READER RESPONSE TO WRITING IN A BUSINESS SETTING: A STUDY OF MANAGERS' RESPONSES TO WRITING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

by

Jane C. Ledwell-Brown
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Faculty of Education
McGill University, Montreal

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

ISBN 0-315-91724-5

Abbreviated Thesis Title

Managers' responses to writing in an organizational culture.

ABSTRACT

Whereas most research on writing in the workplace examines writing from writers' perspectives, this study focuses on readers' responses to writing. The central issue in this study is the relationship between readers' responses to writing and the goals and values of an organization. The particular focus of the study is managers' responses while reading their subordinates' reports.

Conducted over two years in a large company that develops and markets health care products, this study used a variety of qualitative methods. Observations, interviews, and the critical incident method revealed that organizational expectations for writing were closely tied to the organization's mission and its beliefs about how that mission should be accomplished. Respond-aloud protocols from two divisions of the company, Marketing and Management Information Systems, demonstrated that managers' responses while reading their subordinates' reports strongly reflected their beliefs about the particular mandates of their divisions. Furthermore, these protocols also revealed how the divisional cultures

reflected the larger framework of the organization.

These findings suggest that writers must learn both the organizational and divisional goals and values in order to write reports that meet readers' expectations. Moreover, this study illustrates the importance of readers' responses to the development of theories about writing in the workplace.

RÉSUMÉ

Alors que la majorité de la recherche sur l'activité de rédaction en milieu de travail examine le processus de rédaction selon la perspective de celui qui écrit, cette recherche s'intéresse plus spécifiquement au point de vue du lecteur. La préoccupation centrale de cette étude porte sur la relation qui existe entre la manière dont le lecteur répond explicitement à ces textes et les buts et valeurs d'une organisation. L'étude porte plus particulièrement sur les commentaires verbalisés des gestionnaires lors de la lecture de rapports produits par leurs subordonnés.

Menée pendant une période de deux ans dans une grande entreprise qui développe et commercialise des produits de santé, la recherche a fait appel à une variété de méthodes qualitatives de collectes de données telles que l'observation, l'entrevue et la méthode des incidents critiques. Les données recueillies ont montré que les attentes que l'organisation entretient face à la manière dont les textes doivent être rédigés sont intimement liées à sa mission et aux croyances quant à la manière dont cette mission doit être accomplie. Provenant de deux sections de l'entreprise, le Marketing

et les systèmes de gestion de l'information (M.I.S.), les protocoles de verbalisations ont montré que les commentaires verbalisés des gestionnaires découlant de la lecture des rapports de leurs subordonnés reflètent en grande partie la représentation qu'ils se font du mandat de leurs sections respectives. De plus, ces protocoles ont aussi révélé que les sous-cultures de chaque section tiennent compte du cadre culturel plus large de l'organisation.

Les résultats de cette étude nous amènent à croire que la rédaction de textes en milieu organisationnel doit s'instruire à la fois des buts et des valeurs de la section et des buts et valeurs de l'organisation afin de répondre adéquatement aux attentes des lecteurs. Enfin, cette étude souligne l'importance que peuvent avoir les réactions du lecteur pour le développement de théories sur l'activité de rédaction en milieu de travail.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many friends and colleagues helped to make this research a possible and rewarding adventure. Professor Patrick Dias, my thesis supervisor and an inspiring teacher, taught me a great deal about readers' responses to writing and asked important questions at critical points in the research process. My advisory committee provided direction, support, and expertise during the research process: Professor Lynn Butler-Kisber shared her knowledge of qualitative research methods, and Professors David Saunders and James Archibald provided advice on the ways of business organizations.

In order to maintain the confidentiality I have assured them, I am unable to mention the research participants' names. They contributed valuable information about their experiences as writers and readers at the Health Care Company; they also gave me generous amounts of time for interviews and supported this project with much interest. I especially wish to thank the Manager of Training and Development for his continuous support and generosity.

My colleagues, Anthony Paré and other members of the McGill Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing, supported me with fellowship and enthusiasm for the project. I value the many discussions with Graham Smart and Liz Sloat about our common research interests. And I thank Russ Hunt for alerting me to the significance of narratives in research interviews. Alain Saumier kindly translated the Abstract into a Résumé.

I wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the McGill Major Fellowships program for providing me with personal financial support during this research.

My children, John and Gabrielle Darling, contributed with their experiences as workers in business organizations and with their love and confidence.

And finally, I thank my friend, teacher, and husband, Alex. His patience, love, and encouragement have sustained me throughout this endeavour.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM: THE OFF-STAGE READER

> [O]n a darkened stage I see the figures of the author and the reader, with the book ... between them. The spotlight focuses on one of them so brightly that the others fade into practical invisibility.
>
> Louise Rosenblatt (1978, p.1)

With few exceptions, research on writing in general ignores the reader. Writing theorists perceive the reader as a fiction created by the writer, a reader whose goals and values the writer must imagine (Ong, 1982). In workplace practice, however, writers need not invent the reader, who is materially present in the person of the writer's manager. The manager, according to Mintzberg (1990), is the person charged with carrying out the goals of an organization. As such, the manager is also responsible for ensuring that the organization's written texts conform to organizational goals and values. In this position, the reader of the writer's text is an immediate presence in the writer's experience. Managers have a direct impact on writers' texts, yet little or no research has presented a detailed study of readers responding to writing in the workplace.

In this study, I explore the ways readers respond to writing within the context of an organization's goals and values. In particular, I examine the relationship between one organization's culture and its readers' expectations for writing, with a specific focus on managers' responses while reviewing their subordinates' texts.

Background: What is "Good" Writing?

Most theorists in studies of writing agree that to be successful writers in university, students must gain a mastery of academic discourse. In the university, Bartholomae (1986) observes, "[The student] has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (p. 4). However, successful mastery of academic discourse offers no guarantee that graduates will be successful writers in the workplace. In fact, students who produce texts both for teachers in university and for managers in the workplace often claim that the criteria for "good" writing differ considerably in each setting. Surveys of workplace writers support this claim. For example, in his review of surveys of workplace writing, Anderson (1985) reports that graduates regard on-the-job experience as more important than their academic writing courses in their development as writers in the workplace (p. 68). My survey (1988) of 120 managers in four Montreal corporations confirms this finding. Clearly, graduates must develop new writing abilities in the workplace to meet writing demands that differ considerably from those in university. But what characteristics of the workplace create these new writing demands?

According to management theorists, workplaces are characterized by distinctive cultures, systems of beliefs, values, and attitudes which must be learned by newcomers: "Recognition of the need to become acculturated, to 'learn the ropes,' when entering an unfamiliar organizational setting suggests that some cultural stratum is present in any organization, and that its mastery is critical for the well-functioning of new organizational members" (Louis, 1983, p. 40). Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggest that employees' inability to function in a new organization may be due to culture shock: "Where they fail, however, is not necessarily in doing the job, but in not reading the culture correctly" (p. 17). To enter a new culture, the sociolinguist Frake (1972) proposes that a newcomer "needs more than a grammar and a lexicon; he needs what Hymes (1962) has called an ethnography of speaking: a specification of what kinds of things to say in what message forms to what kinds of people in what kinds of situations" (pp. 87-88). I suggest that success in workplace writing also requires that newcomers learn to interpret the culture of the organization.

In practice, though, students (and their prospective employers) do not always recognize the full implications of moving from an academic to a workplace culture. In their survey of recent graduates and their employers, Rush and Evers (1986) found that although graduates believed their written communication skills were highly developed, their employers found them lacking. This finding suggests that employers expect graduates to arrive in the workplace fully prepared to meet its writing demands. Since the graduates surveyed by Rush and Evers had recent university experience, it seems fair to assume that this confidence in themselves as writers must have been derived, in part, from their academic experience. This situation suggests that neither employers nor graduates recognize that criteria for "good" writing in university differ in important ways from those in the workplace and that a graduate's position as a newcomer to an organization includes having to learn how to write in that context.

This study examines the question of how an organization's goals and values define the characteristics of "good writing" as revealed through managers' responses to their subordinates' texts. Managers play an important role in maintaining organizational criteria for writing, especially in the many workplace settings organized along hierarchical lines. And yet, writing research largely ignores the responses of these readers.

This study investigates managers' reviews of their subordinates' writing in one organization, The Health Care Company (HCC), whose business is to develop and market health care products.

Research Assumptions

This study rests on four major assumptions about writing, reading, and organizational behaviour.

Writing is a Social Act.

Writing is not the act of an individual isolated from his or her social environment; rather writing is inherently social in nature. In writing theory, this social perspective maintains that writing is socially motivated and shaped; writing always requires the presence of another for its completion (LeFevre, 1987, p. 38). Writing invokes a response from self (in a diary or journal, for example) or from others, even if that response is a refusal to respond. Experience gained through interaction with others, with situations, and other texts shape writers' intentions and composing processes.

Reading and Response are Social acts.

Reading and reader-response theorists argue that readers do not simply decode the text, they construct meaning by also bringing prior knowledge, intentions, and expectations to the text which acts as a kind of blueprint. (See, for example, Spiro, 1980 and Rosenblatt, 1978.)

A Text is a Meeting of Intentions

Smith (1982) points out that since intentions are the basis of human behaviour, writing is an intentional act. He notes further that reading is a process of anticipating the writer's words and meanings. The text, then, is the meeting place of the readers' expectations and writer's intentions. But readers also bring intentions to the reading process and, thus, the text may also be conceived of as the intersection of writers' and readers' intentions. The concept of intention, argues Anson (1986), is essential to "any theory which sees writing and reading as interrelated, active processes of meaning construction" (p. 21).

These theoretical perspectives support the concept that not only readers, but also writers bring socially engendered intentions, knowledge, and expectations to the construction of textual meaning. A major implication of this position is expressed by Faigley (1986): "[H]uman language (including writing) can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual" (p. 535). Writers' and readers' meanings, then, are created and understood within social contexts; in Bruffee's (1986) words: "Social construction understands reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves and so on as community-generated and community-maintained linguistic entities" (p. 784). For workplace writers and readers, the organization represents one kind of community.

Organizations Act as Communities

As communities, organizations are characterized by shared beliefs and language: "[Organizations are] distinctive social units possessed of a set of common understandings for organizing action ... and languages and other symbolic vehicles for expressing common understandings" (Louis, 1983, p. 39).

Implicit in these concepts of writing, reading, and organizational behaviour as socially constructed are the assumptions that readers' responses to texts within an organization will reflect the organization's shared understandings and that a part of the process of becoming a member is learning to write acceptable texts within the organization. As Lave (1991) proposes, becoming a member is not simply a matter of internalizing new knowledge, but a process of "changing identity in and through membership in a community of practitioners" (p. 64).

From these assumptions about writing, reading, and organizational behaviour, a newcomer's writing can be viewed as a contribution to a conversation already in progress. (For the antecedents of this metaphor, see Burke, 1973; Bruffee, 1984; Bakhtin, 1981.) Like contributions to a conversation, writing outcomes, in terms of "good" and "poor" texts, are products of the dynamic relationships among writer, reader, text, and situation. Thus, the framework for this study of writing outcomes includes these relationships with a particular focus on readers' responses during reading. My research question follows from this framework.

The Research Question

If situations for writing and reading include not only the writer, reader, and text, but also the shared beliefs of the community, then how do the organization's goals and values shape readers' responses to writing? Inherent in this question is the assumption that what the reader attends to while reading will afford an understanding of the meaning of "good writing" as it is defined in the organization. Four issues follow from my research question:

1. What are the goals and values of the organization?

2. How do the organization's goals and values shape readers' expectations for writing?
3. What is the relationship between writers' intentions and readers' expectations?
4. How does this relationship shape readers' responses to writing?

A common thread among the assumptions of my research question is a concept of the community as a social context for writing and reading. The concept of community is more fully developed in the next chapter which reviews theory and research in the fields of writing, reader-response, and organizational behaviour to create the framework for my study of readers' responses to writing in an organization.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

> Knowledge produced by the academy is cast in written language ... The written text, published in journal or book, serves as the definitive form of a claim or argument, following on earlier printed claims and leading to future claims.
>
> Charles Bazerman (1988, p. 18)

This chapter reviews the theory and research on writing, reader-response, and organizational behaviour that I have used to derive the theoretical framework for this study of readers' responses to writing in a workplace setting. While there is a considerable body of research on writing, very little of such research has provided information about readers' responses to writing and about writing in organizational settings. The goal of this chapter is to shape the literature of the fields "into a story in order to enlist the support of readers to continue the story" (Myers, 1991, p. 45)

The major assumption underlying this study is that meaning is socially constructed; that is, individuals interpret language and shape meaning within a framework of social interaction which includes speakers (writers), listeners (readers), texts, and situations (LeFevre, 1987). Following from this perspective, writer, reader, text, and situation are essential elements in any study of readers' responses to writing. Theorists in the fields of writing, reader response, and organizational behaviour all discuss the social nature of their subjects, but they are only beginning to listen in on each other's conversations. Thus, few studies of writing have drawn on the literature of reader-response or organizational behaviour to situate their findings.

Since this research explores the question of how readers' expectations for and responses to writing are shaped by a community's beliefs and values, the following review reports the conversations among theorists and researchers about communities, their definition, their beliefs and values, and their members.

A social perspective argues that individual writing and reading processes are socially constituted; that is, these processes are shaped by an individual's social interaction in particular groups or communities. As Harris (1989) notes, this assumption means, "We write not as isolated individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sorts of things we can say" (p.12). Certainly, as Harris notes, the concept of community can block theorists' recognition of social influences beyond the community, but the concept does allow researchers to begin to explain similarities and differences among writers, readers, texts, and situations. Writing theorists tend to invoke the concept of community to account for different ways of thinking and writing among academic disciplines, professions, and organizations. Reader-response critics draw on the idea of community to argue that readers' particular interpretations of texts are a function of the assumptions of the groups to which they belong. Management theorists conceive of organizations as cultures with distinct values and goals in order to explain why some organizations are more effective than others. In the following discussion, I draw on these notions of community to create the frame for this study.

In the first section below ("Concepts of Community"), I review theoretical discussions of writing and reading as community practices and of organizations as community contexts of shared goals and values. The next section, "Community Values," reviews beliefs about how quality should be judged in the fields of writing, reading, and organizational behaviour. The following section, "The Manager as Reader," reviews perceptions of the often neglected member of the community, the reader, in the literature on writing and reader response. This section also considers how the manager (the reader in this study) is perceived in the literature on management. Finally, I summarize this review of the literature.

Concepts of Community

As many theorists have pointed out (Harris, 1989; Bartholomae, 1986, for example), the concept of community invokes not only a sense of inclusion but also a sense of exclusion. The word "community" is, in Bakhtinian terms, "populated by intentions" (Bakhtin in Holquist, 1981, p. 293). Discussions about the characteristics of a community in the fields of reader-response, writing, and organizational behaviour reflect a variety of intentions, including efforts to define the conditions for membership in a community.

Reader-Response Criticism: The Interpretive Community

Frameworks for research on readers' responses rest mainly on the assumptions of reader-response criticism, a current form of literary criticism which focuses on readers, texts, and communities. A social view of reading, characteristic of current reading theories and reader-response criticism, includes readers as socially constituted individuals who are members of particular communities. From this perspective, the reader's social situation, including the interpretive conventions of the reader's context, shapes the reader's meaning of the text. According to reading theorists, the text acts as a kind of blueprint for meaning: "Constructed meaning is the interactive product of text and context of various kinds, including linguistic, prior knowledge, situational, attitudinal, and task contexts, among others" (Spiro, 1980, p. 246; see also Rumelhart, 1980). An individual reader's process of making implicit connections, filling in the gaps, and drawing inferences draws on experience gained through interaction with others and with other texts.

Suleiman (1980), in her review of reader-centred criticism, notes that the phenomenological approach to literary reading perceives the reading process as "essentially a sense-making activity, consisting of the corresponding activities of selection and organization, anticipation and retrospection, the formulation and modification of expectations in the course of the reading process" (pp. 22-23). This constructive process is both a cognitive and affective phenomenon. Reader-response critics propose that the psychological effects of a literary work on the reader are essential elements of understanding: "a poem cannot be understood apart from its effects" (Tompkins, 1980, p. ix). Rosenblatt (1978) maintains that any reading involves two streams of response: "A concurrent stream of feelings, attitudes, and ideas is aroused by the very work being summoned up under guidance of the text" (p. 48). (See Tompkins, 1980, and Suleiman and Crosman, 1980, for comprehensive introductions to reader-response criticism.)

Literary response depends not only on the reader and the text, but also on the social situation. Rosenblatt (1978) perceives the meeting of reader and text as a _transaction_, an event in which both reader and text contribute to the creation of meaning. She (1985) emphasizes that the meeting of reader and text is not simply an interaction of two individual elements, but a reciprocal process:

> ... we need to see the reading act as an event involving a particular individual and a particular

> text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group. We can still distinguish the elements, but we have to think of them, not as separate entities, but as aspects or phases of a dynamic process, in which all elements take on their character as part of the organically-interrelated situation. (p. 100)

The concept of "dynamic process" is echoed by Wolfgang Iser (1978), a major influence in current literary criticism: "Effects and responses are properties neither of the text nor the reader; the text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process" (p. ix). This potential effect is realized when the reader becomes engaged with the author's thoughts and "his own individuality temporarily recedes into the background" (In Tompkins, p. 67). Fish (1970) perceives this engagement with the author's thoughts as another writing of the text; an act socially shaped. Based on the idea that the reader's interpretive strategies are socially constituted, Fish proposes the concept of "interpretive community": "Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions" (In Tompkins, p. 182). However, as Scholes (1985) points out, Fish's concept of interpretive community is problematic: "[H]e has never made clear what an interpretive community is, how its constituencies might be determined, or what could be the source of its awesome power" (p. 153).

Culler (1975) identifies the interpretive community's locus of power in the conventions of literary discourse: "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a tabula rasa and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for" (In Tompkins, 1980, p. 102). The community conventions bring writer and reader together: both writer and reader are members of the same community because they share some knowledge of these conventions of literary discourse which are the "constituents of the institution of literature" (In Tompkins, 1980, p. 104). On the other hand, Bleich (1978) insists on the power of an individual response within the interpretive community. He distinguishes between individual readers' subjective responses (expressions of the self) and the processes through which their responses become forms of knowledge within the interpretive communities to which they belong: "The practice of formulating response statements is a means for making a language experience (hearing, speaking, reading, or writing) available for conversion into knowledge. A response can acquire meaning only in the context of a predecided community's (two or more people) interest in knowledge" (In Tompkins, 1980, pp. 157-158).

Although there is no consensus about the precise nature of the interpretive community, most reader-response critics would support Gee's (1988) claim: "One always and only learns to interpret texts of a certain type in certain ways through having access to, and ample experience in, social settings where texts ... are read in those ways" (In Beach, 1993, p. 104).

Reader-response critics' belief that readers interpret texts in ways that are defined by readers' socially constituted selves and by their social situations implies that meaning is always socially situated: "Relocating meaning first in the reader's self and then in the interpretive strategies that constitute it, they [reader-response critics] assert that meaning is a consequence of being in a particular situation in the world" (Tompkins, 1980, p. xxv). If one agrees that meaning is socially situated, this investigation of the goals and values of a particular organizational community should provide important insights into readers' responses and their beliefs about the characteristics of "good" writing in that community.

Writing Theory: The Discourse Community

Although writers rather than their cultures are usually the focus of writing research, an emphasis on the writer as a "constituent of a culture" characterizes the social approach to writing (Faigley, 1986, p. 535). This concept of writing as social interaction has led to a focus on writers in particular contexts and the consequent notion of "discourse communities." Discourse communities are conceived as specialized groups in which "[M]embers know what is worth communicating, how it can be communicated, what other members of the community are likely to know and believe to be true about certain subjects, how other members can be persuaded" (Faigley, 1985, p. 238). This assumption implies that community norms define the characteristics of "good" writing. Drawing on Burke's metaphor of writing as conversation, Paré (1991) notes that the concept of discourse community brings writer, text, and reader together as "sets of relations," relations which change as different readers engage the text (p. 50). Like conversational participants, writers and readers negotiate meaning through "a social process in which utterances are selected in accordance with socially recognized norms and expectations" (Gumperz, in Giglioli, 1972, p. 219). Like the concept of interpretive community, the concept of discourse community raises a number of questions: How should discourse communities be identified? Is their nature static or dynamic? Is the discourse characterized by consensus or dissent? Is their chief function to exclude others? (See Herzberg, 1986; Bizzell, 1987; Harris, 1989; Cooper, 1989; and Swales, 1992 for pertinent arguments.)

Swales (1992) suggests six characteristics that define a group as a discourse community: (1) a set of goals generally or partially assented to by the members; (2) mechanisms of intercommunication among members; (3) participatory mechanisms that provide information and feedback to channel innovation, maintain value and belief systems, and enhance its professional space; (4) an evolving selection of genres used to further its goals and instantiate its participatory mechanisms; (5) an acquired community-specific terminology continuously developed; and (6) an implicit or explicit hierarchical structure which manages the process of entry into and advancement within the discourse community (p. 1). The concept of a common project is central to Swales' definition of a discourse community; a common project is carried out through community-specific genres which are defined as typified rhetorical actions responding to recurring situations in a society (Miller, 1984) or typified rhetorical actions needed to achieve a community's goals (Swales, 1990). This concept of discourse community seems especially appropriate as a framework for the study of the manager' responses to their subordinates' writing in an organization.

Yates and Orlikowski (1992) suggest that an organization's communications can be viewed as genres which, like any rhetorical genre, are characterized by conventions or social rules of the organization. They propose that genres possess a reciprocal nature in that they are both changed by the organization and change the organization. These theorists combine the concept of evolving genres with Giddens' theory about the relationship between individuals and institutions to explain organizational communication as a structuration process:

> Structuration theory involves the production, reproduction, and transformation of social institutions, which are enacted through individuals' use of social rules. These rules shape the action taken by individuals in organizations; at the same time, by regularly drawing on the rules, individuals reaffirm or modify the social institutions in an ongoing, recursive interaction. (pp. 299-300)

Kanter (1983) observes that "change" is an elusive concept and proposes that "[T]he act of making changes [in an organization] may involve merely reconceptualizing and repackaging coexisting organizational tendencies, as the balance tips from the dominance of one tendency to the dominance of another" (279). Social rules and organizational tendencies are the defining characteristics of the organization's culture.

Organizational Theory: The Corporate Culture

In the management literature, the concept of community is expressed as corporate culture: "Organizations are not simple systems like machines or adaptive organisms; they are human systems manifesting complex patterns of cultural activity" (Morgan, Frost, and Pondy, 1983, p. 4). Viewed as a culture, the organization is a socially constructed reality in which the term "culture" refers to "the underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for the organization's management system as well as the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles" (Morgan, 1986, p. 2). (See Schein, 1985, for a review of the assumptions underlying the concept of corporate culture.)

An organization's beliefs, according to Sathe (1989), are often unstated and thus "members of a culture are frequently unaware of many of these mutual understandings" (p. 393). When managers respond to their subordinates' writing, their responses must surely reflect these tacit understandings; evidence of these unstated beliefs must also reside in the repositories of an organization's approved documents (the files). These tacit understandings are explored through my analysis of managers' responses and organizational texts. The organization's collection of written texts is a part of what Walsh and Ungson (1991), call "organizational memory." They propose that culture is a "retention facility" of an organization's memory which they define as "stored information from an organization's history that can be brought to bear on present decisions" (p. 61). This stored information also provides newcomers with models for learning about an organization's views of "good" writing.

Management theorists disagree on the value of relying on traditional organizational beliefs. For example, Kanter (1983) proposes that an organization's cultural traditions can help it adapt to meet changing conditions such as the move to global economies, technological changes, and changes in workers' expectations: "When innovators begin to define a project by reviewing the issues with people across areas, they are not only seeing what is possible, they may be learning more about the past; and one of the prime uses of the past is in the construction of a story that makes the future seem to grow naturally out of it in terms compatible with the organization's culture" (p. 283). On the other hand, Kantrow (1987) argues that corporate traditions can constrain as well as enable:

> Look out over the swamp of corporate efforts to restructure and adapt to changed terms of competition. Those widely spaced bubbles mark the pla s where elegant strategic formulations went down for the third and last time, weighted heavily by the pendulous trappings of tradition. (p. 146)

Denison (1990) proposes a model of the relationship between organizational culture and effectiveness: an organization's financial performance over time (its effectiveness) is closely related to its employees' involvement in the organization, the consistency of its goals and values with actual practices and policies, its ability to respond to customers within and without the organization, and the strength of its sense of mission (its purpose in society and the purposes of its members within the organization)(pp.4-14). An organization's goals and values also determine how membership is gained.

Schein (1987) notes that the speed and effectiveness of newcomers' socialization is a major factor in their contribution to the organization: " The basic stability and effectiveness of organizations therefore depends upon their ability to socialize new members" (p. 85). Newcomers are already members of other community cultures. For example, Schein suggests that graduate management education socializes students in ways that run counter to the values and beliefs of the organizations they join when they graduate. He explains:

> Where his education has taught the graduate principles of how to manage others and take the corporate point of view, his organizational socialization tries to teach him how to be a good subordinate, how to be influenced, and how to sell ideas from a position of low power. (p. 97)

This is often the position of writers who are newcomers to an organization, especially when they enter a strongly hierarchical culture. However, as writing and reader-response theorists suggest, newcomers can influence the community also. While Schein (1987) sees the organization as a "stable social system" (p. 85), Sutton and Louis (1987) suggest that the organization changes as the result of a newcomer's entry. For example, they suggest that certain situations (such as when they interview prospective employees) may cause organizational members to reevaluate their own perspectives on the organization. I submit that the power of newcomers to change the organization depends, in part, upon the strength of an organization's beliefs about the relationship between its traditions and its success.

Boundaries between newcomer and member exist not only between the newly hired and the organization, but also between the members of one organizational group and another. Schein (1971) proposes a three-dimensional model of the organization, characterized by a series of boundaries through which members pass during their careers. Hierarchical boundaries separate workers according to levels; inclusion boundaries separate workers according to their degree of closeness to the centre of the organization; and functional boundaries separate people according to department or grouping (pp. 404-405). The functional boundaries of an organization often signal subcultures within an organization. As Morgan (1986) notes, corporations rarely have a single, unified culture; rather organizations may have many subcultures based on professional differences, a situation that often causes difficulties in communication (p. 127). From the perspective of the organization as a distinct culture with embedded subcultures, workers are newcomers each time they cross an organizational boundary.

In summary, the literature in the fields of writing, reader response, and organizational behaviour support the theory that meaning is socially constructed; writing, reading, and managing are interpretive acts which shape and are shaped by the values and goals of the community. A central implication of this assumption is that to become a member of the community, newcomers must learn the socially agreed meanings of the community in order to enter the "conversation" already in progress (Burke, 1973, p. 110).

The research literature described below focuses on writing and reading in the context of community goals and values, which, while often unstated, are certainly operative.

Community Values

The ways in which theorists and researchers talk about writing, reading, and managing illustrate their assumptions about quality or standards of excellence. This section discusses perspectives on the characteristics that define "good" writing, "good" reading, and "quality" products.

What is "Good" Reading?

Most reader-response theorists would agree that "good" reading depends, to a large extent, upon the type of text being read. About literary reading, Culler (1980) states, "The question is not what actual readers happen to do but what an ideal reader must know implicitly in order to read and interpret works in ways which we consider acceptable, in accordance with the institution of literature" (p.111). Haas and Flower (1988) suggest that "good" reading of expository texts is "critical reading": " What they [students] often fail to do is to move beyond the content and convention and construct representations of texts as purposeful actions, arising from contexts, and with intended effects" (p. 170). While most reader-response researchers would agree that "good" reading, to some extent, involves the critical approach described by Haas and Flower, they argue that readers' individual and community purposes play a major role in how texts are read.

Most research on readers' responses has been conducted with students in classroom situations; only a few researchers (Bazerman, 1985, and Smart, 1990) have studied readers' approaches to texts in the workplace, the focus of this study. However, research on students' classroom reading practices provides relevant insights into the influence of prior knowledge, beliefs, and goals on the reader's approach to the text.

Dias' (1987) study of adolescents' responses to poetry in a classroom situation suggests that readers respond in distinct ways according to their beliefs about the nature of poetry. For example, some students believe that reading poetry means attending to the theme or equivalences between the poem and life; others look for the many possibilities for meaning in a poem. Vipond and Hunt (1984) propose three distinct modes of literary reading: point-driven (the reader's goal is to determine what the author is getting at); information-driven (the reader's goal is to obtain information); and story-driven (the reader's goal is to simply enjoy the story). (See Beach and Hynds, 1989, for a comprehensive guide to the research on literary reading.) Researchers agree that these different modes of reading vary with different types of text. For example, Langer (1990) observes that students tend to focus on the possibilities for meaning when reading literary texts and on maintaining a point of reference when reading expository texts. These studies suggest that managers' purposes and beliefs about how one should respond to organizational reports in the workplace might determine their reading practices.

In their study of college students reading a difficult text, Haas and Flower identify the reading practices of experienced readers as "rhetorical reading strategies," strategies that include "readers actively trying to understand the author's intent, the context, and how other readers might respond" (p. 181). These reading strategies also seem appropriate to a situation in which a manager reviews a subordinate's report before it is issued to others in the organization.

