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ABSTRACT: Modern secondary courses in English differ from classical tradition in their tendency to avoid direct instruction in the content and style of writing. Such avoidance is partly a function of anxieties about the role of English in students' personal development and a fear of limiting their self expression. Neither of the dominant writing pedagogies from the last 50 years wholly escapes this problem. A historical consideration of the issue suggests that fears surrounding explicit instruction arise from a range of misperceptions about writing and English. Modern writing pedagogy may therefore be improved by an acquaintance with traditions of explicit instruction, as found in classical training regimes. Such knowledge would furnish teachers with an additional array of instructional techniques.

<p style="text-align:center">I</p>

A notable characteristic of modern secondary school English is its aversion to systematic instruction in the teaching of writing. In that respect, current writing pedagogy reveals its discontinuity from a long historical tradition of direct instruction in writing. So complete is that discontinuity, most teachers and students are probably unaware that there other ways of teaching and learning the skills of composition. Yet, the absence of systematic instruction, and a lack of familiarity with the knowledge on which it would depend, is evidently a source of much frustration in classrooms, judging from widespread complaints among teachers about the difficulty of teaching students to write well, and widespread reluctance among students to engage in writing. From a historical perspective, the instructional gap in modern writing pedagogy is an odd phenomenon, and one that requires explanation. In this paper, I consider some factors that have led to the current situation and make a case for reviving some traditional instructional methods. My general proposition is that the teaching of writing in secondary schools has been problematised by anxieties arising from a century-long affair with Romanticism, from which the school system as a whole, and English in particular, has not yet recovered. I will make the case that better acquaintance with the long history of writing pedagogy can furnish teachers with an array of additional strategies for teaching important skills.

Lamentations about the decline of historical knowledge in English education, and calls for its recovery, are not new (see Goodson & Ball, 1984; Goodson, 1985; Goodson & Medway, 1983; Green, 1987; Green & Beavis, 1996). Such calls have often drawn attention to classical philology and rhetoric as models for a revised English pedagogy. Terry Eagleton (1986) concluded his influential *Literary Theory* with a call for renewed attention to rhetoric, as a way out of various impasses in the teaching of English. Likewise, Ian Hunter's groundbreaking work on the historical formation of English pointed to rhetorical training as a model for an improved English pedagogy and an escape from the tyranny of "the personal" (Hunter, 1994a, 1994b). But to this point, calls to revisit the classical training models have not given rise to suitably renovated curricula or to substantially revised materials and practices for the classroom. In the hope of advancing that project, I propose to sketch here a broad historical perspective on the place of instruction in writing. I will

briefly review the history of two pedagogical paradigms, before offering an outline of classical and early-modern content and methods, with some illustrative suggestions for practice.

II

To say that there are gaps in current writing pedagogy is not to say that the teaching of writing is failing on a grand scale. Indeed, recent test data paint a rosy picture of students' writing abilities. Analysis of the 2009 PISA testing round (Thomson et al., 2011) shows Australia maintaining a strong position in relation to other OECD countries in reading literacy (a correlate for writing literacy), with a ranking in the top ten. Australia's ranking has slipped in successive PISA rounds, but it is important not to read too much into this in absolute terms, as the mix of countries participating in the testing periodically changes, with some impact on the rankings. (It should be noted, also, that the PISA assessment of writing is quite limited, focussing on clarity in short-form written answers.) The most recent NAPLAN test results (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority ACARA, 2010) show solid performance by Year 9 students against national benchmarks, with better than 82% meeting the minimal standards across writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation in the 2010 report (p.47). In spite of these good reports, however, dissatisfaction with literacy standards is evidently widespread among employers, public examiners, and the coordinators of first-year University courses, among others. The Australian Industry Group's workplace literacy survey, for instance, notes that "75% of respondents reported that their business is affected by low levels of literacy" (AIG, 2010, p.1). A recent Industry Skills Council report (ISC, 2011) asserts that 2 million Australian workers are deficient in literacy skills (p.2). In Western Australia, examiner reports across a range of secondary learning areas identified literacy as an area of weakness in the most recent WACE examinations (Hiatt, 2010). And Universities across Australia are adding remedial English courses to their first year programs–even for students who have enrolled as English majors. At Edith Cowan University, for example, WA's oldest teacher training institution, 40% of the 2010 and 2011 cohorts enrolled in Secondary English Teaching were required to undertake remediation, after failing to meet academic writing requirements in their first written assessment.

We know that criticism of literacy standards has to be interpreted with caution. Some of it is a function of a simmering moral panic surrounding literacy; some of it reflects a rise in expectations driven by economic pressures to raise business productivity; some of it reflects changes in the pool of students seeking University entry. But none of these caveats necessarily invalidates the general point that standards of written expression can be improved, whatever their current level. While the teaching of writing is not failing on a grand scale, there are shortfalls and areas of weakness to be addressed.

What are these weaknesses? Much of the published criticism is directed at faults in sentence grammar and the tendency for students to use abbreviated language forms transferred from digital communications media. But "grammar" in these accounts is often a proxy for issues that are not, strictly speaking, grammatical. Prose can

be grammatically sound yet difficult or frustrating to read because of disordered ideas, verbal clumsiness, unintended opacity, or an abrasive tone. Problems of that kind are better understood as matters of style, to distinguish them from technical errors of grammar, as that term is traditionally understood. Control of style in writing is a separate and distinct skill. It requires attention not only to syntax and word-function but also to euphony, tone and balance–which are aesthetic and pragmatic considerations. Similarly, control of form requires attention not only to divisions, content sequences and topic sentences but also to the balance of reason and emotion, the mix of persuasion and proof, in a text. It is in these respects that student writers and employees often disappoint their audiences, in stilted essays, offensive emails, and speeches larded with verbal solecisms. The AIG report makes this very point:

> The second area of concern related to employees who have a reasonable level of literacy skill but were unable to complete some workplace tasks to the standard required. This included tasks like using appropriate email language in communications between employees and external customers, using appropriate communications methods for team based approaches to problem solving and using appropriate language in written materials for websites and publications. (AIG, 2010, p.5)

The question, then, is not only whether our students can write sentences that are grammatically sound, but whether they can also write sentences that are stylistically sound. Can they phrase things lucidly, elegantly, and memorably as the situation requires? Can they communicate their ideas without frustrating, boring, or offending their readers? These are questions to which an instruction in style should be addressed, but which are currently the objects of some pedagogical neglect.

