is a process, Britton et al., set about to examine the question of how students learn to write. Britton continues that a shortcoming of the tradition surrounding these four rhetorical categories is "its concern with how people should write, rather than with how they do" (p. 4).

In the published report of Britton's study, entitled The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), the writing or composing process is described as a three-stage process of conception, incubation and production. The authors state that there are other aspects of the writing process such as memory and revision, but primarily they describe the process with the said three stages. Conception, as explained by Britton, has to do with selection of topic, whether that stems from a specific instance that inspires one to write or whether it comes from orders initiated by a teacher making an assignment. Incubation is another preparatory stage of the process before the writer begins to commit words to paper in draft form. Britton reminds the reader that these

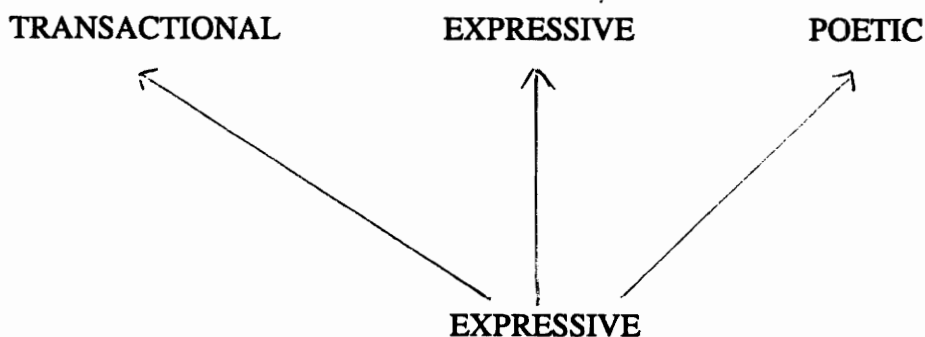
two preparatory stages, conception and incubation, do not cease with the onset of writing, or as he terms the third stage, production. It is this third major stage of production where Britton contends "crucial psychological processes" are occurring, and it is for this reason of complexity that researchers find the process of writing difficult to study and describe. During production, "the writer is, essentially, alone with his thoughts, his pen, and his paper" (p. 32). Thus, Britton contends that researchers in the field of composition are left with "hypotheses concerning various aspects of those processes" (p. 32).

Britton's study of student writing includes writing done for English class, as well as writing from subjects outside of English by students throughout the range of secondary grades/ages. The researchers worked with a sample of 2,122 pieces of writing drawn from 500 boys and girls. This sample was drawn from a larger body of "three to six pieces of writing from each of 1,664 boys and girls, from eighty-five classes in sixty-five schools of many types scattered throughout England" (p. 51).

One interest of Britton and his fellow researchers in working with these student pieces was to establish categories of function that "would cover the range of writings in general use in our society" (p. 86). The result was three categories of mature writing: Transactional, Expressive, and Poetic. It is in the Expressive mode of writing that one forms the first drafts of new ideas. It is the mode in which we approach and relate to each other in speech; in this sense, the relationship between writer and reader would be intimate. Here the writing can be of a personal or



informal nature, affording the writer "favourable conditions for using the process of writing as a means of exploration and discovery" (p. 82). In reference to Expressive writing, Fulwiler suggests that "teachers who ask their students to do frequent bits of self-expressive writing give their students regular practice in thinking and articulating for themselves, rather than to please the teacher" (1987, p. 133). The move from Expressive to either of the other two categories of function is a move toward a more public audience. As one moves from Expressive to Transactional, for instance, one moves toward a writing that is more concerned with as Britton terms it, "participation in the world's affairs." The Poetic function denotes a function that is more concerned with the writing for writing's sake, as a work of art or construct in its own right. Britton contends that these three categories of mature writing stem from a starting point in Expressive or personal, informal writing and that in the case of the three categories, one finds writings all along the spectrum of Transactional--Expressive--Poetic functions of writing. Note the diagram of Britton's categories of function of writing.



Thus, the efforts of Donlan and Britton, taken together, generate a good deal of information about writing produced by students in content areas such as the social studies, and they generate information about why students produce the writing they do. That is, Donlan's traditional categories of writing can be used to label writing assignments in social studies texts and Britton's categories, taking into account how student writing develops and the functions writing can serve, can allow for labeling those same writing assignments by their function and the relationship between the writer and his/her audience.

### Audience

James Britton et al., assumed in their research that "all writing will be influenced by the writer's sense of audience" (p. 65). Their findings revealed that "virtually all of the writing they collected from British schools was addressed to the teacher, and the greater proportion was addressed to the teacher in the role of examiner" (Applebee, 1981, p. 5). Applebee, in his own work, supports this idea as he found that teachers in every subject area most often established themselves as audience for student writing, particularly as an audience bent on evaluating and grading that student writing (p. 48).

Britton's work yielded a number of categories of audience as a means to describe the relationships that can be established between writer and reader. His main divisions are "self, teacher, wider audience (known), unknown audience." Applebee's work in this area, stemming from earlier work by Britton, began by looking at both,

what he termed, "actual" audience for student writing, and the "purported" audience as in the instance of an assignment such as "write a letter to the mayor," though the mayor may or may not have been the actual audience for the writing (p. 5). The Applebee study categorized audiences for student writing as follows: no clear audience; only the writer; the teacher, either as grader or as part of instructional dialogue; and wider audience, known or unknown. Applebee found that 88 percent of the writing samples submitted to him were addressed to the teacher as primary audience (p. 94).

The business of audience seems especially significant in a discussion or study of writing and writing assignments since the writer's relationship to the reader is really "held together by the writer's promise to provide the reader with important and interesting information" (Giroux, 1978, p. 295). The sense of audience that initiates a writing influences the language used, the degree of formality in language used, and even the degree of detail the writer need offer about himself/herself or the subject. In view of information about the value of writing as a mode of learning, and the value of expressive writing as a part of one's writing development, audience is an important consideration by writers, as they make decisions and choices in the process of their writing.

## **Social Studies Periodicals: How They Have Addressed Writing**

In order to better understand what attention has been given to the topic of writing, the writing process, or the teaching of writing in the social studies, I conducted an examination of individual issues of state and national social studies periodicals over the last 15 or more years, from January, 1975, through June of 1991. Those periodicals examined included The Virginia Resolves at the state level, and Social Education and The Social Studies, both national publications aimed at the social studies educator. With the thought that articles included in these periodicals were often written by social educators aiming to impact upon the effective teaching of the social studies, findings about the attention writing has been receiving in the professional writing of this content area yield some indication of the place writing is taking in social studies teaching.

### The Virginia Resolves<sup>1</sup>

In the case of The Virginia Resolves the inclusion of writing as a means of learning or of evaluating learning was minimal. This state periodical has seen a somewhat erratic pattern of publication. Between January 1975 and September 1987, inclusively, the state journal was published 57 times with some years seeing as many as ten issues and another year having only four issues. I was unable to locate issues

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<sup>1</sup>Please note that the researcher was able to locate only issues of this state journal from 1975 through September 1987, consecutively. There is a gap in the archives from the September 1987 issue to the Fall 1990 issue.

that may have been published between Fall of 1987 and Fall of 1990. The archives are current from the Fall 1990 issue to the present. Out of the 59 issues examined, there were only five mentions of writing within four separate issues.

The first mention of writing was in the Summer issue of 1980. In a section on teaching strategies, a suggestion was made for a "Social Studies Period Newspaper" with its purpose stated as being "to improve writing style and newswriting techniques."

The May 1981 issue includes an article entitled "Report Writing: A Step-by-Step Method" by Monte DeBoard and Charles Henricks of Herndon Elementary School in Herndon, Virginia. This nine-page article outlines steps in writing a report such as picking the subject, preparing note cards, conducting research, writing, proofreading and so on. Writing is addressed as a mode or vehicle for reporting information gathered through research. It seems the focus here is on students developing research skills as much if not more so than learning to hone writing skills.

Then, in the February 1984 issue, the Supervisor of Elementary Education for Rockingham County Schools, Sylvia S. Moore contributed a four-page article entitled "National Concern for Excellence: Implications For the Social Studies in the Public Schools." Under the heading of Communication Skills, Moore addresses the need for work with language skills in the social studies. She writes as follows:

We need to direct our efforts not only to the teaching of reading in the content area, but also to developing proficiency in the comprehensive use of language in the content area--writing, listening, speaking. All of the task forces and commissions are in agreement on this point. (p.28)

Thus, only three issues mention writing in the 59 issues of The Virginia Resolves between 1975 and 1991, as examined. This figure presents 5.3 percent of the issues for that period.

### Social Education

On the national level, two periodicals were examined for whatever attention they had given to the writing in the social studies--Social Education and The Social Studies. Social Education, the publication of the National Council for the Social Studies, identifies itself as "the leading journal in the field of teaching the social studies" and reports that it features: "original, interpretive articles on social studies . . . creative materials and methods directly related to social studies instruction . . . as well as significant research findings, theories and philosophies in the fields of the social sciences and in social studies education . . ." (39, 4, p. 259).

In examining the 117 issues of Social Education published from 1975 through May of 1991, 27 issues were found to address the subject of writing in some fashion. This figure represents 23 percent of the issues examined. Of these 117 issues, only one issue, less than 1 percent, focuses an entire issue on the topic of writing in the

social studies. Moreover, there are three instances, or 4 percent of the issues, where writing is explained as a process.

An examination of individual articles or entries in these 117 issues reveals that of 1,602 total articles or entries, only 26 entries mention writing. This might include writing as endorsed in social studies guidelines or writing assignments contained within a model unit. Specifically, only 16 articles of the 1,602 dealt with writing. This represents 1 percent, of the articles for the period examined.

The 27 issues giving attention to writing span the time period under study from 1975 through May 1991. As early as the November/December 1976 issue, there was an indirect reference to writing and the benefits of using the essay question in evaluation of student learning. In an article entitled "What Teachers Should Know About Standardized Tests," author Lena Boyd Brown suggests that essay questions are important in that "they require the student to compose his own answer rather than select among alternatives." She goes on to mention that "writing an acceptable essay question requires the student to utilize certain skills such as organizational ability" (p. 511).

At least four other instances of indirect inclusion of writing were cited. In the January 1978 issue focusing on "Improving Reading Skills," an article appeared about ways to teach the social studies. In a section on "classroom journals" mention was made of implementing the "language experience approach with its emphasis on interrelationship of all communication skills." Also, in April 1978, an assignment

within the context of a model unit entitled "A Holocaust Unit for Classroom Teachers" suggests the possibility of writing papers as a means of evaluating learning. As stated in the unit, "social studies involves the student in expressing what he or she has learned from given materials" (pp. 278-285). Again in November/December of 1979, in a unit of teaching about Ancient Rome, objectives include a writing focus with mention of "writing sentences correctly," writing paragraphs in sequential order, and writing a paragraph of summary for evaluation.

More direct attention was given to writing when devotion to the writing process was addressed in three issues dating from the issue in March 1979 and including the issues October 1982 and January 1983. The prewriting phase of the writing process was the focus of an article in the January 1983 issue of Social Education entitled "How to Stimulate Writing with Political Cartoons." Written by a Virginia teacher who had participated in the Eastern Virginia Writing Project, this article emphasized the importance of prewriting as more than providing a stimulus to writers. Author David Monahan writes of prewriting as a means to "help students focus on the details and the whole and see interrelationships." As Monahan describes it, prewriting engages students in thinking and allows them to see if they have knowledge to write.

In a previous issue of Social Education, October 1982, writing is the focus of two articles. Senior Vice-President for Research and Development for Ginn and Company, James R. Squire writes in his article, "Language Concepts for Application



to the Social Studies" that "few school efforts could contribute more to the development of understanding in social studies than a developing stress on writing and/or discussing response to what is read" (p. 442). In that same issue of Social Education, David A. Welton, professor and chairperson of Elementary/Early Childhood Education at Texas Tech University lists the purposes of writing as follows:

- 1) to serve as a vehicle for teaching thinking and writing skills,
- 2) to help students learn the content subject matter of their reports, and
- 3) to provide opportunities to apply research and reference skills.  
(p. 444)

Welton comments on what he calls "pseudo-writing" or "sham writing," where students are asked to engage in either relatively little writing or in mechanical tasks that are meant to pass for writing. He suggests that teachers instruct students in prewriting and rewriting phase activities so that student writing is improved; moreover, he contends that this can be achieved without "unduly increasing a teacher's time commitment to what is often a time-consuming activity at the outset" (p. 445). He offers teachers the possibilities of staggering expository writing activities over an extended period, eliminating nonproductive practices such as undue attention to grammar, and extending audience through peer review and sharing.

Prior to even Welton's 1982 attention to the writing process and discussion of writing in the social studies, an issue of Social Education focused on "Writing to

Learn in Social Studies" in March 1979. The 23 page section talks of the writing process and the importance of writing in context. Coeditors of the special section on writing, Barry K. Beyer and Anita Brostoff, both at that time at Carnegie-Mellon University, argue that writing has a place in the social studies because of a lack of systematic instruction in writing at present, because writing and content are inseparable, because writing is a way of learning, and because we think as we write (p. 176). In that same article, University of California Professor Josephine Miles observed the following:

Composition does not work in a vacuum; it cannot be learned 'once and for all.' It works rather in a medium (content area) which grows increasingly complex as we learn more about it and requires further and further adaptation of the power to compose. (unpub. paper, p. 8)

Part of the Beyer and Brostoff article is devoted to reporting findings of a survey conducted for that particular issue of Social Education in which teachers and students were surveyed about what they perceived as problems in writing. Of 600 sixth, eighth, and eleventh graders surveyed in Colorado, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas two common writing problems were cited: getting started (picking a subject and thinking about it) and deciding how to organize what they want to write. Teachers indicated two problem areas to be 1) how to teach writing while teaching content, and 2) how to find time to teach and evaluate writing when one has large numbers of students.

In another article of the March 1979 Social Education entitled "Writing and the Generation of Knowledge," author A. D. Nostrand, Professor of English and Director of the Center for Research in Writing at Brown University, identifies writing as a relation-making process. He goes on to say that "composing is sustained activity of discovering and stating relationships among bits of information (p. 178). Since social studies characteristically addresses the efforts of people to relate themselves to their social and physical environments and since writing is a process by which relations can be made, writing is an appropriate tool for the social studies educator. In citing reasons why social studies educators should deliberately teach writing in their content area, Nostrand reminds social studies teachers that they are already engaged in writing and that it can be a means for the learner to acquire new knowledge about self or the content at hand.

Through composition the writer engenders new information, which the writer may or may not have perceived at the start. Nostrand reflects upon research in discourse to say that the "writer's learning, as well as the quality of one's writing, depends not on some static value of information but on the way the writer relates the information fragments to one another" (p. 179).

In a study conducted at the Center for Research in Writing, an analysis was made of 600 writing samples drawn from 45 students responding to 14 controlled writing assignments. Each writer was presented with the same limited set of information fragments and was invited to state some principle of relationship, to write

a paragraph based on this principle of relationship and to use the items in the information set, and finally to summarize the paragraph in a sentence. Approximately 85 percent of these summary sentences incorporated new information beyond the first stated principle of relationship. According to this analysis, 85 percent of the cases resulted in an act of writing producing new information even within a single paragraph. Nostrand takes these findings to mean that because a student can generate new information simply by writing about it, a student's lack of knowledge can be perceived as a temporary condition, one that can be alleviated better through writing than through grading (Nostrand, p. 180). Writing in this case is being used as a vehicle for discovery, as a means of thinking and arriving at new awareness by the learner.