Another model of reading defines reading as an act of "framing," a metaphor that draws on the observation that in order to see something, we must both distinguish it from and relate it to other things (Reid, 1990). Reid proposes four types of framing to describe the reader's attention while reading: circumtextual (elements such as titles, footnotes, details of physical format); extratextual (the reader's preconceptions, knowledge); intratextual (elements such as paragraph breaks, stylistic changes that alter the reader's process of understanding); and intertextual (connections with other texts) (pp.50-51). From this perspective, reading is a process of constant comparison; in the case of managers reading subordinates' texts in an organization, the manager's comparison of the text with his or her preconceptions seems especially important. MacLean's (1986) study illustrates this process of integrating text information with a reader's prior knowledge. From her study of experienced adults reading texts such as newspaper and magazine articles, she proposes a framework for identifying readers' tendencies to draw on information from the text (text-based responses) and to draw on their own prior knowledge of the topic (reader-based responses) in order to comprehend the text. She concludes that although there were individual differences in her participants' tendencies toward text-based or reader-based responses, the readers in her study integrated their use of text information and their prior knowledge of the topic in their process of making sense of the text. Although most of these studies have focused on students as readers (MacLean's is the exception), their findings suggest important lenses through which to view readers in the workplace.

Most studies of students' approaches to texts, though, do not focus on the relationship between a reader's approach to the text and the reader's situation within a community. By contrast, studies by Bazerman (1985) and Smart (1990) illustrate the direct relationship between a reader's response and community values and practices. Bazerman's study of research physicists reading scientific articles in their particular fields identifies patterns of reading based on readers' professional interests and areas of expertise. He observed that the research physicists in his study selected articles to read according to their "mental maps" of their fields: "The map is so well developed that just from the clues of the title, author, and perhaps the abstract, the reader can make strong predictions about what an article in a significant area in the map is likely to contain" (p. 10). He also noted that they usually read only parts of the articles "seeking what they consider the news -- that is, what will fill out and modify their schema or picture of subject and field. But what the news is depends on individual interests and purposes" (p. 10). Smart (1990) observed certain regularities in the reading practices of senior decision-makers in a government financial institution and suggests that these common reading patterns result from shared interpretive frameworks based on their training in economics and their common mandates as senior executives responsible for developing government policy. These two investigations of readers' responses to writing in the workplace reveal that readers' responses clearly depend on goals shaped by their work situations and interpretive frameworks informed by disciplinary knowledge. Whereas the readers in the studies by Bazerman and Smart read to gain knowledge to shape their mental models of problems and issues in their fields, some workplace readers (such as supervisors and managers) read texts to ensure that the texts conform to their mental models of organizational realities before the texts are issued to other readers. This situation of managerial review may have much in common with teachers reading their students' writing.

While most studies of teachers reading students' writing do not describe the relationship between the teacher's responses and the institutional culture in which the reading occurs, they do examine the methods teachers use to evaluate texts. (See, for example, Gere, 1980, on the merits of various methods and Huot, 1990, for a comprehensive discussion of the problems of reliability and validity.) A central motive for this research on evaluation is the recurring observation that readers respond to different features of student writing, as illustrated by Diederich (1974). His study of teachers, writers, editors, and professionals reading a single group of college papers demonstrated a wide range of evaluations for each student paper. Among the difficulties in evaluating students' writing are the effects of the reader's style, inherent difficulties in various evaluation methods, and differences in writers' and readers' perceptions of the assigned task. A difference among teachers' perceptions of the goals of the writing assignment may also be an important reason for variations in readers' responses to the same text, according to a study by DeRemer and Bracewell (1991). This difference in perceptions about the assigned writing task may be an important element in the interaction of managers' expectations and subordinates' intentions for writing.

The conflicting roles faced by teachers as readers of student writing in the classroom has also been an issue in the study of teachers' responses. Anson (1989) describes the dilemma inherent in this situation:

> For the teacher, it is the schizophrenia of roles -- now the helpful facilitator, hovering next to the writer to lend guidance and support, and now the authority, passing critical judgment on the writer's work; at one moment the intellectual peer, giving 'reader-based' feedback (Elbow 1981), and at the next the imposer of criteria, the gatekeeper of textual standards. (p. 2)

Anson's portrayal of the teacher's situation strongly suggests that institutional goals and values underlie the conflict of roles. Purves' (1984) taxonomy of readers' roles suggests both individual and organizational goals: common reader (reads for pleasure or interest); copy editor/proofreader (act as surrogates for other readers); reviewer (surrogate for common reader); gatekeeper (surrogate for an establishment); critic (relates text to writer or culture of writer); and diagnostician/therapist (searches for possible problems and remedies) (pp. 260-262). The roles of gatekeeper and, possibly, diagnostician or therapist in Purves' scheme seem most congruent with managers' roles in the review of their subordinates' reports. On the other hand, the manager's roles of judge and mentor may be difficult to reconcile in a situation in which a subordinate's text reflect's the manager's work. How managers reconcile their roles as mentors and judges when they respond to subordinates' writing must surely reflect both organizational and individual goals and values.

To sum up, research on readers' approaches to literary and nonliterary texts and teachers' approaches to student texts suggests that values, beliefs, attitudes, and goals are important elements of response. Researchers attribute the source of these variations mainly to individual intentions and frameworks of interpretation (often implicit); they seldom elaborate on the influence of community membership on these individual frameworks. Since research on teachers' responses to student' writing demonstrates that teachers' beliefs about writing exert considerable influence on their judgments of student's texts, it seems reasonable to extend this finding to the situation of managers responding to their subordinates' writing. How these beliefs about writing arise from managers' social contexts is a subject of this study.

What is "Good" Writing?

Although many students succeed at writing in school, as graduates they often find writing success difficult to achieve in the workplace. The surveys which demonstrate that workplace writers believe they learn to write through on-the-job experience strongly suggest that criteria for writing differ considerably in school and workplace settings (Anderson, 1985; Rush and Evers, 1986). Research in progress is beginning to show that the explicit teaching of writing in university is often done through writing courses rather than courses in academic subjects (Dias, Paré, Freedman, and Medway -in progress). Writing courses are often taught by teachers trained to teach English literature; therefore, the conventions of literary discourse tend to influence their criteria for evaluation. (See Russel, 1988 and Purves, 1988 for reviews of this claim.) This situation may explain, in part, why students who produce texts both for teachers in university and for managers in the workplace often claim that the characteristics of "good" writing differ considerably in each setting.

In the writing classroom, "good" writing may be viewed as that which matches the ideal forms, such as the conventional essay, term paper, or letter structure (Coe, 1987, p. 14). Some teachers value students' creativity and ability to create texts that demonstrate integrity, spontaneity, and originality (Faigley, 1986, p. 529). When writing teachers are concerned with less literary types of writing, they may associate "good" writing with the writer's ability to move away from self and to take on a reader's perspective (Faigley, 1986, p. 532-533). For example, Flower (1979) describes "good" writers as those who use particular strategies to "transform it [thought] in certain complex but desirable ways for the needs of a reader" (p. 19).

Research on writing outside the classroom has added new perspectives on the nature of "good" writing to take account of the relationships between writing and its social contexts such as communities in academic disciplines and professional organizations. Proponents of this enlarged view perceive writing as situated in a community of writers and readers who share common purposes and language. For example, in a comparison of texts from the published literature of biology, sociology, and literary criticism, Bazerman (1988) describes what it means to write well in a discipline:

> Getting the words right is more than a fine tuning of grace and clarity; it is defining the entire enterprise. And getting the words right depends not just on an individual's choice. The words are shaped by the discipline -- in its communally developed linguistic resources and expectations; in its stylized identification and structure of realities to be discussed; in its literature; in its active procedures of reading, evaluating, and using texts; in its structured interactions between writer and reader. The words arise out of the activity, procedures, and relationships within the community. (p. 47)

Other researchers speak of acquiring the genres of a discipline. For example, Freedman (1987), in her study of students in an undergraduate introductory Law course, observed that through their essays for the course, these students had "learned to share the conventions of language use, to approach problems and define issues in the manner of those already socialized into the discipline (p. 99). From her study of one student's progress through university courses in several disciplines, McCarthy (1987) suggests that teachers, as "native speakers" in a discipline, need to understand the difficulties student newcomers experience in their efforts to learn the interpretive and linguistic conventions that characterize the disciplines (p. 262).

Just as ways of reading differ among communities, ways of writing also differ. Not only do students have to learn the various criteria for writing in the disciplines in university, they also have to learn new ways of writing when they enter the workplace. In the workplace, readers, especially those from upper management, often determine the criteria for written communication. For example, Smart's (1992) study of the reading practices of senior decision-makers in a government financial institution and the documents produced for them suggests that acceptable texts in this community provide community-specific arguments supported by particular kinds of evidence arranged in characteristic forms. MacKinnon's (in press) study in the same organization suggests that the writing development of newcomers includes their realization that meeting readers' specific needs is the only way to ensure their writing success in that organizational community.

Meeting readers' needs is also the criterion for success in Barabas' (1990) study of progress reports written in an R&D organization. Barabas examined the interaction of writers' intentions and readers' expectations by asking writers and readers to identify what information they believed to be most important in their organizational progress reports. As my study will show, the information content of reports is not the only point where writers and readers might disagree. She concludes that when writers included information their supervisors agreed was important, the writer's report was considered a "good" report. However, as Anson and Forsberg (1990) conclude from their study of student interns writing in business settings: "... becoming a successful writer is much more a matter of developing strategies for social and intellectual adaptations to different professional communities than acquiring a set of generic skills" (p. 201).

Interaction between writers and readers is highlighted in the document review process, often described by researchers as a form of "document cycling" (Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller, 1985). Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller report that writers and their supervisors at

Exxon engaged in a process of multiple reviews of documents: the writers submitted drafts of their documents to their supervisors, who then reviewed them and suggested revisions; the writers made the revisions and then sent the documents back to the supervisor for further review. This document cycling process often provoked conflict for a variety of reasons, including the lack of consultation between writers and supervisors before the writing began and the writers' perceptions of the supervisor's comments as arbitrary (p. 294). The supervisors considered this document cycling process not only as a way to improve documents, but also as a way to manage their staff's work and to identify problems (p. 294). Cross (1990) studied the review processes for two different documents in the same organization and observed that one review process was characterized by conflict, the other by accord. He notes that conflict was terminated by hierarchical positioning whereby the company's president overruled the writers and their managers to ensure that the document conveyed his individual view. These studies illustrate a central concern of the social perspective on writing: "[advocates of a social perspective] share a notion of rhetoric as a political act involving a dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as the agency of mediation" (Berlin, 1988, p. 488). (See also Doheny-Farina, 1986, for the influence of hierarchy and competing goals on writing and Winsor, 1990, for the influence of hierarchy on the interpretation of writing.)

Kleimann's (in press) study clearly identifies the relationship between one organization's values and goals and the document review process. She conducted her research in a government organization mandated to identify and report failures of efficiency and compliance in the U.S. federal government. The work of identifying failures and the consequent need for accuracy were identified by Kleimann as the primary elements driving the document review process. The work of identifying failures in texts, the document review process, was carried out differently in the two divisions she studied. One division valued a team approach and perceived the review process as a way to combine the different kinds of expertise of its members. This team approach included a great deal of discussion and oral feedback among the reviewers. In the second division, hierarchy seemed to be valued more than team work and review was seen as a way to make corrections; consequently, the review process of this division was characterized by delays and conflict. Discussion is important to the writing process, as demonstrated by Spilka's (1990) study of engineers writing for multiple audiences. She concludes that discussion before and during the writing process was a major influence on the success of the document.

On the other hand, some researchers have observed that verbal interaction between writers and readers is sometimes difficult. From their study of writers and managers working in an architectural service of a government agency, Couture and Rymer (1991) report that writers and managers may have radically different views on the function of discussions around the writer's text. For example, some managers in their study believed that collaboration over technical issues before writing was appropriate, but not collaboration around the writing of the document (p. 105). They conclude that such a situation may lessen the effectiveness of the interaction (p. 98). Couture and Rymer suggest that differences in organizational power may make the interaction around texts difficult: "The reporting relationship between supervisor and subordinate, exacerbated by the assigned writing situation, assumes pre-established roles of power and submission which may be antithetical to the cooperative effort required for effective interaction during composing, especially for collaborative invention" (p. 101).

Conflict between the goals and values of supervisors and writers as they negotiate the final form of a document appears to characterize much of the research on writing in the workplace. This conflict between superior and subordinate might be viewed as a subordinate's struggle to achieve community approval, an achievement symbolized by the supervisor's agreement on the final text. However, as Kleimann (in press) notes, even though the document review process in organizations has been shown to consume large amounts of time and produce various conflicts, few studies have focused on the details of this interaction between writer and reader.

While researchers study writers in their communities, the community itself as part of the writer's intention seldom figures in such research. Most writing research describes writing from the perspective of the writer. From such a perspective, the reader is most often conceived as someone with a set of expectations rather than someone, such as a manager, with socially engendered intentions for a text. (I discuss the problem of the concept of the reader in the section entitled "The Manager as Reader.")

What is a "Quality" Product

Thus far, I have argued that writing and reading practices clearly reflect organizational goals and values. In this section, I propose that the products of an organization's writing and reading practices, its written texts, also reflect organizational goals and values. From her study of writing in an accounting firm, Devitt (1991) observes that written texts, such as accountants' letters to clients, are products for which payment is demanded. I submit that the ways in which the quality of written texts is judged, even in-house recommendations, reflects an organization's beliefs about the definition of quality throughout its operations.

The performance of an organization's entire operations has become a major issue in the current climate of increased competitiveness in business environments and the market upheavals of the 1980s: "Leading manufacturers and service providers alike have come to see quality as a strategic weapon in their competitive battles" (Eccles, 1991, p. 132). This increased emphasis on quality raises the issue of how a consistent vision of quality can be implemented throughout the organization. Fairhurst (1993), in her study of how senior management's promotion of a Total Quality campaign is enacted at the lower levels of a company's hierarchy, suggests that quality-oriented leadership is an increasing concern for current management practice (p. 334). Eccles recommends that "management needs to articulate a new corporate grammar and define its own special vocabulary" (p. 134). It seems reasonable to suggest that how an organization understands quality influences all its production processes and products, including writing.

From a study of the literature in philosophy, economics, marketing, and operations management, Garvin (1988) has identified five principal approaches to defining quality in organizations: the transcendent (quality cannot be measured), product-based (the number of positive attributes can be measured), user-based (quality depends upon the user's judgment), manufacturing-based (manufacturing processes provide products that meet specifications), and value-based (quality and cost are in balance)(p. 40). Extending these approaches to judgements about written texts, I suggest that an organization that understands quality from a user-based perspective might describe "good" writing as that which meets reader's specific needs. On the other hand, managers who approach quality from a product-based perspective might identify "good" writing as that which includes all the sections of a specific report format.

In a business setting, the managers are the people who promote and maintain the organization's values; their reviews of subordinates' written reports provide an important opportunity to do this.

The Status of the Reader

The Manager in Organizational Theory

The readers in this study are managers who interact daily with their subordinates. When researchers began to study what managers actually did, they overturned the image of managers who sit in their offices reading and planning. Instead, managers plan and manage through dynamic interaction with their specific communities.

Mintzberg (1990) defines the manager as "... that person in charge of a formal organization or one of its subunits ... who must ensure that his organization produces its specific goods or services efficiently .. and that his organization serves the ends of those persons who control it" (p. 166). According to Mintzberg, managers carry out these responsibilities mainly through brief, various, and fragmented verbal contacts. Mintzberg concludes, "The manager's job is not one that breeds reflective planners; rather it produces adaptive information manipulators who favor a stimulus-response milieu" (p. 171). Kotter's (1982) findings in his study of successful general managers support Mintzberg's claim that managers spend most of their time with others in short disjointed conversations to acquire information and get things done. Mintzberg proposes the following interpersonal, informational, and decisional roles enacted by managers: figurehead, leader, liaison, monitor, disseminator, spokesman, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator (pp. 166-169). Morgan (1986) suggests that the corporate culture metaphor with its "influence on the language, norms, folklore, ceremonies, and other social practices that communicate the key ideologies, values, and beliefs guiding action" implies that leadership is the "management of meaning" (pp. 135-136). The manager's position as a manager of meaning who has little time for reflection and a multiplicity of roles to enact in his or her daily routines surely influences a manager's approach to reviewing a subordinate's text.

Several researchers suggest that conditions of trust between manager and subordinate play an important part in their communication situations. For example, McGregor (1967) proposes that the effects of a communication depend not so much on the characteristics of the communication, but on the relationship between the communicator and the characteristics of the system (interrelationships among the characteristics of the individual and of the organization). To illustrate this belief, McGregor offers this example:

> For example, if there is mistrust on the part of the audience toward the communicator, difference in form and style of his communication will have very little effect on the response. If, on the other hand, the relationship is one of trust, large variations in the skills of the communicator or the form of the

communication will not materially reduce the effectiveness. (p. 151)

This subordinate/superior interaction is often influenced by the participants' perceptions of each other. Smircich and Chesser (1981) compared subordinates' perceptions of how their superiors would judge their performance with the supervisors' actual performance evaluation. They found that subordinates, even those who believed they had an open relationship with their supervisor, believed that their supervisors would rate their performance higher than they actually did. These gaps in understanding are not uncommon, according to Dansereau and Markham (1987) in their review of the research literature on superior/subordinate communication (p. 347).

Although daily interaction may offer several opportunities for superiors and subordinates to narrow the gap in their perceptions, the strength of their perceptions may prevent this from happening. According to Saunders and his colleagues (1989), many organizations claim to have informal "open-door policies," policies whereby supervisors' doors are always open to employees for discussion of their work-related concerns (p. 3).

But, as these researchers report, although an open door policy may exist, employees are less likely to use it if they do not trust their supervisors to make effective, fair, and prompt decisions about their concerns (p. 21).

Although the literature above does not discuss written communication, theories about the manager's roles and the importance of managers' and subordinates' perceptions of trust are directly related to managers' responses to writing.

The Reader in Writing Theory

Although they would not deny that texts greatly depend on their readers for meaning, writing theorists most often view readers as entities created by the writer. Park (1982) suggests that theoretical discussions about the nature of the writer's "audience" are rare, perhaps because the concept is so large that it "block[s] thought by making us think we know what we are talking about when we often do not" (p. 248).

A notable contribution to our understanding of audience is Ede and Lunsford's (1984) discussion of the two main concepts of audience in writing theory which they call "audience addressed" (the actual intended readers) and "audience invoked" (those whose images, ideas, or actions influence a writer during the writing process) (p. 168). Ede and Lunsford argue for a synthesis of these two approaches and propose a model that envisions readers in a range of roles along a continuum from "audience addressed" to "audience invoked" depending on the rhetorical situation.

Drawing on the familiar image of audience as a group of people witnessing a performance, Paré (1991) directs our attention to two important problems that arise from conceiving readers as audience. The audience metaphor implies: "The writer-reader relationship is largely one-way; the writer acts on passive readers;" and the writer-reader relationship "... is temporary: the writer's relationship begins and ends with the text" (p. 47). From his case studies of social workers writing reports, Paré concludes that the concept of readers as audience denies the complex web of relationships between and among writers and readers. Certainly the management literature suggests that managers who review their subordinates' reports are active readers who interact in complex ways rather than readers who act as a passive audience.

Because our inquiries arise from the theoretical frameworks we bring to our research, it matters whether we conceive of the writer's readers as actual people who respond to writing or as readers who exist as memories in the writer's mind. For example, as Ede and Lunsford (1984) note, when we conceive of readers as an invoked audience, we "distort the process of writing and reading by overemphasizing the power of the writer and undervaluing that of the reader" (p. 165).

From his experience as a writing consultant, Bocchi (1988) observes that audience analysis begins long before the writing process: "Each time writers make inferences about the conventions of their community, each time writers interact with other members of their community, they are reading and defining role boundaries as well as gaining information about how individuals perceive their own roles" (p. 4). For writers whose writing is reviewed by a manager, managers' responses provide important information about writer/reader relationships.

Summary

This study arises from my desire to know what university graduates must learn to be successful writers in the workplace. Based on the assumption that an organization's values and goals shape expectations for writing, I have drawn from the literature on theory and research in writing, readers' responses, and organizational behaviour to create the theoretical framework for this study. An underlying assumption in this literature is that reading and writing and managing are interpretive acts which shape and are shaped by the values and goals of the community. This assumption arises from central theories in writing, reader response, and organizational behaviour. In composition and reader-response theories, writing and reading are perceived as dynamic processes in which writers and readers bring prior knowledge, intentions, expectations, purposes, situation, and experience to the creation and interpretation of written texts. Writers' and readers' contributions to textual meaning arise from their social interaction within community groups. Although there is little consensus among writing and reader-response theorists about ways to define and identify communities, Swales' (1992) proposal that they are defined by "a common project" seems most congruent with the concept of an organization in the management literature. In all three fields, many theorists perceive a reciprocal relationship between the individual and a community's beliefs, values, and goals (Bleich, 1978; Yates and Orlikowski, 1992; and Sutton and Louis, 1987, for example). In a strongly hierarchical community, evidence of this reciprocity might be difficult to discern. Most theorists agree that communities exclude as well as include and that membership requires the newcomer to learn the socially agreed meanings of the community (Louis, 1983, for example). Since organizational traditions and goals shape management beliefs and practices, criteria for evaluating the quality of a text are community specific; therefore the definition of "good" writing depends upon its situation. Whether managers and subordinates agree or disagree upon the quality of a text depends, to some extent, on the relationship between them (McGregor, 1967, for example), the manager's perception of his or her role in the review process (Anson, 1989, for example), and the congruency between the manager's and subordinate's perceptions of the assigned task (DeRemer and Bracewell, 1991, for example).

Clearly, the assumptions of community, as both the source and result of human actions, point to a strong relationship between readers' responses to writing and the goals and values of the community. The idea of community includes both writer and reader; yet studies of writing have based their conclusions mainly on evidence gained from writers' perspectives. Studies of readers and what they attend to while reading have been slow to develop (Bazerman and Smart are exceptions). No studies reported in the literature have explored the outcomes of a match or mismatch between the writer's intentions and the reader's intentions when the reader meets the text.

In order to explore the concept that writing is socially constituted, this research focuses on the reader's perspective in the expectation that it will enhance our understanding of the meaning of "good" writing in an organization. The reader's voice is especially important for writing in a hierarchical organization where managers act as gatekeepers for their communities. Detailed knowledge of how these managers attend to the written documents submitted by their subordinates for approval will extend our understanding of writing in the workplace. The following chapter describes the methodology used to explore the goals and values of the organization and the ways in which they shape readers' responses to writing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> My tape recorder, as ubiquitous as the carpenter's tool chest or the doctor's black satchel, carried away valuables beyond price.
> (Terkel, 1972, p. xxii)

This research explores the question of how the goals and values of an organization shape readers' responses to writing within the organization. Inherent in this question is the assumption that individual acts of writing and reading cannot be studied apart from their social context:

> ...the behavior of an individual can be understood only in terms of the behavior of the whole social group of which he is a member, since his individual acts are involved in larger, social acts which go beyond himself and which implicate the other members of that group. (Mead, in Morris, 1962, p. 7)

Following this perspective, the methodological approach to this study rests on the major assumption that all language is socially constructed; meaning is both shaped by its social context and, in turn, shapes the social context (LeFevre, 1987). Since the research goal is to understand the participants' meanings in their organizational context, rather than to prove or disprove specific hypotheses, the methodological approach is qualitative: "Qualitative research not only attempts to describe in rich detail but also recognizes the significance of shared meanings developed by the participants in any social setting. It includes the participants' perspectives as an integral part of the research and tries to build and verify a coherent explanation of how a particular situation works" (Butler-Kisber, 1986, p. 4).

This study employs a combination of qualitative methods: in the role of learner I collected information by such means as unstructured interviews, observation, and verification of the data with the participants in their roles as experts. The research site was a natural setting, a pharmaceutical company here called The Health Care Company (HCC). (I have assigned fictitious names to the organization and the participants in order to preserve confidentiality.)

The Research Project

As a teacher of written communication to management students in university, I chose to study writing in an organization typical of those that hire university management graduates. Bazerman's (1985) and Smart's (1990) studies have shown that readers' (research physicists and senior executives, respectively) responses to texts illustrate how the values and goals of a discipline or organization shape readers' responses. While the readers in Smart's and Bazerman's studies were not reviewing texts written for internal readers, it seems reasonable to assume that a study of managers' responses to their subordinates' texts will also show how their responses are shaped by organizational values and goals. Managers often review subordinates' texts before they are issued to other readers in the organization (Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller, 1985, for example), a situation which affords the researcher an opportunity to study the ways in which readers respond to writers' texts. According to Anderson (1985), internal written communications (intended for readers within the organization) represent an important and frequent task in business settings. Therefore, I sought a research site in which writers' texts were reviewed by managers and intended for other readers within the organization.

In the preliminary stages of the study, I chose an engineering company engaged in project management and a pharmaceutical company, both large companies (over 500 employees) operating in English in the Montreal area and employing university graduates. From several preliminary interviews with project managers in the engineering company, I learned that many of the internal communications took place through short messages on the electronic mail system or at meetings; written communication in the form of reports was largely intended for external readers outside the country. This situation mitigated against my focussing on the internal written reports of some substance needed to explore the influence of organizational values and goals on readers' responses to writing. Thus, the study was limited to two divisions of a single site, the pharmaceutical company, where internal written reports were an important feature of daily operations.

Entry to the Site

My entry to the organization was gained through a "dual or multiple entry" procedure (Kahn & Mann, 1969) in which the researcher requests permission from one level of the organization to personally negotiate participation with another, thus avoiding a situation in which the participants would feel that I was sponsored by upper management. A personal contact in the company library put me in touch with the Manager of Training and Development to whom I presented my research proposal. Perceiving this study as an opportunity to highlight the in-house writing workshops sponsored by the company over the past several years, he responded with enthusiasm. With permission from his manager (the Vice-President of Human Resources) the Manager of Training and Development contacted eight people in two departments, Marketing and Management Information Systems, who had taken the in-house writing course over the last few years. In addition to sending them my "Letter to Participants" (Appendix A), he informed them that I was seeking volunteers for my research and provided me with a list of their phone numbers. During my first meeting with each of the potential volunteers, I explained my purposes and confirmed their willingness to participate. None of these participants reported to the Manager of Training and Development or to his superior; therefore there was no hierarchical pressure to participate. As the study progressed, two of the original eight participants became too busy to participate and one was promoted to another division. Of the five remaining participants (3 managers and 2 subordinates), one (a market research manager) was promoted to another department, but volunteered to remain in the study in her new role as product manager reporting to a director. As I became familiar with the organization, I was able to recruit an additional eight people (for a total of 13) to participate in the 12 Reading Events and a further nine people to provide background information on the organization and information about writing and reading in that setting (for a total of 22 participants). (Please see Appendix B for the participants' location in the organization.)

The Manager of Training and Development, an employee with eleven years' experience in the company, became a key contact and assisted me by providing me with such things as organigrams, personnel policies and procedures, and background information about the organization. Although all visitors must sign in and out of the building, wear a visitor's name tag, and be escorted to their destination, I was eventually allowed to go about the building unescorted. As well, I was given space in a small office shared by two part-time French language teachers. Thus, my status gradually evolved from that of an unknown visitor to that of a familiar researcher. This position allowed me to make unscheduled visits to various offices to follow leads to new sources of in-house information.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

In the absence of statistical sampling procedures commonly used in quantitative research, theorists in the field of qualitative research propose that the most important feature of the procedures for selection of participants is that criteria be defined:

> [A]lthough selection procedures may be designed to reflect principles of probability, they do not require the use of such guidelines; rather, a clear definition of the special criteria for selection is critical. (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 67).

I selected participants in view of the kinds of data they could best provide about (1) the background of the organization, (2) writing and reading in the organization, and (3) writing and reviewing specific reports. Employees with more than ten years' experience in the organization provided background information about the company's beliefs, values, goals, and history. The selection criteria for the Reading Event participants (managers and their subordinates) were as follows: their job responsibilities required writing internal reports or reviewing internal reports, they were members of the Marketing or M.I.S. divisions, and they volunteered to participate. Many of these people were long-time employees and also provided background information about the organization.

The selection procedure for the Reading Events was based on pragmatic, ethical, and theoretical criteria. Pragmatic constraints included the following: (1) written reports usually had a list of several addressees which included senior managers in two or more departments; the manager who acted as the immediate supervisor was the most available reader for the first reading of a report; (2) managers often reviewed their employees' texts while on business trips or at home; therefore, some readings were impossible for me to record; (3) busy work schedules, ad hoc meetings, and crisis situations often precluded my presence during a Reading Event. Thus, the pragmatic criteria for selection were that Reading Events to be studied should be those in which the reader was the immediate supervisor, and the place and timing of the reading should be convenient for the participant.

English as the mother tongue was not a criterion for selection, because such a criterion is unrealistic in current societies, especially in Quebec. The working language of the administrative areas of the company is English and of the 22 participants in this study, the majority (18) are native English speakers.

Ethical considerations demanded that both readers (the managers) and writers (employees reporting to the managers) must be volunteers unconstrained by hierarchical pressures to participate. In ten of the 12 Reading Events, the writer (the subordinate) volunteered information about completing a text and made the request to the reader (the manager) to allow me to be present when the text was read. In two cases, the manager offered to read reports already submitted for review before I was able to contact the writers. In both these cases, the managers asked the writers' permission to respond aloud in my presence. In the final interviews, participants revealed a variety of reasons for participating, including personal interest in the subject of writing, a wish to cooperate with the university, an interest in the results of my study, a wish to help a fellow researcher (some participants remembered research projects they had done in university), and a wish to cooperate with the Manager of Training of Development who had helped them with their training needs at various times. No participant suggested managerial pressure was the reason for participating.