A training in style is related to but distinct from a training in sentence-level grammar, just as a training in form and composition is related to but distinct from a training in genre (indeed, it should precede the study of genres, as we shall see). It is on this broad terrain of style, form and content that secondary English teachers should conduct much of their teaching of writing; but many of the traditional rules and techniques for effective writing are missing from our official curricula, our textbooks, and our classroom practice. The means of achieving concise diction; the mathematical strategies for controlling cadence and sentence variety; the various forms of repetition and their uses (anaphora, anadiplosis, epistrophe, and the like): these and dozens of other useful skills are largely untaught in our school system. Issues of style and effectiveness are instead addressed obliquely through the concepts of audience, purpose and "appropriateness." But those are abstract parameters. They are considerations, not teachable techniques.

Such gaps in the teaching of writing have two causes: a lack of knowledge among teachers about form, style and aesthetics; and persistent anxieties about how to reconcile the expressive and instrumental functions of writing. There is a residual fear among teachers that direct instruction in style will stifle the creativity of

students. Part of the solution to both problems is an improved acquaintance with historical traditions in writing and writing pedagogy. But such knowledge is evidently rare. Many undergraduate courses on writing pedagogy are thin on history and thick with theorisation; and what passes for historical review in academic discussions often extends no further than the 1960s–making 'history' conveniently coextensive with the professional experience of many senior teachers and academics. The missing content that was once central to writing curricula has fallen below the horizon of modern pedagogical perspectives.

Happily, the incoming Australian Curriculum for English hints at a renewed focus on elements of style and form. It identifies many aspects of writing in detail and with precision, as the following descriptors demonstrate:

> Understand how coherence is created in complex texts through devices like lexical cohesion, ellipsis, grammatical theme and text connectives.

> Understand the effect of nominalisation in the writing of informative and persuasive texts. (Year 8: ACARA 2010).

> Explain how authors experiment with the structures of sentences and clauses to create particular effects.

> Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness. (Year 9: ACARA 2010)

This move toward greater precision in the treatment of language is welcome; but the focus of the syllabus is largely grammatical, rather than stylistic. While descriptors like those above suggest a study of style, they do not identify by name any specific items from the catalogue of techniques that make up the traditional canons of literary style; nor do they indicate that there are established formulae for achieving specific stylistic goals, or that there exists an established body of knowledge on the topic that one might set out to master. Students are expected, it seems, to discover techniques through observation and experimentation. Systematic study is not ruled out, but nor is it especially facilitated. Phrases like "create particular effects" reveal that the curriculum is agnostic on the question of which specific literary effects are worth studying, and in what sequence. That might be a calculated attempt to avoid entering the shark infested waters of literary debate over canons of style and taste; or it might be simple haziness about the content. Whatever the reason, the lack of specificity in its treatment of style means that the curriculum breaks only partially from the current ad-hoc approach.

Exactly what an alternative pedagogy for writing would look like, and what content should be added to the curriculum, is a point we shall return to shortly. But we should first inquire into the origins of our reluctance to teach directly the elements of content, form and style. For this purpose, I will briefly review two influential strands in modern writing pedagogy, under the headings of *process* and *genre*.

I should acknowledge immediately that the critique of writing pedagogies I offer here will be familiar, at least in its broad outline, to those who began their teaching careers in the post-Dartmouth excitement of the late 1960s and after. But it will be new to more recent graduates who joined the profession after the process and genre debates had largely subsided. My purpose in revisiting the critique is not to rake over the coals of a faded fire, in the hope of reigniting it, but to anticipate objections that will otherwise be raised by those who are unfamiliar with the arguments, and to thereby clear the ground for the very different writing pedagogy I present.

I should also acknowledge that the academic theories and expert practices associated with process and genre pedagogies are certainly more nuanced than is implied by this binary presentation. But I am concerned here with how those practices have been broadly understood and implemented in classrooms by busy teachers who are not researchers or theorists. For many classroom teachers, the process and genre approaches represented (and still represent) competing paradigms with contrasting ideologies—so much so that conscientious teachers often struggle to keep faith with one side, and curtail their exploration of alternative methods. As a young English teacher, I suffered my own anxieties about adopting practices that were regarded as ideologically unsound. I recognise now that my understandings were often reductive, second-hand, and strongly influenced by political auras–but they were no less powerful for that. In what follows, I am interested to trace the ideological force of these two paradigms, in order to expose and neutralise some common anxieties that continue to shape current teaching practice. Some compression of the complex histories involved will be unavoidable.

Readers who are already well versed in the history and theory of writing pedagogy might wish to jump to Section V, where I elaborate some features of a classical training approach to writing.

<div align="center">III</div>

Our modern anxiety about explicit instruction in writing has its roots partly in the progressive education movement of the early twentieth century and, more specifically, the "Personal Growth" model of English that arose from it. As its name suggests, Personal Growth English was a movement focussed on self development and social integration through language. The *locus classicus* for the movement is John Dixon's (1968) *Growth Through English*, which began as a report on the influential Dartmouth College English seminar of 1966 and grew into a broader educational manifesto. But Dixon's book was only one in a library of growth-oriented

literature that emerged in the 1960s and 70s, dealing with reading, writing, oral language, small group learning, and other classroom processes (see Moffett, 1968; Britton, 1970; Barnes, 1976; for three foundational works). Growth-model English was actually a confluence of theoretical positions whose common feature was a belief that language played the key role in mediating personal engagement with the world. The proper function of English, it argued, was not to trifle with spelling and punctuation, but to develop the "whole person" through rich language experiences. Such development could come only through opportunities to reflect on one's experience in a nurturing environment where language was used for "real" purposes. Purely academic or vocational objectives (learning to write a report, for example) were subordinated to the goal of personal growth, understood as a full development of the faculties and a complete realisation of the potential that lay within the individual. In this world view, transmission of established knowledge was seen as inescapably repressive, because it robbed the student of the opportunity for individual interpretation of the world (Barnes, 1976). Thus, Personal Growth English effectively outlawed both systematic instruction and the teaching of fixed content, both of which were seen as imposing artificial constraints upon experience and learning.