As a part of the special section on writing in this particular issue of Social Education Raymond Ventre, then Senior Research Associate at Carnegie-Mellon Education Center, cites writing as a part of the learning process and not just as an evaluative measure of learning. In his article, "Developmental Writing: Social Studies Assignments," Ventre cites steps by which students can be drawn through the writing process and brought to new levels of awareness. It is his recommendation that written work be treated as a class resource from which others can learn. Critical to the successful use of writing in the social studies, one must emphasize students' writing about the significance of information and not writing information itself, as

well as providing a realistic audience for the writing, and then breaking the entire process of writing and thinking into manageable steps for the student.

Anita Brostoff reiterates points made by Ventre in her article "Good Assignments Lead to Good Writing." She speaks to the importance of clearly articulated tasks and then to the importance of moving from simple to more complex tasks, thus making the business of writing and learning through writing a more systematic one (pp. 184-186).

Barry K. Beyer focuses on two parts of the writing process in his article entitled "Pre-writing and Rewriting to Learn." He voices the importance of prewriting and rewriting as practical strategies for addressing a writing task. Particularly, Beyer focuses on rewriting; "research in the teaching of writing indicates that rewriting a piece of writing correlates more closely with improved writing than does almost any other form of instruction in writing (p. 189). He suggests that a teacher might aid a student in the rewriting phase of the writing process by means of checklists for revision or by providing opportunities for peer readings.

In an another article in this special section on writing, Henry A. Giroux, Assistant Professor in Childhood and Curriculum Education Department in the School of Education at Boston University, states that the student should "write social studies rather than write about it" (p. 190). According to Giroux,

. . . writing allows the writer to originate a particular theme, subject or issue, while it also allows the writer to produce a graphic record of his or her thinking. As a result, the writer has

immediate and visible feedback from what he or she has written. Thus, the product as well as the process becomes available for review or redefinition. (p. 190)

In the last article in the writing section of the March 1979 Social Education, Beyer and Brostoff tackle a concern of social studies teachers being asked to incorporate writing into their instruction. In an article entitled "The Time It Takes: Managing/Evaluating Writing and Social Studies," these authors offer options for including writing without adding extra burden to the social studies teacher. For instance, they encourage teachers to let writing replace some oral activities if there is concern for the use of class time. In the area of evaluation, the teacher can introduce self evaluation or peer evaluation in order to limit the amount of time added to the teacher's job. Or, they suggest using holistic methods of grading where the teacher reads a piece looking for primary traits in the written response. This permits the teacher to establish a priority system for what is believed to be the most important items in the student writing. A major recommendation is that the teacher use writing not just as an evaluative measure of learning, but also as a springboard for further study. Beyer and Brostoff suggest that if their advice is followed on how writing can be viewed and used in the social studies classroom that "we are likely to see the time writing takes as time well spent" (p. 197).

As early as 1979 an entire issue of Social Education was devoted to writing in the social studies, including the use of writing as a means of discovering meaning as well as evaluating learning. Yet many of the subsequent references to writing in

Social Education are indirect inclusion of writing assignments in model units or the inclusion of writing in a list of skills that a social studies curriculum should address.

It is the late 1980's before articles again begin to surface in Social Education on specific purposes of writing in social studies instruction. A number of articles suggest that writing can be used to generate ideas or thinking by students. In the April/May 1987 issue there appears an article on "freewriting" in the social studies classroom by Eileen Tamura and James Harstad. The authors acknowledge that "social studies teachers may reject the idea that it is their responsibility . . . to help students write better," but with the belief that good writing is critical to all disciplines, the authors offer free writing, "writing without planning and without stopping to direct or redirect the flow of words," as a vehicle for getting students writing or "warmed up" for learning much the way athletes or musicians ready themselves for a performance (Tamura & Harstad, p. 256).

Further attention is given to the Writing Across the Curriculum movement in articles such as Jacqueline Hedberg's "Writing and Thinking About the English Industrial Revolution," in the April/May 1988 issue of Social Education. Advocating learning as active rather than passive, Hedberg suggests that "writing about the subject matter is one way to provide active student involvement in learning content" (p. 260). In October 1988 Randy Mills writes an article, "Personal Journals for the Social Studies," where he contends that journals not only allow students to discover or clarify meaning but also he suggests the journal in social studies leads students to

achieve the goals of social studies such as greater involvement with the democratic process by dialoguing in detail with self or another reader on various issues via the journal.

In January 1990 and March 1991, articles appear in Social Education that address writing as related to thinking. Margolis et al., in "Reading, Writing, and Thinking about Prejudice: Stereotyped Images of Disability in the Popular Press," speaks to the role of writing in developing critical reading and thinking skills through its permanence which allows the writer to rethink ideas or the active nature of writing that causes a writer to examine an idea or topic. Likewise, Joseph Naumann in March 1991's article, "Letter Writing: Creative Vehicle to Higher Level Thinking," contends that the careful structuring of writing assignments can lead students to varying levels of thinking.

By 1991, another trend is evidenced in those references to writing in Social Education tending toward not just writing in social studies as a content area but instead including the interrelatedness of various content areas such as English and social studies. In January 1991 an article appears by Freeman and Freeman on "'Doing' Social Studies: Whole Language Lessons to Promote Social Action." In the same issue is Gloria Moss' article entitled "An English and Social Studies Interdisciplinary Program" that reminds current readers that teachers must reduce time spent on teaching information for memorization while increasing time spent on fostering thinking skills and helping students see connections between areas of study



within the overall curriculum, a goal to be achieved, at least in part, by including writing strategies in the teaching of social studies.

Thus, Social Education, the national periodical published by National Council for the Social Studies, has seen a focus on writing in only one issue in the last decade. Writing as a process is dealt with in three instances, with writing in its most general sense mentioned in 27 issues out of 117 (23 percent) between January 1975 and April/May 1991. Since 1975 only two years have passed with no attention to writing in Social Education. While in some cases writing was mentioned indirectly, in others specific attention was given to writing as a process, as a means of thinking about or of learning social studies, or as a way to interrelate various content areas or bodies of information.

### The Social Studies

In an effort to broaden the perspective of how writing might be treated in periodicals aimed at social studies educators, I also looked at the inclusion of writing in another nationally distributed periodical, The Social Studies. This publication differs from Social Education in that it is not published by a professional organization such as the National Council for the Social Studies. The Social Studies is a bi-monthly periodical published by the Helen Dwight Reid Education Foundation. Its circulation is 6,000 copies per issue. The editors suggest that

. . . The Social Studies publishes articles of interest to educators at all levels, preschool through college. The subject matter covered includes material dealing with the social studies, the social

sciences, and interdisciplinary studies. [The editors] are especially interested in articles which present new directions, options, or approaches. (p. i)

Of the 99 issues from January 1975 through May/June 1991 that were examined, 15 issues dealt directly with writing in the social studies. Of these 15 only four issues were cited prior to 1987. These four issues were the January/February 1981 issue, the May/June 1982 issue and then two issues in 1985--May/June and July/August. Four other instances between 1978 and 1983 could be found where writing inclusion was addressed indirectly.

For example, in the 1978 November/December issue, an article appears entitled, "Reading, Writing and Philosophy." Author William Proefviedt, Associate Professor in the Department of Secondary Education at Queens College, advocates teaching philosophy in order to teach basics but he does remind social studies teachers "that the failure to develop an argument, to support a contention, is a major fault in student writing" (p. 251). Though no real strategy is offered for inclusion of writing into the social studies the suggestion is made for writing utilization to avoid the error of defining skills as apart from the larger purposes involved in the social studies curriculum.

A May/June 1980 issue follows this connection between writing and skills with an article entitled "Balance Content and Skills in the Social Studies" by Judy Ferro, an instructor of methods of teaching social studies for the College of Idaho. Her discussion generally includes the skills needed for developing written presentations,

levels of difficulty in classroom writing, writing a full paragraph with a clear topic sentence, outlining and writing a one-page paper and then outlining a four-page paper.

Two articles complement one another in their approaches to writing's place in the social studies in the November/December 1982 issue. Johanna K. Lemlech, Associate Professor of education at University of Southern California, writes in "Integration of Basic Skills: The Great Deception in Elementary Social Studies" that while "reading, writing, and mathematics can be taught at home, civic competency cannot" (p. 246). John Lunstrum and Judith Irvin of the Florida State University attack Lemlech's stance in their article "Social Studies and the Integration of Basic Skills: A Reply to Johanna Lemlech." They contend that in a

. . . multicultural society marked by sharp socio-economic differences and levels of schooling, this proposal to let the home handle the instruction would simply perpetuate critical inequities and eliminate the principle of equality of opportunity from American schools. (p. 249)

Then, in 1983 in an article entitled "Food We Need and How We Get It," one activity listed among unit activities mentions working on "writing sentences and paragraphs with purpose." Thus, these four mentions of writing range from suggesting that writing be taught at home, to saying that writing must be included in school instruction because of cultural inequities, to suggesting writing as a unit exercise or activity, to saying that in teaching philosophy one encompasses basics such as writing as a means of defending a position, a continual problem in student writing.

A more comprehensive treatment of writing and its place in the social studies is offered in the January/February 1981 issue of The Social Studies. Ann B. Dolgin of Florida Junior College writes in "Teach Social Studies Through Writing," that each content area teacher must recognize the responsibility for incorporating writing into his/her content area. She contends that writing is not the job of the English teacher and that the success of writing programs depends upon the willingness of content area teachers to cooperate (p. 8). Dolgin targets social studies teachers directly when she asserts that writing can be taught without sacrificing content. She explains the writing process, attempts to generate interest in the teaching of writing, and offers ways to assess writing without overburdening the teacher such as by using peer assessment.

Over a year later, Barry Beyer of George Mason University contributed to the May/June 1982 issue of The Social Studies with "Using Writing to Learn Social Studies." Beyer enumerates five uses of writing in the social studies as being as follows:

- 1) to invent hypotheses
- 2) to generate new knowledge about content
- 3) to develop concepts and generalizations
- 4) to reinforce previous learned information, and
- 5) to develop empathy for a subject, group, etc. (pp. 100-105)

Also, interested in writing in the social studies, are Anne E. Pooler and Constance M. Perry, authors of "Building Higher Level Thinking and Writing Skills

in Social Studies," published in The Social Studies in May/June 1985. Here writing is offered not only as a medium of thought but also as a vehicle for developing it (p. 125). A plus of writing inclusion, according to the authors, is that teaching writing, as well as teaching thinking, cannot be accomplished without involving the students actively. Though the article focuses on a strategy to be used "as a culminating activity after the study of a topic" the overall focus of the article seems to be on teaching thinking through the use of writing. The focus is on teaching thinking with improved writing as an intended by-product.

In the very next issue, July/August 1985, appears an article entitled "Writing to Learn: A Message for History and Social Studies Teachers," written by William F. Goggin of Virginia Commonwealth University. Goggin reiterates that much of what one reads of writing instruction is still relegated to teaching composition in English classes. While he acknowledges the use of writing to evaluate, he reminds his readers that such writing is basically non-original.

A more frequent inclusion of articles on writing in the social studies begins in The Social Studies in 1987. Between 1987 and mid-1991, 11 issues out of 27 include articles on the place of writing in the social studies, designing writing assignments, or the interrelatedness between the social studies and other curriculum areas as in regard to a shared language component.

The writing process approach was the focus of a November/December 1987 article by Robert Giltsrap, "Social Studies Research Papers: A Writing Process

Approach." The writing process is defined as a four-staged process of prewriting, composing, rewriting, and sharing. Gilstrap writes that the teaching of writing can be integrated in the social studies by carefully instructing students on the research paper.

Other articles on writing in the social studies revolve around writing assignments, formal versus informal writing functions, and writing as a way to teach thinking and to teach social studies. In the March/April issue of The Social Studies, Henry Steffens promotes the writing process through assignments, as a way for students to better understand history and to learn history by writing history much as the historian does. Another strategy for actually teaching students how to write in the social studies is the topic of Colleen Rae's "Before the Outline--The Writing Wheel," in July/August of 1990. The prewriting technique of the writing wheel has students generating ideas even before the outline is created as an organizer for later draft writing.

Consistently the articles on writing appear in The Social Studies on an average of twice a year from 1987 till the present. Regardless of the angle on writing expressed, writing is presented as a process that can yield ideas and learning as well as a means for demonstrating learning.

Overall, the 99 issues of The Social Studies examined represent 939 articles. Of these articles only 16 dealt directly with the place of writing in the social studies. This number represents less than 2 percent (1.7 percent) of the articles examined in The Social Studies from 1975 through June of 1991.

## Conclusion

While all three social studies periodicals have given some attention to the place of writing in the social studies since 1975, very little appeared in the state journal on the topic of writing. On the national level, Social Education offers more mention or examples of writing in its issues than does The Social Studies; however, it does so with less consistency in its approach. In some cases Social Education includes a writing assignment in a model unit being shared while The Social Studies seems to more consistently include articles specifically addressing writing as a process that can teach thinking and writing skills as well as the content of social studies. Fifteen percent of the issues of The Social Studies, between 1975 and June 1991, address writing in the social studies while 23 percent of the issues of Social Education during the same period address writing in some fashion, from including writing assignments in exemplary units with no specific mention of their presence or function, to articles specifically aimed at sharing strategies for teaching social studies, thinking, and communication skills through writing instruction or writing assignments.

## **Summary**

Education has long put a premium on writing, though for many years the primary focus on writing and writing instruction was relegated to English/language arts educators. More recently educators have been determining the importance of including writing in all content areas both as a means to learn a particular content as

well as a means to demonstrate learning. Moreover, each content area represents particular forms or functions that writing serves. For instance, the writing required in producing a science lab report might vary greatly from a position paper in social studies or a poem in English class. The responsibility of how to write appropriately for the various purposes or audiences is a responsibility shared by educators across the curriculum.

The literature on writing across the curriculum, and more particularly, on writing in the social studies, represents three levels or bodies of information. The literature addresses what ought to be happening, what potential or support there is for such instruction, and, thirdly, what is actually happening. The review of literature suggests that social studies educators should be sharing in writing instruction so that students can effectively communicate in forms particular to the social studies. Yet, if the social studies professional journals at state and national levels are an indication of the potential for writing in the social studies, the support is sparse and sporadic at best. Though articles on writing were found in these journals, the attention to writing's place in the social studies was relatively minute over the last 15 or more years. Arthur Applebee's national study on writing in secondary schools indicated that most content areas required relatively little writing of students. In addition, he found that most of the writing assigned was of a Transactional, or informational, nature directed most often at the teacher as audience.



Professional literature reflects a place for writing in content areas such as the social studies. (Key articles on writing from social studies periodicals are outlined in Appendix B.) However, the question remains: Do current resources and practices reflect this professional thinking?

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

This study focused on the examination of selected resources available to social studies teachers as they meet the task of including composition in their teaching. The resources examined were primarily twofold. I examined the treatment of writing in student texts currently adopted for use in Virginia social studies classes at grades seven and eleven. Along with the social studies textbooks, I examined accompanying teacher manuals for each text on the Virginia state-adopted list (1991-1997) for grades seven and eleven. This set of resources offered different perspectives and vantage points, from a text for students to a guide or edition written specifically for teachers as they plan instruction for social studies classes, as well as for composition inclusion in those social studies classes. With each student usually assigned a text, and with the teacher edition not an uncommon resource available in schools, these two resources seemed to be the ones most likely available to Virginia's social studies teachers at said grade levels as teachers address writing in the social studies.

Though the texts selected for this study were chosen because they were on the Virginia adoption list, it is important to note that the textbooks represent nationally published textbooks. That is, they were written for a much broader audience or use than just the state of Virginia. Therefore, the significance of these texts in influencing the use of writing in social studies classrooms far extends Virginia and the

scope of this particular research study. Because the textbook is a primary teaching tool and because these texts are distributed throughout the nation, it is all the more important that they reflect current research and theory regarding composition, so that the gap between theory and practice can be lessened.