Theoretical considerations included the selection of Reading Events in which the manager had not read the text earlier. In order to capture Reading Events as naturally as possible (without having the manager rehearse the reading or having the writer revise the text after discussing it with me), I asked writers to contact me when they had finished writing a report and before they submitted it to their managers for review. The writer then contacted the manager to arrange for me to be present during the manager's reading of the report immediately after my interview with the writer.

Although the Manager of Training and Development derived the initial contact list from a list of people who had attended in-house writing courses, participation in these courses was not a criterion for selection. The length of time between participation in the writing course and the beginning of this study varied between one and four years; I believe this time span makes it impracticable to investigate the effects of such courses on the writing or reading of internal reports. The main point recalled by the participants about the in-house writing course was that it alerted them to methods for eliminating the "bog" in writing (making writing more concise). A review of the course materials confirms this focus. Almost half of the eventual list of participants did not participate in the writing course. Any references to the language or terminology of the in-house writing courses is accounted for in the findings.

The Researcher's Roles

This study's qualitative methods include an ethnographic approach in which the researcher assumes the roles of novice and research instrument (Spradley, 1980). As a novice, the researcher seeks to understand another culture from the viewpoint of its participants. This understanding is gained through participation, observation, and analysis, which is then reported. Since the participants knew I taught writing courses at university, a special effort was made to emphasize that I was there to learn about writing outside the university from them. My insistence on their expertise resulted in participants often prefacing their information with comments such as "the way we do it here" and by comparing the writing they had done in university with writing on the job, indicating that they did, indeed, perceive themselves to be the experts on my topic of writing in the workplace.

Denzin (1978) describes researchers' roles along a continuum from "complete participant" (the researcher becomes a complete participant) to "complete observer" (the researcher observes and records with minimal participation). My role in this research lies close to Denzin's category of "participant as observer," a role in which the researcher forms relationships with the participants as they provide information (p. 190). I participated in the organization chiefly as resident researcher who seeks information from participants, key contacts, and available documents. As a researcher I am also interpreter and writer, for the data must eventually make personal sense and then be incorporated into a written account. Clifford (1983), in his review of the problems of ethnographic authority, describes the writing situation as one in which the writer must create an "adequate version of a more-or-less discrete 'other' world" from a complex of data "shot through with power relations and personal cross purposes" (p.120).

Data Collection

Based on my assumption that the reader's response is shaped by organizational goals and values, I collected data about the Reading Event and its surrounding situation as shown in Figure 1 below.

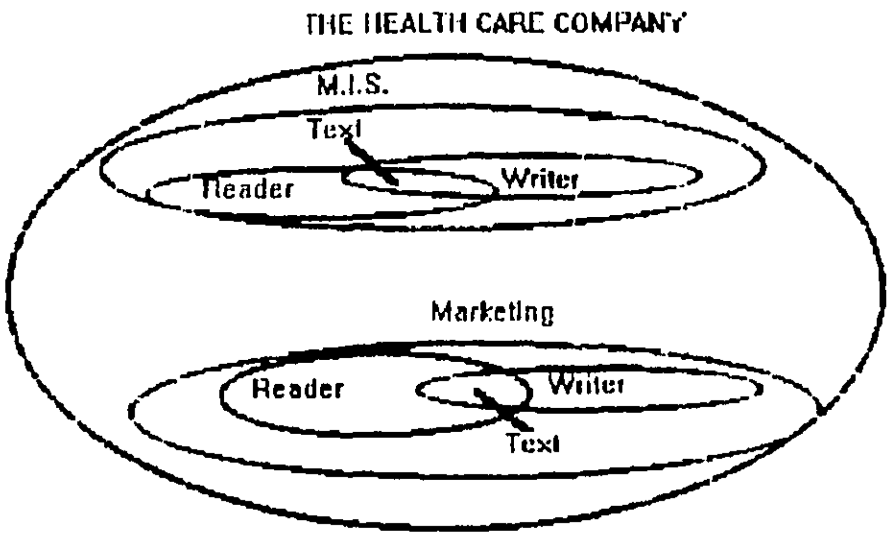


Figure 1. The Reading Event in Context

This figure represents the social context of the Reading Event; it includes the goals and values of the organization, the goals and values of the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions, the experience, goals and values of both writer (subordinate) and reader (manager), and the interaction of the reader's expectations and the writer's intentions in the text.

The following methods were designed to collect information about the Reading Events and their contexts:

Interviews

In the role of novice or newcomer to this organization, I conducted interviews for several purposes: to gain background information about the participants and their job responsibilities; to explore the participants' beliefs about writing and response at HCC; to understand the writer's perceptions of his or her intentions for a specific report (after the document was written, but before the reader had read it);[1] to explore the reader's expectations of the report (after reading

[1]In their discussion of intent within the framework of communication, Stamp and Knapp (1990) draw on Anderson's (1986) description of four states of consciousness: minimal consciousness (knowing that you know); perceptual consciousness (a low level of awareness allowing you to process perceptions like gender, class, or status without effort); constructual consciousness (planning activities with an increased awareness of what you are doing); and articulated consciousness (expression of motives, plans, and actions) (p.283). The descriptions of writers' and readers' intentions that follow in Chapter 5 assume the highest level of consciousness in which participants articulate their intentions for writing and reading. However, I also assume that participants are not aware of or do not remember many of their writing or reading intentions and that intentions change; many readers' intentions seem to be shaped <u>during</u> the responding process.

it) and his or her decisions about revision needs; to verify my understandings of the data with writers and readers when the study was finished (about a year after the first interviews); and to gain general knowledge of the company policies and procedures from key contacts such as the Manager of Training and Development. (Please see Appendix C for my record of interviews, site visits, and Reading Events.)

The interviews were, for the most part, scheduled (by appointment) because of the participants' busy work routines. Short, unscheduled interviews did occur when I used the office space assigned to me and visited the cafeteria, library, and Personnel office. The interviews were unstructured and open ended; that is, I approached the interview with a list of standard topics for discussion rather than a schedule of standard questions, so that the interview resembled a "guided conversation" (Lofland & Lofland, 1964, p.59) more than a question and answer session. Discussion of one topic led to another, depending on a participant's interests; participants often raised issues not on my list of topics. (Please see interview topics in Appendix D.) These unstructured interviews approached a form of discourse in which both interviewer and interviewee negotiated common meanings (Mishler, 1986).

Through these unstructured interviews, the participants were able to direct me to the information they considered important. Furthermore, this freedom prompted the participants to use stories and anecdotes freely to explain their experiences. (See Ledwell-Brown and Dias, in press, for a more fully developed account of stories in research interviews.) As Mishler points out, unstructured interviews encourage participants to explain their experiences in their own language, rather than having to shape their responses to fit the pre-determined form and meaning of the researcher.

One of the requests I made to writers and readers during the interviews was to recall a critical incident, a writing or reading situation that had made a positive or negative impression in their workplace experience. Flanagan (1954) suggests that this "Critical Incident Technique," often used to establish criteria for specific jobs, provides more information than simply asking for a general impression because the participant describes an actual event or activity in concrete detail (p. 355). In my study, I assumed that recalling details about specific texts would elicit tacit criteria for writing.

To clarify the participants' meanings, I conducted <u>verification interviews</u> with writers and readers in the final stages of the study, a time when I felt my knowledge of all the data would allow me to cross-check my understandings with the wider writing/reading situation. In preparation for these interviews, I returned a copy of each participant's interview transcript for his or her review about a week before we met. To help the participants remember what they had said earlier, I formatted the interview transcripts as a solid block of text, incorporating all hesitations, rephrasings, interjections, and exclamations. There were three reasons for this format: (1) a question and answer format was not appropriate because much of the discussion was around topics rather than arising from questions; (2) topic segmentation was not appropriate because the boundaries between the topic segments were not discrete; and (3) the solid block would require participants to thoroughly immerse themselves in the text to discover what they had said. In many cases, this immersion proved to serve the purpose of "taking the participant back" into the interview. One participant remarked, "The way it's laid out -it just flows into the conversation as it occurred" (C521/91.12). Although participants often found the transcripts difficult to read, many of them read all their transcripts, and some shared them with close relatives: "My wife read the first one -that was an incredible experience -she said, 'this is amazing -this is just like you'" (C549/91.12).

These verification interviews were a variation of the discourse-based interview described by Odell, Goswami, and Herrington (1983), a procedure in which research participants explain their reasons for making specific choices in their writing. In this case, I asked the participants to explain specific words or concepts (highlighted in the returned copies of their interview transcripts) that I did not fully understand. From these verification interviews, I gained a deeper understanding of the participants' meanings. I also learned about changes that had taken place during the course of the study. For example, one participant explained that his perceptions of his job responsibilities as reflected in the transcript of an early interview had been somewhat "naive"; at this later date, he perceived them differently.

Respond-Aloud Protocols

In addition to interviews, I asked the managers to respond aloud while reading their subordinates' reports, a process largely accepted as a way of charting a reader's approach to the reading task at hand (Waern, 1979; Dias, 1987; Afflerbach & Johnston, 1984). Since I did not want to direct the participants' reading, I simply asked them to think aloud while reading; I did not ask them to stop in any particular place or comment on anything specific. (Please see the "Instructions for Responding Aloud" in Appendix E.) As Langer (1986) notes, think-aloud protocols seem to capture the momentary decisions that readers no longer remember after reading (p. 235). I tape-recorded these respond-aloud protocols and later transcribed them for analysis. I collected 12 protocols from nine readers. The transcripts of the protocols range in length from one to nine single-spaced pages; the reading time varied from 15 to 30 minutes (approximately).

Document Review

In addition to tape-recording the respond-aloud protocols, I collected the reports read by the managers (except for one which was considered too confidential) and, in several cases, I collected the revised versions of the reports. To complement my growing understanding of the organization's activities, values, and goals, I also tracked many of the organization's events, such as staff promotions and awards, new product launches, and public citations, by reading the in-house newsletters, magazines, and bulletin boards. Although I was not allowed to copy particular documents, I was allowed to review policies and procedures, guidelines for reports, performance appraisal forms, and training material.

Observations

I made frequent field notes during my visits and kept a research journal to record my observations and developing insights. Part of this data collection involved following up leads from participants and from my observations recorded in the field notes in order to enlarge and refine the emerging picture of the organization as a context for writing and reading. For example, the Manager of Training and Development gave me a copy of the "Skills Profile" used for evaluating employee skills, a list and description of skills such as communication, leadership, and analysis. A review of my recorded observations over the course of the study pointed to conflicting information about the purpose and actual use of the "Skills Profile." This review of the field notes prompted a further investigation which revealed that although written policy requires that the skills list be completed for all new employees as part of their Personal Development Plans, managers apply the policy at their own discretion. Thus, the field notes provided a method for identifying discrepancies among policies and practices.

The methods described above have provided valuable information about the organization's implicit and explicit understandings of the characteristics of "good" writing at HCC.

Data Analysis

The chief method of analysis for the data was analytic induction: "scanning the data for categories of phenomena and for relationships among such categories, developing working typologies and hypotheses upon an examination of initial cases, then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981, p. 57). This analytic method involved recursive cycles of data review, reduction, and verification which included an in-process analysis (ongoing during the research) and a reflective analysis (after leaving the site). After I left the site (August, 1992), I integrated the interview and reader-response transcripts and the field notes into a single corpus, an activity which greatly assisted my reflective analysis.

The main analytical activities included reviewing the transcriptions, field notes, and collected documents in search of recurring themes, developing categories and definitions, and returning to the data to verify themes. The process of transcribing the tape-recorded interviews and respond-aloud protocols and verifying them with the audio tapes greatly increased my familiarity with the data. During this transcription process, I frequently reviewed the field notes to recall my recent experience of the interviews in order to capture as much as possible of the total picture (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1979).

This review process was guided by frequent reference to the original research question: How do an organization's goals and values shape readers' responses to writing? In order to guide the analysis, I focussed on the four issues relating to the research question: (1) What are the goals and values of the organization?

(2) How do these goals and values shape the organization's expectations for writing? (3) What is the relationship between writers' intentions and readers' expectations? (4) How does this relationship shape readers' responses to writing?

In the context of this study, the unit of analysis is the Reading Event, the meeting of the reader and text (in a situation in which reader and writer can know each other's expectations and intentions) and the decision point where the manager decides whether to approve the text as is or to send it back for revision. The Reading Event is best characterized as a transaction, a dynamic and reciprocal process in which meaning is created in the meeting of reader, text, and situation. In this study, I am adapting Rosenblatt's (1978) concept of reading (described in Chapter 2) to include the writer in the transaction; when managers respond to their subordinates' writing, the relationship between reader and writer clearly affects the transaction. Therefore, my definition of the Reading Event includes not only the reader and the text, but also the writer and the writer's intentions for the text. None of the literature in the fields of reader response and writing has provided a detailed description of readers' responses to specific texts in the workplace; therefore, no precedent exists for my definition of a Reading Event.

Phases of Analysis

Five phases of analysis characterize this study. Although they are separated into discrete activities here for the purpose of description, the analysis was a recursive process as each phase contributed insights to the other phases. I used the following methods to analyse the data during the analytic phases: data reduction through grouping of various kinds of data, categorization of the groupings, comparison among and within the groupings, frequency counts to determine dominant trends in the categories, construction of case descriptions, and identification of negative case data (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

In phase one, as I collected the data, I continuously reviewed and compared all the data, including transcripts of the interviews with participants and key contacts, company documentation (policies, procedures, performance appraisal forms, public relations documents), and field notes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This "coarse-grained" analysis (Butler-Kisber, 1988) guided the ongoing data collection and provided insights into the emerging themes and patterns of values and goals in the company's culture. During this time, I verified the adequacy of my field data and my emerging insights with one of my advisors who is an experienced ethnographer. Through a "fine-grained analysis" (Butler-Kisber, 1988), I gradually refined and confirmed my definitions of the categories arising from the data.

In phase two, I reviewed the respond-aloud protocols to gain an understanding of what the participant readers were attending to as they read their subordinates' texts. From this analysis, I derived tentative categories and coded the protocols. I repeated this review of the transcripts several times to refine and verify the categories of participant's responses. During this phase, I reviewed my coding procedures and my definitions of the categories with one of my advisors who is an experienced reader-response researcher.

In phase three, I analysed the transcripts of the interviews with writers and readers of specific documents and constructed case studies around the Reading Events.

In phase four, I reviewed the case studies in order to understand similarities and differences among the

Reading Events.

<u>In phase five</u>, I compared the case studies to discern the similarities and differences and to relate these to the insights about the company's culture gained from the first phase of analysis.

Figure 2 below is a visual representation of the analysis process in the time frame of this study (I first entered the site in July, 1990 and collected my last data in August, 1992).

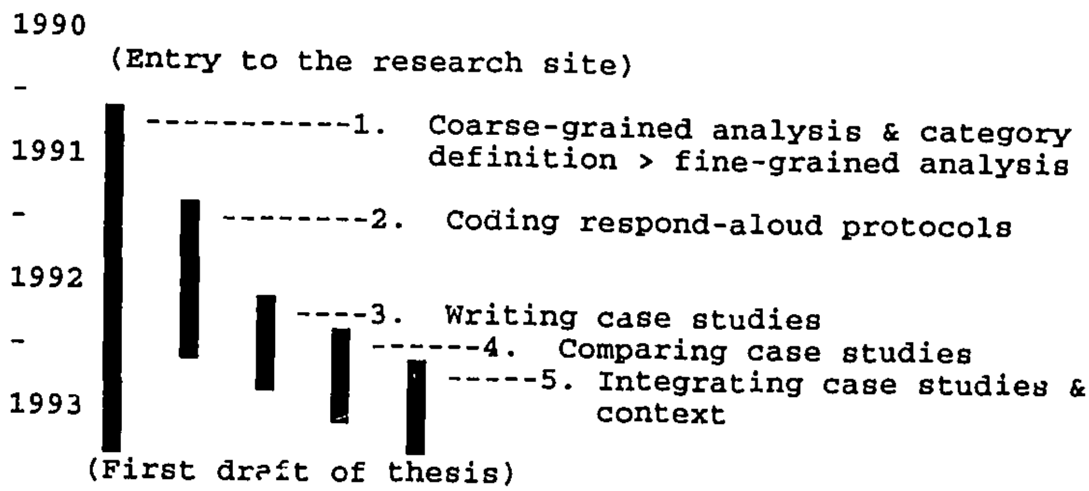


Figure 2. Phases of Analysis

Coding

As I collected the data, I reviewed and compared them in an effort to discern emerging patterns of goals and values related to writing and reading at HCC. Since my research role was that of novice, or learner, intent on learning the ways of writing and reading in this organization, the participants' comments tended to be prescriptive; that is, the participants were teaching me how writing and reading happens at HCC. For example, a common comment was "stay within the format." Whereas researchers in the role of consultant are responsible for diagnosing and recommending solutions to problems, a researcher in the role of learner places the participant in the role of consultant.

I assigned tentative codes to the interview transcripts and field notes in order to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward work-related writing and reading. I continued a recursive process of reviewing and comparing the participants' comments about writing and reading until the emerging patterns could be clearly defined. (See Appendix F for the categories, definitions, and coding rules.)

Whereas the interviews were conversations between me and the participants about writing and reading at HCC, the respond-aloud protocols appeared to reflect managers in dialogue with the texts they were reading (and the writer or future reader as represented in the text); therefore, I coded them separately. The transcripts of these respond-aloud protocols reveal managers posing questions to the writer as they read the text (the writers were not present during the readings), anticipating responses, agreeing and disagreeing with the writer's ideas, and contributing information to complete the writer's ideas.

The concept of reading as a dialogue with the text has been described in composition and reader-response theories. For example, James Moffett (1983), a theorist in the field of writing and teaching, describes the reading process as a meeting of one inner stream of consciousness with another: "The text does not register on a blank. The inner stream of thoughts, feelings, and images that flow unceasingly in us virtually all the time, even in sleep, does not stop when we open a book, but it does adapt drastically to this act, because what comes off the page is another thought stream" (p. 315). The novel, or even the report, is the product of another's inner stream of consciousness. Louise Rosenblatt (1978) describes the literary reading experience as having concurrent strands of response: the reading activities of responding to cues in the text, anticipating, and synthesizing are accompanied by the reader's reactions to the text he is creating. These reactions include "approval, disapproval, pleasure, shock; acceptance or rejection of the world that is being imaged; the supplying of rationales for what is being lived through" (p. 69). Although Rosenblatt is describing readers' responses to literature, her description also seems to apply to the readers' reactions in this study. The manager's comments in the protocols reflect these interactions between the reader's thoughts and feelings and the writer's thoughts and feelings as expressed through his or her text. To capture the dynamic nature of this interaction, I have created the categories from the implicit questions the readers seem to be asking themselves as they read. For example, the category, "consistency," reflects the reader's implied question: How does this information accord with what I know or believe? This effort to make sense of the data from the participant's point of view, the "emic" perspective (Spradley, 1980), is one of the defining characteristics of qualitative research.

The process of creating the categories began with reflecting on the questions the readers seemed to be asking of the text or writer. Then, I developed tentative codes to identify the comments and gradually developed definitions of the categories. Through a process of comparing and contrasting the definitions and categories, I gradually refined the coding scheme and definitions to account for all the comments made by the readers while responding aloud to their subordinates' texts. That is, the coding scheme accounts not only for the participants' comments about the text, writer, or situation, but also for comments about the researcher's presence and the situation of responding aloud. (See Appendix G for a description of the implicit questions, the categories, definitions, and coding rules.)

Aside from creating a typology of readers' responses to workplace writing (none have been described in the literature), this process of analytic induction conforms to the principles of qualitative research methods and enhances the study's reliability (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

About a year after my first visit to HCC, I was asked to present my preliminary research findings to the participants. This presentation was the impetus to refine the coding categories to the point where they would make sense to the participants. At the presentation, I explained the categories and provided examples. The participants generally agreed with the categories as described and suggested rationales for the predominance of one category in each division. Six months after this first coding for the presentation to the participants, I rewrote the category definitions and recoded the protocols without reference to the first coding. This second coding resulted in few variations from the original coding, which suggests that the coding scheme has a certain integrity. I did not consider the use of external verification procedures appropriate because of the contextual knowledge required to understand the participants' comments. Clark (1987) reminds us that the meaning of field work data is highly context bound:

> But field notes are not, ipso facto, data. Rather, they constitute an incomplete and selective record of events and impressions recorded by the fieldworker. The interpretive meaning of these events does not reside in the notes, but must be

> recreated by the fieldworker who was present at the time, in the context, attending to and remembering much more than what is literally recorded in the field notes. (p. 57)

In his study of coding practices, Garfinkle (1967) found that coders relied heavily on their contextual knowledge of the situation in their coding decisions: "[S]uch presupposed knowledge [of the situation] seemed necessary and was most deliberately consulted whenever, for whatever reasons, the coders needed to be satisfied that they had coded 'what really happened'" (p. 20). (See also Mishler, 1986, on the problems of decontextualizing data for the purposes of coding.)

One example of the need for contextual knowledge to categorize data from my study is illustrated by the coding situation of the following comment in a respond-aloud protocol: "Bert's going out and he's representing the company at this advisory board" (C381/91.06). The reader, John, made this comment about the meaning of a paragraph in a report. To place this comment in an appropriate category, the coder must know the writer's and reader's context. John and Bert work in an open office (the walls of their working spaces do not reach to the ceiling and there are no doors); they have many opportunities for conversation because their offices are next to each other (I have frequently observed them together in conversation); and John has already heard Bert's information about the advisory board at a staff meeting a few days before the Reading Event. No external coder could know this information and, therefore, could not use it to code this comment. (Please see Appendix H for an excerpts from coded protocols.)

Reliability and Validity of the Study

Can this study be replicated? Many of the methods could be replicated, since they have been described in detail, but the results would not be the same because so much of the method depends upon the interaction of the researcher and the participants. The kinds of information gathered from interviews, for example, depend to a large extent on the interpersonal relationship established between the interview participants. The researcher's ability to put readers at ease while responding aloud to reports also affects the kinds of data collected. Furthermore, The Health Care Company (the research site) has not been static since my departure from the site and the participants have grown and changed as well: "[H]uman behavior is never static, no study can be replicated exactly, regardless of the methods and designs employed" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.35). I have collected data from a number of different sources in two divisions of the organization (managers, subordinates, key contacts, documents, and on-site observations) and used a variety of methods (tape-recorded interviews, read-aloud protocols, verification interviews, document analysis, observation, and field notes) over an extended period of time (approximately 24 months). This triangulation of sources of information, space, time, and methods is designed to increase the study's validity and reliability (Cohen and Manion, 1989).

The research findings, described in the next two chapters, are presented with frequent quotations from the participants in order to provide a fully-documented analysis: "Those ethnographies rich in primary data, which provide the reader with multiple examples from the filed notes, generally are considered to be most credible" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 41).

Spradley and McCurdy (1972) note that all research is interpretive: "[S]elective observation and selective interpretation always work to transform the 'actual events' into the 'facts' that are used in a descriptive account" (p. 13). In this study, I have tried to reduce the researcher bias through assuming a learner role, rather than the role of an expert who might be seen by the participants as judging their writing and reading. Therefore, I recorded participants' responses to me and my own responses to the participants and situation in my field notes, and verified the participants' meanings by reviewing their transcripts and conclusions with them. The purpose of this study was not to establish cause and effect, but to discover participant's perceptions of cause and effect with respect to how writing achieves success in a business setting; a further goal was to infer traces of this achievement in the interaction of writers' intentions for the text and readers' expectations (as expressed through comments made during interviews and during the readings of texts).

Although this study cannot be replicated, the detailed descriptions of the research process and of the organization, participants, and Reading Events will allow other researchers to compare readers' responses in organizations similar to those reported here. Heath (1982) suggests that comparison studies are needed in order to generalize ethnographic conclusions from one setting to another, and notes that ethnographies of communities are not yet abundant enough to allow comparisons (pp. 42-44). This study can only add to the development of a corpus within which comparisons of communities of writers and readers can be made.

Summary

The goal of this study is to understand how the goals and values of an organization shape readers' expectations for and responses to writing. This goal assumes that both writing and response are social acts shaped by the interaction of writers, readers, texts, and situations; readers' responses cannot be understood apart from their context.

I chose the Health Care Company as the research site because it typically hires university graduates with management training and because internal written communications are an important part of its routine operations. The review of reports intended for readers internal to the organization affords an opportunity to study the interaction of writer, reader, text, and situation. With the help of the Manager of Training and Development, I made initial contact with eight potential volunteers and contacted others as I became familiar with the organization. Twenty-two people eventually participated in this study.

Because the goal is to understand the participants' meanings rather than test hypotheses, I have used a qualitative research approach to the problem. This means that I assumed the role of a newcomer or learner and sought to understand the participants' perspectives on writing and response in the organization through observation, interview, analytic induction, and participant verification over an extended period of time.

The following methods and phases of analysis contributed to my exploration of the three questions that follow from the central research question: (1) What are the goals and values of the organization? (2) How do these goals and values shape the organization's expectations for writing? (3) How do the writer's intentions interact with the reader's expectations to shape readers' responses to writing?

To understand the goals and values of the organization, I interviewed managers, directors, and administrative staff; I reviewed written policies, procedures, a report on employees' perceptions of communication within the organization, annual reports, and in-house newsletters; I made frequent visits to the site to observe what I could of the daily routines; and I verified my observations with participants. To understand how the organization's goals and values shape beliefs about writing and readers' responses, I interviewed participants, reviewed written guidelines for reports and a document describing ratings for writing skills, and I verified my conclusions with the participants. To understand how readers' expectations and writers' intentions interact to shape readers' responses to specific texts , I interviewed writers after they had completed a text (before they submitted it to their managers for review); tape-recorded readers' responses to the texts; interviewed the readers after the reading; collected a copy of the text and the readers' written comments when possible; and verified my interpretations of these data with the participants.

During the process of collecting the data I recorded observations, reflections, questions, and emerging insights in field notes, transcribed interviews and respond-aloud protocols, reviewed and compared the data, established tentative categories and definitions for the interview and reader-response data, constructed case studies from the Reading Events, compared and contrasted the case studies, and integrated the case study findings with my understanding of organizational goals and values. This process of analytic induction led to my interpretation of how the goals and values of one organization shape expectations for and responses to writing described in the following chapters.

The validity and reliability of this study are enhanced by the "triangulation" of sources of information and methods, and by the length of the time on site. The frequent quotations from the participants, the detailed methodology, and the detailed description of the organization and the participants should contribute to this study's credibility.

In the next chapter, I address the research question of how the organization's goals and values shape readers' responses to writing by describing the organizational culture of The Health Care Company and the relationships between the culture and readers' expectations for writing.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE HEALTH CARE COMPANY

> We're managing a business. And that's a serious affair. Therefore we have to ask questions. Although the pill may taste bitter today, you'll feel a lot better tomorrow.
>
> (A Participant)

In the previous chapters, I have argued that organizations are communities of people whose shared goals and values shape common practices. This assumption underlies my research question: How do an organization's goals and values shape the ways readers respond to writing? In this chapter, I address two of the four issues pertaining to this study of one organization, The Health Care Company: 1) What are the goals and values of the organization? and 2) How do these goals and values shape readers' expectations for writing in the organization? The goal of this chapter is to set the stage for Chapter 5, in which I explore the third and fourth issues of this research which pertain to the relationship between writers' intentions and readers' expectations and the effects of this relationship on readers' responses to writing?

I begin this chapter with a brief introduction to The Health Care Company (HCC) and then proceed to an analysis of the organization's goals and values. Following this analysis, I describe the relationship between the HCC culture and readers' expectations for writing.

The Organization

The Health Care Company (HCC) is the Canadian arm of a large (several billion dollars in annual sales in 1990 and almost 50,000 employees world-wide) multinational organization based in the United States (RA, 1990). Engaged in the research, development, production, and marketing of health care products in Canada, HCC employs more than 1,000 people, most of whom work at the Canadian head office, the site for this study (C10/90.10).[2] At the time of my entry to the site, July 1990, the company had experienced five consecutive years of rapid growth in sales, net income, and earnings per share, despite the poor economic climate of the 1980's (RA, 1990).

This profitable company is organized along

---

[2]The codes in parentheses identify the page number in the combined data corpus and the date the information was collected. For example, C10/90.10 means the information comes from page 10 of the corpus (C10) and was collected in October, 1990.

I have coded information from published sources (such as business journals, HCC annual reports, in-house newsletters, policies, and procedures) with fictitious initials (to protect confidentiality) and the date of publication.

hierarchical lines with an upper echelon of president, vice presidents, executive directors, directors, and managers (see Appendix B). The president reports to the corporate head office in the United States and each position in the Canadian operation reflects a position in the American corporation: "It's a sort of microcosm of [the parent company]" (EC/90.08). Within the hierarchical structure, organized according to functions such as research, production, marketing, sales, and finance, work is often accomplished by teams composed of employees from several functional areas (C51/90.11). For example, the Marketing Division works with Research, Production, Sales, Public Affairs, Regulatory Affairs, and many other departments, to plan and implement the introduction of a new product to the market.