In its approach to writing, Personal Growth English drew upon psycholinguistic research into composition as an expressive process (see, for example, Emig, 1971). Out of such research, it fashioned a pedagogy that eschewed formal instruction in favour of an autodidactic "process" methodology. The emphasis on process was famously formalised in Donald Murray's widely circulated leaflet, "Teach Writing as Process Not a Product" (1972), the title of which became a shibboleth of the progressive English movement. The process approach emphasised the shaping of written text from personal and expressive beginnings. In the process classroom, writing typically began with personal reflection, often in the form of journaling, or in response to literature or some other stimulus. Composition then proceeded through stages of drafting, conferencing, revising and publishing, as the student shaped and polished the material. Students were encouraged to choose their own topics, experiment, and discover, as they shaped their work. The twin desires to express an idea and please an audience would, it was believed, create dialectical pressures toward honesty and communicative clarity. The process method quickly became a movement, championed by Murray and a host of others, including James Britton (1970), Donald Graves (1982), Nancy Martin (1983), and, in Australia, R.D. Walshe (1981).

In its emphasis on the primacy of process and the inner struggle with words and meanings, progressive writing pedagogy was quintessentially Romantic. Its governing metaphors were of organic growth and development, of shaping and becoming. Not only were established techniques of invention, style and arrangement downplayed; the very existence of such knowledge was often simply denied. Murray summed up the theory and the practice–and indeed the tone–of the progressive writing movement in this introduction:

The other day a young high school teacher asked me, "I've been assigned to a writing course this fall, what should I teach?"

"You don't teach anything," I answered. "You let the students write, you read what they've written with the class, and then you try to help each of them say what he has to say."

It was good advice, the distillate of what is practiced in university writing workshops across the country. (Murray, 1968, p.115)

This conversational summary of the process approach captures both the essentials of the method and the breezy, self-congratulatory confidence of the discourse at its high-point. Writing begins with the individual's desire to express himself. The teacher's role is to facilitate the full realisation of that desire by responding to whatever the student has written. Through this exchange the writing is shaped in stages toward its final form. There is no need for explicit instruction because, as Murray goes on to say, "in the writing course, there is no great body of knowledge to lug into class." There are only a few "simple principles, constantly reborn out of the writer's experience" (p.115).

While the injunction to *engage* students was a welcome reminder of the importance of intention in writing, process discourse sometimes went too far. Murray's breathtaking assertion that there is "no great body of knowledge to lug into class" is a denial of two-thousand years of scholarship and teaching. In any other discipline such a statement might be characterised as wilful malpractice. In its privileging of personal experience and its implicit rejection of book-learning, the statement echoes Wordsworth's famous conceit, that a stroll through the woods is better for the soul than all the accumulated wisdom of the ages:

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.   (Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned" 1798).

At the heart of the process philosophy was a rejection of "artificial" practice. Writing had to begin with a genuine intention–the writer with something to say–and from this genuine need to express would come the intrinsic motivation to shape the writing to best effect for its purpose and audience. In this there are strong associations with the romantic conception of the author as creator, an association further evidenced by the privileging of literary genres in the early process curriculum, and its suspicion of norms and rules. The slogan

"We learn to write by writing," widely adopted by advocates of process, implied that complex linguistic skills in writing would emerge spontaneously through the natural impulse for authentic self expression.

Process theory rested partly on a questionable analogy between learning to write and learning to speak, and partly on a set of philosophical assumptions derived in equal measure from Romantic literary tradition and ego psychology. Reference was often made to Vygotsky's psycholinguistic theory, but in fact the autodidactic character of process pedagogy suggests a rather selective reading of Vygotsky, whose model of early language acquisition and development stressed the primacy of social language, from which the child derived resources with which to construct more egocentric forms (Vygotsky, 1934). In comparison, process writing philosophies often seemed to imply that children were best left alone to haul themselves up by their own linguistic bootstraps. More sophisticated accounts, drawing on the work of Bernstein (1971) and others, also stressed the role of social processes and contexts that would provide students with expanded models of language, purposes and audiences. But in practice, social determination was often reduced to notions of personal experience and developmental readiness, the child's movement through a taxonomy of genres being driven by an imagined maturation, linked to natural stages of development.

Tied as it was to Growth-model English, process writing built its pedagogy on at least two important misunderstandings about the language classroom–especially in the secondary school. First, it confused direct instruction with repression of individual talent. It failed to see that the indirect techniques of the Personal Growth classroom did not permit the free development and expression of an already-formed competence but were themselves the very means for producing particular skills–specifically, skills of introspection and confession that led individuals to function as particular kinds of ethical subjects. Second, it failed to see that the dissemination of ethical competencies, effected through an aesthetic engagement with literature and lived experience, was quite separate from the business of linguistic skilling. Advocates of process writing were misled by the fact that both these projects were carried out in a single curriculum space called "English." They saw English as the site in which developing subjects achieved self-realisation through activities (literary reading, creative writing, personal and social inquiry) whose unity lay in mediating the subject's relation to experience. Given this *a priori* assumption of unity, any activities that took place in the English classroom–learning to spell, writing a diary, responding to a poem–were inevitably seen as either enabling or preventing the free and full development of an autonomous self.

The result of such misunderstanding was a rejection of anything that looked like direct instruction, since instruction, as opposed to discovery or emergence, implied a limiting of the personal–anathema to those who saw English as a haven for self-actualisation. At its worst, the resulting lack of instruction, and faith in discovery, left students trapped within their own limited social experience of language. This was particularly tragic for students whose home backgrounds had provided limited exposure to diverse language forms, or had equipped them with less prestigious dialects and genres. In the absence of direct instruction in new forms,

such students had little option but to repeat the limited forms and genres available to them. Critiques of process writing made this point clearly. Jim Martin and others, for example, documented the effect of process pedagogy on Aboriginal students, whose limited repertoire of topics and genres remained largely fixed without specific instruction in new genres (Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987). Readers of Gramsci should have anticipated this. He had observed in 1932 the paradox of "open" and democratic forms of education, which is that they can perpetuate social difference by preventing subordinated classes from gaining access to the knowledge and skills needed to change their lives (Gramsci, 1932; but see also Green, 1987, on Gramsci's equal recognition of self-engagement—a point we shall return to later). Even for more privileged students, process writing could become a trap, as they applied the same limited rhetorical strategies to every piece: interrogation of their own experience and values, followed by generalised procedures for drafting, revising and editing. The risk was that all forms of writing would turn out as personal confession. That such confessions were, for all their apparent spontaneity, highly ritualised (Patterson, 1994), only underscored the irony of equating process pedagogy with personal growth.

These critiques of the process paradigm in writing remain as potent today as they were in the 1980s and 1990s. A lack of systematic instruction limits the range of skills that most students can acquire, entrenches the disadvantage of those who have limited extramural resources to draw upon, and complicates curriculum planning by making it difficult to predict the set of writing skills students might have learned at specific points in their education.