Both resources, student text and teacher edition/manual, were examined for any general endorsement or attention to a composition component. Then, more specifically, I examined the writing assignments of each resource according to an established set of criteria, to determine the degree and kinds of writing available in selected social studies texts and complementary guides.

#### Resources Selected for the Study

The textbook, with accompanying teacher resource manual, continues to be the tool most often influencing teachers as they plan content, skills, and values to be included in their teaching of social studies. Very likely the degree of attention that writing receives in the textbook package influences the degree to which writing is actually employed in the social studies classroom. Thus, as the broad-based state objectives stated by grade levels in Virginia's Standards of Learning encourage writing in the social studies, textbook packages of basal text and accompanying teacher guide offer a broad perspective for determining what aid Virginia social studies teachers at grades seven and eleven have available to them as they work to address composition instruction in their teaching.

## Textbooks

The resource that most often surfaces as an aid or tool in teaching is the basal textbook with accompanying resource manual serving as a guide for implementation. The student text is one resource of the two types examined; it is readily available to both teachers and students because each public school student is issued the textbooks adopted by its local school division, which in most cases means texts adopted from the state adoption list. There is a provision in state policy allowing divisions to adopt off the state list if the division has scrutinized all state offerings in that subject or grade level first, and if the division can show what advantages an "off the list" title offers. In the case of such an adoption, the division forfeits the guarantee of a state contract price on the text, as would be assured with a state-adopted title, during the adoption cycle.

Since I was interested in the inclusion of writing in social studies textbooks at the seventh and eleventh grade levels, I examined all social studies textbooks and the accompanying teacher manual for each text at those two grade levels which appear on the current state-adopted list (1991-1997) for grades seven and eleven. This selection reflected two grade levels that focus on the study of U.S. history and which, in the state of Virginia, represent middle level education as well as high school level. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Virginia's Social Studies Program (6-12)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Required/Elective</u>
6	World Studies	Required
7	U. S. History	Required
8	Citizenship Studies	Required (Local option)
9	World Geography	1 of these 2 world studies is required
10	World History	
11	U. S. History	Required
12	VA & U. S. Government	Required

## Definition of Terms

I used the following definitions of terms for the Social Studies Textbook Analysis Worksheet that I developed to gather data for this research study. The terms were a guide not only to me as data were collected, but also the list offered clarification to participants in the coder reliability sessions. Definitions reflected what constituted a writing assignment to be analyzed, as well as current theory and research about various characteristics of writing, both generally and in the social studies.

1. Textbook Writing Assignment - a task indicated by textbook authors whereby the student will give responses in written form of more than a sentence.
2. Writing-related Assignment - a task that may require the student to record a brief written response as in fill-in-the-blank, definition of terms, etc.; "tasks involve supplying information rather than composing coherent text" (Applebee, 1981, p. 27).
3. Writing to Learn - composition activity that allows the writer to clarify his/her understanding of a topic, discover meaning, or make connections between what has been experienced or known and what is being introduced (Mayer et al., 1983, p. 38).
4. Writing for Evaluation - composition activity that is generated for the purpose of demonstrating mastery of information; and, it is to be judged by a reader. (Wolfe & Reising, 1983, p. 1).
5. Written Product - finished piece of writing, or writing that is treated as if it is finished.

6. Writing Process - writing/thinking stages through which writers move as they compose a written piece. Generally, the process is described as a three-stage process.
  - a. Prewriting - stage during which ideas are generated or brainstormed for possible inclusion in the composition.
  - b. Composing - actual drafting of ideas on paper.
  - c. Postwriting - stage during which the author rereads draft and makes considerations for revision, as well as proofreading for mechanical errors.
  
7. Britton's Function of Writing - (Britton et al., 1975, pp. 88-90).
  - a. Expressive - "language that might be called 'thinking aloud'"; writing of a personal or an informal nature.
  - b. Transactional - "language to get things done"; informational writing.
  - c. Poetic - "language as an art medium"; writing for writing's sake, as a work of art or construct in its own right.
  
8. Audience - intended reader of a composition.
  - a. Teacher - an authority figure; author writes with the expectation that the teacher will respond to or evaluate the writing (Applebee, 1981, p. 47).
  - b. Self - personal writing; one writes for oneself, as to clarify understanding of material or to speculate on possible meaning or connections (Applebee, 1981, p. 46).
  - c. Other - public audience; may be peers or a specified reader, as in the case of "write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper" (Applebee, 1981, p. 53).

9. Donlan's Categories of Writing in the Social Studies (Donlan, 1976, pp. 4-8).

- a. Reporting - recall of basic information.
- b. Exposition - explanation of an idea or historical occurrence.
- c. Narration - storytelling with characters, plot, etc.
- d. Argumentation - defense of an idea or belief.

Instrument Worksheet

The instrument worksheet developed to collect data for this study includes nine categories. The category headings correspond to the definitions of terms list, representing major areas of composition research and theory such as writing as a process; writing to learn for evaluation; audiences; as well as Britton's and Donlan's categories of writing. Information was also collected about the form dictated by a particular writing assignment to determine the variety of forms employed and if the form corresponded to certain categories of writing by purpose or function. The Worksheet for Social Studies Texts and Teacher Editions developed specifically for this study is located in Appendix C. The results of data collection for each text and grade level are also reported in the Appendix and reflect data for each category of the worksheet.

Reliability of the Researcher as Coder

To establish the reliability of the researcher as coder, two educators--one grounded in social studies and one grounded in English--participated in checking



intercoder agreement. One of these educators has 18 years experience, and the other has 15 years experience in education. One has an Ed.D. in Social Studies education; the other has a master's degree in English education. Currently one educator is an Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and the other is a Principal with responsibility for the entire instructional program in the school or school division, rather than a particular focus in either English or social studies.

The researcher set as a criterion a two-way reliability of .80 (Fisher, 1985; Swope, 1983). Two-way agreement occurs when at least one other coder agrees with the researcher.

As part of each coding session, the researcher explained the coding worksheet, defined terms, and answered questions of the coders. Several sample responses were coded, and the reasons for coding them as such were discussed.

The initial component of coding called for coders to locate writing assignments in two chapters of a student text and in the corresponding two chapters in the teacher edition of that same text according to the researcher's definition of a writing assignment, as opposed to a writing-related assignment or an assignment that could be made as a writing assignment but did not necessitate writing as posed in the student text or complementary teacher edition.

Coding was then completed section by section across the coding worksheet so that coders focused on only one category of coding at a time. For example, all examples of writing assignments were coded for their function of writing according to

Britton's categories and then discussed, before moving to another set of criteria such as audience or Donlan's categories of writing.

In the two chapters of student text analyzed, along with the accompanying two chapters of the teacher edition, it was determined with 100% agreement among the researcher and the two coders that there were six writing assignments, according to the two-way reliability where at least one coder agreed with the researcher in each instance. In Appendix D are the initial reliability results for each of the categories the researcher worksheet or instrument. While 100 percent reliability can be reported in that in each instance at least one coder agreed with the researcher, the category of Audience appeared at this point to be a weaker area of correlation than most others, since in only two of the instances did both coders agree with the researcher.

In four of the six examples, both coders agreed with the researcher regarding Donlan's categories. After discussion, Coder #1 indicated that he had erroneously marked Argumentation in the second assignment examined rather than Reporting. While it appeared to Coder #1 that Argumentation might be indicated by the assignment an examination of corresponding text on that page indicated that Reporting, or recalling information, was what was called for by the assignment.

There were seven areas in which I needed to establish coder reliability in order to proceed in the use of this particular instrument or worksheet. In six of those areas 100 percent reliability was established by at least one coder agreeing with me as researcher. In the category of Writing to Learn/Writing for Evaluation, reliability

was established in 83 percent of the cases. Thus, overall an average reliability of 97.57 percent was established with the worksheet during the first intercoder reliability session.

Although the coders understood the definitions of terms as offered, upon completion of the exercise, they both voiced concern over whether or not one could determine, or if valuable information were obtained by, breaking down the category of writing to learn/writing to evaluate into learning/evaluating content or learning/evaluating thinking or writing. The coder with the background in social studies voiced concern over whether one can expect writing assignments in social studies textbooks to be writing to learn activities where the goal is that the student learn how to write. Therefore, consideration was given to labeling assignments as either writing to learn or writing to evaluate assignments with no finer breakdown into intent of the assignment.

### Second Coder Reliability Check

A second reliability check was conducted in June, 1992, when five more texts had been analyzed. The same two educators participated in checking intercoder agreement. Again, the researcher set as a criterion a two-way reliability of .80 (Fisher, 1985; Swope, 1983). Two-way agreement occurs when at least one other coder agrees with the researcher.

As part of the coding session, I reviewed definitions of terms and the coding worksheet with its categories. After answering questions of the coders, coders were

given a unit from the student text of one of the five books analyzed in this set, along with the corresponding section from the teacher edition.

In locating assignments there was agreement with at least one coder in each instance except one. In one case both coders failed to identify one assignment as a writing assignment, contending that an assignment entitled "Researching and Taking Notes" did not require writing as defined in this study. I considered that researching and taking notes on a topic would likely result in more than a sentence of writing.

Coders were given a sample of assignments from both the student text and teacher edition to code. When working with the student text there was agreement with at least one coder in all categories. I agreed with only one coder in the areas of purpose of the assignment and Britton's categories in one instance. In all other categories all three coders were in 100 percent agreement. With the teacher edition sample, there was 100 percent agreement among the three coders in all categories.

Though the coding session had been done at an earlier stage in the study, after the analysis of the first text, several months had lapsed between sessions. One coder suggested that more time be devoted to sample codings or a coding aloud as a group for practice which might have been helpful as a refresher. It was noted that confidence with the instrument rose with the second round of coding in this set, once coders had shared their rationale for original codes or decisions. I noted the suggestion for the next check scheduled to be conducted after the eleventh text package was analyzed, the next set of five titles.

### Third Coder Reliability Check

A third and final reliability check was conducted in August 1992 when five more text packages had been analyzed. This check left five texts and accompanying teacher manuals or editions to be analyzed. Again, the same two educators participated in establishing intercoder reliability. I maintained a criterion of a two-way reliability of .80 (Fisher, 1985; Swope, 1983). Two-way agreement occurs when at least one other coder agrees with the researcher.

At the beginning of the coding session, I reviewed with both participants the definitions of terms and the coding worksheet with its categories. I then demonstrated the use of the worksheet by walking participants through an example of locating a writing assignment within a text and then applying the categories from the worksheet to the assignment. After answering questions of the coders, coders were given a unit of text from an eleventh-grade student text of one of the five texts analyzed since the last reliability check. Coders were also given the corresponding sections from the teacher edition for complementary analysis. In this case, the teacher edition meant annotations wrapped around student text pages, as well as a separate section in the teacher edition preface pages.

In the student text portion there was 100 percent agreement among coders regarding location of the assignments and of the labeling of all categories with the exception of one assignment in the categories of Britton, with coders having labeled an assignment calling for a diary entry as Transactional rather than my label of

Expressive. Coders indicated that once they committed to the assignment being a "writing for evaluation" assignment, they believed the diary form still represented informational writing meant to explain a particular perspective on an historical period. They indicated they would have labeled a diary entry as Expressive only if a diary were actually being maintained by the student writer. Even with this divergence in coding an agreement for at least 80 percent of the instances with Britton's categories resulted.

The only difference between my coding and that of one coder working in the teacher edition section came in the location of assignments. One coder found an assignment embedded in a passage that had not been detected by the researcher. Again, the difference did not violate the established criterion of .80 for reliability.

Both coders seemed adept at distinguishing writing assignments from writing-related ones or assignments that might well include writing, though such an indication was not inherent in the assignment as stated. Participants grew in familiarity with categories and their corresponding definitions so that all other categories of comparison resulted in 100 percent agreement during the coding session. Coding sessions helped maintain consistency within the researcher's treatment of texts and categories, as well as clarified the use of the instrument throughout the study.

### Data Collection

Specific procedures for treating the various resources available to social studies instructors regarding the incorporation of writing were of a descriptive nature. That

is, I have described the attention writing receives in the targeted social studies texts and teacher editions selected as part of this study.

In order to treat the social studies perspective as included in the sample of history texts, I examined textbook packets, consisting of the basal text and its complementary teacher guide, at each grade level, seven and eleven. Using the current adoption list of textbooks (1991-97) for the state of Virginia, this approach yielded a list of sixteen titles of texts, with seven entries at grade seven in United States history, and nine entries at grade eleven in United States history. I targeted those instances where writing was dictated as a means of learning content, practicing a skill, or clarifying a value and those instances where writing was assigned as a means of evaluating in the areas of content, skills, and values.

In the instances that textbook assignments included composition, I applied two sets of criteria to further determine the nature of writing in these selected social studies texts. Two frameworks that get at the purpose of the piece and relation to one's reader are the Britton and Donlan models. James Britton categorizes writing with his developmental functions of writing--Expressive, Transactional, and Poetic. Dan Donlan suggests four categories of writing particular to the social studies: Reporting, Exposition, Narration, and Argumentation.

First, I applied Britton's categories of writing assignments that include Expressive, Transactional, and Poetic types of writing. These three categories represent what Britton terms functions of writing. Expressive writing is defined as

"writing close to the self, carrying forward the informal presuppositions of informal talk and revealing as much about the writer as about his matter" (1975, p. 141). The Transactional function, according to Britton, refers to "those uses of language where the writer, operating in a participant role, seeks, in his writing, outcomes in the actual world: to inform or to persuade" (1975, p. 146). Britton explains that in this type of writing the writer is performing "a transaction which seeks outcomes in the real world. It is language to get things done" (1975, p. 160). The Poetic function, rather than trying to inform or persuade in order to achieve outcomes in the real world, is attempting "to create a 'world', a totally independent construct" (1975, p. 162). These categories as explained by Britton "attempt to provide a framework for the question, 'Why are you writing?'" (1975, p. 75). Britton et al., hypothesize, for instance as follows:

. . . regarding the development of writing ability in school: that what children write in the early stages should be a form of written-down expressive speech. . . . As [students'] writing and reading progress side by side, they will move from this starting point into the three broadly differentiated kinds of writing--[Britton's three] major categories. (1975, p. 82)

From Britton's study of development of writing, I moved to types of assignments students are asked to complete in social studies according to researcher Dan Donlan. Having examined writing assignments in the texts of several content areas, Donlan concluded that writing assignments focus on reporting, explaining, narrating, or arguing (persuading). In a 1974 survey of content area textbooks and



their assigned writing, Donlan classified writing assignments in social studies texts into four categories--Reporting, Exposition, Narration, and Argumentation. He defined Reporting as "an assignment where a student is directed to compile information with a minimum of critical or original thinking" (1976, p. 4). Exposition is defined as "an assignment where a student is asked to explain an idea, conduct a critical investigation, synthesize points of view, or bring a fresh point of view to a problem." Narration is defined as "an assignment where a student is asked to tell a story--anecdote, tall tale, legend, myth, short short story, drama, narrative poetry, vignette." Argumentation is defined by Donlan as "an assignment where as student attacks or defends an idea or belief" (1976, pp. 4-5).

It was my aim to apply these two sets of criteria, the Britton and Donlan models, to the writing assignments in social studies texts adopted for use in the state of Virginia, at grades seven and eleven, in order to determine if text assignments reflect the Britton and Donlan models concerning purposes for student writing.