Among the teams, informal and formal meetings are a major means of internal communication. One manager observes: "I spend a good deal of my time during the day going to meetings" (C105/90.11). Informal meetings are often occasioned by the physical layout of the office space. Subordinates' offices usually have no doors and only partial walls, a situation which allows easy communication, but also provides many distractions for writing or reading (C130/90.11). By contrast, the managers all have doors and complete walls. Managers often leave their doors open, a sign that they are available for discussion and also a sign that they expect subordinates to keep them advised of pertinent issues (C406/91.06).

Suggestion boxes provide another means for employees to communicate ideas to upper management; employees receive rewards for ideas that lead to increased profits. Upper management communicates official news to employees through newsletters, monthly and quarterly in-house publications, bulletin boards, and periodic addresses by the President.

Although all the participants in this study use computers for various aspects of their work, such as forecasting and project planning, the main message communication system is voice mail (similar to a telephone answering system). In the field, sales representatives use portable computers to record their activities and to communicate with head office. State-of-the-art video conference facilities enable conferences with executives in the corporate head office (the U.S.) and with experts in the research communities.

In summary, HCC is a large and successful company with a traditional organizational structure. The physical design of the office space provides more opportunities for communication among subordinates than it does for communication between subordinates and managers. Although managers maintain an open-door policy, frequent absences due to travel and meetings also reduce the communication opportunities among levels in the hierarchy. External communications with HCC's corporate office and field workers are facilitated by technology such as video conference facilities and computers; internally, employees communicate through face-to-face meetings and telephone messages. The rationale for HCC's organizational structure and communication paths rests on a tradition of goals and values discussed in the next section:

What are the Goals and Values of the Health Care Company?

The following discussion of HCC's goals and values reflects my understanding of this organizational culture. As Sathe (1983) reminds us: [R]eading a culture is an interpretive, subjective activity ... The validity of the diagnosis must be judged on the utility of the insights it provides, not on its 'correctness' as determined by some objective criteria" (p. 393). My reading of the goals and values underlying HCC's management system and practices emerges from my interviews with the 22 participants in this study (directors, managers, supervisors, and analysts, and product managers) over a period of 24 months and is supported with evidence from my reviews of company documents and observations on site. Most of the participants who contributed to this portrait of HCC work in the areas of Corporate Affairs, Marketing, and Management Information Systems. The length of their experience with the organization ranges from six months to 20+ years. Many of these participants have also worked as sales representatives, and some have experience in the Production and Research areas. Therefore, I suggest the patterns described below represent common goals and values underlying the management of the broad organization. (I tie the specific goals and values of the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions more closely to their particular mandates within HCC in Chapter Five.)

I describe the broad organizational goals and values below by signalling each pattern with a motto intended to capture the essence of the topic as suggested by the participants' comments about working life at HCC. These mottos are "We aim for the highest quality," "We expect dedication to the job," "We value our traditions," "What's not on paper does not exist," "We are always selling," and "We learn from our mistakes."

"We aim for the highest quality."

The company's mission, as quoted by a senior manager, is "to be the preeminent [health care] company in Canada through development, research, productivity, and marketing of the highest quality [products] to enhance the health and quality of community life" (C8/90.10). A major means of accomplishing HCC's mission, according to the President, is "by attracting, motivating, and maintaining the best employees in the industry" (EC/91.08). The participants, too, speak of being among "the best": "We all pride ourselves in working for a company that has quite a unique status in the industry -and it comes from the culture of knowing that The Health Care Company hires the best people -and you want to live up to its expectations" (C592/91.12). The claim tc a unique status in the industry is supported by citations in business journals for HCC's excellent performance along a range of measures including personnel, management practices, and financial situation

(FF/90.01.29). HCC celebrates this recognition by presenting its employees with commemorative gifts (C10/90.10). This sense of pride is widely encouraged as illustrated by the in-house posters used to advertise a recent celebration of the opening of a new building; they urged employees to "Come Share the Pride" (C491/91.09).

In their stories about legendary company figures, participants suggest that education, experience, and talent are key elements in the meaning of "best people." For example, a company magazine features the story of a retiring vice president who made "the greatest strides in modern [industry] marketing" on his return from company sponsored studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (EC/88.#3). Participants who have worked under this vice president all have stories to tell about the lessons they learned from him. They also tell stories about another senior executive, a biochemist "destined to become one of the top executives in the corporation" (C285/91.04): he had "the sharpest analytical mind I've ever seen in my life" (C462/91.07). Both intelligence and experience are greatly admired as illustrated by this comment about a senior manager: "[He's] a great guy -he's worked all over the company -

he's very intelligent" (C429/91.07). Nevertheless, other qualities may compensate for a lack of experience in the company according to one participant's remark during lunch in HCC's cafeteria: "[She's] a bright young woman -she's only 28 and she's a director" (C236/91.03).

In the company policy and procedure manual, HCC states that it "seeks to provide employee development and education activities which facilitate the increase of knowledge and skills required by the Company to maintain and improve total company productivity and performance" (PE/80.04). Towards this end, HCC sponsors employees who wish to continue their education while working. Two participants mentioned that they had attained graduate degrees while in the company; another who was pursuing a degree during this study confirmed HCC's focus on education: "They're very big on education here" (C28/90.11).

On the other hand, some participants claim that their work leaves little time for taking courses: "Where do I squeeze that one more thing into my schedule?" (C522/91.12.03). One participant explains that she's glad she completed her graduate degree before starting work because "with the working hours here, I don't think

I would ever have completed it" (C293/91.04).

"We expect dedication to the job"

Participants maintain that working at HCC means giving "110%" of their effort (C633/92.02). A senior manager states: "Everybody around here realizes they have a lot more capacity than they thought they had - other companies don't bring that out in you -this company demands it of you" (C549/91.12). Living up to the company's expectations often means heavy demands on an employee's time; stories abound about working long hours, especially when a new product is about to be introduced to the market: "I didn't see my wife and children basically for three months -I was here Saturdays and Sundays -every night" (C371/91.06.04).

The promise of security and attractive monetary rewards are important factors in this dedication to work (C633/92.02). HCC recognizes its employees' productivity by means of incentive bonuses, valuable stock options, and the publication of team- and individual- accomplishments in the quarterly in-house magazine and weekly newsletter. Upper management encourages the widespread belief that HCC employees are capable of extraordinary effort, as illustrated by this message about HCC's current situation from the President: "The sheer number of product launches puts huge demands on marketing, sales, production, and other groups that would have overtaxed virtually any other organization" (EC/1990.11). This focus on employees' dedication to the job is reinforced by the rituals surrounding the introduction of a new product to the market, "a launch." For example, when a major product was launched a few years ago, every employee received a bathrobe and packet of hot chocolate as a signal that they deserved to put their feet up after the enormous amount of work that went into the launch (C282/91.04). As one product manager explains: "When you launch, you touch everybody in the whole company" (C371/91.06).

"We respect our traditions"

The leadership at HCC strongly believes that traditions are important for maintaining the company's success: "The staying power of an outstanding organization is the commitment by generation after generation of its people to hold fast to its founding values" (RA, 1990). One 'founding value' is the maxim that profits follow when the goal is to produce quality products for people (RA, 1990). Traditional product quality is considered a major factor of HCC's success: "They're not 'me too' products -most of them truly represent advances in [health care]" (C497/ 91.11). To produce "the highest quality" products and meet government regulations for health care products, HCC has created a highly structured organization: "I think what makes the company successful, too -is the bureaucracy ... -it allows people to change jobs with minimal disruption to the company ... it's still quite structured compared to other companies ... like the marketing statements, the promotion plans, the long-range operating plan -all these things are there -and even if I suddenly left the company tomorrow, there'd be another person who could come in -they might find it rushed for the first little while, but the structure would be there that would allow them to pick it up quickly -so, I think the company has a lot of continuity" (C583/91.12.13). The traditional structure not only provides continuity in HCC's operations, it also protects it from adverse changes in external forces. For example, one senior manager explains a current hiring freeze: "I think one of the things that makes this company what it is ... we try to do the things that brought us to where we are -and we do them the same way as we did -not that we don't ever want to change, I didn't mean that -but you keep the belt kind of tight - you defend and rationalize the things you do" (C449/91.07).

Decisions are made at various levels in the organization, but they must gain approval from upper management; managers cannot approve recommendations that require resources beyond their "grant of authority" (the spending limit associated with their position) (C106/90.11). The approval procedure is specified in the standard procedures manual which lists the people who must sign particular reports (C41/90/11). Thus, internal reports often have long lists of people to whom the report is addressed and copied (C135/91.10).

Some participants observe that this tradition of hierarchical authority slows decisions and response. For example, one suggests that "the down side of the bureaucracy is that it takes us a lot longer to respond to things going on in the market than most companies" (C583/91.12). Another participant compares HCC to a company he worked with previously: "[In the other company the concept was] let's get it moving -[whereas] in terms of [HCC] it's a lot of documentation -a lot of understanding what can be done and cannot -a lot of legalities and a lot of paperwork -this has to be signed, that has to be signed in order for everything to be correct" (C289/91.04).

According to a survey of employees' opinions about communications in the organization, the traditional structure also creates communication barriers. The communication survey, commissioned by The Health Care Company's corporate headquarters in the U. S., was completed by American and Canadian employees four years before the beginning of this research. The survey report identified three areas for improvement in employee relations: consistency in managers' application of policies, recognition for managers' ability to manage people, and the amount and kind of downward communication. Since the report, efforts have been made to improve all three areas by an emphasis on managerial training and performance and by establishing communication policies such as the following: "Employees will be encouraged to bring their suggestions and concerns directly to the attention of their supervisors, and to higher management when appropriate, but always in an orderly manner" (AC/91.05). The terms "appropriate" and "orderly" suggest that definitions of these words are tradition bound.

Opportunities for manager/subordinate communication are reduced by employees' frequent travel to meetings and conferences. One manager estimated that he spent forty percent of his time away from the office at meetings (C249/91.04). Regular intradepartmental staff meetings are considered valuable, but are difficult to schedule because of heavy workloads and frequent travel. One participant observes that his manager tries to schedule regular staff meetings and "has been quite successful in getting three or four staff meetings throughout the year" (C554/91.12).

"We are always selling"

External markets and competition for resources within HCC focus attention on selling. Externally, the sales force sells the company's products. Internally, participants explain that selling abilities are essential as well: "We always find ourselves selling -in a selling mode -internally amongst ourselves -Product Managers trying to sell a project to the directors -or us as a team -the [product] group selling our strategy to the Vice President of Marketing, Vice President of Sales -or simply the Product Manager presenting the strategy to the Sales Representatives for the next two months" (C301/91.04). In addition to selling projects, managers also have to acquire resources to carry them out: "Somehow we have to build our case so they [will] release those funds ... we each have a piece of the pie basically -and although we don't look at ourselves as competitors internally -but still we have to convince upper management that this is the best use of the company funds (C301/91.04).

One director explains that selling is a necessary experience for job mobility within the organization: "Basically we're a research, sales and marketing organization -that's what we are -so, if you want to move, you'd better go into sales and marketing" (C480/91.07). Even those whose job is to implement automated systems within the company claim that selling is important for their jobs: "It's a marketing company - if we want to get in there with the marketing outfit and contribute, we have to adapt ... you've got to sell - that's not the way IS [Information Systems] used to be" (C89/90.11). The training department is planning seminars on marketing skills for the people in information systems because they are "the quiet types - always working with their computers" (C412/91.06).

"What's not on paper doesn't exist"

Participants all claim that writing is highly valued at HCC. One manager explains: "I generate a lot of paper -and I think one of the reasons for that is -one of our old vice presidents said 'What's not on paper doesn't exist.' -he's retired now, but a lot of people that worked under him still share that mentality" (C45/90.11). This former vice president's motto occurs as a leitmotif throughout my interview transcripts. During my research, stories of encounters with "a retired vice president" arose in interviews with several different participants. Eventually, I discovered that they were all talking about the same person. However, this motto has several different meanings at HCC.

One reason for documenting ideas is to account for resource expenditures. For example, one writer explains that although a plan for promotion materials is included in the current market plan and budget, he must write a recommendation report which his manager will review before it goes to upper management for a signature of approval: " He [the manager] will agree on the project -

that's not an issue -it's just that we have to agree on the document before it gets to his boss [for a signature]" (C241/91.03). Another reason for putting something "on paper" is to "make it official": "If he ... informally told me something ...to make it official and for the record through a memo would ensure that everybody else involved ... would also have access to that information ... and also it would be in the files" (C572/91.12). This documented information also serves those who were not involved as one newcomer explains: "I've based all my report writing so far on ... reports of a similar nature that were written in the past ... I walked into a position that was held by another ... MBA graduate -he was in it for two years and he built up quite a filing system" (C115/90.11). This same participant observed that these files helped him to adapt to the organizational culture: "By using these models and being new to the company, I've perhaps not injected much of my own style ... into my report writing yet -because I'm still just trying to appease everyone and adhere to the culture here" (C116/90.11).

Information that is recorded also helps participants to avoid duplicating the work of others. In one department, a manager explains that members of his department keep "a chronological record of every memo that they have issued -or report ... because we all work on various projects, there's a tendency to overlap" (C49/90.11). This file also helps writers to save time: "When I want to send [a memo], I don't reinvent the wheel every time -I just refer back to what I've done" (C23/90.11).

Report files also provide writers with evidence to support agreements made with others or to justify past actions. For example, one department in the Management Information Systems division maintains a "systems dictionary," a file of all the documents associated with specific automation projects. One participant explains that all correspondence about a system is placed into this filing system, "because the whole system and its behaviour is built on things like this -it's very important to recognize that a system's behaviour is affected by correspondence -that you have to be able to track back through the correspondence to specific dates - because sometimes people -a year and a half out -will say, 'Well, how come you're late? How come you're two months late on this project? Because we spent time doing this!' -and it's not that we're trying to hide in the bushes -we're just trying to say, 'Look this was the situation back then. We tried to recoup the time on that and that -and we couldn't'" (C165/91.01).

Participants suggest further that recording events helps to justify failures to meet objectives at performance appraisal time or to support their claims that objectives were especially well met. One participant reports that the performance appraisal document, negotiated between manager and subordinate, is "the only document where all your accomplishments are recorded" (C634f/92.07).

Documents that have been approved and signed by upper management provide accountability for the spending of HCC's resources. As one participant states: "If I'm signing it ... my responsibility is to ensure that ... it justifies the spending of this money -there's something on record" (C106/90). In some cases, an approved recommendation becomes a kind of contract: "We issue it [the report] and we call a meeting where we present ... and the substance is drawn out -just put on overheads ... once you get past that, it might be a redirect or a go - and it might be with changes -'Make these few changes and we agree' -and if we can agree in the meeting, off we go -it's a contract essentially" (C92/90.11). Even when plans are negotiated before the report is written, the agreement is later documented and circulated for approval. For example, plans are often presented orally to upper management because, as one participant explains: "We're looking at maybe 20 acetates to present to management -because you can't present all this to management, they'll go crazy" (C356/91.05). In this case, plans may be approved in principle and later ratified through signatures on the written text.

Clearly, documentation is an important part of the organizational memory at HCC. However, writers sometimes feel that once information is known or that a plan has been approved in principle, actually writing the report is of secondary importance in view of their other job responsibilities: "I really don't know [when the report will be written] -I mean, I have so many other things ... once something is over and done with, it's nice to get it into circulation and agreed -but it doesn't change anything -and when there are other things -it just doesn't become the most urgent" (C427/91.06). Although writing is an integral part of each participant's job, few report that writing is included in their written job description.

"We value a team approach"

Recently there has been a growing emphasis on leadership training for managers to help them with both interdepartmental and intradepartmental team work (C634a/92.06). One participant explained that team work is essential to the work of his department: "It's called a team-building process -and it's not just departmentalized -if you've got a sponsor and you've got a user group and you've got us, you have to be a team -and you have to build the language and the understanding ... -you build confidence, trust, credibility -these are fundamentals -if you don't have that, you can make no progress" (C539/91.12). Another participant explains that he has no authority over people in his position, yet he needs cooperation from many to do his job: "That's the key thing -you can not do the work by yourself -you have a whole team of people who are involved with this [project]" (C506/91.11). Team building includes calling meetings to keep people informed and copying memos to team members. For example, one participant explains the carbon-copy list on one of his memos: "I copied everybody who was involved as well -so everybody knew what everybody was doing -it's a team effort" (76/90.11). This participant also explains that department protocol demands that the managers of both the writer and the addressees be copied as well: "You have to copy your boss -you have to copy the supervisor of the person to whom you're sending the memo -and then every other department who will be involved [in the project] (C71/90.11).

"We learn from our mistakes"

Participants report few formal procedures for orientation to new positions; rather they learn about their jobs by doing them. One newcomer to the organization describes his experience: "The orientation here is not very formal -for someone like myself that wasn't really disadvantageous at all -in that I had two days with [the person] I replaced -imagine a relay race where you're running around and you hand the baton over - that's what it was -I was running right away -and [his manager] worked very closely with me -so, if I tripped at all she was there to catch the fall -so that way you're allowed to learn and make mistakes ... it's well buffered and everybody's checking all the way along the lines" (C116/90.11). On the other hand, another newcomer recounts his experience differently: "There's a lot that you pick up just by being involved -going to meetings and conferences where all you do is sit and listen -it's tough because you're sort of on the outside for quite a while not participating or contributing -so, you just sit and listen and try to keep track of what's important ... what the big concerns are to the department" (C129/90.11). Orientation is also a concern for established members of HCC who move to another department within the company: "You haven't been in the job long enough to know the right questions to ask -and you're so busy that -I was bombarded with meetings and meetings and couldn't get things done -so, it was quite stressful trying to learn everything" (C578/91.12).

Summary and Conclusion

As expressed by this study's participants and reflected in company publications, the mission of HCC is to maintain its position as a leader in the industry by developing "the highest quality" products through the dedication and expertise of its workforce. HCC values a traditional organizational structure in which decisions are approved through the hierarchy and attended by a great deal of documentation.

HCC values writing mainly as a means of accounting for its decisions and actions; making decisions seems to be a function of oral persuasion. A "selling" approach is highly valued within and without the organization. Internal competition for resources heightens this emphasis on marketing ideas and plans to colleagues and upper management; sales experience is valuable in this situation. This marketing approach is evident in HCC's promotion of corporate achievement among its employees to encourage a "culture of pride," a situation in which Kanter (1983) suggests "success reinforc[es] an attitude that success is inevitable" (p.151).

Although HCC considers itself a "people-oriented" company, it appears to rely on its structure as much as, or more than, the people who fill its positions. When HCC hires newcomers or promotes its employees, its structure of document files and policy manuals performs a major part of the orientation to the job.

The committee who conducted the communication survey reported that an attitude of complacency seemed to exist in the company, a kind of parent-child relationship of employees to HCC (AC/86). This suggests that as the parent, HCC believes in the abilities of its employees, but also sets the rules and standards for their behaviour. This conflict is captured in one participant's expectations for his subordinates' reports: "What I'm looking for is creativity, innovation -I want them to put their stamp on it -and I stress stay within the format, because the worst thing you can do ... is choose a format so drastically different that no one can read it" (C90/90.11).

That is not to say that HCC remains rooted in tradition; there are signs of a shifting emphasis among its goals and values. One participant reports that the old motto, "What's not on paper doesn't exist," is changing to accommodate the new motto of his new superior, "We're never satisfied" (C502/91.11). A senior manager explains that the culture is not changing, rather it swings as a pendulum, "a balance between two points," depending on the external environment (C637/92.08). HCC's belief in its employees' expertise is attracting more attention. For example, one department is being restructured to give people more freedom to do long-range planning and more flexibility in their jobs (C640/92.08); another department is creating project teams to improve project management (C634c/92.06); and departments are considering ways to improve orientation procedures (C357/91.05). During the course of this study managers were being introduced to a new system for appraising subordinates' performance to change the focus from measuring performance to promoting development (C634a/92.06). The new emphasis on training in team work and communication seems to indicate a movement toward a greater trust in employees' abilities to manage their work through team cooperation at HCC.

Although the corporate culture may be in the process of change at HCC, the goals and values described above were articulated by the participants during the course of my study. Therefore, my analysis of the relationship between HCC's goals and values and readers' expectations for writing is based on my reading of the culture as it was then. This relationship is described below.

How Do the Organization's Goals and Values Shape Readers' Expectations for Writing at HCC?

The following section describes the comments made by participants (both writers and readers) about the ways texts should be written at HCC and the reasons for writing them that way. The comments do not pertain to the specific texts read aloud for this study during the Reading Events (those are described in Chapter Five), but to the participants' beliefs about writing in the organization formed by their experience there as writers and readers.

The excerpts from the interviews with managers and subordinates describe actions, events, or situations that lead to desired outcomes for written texts. Many comments seem to indicate a loose cause/effect relationship; in view of my research questions about the desired outcomes for writing and the ways in which they are achieved, I perceive the comments as prescriptions for writing success at HCC. As one participant explains about the recent revisions to guidelines for writing particular reports in her department, "We made sure we were paving the way for a successful report to be issued" (C296/91.04).

Comments about desired outcomes describe the desired outcomes of the prescriptives. For example, a prescriptive comment might include advice to follow the standard format, whereas a comment about desired outcomes might include the goal for adhering to the format. In some cases, the participants' comments included both prescription and desired outcome, but some comments emphasized only one of these aspects, so I have created both categories (Prescriptions and Desired Outcomes) in order to illustrate patterns in the comments. These patterns reflect my analysis of 22 participants' comments during my interviews with them over the two years of the study. As I reviewed the data, I perceived recurring themes in the participants' comments. I developed categories to reflect these themes and counted the frequency of their occurrence to assess their prevalence in the data. (See Appendix F for the categories, definitions, and coding rules).

Some <u>prescriptions</u> are framed as likes and dislikes: "That's the kind of thinking I would like to see in a report" (C342/91.04) or "This director likes" (C595/91.12). Others are framed as obligations: "The objectives of this study have got to be made very clear" (C98/90.11). Some are framed as expressions of existing procedures or traditions: "In Marketing Planning, it's more Purpose, Recommendation, Background" (C574/91.12) or "It [the report] usually contains things like cost analysis" (C443/91.07). The prescriptive comments respond to implied (or explicit) questions in the interviews, such as "How do you do things here?", "What needs to be done?", "What do you look for?"

The categories below describe comments about the positive outcomes participants wish for their texts or the negative outcomes they wish to avoid. I follow this section by describing the participants' prescriptions for achieving or avoiding these outcomes.

Desired Outcomes for Writing

[Acceptable Texts]

The most frequently mentioned goal for reports was that they should be acceptable; that is, they should conform to HCC's explicit written guidelines for reports or to managers' individual preferences. For example, one writer notes that a former manager did not require a section called "Scope" in reports; whereas, the current manager does require it (C595/91.12). Thus, an intended outcome here is to construct a report that will be acceptable to the manager. These goals for reports reflect HCC's beliefs in the value of tradition and hierarchical authority.

Comments in this category also reflect participants' intentions that the text should be "right"; as demonstrated in this example, "It's all wordsmithing -

it's taking out the the's and the thou's and getting them just right" (C91/90.11). Although the concept of "right" is not elaborated, I perceive it to mean that the wording of the report should meet some kind of unarticulated standard for quality.

The values of quality and hierarchy are also expressed in managers' comments about their expectations for correct spelling, grammar, and typography: "I think something is wrong if there's something wrong with syntax -there's a grammatical error -those should really not be picked up by my boss -by me either" (C103/90.11).

[Action from Readers]

An important outcome for written texts such as recommendations is that upper management sign the approval page. Approval from the hierarchy is also required when a writer requests the assistance of an employee in another department to work on a project. A participant explains: "I had to get [the agreement of] his manager and the director of his region before being able to contact him" (C76/90.11). This need for approval seems to reflect HCC's beliefs in the value of its traditional hierarchical structure.

[Justification of Expenditures]

Although resources are not unduly scarce at HCC, they are tightly controlled by upper management who believe that the organization's success is largely due to effective resource allocation. Writers and their managers intend recommendation reports to provide full justification for expenditures of human or financial resources. One participant explains how HCC justified the worth of a product to the government: "The information was really well put together and provided convincing evidence that we had a very cost-effective product" (C300/91.04). Another participant explains that she has learned how to justify requests for resources through experience: "My experience shows me which questions they're going to ask -you have to be very thorough -you can't be ambiguous -answer all their questions before they think of them" (C595/91.12).

[Writing and Reading Efficiency]

Dedication to the job and efforts to achieve the "highest quality" reduce the time for writing and reading at HCC. Writers speak of writing the report in short stretches whenever time is available: "I try to pull all the half hours here and there that you get -I really haven't had the chance to sit down and solidly write" (C 114/90.11). Managers say they receive an "unbelievable" amount of mail to read (C45/90.11). Some managers report that they ask their secretaries to sort their mail into 'urgent' and 'non-urgent' files ('urgent' files contain memos and reports that require a signature or some other immediate action); others try various strategies for handling their reading. For example, one manager explains that he tries to handle a report only once: "Once it's read, it's filed" (C269/91.03). The participants' claims that they lack time for writing and reading suggests one of the meanings of HCC's belief in the value of "quality" may be that a quality report is composed with little disruption to the writer's main job responsibilities and read with ease: "If a person's putting out nice clear statements -and not many of them - they're getting to the point -the user doesn't want to read paragraphs, they want to read exactly what's relevant to what they asked for" (C537/91.12).

[Credibility]

In the competitive internal environment of HCC, participant's recognize that written texts can maintain or destroy their credibility in the hierarchy.

Sometimes, credibility means not promising to do more work than is possible: "If you write it in a certain way, you can get yourself into trouble -because you may promise the world to everyone -and if you can't deliver, then you're held accountable" (C625/92.01). Credibility can be lost when a report reaches upper management without sufficient review at the lower levels, as explained by this manager: "If [a subordinate] writes something and I don't make changes to it -when it gets to [the manager's superior], I look bad" (C602/91.12).

Summary

The comments above illustrate desired outcomes for writing at HCC. Writing should be acceptable to upper management, provide justification for expenditures, prompt action from readers, be composed and read efficiently, and protect the writer or department from a loss of credibility. These expectations reflect HCC's belief in the values of documentation and an organizational structure of hierarchical authority.

In the following section, I describe the participants' recommendations for meeting these expectations within the framework of organizational goals and values at HCC.

Prescriptions for Writing

[Understand the Review Process]

The process of review (for plans presented orally or in writing) is a key element in all aspects of planning and gaining approval at HCC. For example, a recommendation that must be approved at the vice-president level is written as a formal report and then reviewed by the writer's immediate supervisor before it moves on to the supervisor's manager. The document may go back and forth several times between writer and supervisor: "This is the third [revision] -we've probably got to go around at least another four times, I'm sure" (C43/90.11). The document may also go back and forth between a manager or director and the vice president, but less frequently: "By the time it gets to the VP it should be very polished" (C499/91.11). This time-consuming revision cycle between the manager and writer reflects HCC's belief in working hard to achieve a quality product and to ensure hierarchical acceptance. Unacceptable reports indicate a certain lack of dedication. As one manager states: "I try to be very exacting, because I'm answerable to a higher authority, being my boss -who is also very exacting -I would hate to be in a position for a report or recommendation to come out of my department -and to have my boss call me in to his office and say, 'I'm sorry, I don't understand this.' -because what it says is I'm not doing my job" (C102/90.11).

The value of a "selling" approach is reflected in one participant's story about many rounds of writing and reviewing a particular recommendation to ensure the corporation's executive committee would approve it: "We were selling an idea -we wanted to make sure we put it together in a way that would be most advantageous to us ... we were very concerned with people understanding ... we didn't present it until we were ready -until we were satisfied, we'd never pass it along (C453/91.07).

The review process sometimes reflects participants' belief in team work, as illustrated by what participants call "dry runs" or "walk throughs" for presentations to upper management: "It's a matter of all of us trying to apply whatever brainpower we happen to possess to put together as good a job as we can -four eyes are usually better than two" (C475/91.07).

Managers typically review routine reports when they are written by newcomers. One reason is to ensure that the report does not jeopardize the department's credibility as this manager explains: "I have to act as a mediator -there's a message going out -I want to make sure that the message is palatable, professional -and it says what it should say" (C162/90.11). This focus on ensuring that reports meet certain standards before they are issued also helps newcomers learn from their mistakes. For example, one manager explains what she attends to while reviewing a newcomer's report: "The actual numbers themselves -on the first read through, I'd probably check that they made sense -that they were consistent with each other -because we deal with so many numbers, it's very easy to pull one from a table and have your base wrong" (C232/91.04). Managers also perceive the review process as a way to help newcomers learn the organization's traditions: "Somebody who is just starting -I have to show them how HCC wants to do it" (C318/91.04). Learning HCC's traditions includes learning the expectations of upper management: "We have Tim who is new -so I'm going through the same process I went through with John originally -especially when they're not familiar with the style of reports that we'd like to see in the company -or the executives are accustomed to seeing -there's a certain amount of adaptation that goes with it as well" (C612/91.12).