Through its entangling of personal development with the craft of writing, the process movement became a source of much anxiety among teachers. A fear held by many teachers, that direct instruction will stifle creativity and thereby stunt personal development, resonates with Personal Growth philosophies and practices. Equally, a suspicion of rules and techniques in writing lessons is endorsed by the personalist belief that all the resources needed for writing already exist within the student. The impact of such suspicions and anxieties extends well beyond the domains of style and content. Barbara Harris (2011) has shown that the reluctance to teach skills in explicit and systematic ways extends even to the technical skills of word processing. These skills, which are relevant, identifiable, and open to direct instruction, continue to be almost entirely ignored in writing classrooms–as if competence with the tools, like facility with language, is best caught rather than taught. (See also Hakeney, 1995 for an earlier study reaching similar conclusions). Thus, Romantic beliefs and fears surrounding instruction continue to undermine effective writing pedagogy.

To unpick all the threads of the Personal Growth's ties to Romanticism, we need to lift our gaze further. Behind the growth model, and setting the stage for its popularity, was a misreading of the relationship between progressivism and mainstream educational practice. The progressive education movement of the 1960s and 1970s is often portrayed as a brief flowering of consciousness against the backdrop of a stifling conformity to which we risk returning. But the evidence for such a reading of history is rather weak. Indeed,

the contrary could be said. Although presented at the time as a revolution in educational theory and practice, Personal Growth English was in fact the continuation of a long tradition, one that had been but briefly interrupted during the 1950s. Education in the first half of the twentieth century had been dominated by so-called progressive ideas. They included "child study" and natural learning, as championed by G. Stanley Hall (Hall, 1901), "authentic" activity-based learning, as articulated in William Kilpatrick's "project model" (Kilpatrick, 1918, 1925), and the "child-centred" education movement promoted by Harold Rugg (Rugg, 1928). These powerful movements were fundamentally Romantic models of schooling (one might say, of deschooling). Like Wordsworth's rustic poetry, they were founded upon a quasi-religious faith in nature and a sometimes overtly religious belief in the sanctity of the unspoiled child. Hall, for example, an educational psychologist and founder of the child study movement, declared that childhood "comes fresh from the hand of God" and should not be corrupted by the alphabet, mathematics, or the learning of grammar (Hall, 1901). Like his fellow Romantics, Hall railed against book-learning, which he slandered as "bibliolatry." His views influenced a generation of educators, including his student John Dewey, perhaps the most famous of the progressive reformers. Personal Growth English was entirely consistent with the themes of individual development, self-expression and authenticity that animated these earlier progressives. It shared their suspicion of traditional academic disciplines, which were regarded as artificial and potentially repressive, if not actually corrupting.

The dominance of Romanticism in early twentieth-century education was documented by Lawrence Cremin in *The Transformation of the School* (Cremin, 1961). Writing at the end of the 1950s, Cremin believed that progressivism had almost run its race. But the decade of the 1950s was to be merely a hiatus. In the post-war period, Romantic ideals had been briefly overturned by a back-to-basics revival in the United States and a turn toward narrowly vocational training, triggered by skills shortages, and Cold War fears of a decline in Western education–fears heightened by the Sputnik launch of 1957. The subsequent Growth movement was in part a reaction against the narrowly technical focus of the 1950s and early 1960s, and thus a restoration of well-established Romantic ideals. The movement portrayed itself as a radical new consciousness, flowering in opposition to orthodox educational thinking; but it was in fact the inheritor of a powerful tradition. Indeed, the roots of Personal Growth reach back even further than Hall and his contemporaries. Subsequent histories (see, for example, Donald, 1992; Hunter, 1988, 1994b; Peim, 2001) have shown that many features of Personal Growth had been assembled much earlier, in at least the 1830s, when English was formed as a pedagogical milieu modelled on Protestant techniques of moral training. Those confessional techniques of introspection, judgment and the performance of corrective work upon the self, have their own much longer lineage (see Foucault 1982; 1988), pushing the philosophical origins of Personal Growth English back even further. Seen in this light, the progressive methods of the 1960s and 1970s appear less a revolutionary break from narrow academic training, and more a perennial counterpoint to efforts to establish a formalised academic curriculum within the popular school system.

Romantic ideas remain powerful and prestigious in today's Schools of Education. Key themes and labels that greet undergraduates in their education courses–the "learner-centred" curriculum, "authentic" learning, "developmental" planning, and "constructivism"–are perfectly consistent with the Romantic tradition. Like Personal Growth English, these "new" orientations in pedagogy often downplay their powerful history in favour of appearing innovative, radical and even vulnerable. The continuity of current education courses with Romantic ideals thus makes even new graduates vulnerable to the charms of personalist pedagogies.

One might object that the influence of growth model English and process pedagogy cannot be reduced to false consciousness, to the lure of a naturalist ideology. It is true that resistance to explicit instruction had multiple sources. The narrow, utilitarian curricula of the 1950s had sparked a backlash on pragmatic grounds, supported by a wave of research into the explicit teaching of language skills. Studies investigating the efficacy of teaching grammar to students had concluded that there was little correlation between such instruction and the development of writing abilities (see Braddock et al., 1963; Brooks Smith et al., 1976; Hillocks, 1986). Such research influenced education policy in the UK, through the Bullock, Kingman and Cox reports (Dept of Education and Science, 1975, 1988, 1989); and the associated research findings were widely reported in teacher journals and curriculum materials in the UK, US and Australia. In Western Australia, the newsletter *Backchat* cited twelve language studies in one edition (see Cutten, 1983), supporting its position in favour of process pedagogy. Similar research findings have been reported in more recent works (e.g., Andrews, 2005; Anderson, 2005; Saddler & Graham, 2005).

Two points can be made in response to the role of language research, however. First, while post-1950s research bolstered the case against certain forms of explicit instruction, it is doubtful that classroom teachers adopted process methods (or any other practice) solely on the basis of research reports. Progressive discourse about growth, self-expression and authenticity had a powerful framing effect on the reception of such studies, and was quickly entrenched in training institutions and curriculum documents. Second, many of the language studies searched for narrow correlations between declarative knowledge about grammar and improvements in writing. In contrast, rhetorical instruction (our concern here) is not about teaching grammar; it is about the explicit teaching of functional stylistic techniques in purposeful contexts. Research on the explicit teaching of functional strategies does show positive effects on writing (see, for example, Fearn & Farnan, 2005; Graham & Perin, 2007). This distinction has long been acknowledged, even by critics of grammar teaching. As far back as 1977, at the height of its process enthusiasm, the *Backchat* newsletter (Education Dept of WA) acknowledged that where grammar instruction did lead to improved composition, this was because "the grammatical question points to the rhetorical and semantic problem in language" (p. 4). Indeed.