Beyond application of these two specific sets of criteria, a general evaluation of writing was also made. This evaluation included whether or not the writing assignment was product-oriented or whether it was offered as a part of a writing process. More specifically, if the writing assignment reflected the composing process, identification was made as to which part of the process--prewriting, writing or rewriting--was being addressed. Notation was made if the writing assignment addressed an intended audience; and, in the case of a specified audience, I described

the type of audience targeted. Lastly, notation was made of the form the assignment suggested for the written response.

I employed the following checklist of points in examining individual uses of writing:

1. writing to learn/writing for evaluation
2. product/process (prewriting-revision)
3. Donlan's categories of Reporting, Exposition, Narration, Argumentation
4. Britton's functions of writing: Expressive, Transactional, Poetic
5. address of audience
6. form written response is assigned to take

In reporting the results of the textbook analysis, I have tabulated findings using the above checklist of points by grade levels of texts. That is, I have focused on which texts of a particular grade level treat writing in a certain way. I examined the teacher manual, as well as text, for any general endorsement of or encouragement for writing as a means of employing the text series at each of the selected grade levels. A manual may generally address the place of writing in the use of the textbook, while another teacher manual might even include actual writing assignments suggested for use with the student text. The teacher manual, along with the text it complements, formed the textbook packet. The manual included in this study was the chief supplemental resource designed to aid the teacher in implementing the textbook as it

was designed by the publishing company. It could conceivably take the form of marginal notes and supplemental pages housed in a teacher edition of the text, or it could be a separate supplemental manual. Knowing that textbook companies design resource manuals as aids for effectively implementing textbooks and for maximizing their effects as teaching tools, the manuals were examined for direction and bearing that they might have for implementing writing in the usage of a particular text. If these manuals included actual writing assignments, I treated assignments as I did those found in the student text; that is, I analyzed them using the seven items in the checklist.

Though publishers often publish a series of supplemental resource books such as student workbooks, quiz booklets, or test booklets, I did not examine these extras generally as a part of this study. Each text would not have the same number of types of these resource materials, and such materials, though available from publishers, do not always make their way into the hands of teachers or students because of cost factors. The various components of the textbook phase of this research study were designed to yield information about the approach to writing and the purpose that writing serves in social studies textbooks on Virginia's textbook adoption list in the area of U.S. history at grades seven and eleven.

Because publishers package teacher resource materials or ancillary materials for texts in a number of combinations, it was possible to examine a student text and even an accompanying teacher manual, and miss a composition component intended for use

with the text if, in fact, a workbook or resource binder or some other configuration of supplemental materials housed teaching aids focusing on the writing component recommended by the publisher. Yet, often teachers never see a host of ancillary materials designed to accompany a particular text. Therefore, I examined the student text and the teacher edition or manual while acknowledging the possible limitation to the study caused by this concern.

### **Summary**

Realizing that professional literature and educators generally support the concept of writing in the social studies, I was interested in determining what support exists for social studies teachers to put that concept into practice. Because the textbook remains the most frequently used teaching tool, I undertook an examination of selected text materials to offer some indication of the amount and kinds of writing suggested at various grade levels by nationally published textbooks.

Interested in whether or not these texts reflected current theory and research about composition instruction, particularly in the social studies, I developed a worksheet instrument for collecting data on writing assignments contained within the text package of student texts and teacher editions selected. Particularly, I examined text packages of United States history texts currently adopted in the state of Virginia for use at grades seven and eleven. I then conducted an analysis regarding the amount and kinds of writing reflected via the writing assignments within these

selected text materials. An intercoder reliability check was conducted after the research instrument was implemented with the first text package, and similar intercoder reliability checks were conducted again after each set of five texts was examined. Results of these reliability checks are reflected in Appendix D as are text analysis results in Appendix E through Appendix I. The data collected offer a variety of information about resources available to Virginia's social studies teachers for including writing in their teaching, and the data offer insight into whether or not writing in these Virginia social studies resources reflects current research and theory in the area of composition.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Results**

I undertook this study to assess the treatment of writing in Virginia's state-adopted history textbooks at grades seven and eleven. Answers to two basic questions, with subparts, were analyzed after all data collection was completed.

These questions were as follows:

1. What endorsement of or attention to composition do the selected textbooks and accompanying teacher manuals at grades seven and eleven of Virginia's currently adopted social studies textbooks give?
  - a. What purposes do the writing assignments in Virginia social studies textbooks at grades seven and eleven serve?
  - b. Do the assignments lean toward writing to learn/think activities or toward a means of evaluating mastery of content?
  - c. Do the selected state-adopted social studies textbooks, at grades seven and eleven, and accompanying teacher manuals, acknowledge and incorporate the writing process in their treatment of composition by either mentioning the various stages in the process or by including assignments that make use of the various stages in the writing process?
  - d. What functions or categories of writing are required by writing assignments in the selected text packages (i.e., Britton's and Donlan's categories)?
  - e. What attention to audience is made by the writing assignments in the selected text packages?

- f. What forms do the writing assignments call for in the selected text packages?
2. How does the treatment of writing in Virginia social studies textbooks, at grades seven and eleven, and accompanying teacher manuals, reflect current composition research and theory?

### Instrument

In order to find answers to these questions, I developed an instrument to reflect nine categories of information. Having identified writing assignments, as defined in this study as assignments requiring writing of more than a sentence, a series of seven questions were posed about each assignment. I distinguished between the assignment as a writing to learn activity or a writing for evaluation assignment. That is, distinction was made between the use of writing to make new meaning and to learn, and the use of writing to demonstrate primarily mastery of learning. Next, I looked for evidence of any recognition of or inclusion of writing as a process with composing steps of prewriting, writing, and postwriting. Otherwise, I considered an assignment product oriented, focusing on writing as a finished product rather than a process of thinking and expression. Regardless of whether or not the writing assignment was product or process focused, it did reflect some step or steps of the writing process. I noted any steps of the process evidenced by each assignment.

James Britton's functions of writing--Expressive, Poetic, and Transactional--formed the next category of classification. The assignment either allowed for self expression in an informal manner (Expressive); focused on informational writing for a

specific purpose (Transactional); or it focused on an art form that was as critical and fundamental to the composition as was the language itself (Poetic). As an extension of function or purpose for writing, I also looked at audience for the assignment as a shaper of the assignment and ultimately the written response it would generate.

Taken from Arthur Applebee's national study on writing in secondary schools, the category of Audience was divided among teacher as audience, self as audience, and other as an actual audience other than self or some authority figure such as the teacher. Teacher was considered audience whenever it was expected that the assignment would be read by some authority figure with intent to evaluate the writing.

Paralleling the categorization by Britton's functions of writing was the section on Donlan's categories of writing. Dan Donlan offered a content specific perspective to the study with a hierarchy of four categories of writing particular to the social studies. I determined which level of writing--Reporting, Exposition, Narration, or Argumentation--was represented by an assignment. I considered an assignment Reporting if it called for mere restatement of or recall of basic information. If a student were expected to assimilate or select information and, in effect, create a new angle on existing information, I considered the assignment an example of Exposition. Narration called for a particular form of relating information, as with characters and plot. The final category of Argumentation was assigned to those assignments that necessitated the student writer taking a stand on an issue or event and supporting that stand.



Lastly, as part of this instrument, I labeled each writing assignment by the form that was called for by the assignment, noting whether the writing assignment was a letter, a poem, an editorial, or a report, for example. The frequency of each form was noted for each student text and accompanying teacher manual or teacher edition. Moreover, I determined if the form of the response paralleled particular categories of writing according to the Britton and Donlan models.

### Writing Assignments

Each student text and accompanying teacher manual or teacher edition was examined for writing assignments. Those assignments specifically requiring writing, rather than ones which might allow for written expression depending on teacher direction or student interpretation, were identified for further data collection. Moreover, these assignments were to require more than a sentence of composition so as to distinguish them from writing-related assignments that might mean recording existing information in written form, rather than requiring any composition by students.

Of the sixteen student texts examined, fourteen of the sixteen included writing assignments. At grade seven, all seven student texts included writing assignments. At grade eleven, two of the nine texts included no writing assignments. While levels of texts were not a focus of this study, it is noted that the two eleventh-grade texts not including any writing assignments were the two most advanced texts in readability and

are often adopted for use with advanced placement history courses across the state.

Table 2 indicates text components which included writing assignments.

An examination of teacher editions again showed writing assignments included in each title at the seventh-grade level. At eleventh grade, eight of the nine titles included writing assignments as part of the teacher manual/edition. Only one text package failed to include writing assignments as part of the student text or the teacher manual. It is noted that American Pageant is often used with advanced placement courses meant to be college level in their approach. Enduring Vision, though its student edition had not included writing assignments, did offer some writing assignments through the teacher manual.

Overall, the teacher editions contained more writing assignments than did the corresponding student texts. At seventh grade, 487 assignments were located in student texts, representing slightly more than 33 percent of the writing assignments identified at seventh grade. Teacher editions included 969 assignments of the seventh-grade total of 1,456. At eleventh grade, a total of 1,498 assignments were located in student texts and teacher editions combined. Twenty-four percent, or 361 assignments, were located in student texts, with 1,137 assignments found in teacher manuals. The number of writing assignments found in the text package components at each grade level is as follows in Table 3.

Table 2

General Location of Writing Assignments within Text Packages

	<u># of Text Packages</u>	<u># With Writing Assignments</u>
Grade 7		
ST	7	7
TE	7	7
Grade 11		
ST	9	7
TE	9	8

Table 3

Number of Writing Assignments at Each Grade Level

	<u>Grade 7</u>		<u>Grade 11</u>		
ST	487	33%	ST	361	24%
TE	<u>969</u>	<u>67%</u>	TE	<u>1137</u>	<u>76%</u>
	1456	100%		1498	100%

At each grade level, there was one instance of where student texts included more writing assignments than did the corresponding teacher manuals. But, in thirteen of sixteen cases, the writing assignments in the teacher edition or manual exceeded the number located in the complementary student text.

### Writing to Learn/Writing for Evaluation

As researcher, I made a forced choice regarding the intention of the writing generated by the assignment, labeling the writing as either intended as writing to learn or writing for evaluation purposes. If the writing seemed primarily focused toward the student learning new information or making connections between new information and information already mastered, I considered the assignment as an example of writing to learn. For instance, an assignment in the seventh-grade student text, The American Nation, called for students to "find someone in your area who remembers the Great Depression. Draw up a series of questions before you go to interview him or her. Use a tape recorder to get an oral history . . ." (p. 621). On the other hand, if the assignment seemed more intended toward the student demonstrating learning or mastery, I considered the assignment writing for evaluation. A student using the eleventh-grade text, Our Land, Our Time, encounters an assignment such as "In your own words, write a brief character sketch of Peter Stuyvesant" (p. 73).

It is important to note here that while assignments labeled "writing to learn" did not suggest evaluation of the student writing, "writing for evaluation" assignments might well provide student writers learning opportunities. As Zinsser suggests that

we learn about a subject by writing about it, the student likely learns or discovers new meaning as s/he chooses words to demonstrate a mastery of subject content, skills, or attitudes. For analysis purposes, I include the dichotomy of writing to learn and writing for evaluation to offer information about the initial or primary intent of writing assignments. This forced choice may not reflect all results or by-products of a writing assignment.

In establishing the intention of writing assignments, I also took into account the location of the writing assignment within a text section in establishing intention. That is, a writing assignment positioned as a preface to a section might signal a different intent than a similar assignment located in a unit review or examination section.

In all instances, writing assignments intended to allow the student writer to demonstrate mastery, or writing for evaluation learning, far outnumbered assignments employing writing as a means for the student to learn information. Specific grade level distribution of writing to learn and writing for evaluation assignments is detailed in Table 4. Of 1,456 writing assignments at the seventh grade, both in student texts and teacher manuals, only 89 were writing to learn opportunities. That represents little more than 6 percent. At eleventh grade, 52 of 1,498 assignments, or only 3.3 percent of assignments were writing to learn assignments. Overall, I determined that only 141 of 2,954 assignments, or 4.7 percent, were writing to learn assignments. Over 95 percent were examples of writing for evaluation primarily.

Table 4

Distribution of Writing to Learn and Writing for Evaluation Assignments

	<u>Writing to Learn</u>	<u>Writing for Evaluation</u>
<b>Grade 7</b>		
ST	30	457
TE	<u>59</u>	<u>910</u>
Totals	89	1367
<b>Grade 11</b>		
ST	8	353
TE	<u>44</u>	<u>1093</u>
Totals	52	1446

## Product/Process

Each writing assignment also was examined to determine whether or not it was product based or process based. A label of "product" was used if the assignment merely called for writing with no provision for or directions regarding organizing ideas before drafting a written response, or any recognition of postwriting with editing and revision considerations. Such an assignment was found in the annotated teacher edition of an eleventh-grade text, The Americans: A History, with its direction to "write two paragraphs comparing the conditions of slaves in Virginia and Maryland to those in South Carolina" (p. 44). Yet, an assignment need not specifically state the need to prewrite or revise in order to be acknowledged as process writing. If preliminary portions of the assignment inherently led the student through a prewriting phase before composing or, likewise, led a student to re-examine his/her writing after generating a draft, I considered the assignment to evidence writing as a process. In the teacher edition of seventh-grade text America's Story students were asked to "list goals of the Peoples' Party in 1892." The assignment continued to "have them also note whom the Populists blamed for farmers' problems." Finally, students were asked to write a campaign speech that expressed these goals and beliefs (p. T79). Though not called prewriting as such, the assignment clearly led students to the writing of the speech through previous prewriting and focusing activities.

When considering all 2,954 assignments identified in the seventh and eleventh-grade history text packages, I found slightly more than 2 percent to provide for



writing as a process opportunities. The vast majority of assignments merely called for students to write a response to a particular question or in a particular form. In no single student text or teacher edition case, at either grade level, did the number of assignments labeled process exceed those considered to be product oriented.

Following in Table 5 is a depiction of product-oriented assignments versus process-oriented assignments by grade level.

### Prewriting/Writing/Postwriting

Regardless of the parameters of a particular assignment, any episode of writing does in fact address at least one phase or stage of the writing process. Generally considered to have three stages, this process includes any generating and organizing of ideas prior to actual drafting (prewriting), the drafting itself (writing), as well as any revisiting the draft to make editorial changes or revisions (postwriting). Though product-oriented writing does not acknowledge the process in its entirety, it does nonetheless require the writer to engage in the writing phase of the process.

Therefore, in the case of each assignment, I identified the one or more phases of the writing process represented by the assignment.

As I found most of the assignments to be product oriented with no real attention to multiple phases of the writing process, likewise, I found most assignments to include only the writing phase. Table 6 indicates the various process stages reflected in the writing assignments examined.

Table 5

Product or Process-Orientation of Assignments

	<u>Product</u>	<u>Process</u>
Grade 7	1423	33
Grade 11	<u>1463</u>	<u>35</u>
Totals	2886	68

Table 6

Writing Process Stages Reflected in Writing Assignments

	<u>Prewriting</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Post</u>
Grade 7	31	1452	5
Grade 11	<u>35</u>	<u>1487</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	66	2939	8

In over 99 percent of the writing assignments, the composing phase of the process was suggested. There were a few instances where an assignment called for prewriting as such with no follow through to actual composition. In a series of assignments suggested in the Teacher Resource Book accompanying the seventh-grade text American Spirit, students were asked to circle a topic of choice and then "complete the prewriting activities" (p. HWH16). Prewriting activities did not necessarily lead to any composition by students as provided for by stated assignments. Or, the case might arise where a passage were offered to students for them to rewrite or revise, resulting in an independent label of postwriting without either of the other two phases registered. This situation occurred when students using student text The United States: A History of the Republic were asked to "rewrite the paragraph below to improve the organization and style" (p. 687). In only four assignments out of nearly 3,000 were all three phases of the writing process included. One such case can be cited from the student edition of America's Story, adopted for seventh-grade use. An assignment called for students to write [their] own essay. It goes on to direct students to

. . . choose between these subjects . . . . When you have enough information to begin writing, organize it into an outline. Then write your essay using these guidelines. When you have finished, edit your essay. Finally, check for grammar and spelling errors.  
(p. 301)

In cases where phases of the process were acknowledged beyond the writing phase, most often it would be a combination of prewriting, or getting ideas down, along with

the writing or drafting phase. These might be in the absence of any mention of reworking the draft in a postwriting phase. In The American Nation student text at seventh grade, an assignment read as follows:

Review the outlining skill on page 31. Then prepare an outline of the first two sections of this chapter on pages 173-181. Using your outline, write a summary of events during the early years of the Revolution. (p. 195)

Here, the student is led through the prewriting and writing phases of the process with no attention to postwriting. Thus, in this section of the worksheet/instrument, choices were not mutually exclusive. I did not have to label an assignment as primarily an example of prewriting or writing or postwriting. Rather, numbers represent any and all phases of the writing process provided for by an assignment.