Subordinates also perceive that the report review process improves their written texts, but often see it as a difficult and somewhat arbitrary process. For example, one writer observes that the review process delays the report: "I think what I found happened [when he first arrived] was that because -the to-ing and fro-ing was a good learning experience for me -but, again, it sapped your time -it took longer to get it out, because everybody had something to say -and in the end let's just get it out -and get the information out -and if people have questions, they'll call you" (C559/91.12). Another writer notes, "The whole concept of it [review process] is to make sure that we have our statement precise and accurate enough so that it passes -and I guess that's the whole objective of it -but a lot isn't getting done while that's going on -because, of course, there's a delay in the project" (C624/92.01). Some writers suggest that managers' focus on detailed editing prolongs the review process. For example, one writer notes, "It gets to a point where it's over-revised -they start bickering over words -semantics ... editing documents -must be something in the blood" (C142/91.01). Another participant explains that long periods between one review and the next sometimes causes duplication: "You write something and you propose it -they read it and they come up with recommendations and changes -but you may not have the time to go ahead and modify it again -you may have other things which have become more pressing because you did spend time writing that and not doing other things -and now you have to do that -by the time you get back to it -and re-release it again -they may have forgotten what the original comments were -and they may change back" (C625/92.01). Since the writers quoted above were relatively new to HCC (two years or less), these comments seem to reflect a period of adjustment both for the newcomer and their managers.

Managers remember their first encounters with the review process. Their stories illustrate present beliefs in the value of working hard to learn and to produce high quality reports despite the painful process. Comments from the managers about what their managers did to their reports include, "He's blown it all to smithereens" (C43/90.11), and "I learned this from [a former superior] ... you learned well from him ... I started the presentation ... and then the destruction started"

(C461/91/07). These comments about learning suggest that the report review process is a kind of initiation rite handed down from one generation of managers to another. Comments about the review process also illustrate a dedication to the pursuit of quality. For example, one manager recalls: "I had a manager who was very exacting -and written reports -I'd spend a lot of time in his office -and for something that I thought I did just a bang-up job -it would be just torn apart -and I'd be walking out of there and basically redoing it -but redoing it and getting a better product -ultimately" (C100/90/11).

Some participants maintain that the conflict suggested by these stories about the review process is not meant to be a criticism of the writer: "It's not a matter of 'You're bad, I'm good' ... or any of that sort of nonsense -we go out of our way to try and make sure that you don't kind of turn people off by doing that sort of thing ... we're managing a business and that's a serious affair -and therefore we have to ask questions of one another -although the pill may taste bitter today, you'll feel a lot better tomorrow" (C474/91.07). Managers realize that newcomers sometimes have difficulty with the review process: "The first six months ... you tend to take -not criticism -I'll say negative remarks -very personally -it's very common -and it isn't until you get to the end of your first year -and into your second year -that you realize that your boss and your boss's boss -when they make comments that you don't particularly like to hear -they're not doing it to criticize you personally -they're doing it in order to help you -because the final product will be better -whatever you're doing, the final product will be better" (C504/91.11). This comment seems to reflect this manager's belief that newcomers learn from their mistakes.

The chief emphasis in these comments is on attaining a better report or "product." Although some participants identify preparations for oral presentations or planning meetings as being team efforts, no comments identified the report review process between manager and subordinate with team work, which suggests an inconsistency between HCC's ideals and practice regarding team work. On the other hand, this absence of comments about team work and the review process may indicate that the review process is more often characterized by conflict than collaboration.

Comments about the review process were more prevalent in the data than any other category of prescription. Clearly, this focus on review results from my interest in managers reading their subordinates' reports, but I suggest that the participants' association of review with successful writing is congruent with the organization's belief in hierarchical authority and a belief in tradition as reflected in the managers' reports of their own experiences with the review process. The managers' stories of conflict and writers' intimations of editing excesses suggest that although a team approach may be valued, it is far more authoritarian than collaborative. (Studies by Kleimann (in press) and Cross, 1980 also report review processes characterized by conflict.)

[Use the Standard Report Formats and Approved Models]

Consonant with HCC's attention to the review process, is its belief in the value of tradition. This is illustrated by its policies on the use of report formats, many of which are specified in the standard procedures manual. Managers point out that standard formats make reading more efficient because the reader finds certain information in expected places: "The document is always the same --bang, bang, bang -but it helps you relate to the thing -the issue at hand -the recommendation at hand -it quickly helps you respond" (C536/91.12). In some cases, managers note that formats develop certain reading patterns in readers: "People get used to reading this way -and they get used to reading what they want to read" (C454/91.07). Another manager notes that standard formats ensure "there's a common understanding of what needs to be said where and for what reason" (C295/91.05). HCC also values the pursuit of quality. During this study, guidelines for particular marketing reports were rewritten, not to change the format, but to provide more direction for writers and to improve the quality of their reports. A manager explains: "There were new product managers, so we felt there was a need to have some sort of tutoring or educational event associated with the whole process -plus they haven't been revised for quite a long time -so, we felt the need to see if there was an opportunity to upgrade the quality of our marketing statements" (C502/91.11).

The standard procedures manual also specifies a general report format with variations depending on the type of report: Introduction, Summary, Recommendation, Discussion (C247/91.03). The traditional "HCC format" is explained in various ways by different managers. For example, in one department, the report format is explained thus: "Purpose, Objectives, Scope, Summary (if it's a long report), Recommendation, then Discussion" (C443/91.07). In another department, the HCC format is reported as Purpose, Background (including Objective), and Executive Summary: "That is more or less an HCC style -the style of just about everybody in the company" (C619/91.12). Although written guidelines exist for specific reports, subordinates report that they most often use an existing document, already approved, as a model to ensure an acceptable text and to save time: "[Although written guidelines exist] what really happens is -you go to the files and you dig out the last four or five [specific documents] and you follow that for the format" (C575/91.12).

The use of standard report formats not only maintains traditions, but also reflects the power of hierarchical authority at HCC. For instance, some participants note that format expectations often depend on the individual preferences of their managers: "You were told to write a report on certain situations -we had to model it to what your manager would tell you is the flow that he expects in terms of Purpose, Background, Discussion -some of them like it the other way around - the Summary or Highlights, then Discussion, then Conclusion" (C587/91.12). Writers point out that using the accepted format helps to ensure a positive reception: "[The format] works well with him, because he's very much an HCC man -so, this is the way we do things here - there's no other way to do it -so everybody's going to follow this method -so, if you follow that message, you set the stage in a positive environment for him to read whatever you're publishing" (C528/91.11). Failure to meet a manager's expectations for a particular format may have unpleasant consequences. Both managers and writers recalled specific instances of conflict between writer and manager when the writer did not followed the expected formats. From three different participants, I heard the same story about one such conflict in which a manager had "butchered" a writer's report because of the format (C530/91.12). One writer recounts a story about his manager's insistence on the traditional format. While his manager was away, the writer responded to a request for immediate information by writing a report very quickly without paying attention to the format. When the manager read the report, he returned it to the writer with a comment: "Good work. However, please do not forget how we like to see things." The manager then "put the various headings in ..Purpose, Background, Methodology, Results, Conclusion" (C555/91.12).

At HCC, beliefs about report formats reflect attention to tradition, quality, "clients'" (readers') needs, and hierarchical preferences. These values also inform the organization's attitudes towards writing style.

[Attend to Style]

I have classified text features such as diction, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and organization as elements of style which, according to the participants, characterize effective writing. For example, one writer recounted how he had changed his style in writing memos: "[When I started I used to say] 'If you are free, could you please try to attend this meeting.' Of course, nobody showed up. I changed my style and now I'm saying, 'Please attend.' -and everybody shows up" (C23/90.11). In addition to reflecting the value of learning from mistakes, attention to style also represents HCC's belief in traditions. Speaking about the teachings of the in-house writing course, one manager notes: "If you take the report writing class here, they tell you to use 'we' -'We suggest we do this.' -and so on and HCC are still using 'It is suggested,' 'It is recommended'" (C311/91.04). This manager went on to say that she tried using 'we' in a report once and "I got it scratched out, so I don't bother -and I'm more comfortable with the passive tense [voice] because that's what I've been using for a long time" (C311/91.04).

The value of the selling approach is evident in this manager's observation about diction: "It's optimizing - that means there's an effect on the bottom line -that I can gain something from it -so, as a result of using words like that, you pique the reader's interest" (C266/91.03). Another participant explains, "You cannot write ten pages -people won't read it -so, you have to be direct, to the point, short, efficient" (C24/90.11).

HCC writers make great efforts to achieve quality, according to one manager, especially in documents that will be read by the executives or the shareholders: "They hammer and tong this thing [a long range plan] but good because it represents the company -it's a document that can be shown to shareholders, to business partners ... - they get the whole thing worked out issue by issue ... - after they get each issue, they slice through horizontally and get the flavour, the language" (C399.26/91.06).

Individual managers' preferences also determine style at HCC. Some managers prefer less text: "This is nice, there isn't that much text ... from my perspective, that's the way I like it" (C247/91.03). Another manager observes that one of the writers who reports to him "will write a very, very skeletal form of language, so it leaves them [readers] with these words -very clear and prominent" (C162/91.01). One writer remarks that his current manager prefers that writers do not express their ideas in point form but use full sentences instead to create a "more elaborated" style (C368/91.06).

Constraints on a writer's style are not only created by hierarchical pressures, but also by HCC policies on the internal use of product names; for example, a product name cannot be used as an adjective or written as a possessive (C250/91.03). HCC's attention to government regulations concerning product advertising illustrates the value of meeting quality objectives: "Everything that is sent out of this company -every word, every comma is scrutinized ... the legal department makes sure that everything we say or imply in any way, shape, or form is in accordance with full disclosure and balance ... other companies are very ethical in that sense, but HCC is particularly" (C185/91.02).

The participants' concern for diction and conciseness in writing suggests that readers are particularly concerned with meanings of words; the writer's task is to ensure that he or she uses few words to express specific meanings. This task is difficult for all writers; HCC's demands reflect a belief in the value of dedication to the job to produce a quality product.

[Collect Sufficient and Appropriate Information]

The concern for quality through dedication that is apparent in the organization's close attention to style extends as well to participants' beliefs about collecting sufficient and appropriate information. For example, in her advice about writing reports at HCC, one manager states: "I think when you prepare a document or a proposal like that -I mean, the writing has a lot to do with it, of course ... however, there's a lot of background work that has to be done ... you have to do the background work" (C399.8/91.06). Doing the background work is sometimes referred to as "doing your homework." For example, one participant explains his writing of a major proposal to be presented to the corporate executives: "[I did] my homework, before I ever let go -because if somebody sitting in front of me can say, 'Well, what does this mean? -or 'Have you considered that? -and I say, 'Well, no.' -they say, 'Well, why are you giving me this?" (C455/91.07). One writer explains that he spends "at least two months" getting the information for a recommendation to "make sure you know what you're talking about -that it actually works" (C214/91.02). One manager notes that one of his subordinates "inevitably does her homework" and this helps to produce a report that the readers will "buy into" (C161/91.01). Doing the background work also helps to promote a department's credibility: "Whatever question pops in their mind [upper management readers]-I want the answer to be in the report ... [they will say] 'Well, you didn't do your homework.' ... and then maybe the credibility won't be there" (C594/91.12).

The quality of the information is an important consideration for writers: "Sometimes we'll say things which aren't statistically significant, but we'll point that out" (C387/91.06). One manager recommends that writers in his department should "stay away from suppositions -deal with the facts ... -make conclusions on the basis of the facts" (C102/90.11). The participants' concern for factual and complete information in HCC reports suggests a related belief in the value of recorded information ("What's not on paper, doesn't exist"). The nature of the information in reports determines the quality of HCC's organizational memory, the record of management's decisions.

The quality of this body of decisions is ensured by HCC's managers as illustrated by one participant's comment about a former executive: "[He] was exceptional at cutting through all the smoke and mirrors in documents and getting down to the facts" (C461//91.07).

[Anticipate the Reader's Situation]

Although HCC values a marketing approach when making recommendations, the managers' experience with marketing makes them especially sensitive to "smoke and mirrors." As one manager observes, "It's really some salesmanship that's required in these kinds of things -but it can't be salesmanship of the glossy type ...-because most of us have been through all that before" (C458/91.07). Writers producing documents for in-house readers often know their readers quite well. For example, one writer reports that her superior focuses on numbers: "He likes numbers ... by the time it gets to him, you better make sure that you can justify or substantiate every number" (C315/91.04). The same participant observes that others also respond to numbers: "It's the financial guy that has to approve it - so, of course, if you put in lots of numbers, they can relate to that very easily" (C316/91.04). One technical writer reports that she tries to relate to the reader's familiar job responsibilities so that she can explain the benefits of unfamiliar technology: "What I've tried to do is take very specific examples from the business that these people do every day ... so that we can show it to them ... it has relevance to what they do" (C529/91.12).

[Establish Authorial Credibility]

Just as participants are concerned to take account of the reader's situation, they also prescribe particular actions for establishing a writer's credibility. The writers, especially, commented on the value of having established relationships with readers or having the weight of an authority in the hierarchy (upper management) associated with a report or memo. Participants observe that a department's profile within the hierarchy affects the acceptance or rejection of a recommendation: "Their [recommendation] went through because their department has a lot more power and influence than ours" (C197/91.02). According to one participant, a writer's credibility determines whether a memo will be read: "I don't know if you can say 'established' -but if they are aware that you're taking action -that you're not writing this for the sake of writing ...then they are going to pay attention to your writing" (C22/90.11). Writers also gain credibility through tenure as some of the relatively junior members (two years or less experience) of HCC explain: "It might have something to do with them having the confidence in what you're writing and your abilities -they're less likely to question what you're putting down ... they may read it differently" (C526/91.12).

Another form of authorial credibility comes with having support from higher management: "I don't remember having a recommendation or a program rejected once I had the [senior executive's] signature on it" (C372/91.06).

This belief in the value of hierarchy is illustrated by one account of a proposal that was stalled at the departmental level until the President expressed interest in obtaining equipment that was closely related to one of the report recommendations. When this presidential request was known, the proposal was speedily revised and approved (C600/91.12).

Aside from having top management behind a recommendation, expertise also provides authorial credibility. A participant explains that when a recommendation has to receive corporate approval in the U.S., they send it to their counterparts in corporate headquarters to have them review it before it goes to the executives there: "If there are any changes they feel we should make, we make them ... -and then when that report goes to corporate, we say that the people in [the counterpart department] concur with this report" (606/91.12). This consultation helps to ensure that readers' objections are met before the report is issued. [Prepare the Terrain]

In addition to having the weight of authority behind a recommendation, participants recommend that writers prepare the reader by speaking to him or her before sending a written communication. This strategy helps to gain compliance from readers. As one writer notes, "It's better if you present it orally first ...-make the readers see your reasoning, even if they don't agree with it" (C370/91.06). Explaining his writing process for a particular report, one participant remarks: "Things of this magnitude are not going to succeed unless you first get the support you need -when you get the support you need, then you can go ahead and put it down in writing and publish it" (C370/91/06). One manager explains that one of his writers writes reports that require very little review once they are written, because the writer consults him before he starts to write: "He comes in and talks about the subject first -he finds out, in his own subtle way, if you have biases -whether you believe them or not -and he also finds out what you're really looking for -and then goes about doing it" (C470/91.07). Another manager reports that the recommendations she receives from her subordinates have usually been discussed beforehand: "People don't end up writing things ten times around -so, we discuss -I suggest what should be in it and then they go off and write it" (C407/91.91).

Summary

The comments above illustrate the participants' beliefs in how writing should proceed in order to meet the readers' expectations at HCC. Readers' expectations for writing are strongly tied to the organization's goals and values. The company mission, "to achieve the highest quality," underlies the managers' expressed beliefs about the value of the review process. Comments about the review process also suggest the belief that HCC values dedication in its employees and the tradition of the review process. A strong belief in traditions underlies the participants' recommendations for using standard report formats and approved models. These prescriptions also illustrate a belief in hierarchical authority; managers sometimes have individual preferences to which writers must adhere.

Many comments reflect the situation of internal competition within the company and a consequent belief in the value of "selling" ideas and plans. Strategies such as "preparing the terrain" and gaining "authorial credibility" are especially helpful for gaining cooperation and resources. However, HCC readers expect reports to contain factual and complete information that will justify recommendations and document the decisions for which they are accountable.

Frequency of Occurrence

The comments above form part of continuous streams of talk (interviews). In order to discover which desired outcomes and prescriptions the participants emphasized during our discussions, I have counted the number of comments in each category and put this information in graph form below (Figures 3 & 4). The graphs are not meant to represent precise statistical information, but simply to indicate the pattern of participants' concerns within the data. The frequency of occurrence of categories of desired outcomes and prescriptions is based on interviews with 13 people in the Marketing division and 7 people in the Management Information Systems division (interviews with the 2 key contacts in Corporate Affairs did not focus specifically on writing and reading). Interviews with the M.I.S. participants produced 225 pages of single-spaced transcripts and 373 comments for approximately 30 hours of interviews; interviews with Marketing participants produced 271 pages of transcripts and 327 comments for approximately 23 hours of interviews (M.I.S.=225 pages, 30 hours, 373 comments; Marketing = 271 pages, 23 hours, 327 comments). The difference between the two divisions' number of comments may be explained by the fact that more time was spent in introductory discussions with the 13 Marketing participants than with the 7 M.I.S. participants. To accommodate these differences, I have multiplied the M.I.S. comments by a factor of 1.2 (271/225 = 1.2, the ratio of the difference between the total number of pages for each division, assuming that additional participants from M.I.S. would have produced at least as many pages of transcripts as the Marketing division). The graphs below, then, simply suggest how often specific types of comments occur in the interviews with the participants. These graphs do not include comments made during the respond-aloud protocols in which readers were responding to <u>specific</u> texts. (Those comments are discussed in Chapter 5.) The graphs illustrating the frequency of occurrence of "desired outcomes" and "prescriptions" for writing follow on the next page.

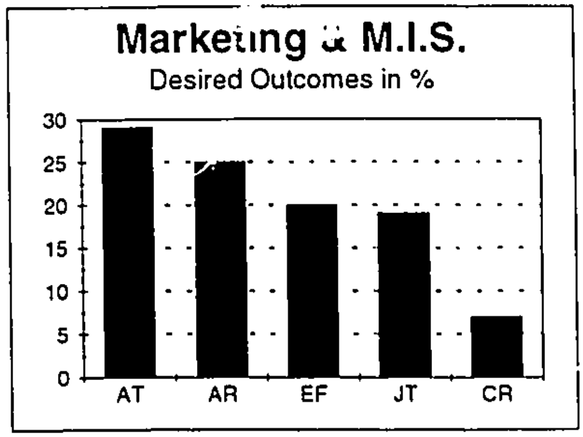


Figure 3. Desired Outcomes for Writing

Key: **AT** - Acceptable Texts; **AR** - Action from Readers; **JT** - Justification of Expenditures; **EF** - Writing and Reading Efficiency; **CR** -Credibility

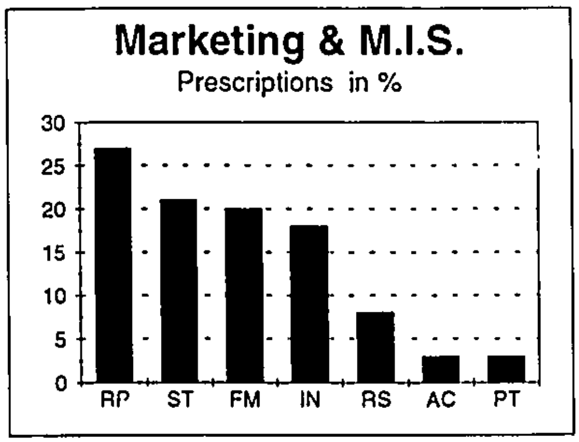


Figure 4. Prescriptions for Writing

Key: **RP** - Review Process; **FM** - Formats & Models;
ST - Style; **IN** - Information; **RS** - Reader's Situation;
AC - Authorial Credibility; **PT** - Prepare the Terrain

Clearly some prescriptions and desired outcomes were mentioned more often than others. The analysis in Figure 3 demonstrates that, during the interviews, the participants tended to speak most often about ensuring that their reports met the managers' expectations or conformed to the written guidelines. A further analysis (Figure 4) shows that the participants tended to prescribe the review process, formats and models, attention to style, and the collection of appropriate and sufficient information most often as means of achieving desired outcomes in writing.

Although the patterns of desired outcomes and prescriptions prevails throughout the data, the emphasis tended to differ between divisions, and between writer and manager. In Chapter 5 these differences are discussed in relation to managers' responses to specific documents and writers' stated intentions for these documents.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to explore two issues related to the research question: How do the goals and values of an organization shape the ways in which readers respond to writing. The issues discussed here are 1) What are the goals and values of the organization? and 2) How do these goals and values shape readers' expectations for writing? In this chapter I have described the research site, The Health Care Company, and the goals and values that underlie its management system and shown how these goals and values inform readers' expectations for writing within the organization.

In brief, HCC is a large company that has been particularly successful in creating, developing, producing, and marketing health care products in Canada. HCC operates in a highly-structured organization in which decisions are approved through hierarchical authority. This structure is reflected in the physical design of its office space (only subordinates work in open office spaces), its communication policies (upper management can be approached when 'appropriate'), and its decision approval procedures (many signatures are required). The rationale for HCC's management system rests on its traditional goals and values. As expressed by this study's participants and reflected in company publications, the mission of HCC is to maintain its position as a leader in the industry by developing "the highest quality" products through the dedication and expertise of its workforce. Widely recognized as an industry leader, HCC actively promotes this recognition among its employees to encourage a "culture of pride."

HCC maintains its position by means of a management system that values expertise, dedication, tradition, and structure. In this organization, employees achieve legendary status through higher education, wide experience in the company, and 'remarkable' intelligence. These qualities also pave the way to positions in upper management. HCC values a traditional organizational structure in which decisions are approved through the hiera chy. Attended by a great many reports, this approval process signals HCC's belief in the value of documenting decisions and events. Newcomers to HCC become members of this highly-structured organization through a process of trial and error based on management's belief that people learn from their mistakes.

HCC values a marketing approach within the organization in which departments have to "sell" their services, plans, and projects to compete for the organization's resources. Within this competitive framework, HCC also promotes the value of team work across department boundaries to accomplish the organization's work. HCC demonstrates its belief in the value of dedication to the job and hard work through rewards such as competitive salaries, incentive bonuses, and public citations in their internal publications.

Some management practices at HCC appear to be inconsistent with the organization's goals and values. For instance, HCC's claims to hire the "best" and promotes this belief within the organization, but it also constrains writers' creativity and independent thinking. Although HCC considers itself a "people-oriented" company, it appears to value its structure of authority as much, or more than, the people who fill its positions. However, HCC has recently been implementing new training courses in leadership and team work and setting up new project teams, which indicates a change in the balance of goals and values with a stronger emphasis on human relations.

The traditional goals and values of HCC are reflected in readers' expectations for writing within the company. My analysis of the participants' comments suggests that readers' desired outcomes for writing and their recommendations for achieving these outcomes clearly represent organizational goals and values. For example, a major outcome readers desire for writing is that reports should be characterized by HCC standards of quality, just as the organization aims to produce quality products for the market. In the case of writing, quality includes efficient processes for writing and texts that busy readers can read quickly. Readers expect recommendation reports to include full justification for spending resources in order to provide accountability in a system that values the approval of hierarchical authority. Readers also expect reports to maintain a department's credibility, reflecting HCC's belief in the value of its employees' expertise. These are the characteristics of successful writing at HCC.

A further analysis of the participants' comments reveals that their recommendations for achieving these outcomes in writing also rest on the goals and values of HCC. The company mission, "to achieve the highest quality," underlies the managers' expressed beliefs about the value of the reviewing and revising reports until they meet readers' expectations. This belief in the process of review and revision (even if it involves several rounds of review and, sometimes, conflict) illustrates HCC's values of dedication to the job and tradition. HCC's beliefs in tradition and hierarchical authority are reflected in the participants' recommendations for using standard report formats and approved models, since writers must adhere not only to written guidelines for reports when they exist, but also to managers' individual preferences for style and format.

Many comments about writing reflect the situation of internal competition within the company and a consequent belief in the value of "selling" ideas and plans. Strategies such as "preparing the terrain" and gaining "authorial credibility" are especially helpful for gaining cooperation and resources. However, HCC readers also expect reports to contain factual and complete information that will justify recommendations and document the decisions for which they are accountable.

Recent trends in training courses and reorganization within departments may indicate that HCC is shifting to a greater emphasis on collaboration and recognition of employees' abilities. If this is so, then the nature of the report review process may change from a process characterized by hierarchical authority and conflict to one of collaboration and development.

In this chapter, I have focussed on the organization's goals and values and its consequent expectations for writing in order to describe the organizational setting for managers' actual responses to specific texts. In the next chapter, I address the remaining issues pertaining to my research question: What is the relationship between writers' intentions and readers' expectations? How does this relationship shape readers' responses to writing? In Chapter 5, I describe two subcultures within HCC and show how the particular goals and values of these divisions shape managers' actual responses to specific texts within the larger organizational setting.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY: READERS MEET TEXTS

"I'm sort of surprised at that, because my hypothesis would have been ..." (Marketing manager reading)

"Like I say, answer all their questions before they think of them" (M.I.S. manager reading)

Up to this point, I have established a theoretical framework built on the assumption that both reading and writing are inherently social acts which include the reader, the text, the writer, and the situation. This assumption underscores my argument that community goals and values shape the social acts of reading and writing. From this theoretical framework I have shown (in Chapter 4) how the goals and values of one community, The Health Care Company (HCC), shape readers' expectations for writing within the organization. This chapter addresses the third and fourth issues of the research question:

3. What is the relationship between writers' intentions and readers' expectations?
4. How does this relationship shape readers' responses to writing?

In this chapter I narrow my research focus to the reading of specific texts in two distinct communities within HCC, the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions. This narrowing focus is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

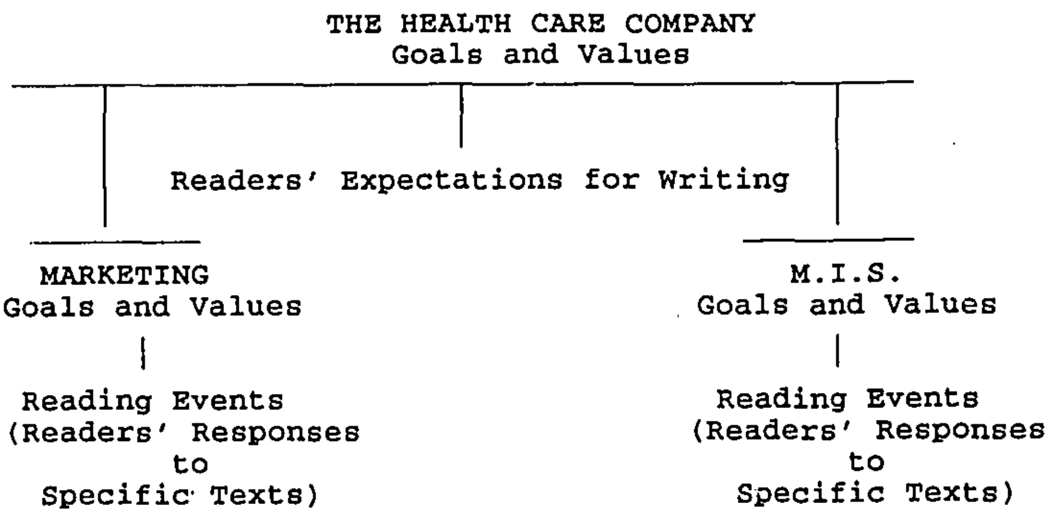


Figure 5. The Research Lens

In Figure 5 the broad focus of this study is indicated on the top level in which the goals and values of HCC are shown to directly influence readers' expectations for writing. The research focus narrows to examine the individual goals and values of two divisions (Marketing and M.I.S.). Certainly, these cultures reflect the broad organizational culture, but specific mandates in each division create particular goals and values. The final focus, readers' responses to specific texts (the Reading Events), creates the research link between goals and values (both organizational and divisional) and the ways in which readers respond to writing. This changing perspective, from a broad to a narrow focus, addresses the issue of how a study of readers' responses to writing within an organization yields valuable insights into the meanings of "good" writing and answers my central research question: How do an organization's goals and values shape readers' responses to writing within that organization?

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the particular contexts in which readers respond to writing, the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions in HCC. In the following section, I define my concept of a Reading Event and explain the categories I have developed to describe the Reading events at HCC. Then I proceed with a detailed analysis of two Reading Events, one from each division, in which managers respond to their subordinates' writing. In my discussion of these two cases, I include my findings from the remaining ten Reading Events in this study. Finally, I compare the Reading Events of each division and relate them to the goals and values of the divisions and the organization.

Communities of Readers: The Marketing and M.I.S. Divisions

The Marketing Division

This division is responsible for marketing HCC's products. The product managers plan strategies for the introduction of new products to the market; they also ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to protect existing products against competitive threats. They write major reports such as marketing plans, pricing proposals, and promotion plans; they also write frequent memos requesting or sending information and confirming agreements reached at meetings.

Each product manager works with at least one key product (new and/or especially profitable) and four or five others. In addition to competing for funds to market their products, the product managers must compete with other product managers for the market research information they need. For example, three product managers may be competing for the attention of the one market analyst who is responsible for providing data to all three (C19/90.11). In effect, the product manager works with a team of experts who provide the services needed to ensure effective marketing of the product; these experts include the market research analysts and others throughout the organization, such as those in sales, promotion, production, and public relations. Although the product manager must orchestrate the marketing of a product, none of the team members reports directly to the product manager. One product manager explains his position this way: "We have to deal with them, we have to interact with them, we have to write to them very often -but you cannot tell them 'This is your priority today' ... -you have to ... sell ... [it] is important for you to have the help of that person -so you're responsible for the product -if it goes well, it's you -if it goes wrong, it's you -but you don't have any authority around yourself" (C16/90.11).