IV

The problems of a fundamentalist application of process philosophy soon became clear, as some teachers of English abandoned structured programs entirely, in favour of free-form experiential journeys (see Moore,

1978)—with predictable consequences. As enthusiasm for the process paradigm moderated, alternative pedagogies gained traction. The most influential alternative crystallised around the notion of "genre," eventually giving rise to what I shall call here, for convenience, the genre paradigm. While genre methods eventually ameliorated the worst excesses of the process paradigm, the movement was not without its own baggage and side effects.

Where the process philosophy had privileged self expression and the individual voice in writing, genre theory emphasised the social functions, and therefore the inescapable conventionality, of written text. Martin et al. (1987) describe genres as "staged social processes" that evolve in a community to meet specific communicative needs—signalling that the forms and techniques of writing evolve through collective negotiation rather than individual expression. The origins of this view lie in sociolinguistics, in contrast to the psycholinguistic origins of Personal Growth English. Early genre theory was especially influenced by the structural and functional language schools, most notably the work of Australia's Michael Halliday. Halliday's work, and the communicative pedagogy derived from it, was championed by Gunther Kress, Terry Threadgold and Frances Christie, among others (see Christie & Misson, 1998; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Kress, 1993). For secondary teachers, a key publication in the emergence of genre as a pedagogical "brand" was Ian Reid's (1987) *The Place of Genre in Learning*, which carried contributions from key researchers and tackled head-on some of the points of contention between process and genre theorists.

In the classroom, genre practitioners focused on the teaching of specified text forms, such as the recount, the report, the description, and the narrative. They taught explicitly the social roles and grammatical functions associated with those text forms. Students worked from text models and learned the grammatical forms needed to produce their own examples. This was a very different approach from the established process methods, and it led to some spirited debate, both in staff rooms and in the academic literature–see, for instance, Rosen's (1988) defence of process writing, and the response by Christie and Rothery (1989). In its emphasis on equipping students with a knowledge of "powerful" genres, the genre approach fits into a broadly materialist educational tradition that emphasises the role of education as an intervention in social relations. In genre classrooms, mastery of specific genres, rather than self-interrogation and expression, was seen as the best means of enhancing personal agency.

Given its critique of pure process and its insistence on explicit instruction, genre theory would seem to offer an improved framework for teaching the skills of writing; and indeed, genre methods have made great inroads in primary education, where the impact has perhaps been revolutionary. But genre theory, as implemented in many classrooms, has problems of its own. While its understanding of participant relations, fields of knowledge, textual forms, and language functions is a major improvement on the naive versions of process pedagogy enacted in many classrooms, its pedagogical practice has sometimes been found wanting. This is

especially so in the case of secondary English and Literature studies, where we need to address questions not only of functional grammar but also of style and aesthetics.

One problem with genre pedagogy is that it takes a very abstract approach to literary genres like the short story. For purposes of description and classification, genre theory necessarily reduces the narrative variety and complexity of stories to abstract fundamentals such as *orientation-complication-reorientation-resolution*. While such descriptions provide insights for already well-read adults, who can grasp the concepts by generalising from their wide reading experience, such schematising is less helpful to the beginner faced with the task of writing a story. The beginning writer needs a more concrete and specific set of instructions. Asking a student to plan a story using the template of *orientation-complication-resolution* is not the same as teaching him or her how to arrange events into a satisfying plot, or how to choose an appropriate verbal style for the narrator. Because it treats written genres as abstractions, genre pedagogy reaches too far too quickly in the teaching of writing. The vitality and pleasure of literature often lies close to the surface, in the language and devices used to render the author's ideas. These things need to be taught and learned in their specificity before we ask students to generalise them. That is not to say the genre method is fundamentally flawed. On the contrary, it is perhaps the most sophisticated of the modern literacy pedagogies. In its specification of 'core' genres to be taught, its use of models, and its insistence on analysis prior to composition, it goes a long way in the direction of classical training. But it errs when it asks students to replicate the deep structures of texts without first attending to the surface arrangement and style.

A second problem emerges from the intersection of purely linguistic conceptions of literacy with a set of broadly progressive socio-political objectives. One of the powerful appeals of genre pedagogy—that it can give marginalised groups access to discourses of power and influence—is also a potential blind spot. Like the process paradigm to which it otherwise seems opposed, genre scholarship is determined to theorise (by which I mean overgeneralise) the relation between language, consciousness and social experience. This impulse leads to the problem of excessive abstraction outlined above, and to a benign neglect of both style and aesthetics—seen as too personal, variable and peripheral to be claimed by genre. If the process paradigm subordinates literate technique to self expression and the intersubjective relation between writer and reader, the genre paradigm subordinates personal expression to social authority and a conception of agency as access. Ironically, the idea of restoring agency by granting individuals access to powerful genres risks a return to Romanticism once again, insofar as the aim is to achieve the full development of the individual—not, this time, through the rejection of a distorting culture, but through the totalising of (literate) cultural practices with respect to subjectivity, where the subject is a subject of and in language. Thus social inequality is dissolved, and the subject endowed with full consciousness, through total literacy. In both the process and genre paradigms, then, teaching writing means participating in the great dramas of personal and social completion—a sure recipe for the kind of moral inflation that can be so disabling in curriculum development and classroom practice.

V

We have seen that our two modern paradigms for teaching writing bring with them certain problems: excessive concern with self expression and creativity on the one hand, and excessive abstraction and technicality on the other. In combination, these two excesses have hollowed out the modern writing curriculum. Between the imperatives of authentic personal expression on the one hand and a formulary treatment of genres on the other is a vacuum where the teaching of style and aesthetics should be. A consequence of this vacuum is that many otherwise capable students struggle with quite mundane aspects of writing (balancing sentences, controlling diction, fashioning analogies) and fail to develop an appreciation for the aesthetics of the written word. It is in this middle ground between self expression and the conventions of genre, I propose, that we might draw valuable lessons from classical traditions, having put to one side our misplaced anxieties about instruction.