### Britton's Functions

The sixth section of the instrument targeted the function of the writing indicated by the writing assignment. Grade level information on Britton's functions of writing, as reflected in text packages examined, is cited in Table 7. James Britton's functions of writing are meant to "cover the range of writing in general use in our society" (p. 86). These three categories of Expressive, Transactional, and Poetic offered a global perspective as to purposes or functions of writing. In the Expressive mode a writer drafts ideas while maintaining an informal, if not intimate, relationship with the reader. For example, students might write expressively in completing an assignment suggested in the teacher edition of Land of Promise for eleventh grade, in which

Table 7

Representation of Britton's Functions within Writing Assignments

	<u>Expressive</u>	<u>Poetic</u>	<u>Transactional</u>
Grade 7	186	101	1069
Grade 11	<u>99</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>1307</u>
Totals	285	193	2376

students are asked to "respond in writing to what they learn about current peace efforts" (p. T122). Students are asked to respond to material as a means of reflecting and thinking about ideas and possibly their implications. This writing is of an informal nature. On the other hand, Transactional writing is defined by Britton as more informational and generally a move toward a more public audience. In the student text of Life and Liberty, students are instructed to "decide which three events of the 1950s influenced life in the United States the most." They are then asked to "write a short essay ranking events in order of importance with reasons for choices" (p. 627). Lastly, the Poetic function is as much concerned with writing for writing's sake as it is with the expression of information. That is, the construct of the writing is significant and may suggest writing as a work of art. This occurs as when students are asked to "write their own song describing life on the long drive" as in the teacher edition of A History of the United States (p. 337) or as in the following assignment included in the annotated teacher edition of The Americans:

Write a short story describing what their lives would be like if they had lived in the Tennessee Valley in the 1920s (p. 699).

Looking at totals by grade levels and overall, it is noted that writing assignments most often fulfilled a Transactional purpose or function, meant to convey information in a formal sense. Of the 2,954 assignments from both grade levels, 2,376, or 83 percent, were Transactional in nature. Overall, the Expressive mode accounted for 285 assignments or approximately 10 percent of all assignments, with only 193

assignments serving a Poetic function. In the case of each student text and each teacher manual at the two grade levels, employment of the Transactional mode occurred most often. In all student texts, the use of the Expressive mode outnumbered the use of the Poetic mode. In four instances of teacher editions/manuals, the use of the Poetic function outweighed the use of the Expressive mode. This occurred once at seventh grade in the teacher edition of The American Nation. It occurred in three eleventh-grade teacher resources with History of the United States, Land of Promise, and Life and Liberty. As a result, the totals for eleventh-grade teacher editions show a slight edge of Poetic over Expressive mode use. Grand totals for combined grades follow a pattern of Transactional, Expressive, and Poetic functions utilized, moving from highest to lowest frequency.

### Audience

Closely related to Britton's functions or purposes for writing is the issue of audience. Basing his work on that of James Britton, Arthur Applebee gave attention to the kinds of audiences for whom students write in his national study about writing in secondary schools. The audience for whom one writes causes the writer to make decisions and choices in the writing process as information or ideas are expressed. Assignments might target an actual audience or a purported audience. That is, a student may actually write a letter to a community agency in request for information (actual audience), or the student may be asked to assume a persona or perspective in his/her writing with an intended audience suggested (purported audience). For



example, one may be asked to assume the role of a struggling colonist who is to write a letter to a cousin still in the homeland, describing surroundings and experiences in the new world. Here, it is impossible for such an audience to be real or authentic.

Not always was the audience for the written piece a stated audience. According to Applebee, writing assignments may offer no clear audience, only the writer as audience, the teacher either as evaluator or as part of an instructional dialogue, and a wider audience which may be known or unknown. For the purposes of this study, I considered three divisions of audience. Since the teacher would likely be assigning the writing assignments found in the student text or teacher edition, the teacher constituted a major audience category. The teacher could be an evaluator of the written piece or be the authority figure offering feedback or response to the writing in an "instructional dialogue" with the student writer. While no audience was identified in the following assignment taken from The American Nation by Prentice-Hall, as researcher, I determined that the teacher-generated assignment would likely be evaluated by or responded to by the teacher:

Research and write a report on the executive departments. Identify their secretaries and explain their role. (p. C25)

Some writing assignments, while teacher generated, might be intended only to be read or used by the student writer himself/herself. Therefore, a second category of "self" was established. Such an assignment is suggested in the teacher edition of America: The People and the Dream when students are asked to "do a five-minute

quick write on the question: What do I know about JFK? [Students will] refer back to these later" (p. 787). In some cases the student writer writes to or for another audience other than self or teacher. Thus, a category of "other" was established for actual audiences other than self or the teacher figure. Such an audience is suggested by the following assignment from The American Nation:

Obtain information from the Chamber of Commerce about the people, industries, schools, hospitals and recreation programs in your city or town. Prepare an illustrated pamphlet to attract new residents and businesses. (p. 749)

More specifically an external audience other than teacher is targeted in this eleventh-grade assignment from History of the United States:

Do research on a current issue in US-Latin American relations. When you have formed an opinion about what the United States should do, write a letter to your district's representative in Congress telling your view. (p. 479)

The "other" audience could be known or unknown to the student. Contrived audiences, as in the example of an assumed persona from a past historical friend writing to a relative would be considered writing with a primary audience of teacher as evaluator or participant in an instructional dialogue with the student writer.

As indicated in Table 8, at each grade level and overall, writing assignments targeted the teacher as audience considerably more often than they targeted the audience categories of self and/or other.

Table 8

Audiences Addressed by Writing Assignments

	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Self</u>	<u>Other</u>
Grade 7	1254	56	146
Grade 11	<u>1434</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>40</u>
Totals	2688	80	186

Of the 2,954 total assignments in student texts and teacher editions, 2,688, or over 91 percent of the cases, saw the teacher as audience. Teacher audiences were followed overall by other real audiences as in the case of writing a letter to the student's local representative on an issue, or writing a letter of inquiry to an agency. The "other" audiences constituted 186 total assignments or 6 percent of total assignments; this left 80 assignments or 3 percent written for self.

An examination of individual text tallies shows only three instances of where this pattern of teacher, other, self frequency being altered. In one instance at seventh grade, with America: The People and the Dream, audiences of "self" surpassed that of "other." While 194 assignments in the text package had targeted "teacher" as audience, thirteen addressed "self," with only eight aimed at "others." Similar patterns emerged in two eleventh-grade packages. Enduring Vision's teacher edition resulted in 43 teacher audiences, eleven self as audience assignments, with only two assignments focused on others. Our Land, Our Time from the eleventh-grade list reported 211 "teacher" assignments, seven "self" assignments, and only two "other" assignments in regards to audience.

### Donlan's Categories

Dan Donlan's four categories of writing brought the focus on the writing assignment to that of a specific content area. Donlan's studies of content specific assignments determined that four types of writing exist in the social studies. His hierarchy of writing in the social studies included Reporting, Exposition, Narration,

and Argumentation. Reporting offered basic recall or restatement of information. A classic assignment in this category might be "Do research and write a report on the life and work of one of the religious leaders of the 1920s" (p. 533), an actual assignment from the History of the United States, currently published by Houghton Mifflin.

Exposition offered some use of information to explain a point. As in this assignment from the annotated teacher edition of The Americans: A History, "write two paragraphs comparing the conditions of slaves in Virginia and Maryland to those in South Carolina" (p. 44), students must explain differences and similarities between two bodies of information they have gathered.

The category of Narration offered information or ideas through the use of characters and plot development. Narration was determined with such assignments as "write and act out a conversation between Hamilton and Madison about the funding measure" (p. 181) taken from The United States: A History of the Republic, or "have students write and act out a skit featuring a city dweller and a farmer comparing the advantage of where they live" (p. 269) as cited from the teacher edition of The American Nation.

Argumentation offered support for an idea or stance. Seventh-graders using Exploring American History might encounter such an assignment with "write editorials in which they advocate a strong environmental protection program" (p. T130).

Donlan's studies established a pattern of use of these four categories of social studies writing. In both major studies, Donlan found that the most often used category of writing employed in the social studies was that of Exposition. Second highest in frequency was Reporting, followed by Argumentation and Narration, respectively.

The social studies textbooks currently adopted in Virginia, for use at seventh and eleventh-grades, hold true to this pattern for the most part. Student text totals for both grades show a breakdown as follows:

**DONLAN CATEGORIES IN STUDENT TEXTS  
(TOTALS)**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Reporting	260	2nd
Exposition	320	1st
Narration	37	4th
Argumentation	<u>231</u>	3rd
(Total)	848	

Teacher edition totals follow a similar distribution:

**DONLAN CATEGORIES IN TEACHER EDITIONS  
(TOTALS)**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Reporting	636	2nd
Exposition	828	1st
Narration	86	4th
Argumentation	<u>556</u>	3rd
(Total)	2106	

A look at individual grade level totals shows a slight deviation from the pattern with student texts at seventh grade having a slightly higher number of reporting assignments than exposition assignments with 163 instances of Reporting and 158 of Exposition. Individual grade level data regarding the Donlan categories are cited in Table 9 for student text findings and in Table 10 for teacher edition findings. Further examination of individual text package results indicates that three titles at each of the two grade levels saw a slight edge of Reporting over Exposition use. These exceptions are cited in the Table 11.

Despite these variances, it is noted that overall results of this study follow the Donlan pattern of Exposition, Reporting, Argumentation, and Narration in regards to frequency of use. Overall results are reported in Table 12.

### Forms

The last question applied to each writing assignment was an anecdotal reference or label to the form suggested by the writing assignment. That is, were students being asked to write a letter, a poem, a journal entry, or a report? This category on the instrument was open-ended and most often stemmed from key words within the assignment itself.

Appendix E represents the three forms most often called for within assignments, listed by grade level and more particularly by title (student text and teacher edition). Table 13 indicates a summary by grade level, broken down by student text and

Table 9

Donlan Categories in Student Texts

<u>Category</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>
Reporting	163	97
Exposition	158	162
Narration	30	7
Argumentation	<u>136</u>	<u>95</u>
Total	487	361



Table 10

Donlan Categories in Teacher Editions

<u>Category</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>
Reporting	292	344
Exposition	367	461
Narration	48	38
Argumentation	<u>262</u>	<u>294</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>1137</b>

Table 11

**Instances of Reporting Assignments Greater Than Exposition Assignments**

<u>7th Grade</u>		
	Reporting	Exposition
<b>CHALLENGE OF FREEDOM</b>		
Student Text	13	5
Teacher Edition	59	23
<b>EXPLORING AMERICAN HISTORY</b>		
Student Text	74	56
Teacher Edition	54	40
<b>AMERICA'S STORY</b>		
Student Text	42	32
<u>11th Grade</u>		
	Reporting	Exposition
<b>ENDURING VISION</b>		
Teacher Edition	24	10
<b>A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES</b>		
Student Text	1	0
<b>U.S.: A HISTORY OF A REPUBLIC</b>		
Teacher Edition	101	98

Table 12

Donlan Categories Overall

<u>Category</u>	<u># Assignments</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Reporting	896	30%	2nd
Exposition	1148	39%	1st
Narration	123	4%	4th
Argumentation	<u>787</u>	<u>27%</u>	3rd
	2954	100%	

Table 13

Grade-Level Summary of Top Three Forms Used

Seventh-Grade

**Student Text (256)\*\***

Report/Summary (103)  
Arguments (52)  
Letters (48)  
Explanation (24)  
Journal/Diary (11)  
News Article (11)  
Biography (4)  
Pamphlet (3)

**Teacher Edition (435)\***

Report/Summary (124)  
Explanation (124)  
Essay (53)  
Diary/Journal (44)  
Position Paper (41)  
Article (41)  
Paragraph (33)  
Letter (23)

Eleventh-Grade

**Student Text (224)\***

Report/Summary (80)  
Letter (49)  
Explanation (35)  
Essay (29)  
Position (17)  
Paragraph (11)  
Hypothesis (2)  
Description (1)

**Teacher Edition (581)\***

Report/Summary (235)  
Explanation (125)  
Position Paper (112)  
Letter (58)  
Essay (24)  
Stories (18)  
News Articles (9)

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\*\*Number of assignments represented in the top three forms used.

teacher edition. In each case of grade level summary, the form most often called for was a report or summary.

It is noted that while an assignment might have suggested a form such as a report or summary, such a suggestion did not automatically indicate any other category label within the research instrument. That is, further clues within the assignment may have indicated that the assignment was an example of Exposition rather than Reporting according to Donlan's categories because of the nature of the information being requested. The call for a report in one assignment might indicate a recounting of basic information (Reporting) while another assignment calling for a report on one's opinion on a topic might have been a case of Argumentation rather than Reporting.

Generally, assignments asking students to compare and/or contrast were Exposition. However, too quick a glance at the following assignment from America's Story might cause one to overlook that students were actually being asked to take a stance and support it, an example of Argumentation. Rather terms of the assignment asking the student to explain might have suggested a label of Exposition.

Write two paragraphs comparing Jefferson's and Hamilton's views about government. Then write another paragraph explaining which view you would have supported and why. (p. 280)

## Summary

The results of the data collection on writing assignments in selected social studies student texts and accompanying teacher editions or manuals are presented in tables, in Appendices, and are discussed in this chapter. With analysis of those data, I offer the following observations regarding writing assignments in these social studies texts:

1. While nearly 3,000 writing assignments occurred in the social studies text materials examined, not every student text and/or teacher edition required writing. (Fourteen of sixteen student texts examined included writing assignments as did fifteen of the sixteen teacher editions.)
2. Generally, more writing assignments occurred in the teacher editions of adopted social studies texts at grades seven and eleven than did in the student texts. (Only one seventh-grade title and one title at eleventh-grade saw a greater number of writing assignments in the student text than in the corresponding teacher edition.)
3. Writing as a process was not strongly evidenced in the writing assignments of student texts or accompanying teacher manuals in state-adopted social studies texts at grades seven and eleven.
4. The majority of writing assignments contained in state-adopted social studies texts at grades seven and eleven, as well as in the accompanying teacher manuals, were writing for evaluation assignments rather than writing to learn opportunities. In the case of every text component examined (student text or teacher manual), students were more often asked to demonstrate mastery of learning through writing (writing for evaluation) than were they asked to use writing to process new ideas and to connect these ideas to previously learned information (writing to learn).

5. The writing form most frequently called for at each grade level of texts examined was that of the report or summary. This frequency held true in both student texts and accompanying teacher manuals alike. Among the top four writing forms called for in writing assignments of examined texts and manuals was the "explanation." The "letter" was among the top four forms utilized in both grade levels of student texts and among the top four forms utilized in assignments contained in the eleventh-grade manuals or teacher editions. Though various assignments called for the same forms, the level of difficulty among these assignments often varied considerably.
  
