

Freshman English Policy Committee Meeting

July 19, 1978

Parlin 8C, 2:00-3:00

Members present: Kinneavy, Trimble, Cameron, Ruszkiewicz, Hart,
Henry, Creel, Saldivar, Byars

AGENDA:

Workbooks for E306, E307

Program for coming New TA/AI Orientation Week

Discussion of E398t

1. Dr. Kinneavy reviewed the status of previous FEPC deliberations on the use of workbooks in Freshman English courses. Pointing out that several teachers have requested permission to use a workbook in their sections in the fall, he asked the committee to discuss the issue once more and come to a decision. In Janice Haney's absence, Kinneavy mentioned that Haney prefers the Prentice-Hall Handbook in E307.

Jim Creel said that he dislikes the use of workbooks because they make students consider grammar outside of the context of writing. Saldivar pointed out that the same can be true of all exercises, whether grammatical or rhetorical, and that such an argument might not be applicable here. Creel replied that he did not want a workbook to be a substitute or replacement for actual teaching, claiming that nothing beats a good teacher-student conference when a problem of grammar arises.

John Trimble suggested that the committee consider two questions: whether to use workbooks in general, and, if so, whether one is better than another for a given course. He suggested that, if we decided to allow the use of workbooks, we might find volunteers to teach a variety of them and try to evaluate their relative effectiveness. He noted that, in spite of his personal dislike for workbooks, those who find workbooks useful should have one available for use. After some further committee discussion, Trimble moved that we find five volunteers to use the workbook companion to Corder's Handbook of Current English in E306 and five more to use the workbook companion to the Prentice-Hall Handbook in E307, asking for a report of teacher impressions at the end of the fall semester. Trimble accepted Creel's amendment that we also consider student evaluations, publisher-supplied machine-corrected tests, and an essay from each student in our evaluations. Kinneavy noted that we could compare these with a group of control sections which use only the Corder Handbook. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Kinneavy discussed the coming Orientation Week program. He has been given money from the Dean to bring Lynn Phillips from Georgia, and he will ask Scott, Foresman to pay Corder's expenses. He asked for volunteers and names of others who might be interested in serving as workshop leaders.

3. Acting as a committee-of-the-whole, the group discussed a wide range of matters pertaining to the eventual disposition of E398T, the Departmental graduate-level course in teaching which is required of TA's and AI's who have little teaching experience. Jackie Byars, who has served on the Graduate Studies Committee, suggested that there should be more input from the 306 course than from either 307 or 308. Noting that, by Dr. Rebhorn's estimation, most students will be TA's for one and one-half years before getting their MA or MA-equivalent, she suggested that 398T should be given only in the fall semesters and that a graduate student take one course as a TA and the other as an AI. Trimble expressed interest in seeing one of the courses become a combination theory and writing course for graduate students; Henry agreed that both were important but that she was not sure that both should be the focus of 398T.

The committee then broadened the discussion to include the various courses offered on the graduate level in composition or rhetoric. Cameron suggested that the composition program might require AI's to have a formal course in rhetoric or the teaching of composition such as one of those currently offered. The committee then discussed the contents and purpose of each of the following:

- E381L Teaching College English (currently taught as a theories of teaching composition course);
- E383L Rhetoric and Composition for High School and College (taught most recently as a study of teaching composition in the junior or community college);
- E393L Rhetorical theory (taught most recently as a criticism course in Major Rhetorical Texts).

Trimble noted that the Department might establish a seminar course which would blend the study of teaching composition with the actual writing of compositions.

After considerable further discussion, the committee came to the following consensus: this semester, we should offer one 398T for TA's which would be an introduction to the 306 syllabus and the theory behind it and another 398T for AI's which would give them practical, unit-by-unit help in teaching the course for the first time. The committee also concurred that we might eventually require AI's to take or to have taken 381L.

4. The committee also addressed a topic not listed on the agenda: the proposed student syllabus for E306. Kinneavy pointed out that there were considerable problems with our publication of a syllabus for freshmen--namely, permission from Harper's to use his materials in the book and permission from the FEPC. He said he thought Harper's would grant permission to use his theoretical work as the basis of the syllabus, since the syllabus might be considered a kind of trial run of a longer rhetoric text. He asked for suggestions on how to get proper response from all members of the committee, as he felt that FEPC members have the right to pass judgment on any syllabus used in the freshman courses.

The committee members agreed to look carefully at the chapters of the syllabus as soon as they are reproduced and to let the Freshman Office know of their reactions by Monday, July 24.