In contrast to the process and genre paradigms, which depend more or less on theoretical models of language and writing, the classical system is grounded in a practical tradition. The discipline of *rhetoric* dates back 2,500 years to ancient Greece, where it began as a set of precepts for effective public speaking. It was elaborated and critiqued over the centuries by a succession of orators, writers and teachers–from Gorgias to George Campbell, from Ramus to Richard Rainolde, from Hermogenes to Hugh Blair (names sadly unfamiliar to many today). The strength of the classical system lay in its emphasis on social utility. Like modern functional approaches, classical rhetoric viewed oratory and writing not as an ends in themselves but as forms of social intervention, means by which an individual might inform, persuade, entertain, enlighten, charm or motivate an audience. To that end, the classical rhetoricians considered carefully the roles, purposes and effects that were implicated in writing and speaking. Using a variety of terms, they identified four key determinants in any communicative act: the situation or cause (*kairos*), the speaker and audience, the material (*res,* or *logos*), and the style or method (*verba,* or *lexis*). Upon this functional foundation, classical rhetoricians developed a detailed catalogue of the purposes, forms of writing, styles and techniques embedded in public communication, with the aim of systematising composition and improving public discourse. The result was a complex set of principles, techniques and compositional formulae that helped writers select the right style and arrangement to match a given topic and purpose.

Students of rhetoric mastered a prodigious body of content. The classical system covered standard topics, varieties of argument and proof, the means of developing a theme, ways of appealing to an audience, and a vast catalogue of techniques to employ and errors to avoid. This content was organised by name and function into complex tables and hierarchies. Under the heading of Invention (*inventio*), students learned to select materials and arguments appropriate to their purpose and audience, based on a combination of local knowledge, history and psychology. Under the heading of Arrangement (*dispositio*), they learned how best to sequence an argument: where to locate their strongest point; when to concede and then rebut a counter-

argument; and how to present their proofs. Contrary to modern prejudice, which associates rhetoric only with expression (often superficial or disingenuous expression), classical rhetoric was also a study of reasoning. Forms of argument and proof were major topics, and exercises in propositional logic were central. Syllogisms, enthymemes, logic squares, and Euler diagrams have all been employed in the field of rhetoric as devices for instructing students in reasoning and argumentation. The narrower modern conception of rhetoric as solely a study of stylistic frills began with the sixteenth century Ramist revision, that saw *inventio* and *dispositio* consigned to the field of logic. But there is no doubt that classical rhetoric was as much concerned with learning to think as it was with learning to speak and write. This is another significant point of difference between ancient and modern pedagogies. While themes and arguments are of course part of modern writing instruction, they are not integrated into a single instructional framework, as was the case in classical rhetoric. Indeed, topics and arguments are often treated as part of the personal domain, students being given a free hand in relation to the content of their discourse, as if instruction in this area would transgress upon their freedoms.

Under the heading of Style (*elocutio*), students studied the resources of language available for making their discourse more memorable, pleasing and persuasive to an audience. They studied the elements of diction, including the effect of abstract and concrete nouns, the effects of different verb forms, the impact of mono- and poly-syllabic word choices, referential and emotive usages, and special devices such polyptoton. They learned how to compose and arrange sentences to achieve a specific style; they mastered parataxis and hypotaxis, and learned the use of sentence schemes such as chiasmus, parallelism, and zeugma. They learned how to make persuasive appeals to the reader through logic, emotion and ethics, using strategies such as apodixis, enthymeme and prolepsis. They learned the familiar tropes of hyperbole, litotes, metaphor, simile and syllepsis. Individual writers differed on exactly how many such schemes and tropes could be classified. Greek and Roman treatises, such as Aristotle's *Rhetorica,* or Quintilian's *Institutiones Oratoria*, typically identified 60 or so; but the number approached 200 at the height of the Renaissance revival (see, for example, Peacham's 1577 *Garden of Eloquence*).

In time, a formal pedagogy emerged for transmitting all this knowledge. Key strategies in the pedagogy were the *exemplum* (study of examples), *imitatio* (imitative writing), and *exercitatio* (practice exercises). In contrast to modern practice, classical teaching emphasised systematic instruction in established content, forms and techniques. Rhetorical pedagogy divided writing lessons into stages of analysis and genesis. Analysis of examples (sometimes famous set pieces, sometimes exemplars written especially by the teacher) focussed first on helping students understand the ideas and effects, and then on divining the rhetorical strategies by which the effects were achieved. In modern parlance, analysis equates roughly to what we might call guided reading, the teacher signposting for students the particular features of form and style considered instructive. Genesis, the composition stage, entailed students employing the same techniques they had identified in the exemplar. Tasks and topics would be chosen by the teacher, often from an established instructional taxonomy, such as that of Hermogenes. Such taxonomies ranked tasks from simple to complex (fable, anecdote, narrative, and so

on) and covered a range of practical situations (storytelling, speech making, drafting of legal appeals). In broad outline, the system shares many features with modern genre pedagogies, and with the developmental taxonomies of Moffett and others. It is in the details of instruction that differences between classical writing pedagogy and modern practices become most clear.

Of the many differences, four will be sufficient to suggest the character of the classical system.

1. The close imitation of models
Both copying and imitation were integral to the training of young writers in classical times. Imitation was not an end in itself, but part of a regimen for a training in style, and a prelude to original invention. Dictation, copying and translation tasks were used to expose students to a range of compositional forms and stylistic techniques, and to stock the memory with exemplars. Activities such as copying out famous maxims and passages of fine writing were frequent but brief inclusions in lessons. The aim was not only to expose students to exemplars of style (that could be achieved through reading and analysis) but to familiarise them intimately with the experience of writing well-formed sentences. Dictation tasks improved attention and listening skills, while also drawing attention to the relation between sound and form–a prerequisite for understanding euphony. A second kind of imitation involved the construction of sentences, paragraphs and whole texts modelled on a given original. In these activities, the texts to be imitated were not offered as mere stimulus, nor as general examples, nor as instances of a genre to be reproduced; they were to be imitated explicitly, part for part and sequence for sequence. This kind of diligent imitation has almost wholly disappeared from modern practice.

To modern teachers and students, the classical emphasis on imitation and repetition might seem shocking (nothing so fills the modern educator with horror as rote learning). But imitation is not the antithesis of learning. Anyone who thinks copying out a passage is a mindless activity can quickly prove the contrary by doing it. The task requires close concentration, and one inevitably catches oneself making wrong predictions about the progress of a sentence, based on poor attention or faulty memory. Classical teachers recognised that copying taught their students concentration and correctness, developing in them a feel for clear expression and well-formed sentences (see Brown, 1915). Further, imitative writing enabled students to concentrate on refining their skills before taking on the burden of invention–thereby reducing what we nowadays call cognitive load. Quaint though they may seem, these ancient strategies are supported by recent research into guided instruction (see Kirschner et al., 2006).