The market research analysts collect statistical data on product performance and market trends to forecast the performance of HCC's products. They also conduct focus groups with clients: "The research that we do here is very objective ... -it's a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses -qualitative analysis from the perception of the [client] which is very important -it's not our perception, it's their perception -quantitative analysis in terms of -well, we know how a product is performing because these are the number of [orders] that are reported in relation to the number of [orders] that are reported for the key competitor -in other words, what's our share" (C101/90.11).

Market research analysts work closely with the product managers and attend their marketing planning meetings in which research needs are identified and market objectives are set. Once a research objective is set, the analyst sends a written request to an external market research agency which conducts the research, usually in the form of a survey questionnaire. Partial results are available to HCC as they are collected by the agency; when they are complete, the agency presents the research results to HCC at a meeting which includes the product managers, market research analysts, and their managers. The market research analyst then receives the statistical tables from the research agency and writes a report for the product managers designed to address HCC's specific market concerns.

The market research analysts often provide the partial research results to the product managers by telephone, or in passing, as they become available; the analysts describe these as "top-line results": "By saying 'top-line' -you're almost covering yourself -because you could put out a report a month from now when all the research is done and you've analysed it and concluded - and come out with a different conclusion than you might have based on these initial results" (C382/91.06).

In the Marketing division, employees rotate positions about every two years. For example, one participant charts her six years with HCC this way: market research analyst, sales representative, then manager of Market Research. Some employees begin as sales representatives and then move into market research. This rotation ensures that all members of this division have experience with the organization's clients and with the various marketing functions. Another effect of the rotation is that employees move from a position (manager of Market Research, for example) in which they have people reporting to them to a position (as product manager, for example) in which no one reports to them (and vice versa). One participant notes: "Before he was my boss ... I was working very closely [with him] -but it's always different when you're reporting to somebody -

than when you are just working with somebody" (C23/90.11). These changing relationships, shifting job responsibilities, and the division's mandate are reflected in the Marketing Reading Events which involve market research analysts and their managers, and product managers and their directors.

The Management Information Systems Division (M.I.S.)

This division is responsible for the automated information systems, telecommunications, and office equipment such as photocopiers and printing equipment. Video conference facilities, computer training, in-house voice mail, mail delivery, portable computers for the sales force, and automated project scheduling are all implemented and maintained by this division. A major writing task in this division is the writing of recommendation reports to justify the implementation of information systems, the purchase of new equipment, or the change in a communication system.

One participant explains the division's mandate: "Our important job is not building computer systems -it's not putting together hardware and software and all kinds of fancy wiring and all that kind of stuff -our job is training -that's what we do for a living -we train others to run the business properly" (C476/91.07). He notes that M.I.S. has changed: "We are now marketing people -we market ideas -we build systems around those ideas -and we work with others to make it happen -so, interpersonal skills becomes a very strong asset for people that are generally conservative, generally introverted" (C479/91.07).

The analysts in this division work closely with other departments to examine their work routines, define problems, and explore solutions: "It's like moving to a new city each time for the analyst -having to learn who's there -what they do -and get along with them all" (C88/90.11). Because the M.I.S. department works in a technical environment, they speak a language that is often unfamiliar to others in HCC: "[The analysts] are not knowledgeable about marketing, finance, etcetera -necessarily -so they have to learn and then translate that backward into technical requirements -they become the bridge between the technology and the business people -they have to walk the mile in the other guy's shoes and come back and translate that into technology and back-translate that back into the other guy's shoes and explain it to them" (C638/92.08).

There is no job rotation in this division; employees move from junior to senior positions as positions become available. One member of this division explains it this way "The career path basically comes to a stop in our department -you've reached as high as you can go" (C419/91.06). Another participant notes that although he has the same title as he did a few years ago, his job responsibilities have changed: "I've been doing much more management of projects where I might have anywhere from one to five people reporting to me on a certain project" (C321/91.04). The M.I.S. division's hierarchical structure and its position as a bridge between technology and the users are reflected in the managers' responses to their subordinates' texts.

A Summary of the Differences between Divisions

Mandates: Although both these divisions, Marketing and M.I.S., ultimately work toward the company mission to be the industry leader by producing the 'highest quality' health care products, each area has very specific mandates.

Customers: Whereas the Marketing division markets HCC products to external clients, the M.I.S. division markets services to improve the efficiency of divisions such as Marketing. A major implication of this difference is that M.I.S. is marketing services to people working in the same cultural framework of HCC's goals and values. The 'clients' of M.I.S. are familiar people within the organization, known personalities with particular likes and dislikes. Although M.I.S. must compete with other divisions for HCC's resources to carry out its projects, no competitor within HCC provides a similar service.

On the other hand, the Marketing division works within a competitive environment both internally and externally. Within this division, product managers compete for assistance from market research analysts for information and from other departments to carry out their plans. Gaining cooperation requires interpersonal skills, but it also depends on what the market research indicates about the product. One participant explains: "Of course if a product is more important in terms of dollars, this product will have priority" (C18/90.11)

<u>Information Needs</u>: The Marketing division depends, in large part, on statistical information and surveys of clients for decisions about marketing strategies. Changes in government p(icies that regulate the

industry, competitors' new products, and unanticipated consumer issues all provide challenges to the integrity of the Marketing information base. An important issue in this division is the quality of its statistical information about sales and customer surveys. On the other hand, the M.I.S. division attends closely to information about specific people (the 'users') for whom they are designing their products.

Whereas a central concern for M.I.S. is teaching people how to use technology to make their work more efficient, a major focus in Marketing is on understanding their data in order to make good decisions about marketing their products.

Desired Outcomes and Prescriptions for Writing: The differences between the two divisions are reflected in their different emphases on the desired outcomes and prescriptions for writing discussed in Chapter 4. For example, the M.I.S. participants tend to speak more often about actions from readers as desired outcomes for writing than do the Marketing participants. This difference reflects the M.I.S. division's strong belief in the value of establishing working relationships with their readers (users and upper management) in order to carry out their projects. The M.I.S. tendency to focus on justification and credibility also reflects this concern for readers. A central goal in the M.I.S. division is to create an understanding between their area and their in-house clients.

The readers in Marketing (upper management and people from other departments who help to market products) are not clients, but part of the same team. To carry out this division's projects, external market information is more pressing than in-house relationships. Of course, Marketing requires the cooperation of other departments; but since marketing is a major part of the HCC mission, cooperation is more forthcoming.

The differences between the prescriptions for writing for both divisions are less pronounced, but again M.I.S. seems to emphasize readers (the review process and "effects on readers") more so than Marketing. Since the marketing planning process is accompanied by a number of key documents for which report formats are included in their standard procedures manual, the marketing participants seem to place more value on formats and models than the M.I.S. participants do. Considering that marketing relies on market research information to support its planning of market strategies, I expected more prescriptions about collecting information from the Marketing participants. However, procedures for collecting marketing information are fairly standardized and much of that work is accomplished by external market research agencies; therefore, the marketing division emphasizes the interpretation of this information rather than collecting it. For example, a sample Marketing comment in this category is "It's a question of ... not just to regurgitate data, but of analysing -produce reasons for numbers being what they are, rather than just saying what they are" (C125/90.11). On the other hand, the M.I.S. participants' emphasis on information is closely associated with their need to collect enough information to justify their recommendations to upper management. For example, a typical M.I.S. comment in this category is "We're going to save eight hours somewhere else? ... What does it mean exactly? I'm sure the question will come up ... -because of the freeze on manpower -on hiring -we have to look at that more closely" (C399.5/91.06).

These differences in emphasis between the M.I.S. and the Marketing divisions are illustrated in Figures 6 and

7 below. The frequency of occurrence in each division is prorated for the M.I.S. division to account for the smaller number of participants from that division (see Chapter 4).

As described in Chapter 4, the categories for the outcomes participants wish to achieve in writing (Desired Outcomes) are **AT** - Acceptable Texts; **JT** - Justification of Expenditures; **AR** - Action from Readers; **EF** - Writing and reading Efficiency; and **CR** - Credibility. The categories for participants' prescriptions for writing (Prescriptions) are **RP** - Review Process; **IN** - Information; **FM** - Formats & Models; **RS** - Reader's Situation; **ST** - Style; **AC** - Authorial Credibility; and **PT** - Prepare the Terrain.

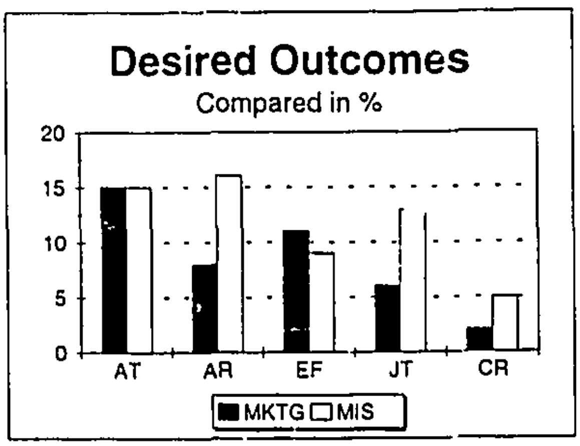


Figure 6 *

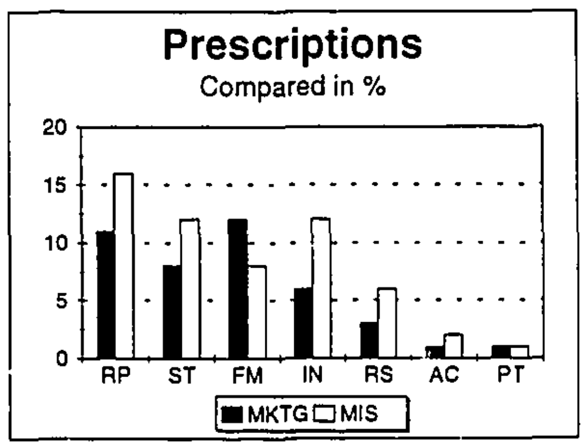


Figure 7 *

According to these figures, the differences between the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions with respect to

---

*Percentages are based on combined Marketing and M.I.S. comments.

desired outcomes and prescriptions for writing suggest that readers' expectations for writing, while reflecting the overall goals and values of HCC, also reflect particular goals and values closely associated with their individual mandates. In the next section, I describe the Reading Events, the meetings of managers with specific texts, which illustrate this relationship between goals and values (both organizational and divisional) and managers' responses to their subordinates' texts.

What is a Reading Event?

The Reading Event is best characterized as a transaction, a dynamic and reciprocal process in which meaning is created in the meeting of reader, text, and situation. In this study, I am adapting Rosenblatt's (1978) concept of reading to include the writer in the transaction. Since Rosenblatt's focus is on literary reading, a reading situation in which text and reader usually take precedence over the authorial interaction, she does not include the writer as part of the transaction. But when managers respond to their subordinates' writing, the relationship between reader and writer clearly affects the transaction. Therefore, my definition of the Reading Event includes not only the reader and the text, but also the writer and the writer's intentions for the text. In this study, reading is a transaction between elements of the situation (the circumstances of the reading), features of the text (the writer's construction of the text as a blueprint for meaning), and characteristics of both reader and writer (intentions, expectations, prior knowledge, and experience).

In this chapter, I present two detailed case studies of Reading Events in each of the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions and describe the findings of the remaining ten case studies. These case studies draw on interviews with readers and writers, respond-aloud protocols (managers commenting aloud while reading), and reviews of the texts read by the managers.

My construction of these case histories (the Reading Events) depends upon particular assumptions about writers' and readers' intentions and about the meaning of consequences. As described in Chapter 2, theorists agree that intentions shape both writing and reading; that is, writers have intentions for their texts and readers bring intentions to their reading that direct their attention to selective features of a text. Theorists also agree that readers bring expectations to their reading. Whereas the term "expectation" denotes a rather passive sense of anticipation (before reading, a reader may expect that a text will provide certain information), intention denotes an active sense of purpose (before or during reading, a reader may intend to look for specific information). Of course, expectations and intentions may change as the reader progresses through the text. Readers, such as managers who review texts and who have the power to change the text or demand that the writer change it, bring both expectations and intentions to their reading.

My analysis of managers' responses to writing suggests two levels of consequences: 1) Managers' comments while reading are momentary consequences of the reader's attention to features of the text. 2) Managers' suggestions for revision are consequences of their evaluation of the reading experience. In this study, managers' requests for revision ranged from small additions or verifications ("I basically have very few questions" C42/90.11) to requests for major additions or reorganization ("The inevitable restructuring is needed"

159/91.01). A positive consequence of the Reading Events in this study then is a manager's indication that a text is "well written" (thus, it meets HCC standards) and/or it requires few changes.

The case studies of the Reading Events are organized into four parts: Situation, Reading, Consequences, and Postscript.

1) The Situation section outlines the relationship between the writer and reader, the reader's expectations, the reader's and writer's intentions, and the features of the text and its situation.

2) The Reading section describes the characteristics of the meeting between reader and text as illustrated by reader's comments during the reading.

3) The Consequences section describes the reader's evaluation of the text, including suggestions for revision, and compares the writer's stated intentions for the text to those of the reader.

4) The Postscript section describes events in the participants' experience after my recording of the Reading Events in order to reflect the changing nature of the research situation.

Categories

In order to gain an understanding of what readers attend to while reading, I tape recorded managers' comments while they responded aloud to subordinates' reports. From my review of the comments, I have identified the following categories (Please see Appendix G for the coding categories, definitions, and coding rules.): consistency (the reader's agreement with, disapproval of , or questioning of the writer's text); effects on readers (comments about the reactions of the present or a future reader); missing information (comments about the completeness of the information); writers' intentions (readers' attention to perceived writers' intentions); style (comments about diction, tone, and clarity); message (comments that paraphrase or explain the message in the text); organization (comments that address the arrangement of information in the text); format (the reader's attention to the writer's use of standard formats); mechanics (comments about spelling, grammar, punctuation, and typographical errors); and visuals (comments about charts, graphs, or fonts).

Reading Events in the Marketing Division

I attended the reading of seven texts in the Marketing division: a market plan, two market research reports, a meeting report, an information report, a recommendation, and a monthly status report. In this section, I present a single case, the Reading Event in which John, a manager, responds to a market research report written by Linda.[3]

The Marketing Report

__Situation__: Three weeks before this Reading Event, John had been promoted from one department to another. His experience at HCC includes positions in market research and sales. Having been present when Linda joined HCC, John observes that "she's obviously picked things up very, very quickly" (C232/91.03). Linda explains that John provided very helpful support to her as a newcomer: "John worked very closely with me, so that if I tripped at all he was there to catch the fall" (C116/90.11). In this case, the working relationship of

[3]NOTE: To protect the confidentiality of the participants in this study, I have used fictitious names in the Reading Events and deleted all information that might identify a writer, a reader, or a text. Case studies of the Reading Events not presented here are on file at the McGill Faculty of Education.

John and Linda appears to be characterized by mutual respect.

In summary, John understands Linda's work as an analyst; they both share a certain amount of knowledge about the particular market addressed by the report John reads in this Reading Event. Having written and read many market research reports, John knows what the product managers and his superiors, expect. One superior explains: "I think that, you know, over a period of time -the manager knows exactly what I expect to see in a report and at this point in time most of the reports that come out -or the recommendations come out of that department -I read and I'm satisfied" (C103/90.11).

Linda's ten-page report is an analysis of a market research survey designed to find out why clients prefer one product to another. The study was contracted to an outside research agency, which made an oral presentation of the results five months previous to this Reading Event; they also provided Linda with two large volumes of tables and graphs. Linda, John, and the product managers all attended the research agency's presentation. Since then, Linda has provided data to the product managers on an ad hoc basis in response to their informal requests.

Linda explains that despite the agency's presentation, an in-house report must be written "because we have hopefully more insight into what the results really mean and how they are applicable to our company" (C49/90.11).

John reviewed this report when Linda first wrote it six weeks prior to this Reading Event. This first draft was 12 pages, including a handwritten page of recommendations. Although the major headings in the first draft are the same as those of the second draft, the subheadings are different and some of the information has been reorganized. When Linda submitted this first draft to John, she attached a note asking him to comment on "style and content" and requesting "a final 'brainstorming' session for us to try and give this some punch" (C218/91.03). John read the draft report and made several marginal notes such as "This is not an objective -this is Findings," "I don't think this belongs here" (C219/91.03). Some marginal notes were questions about the numbers, suggestions for adding words or sentences, and suggestions for reordering some of the points. Linda and John discussed these comments and Linda revised the draft about six weeks later.

Linda's new manager, Hugh, was also given a copy, but had not yet had time to read it. John read the revised report as a favour to both Linda and me, knowing that in his new position he would get a copy of the final report once it had been reviewed by Linda's new manager.

The report read by John in this Reading Event is 10 pages long and written in memo format, arranged under the following major headings: Purpose, Objectives, Methodology, Key Findings, and Conclusion / Recommendations. The longest section is "Key Findings," which covers eight pages and includes several subheadings and one chart. The text is written in short paragraphs of one or two sentences. The date and list of addressees have not yet been completed, but Linda reports that she will include the following people on the distribution list for the report: her manager, and her manager's superior, product managers and their Director, the Vice President of Marketing, and others who have an interest in this particular market (C219/91.03).

During the interview with Linda before the Reading Event, she states that her intentions for this report were to "sum up the data" for the product managers, address the several issues surrounding the main question of the research survey, structure the report the way John had suggested on reading the first draft, answer the main question in the survey, describe the three questions asked and provide the answers, and try to "merge" John's suggested structure for the report with her own (C218-221/91.03). The main message Linda wants to convey in this report is that there are three main reasons clients prefer one product to another.

Linda explains that the report "pretty much looks now how I want it to look," but believes that John may pick up on "dangling loose ends" (C220/91.03). However, she feels that having followed his suggestions for revision, the report is "pretty much what he's looking for."

In an earlier interview, when he was a manager, John explained that his comments during the review process included requests to the writers to clarify information in the report for the readers or statements such as "I disagree with what you're saying -because it needs more investigation" (C571/91.12). He also verified the numbers: "On the first read through, I'd probably check that they [the statistics] made sense -that they were consistent with each other -because we deal with ... so many numbers, it's very easy to pull one from a table and have your base wrong" (C232/90.11). According to John, the format for a market research report is Purpose, Objectives, Methodology, Key findings, Conclusions, Recommendations" (C52/90.11). There are no written guidelines for a market research report, but there is a traditional company format that writers learn with time: "I know - just from being here a few years that ... its Purpose, Background, Recommendation" (C52/90.11).

Having attended the research agency's presentation, John knows what the agency said and how the product managers responded: "I've known about the results of the study -and that's probably the case in most things -you see a presentation from the research agency -you've heard a little bit about the results -the daily information comes in -this is a formality and documents it for everyone" (C231/91.03). However, Linda has the added experience of dealing with the ad hoc requests from the product managers and a more thorough knowledge of the actual data which she has analysed using the tables and charts supplied by the agency. Since six weeks have passed between John's review of the first draft and this Reading Event, John has some idea of the contents, but little knowledge of how his suggestions have been incorporated into the report. These suggestions were made when he was Linda's manager; however, John is reading the revised report with three weeks' additional experience as a product manager. This new position adds to his knowledge of what the market research department's main clients, the product managers, need from reports.

<u>Reading</u>: John's approach to the reading of this text was to read it silently at times, aloud at other times. He read from beginning to end, with occasional returns to the first pages to compare information on one page with another. John commented on what he read and made marginal notes. From an analysis of the reading protocol, it is evident that during the reading, John evaluated the information and writing style, summarized and paraphrased the information, recalled prior discussions with Linda, compared information in the text with his prior knowledge and expectations, envisaged scenarios, drew conclusions, added information and words, noted Linda's intentions, made plans for future research, and reflected on his role as reader. John's role as the reader seems to shift along a continuum which includes the ordinary reader making sense of the text, the writer's manager evaluating the quality of the

information and style, the product manager making plans for his product promotion and planning further research questions, and surrogate writer adding words or information and expressing intentions.

An analysis of John's 72 comments during the reading reveals that John's main focus of attention was consistency -how the text accorded with his prior knowledge and expectations (28 comments). Typical comments in this category were "it's surprising that this number is so low," "it makes sense" "I'm just trying to recall what we had talked about," and "she's used really good examples." These comments reflect John's prior knowledge and beliefs about the market situation, his beliefs about the characteristics of "good examples", and his memories of the previous review of the report. The comment about the low number confirm's Linda's later observations that John typically questions her numbers and claims (C336/91.04) and also reflects John's comments about his role in the review process of his subordinates' reports: "If the conclusions are based on weak data, then certainly it's the analyst's report -but it is my responsibility for having let that information misguide people" (C576/91.12). Now, as a product manager responsible for marketing strategies, he relies on the integrity of such reports. The comment, "it makes sense," refers to his comparison of the data reported in this study to data found in a similar study, a comment that reflects his prior knowledge of the studies done in this market. With few exceptions, John's comments about consistency are comments on the data and the conclusions drawn from them. Of John's 72 comments, 12 focus on Style. Examples of these comments are "So far, I think it's very clear," "So, it flows," and "I think she's phrased that really well." These comments reflect John's role as evaluator of the text style and his managerial intentions to check reports for clarity, focus, and flow.

Missing Information: In this category, John made 10 comments. Typical comments are "Here I'd want a follow-up question," "She might have put something up here {makes marginal note} just to describe that," and "So it would have been interesting ...some sort of recommendation [for the marketing strategy]." Some of the missing information, such as that needed to clarify a point, is already available, other missing information (follow-up questions) can only be gained from further research. These comments reflect John's interests as

Linda's former manager and reviewer of reports and as new product manager planning further research on his product. The comment about having a recommendation may reflect his situation of being in a new position: his job now is to formulate marketing strategies based on information such as Linda's report, a position in which recommendations would be helpful.

The category <u>Message</u> accounts for eight of John's comments. Typical comments in this category are "Just going back over the whole section -trying to think what I got out of it," "In other words, she's saying...," and "What she's saying in this paragraph." These comments reflect John's role as ordinary reader making sense of the text. They also reflect his reading intentions to gain useful information as a product manager.

Three of John's comments fall under the category of writer's <u>Intentions</u>: "That's stressing the second point she's got," and "She's put the emphasis on the relative," and "She's making a suggestion." These comments seem to reflect John's role as the ordinary reader making sense of the text. None of the comments related to the writer's intentions suggest that the writer should change her intentions; John accepts them.

John's attention to Effects on the Reader is reflected in four comments. Comments such as, "If I was reading it from the receivership side," "This is a concern I've had all along, but what can I do with it," and "So this is the section that should be most interesting" reflects John's dual role as the writer's manager and product manager. The first comment is stated in the conditional: If he were reading from the receivership side (product managers), suggesting that he is, at that point, reading it in the role of Linda's manager. The second comment reflects his role as product manager looking for recommendations. His third comment also reflects his interest in information he can use. John's focus on consistency suggests that he was reading primarily in the role of Linda's manager. Since he has, until very recently, been Linda's manager, this predominant role is not surprising.

Considering Linda's concern about combining her original structure for the report with that suggested by John, it is surprising that only four of John's comments were in the category, Organization. A typical comment in this category is "She's dividing it into three questions." Although John reflected on his previous discussion with Linda about the report, he had few comments about its new structure. This suggests that Linda succeeded in achieving the structure suggested and remembered by John and that he found the present structure acceptable.

The category, Mechanics, accounts for only 3 comments. Given John's self-acknowledged tendency to edit (C576/91.12), the few comments about surface features such as errors in grammar and spelling suggest that the text was relatively error free. A review of the text by the researcher confirms this.

There were no comments about Format. The headings in this report conform to the expected (but not established in written guidelines) format John had described in an earlier interview: "Purpose, Objectives, Methodology, Key Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations - with variations depending upon what you're working on" (C52/90.11). A variation of this format had also been described earlier by Linda: "Purpose, Objectives, Methodology, Results, -and then, of course, what's crucial -the Conclusion and Analysis" (C112/90.11).

The single comment about Visuals may reflect the fact that the report contained only one chart to comment on.

<u>Consequences</u>: One of the reading consequences is a number of marginal notes, reflecting some of John's comments during the reading. John notes that revision suggestions will have to come from the new manager of market research, but if he were her manager "-I'd probably just get back to her and say, 'I'd recommend you change this small little point' ... and 'Can you check that?'" (C232/91.03). John's comments after the reading indicate that he believes the report is useful and well done: "I think she did a really good job," "I find it useful." His comment, "She's obviously picked things up very, very quickly," seems to confirm that this report represents the work of someone who has learned the job of market analyst.

After reading the report, John observes that the report supports current promotion strategies: "I think when we're making our promotional plans -we can take this [report] into account ...-I know that some of these suggestions have already been incorporated -so, we're sort of on the right track anyway" (C230/91.03).

When asked to describe the main message of the report, John's reply demonstrates that his understanding of the message is similar to Linda's intended message, but expressed in terms of implications for his marketing responsibilities : "The main message is the answer to the 'why' ... which means that there's a lot of education that has to be done (C233/91.03). Linda's explanation of the main message focuses on the conclusion that the main message is the answer to "why?" (C221/91.03). John's intentions, as the writer's manager, for the report to be clear and to make sense have been mostly fulfilled. As a product manager, John's intentions or hopes for the report to recommend some action have not been fully met because Linda's intentions were simply to provide the answers to the question.

Postscript: The final draft of the report was issued a week after the Reading Event. By that time, Linda's new manager, Hugh, had reviewed the report and suggested changes. These changes included a reorganization of the report. Whereas the draft commented on by John in the Reading Event had the following headings: Purpose, Objectives, Methodology, Key Findings, Conclusions / Recommendations, the final report had these headings: Purpose, Background, Methodology, Conclusions, and Discussion. The Objectives section of the earlier version became the Background section of the final version. The Reading Event draft had one chart and no tables; the final version had one chart and six short tables. Most of the information remained the same, except where the tables summarized some of the information. In the final version, the Conclusions appear on the third page as opposed to the last page in the second draft. The final version did incorporate some of John's suggestions, particularly those requesting more information.

Summary and Conclusions

In this case, the reader's role in the review process is complicated by the situation. He had suggested changes on the first draft, but had been promoted before the second draft was ready for reviewing again. His responses reflect his dual role as the writer's manager and as a new product manager to whom the writer does not report. The dual role of the reader in this Reading Event represents a common situation for readers in the Marketing division in that they know the job responsibilities of others, because members of that group rotate from one position to the other. This means that readers in Marketing are familiar with the market issues surrounding HCC's products as well as being familiar with the types of writing done in that division. John's comments while reading Linda's report clearly indicate that his main focus of attention is on the consistency of the information with what he knows about the information already (28 of 72 comments). In his role of department manager, John ensures that reports issued from his department provide quality information; that is, the information is accurately described and interpreted. As a product manager, John needs this information as a basis for his marketing strategies. His focus on style reflects his role as Linda's manager, who is responsible for making sure that market research reports are clear and well written.

John and Linda's intentions for this report differ somewhat: Linda intends to answer the product managers' question about why the clients prefer one product to another; John intends not only to answer the question, but also to recommend a marketing strategy. John's intention to have a recommendation follows from his reading role of product manager. However, as the department manager he knows that it is the product manager's responsibility to create the marketing strategy; therefore, he does not criticize the report for the lack of a recommendation. John asserts that this report is well written and makes only a few suggestions for changes. For the writer, this Reading Event has a positive outcome.

A Summary Account of Other Reading Events in Marketing

In this section, I draw on the remaining six cases to describe the characteristics of the Reading Events in the Marketing division.

Not all of the Reading Events in the Marketing Division had positive consequences. One case with negative consequences is that of Robert and Andrew. In this Reading Event, Andrew was a newcomer to the department and reported to Robert. Andrew's memo report to Pierre (a peer in another department) followed a meeting with him and documented certain actions he believed Pierre should carry out on a joint project. Robert did not review Andrew's memo before it was issued, but he read it when he returned from a week's absence. Although Robert did not suggest revisions to the memo, he did suggest that future memos of this sort should be written differently. Nine of his 17 comments while reading Andrew's memo pertained to the writer's intentions for sending the memo. He observed that Andrew would have to rely on HCC protocol (Andrew's responsibility was to set objectives for the project; Pierre's was to plan the necessary actions), rather than on his memo, to ensure the project was completed. As a member of the HCC culture, Robert values tradition.

On the other hand, several of the Reading Events did have more positive consequences. For example, when Linda's new manager, Hugh, read Linda's report on product packaging (a similar type of market research report to the one read by John above), he requested that a short Background statement be added and that two of the paragraphs be rearranged. Hugh's comments focussed mainly on consistency and organization. His comments on organization highlight his belief in the value of a "selling" approach in that he remarked that the report should present information from the marketing survey about the clients' need <u>before</u> information about how HCC is meeting those needs ("the customer comes first"). The revisions to this report mainly required a reordering of two paragraphs.

When Ralph read Marie's marketing plan, he, too, requested few revisions. Most (45 of 71 total) of

Ralph's comments were about the consistency of the information with Ralph's knowledge of the product and the plans for marketing it. As the former product manager for that product, Ralph knew a great deal about it. As a department manager, Ralph had to ensure that the plan was supported by accurate information. The revisions suggested for this report required the verification of certain costs and a calculation of the financial implications of the plan.