6. A decade after Applebee's national study entitled Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas, the results of this study parallel Applebee's findings that most writing required of secondary students is of an informational nature rather than an imaginative or creative nature. Likewise, results of this study paralleled Applebee's findings that little provision is made for prewriting or even writing as a process in student writing assignments. As Britton before Applebee found, as did Applebee in his study, the results of this study indicate that writing assignments in at least state-adopted social studies text packages at grades seven and eleven were largely of a transactional nature, most often aimed at the teacher as reader/evaluator with little attention to writing as a process.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Findings, Implications, and Recommendations**

I undertook this study in order to assess the treatment of writing in Virginia's state-adopted history textbooks at grades seven and eleven. In this study, I developed an instrument to be applied to the selected student texts and their accompanying teacher editions or teacher manuals. I based categories within the instrument on current research in the general area of writing, as well as in the particular area of writing in the social studies. I analyzed writing assignments, defined for this study as assignments requiring more than one sentence of composition, to determine key characteristics of the writing required regarding purpose or function, audience, and the form called for by the writing assignment.

My examination of Virginia's state-adopted social studies texts, and accompanying teacher editions, at grades seven and eleven, revealed varying degrees of attention to the inclusion of writing assignments requiring more than one sentence of composition. Teacher editions generally offered more specific writing assignments than did the student texts. Few assignments acknowledged writing as a process. Most assignments were of an informational and/or expository nature, meant to demonstrate student learning or mastery, and intended to be read by the teacher. The findings of this study did not deviate greatly from various national studies on related topics serving as bases for this particular study.



## **Findings Related to the Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to assess the treatment of writing in selected secondary social studies textbooks currently adopted for use in Virginia, as well as to assess the treatment of writing in the teacher editions that complement the selected texts. The instrument I developed for data collection included categories of information that reflected current research and theory in the area of composition and, more particularly, in the area of writing in the social studies. The work of Britton in developmental writing abilities, Applebee in content area writing in secondary schools, and Donlan regarding types of writing particular to the social studies served as bases for the study and the research instrument developed for it.

**Research Question #1:** What endorsement of or attention to composition do the selected textbooks and accompanying teacher manuals at grades seven and eleven of Virginia's currently adopted social studies textbooks give?

In an attempt to assess the treatment of writing in Virginia's state-adopted history textbooks at grades seven and eleven, I developed an instrument targeting nine categories of information. The instrument/worksheet initially identified those writing assignments found in each seventh-grade and eleventh-grade student text and accompanying teacher manual or edition.

Nearly 3,000 writing assignments were located in the examined materials. At each grade level and overall, more writing assignments were contained in the teacher editions than were in the student texts. However, not every student text nor teacher

edition included writing assignments. Though each text and teacher edition at the seventh grade contained some writing assignments, two student texts at the eleventh grade contained none. In the case of one eleventh-grade title, no writing assignments appeared in the student text or in the teacher edition.

Generally, teacher editions housed more writing assignments at each grade level than did the corresponding student texts. At seventh grade, teacher editions averaged approximately twice the number of writing assignments as did seventh-grade student texts. At eleventh grade, the relationship of writing assignments located in teacher editions to those of student texts was approximately three to one. It would seem that, if teachers relied on text materials as a major resource for writing instruction and/or assignments, it would be important that they have teacher editions or manuals available to them in their teaching, along with the student text.

**Research Question #1a:** What purposes do the writing assignments in Virginia social studies textbooks at grades seven and eleven serve?

As reflected by the worksheet instrument developed for this study, there are a number of ways to analyze the purpose of writing assignments. Generally, I scrutinized each assignment to determine whether or not it indicated to the writer what to write, how to write, or for whom s/he was writing. Specific categories of analysis addressed whether writing was primarily to learn or primarily to demonstrate learning; whether students were instructed on how to write, as through process steps;

whether students were told a form their writing should take; or, if assignments indicated an audience or potential reader of the writing.

Generally, writing assignments examined were product oriented with little specific attention to a suggested process for drafting ideas. Most assignments offered opportunity to learn through writing by demonstrating mastery of learning rather than by writing to learn. Moreover, writing assignments most often called for school-sponsored, informational writing addressing the teacher in the form of reports, summaries, and letters rather than personal or creative kinds of writing.

**Research Question #1b:** Do the assignments lean toward writing to learn/think activities or toward a means of evaluating mastery or content?

As writing instruction has been encouraged in the content areas, this instruction often has been linked to two major uses of writing--as a means of learning information and as a means of demonstrating learning. Thus, the second category of the research instrument focused on whether assignments were considered writing to learn activities or writing for evaluation activities. Therefore, each writing assignment identified in this study was labeled as either a writing to learn assignment or a writing for evaluation assignment.

At both grade levels, although writing to learn activities were present, writing for evaluation assignments far outnumbered assignments designed to help students initially process information. Thus, most current texts used at these two grade levels did include writing, but the intent of the writing assignments was very much slanted

toward writing as a means of evaluating learning. Texts and teacher manuals offered little support to writing as a means of learning alone, without evaluation. As indicated in the summary tables located in Tables 14-17, most of the writing assignments that I analyzed in this study fulfilled an intent of writing to demonstrate knowledge or content mastered rather than opportunities to process information and make connections between new ideas and information previously learned, as in the case with writing to learn assignments.

**Research Question #1c:** Do the selected state-adopted social studies textbooks, at grades seven and eleven, and accompanying teacher manuals, acknowledge and incorporate the writing process in their treatment of composition by either mentioning the various stages in the process or by including assignments that make use of the various stages in the writing process?

Another major development in research about writing over the last fifteen to twenty years is the acknowledgement that writing is a process of thinking, formulating ideas, drafting those ideas, and then reshaping them through revision or editing. Prior to this approach had been decades of treating writing in the content areas as a product-oriented activity to demonstrate learning as in an essay or discussion answer on a test.

As part of this study, I examined each identified writing assignment to determine whether or not it was product based or process based. When assignments were first categorized as either process based or product based, product-based assignments

Table 14

Grade Seven Results

GRADE 7

Title of Test	No. of Pages	No. Writing Assignments	Writing to Learn	Writing to Evaluate	Prod.	Process	Prewriting	Writing	Part	Expressive	Poetic	Transactional	Teacher	Self	Other	Reporting	Exposition	Narration	Argumentation
1. Challenge of Freedom	ST	796	21	17	21	0	0	21	0	2	1	18	8	1	12	13	5	1	2
	TE	796	107	92	106	1	1	106	0	13	3	91	84	4	19	59	23	8	17
	Total	1592	128	109	127	1	1	127	0	15	4	109	92	5	31	72	28	9	19
2. Exploring American History	ST	698	212	190	212	0	0	212	0	38	21	153	131	16	65	74	56	20	62
	TE	872	130	124	180	0	0	130	0	32	10	88	96	15	19	54	40	10	26
	Total	1570	342	314	392	0	0	342	0	70	31	241	227	31	84	128	96	30	88
3. America's Story	ST	828	101	101	98	3	3	101	1	16	2	83	99	0	2	42	32	6	21
	TE	954	141	134	137	4	4	141	0	8	6	127	133	3	5	41	47	6	47
	Total	1782	242	235	235	7	7	242	1	24	8	210	232	3	7	83	79	12	68
4. American Spirit	ST	800	55	55	51	4	4	55	0	6	3	46	52	1	2	4	25	1	25
	TE	828	105	94	97	8	6	102	4	5	3	97	103	1	1	15	60	3	27
	Total	1628	160	149	148	12	10	157	4	11	6	143	155	2	3	19	85	4	52
5. The American Nation	ST	842	24	23	20	4	4	24	0	0	1	23	20	0	4	10	13	0	1
	TE	842	242	238	240	2	2	242	0	17	21	204	234	0	8	60	100	8	74
	Total	1684	266	261	260	6	6	266	0	17	22	227	254	0	12	70	113	8	75
6. America: The People and the Dream	ST	886	46	45	43	3	3	46	0	5	3	38	45	0	1	10	17	1	18
	TE	886	215	199	211	4	4	215	0	33	22	160	194	13	8	55	84	12	64
	Total	1772	261	244	254	7	7	261	0	38	25	198	239	13	9	65	101	13	82
7. One Flag: One Land	ST	818	28	26	28	0	0	28	0	4	2	22	26	2	0	10	10	1	7
	TE	818	29	29	29	0	0	29	0	7	3	19	19	0	0	8	13	1	7
	Total	1636	57	55	57	0	0	57	0	11	5	41	55	2	0	18	23	2	14
7th Grade Totals	ST	5668	487	457	473	14	14	487	1	71	33	383	381	20	86	163	158	30	136
	TE	5996	969	910	950	19	17	965	4	115	68	786	873	36	60	292	367	48	262
	Totals	11664	1456	1367	1423	33	31	1452	5	186	101	1169	1254	56	146	455	525	78	398

Table 15

Grade Eleven Results

GRADE 11

Title of Text	No. of Pages	No. Writing Assignments	Writing to Learn	Writing to Evaluate	Prod.	Process	Prewriting	Writing	Post	Expressive	Peer-Transactional	Teacher	Self	Other	Reporting	Exposition	Narrative	Argumentation
1. American Pageant	ST 1019 TE 218	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1237	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Enduring Vision: History of the American People	ST 1159 TE 312	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1471	56	16	40	55	1	1	56	0	6	0	43	11	2	24	10	0	22
3. Our Land, Our Time	ST 944 TE 1200	92	4	88	86	6	9	86	0	11	2	89	3	0	24	37	1	30
Total	2144	312	12	300	305	7	9	305	1	24	7	281	10	2	103	126	5	78
4. History of the United States	ST 870 TE 870	103	0	103	103	0	0	103	0	4	1	98	0	3	45	45	0	13
Total	1740	232	1	231	232	0	0	232	0	16	40	176	0	9	77	84	20	51
5. The Americans	ST 864 TE 864	6	0	6	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	6	0	1	1	5	0	0
Total	1728	199	1	198	194	5	5	199	0	8	6	185	0	7	48	90	5	56
6. A History of the United States	ST 891 TE 1038	5	0	5	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	4
Total	1929	131	15	116	122	9	8	131	1	11	4	116	0	2	16	63	1	51
7. The United States: A History of the Republic	ST 917 TE 1065	20	1	19	16	4	3	19	1	0	0	20	0	1	7	12	0	1
Total	1982	272	1	271	263	9	8	271	1	20	8	244	0	1	108	110	1	53
8. Land of Promise	ST 936 TE 1096	67	1	66	65	2	2	67	0	5	14	48	0	4	11	34	5	17
Total	2032	204	3	201	200	4	4	201	0	8	19	177	3	13	52	101	8	43
9. Life and Liberty	ST 740 TE 255	68	2	66	68	0	0	68	0	6	0	62	0	1	8	29	1	30
Total	995	92	3	89	92	0	0	92	0	6	8	78	0	4	13	39	5	35
11th Grade Totals	ST 8340 TE 6918	361	8	353	349	12	14	354	3	26	17	318	3	10	97	162	7	95
Totals	15258	1498	52	1446	1463	35	35	1487	3	99	92	1307	24	40	441	623	45	389

Table 16

Grades Seven and Eleven Combined Totals

TOTALS

	No. of Pages	No. Writing Assignments	Writing to Learn	Writing to Evaluate	Prod.	Process	Prewriting	Writing	Post	Expressive	Point	Transactional	Teacher	Self	Other	Reporting	Exposition	Narration	Argumentation
<b>7th Grade N = 7</b>																			
7th ST Totals	5668	487	30	457	473	14	14	487	1	71	33	383	381	20	86	163	158	30	136
7th ST Average	810	70	4	65	68	2	2	70	0	10	5	55	54	3	12	23	23	4	19
7th TE Totals	5996	969	59	910	950	19	17	963	4	115	68	786	873	36	60	292	367	48	262
7th TE Average	857	138	8	130	136	3	2	138	1	16	10	112	125	5	9	42	52	7	37
<b>11th Grade N = 9</b>																			
11th ST Totals	8340	361	8	353	349	12	14	354	1	26	17	318	348	3	10	97	162	7	95
11th ST Average	927	40	1	39	39	1	2	39	0	3	2	35	39	0	1	11	18	1	11
11th TE Totals	6918	1137	44	1093	1114	23	21	1133	2	73	75	989	1086	21	30	344	461	38	294
11th TE Average	769	126	5	121	124	3	2	126	0	8	8	110	121	2	3	38	52	4	33
<b>Combined N = 16</b>																			
ST Totals	14008	848	38	810	822	26	28	841	2	97	50	701	729	23	96	260	320	37	221
ST Average	876	53	2	51	51	2	2	53	0	6	3	44	46	1	6	16	20	2	14
TE Totals	12914	2106	103	2093	2064	42	38	2098	6	188	143	1775	1959	57	90	636	828	86	556
TE Average	807	132	6	125	129	3	2	131	0	12	9	111	122	4	6	40	52	5	35
Totals	26922	2954	141	2813	2886	68	66	2939	8	285	193	2476	2688	80	186	896	1148	123	787
Overall Averages	1683	185	9	176	180	4	4	184	1	18	12	155	168	5	12	56	72	8	49

Table 17

Grades Seven and Eleven Averages

AVERAGES

Grade Level	No. of Pages	No. Writing Assignments to Learn	Writing to Learn	Writing to Evaluate	Prod.	Process	Prewriting	Writing	Post	Expository	Poetic	Transactional	Teacher	Self	Other	Reporting	Exposition	Narrative	Argumentation
<b>7th Grade N = 7</b>																			
ST Totals	5668	487	30	457	473	14	14	487	1	71	33	383	381	20	86	163	158	30	136
ST Average	810	70	4	65	68	2	2	70	0	10	5	55	54	3	12	23	23	4	19
TE Totals	5996	969	59	910	950	19	17	965	4	115	68	786	873	36	60	292	367	48	262
TE Average	857	138	8	130	136	3	2	138	1	16	10	112	125	5	9	42	52	7	37
Grade Total	11664	1456	89	1367	1423	33	31	1452	5	186	101	1169	1254	56	146	455	525	78	398
Grade Average	1676	208	13	195	203	5	4	207	1	27	14	167	179	8	21	65	75	11	57
<b>11th Grade N = 9</b>																			
ST Totals	8340	361	8	353	349	12	14	354	1	26	17	318	348	3	10	97	162	7	95
ST Average	927	40	1	39	39	1	2	39	0	3	2	35	39	0	1	11	18	1	11
TE Totals	6918	1137	44	1093	1114	23	21	1133	2	73	75	989	1086	21	30	344	461	38	294
TE Average	769	126	5	121	124	3	2	126	0	8	8	110	121	2	3	38	52	4	33
Grade Total	15258	1498	52	1446	1463	35	35	1487	3	99	92	1307	1434	24	40	441	623	45	389
Grade Average	1695	166	6	161	163	4	4	165	0	11	10	145	159	3	4	49	69	5	43



outnumbered assignments acknowledging writing as a process nearly forty to one. This proportion of product-oriented assignments to process-oriented assignments held true at both grade levels and in student texts and teacher editions alike. Ninety-eight percent of assignments examined were found to be product oriented, merely asking students to write a response to a particular question or assignment. Such assignments focused on the final product or result from assignment completion with no acknowledgment of prewriting to generate ideas prior to drafting responses, or any need to revise or edit writing once drafted. In no case of student text or teacher edition did the number of process-oriented writing assignments exceed those found to be product oriented. One could not rely on the writing assignments within the texts sampled to reinforce the need for students to prewrite or postwrite in developing their responses.