2. Systematic and explicit instruction
In classical pedagogy, writing was supplemented by detailed and direct instruction in particular strategies, skills and techniques. These techniques were always related to achieving specific effects, so that the learning was both purposeful and linguistically functional. Control of subject matter, divisions, sentence forms, and

diction was achieved through the teaching of explicit rules and through nomination of precise foci for each lesson in a sequence. The classical treatment of audience is instructive. Where modern students might be told to consider the needs of their target audience, such advice often lacks specificity and precision. In contrast, classical tutors gave precise instructions. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle gave extensive descriptions of different audiences and detailed advice on how to appeal to them. When writing for young men, one should appeal to their optimism and to their sense of virtue, he advised, for as young men "they have as yet met with few disappointments. Their lives are mainly spent not in memory but in expectation. They have exalted notions because they have not yet been humbled by life or learned its necessary limitations. They would rather do noble deeds than useful ones" (*Rhetoric,* XII). This broad characterisation of the youthful male temper may or may not convince us, but we might learn something from its lack of equivocation. Modern teachers of writing, with access to copious demographic information on audiences of all kinds, could provide even more detailed prescriptions for appealing to a particular readership; but it is rarely done. What most distinguishes classical pedagogy, in relation to explicit instruction, is this preparedness not only to define the parameters of a task but to give concrete advice on matters of content and style, as opposed to requiring the student to conjure solutions from their own limited life experience.

3. Exercises and drills

Classical pedagogy recognised practice as an essential precondition for mastery. Exercises and drills were a regular feature of lessons. Their purpose was to cultivate a degree of automaticity (essential for the mastery of any complex skill), and also to promote flexibility and versatility at word, sentence and text levels. Hermogenes used modelling and scaffolding exercises to teach his students how to amplify or condense a fable, as needed, through spontaneous insertion or excision of dialogue. Erasmus taught students to write variations on a given sentence by changing the diction, or syntax, or punctuation. In his *De Copia* (1512), he famously demonstrated how a simple sentence could be rendered in more than 100 different ways. Such training made students aware of the extraordinary resources of expression provided by a language. The goal of such exercises and drills was to achieve fine adjustment of the student's style, just as the champion swimmer might repeatedly practise laps and turns—skills that are not meaningful in themselves, but which require a degree of decontextualised practice in order to be refined. The value of training specific skills is recognised in sports, music, and the fine arts; and it has a legitimate place in the writing classroom, not as a substitute for authentic communication, but as a preparation for and adjunct to it.

4. Formal calculation.

Counting and measuring the features of a style is another rhetorical strategy widely neglected in modern classrooms. Though estimation and impressionistic description can be useful starting points for analysis, intimate understanding of an author's technique is greatly assisted by quantifying elements of the writing. Determining the ratio of concrete to abstract nouns in a passage; counting the number of words per sentence;

classifying the number and variety of clauses: these can be revelatory techniques. They add precision to analysis and to composition, and quantification makes redrafting more targeted and purposeful. Telling a student to vary the length of her sentences is one thing. Telling her to check that her longest sentence is at least 40 words long, and her shortest no more than five, is quite another. The latter instruction gives the student an unambiguous target, and makes revision more effective. We know that beginners differ from accomplished writers in that they fail to make use of contrasts and rhythms in their sentences. Numerical targets make clearer to students just how much variation is required, and improves upon their subjective judgment.

As this brief sketch suggests, the classical system was complex; but its aims were practical. Rhetorical training gave students a set of "tried-and-true" techniques for getting things done, so that they would have no need to re-invent the wheel every time they sat down to write. It was a toolkit for writers and orators. It put the student in touch with a practical tradition of technique and thought, just as one might do in, say, a study of carpentry–though the preferred metaphor was not of trade skills but athletic performance (the set of preparatory exercises favoured by rhetoricians was called the *progymnasmata*, and the various drills were likened to physical training). To the modern ear, such talk of tools and trades, or training regimes, will sound too mechanistic; we like to think real writers spend days in silent agony in search of a word. Sometimes they do. But it is worth recalling that classical training produced some of the most celebrated writers in English literature–not only essayists, historians and technical writers, but poets and dramatists too. Indeed, it seems fairly clear that Shakespeare and his contemporaries were educated in precisely this tradition, from the Latin of Erasmus and Vives, and, very likely, from vernacular primers such as Thomas Wilson's (1553) *The Arte of Rhetorique*. Whatever the Romantics might have us believe, a regime of suffering and introspection is not the only route to art.
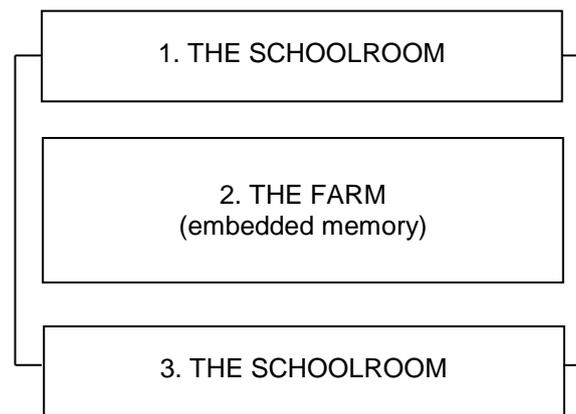
VI

From this short description, we can see that some knowledge of rhetorical traditions and techniques can offer us both a content and a method for enhancing the teaching of writing in Secondary English. To give a sense of how such methods work in practice, a brief example will be helpful. My aim in the following is not to offer a full demonstration of a pedagogical method, but to briefly ground an otherwise abstract description, by means of a quick sketch. For my example, I have chosen Peter Cowan's short story, "School" (Cowan, 1958). Interested readers should note that the material has elsewhere been developed in full for teachers (see Moon 2010 and 2011).

Ideas and arrangement (inventio and dispositio):
Only three paragraphs long, Peter Cowan's "School" is an instructive example of disciplined writing. The story is a cameo piece illustrating a young boy's alienation from school. It depends for its effect upon the simple juxtaposition of two contrasting settings: a stifling and sterile classroom in a suburban school, and a

wheat farm at harvest time. The boy is first shown silently weeping in frustration in the schoolroom, and then, in a flashback, shown working purposefully and happily on the farm. In rhetorical terms, such a story is simply another way of presenting an argument. This particular text is designed to convey the proposition that school lessons can be artificial and alienating, in contrast with the more authentic lessons of daily life.