A completely positive outcome is illustrated by the Reading Event in which Ralph read Marie's recommendation for creating promotional materials; Ralph requested no revisions. Of his 11 comments, six pertained to the consistency of the information with his prior knowledge and beliefs. All these comments were agreements with Marie's plan. Ralph largely attributed the success of the report to the writer's use of an accepted model.

In most of the Marketing Reading Events there was a difference in the writers' and readers' intentions for the report, which resulted in the managers' requests for revisions; however, the revisions usually required fairly minor changes. This situation suggests that the gap between writers' and readers' intentions is a matter of breadth rather than difference; that is, the managers' intentions for writing included organizational goals, whereas the writers' were more immediately concerned with their own job responsibilities.

The quality of information is important to the participants in the Marketing division, since they rely largely on market research information to plan their strategies for gaining the largest market share possible for HCC's products in a competitive marketplace. Since marketing decisions are based on both "soft" (perceptions of clients) and "hard" (numbers of products sold) data, members of the Marketing division tend to compare the data with what they already know from meetings and discussions; in effect, they do a "reality check." This situation is reflected in the fact that the main focus (34% of all the readers' comments in Marketing) of the Marketing readers' attention was on the consistency of the report information with their prior knowledge and beliefs. The following graph compares the percentage of comments in each category relative to the total number of comments for the Marketing division. Please see Figure 8 on the next page.

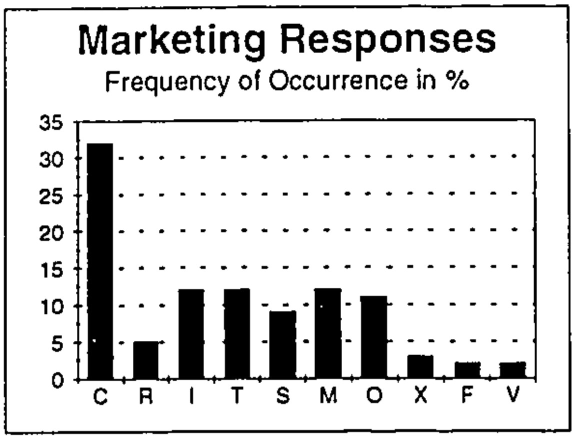


Figure 8. Marketing Readers' Focus of Attention

Key: **C** - consistency; **R** - readers; **I** - missing information; **T** - writers' intentions; **S** - style; **M** - message; **O** - organization; **X** - mechanics; **F** - format; and **V** - visuals.

The graph above illustrates the strong tendency of the readers in the Marketing division to comment on the consistency of the report information with their mental models of the market situation. (These readers made comments about consistency almost three times more often than they did about any other feature of the report.) What readers attend to in the M.I.S. division differs considerably from what is attended to by readers in the Marketing division.

Reading Events in the M.I.S Division

A Report to Paul

<u>Situation:</u> In the two years since Sylvia (the reader) hired Ted (the writer), she has provided much of Ted's orientation to the job of analyst, a position that she has also held. Sylvia believes that the development of her staff is one of her most important job functions: "drawing the line and pulling them over -until they're finally there" (C87/90.11). Ted observes that Sylvia acts as his guide and advisor: she is the person who knows the broad political climate and who can thus make suggestions for his documents (C143/91.01). Sylvia observes that Ted's writing is usually very concise: "[He uses] a very skeletal form of language" (C162/91.01). She also notes that he invariably "does his homework" (C161/91.01). There appears to be a relationship of trust between writer and reader and some admiration for the writer's style.

Sylvia explains her role in the review process of her subordinates' writing this way: "I try and play the devil's advocate -I'll stand in somebody else's shoes for a minute" (C541/91.12). She observes that "People have a mind set ... they're asking themselves certain questions

... -they'll be looking for the scene ... (C90/90.11). Ted notes that effective writing: "is clearly getting the message across in whatever context it happens to be" (C278/91.04).

Both Sylvia and Ted emphasize the importance of communication to their work. Sylvia explains: "We're out there trying to improve the business, so to do that communication skills are way up there" (C89/90.11). Ted considers that his memos to users are more important than the formal reports he writes for upper management because "They are more important to me being able to get my job done" (C527/91.12).

Sylvia believes that a report's structure is very important for the reader: "The worst thing you can do in this exercise is choose a format so drastically different that no one can read it" (C90/90.11). Ted explains that there is a "standard way of doing things," but "a lot of it depends, too, on who you're working with -who is going to represent the work as part of the particular department" (C148/91.01). He observes that writers should follow the format used by management, rather than the written guidelines: "I see people in here follow those and be routed -be totally routed -into another direction" (C148/91.01). Clearly, Sylvia and Ted share many beliefs about writing and communication. Their beliefs about formats and structure seem to differ somewhat in that Sylvia stresses the readability of the format, whereas Ted stresses the political value of using a certain format.

This report is one of the documents that form part of Ted's documentation for a large automation project for one of the Marketing departments. The project is scheduled to take 18 months to complete. Because the users have some immediate problems, they request that the project be diverted somewhat to provide a temporary solution to a critical budgeting problem. Although the problem will be solved upon completion of the major project, Paul, the user most directly involved in the problem has requested immediate assistance in the form of a particular piece of project software.

After some investigation, Ted has identified the problem as a procedural problem that would require the users to change their work routines before these could be computerized. Ted and Sylvia have discussed the situation and concluded that the recommendation should be against installing the software, because it would delay the major project and add more work at this time for the users who are already under a great deal of pressure. In the ongoing discussions with the users, Ted has informally told them about the difficulties of making the software work for them at this time. Sylvia has asked Ted to document the request and their recommendation for the systems dictionary (the M.I.S. record of projects): "We want to put in writing that we did spend some time - energy -and we have looked into it" (C161/91.01). As Ted began to write this document, he decided that rather than writing a report only for M.I.S. records, he would direct the report to Paul because he asked for the help. Although he was primarily thinking of his manager when he wrote the report, Ted explains that he also kept other readers in mind: "I started thinking -no, no this is going to go to this individual who asked for the help - and almost invariably anything you write goes to your and their bosses -you sort of keep that in the back of your mind" (C141/91.01). Ted wrote this report over three or four days "because I was struggling with it" (C142/91.01). The report read at this Reading Event is Sylvia's first reading of Ted's response to Paul. Ted explains that he intends "to let the user know -we tried to find you a solution -for these reasons, we couldn't." A main purpose is to " keep them [the users] on our side...to keep the lines of communication open ... because as soon as they put up roadblocks, you start building walls -you have to work twice as hard to take them down" (C149/91.01). Ted explains his relationship with the addressee, Paul: "I'm not really comfortable with this person -I'm not sure how much he might understand -I tried to keep it as simple as possible -that's why the tone of it is relatively soft -I'm trying to sort of say -I'm real sorry -I tried -and all this is going to do is make your life worse, so I don't think you really want that at this point -and to say that -jeopardizing the entire project for this, at this point -try to give real -reasons -not trying to be -backing out" (C141/91.01). He explains that he tried to structure the document in a logical order: "This is what I'm going to do -this is what I did ...-trying to give a little bit of a logical progression -this is what we're trying to accomplish -this is what the product is -this is what I say we should do -the reason why is -there's boundaries in which ... can operate -there is a benefit, but it comes at a fairly high cost .. and then to say -even if we were to get by all those barriers, here's the other headaches you would have to deal with" (C148/91.01). Since this report would be copied to the user's manager and his own manager, Ted also decided to make this a more "formal" report rather than the informal memo for the department records: "[I decided to use] more formal format -the flow, makes sense, the right words, that kind of stuff ...what I was saying was the same -it was just how I was saying it" (C142/91.01). He notes that he structured it with the managers in mind as well: "Tell them the recommendation right up front -so that the two managers -that's all they may be really interested in looking at" (C140/91.01). Sylvia, he notes, may make comments that will "add to the political environment." Ted observes that the issue will probably arise in future meetings with the users: "This (memo) may get thrown in as one of the things to discuss -[They will say] 'Tell us in person, rather than a memo -give us more information - because this is not enough' -things tend to happen like that" (C142/91.01).

In a previous discussion about her expectations for writing in her department, Sylvia said that she wants writers "to put their stamp on it." She also wants them to adhere to the format: "Purpose, Background, Rationale, Alternatives, Recommendation" (C90/90.11). She explains that one of her jobs in the review process is to ensure "the audience is well-addressed, the technical language is appropriate, innuendo has been removed" and to identify parts of the report that are potential problems for the readers (C85/90.11). To define 'professional', Sylvia offered the following explanation: "You don't want to come across as a used car salesman -you have to be objective -you want to remove a lot of personal biases the way it's presented" (C542/91.12).

Sylvia has been involved in this project from the beginning; she has coached Ted through the major initiation report and its presentation to upper management and the users. She knows the users' situation and she knows how Ted plans to handle it, although she expected a memo for the systems dictionary, not necessarily a memo that would be addressed to the users. Once the report is approved by Sylvia, it will go out to the users; copies will go to the Paul's superior and to Sylvia's superior, and a copy will go into the dictionary as "part of things that happened during the life of the project" (C144/91.01).

This report to Paul is a two-page report with a covering memo that identifies the addressee, the writer, and the subject, as well as a short statement of the report's recommendation. The report includes the following headings: Introduction, Recommendation, Benefits, Costs, Implementation Issues, Summary. Under each heading are short paragraphs of one to two sentences each.

Reading: While reading the report Sylvia expresses a number of intentions for this communication to the user and the managers. She comments: "So, instead of stressing us as the weakness, I want to stress the availability -as the weakness." She also wants to make it evident that it's not worthwhile for the user to spend time. Because Paul's situation is complex, Sylvia notes "We wanted to close this off with a very clear -message to them that they're trying to solve a symptom and not the problem." Sylvia explains that a main purpose is to put it in writing that they did spend some time looking at the problem. She also wants to make sure "that all the players are identified who have been at the table in the prior discussions and that we keep developing our language -very important -it makes it easier down the road." She observes that it is important that the report be written in such a way that upper management in both departments will support the recommendations.

Sylvia read the document from front to back, occasionally flipping backward through the report. During her reading, she made observations about the writer's intentions, adopted the role of the user and hypothesized about his reactions to the text, stopped to question whether she should read any further, summarized the message, summarized the effects of the text on the reader, reread certain parts, expressed her intentions for the document, expressed her intentions for reading, observed her own reactions to the text, expressed her plans for feedback to the writer, and commented on her comments. Sylvia dramatized her many roles with the use of colourful metaphors and affective phrasing. For example, in the role of Paul she dramatized her reading: "I'm at the 'why' stage now .. I don't want to know 'what', I want to know 'why'." In her role of surrogate writer, she talked to the users: "In case you didn't realize, all schedules must be loaded." In her role of manager reviewing the message going out, she summed up the reader's situation in a metaphor: "Now we're in hell

-it's getting hot and it's time to leave." In her role of reviewer of the text, she expressed her immediate reaction to the wording with fairly strong emotion: "I'm going to choke -I mean, how can you sit there and write these kinds of paragraphs -it's about as subtle as a bulldozer."

Sylvia's main focus of attention was on the effects of this report on readers (35 of 146 comments). In this case, 'readers' included herself as reader and the external reader, Paul. Typical comments about the effects of the text on herself were "I'm starting to want to take control," "My reaction has been better at the end," and "This is giving me a framework to relate back to him." These comments reflect Sylvia's role as Ted's manager responsible for the work of her department. On the other hand, she also wants her writers to "put their stamp on it" (C90/90.11-S). Thus, her comment about taking control of the text suggests that she is aware of a possible contradiction between her beliefs and her practices. As she has said earlier, Sylvia feels that one of her key responsibilities is to develop her people; it is through this development that she will be able to accomplish her objectives for the department. More of the comments focus on Sylvia' role as surrogate reader for Paul. Comments that reflect this role are "Nobody's softening me up here," "If I'm Paul -...I'm in the middle of a day just like this when I've picked it up off my desk,' and "I'm at the 'why' stage now." These comments reflect Sylvia's vision of her role in the document review process. She sees herself as a 'devil's advocate' who steps into the reader's shoes. In this role she tries to identify potential problem areas and to ensure that the reader will 'buy into' the recommendation. In addition to the users, Sylvia needs the support of Paul's manager and her own manager: "After all they run the business" (C399.25/91.06).

The second most common focus of attention during this reading was the writer's <u>intentions</u> (30 comments). Sylvia's comments in this category include questions about Ted's intentions, "What is he trying to accomplish?", conclusions about his intentions, "Obviously he's intending on sending this out," inclusions of his intentions with her own, "We wanted to close this off with a very clear message," and expressions of her own intentions, "Instead of stressing us as the weakness, I want to stress the availability as the weakness." Several comments in this category seem to reflect Sylvia's confidence in Ted's work; instead of ignoring or criticising his intentions, she works to understand them, "It's starting to occur to me that he must have a motive for putting things in this order." Other comments reflect their earlier discussions about Ted's approach to the problem: "I realize he doesn't want to spend time." Some of Sylvia's comments express her own intentions for the text, reflecting, again, her responsibility for the relationship of her department to others in the organization, "So, what we have to do is clean out the defensiveness from an M.I.S. point of view."

Consistency , the fit between the text and Sylvia's prior knowledge and beliefs, accounts for 23 of Sylvia' comments. In addition to drawing on her knowledge of the situation ("We talked about this") and her agreement with Ted's ideas ("That's right -that's why I liked it so much"), Sylvia also draws on her knowledge of how recommendations are written ("How do we evaluate alternatives? When we normally present alternatives"). These comments seem to reflect her concern to place this recommendation in the context of the prior discussions with Ted and in the context of the department's traditional recommendation format.

Although 15 of Sylvia's comments concern organization, only 2 focus on format. The comments about organization include a concern for restructuring the argument ("After telling me that installation is not enough, and after telling them what the benefits of the package are -and the costs -we're all over the damn planet here") and the placement of parts of the text ("We kind of say that better -we focus it better under 'Costs'"). The two comments about format concern Ted's use of the traditional format in which the Recommendation appears right after the Introduction. The two comments on format seem somewhat contradictory: she observes that he has begun with the standard 'Introduction' and 'Recommendation,' the format recognized throughout the company to accommodate busy readers; but, she then suggests that he has deviated from this standard format to be "a little more creative," when she begins to read the rest of the text. These comments reflect Sylvia's earlier statement that she wants writers to be creative, but she also wants them to stay within the format because "people have a mind set -they're asking themselves certain questions" (C90/90.11). Thus, the comments seem to reflect a concern that the argument persuade Paul by anticipating his questions.

Although one of Sylvia's intentions for reviewing this report was to "make sure he's saying that [what we're trying to say]," only 11 of her 146 comments focus on the message. The message has already been decided in discussion with Ted; these comments seem to reflect Sylvia' confirmation of the message. For example, comments such as, "The recommendation is not to do it" and "They're trying to solve a symptom and not the problem" echo the previous discussion. Some of the comments seem to reflect Sylvia's participation in the sending of this message. For example, "In case you didn't realize, all schedules must be loaded" seems to put Sylvia in the role of speaking directly to Paul.

Sylvia' comments on style (10 comments) focus on her perception of Ted's tendency to be concise, "a very skeletal form of language." For example, she notes that Ted is 'blunt': "So, he has said very clearly and very bluntly" and "He has bluntly stated the problem." Further in the protocol, she finds his language too blunt: "It's about as subtle as a bulldozer." None of

Sylvia's comments on Ted's style recognize his intention to use a "soft tone" to convey his sympathy for Paul's situation. Other comments on style relate to Sylvia's confusion in reading parts of the text: "What does he mean by that?"

Missing information accounts for only 6 comments; in one case the comment referred to information that should be deleted "'Benefits' -out -don't need it." She makes one comment on the visual appearance of the text, one comment on style, the naming of a heading "Instead of calling it 'Summary', call it 'Situational Analysis'," and no comments on mechanics, such as grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Although she stumbles slightly while reading an incorrectly spelled word "persue", she does not comment on it. Nor does she comment on a particularly awkward sentence in the list of implementation issues: "Support will be necessary above and beyond the two months already identified and whose responsibility will it be."

Consequences: As a result of this reading, Sylvia made plans to discuss the report with Ted. She made three main points in her written comments on the front page of the report. The first noted that many of Ted's arguments were "clean, clear, and concise." The second comment noted "the inevitable restructuring" was required, and the third requested a discussion about the report the next day. Sylvia observed that the text contained the ideas she and Ted had agreed upon in their prior discussion. For the writer, the outcome of this reading event was a request to restructure the report.

Postscript: In a later interview, Ted reported that he and Sylvia discussed the report after her first reading of it. He revised the report as much as he could within his time constraints: "I got to the point where I couldn't spend any more time on it, so that was the way it was going to go" (C272a/91.04). He reported that he did not change the report a great deal: "I wouldn't really say significantly -the thrust of it was the same - a little bit of a change on presentation -a little bit of a change on some of the titles -because of the flow - things were not in the appropriate sections -the essence stayed the same" (C276/91.04).

A review of the revised report reveals that the cover memo was unchanged except that two people had been added to the list of people who would receive copies: Paul's colleague and Sylvia's superior. This reflects

Sylvia's intention that "all the players are identified who have been at the table in the prior discussions" (C158/91.01). The first headings, "Introduction" and "Recommendation," and the contents in these sections were unchanged. Other headings were revised; information was added and deleted to reflect Sylvia's concerns about ensuring that Paul and the managers would understand the reason for their decision not to install the software.

A few weeks after the Reading Event, Ted reports, he and Sylvia "took another kick at the can" and devised an interim solution for Paul (C272a/91.04).

Summary and Conclusions

Sylvia's comments reveal that she is mainly concerned with the effect on the reader of Ted's organization of the argument in his report. This focus seems to reflect Sylvia's concern for her responsibility to ensure that her department maintains the users' trust and confidence: "You have to be a team ... you have to build confidence, trust, credibility .. if you don't have that, you can have no progress." This intention also reflects Ted's efforts to "try to keep people on my side" (C141/91.01). Although Sylvia and Ted have similar intentions for this report, their ideas for structuring the argument appear to differ. Ted intended that the text should demonstrate that he was "real sorry" he could not recommend the software and that he had "real reasons" for not doing so. Sylvia's concern was not only that the message be "palatable," but also "professional."

Ted's focus was directed more to his relationship with the users, people with whom he would have to work to complete the project, whereas Sylvia's focus included a concern for the M.I.S. credibility within the organization.

A Summary Account of Other Reading Events in M.I.S.

In the M.I.S. division concerns about the in-house readers are of major importance. This concern is illustrated in the Reading Event in which Lise reviews a recommendation written by Nancy (and revised by Nancy's manager, Eric) for the purchase of a computer system to create advertising materials. The main focus of her comments is missing information (12 of 42 comments total) and effects on the readers (11 comments). In these comments, she explains that the writer has not included the assumptions, alternatives, and consequences of the recommendation. Without this information, readers will not be convinced of the benefits of purchasing the equipment. As a manager, Lise's intention is that this recommendation should also explain the organizational implications of having the computer system in-house, rather than having the work done by external agencies. The writer's intentions were simply that the recommendation should prove that certain costs could be avoided by buying the system. These differences in intentions led to a major revision of the recommendation.

A more positive Reading Event outcome is illustrated in the Reading Event in which Neil reviews Sarah's report to the users to inform them about changes to the software in their computers. Many (26 of 96 total comments) of Neil's comments while reading focus on the writer's intentions. These comments pertain to Sarah's strategies for convincing the users, through her report, that her department provides the support they need. Twenty-one of Neil's comments pertain directly to the effects on the readers; that is, Neil adopts the position of the users and others who will read the report to understand how they will respond. Neil agrees with Sarah's approach and makes few suggestions for revision. Neil's review of Sarah's report was the only Reading Event in M.I.S. where major revisions were not required. One of the reasons this review may have had such a positive outcome is that Neil and Sarah have worked together for several years and have developed a relationship of trust. Neil recognizes Sarah as a competent writer; they often collaborate on writing major reports.

The differences between the writers' and readers' intentions mainly concerned their intentions for organizing reports. Although a standard format for recommendations does exist in this division, the subjects of the reports read in this study required several variations of the format (they were not routine reports). In addition, there were no models for the kinds of reports read in these Reading Events. This situation leaves several options for report structure and creates a situation in which hierarchical authority plays an important role in decisions about organizing information in reports.

Except for Sarah, the other writers in the M.I.S. cases had fewer than two years of experience writing in M.I.S. This may be an important reason for the largely negative consequences of the Reading Events here in which managers required fairly substantial revisions of all but one of their subordinates' reports. Another reason may be that although the readers do not always know the technical details of their subordinates' reports (the subordinates are the technical experts), these readers do know the political environment of HCC. This situation is reflected in their attention to the effects on readers and the writers' intentions while reading their subordinates' reports. Managers' comments about the readers reflect this division's goal to market their services to in-house "clients" who share the same organizational culture. These readers are familiar with the issues and controversies within HCC; thus, they know how other readers in the organization will respond to the reports issued by M.I.S.

Figure 9 on the next page compares the percentage of comments in each category relative to the total number of comments for the M.I.S. division.

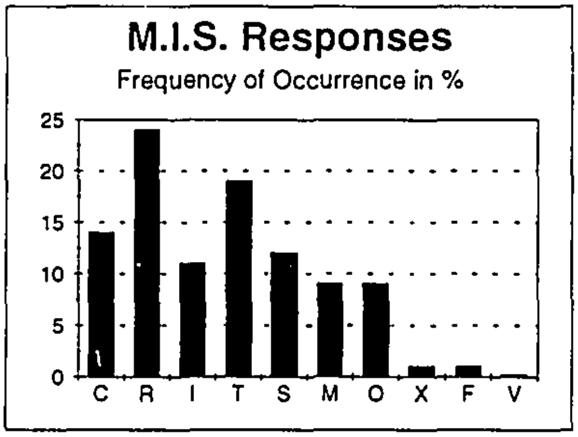


Figure 9. M.I.S. Readers' Focus of Attention

Key: **C** - consistency; **R** - readers; **I** - missing information; **T** - writers' intentions; **S** - style; **M** - message; **O** - organization; **X** - mechanics; **F** - format; and **V** - visuals.

It is apparent in Figure 9 that the readers in the M.I.S. division attended somewhat more frequently to effects on the readers and to writers' intentions than to other features of the text. Figure 9 also shows that the frequency of occurrence of the other comment categories tends to be fairly similar (except for mechanics, format, and visuals). The M.I.S. focus on readers reflects their position in the organization.

The M.I.S. division's mandate is to improve the business operations of the organization. Their "customers" are people within the organization, most of whom they know as individuals. In addition to technical information from vendors, information for recommendations in this division derives from studies of people within the organization and their work procedures. Work procedures are perceived as flows of information rather than statistics. Since their work involves introducing new technology into the organization, their recommendations change the ways people perform their daily routines. Thus, reports in M.I.S. must be written in a non-technical language that readers can understand, especially since the reports recommend a change to their familiar work routines. This interaction with people may account to a large extent for why M.I.S. readers tend to focus on how written documents will affect readers.

A Summary of the Differences between the Divisions

The readers' focus of attention in the M.I.S. division differs markedly from that of the Marketing division. This difference may be attributed to different mandates and different situations among the readers.

In the Marketing division the mandate is to "promote and protect" the company's products. Marketing strategies depend, in part, on the statistics acquired through market research on such matters as market trends and sales figures. Important information also comes from customer surveys and focus group interviews which reveal perceptions rather than actual events that can be counted. This mix of quantitative and qualitative information is used to support proposals for marketing the products. Since the customers are external to the organization, writers must rely on statistics, rather than familiarity with individual personalities, for their information . Thus, writers must convince their readers that their interpretation of the statistics and interview data represents a "true" reality. The managers, as reviewers of the Marketing reports, must verify that the report information supports the reality. Since most of the readers in Marketing have experience as sales representatives, market research analysts, and product managers, and since they attend frequent meetings about the market situation of the company's products, they have their own picture of reality. Thus, the readers in Marketing attend closely to the consistency between the writer's view of reality and their own. The differences in the frequency of occurrence of the two divisions' comments is illustrated in Figure 10 on the next page.

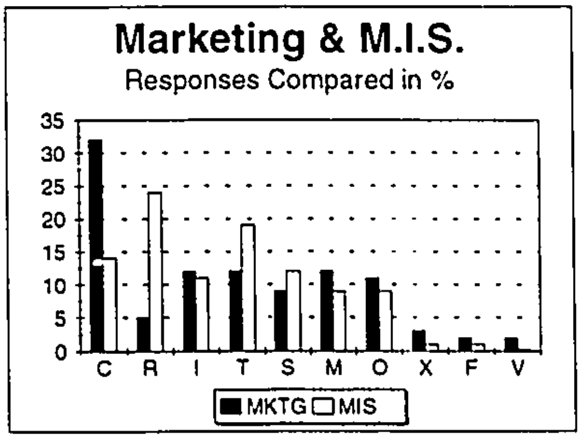


Figure 10. A Comparison of Readers' Responses in Two Divisions

Key: **C** - consistency; **R** - readers; **I** - missing information; **T** - writers' intentions; **S** - style; **M** - message; **O** - organization; **X** - mechanics; **F** - format; and **V** - visuals.

The figure above simply compares the tendencies of the readers in Marketing and M.I.S. to attend to different features of the text. The most obvious difference is between their emphasis on "consistency" and "readers." As explained above, these differences reflect the differences in the goals and values of the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions. The smaller difference between the divisions with respect to the "writer's intentions" may result from the tendency of readers in both divisions to comment on the writer's intentions as a way of trying to make sense of the text. M.I.S. readers also attended to the writers' persuasive strategies which may account for more comments in this category.

Conclusions About the Reading Events

Certainly the differences in managers' responses to their subordinates' texts in this study at HCC can be attributed, in part, to the research conditions. For example, not all the participants had the same length of experience in the organization, which ranged from one day to several years. The texts read by the managers varied from a one-page memo to an eight-page market plan. Differences in managers' responses may also be attributed to the differences in the individual personalities of the managers. Some readers tended to engage the text with more apparent emotion than others. Metaphors, analogies, and affective comments seemed to characterize some readings and not others. Clearly, perceptions of the task ("Please read and comment aloud") differed, since some readers read more of the text aloud than others. Some readers seemed more aware of my presence than others during their reading.

However, the similarities in the managers' responses lead me to believe that indeed the respond-aloud protocols do provide important insights into what managers attend to while reading their subordinates' reports. Moreover, the recurring themes in the interviews, respond-aloud protocols, and documents (procedures, newsletters, etc.) and my field notes support my assertion that the managers' responses reflect the goals and values of both the organization and the two divisions.

Organizational goals and values shape the organization's standard procedures. The procedure of reviewing subordinates' texts before they are issued is common to both divisions, reflecting organizational beliefs in the values of tradition, hierarchy, quality, and dedication. The review process has been handed down from manager to manager; managers tell stories about their own experiences as writers. These stories involve accounts of great effort and many revisions suggesting that the participants believe that dedication to the job will produce a quality report, a "better product."

The many comments about consistency also reflect managers' beliefs in quality. Additionally, they reflect a belief in hierarchical authority when the consistency is between the manager's vision of reality and the writer's vision of reality in the text. The belief in a tradition of hierarchy is illustrated in the managers' frequent comments on effects on the readers; these comments often refer to upper management readers who must sign their approval before a project can begin. Comments about the writer's intentions, less frequent than those about consistency and effects on readers, reflect managers' beliefs in the value of learning from mistakes; managers often seem to be trying to understand a problem a writer may be having so they can make suggestions for revision. These comments also reflect managers' belief in the value of a "selling" approach to convincing other readers to "buy into" a plan. The managers' focus on missing information reflects a concern for the traditional system of authority in which upper management requires specific information before a text is acceptable for their signatures. Comments about organization also suggest that recommendations require particular information, arranged in a particular way, for justifying a plan to upper management. Managers' comments on formats and models reflect their beliefs in HCC traditions for report formats, whether they are written in the standard procedure manuals or exemplified in model reports. Beliefs in the tradition of hierarchical authority are also evident in these comments, especially when they refer to managers' individual preferences. Comments about the message of a report often reflect their belief in the value of "selling." Comments about style reflect values pertaining to the quality of HCC product. The few comments about mechanics and visuals suggest that report quality is less dependent on these characteristics than it is on features such as style.

The differences in the frequency of occurrence of particular categories of response between the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions reflect the particular goals and values of those two groups. Responses in the category of effects on readers were particularly common in the M.I.S. division where readers are the upper management. M.I.S. writers must justify their plans to readers who share an organizational culture but do not share the technical language of M.I.S.

Members of the Marketing division strongly believe in the value of quality information as expressed by their focus on consistency. Readers attend to the consistency of information with what they know about the markets, the products, and the clients. Quality information is important to their pursuit of a leading market share for HCC products.

Writers' and Readers' Intentions

A common motivation for the required revision was a mismatch between the writer's and reader's intentions for the report. These mismatches most often resulted from the difference in the breadth of the reader's and writer's perspectives. Since most of the writers had been in their present jobs for less than a year, they could not be expected to know the implications of their recommendations for the organization as a whole as did their managers. This is especially true in the M.I.S. division in which members do not rotate through the various positions, but rise vertically in the hierarchy. Newcomers in this division have fewer opportunities than those in Marketing to understand the needs of readers with responsibilities different from their own. This may account for the difference in "Consequences" between the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions.

The definition of a newcomer differs among managers and their subordinates. One manager noted that someone is no longer "new" when "he gets it right." Another manager observed that it takes two years to learn the job. The subordinates noted that eventually (after about a year) they were able to issue routine reports (those that do not require the manager's signature) without a manager's review.