When assignments were further examined to identify all phases of the writing process included by an assignment, it was found that in nearly all cases only the composing phase of the process was represented. Over 99 percent of writing assignments analyzed only reinforced the composing phase of the writing process. Reinforcement of other writing process stages would need to come from resources other than the text materials and writing assignments contained within them. Though some assignments could be found that represented the prewriting or postwriting phases of the process, or even all three phases in a few cases, they were the exception rather than the rule in this sample.

**Research Question #1d: What functions or categories of writing are required by writing assignments in the selected text packages (i.e., Britton's and Donlan's categories)?**

The instrument section on functions of writing saw assignments labeled as Expressive, Poetic, or Transactional, based on Britton's work on developmental writing abilities. While examples of each function were represented in the sample of textbooks examined, Transactional writing dominated the functions of writing represented by the sample analyzed. Over three-fourths of the assignments were Transactional in nature, requiring students to write in an informational, formal mode. Markedly fewer assignments allowed for the Expressive mode where a student might write informally as in contemplating ideas or informally conversing about information. The function least often evidenced in examined materials overall was the Poetic function where form was an essential art structure, perhaps as essential to the writing as the information being conveyed. Few assignments lent themselves to that much creativity or even to the informality suggested by the Expressive mode. Transactional writing, just as Britton and Applebee found in their studies, remains school-sponsored, informational writing at least within secondary United States history texts adopted for current use in Virginia.

Another section of the instrument devoted to kinds of writing asked for in writing assignments was based on Donlan's categories of writing particular to the social studies. Donlan's own studies had indicated that most writing in the social studies was Exposition, followed by Reporting, Argumentation, and then Narration.

Donlan's categories of Reporting, Exposition, Narration, and Argumentation were all evidenced in student texts and teacher editions at each grade level of this research study.

Donlan's categories of social studies writing represent a hierarchy of thinking and processing of information. His lowest level, Reporting, was the category of writing called for in 30 percent of assignments analyzed, second only to Exposition. Because of its requirement by the writer to go beyond recall to explain and thereby generate new ideas or ways of expanding on information, Exposition constituted Donlan's second level of social studies writing. In this study, Exposition assignments constituted 39 percent of all assignments, making Exposition the most frequently required type of writing according to the Donlan model. Thirdly, was Narration, a creative level of composition where the writer created characters and plot to make a point. This level of the hierarchy saw the fewest number of assignments with only 4 percent of examined assignments requiring such creativity. Donlan's categories suggest that the highest level of thinking is in assignments of Argumentation where the writer supports an idea or belief. Such assignments represented 27 percent of examined assignments overall.

Results of this study paralleled Donlan's findings with most assignments overall being examples of Exposition, followed by Reporting, Argumentation, and Narration. Most writing assignments identified in the student texts and teacher editions were found to be examples of Exposition, causing the student to explain an idea or an

historical occurrence. Next in frequency were assignments of Reporting calling for students to restate or recall basic information. Third in frequency were assignments of Argumentation where students were asked to support a stance or position. Markedly fewer assignments were found to require the creative writing represented by Narration with its inclusion of characters and plot development in storytelling.

Research Question #1e: What attention to audience is made by the writing assignments in the selected text packages?

Stemming from the work of Britton and Applebee, on the function or purpose of a written piece, was the category of audience. Here, I considered whether the written response resulting from the writing assignment was aimed at the teacher as reader or evaluator, at another real audience, or for the student author himself/herself. Most assignments targeted the teacher as audience considerably more than the other two audience options. Students were offered, in this sampling of text assignments, little opportunity to write for themselves or for some real audience other than the teacher.

Assignments did not have to target an audience specifically to receive a rating in this category. In fact, with most assignments as constructed, there was no mention of an audience for the writing assignment. I had to infer that the teacher would serve as the likely audience of, for example, an assignment calling for students on an essay test to write of the major causes of the Civil War. Despite the attention to cooperative learning activities and shared writing demonstrated in many of the text materials, seldom did the student actually write for an audience other than the teacher

as reader. Many assignments even created imaginary, though unrealistic, audiences such as writing a letter as a colonist to a relative still in the homeland. The actual audience for the student writing remained the teacher since the scenario described within the stated assignment offered an imaginary or purported audience to guide the student writer. Realistically, the student writer responded with the expectation that his/her writing would be evaluated or responded to by the teacher. As indicated in the summary tables, this pattern held true at each grade level and overall.

Research Question #1f: What forms do the writing assignments call for in the selected text packages?

The last section of the instrument was used to record forms required by writing assignments. Labels were assigned based on key words within the assignment rather than by categorizing according to prescribed or set forms. That is, it was recorded if the assignment asked the student to write a letter (letter form) or compare (comparison form) two political candidates. Similar forms were then summarized as to frequency of use. In the case of each grade level and of student texts overall, as well as teacher editions overall, the form most often mentioned in assignments was the report or summary.

Interestingly, an assignment might call for a report by form, only to require a level of written response that would not be considered Reporting by Donlan's categories of social studies writing. Thus, key words such as "report" or "explanation" were used freely among writing assignments with varying degrees of

thinking or manipulation of information required by the student writer. What was termed a "report" of key accomplishments of a leader in one writing response might be much more involved in a writing assignment calling for a "report" on the student's support for a political idea discussed within the text chapter. Teachers might well take notice as they assign writing from text materials of the varying demands or requirements on students with assignments of seemingly similar expectations or at least with similar forms required.

Research Question #2: How does the treatment of writing in Virginia social studies textbooks and accompanying teacher manuals, at grades seven and eleven, reflect current composition research and theory?

Generally, the writing assignments housed within social studies student texts and teacher editions at grades seven and eleven of Virginia's current adoption list reflect the findings of earlier studies by Britton, Applebee, and Donlan. Over a decade later than the research conducted by these three, writing, as represented in these selected texts, has changed very little. Writing largely continues to be of a product orientation, with minimal attention to writing as a process, at least in writing assignments contained within the examined texts and related teacher materials. These writing assignments did little to acknowledge or reinforce writing as a process that might serve students as a means of learning information as well as demonstrating learning. Most writing required of students, as reflected by text assignments, was

informational in nature, written for the teacher as audience. Students were seldom asked to write creatively as a means of expressing or exploring ideas.

As the findings of this study generally paralleled similar studies of more than a decade earlier, it seems that writing in the social studies is changing slowly at best in its reflection of current research or trends. Teachers interested in assigning writing and encouraging the like, may well need to look beyond the writing assignments offered within student texts or accompanying teacher editions for accomplishing such goals.

### **Implications of this Study for Writing in the Social Studies**

As teachers select or inherit textbooks for use in the teaching of their courses, the intent is that the texts will be current in information and trends of teaching for a given subject area. Because textbooks remain a primary teaching tool, it is imperative that they at least model the teaching approaches found to be most effective or reliable. Therefore, in the teaching or use of writing in a content area such as social studies, one should be able to examine the writing assignments posed for students through textbooks to ascertain a sense of the kind of writing that may be required or encouraged. For the purposes of this study about writing in the social studies, a sample of texts was chosen for analysis from the Virginia textbook adoption list. Examined were seventh and eleventh-grade United States history texts, along

with their complementary teacher editions. This sample reflected two grades of history with the thought that in history courses, with their emphasis on the importance of written records of major events or accomplishments, as much writing could be expected as in any other social studies areas. Moreover, the focus on United States history would allow for examination at a middle school grade level as well as at a high school grade level. This focus would cover two secondary perspectives on writing in the social studies and allow some common ground or subject for comparison.

The results of this study, as detailed earlier, generally reflected the findings of similar studies of the seventies and eighties by such researchers as Britton, Applebee, and Donlan. As was the case more than a decade before, the writing assignments of history text materials examined indicated an emphasis on product-based writing intended to evaluate student learning. Little provision was made within assignments to encourage writing as a process. Most writing suggested by assignments was of a Transactional or informational nature meant to explain or report information about history. Primarily, the writing assignments were completed with the teacher designated or inferred to be the audience. If teachers and students using these text materials intend to broaden the approach to writing to consistently include writing as a process or to include writing as a means of learning information, much needs to be done to supplement the writing opportunities provided through the student text or the teacher edition.



The results of this study have implications for a number of groups interested in the place of writing in content areas such as social studies. Beyond the teacher and student using the materials, there are implications for curriculum specialists, social studies educators, educators in general, state departments of education responsible for statewide textbook adoptions, as well as for textbook publishers.

Teachers might well identify for their students a variety of writing types or purposes particular to their content areas. Beyond that, teachers might well create a framework of writing types or assignments to be emphasized at various grade levels or in various related courses. One might even build on various writing assignments to lead students through a writing process toward a written product. Students might even create a portfolio of their writing throughout a course.

Denise M. Standiford, in her article "In the Process: Using the Four Modes to Develop a Layered Composition," explains how she used the discourse modes to create a conceptual framework for the study of writing in her course. Though she acknowledged that James Britton said one should not force the modes of discourse into such a conceptual framework, Standiford found that the building or layering of assignments helped students to grow and learn about the information provided by various modes. Her "object-composite assignment . . . provided a vehicle for helping students move through a process that encouraged them to adopt various ways of seeing, layer by layer" (Standiford, p. 53).

Initially students wrote a description of the chosen object offering concrete and vivid information about that object. The next layer of writing called for a move from factual properties to an explanation of the object's purpose or how it compares to other familiar objects. A third assignment of argument and persuasion challenged student writers to "move from the world of concrete facts about an object to the abstract world of reflection, interpretation, and belief as they explore the object's meaning as a symbol" (Standiford, p. 50). Lastly, students were asked to create a story or narrative, with logical sequence and order, about their own personal interaction with the object. The final draft of writing called for a composite of the four modes addressed in initial assignments with transition and revision as needed for coherence and clarity.

Standiford contended that short writing segments, each with a solitary focus, leading to the composite assignment made writing manageable for students and offered a marriage of process and product in regards to composition. Other teachers might take from this model and develop their own strategies to help students grow in their writing and thinking about their particular subject areas or disciplines.

It is impossible to project a model assignment with all its appropriate parts, in that assignments may vary so in their function, purpose or intended audience. Not every assignment need have the same ingredients. For instance, a writing to learn activity need not require prewriting or even rewriting if the intended audience is the student himself/herself and the assignment is merely a focal activity to a lesson meant

to generate information regarding the student's prior knowledge. Yet, surely a more systematic approach can be made to writing instruction or modeling than did one text which had included several assignments requiring students to write a newspaper article, only to include instruction on the 5W's of a good newspaper article in a subsequent chapter. As curriculum specialists and teachers work together to develop curriculum responsibilities at various grade levels, attention might well be given to what responsibility each grade-level or subject area teacher will have for either introducing, emphasizing, or reinforcing ideas associated with writing in the content area.

Curriculum specialists might well use the findings of this study to initiate curriculum review if not revision. The history text materials examined represent nearly 3,000 stated writing opportunities. Every text package except one included writing assignments. However, a system for logically developing writing skills was often lacking within any particular text package. Direction for how best to implement a writing component was not always directly stated. At least at these two grade levels of texts there is little stated support for writing as a process; little specific attention to writing as a means of learning as well as a means of demonstrating learning; little direct attention to writing for an audience; and no stated attention to various purposes or functions of writing. Thus, the specialist might well lead teachers through curriculum review to establish priorities for writing instruction and writing use in the

social studies, regardless of the assistance that might be expected from current student texts or teacher editions.

Moreover, curriculum specialists might use the results of this study to shape staff development programs for teachers regarding the place of writing in the social studies as well as strategies for creating that place for writing in social studies instruction. Content area specialists might look for models of writing types particular to a subject area to assist teachers in recognizing and incorporating a variety of purposes through student writing into their teaching. Such might well help to ground writing in all content areas as a means of mastering information and demonstrating mastery or learning within a discipline.

Social studies educators can learn from the results of this study just how much congruence exists, or does not exist, between theory and practice as advocated to classroom teachers and the actual resources available to teachers to implement or apply that theory. Aware of the importance of or potential for writing in the social studies, social studies educators may offer teachers a rationale for including writing in their teaching. Perhaps they could help teachers develop strategies and even writing assignments to appropriately address writing in a meaningful way since the texts supporting those teachers may fall short in fully utilizing writing otherwise.

Social studies educators developing methods courses for preservice training might well serve their students by emphasizing the importance of writing within their content area to teach their subject areas as well as to provide a vehicle for testing or

demonstrating mastery within their areas. Acceptance of writing's place in any and every content area might well lead to a writing across the curriculum program at college level or elsewhere. For students to learn in an environment that accentuates writing in this way would allow students the opportunity to experience writing's benefits and multiple uses first hand. A program that modeled writing inclusion would make writing a part of one's experience base and a strategy to naturally draw upon later, as in teaching others. Coupled with an emphasis in a methods course designed to focus on specific strategies for implementation, this emphasis on writing could strengthen writing instruction and communication skills in any content area.

Because more writing assignments, at each grade level of this study, were found in the teacher edition than in the student text, the importance of teacher editions and ancillary materials is reinforced. Educators must realize that the student text is only one component of a textbook package developed by publishers and that the student text may fall short of supporting philosophies and suggestions for its most effective use by the teacher and student.

In such states as Virginia where local adoption of textbooks comes from a state-adopted list of choices, prepared under the direction of this State Department of Education, the results of this study could be particularly meaningful. The analysis provided as part of this study may suggest the need for more than just a cursory look at text choices to see if they provide writing assignments of some kind. Instead, it offers a method by which to analyze the writing required by students as to its variety

of purposes, audiences, and its approach. As state textbook adoption committees set criteria for reviewing texts, guidelines regarding the treatment of writing could be clearly articulated to suggest or reflect current trends and research. Then it would be easier to distinguish between texts that include information sections on writing various forms such as book reports, a persuasive essay and the like, from those that actually require writing throughout for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Perhaps the greatest difference could be felt by these research study findings if they were considered by textbook authors and publishers. The findings would provide some indication of what exists at least by certain publishers at certain grade levels, accompanied by an instrument or means to analyze writing assignments being included in textbooks packages. While one must be careful not to generalize too far beyond the sample of textbooks examined, certainly several national publishing companies are represented by Virginia social studies texts at grades seven and eleven. Once presented with findings about the texts for these two grade levels, publishers might be encouraged to use the instrument or develop some comparable means for analysis of other texts being published for other social studies areas and beyond. Review by publishers issuing texts for use nationwide might well offer the greatest point of change or impact as texts are reviewed or are written for future adoptions.

Another implication of these research study findings is for the shared responsibility by publishers, social studies educators, departments of education, and curriculum specialists to provide appropriate staff development to teachers using the

text packages. To assume that the teacher will automatically know the best use of the text activities or assignments is too great an assumption. Realizing the difficulty in including all support for text use within its covers, follow-up staff development tailored to teachers in particular settings, working under particular curricular mandates, and perhaps with varying backgrounds or levels of expertise, on-site staff development seems mandatory if the text is to be used most effectively and if certain key topics, such as writing in the content areas, are to be addressed.

In an effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice, professional journals need to heighten awareness about current research in such areas as writing in the content areas so as to further support teachers who are expected to effectively teach, often in the face of materials and resources that are not equipped to assist them. Greater attention to such topics, along with suggestions for application, would do much to educate teachers and provide them with much needed strategies and resources to reinforce and maximize their teaching.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

In considering recommendations for future studies I distinguish between recommendations for possible modifications of this study before possible replication and complementary studies which would offer additional information about writing in the social studies or in other content areas.