The writer's chosen strategy is illustration. Cowan shows the contrast, but does not comment on it, leaving the reader to assemble the preferred reading from details embedded in the narrative. The two settings are arranged in a three-part structure, which we can diagram like so:

```
        ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
    ┌───┤      1. THE SCHOOLROOM           ├───┐
    │   └─────────────────────────────────┘   │
    │   ┌─────────────────────────────────┐   │
    │   │         2. THE FARM             │   │
    │   │      (embedded memory)          │   │
    │   └─────────────────────────────────┘   │
    │   ┌─────────────────────────────────┐   │
    └───┤      3. THE SCHOOLROOM          ├───┘
        └─────────────────────────────────┘
```

The description of the schoolroom is the static, foreground scene that opens the story. The boy's daydream punctures that scene with an extended portrait of a single day on the farm. After the daydream, the focus returns to the schoolroom. The true setting of the story thus serves as a frame for the boy's reverie. The story's brevity and structural simplicity thus make it an ideal teaching exemplar. *Inventio* and *dispositio* are easily identified through a guided reading, setting the stage for students to develop their own parallel example.

After the guided reading, instruction begins with the teacher leading students to devise a scenario that imitates the structure of "School." Two contrasting settings will be needed: one unpleasant, stifling or monotonous, the other vibrant, intense, and appealing. Other oppositions from the original story can also be included (for example, indoor/outdoor). Suitable paired scenes for a new story could include *hospital ward/family home*, or *prison cell/football game*. These contrasting settings will provide the narrative framework of the story. For each pair of settings, a theme can be stated: *home offers more healing than a hospital*; *the football field reforms character more effectively than the prison*; and so on. Given such examples by the teacher, students can suggest other contrasts that fit the pattern, producing a list of options. From these, a common topic for writing will be chosen. The common task makes it possible for the teacher to offer whole-class instruction that will be relevant to every student. This is a point where modern pedagogy often falters, sacrificing the opportunity for detailed instruction by allowing individual students to pursue their own topics. Creative

variations are best explored once the skills have been taught and learned. For a short and simple narrative like "School", students can attempt their first draft once the settings and structure have been chosen.

Style (elocutio):

After duplicating the story's form, students will analyse and apply a range of Cowan's stylistic techniques, progressively reshaping their draft. These techniques include strategies for dramatising ideas, describing scenes, and conveying mood. One such feature is the pronounced use of parataxis in sentences describing the school: "The classroom was hot *and* outside the sun was hard on the dusty earth *and* the grass was going brown on the playing fields." A second feature is the exclusive use of concrete nouns to describe the physical environment: *classroom, exercise book, window, sun, earth*, and so on. A third is the use of polyptoton to emphasise the Australian heat: "It made the wagon *hot* and the hay held the *heat* and his clothes were *hot*". Also important is Cowan's disciplined control of sentence length and form. Of the 27 sentences in the story, 14 are compounds, and most of the remaining complex constructions contain compounded clauses. These compounds are used to construct descriptions in series, as a way of achieving a detached observational style. The sentences range in length overall from 6 words to 38; but, remarkably, in each paragraph the average sentence length remains the same: 21 words. That consistency gives the whole passage a stylistic unity that cuts across the contrasting settings. A counting analysis can be used to identify these patterns and variations, which are signs of disciplined and purposeful crafting.

A selection of the above techniques can be taught to students directly, using simple workshop methods. A model sentence, form of words, or other feature from the text is identified; students practise copying the model, using different words and content; examples are scribed onto the board or screen; the teacher leads the class in checking for errors, making corrections if needed; and brief practice exercises are used to consolidate students' grasp of the technique. As each technique is explored, students can return to their rough draft and begin to refine it, making specific and purposeful changes to sentence forms, word choice and figuration, in turn. This approach to redrafting is much more purposeful than that found in many classrooms, where drafting is too often imposed as an empty chore–so much so, that students will often write the final version of their paper in one sitting, and then invent a rough draft merely to satisfy the teacher's requirement that working stages be shown.

It must be stressed that the point of rhetorical instruction as outlined above is not to create little clones of Peter Cowan. That is precisely the tendency that saw rhetoric fall from favour in nineteenth century grammar schools, where rigid application of the *imitatio* led to pointless factory reproductions of a few timeworn exemplars. The point, rather, is to equip students with a few very specific stylistic skills, and add to the repertoire with each new writing task. In this way, students will acquire over time a body of knowledge they can apply to real-world writing tasks; and they will develop habits of observation and analysis that help them discover further techniques through their own wider reading. Witless and dogmatic application of any

pedagogy is damaging, and rhetorical pedagogy is no different. No system can protect against plain bad teaching. But for committed and thoughtful teachers, systematic instruction along rhetorical lines offers a framework for organising a complex field of objectives and teaching them well.

This brief sketch shows that classical pedagogy differs from modern practice not only in kind but also in intensity of teaching. The cataloguing of schemes and tropes; the quantification of language elements; the use of copying and imitation; the performance of practice exercises; such techniques suggest the kind of precision and intensity that we nowadays associate more with formulary study in physics or chemistry than with composition. But the skills involved are no more beyond the reach of students than learning the periodic table, solving an equation in linear motion, or calculating the sine of an angle. Mastery of such techniques for writing has the potential to build confidence and competence, with no necessary detriment to the student's creativity, the origins of which lie elsewhere.

That said, we must be careful not to fall into the trap of romanticising the past as a golden age in which everyone could write with style and erudition. In earlier days, the student population was much less diverse than now, and the training they received was admittedly narrow and specialised. Times have changed. Nor was rhetoric itself a unitary and settled discipline: it was riven with disputes over variant taxonomies, differing standards and competing moral agenda—and continues to be so. We have only recently begun to attempt the formal education of whole populations, and our successes have been stunning by any measure. But it is nevertheless true that many students now struggle with even quite simple writing tasks, and many actively fear putting pen to paper, or finger to keypad. To the extent that these problems can be addressed via pedagogy, we must explore the full range of practices available to us. That, I think, justifies a re-examination of the potential benefits of rhetorical training. Whatever its other shortcomings, classical training helped, and might still help, students achieve a much needed mastery of style and technique–not the mother of invention, perhaps, but surely a welcome assistant.

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