If this study were being replicated, the researcher might obtain additional information in the category of audience for the writing. Here, more than in any other category of the research instrument, there sometimes seemed confusion between what was purported within an assignment and the reality of the situation. For example, an assignment might suggest that the student write a journal entry describing surroundings of an expedition conducted historically by Lewis and Clark. While the journal form suggested the student might be writing for "self" because if it was a journal entry, the reality was that the student might well be demonstrating for the teacher audience his/her knowledge of Lewis and Clark's work. Therefore, it might be helpful, and less confusing in data collection, to differentiate somehow between the purported audience, for instance, and the actual one. This would provide information about assignments with contrived audiences versus ones that seemingly offer no attention to audience at all.

Another modification of this study might be to look only at student texts for analysis purposes. It may not be unrealistic that there are teachers who only have student texts available to them as they plan instruction and subsequent writing assignments for students. An alternative to this approach would be to examine all ancillary materials available from a publisher that are associated with titles adopted by the state. This would give a full accounting of each publisher's priorities to writing in a textbook package.



A logical extension of this study would be to duplicate the basis and approach of the study with secondary social studies textbooks of other areas such as geography or government. Such would offer a more comprehensive perspective of writing in social studies texts at secondary grades. A complement to this might be to duplicate the study using elementary social studies texts from the state-adopted list, allowing one to see the progression and development of writing across grade levels as revealed through textbook assignments.

In order to gain a sense of change in writing assignments in social studies texts, for instance, one might apply the instrument to a sample of texts across two adoption cycles. In the state of Virginia, texts are adopted every six years. Supposedly texts are revised, updated, and rewritten between adoptions in order to offer the most current texts. One might examine the texts provided by particular publishers at one adoption point to those presented six years later to see how revision and change is reflected in the treatment of writing within those texts.

Though the textbook remains a primary teaching tool in classrooms, it is nonetheless only one resource available to teachers and students. A follow-up study to this research might be a study of the writing that a sample of teachers actually required of their students regardless of whether the assignments stemmed from textbook materials or other resources. Additionally, it would be of interest to survey teachers about their perceptions of the place of writing in social studies instruction and their own teaching of writing and the resources employed to address writing.

As stated earlier, the study suggests discrepancies between theory and practice in the area of writing in the social studies. Even those texts with the most instances of writing assignments need not be better than other texts with fewer writing assignments. Much depends on the use made of the texts by the classroom teacher. This study focused primarily on the potential for writing in certain classrooms where selected texts were adopted for use; subsequent studies might well focus on the teacher and his/her use of text materials to include writing in their teaching. That is, how does a good teacher negotiate the inclusion of writing in his/her teaching? How much are texts used in writing instruction or inclusion? How are text writing assignments used or modified by teachers? What other resources bear on the teaching of writing in selected classrooms?

These are only a few of the kinds of research that might stem from this particular research study. Not only might this study serve for further analysis of writing happening in the area of social studies at various grade levels, but also it might serve as a model for further study of writing's place in other content areas.

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## **APPENDIX A**

## **Textbook List**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Department of Education  
Basal Textbook List for Social Studies  
Grades 7 & 11  
Sessions 1991-1997**

### **GRADE 7 - U.S. HISTORY**

**(7 entries)**

1. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill  
LaRaus  
CHALLENGE OF FREEDOM (c) 1990
2. Globe Book Company  
O'Connor  
EXPLORING AMERICAN HISTORY (c) 1991
3. Houghton Mifflin  
Jacobs, Wilder, Ludlum, and Brown  
AMERICA'S STORY (c) 1990
4. Prentice Hall  
Ver Steeg  
AMERICAN SPIRIT (c) 1990
5. Prentice Hall  
Davidson and Batchelor  
THE AMERICAN NATION (c) 1990
6. Scott Foresman  
Divine, Breen, Fredrickson, and Williams  
AMERICA: THE PEOPLE AND THE DREAM (c) 1991
7. Silver Burdett Ginn  
Brown and Bass  
ONE FLAG: ONE LAND (c) 1990



**GRADE 11 - U.S. HISTORY**

**(9 entries)**

1. D. C. Heath  
Bailey and Kennedy  
AMERICAN PAGEANT (c) 1987
2. D. C. Heath  
Boyer, Kett, Sitkoff, Clark, Purvis, and Woloch  
ENDURING VISION: A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE (c) 1990
3. Holt Rinehart and Winston  
Conlin  
OUR LAND, OUR TIME (c) 1991
4. Houghton Mifflin  
Dibacco, Mason and Appy  
HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES (c) 1991
5. McDougal Littell  
Jordan, Greenbaltt, and Bowes  
THE AMERICANS (c) 1991
6. Prentice Hall  
Boorstin and Kelly  
A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES (c) 1990
7. Prentice Hall  
Davidson and Lytle  
THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC (c) 1990
8. Scott Foresman  
Berkin, Wood, Deines, and Gertner  
LAND OF PROMISE (c) 1987
9. Scott Foresman  
Roden, Greer, Kraig, and Bivins  
LIFE AND LIBERTY (c) 1987

## **APPENDIX B**

**Key Articles from Social Studies Periodicals  
that Address Writing in the Social Studies  
(January 1975 - June 1991)**

Following is a chronological listing of key articles on writing found in state and national social studies periodicals, from January 1975 through June 1991. Each entry includes the date of publication, the title of the article, the author, and a brief comment regarding the focus of the article.

**The Virginia Resolves**

- May 1981            "Report Writing: A Step-by-Step Method"  
Monte DeBoard and Charles Hendricks  
Herndon Elementary School; Herndon, VA  
- Outlines steps in writing a report
- Feb 1984            "National Concern for Excellence: Implications For the Social  
Studies in the Public Schools"  
Sylvia S. Moore  
Supervisor of Elementary Education, Rockingham County Schools  
- States need for work with language skills in social studies

**Social Education**

- Nov/Dec 1976      "What Teachers Should Know About Standardized Tests"  
Lena Boyd Brown  
- Relates importance of essay questions
- March 1979        "Developmental Writing: Social Studies Assignments"  
Raymond Ventre  
Carnegie-Mellon Education Center  
- Cites steps to writing process
- March 1979        "Good Assignments Lead to Good Writing"  
Anita Brostoff  
Carnegie-Mellon Education Center  
- States importance of clearly articulated tasks

- March 1979 "Pre-Writing and Rewriting to Learn"  
Barry K. Beyer  
Carnegie-Mellon Education Center  
- States importance of prewriting and rewriting
- March 1979 "The Time it Takes: Managing/Evaluating Writing and Social Studies"  
Barry K. Beyer and Anita Brostoff  
Carnegie-Mellon Education Center  
- Gives options for including writing without adding extra burden to social studies teachers
- March 1979 "Writing and the Generation of Knowledge"  
A. D. Nostrand  
Brown University  
- Shows writing as a relation-making process
- March 1979 "Writing to Learn in Social Studies"  
Barry K. Beyer and Anita Brostoff  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
- Explores the place of writing in the social studies
- Oct 1982 "Language Concepts for Application in the Social Studies"  
James R. Squire  
Senior Vice-President for Research and Development for Ginn & Co.  
- Cites importance of stressing writing
- Jan 1983 "How to Stimulate Writing with Political Cartoons"  
David Monahan  
Eastern Virginia Writing Project  
- Demonstrates importance of prewriting
- April/May 1987 "Freewriting in the Social Studies Classroom"  
Eileen Tamura and James Harstad  
University of Hawaii  
- Explains freewriting as a warm-up activity
- April/May 1988 "Writing and Thinking About the English Industrial Revolution"  
Jacqueline Hedberg  
- Suggests writing as active learning

- Oct 1988      "Personal Journals for the Social Studies"  
Randy Mills  
- Emphasizes place of journals in social studies
- Jan 1990      "Reading, Writing and Thinking about Prejudice: Stereotyped  
Images of Disability in the Popular Press"  
Howard Margolis, Arthur Shapiro, and Phillip Anderson  
- Discusses role of writing in developing critical reading/thinking  
skills.
- Jan 1991      "An English and Social Studies Interdisciplinary Program"  
Gloria Moss  
Coconut Creek High School; Coconut Creek, Florida  
- Suggests connections between areas of study
- Jan 1991      "'Doing' Social Studies: Whole Language Lessons to Promote  
Social Action"  
David Freeman and Yvonne Freeman  
- Suggests connections between areas of study
- March 1991    "Letter Writing: Creative Vehicle to Higher Level Thinking"  
Joseph Naumann  
McCluer North High School; St. Charles, Missouri  
- Cites importance of carefully structured writing assignments

### The Social Studies

- Nov/Dec 1978    "Reading, Writing and Philosophy"  
William Proefviedt  
Queens College  
- Tells importance of teaching how to develop an argument
- May/June 1980    "Balance Content and Skills in the Social Studies"  
Judy Ferro  
College of Idaho  
- Shows skills needed for writing
- Jan/Feb 1981    "Teach Social Studies Through Writing"  
Ann Dolgin  
Florida Junior College  
- Cites importance of writing in content areas

- May/June 1982 "Using Writing to Learn Social Studies"  
 Barry Beyer  
 George Mason University  
 - Shows some uses of writing in the social studies
- Nov/Dec 1982 "Integration of Basic Skills: The Great Deception in Elementary Social Studies"  
 Johanne K. Lemlech  
 - Suggests importance of civic competency versus writing
- Nov/Dec 1982 "Social Studies and the Integration of Basic Skills: A Reply to Johanne Lemlech"  
 John Lunstrum and Judith Irwin  
 Florida State University  
 - Suggests place of writing as basic to school instruction
- May/June 1985 "Building Higher Level Thinking and Writing Skills in Social Studies"  
 Anne E. Pocker and Constance M. Perry  
 - Sees writing as a medium to develop thought
- July/Aug 1985 "Writing to Learn: A Message for History and Social Studies Teachers"  
 William E. Guggin  
 Virginia Commonwealth University  
 - Cites place of writing beyond English
- Nov/Dec 1987 "Social Studies Research Papers: A Writing Process Approach"  
 Robert Gilstrap  
 George Mason University  
 - Advocates teaching research as a process
- July/Aug 1990 "Before the Outline--The Writing Wheel"  
 Colleen Rae  
 Santa Fe Community College  
 - Creates writing wheel as form of prewriting

## **APPENDIX C**





## **APPENDIX D**

**Intercoder Reliability Results  
Round 1**

	<u>Researcher</u>	<u>Coder #1</u>	<u>Coder #2</u>
Determination of Assignments (100% Reliability)	6	6	6
Writing to Learn/Writing for Evaluation  (83% Reliability)	Ea Ea Ea La Ea La	Ea Ea Ea Lb Lb Lb	Ea Ea Ea La La La
Product/Process Product Process (100% Reliability)	6 0	6 0	6 0
Process Phase Prewriting Writing Postwriting (100% Reliability)	0 6 0	0 6 0	0 6 0
Britton's Functions: Expressive, Transactional, or Poetic (100% Reliability)	T T T T E P	T T T T E P	T T T T E P
Audience: Teacher, Self, or Other (100% Reliability)	T T T O S O	O T O O S O	T T T T S T

**Donlan's Categories: Reporting,  
Narration, or Argumentation  
(100% Reliability)**

**R  
R  
R  
E  
N  
N**

**R  
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**R  
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N**

## **APPENDIX E**

**Top Three Forms Used in Texts**  
**Seventh Grade**

<b>1. CHALLENGE OF FREEDOM</b>			
ST	Reports (6) Letters (4) Biographies (4)	TE	Paragraph (33) Article (17) Report (9)
<b>2. EXPLORING AMERICAN HISTORY</b>			
ST	Summaries (42) Arguments (40) Letters (31)	TE	Reports (33) Newspaper (24) Diary (19)
<b>3. AMERICA'S STORY</b>			
ST	Report/Summary (35) Journal/Diary (11) News Article (11)	TE	Report/Summary (39) Explanation (21) Essays (12)
<b>4. AMERICAN SPIRIT</b>			
ST	Position Paper (9) Explanation (7) Letter (5)	TE	Explanation (35) Position Paper (20) Summary (13)
<b>5. AMERICAN NATION</b>			
ST	Report/Summary (9) Comparison (3) Pamphlet (3)	TE	Essay (37) Report (26) Explanation (20)
<b>6. AMERICA: THE PEOPLE AND THE DREAM</b>			
ST	Explanation (8) Letter (8) Report (4)	TE	Letter (23) Position Paper (21) Diary/Journal (20)
<b>7. ONE FLAG: ONE LAND</b>			
ST	Report/Summary (7) Essay/Explanation (6) Position Paper (3)	TE	Diary/Journal (5) Report (4) Essay (4)

## Eleventh Grade

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1. AMERICAN PAGEANT<br>ST     NONE  | TE | NONE   |
| 2. ENDURING VISION<br>ST     NONE   | TE | Report/Summary (21)<br>Position Paper (16)<br>Essay (7)        |
| 3. OUR LAND, OUR TIME<br>ST     Letter (15)<br>Paragraph (11)<br>Summary (11)                           | TE | Report/Summary (78)<br>Explanation (37)<br>Position Paper (27) |
| 4. HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES<br>ST     Report (60)<br>Letter (8)<br>Explanation (7)                  | TE | Stories/Tales (18)<br>Position Paper (16)<br>Letter (16)       |
| 5. THE AMERICANS<br>ST     Summary (3)<br>Explanation (2)<br>Description (1)                            | TE | Explanation (48)<br>Report (28)<br>Letter (19)                 |
| 6. A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES<br>ST     Hypothesis (2)<br>Summary (1)<br>Explanation (1)            | TE | Letter (21)<br>Explanation (20)<br>Position Paper (17)         |
| 7. THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORY OF A REPUBLIC<br>ST     Explanation (6)<br>Report (5)<br>Comparison (3) | TE | Report/Summary (64)<br>Position Paper (22)<br>Explanation (20) |

**8. LAND OF PROMISE**

**ST** Explanation (16)  
Letter (10)  
Position Paper (6)

**TE** Report/Summary (44)  
Essay (17)  
Position Paper (10)

**9. LIFE AND LIBERTY**

**ST** Essay (29)  
Position Paper (11)  
Letter (6)

**TE** News Article (9)  
Editorial (4)  
Letter (2)

## VITA

Charlotte P. Sellers was born on September 16, 1953, in Charleston, West Virginia. Moving to Salem, Virginia, as a child, she attended Roanoke County Public Schools and graduated from Andrew Lewis High School in June 1971.

In September 1971, Mrs. Sellers entered Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia where she remained through her freshman year. The following fall she entered Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University as a transfer student, majoring in English. In June 1975, she graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Arts degree. In January 1976, she entered a graduate program at Virginia Tech and graduated in 1978 with a Master of Arts degree in Education, having concentrated in social studies education. In March 1979, Mrs. Sellers applied for readmission to Virginia Tech to commence studies in a doctoral program in Education Curriculum and Instruction. during the summer of 1979, Mrs. Sellers participated in the first institute of the Southwest Virginia Writing Project.

After graduating with her B.A. degree in English, Mrs. Sellers was employed by Montgomery County Public Schools to teach English and social studies at Blacksburg High School. It was at Blacksburg High that she taught English and social studies for eight years before requesting a year of educational leave of absence to fulfill residency requirements for doctoral studies at Virginia Tech. Mrs. Sellers remained a full-time graduate student from 1983 till 1986, serving as a University Supervisor of social studies student aides and student teachers for Virginia Tech. After her leave,



Mrs. Sellers returned to Montgomery County Public Schools in 1986 as an English teacher at Blacksburg High School. After one semester, she moved to central office as Supervisor of Secondary Education. In 1991 she became assistant principal at Christiansburg High School in Montgomery County. It was during her tenure there that she resumed her doctoral studies, completing requirements for the doctorate in 1993.

Charlotte P. Sellers