The managers' comments while responding also indicate their intentions to assume particular roles in their reading. All readers assumed the role of others who would eventually read the report. Comments made from this perspective reveal the reader's knowledge and experience with others throughout the organization, knowledge that writers gain through project meetings, from their managers, and from peers. One reader seemed to assume the role of coach as illustrated by his comments about how he was going to manage his feedback to the writer. Many readers adopted the role of manager as quality inspector who ensures that reports meet with his or her perceptions of organizational expectations. Some readers saw themselves as mediators between their departments and the organization. No reader assumed just one role during the reading of the writers' texts, rather roles seemed to shift during the process.

Conclusion

This chapter addresses the third issue (How does the meeting of readers' expectations and the writers' intentions influence the ways readers respond to writing in the organization?) to answer the research question: How do an organization's goals and values shape the ways readers respond to writing? In Chapter 4, I demonstrated the ways in which readers' expectations for writing reflect the organization's goals and values. In this chapter, I have shown how the organizational goals of The Health Care company are particularized in two divisions, Marketing and M.I.S. These divisions are distinct communities within the larger community of HCC; their distinctiveness affects the ways in which managers in each division respond to their subordinates' texts. The readers' intentions for writing are based on these different divisional and organizational goals; when writers are newcomers to the organization, their socialization is an important element in their processes of becoming successful writers. In the next chapter I describe these conclusions more fully and discuss the implications of this study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> [R]eading a culture is an interpretive, subjective activity ... The validity of the diagnosis must be judged on the utility of the insights it provides, not on its 'correctness' as determined by some objective criteria.
>
> Vijay Sathe (1989, p. 393)

In Chapter 1, I argued that readers' expectations for writing in the workplace differ considerably from those in academic settings. When university graduates enter an organization, they must learn how to adapt the writing abilities they developed in their university community to the demands and expectations of the new community.

A major assumption underlying this study is that reading and writing are social acts; writers and readers interpret language and build meaning within a framework of social interaction that includes writer, reader, text, and situation (LeFevre, 1987).

While researchers largely agree that writing is socially situated, most research on writing has ignored the voice of the reader and focussed instead on the writer's perceptions of readers' expectations for writing. In this study, my goal has been to examine the process in which readers respond to writing in the workplace. In particular, my study has addressed the question: How do the goals and values of an organization shape the way readers respond to writing in that organization? Using a variety of qualitative methods, I have examined managers' responses to their subordinates' writing within the framework of organizational goals and values in the Health Care Company.

Readers' Responses to Writing at HCC

The Health Care Company (HCC) is a workplace setting in which organizational goals and values clearly shape readers' expectations for writing. Characterized by a "culture of pride" (Kanter, 1983), this community believes that the concerted efforts of their highly expert members in a traditional structure of hierarchical authority are responsible for HCC's success in the marketplace. At HCC, the "common project," the organization's mission to be the industry leader and its beliefs in the value of its traditions are most clearly evident in its procedures for rationalizing and documenting its decisions. Even though decisions may be made at the departmental level, at HCC they must be documented for formal approval by upper management, who have their own mental models of how decisions should be rationalized. Managers at HCC consider the review process as a standard procedure. Managers, responsible for ensuring the quality of written texts, approach the review process with a belief in the value of working hard to achieve a "quality" product that clearly provides the kinds of justification required to "sell" it to the upper levels in the echelon, who must ratify the decisions made in the lower management levels. This standard procedure for providing accountability within the organization is reflected in managers' attention to specific features of texts when they review them. To ensure a "quality" product, managers at HCC respond to their subordinates' writing with particular attention to the goals and values of their divisions.

Consistency of the information in the text with what they already know or believe is an important feature of texts for managers at HCC. Managers, as Mintzberg (1978) has pointed out, build their own models of reality through frequent verbal interaction with others inside and outside the organization. In the Marketing division, managers compare report information about product sales and markets with their own knowledge and marketing models, which they have gained through experience in the writer's position, in other Marketing positions, and from their interaction with knowledgeable peers. In the M.I.S. division, managers appear to be less concerned with the consistency of the information; in this division, writers are the information experts.

By contrast, the managers in M.I.S. attend more closely to the effects of the text on readers outside their division. These readers are familiar people, internal "clients," who have little knowledge of M.I.S. technology. Because they have more verbal interaction with upper management than writers do, managers in the M.I.S. division have a good idea of the questions these readers will ask and the need to translate technical language into common language in order to convince them to approve a recommendation. Readers in the upper management levels of the Marketing division share the marketing language, and they are already familiar with a great deal of the information in reports from their experience in various marketing positions and from frequent external contacts. Whereas writers in the Marketing division must attend to the compatibility of their interpretations of the market situation with the mental models their managers have built from their experience, writers in the M.I.S.

division must attend to the particular evidence upper management and users require to justify changes in work procedures and purchases of equipment. At HCC, the review process for reports is an important opportunity for writers to discover what information is important to their readers.

In Marketing, much of the sales and market information arrives at HCC in the form of statistical tables from surveys conducted by outside agencies. Writers have to learn to select only the information which affects issues at HCC. In the M.I.S. division, information is usually collected by the writers from discussions with others in the organization and from technical sources such as systems experts and vendors. Managers in this division want to know now the information the writer has provided justifies the recommendation.

An important writing task at HCC is to abstract information from notes and remembered conversations of meetings and to transform this information into a written record that is consistent with the reader's mental model of organizational reality. Readers' views of organizational realities are constructed not only from meetings shared with the writer, but also those at which the writer was not present.

Writers' intentions for the text may or may not be congruent with the manager's intentions. Managers may perceive their roles as copy editors, as writers, as mediators, as guardians of the traditions of the HCC review process, as surrogate readers for upper management, as mentors to the writer, as image makers for their department. As illustrated in the Reading Events, the reader's roles shift along a continuum during the reading of a subordinate's report, but some roles appear to be more prevalent than others. The new HCC emphasis on team work may result in a stronger managerial focus on the role of mentor or coach during the review process of their subordinates' writing.

In both divisions, managers expect clear writing; that is, they expect not to have to reread sentences to understand them. Managers also attend to the organization of reports; comments about organization often reflect their views on how a report can be read efficiently by busy executives or how it can best persuade upper management to "buy" the recommendation. In the M.I.S. division, managers attend to the writer's diction and tone as elements of persuasion as well. Written guidelines exist for some reports, but not for others. In some cases, expectations for formats differ from manager to manager. In the Marketing division, writers will find written guidelines for some reports and approved models for others. Managers believe that using these formats and models helps to ensure a complete report. In the M.I.S. division, a general written guideline exists for recommendations, but managers often have their own preferences.

In summary, HCC's belief in the values of tradition, hierarchical authority, and quality products strongly influence managers' responses to their subordinates' writing. The review process with its attendant focus on quality reports that document decisions for ratification by upper management reflects these values. Because the Marketing and M.I.S. divisions have different mandates within HCC, they each tend to emphasize particular organizational goals and values.

Limits of the Study

Certainly the differences in managers' responses to their subordinates' texts in this study at HCC can be attributed, in part, to the research situation. For example, length of experience with HCC ranged from one day to several years. The texts read by the managers varied from a one-page memo to an eight-page market plan. Differences in the managers' responses may also be attributed to the individual personalities of the managers. Some readers tended to engage the text with more apparent emotion than others. Metaphors, analogies, and affective comments seemed to characterize some readings and not others. Clearly, perceptions of the task ("Please read and comment aloud") differed, since some readers read more of the text aloud than others. Some readers seemed more aware of my presence than others during their reading.

However, the similarities in the managers' responses lead me to believe that indeed the respond-aloud protocols did reveal important insights into what managers attend to while reading their subordinates' reports. Moreover, the recurring themes in the interviews, respond-aloud protocols, and documents (procedures, newsletters, etc.) and my field notes support my assertion that the managers' responses reflect the goals and values of both the organization and the two divisions.

From this study I have gained insights into what writers must know to be successful at HCC and how the organization's goals and values shape readers' responses.

Theoretical Implications of the Study

As noted in Chapter 2, no research literature on writing or reader response has reported detailed models of the relationship between an organization's goals and values and its managers' responses to subordinates' writing. In my study of the organization and 12 Reading Events there, I have concluded that Reading Events are shaped, in part, by the following characteristics of the organization, the text, the reader (the manager who reviews subordinates' texts before they are issued to other readers in the organization) and the writer:

- The reader's understanding of the organizational goals and values;
- the reader's understanding of particular goals and values within the organization's subcultures;
- the reader's knowledge of other intended readers' expectations and prior knowledge;
- the reader's conception of his or her role in the review process;
- the match or mismatch between the reader's

expectations and the writer's intentions for the report;

- the reader's perception of the writer's competence as a worker;
- the reader's previous experience as a writer whose reports were reviewed by a manager;
- the history of the text and its relationships to other texts and to oral discussions; and
- the reasons for the reading and the eventual destination of the text.

My conclusion that readers' responses clearly reflect the organization's goals and values is also supported by the work of several researchers (Bazerman, 1985; Smart, 1990; and Kleimann, in press, for example). These researchers have noted that readers attend to selective elements in the text depending on their disciplinary interests and work-related goals (Bazerman), and to their mental models of reality (Smart). Kleimann's study provides evidence that values of particular subcultures within an organization strongly influence the effectiveness of the review process. As well, the description of the Reading Event in my study clearly supports other researchers' observations that trust between the reader and the writer is an important element in their communications (for example, McGregor, 1967; Saunders et al, 1989).

The characteristics of the Reading Event, described above, suggest that "good" writing is more than a close match between the reader's expectations for the report and the writer's intentions. Whereas, Barabas' (1990) study suggests that "good" writing is defined by the congruency of the reader's expectations and the writer's intentions, she focussed mainly on writers' and readers' agreement on the importance of specific information in progress reports; her research did not investigate the relationships between readers' responses to writing and the organization's goals and values. Certainly, the readers at HCC attended to the information in the reports they were reading; their concern was not only whether it was present in the report, but also whether it accorded with their mental model of organizational realities. At HCC, "good" writing also depends on the several characteristics of the Reading Event described above. Denison (1990) describes the relationship between organizational culture and effectiveness in terms of an organization's financial performance. Although this study of readers' responses at HCC defines "good" writing in terms of the managers' acceptance of a report, there are clear similarities between the reasons for an organization's effectiveness, as described by Denison, and the characteristics of "good" writing at HCC. According to Denison, the difference between effective and less effective organizations is related to the degree of clarity in their missions, consistency between their goals and values and their practices, their ability to respond to internal and external clients, and the employees' degree of involvement with the organization. In this study of the relationship between the organization's culture and readers' responses to writing, "good" writing depends, in part, on 1) the match between the writers' and readers' understanding of the relationship between the report and the goals of the division and the organization (which compares to Denison's element of consistency), and 2) the reader's and writer's understanding of each other's goals and values (which compares to Denison's element of involvement). Denison's study suggests that decision makers need to understand the relationship between the organizational culture and its financial performance in order to ensure the organization's continued success. My study suggests that writers need to know a great deal about the organization and the readers (managers and intended readers) to produce "good" writing in that organization.

Implications for Teaching Writing

Learning to write on the job requires the ability to understand both the organizational culture and one's place in it. Whether managers can assist this learning through the review process or not depends upon how they perceive their role in the process (as copy editor or mentor, for example). Whereas much of their understanding of the organization's goals and values may be tacit knowledge as Sathe (1989) suggests, managers may be unable to articulate it for the writers. This situation implies that writers learn to write at work through the experience of working in the organization, rather than through explicit teaching.

Some, such as Anson and Forsberg (1990), have suggested that internships as writers in organizations may better prepare students for writing on the job. This study at HCC suggests that newcomers undergo a process of socialization which enables them to become members of the organization; whereas, student interns are unlikely to experience a similar learning situation because the organization does not have a stake in their acquiring membership. Learning the ways of the organization is a necessary step to becoming a "good" writer in that organizational context.

This study suggests that teaching writing must include teaching the goals and values of the organization in which the writing occurs. For university students, this means learning the goals and values of their chosen disciplines and of their particular universities. For teachers, this means reflecting on their institutions as particular cultures, with goals and values that affect their responses to students' writing.

I submit that writing in university should focus on teaching students how to write in their chosen disciplines and how to learn the ways of the organization (the particular university). These lessons will help students to learn how to learn in future social contexts.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study describes the ways in which an organization's goals and values shape readers' responses to writing; however, we need to know if the patterns of readers' responses to writing at HCC are similar to patterns in other organizations. As Heath (1982) suggests, we need a corpus of case studies from which generalizations may be made and theories of writing and reading can be enlarged.

Moreover, the findings of this research suggest that the review process provides an important opportunity for newcomers to gain an understanding of the organization's goals and values, so necessary for success as writers and as aspiring members of the community. We might ask, for example, how the review process contributes to a newcomer's socialization. How do managers' perceptions of their roles in the review process influence the learning processes of newcomers? How can managers learn to assist writers?

Whereas, organizations need to recognize the importance of the manager's role in the learning process of writers who are newcomers, universities need to recognize that institutional goals and values also shape the teachers' roles in the writing classroom.

REFERENCES

Afflerbach, P. & Johnston, P. (1984). Research methodology on the use of verbal reports in reading research. Journal of Reading Behavior, 16, 307-322.

Anderson, P. V. (1985). What survey research tells us about writing at work. In Odell & Goswami, pp. 3-83.

Andersen, P. (1986). Consciousness, cognition, and communication. Western Journal of Speech Communication, 50, 87-101.

Anson, C. M. (Ed.). (1989). Writing and response. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Anson C. M. (1986). Reading, writing, and intention. READER, 16, 20-35.

Anson, C. M. (1989). Response styles and ways of knowing. In Anson, pp. 332-366.

Anson, C. M. & Forsberg, L. L. (1990). Moving beyond the academic community. Written Communication, 7, 200-231.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In Michael Holquist (Ed.), The dialogic imagination (pp. 259-422). Austin: University of Austin Press.

Barabas, C. P. (1990). Technical writing in a corporate culture: A study of the nature of information. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Bartholomae, D. (1986). Inventing the university. Journal of Basic Writing, 5, 4-23.

Bazerman, C. (1985). Physicists reading physics. Written Communication, 2, 3-23.

Bazerman, C. (1988). Shaping written knowledge. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Bazerman, C. & Paradis, J. G. (Eds.) (1991). Textual dynamics of the professions: Historical and contemporary studies of writing in professional communities. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Beach, R. & Hynds, S. (1989). Research on the learning and teaching of literature: Selected Bibliography. Centre for the Learning and Teaching of Literature, University at Albany, State University of New York, Resource Series R.1, April 1989. [ED 315 764]

Beach, R. (1993). A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Berlin, J. (1988). Rhetoric and ideology in the classroom. College English, 50, 477-494.

Bizzell, P. (1987, June). What is a discourse community? Paper presented at Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, University Park, PA.

Bleich, D. (1980). Epistemological assumptions in the study of response. In D. Bleich, Subjective criticism (97-133). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. (Reprinted in Tompkins, pp. 134-163.)

Bocchi, J. (1988, March). The collective concept of audience in nonacademic settings. Paper presented at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, St. Louis, MO. [ED 293150]

Brown, J. L. (1988). A survey of writing practices in management. English Quarterly, 21, 7-18.

Bruffee, K. (1986). Social construction, language, and the authority of knowledge: A bibliographic essay. College English, 48, 773-790.

Burke, K. (1973). The philosophy of literary forms: Studies in symbolic action. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Butler-Kisber, L. (1988). Peer collaboration around educational tasks: A Classroom ethnography. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Clark, C. M. (1987). Computer storage and manipulation of field notes and verbal protocols: Three cautions. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 18, 56-58.

Clifford, J. (1983). On ethnographic authority. Representations, 1, 118-146.

Coe, R. (1987). An apology for form: or, Who took the form out of process? College English, 49, 13-28.

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1989). Research methods in education. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Cooper, M. and Holzman, M. (1983). Talking about protocols. College Composition and Communication, 34, 284-293.

Cooper, M. (1989). Why are we talking about discourse communities? In M. Cooper and M. Holzman, Writing as social action (pp. 202-220). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook Heinemann.

Couture, B. & Rymer, J. (1991). Discourse interaction between writer and supervisor: A primary collaboration in workplace Writing. In M. M. Lay & W. M. Karis (Eds.), Collaborative writing in industry: Investigations in theory and practice (pp. 87-108). Amityville, New York: Baywood.

Cross, G. A. (1990). A Bakhtinian exploration of factors affecting the collaborative writing of an executive letter of an annual report. Research in the Teaching of English, 24, 173-203.

Culler, J. (1975). Literary competence. In J. Culler, Structuralist poetics. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (Reprinted in Tompkins, pp. 101-117)

Dansereau, F. & Markham, S. E. (1987). Supervisor subordinate communication: Multiple levels of analysis. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. Roberts, & L. Porter (Eds.) Handbook of organizational communication (pp. 343-388). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Deal, T. & Kennedy, A. (1982). Corporate cultures: The rites & rituals of corporate life. Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley.

Denison, D. R. (1990). Corporate culture and organizational effectiveness. New York: Wiley and Sons.

Denzin, N. K. (1970). The research act. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

DeRemer, M. & Bracewell, R. (1991, April). The hidden task in subjective rating of student writing. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Devitt, A. J. (1991). Intertextuality in tax accounting: generic, referential, and functional. In Bazerman & Paradis, pp. 336-357.

Dias, P. X. (1987). Making sense of poetry: Patterns in the process. Ottawa: Canadian Council of Teachers of English.

Dias, P. X., Paré, A. W., Freedman, A. & Medway, P. (in progress). Writing in the university and writing in the workplace. (A team research project funded by a strategic grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

Diederich, P. B.(1974). Measuring growth in English. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Doheny-Farina, S. (1986). Writing in an emerging organization. Written Communication, 3, 15[illegible]-185.

Eccles, R. G. (1991). The performance measurement manifesto. Harvard Business Review, Jan.-Feb. 131-137.

Ede, L. & Lunsford, A. (1984). Audience addressed/ audience invoked: The role of audience in composition theory and pedagogy. College Composition and Communication, 35, 155-171.

Faigley, L. (1985). Nonacademic writing: The social perspective. In Odell & Goswami, pp. 231-248.

Faigley, L. (1986). Competing theories of process: A critique and a proposal. College English, 48, 527-542.

Fairhurst, G. T. (1993). When the rest of the organization talks total quality. Management Communication Quarterly, 6, 331-371.

Fish, S. E. (1970). Literature in the reader: Affective stylistics. New Literary History, 2, 1, 123-162. (Reprinted in Tompkins, pp. 70-100.)

Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. Psychological Bulletin, 51, 327-358.

Flower, L. (1979). Writer-based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing. College English, 41, 19-37.

Frake, C. O. (1972). How to ask for a drink in Subanum. In Giglioli, pp. 87-94.

Freedman, A. (1987). Learning to write again: Discipline-specific writing at university. Carleton Papers in Applied Language Studies, 4, 95-115.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). Studies in ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Garvin, D. A. (1988). Managing quality. New York: Free Press.

Gee, J. P. (1988). The legacies of literacy: From Plato to Freire through Harvey Graff. Harvard Educational Review, 58, 195-213.

Gere, A. R. (1980). Written composition: Toward a theory of evaluation. College English, 42, 44-58.

Geisler, C. (1991). Toward a sociocognitive model of literacy: Constructing mental models in a philosophical conversation. In Bazerman and Paradis, pp. 171-187.

Giddens, A. (1984). The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structure. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Giglioli, J. P. (Ed.)(1972). Language and social context New York: Penguin.

Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Goetz, J. P. & LeCompte, M. D. (1981). Ethnographic research and the problem of data reduction. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 12, 51-70.

Goetz, J. P. & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. New York: Academic Press.

Gumperz, J. (1968). The speech community. International encyclopedia of the social sciences (pp.381-386). New York: MacMillan. (Reprinted in J. P. Giglioli pp. 219-231.

Haas, C. & Flower, L. (1988). Rhetorical reading strategies and the construction of meaning. College Composition and Communication, 39, 167-183.

Harris, J. (1989). The idea of community in the study of writing. College Composition and Communication, 40, 11-22.

Heath, S. B. (1982). Ethnography in education: Defining the essentials. In P. Gilmore & A. A. Glatthorn (Eds.), Children in and out of school (pp. 33-55). Washington,DC: Centre for Applied Linguistics.

Herzberg, B. (1986). The politics of discourse communities. Annual Conference on Composition and Communication, New Orleans, March.

Huot, B. (1990). The literature of direct writing assessment: Major concerns and prevailing trends. Review of Educational Research, 60, 237-263.

Hymes, D. H. 91962). The ethnography of speaking. In T. Gladwin & W. C. Sturtevant (Eds.), Anthropology and human behavior (pp. 15-53). Anthropological Society of Washington.

Iser, W. (1974). The Implied reader: Patterns in communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins university Press.

Iser, W. (1980). The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach. In Tompkins, pp. 50-69.

Kahn, R. & Mann, F. (1969). Developing research partnerships. In G. J. McCall & J. L. Simmons (Eds.), Issues in participant observation: A text and a reader (pp. 45-52). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Kanter, R. M. (1983). The change masters. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Kantrow, A. M. (1987). The constraints of corporate tradition. New York: Harper and Row.

Kleimann, S. (in press). The review process and cultural influence. In Spilka, in press.

Kotter, J. P.(1982). What effective managers really do. Harvard Business Review, Nov.-Dec., 156-167

Langer, J. A. (1986). Reading, writing, and understanding: An analysis of the construction of meaning. Written Communication, 3, 219-267.

Langer, J. A. (1990). The process of understanding: Reading for literary and informative purposes. Research in the Teaching of English, 24, 229-260.

Lave, J. (1991). Situating learning in communities of practice. In L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine, & S. D. Teasley (Eds.) (1991). Perspectives on socially shared cognition (pp. 63-82). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

LeCompte, M. D. & Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. Review of Educational Research, 52, 31-60.

LeFevre, K. B. (1987). Invention as a social act. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (1964). Analyzing social settings. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Louis, M. R. (1983). Organizations as culture-bearing milieux. In Pondy & Dandridge, pp. 39-54.

MacKinnon, J. (in press). Becoming a rhetor: The development of on-the-job writing ability. In Spilka, in press.

MacLean, M. (1986). A framework for analyzing reader-text interactions. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 19, 16-21.

McCarthy, L. P.(1989). A stranger in strange lands: A college student writing across the disciplines. Research in the Teaching of English, 21, 233-265.

McGregor, D. (1967). The professional manager. New York: McGraw Hill.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Miller, C. R. (1984). Genre as social action. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 70, 151-157.

Mintzberg, H. (1990). The manager's job: Folklore and fact. Harvard Business Review, Mar-Apr, 163-176.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). Research interviewing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Moffett, J. (1983). Reading and writing as meditation. Language Arts, 60, 558-567.

Morgan, G., Frost, P. J. & Pondy, L. R. (1983). Organizational symbolism. In Pondy & Dandridge, pp. 3-35.

Morgan, G. (1986). Images of organization. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Morris, C. W. (Ed.) (1962). Works of George Herbert Mead: Mind, self, & society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Myers, G. (1991). Stories and styles in two molecular biology review articles. In Bazerman & Paradis, pp. 45-75.

Ochs, E. & Schieffelin, B. B. (1979). Developmental pragmatics. New York: Academic Press.

Odell, L., Goswami, D. and Herrington, A. (1983). The Discourse-based interview: A procedure for exploring the tacit knowledge of writers in non-academic settings. In P. Mosenthal, L. Tamor, and S. A. Walmsley (Eds), Research on writing; Principles and methods (pp. 221-236). New York: Longman.

Odell, L. & Goswami, D. (Eds.) (1985). Writing in nonacademic settings. New York: Guilford Press.

Ong, W. J. (1982). Orality and literacy. New York: Methuen.

Paradis, J., Dobrin, D., & Miller, R. (1985). Writing at Exxon ITD: Notes on the writing environment of an R & D organization. In Odell & Goswami, pp. 282-307.

Paré, A. W. (1991). Ushering "audience" out: From oration to conversation. Textual Studies in Canada, 1, 45-64.

Park, D. B. (1982). The meanings of "audience." College English, 44, 247-257.

Perry, W. G., Jr. (1968). Patterns of development in thought and values of students in a liberal arts college: A validation of a scheme. Cambridge: Bureau of Study Council, Harvard University, [ED 024 315].

Pondy, L. R. & Dandridge, T. C. (Eds.) (1983). Organizational symbolism. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Purves, A. C. (1984). The teacher as reader: an anatomy. College English, 46, 259-263.

Purves, A. C. (1988). Research on written composition: A response to Hillocks' report. Research in the Teaching of English, 22, 104-108.

Reid, I. (1990). Reading as framing, writing as reframing. In M. Hayhoe & S. Parker (Eds.), Reading and response (pp. 49-61). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). The reader, the text, the poem. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1985). Viewpoints: Transaction versus interaction--a terminological rescue operation. Research in the Teaching of English, 19, 96-108.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). Schemata: the building blocks of cognition. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer (Eds.), Theoretical issues in reading comprehension (pp. 33-58). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rush, J. C. & Evers, F. T. (1986). Making the match. Montreal: Corporate-Higher Education Forum

Russel, D. R. (1988). The search for traditions. College English, 50, 437-443.

Sathe, V. (1989). Implications of corporate culture: A manager's guide to action. In L. A. Mainiero & C. T. Tromley (Eds.), Developing managerial skills in organizational behavior: Exercises, cases, and readings (pp. 392-407). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Saunders, D. M., Knight, V., Sheppard, B. H., & Roth, J. (1989). Informal open door policies: The dynamics of employees voicing concerns, suggestions, and complaints. Unpublished manuscript.

Schein, E. H. (1971). The individual, the organization, and the career: A conceptual scheme. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 7, 401-426.

Schein, E. H. (1985). Organizational culture and leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-bass.

Schein, E. H. (1987). Organizational socialization and the profession of management. In E. H. Schein (Ed.), The art of managing human resources (pp. 83-100). New York: Oxford Press.

Scholes, R. E. (1985). Textual power. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Smart, G. (1990, October). Genre as social process: A financial institution's response to its senior readers' expectations. Paper presented at the Conference on Contextual Literacy, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, October 13.

Smircich, L. & Calás, M. B. (1987). Organizational culture: A critical assessment. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. Roberts, & L. Porter (Eds.), Handbook of organizational communication (pp. 228-263). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Smircich, L. & Chesser, R. J. (1981). Superiors' and subordinates' perceptions of performance: Beyond disagreement. Academy of Management Journal, 24, 198-205.

Smith, F. (1982). Writing and the writer. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spilka, R. (1990). Orality and literacy in the workplace: Process and text based strategies for multiple-audience adaptation. Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 4, 44-67.

Spiro, R. J. (1980). Constructive processes in prose comprehension and recall. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer (Eds.), Theoretical issues in reading comprehension (pp. 245-278). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spradley, J. P. & McCurdy, D. W. (1972). The Cultural experience: Ethnography in a complex society. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press Inc.

Stamp, G. H. & Knapp, M. L. (1990). The construct of intent in interpersonal communication. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 76, 282-299.

Suleiman, S. R. & Crosman, I. (Eds.) (1980). The reader in the text: Essays on audience and interpretation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sutton, R. I. & Louis, M. R. (1987). How selecting and socializing newcomers influences insiders. Human Resource Management, 26, 347-361.

Swales, J. M. (1990). Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M. (1992, April). Re-thinking genre: Another look at discourse community effects. Paper presented at the Colloquium on Rethinking Genre, Ottawa, Carleton University Centre for Rhetorical Studies.

Terkel, S. (1972). Working. New York: Avon Books.

Tompkins, J. P. (Ed.) (1980). Reader-response criticism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Vipond, D. & Hunt, R. A. (1984). Point-driven understanding: Pragmatic and cognitive dimensions of literary reading. Poetics, 13, 261-277.

Waern, Y. (1979). Thinking aloud during reading. Rep. Dep. Psychol. 546: Stockholm, University of Stockholm.

Walsh, J. P. & Ungson, G. R. (1991). Organizational memory. Academy of Management Review, 16, 57-91.

Winsor, D. A. (1990). Engineering writing/writing engineering. College Composition and Communication, 41, 58-70.

Yates, J. & Orlikowski, W. J. (1992). Genres of organizational communication: A structurational approach to studying communication and media. Academy of Management Review, 17, 2, 299-326.

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

September 10th, 1990

Dear Writers and Readers at [HCC]:

Because written communications are important in your daily work, I would like to interview you for my doctoral research on ways to make written communications more efficient and effective.

[The Manager of Training and Development] in Human resources suggested you might be interested in participating in my study on internal written communications in the workplace. My study will focus on how writing is accomplished, how it is read, and how it functions in work-related situations. By participating, you will help us to expand our current theories on writing and reading, and you will gain new insights into your own writing and reading processes. As well, you will have full access to the research findings.

My research requires interviews with writers of short internal reports and readers of these same reports. Each participant will be interviewed three times: first, to discuss writing, reading, and job responsibilities; second, to focus on the writing or reading of a specific report; and third, to discuss the research findings. Each interview will normally require about 45 minutes.

I do want to assure you that I am aware of the constraints on your time and will plan to make the interviews as efficient as possible. The information you provide will be confidential; all names and identifying features will be removed from the research report, thesis, and published papers.

My training and experience combine nursing, English studies, information science, and teaching. As a founding member of the McGill Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing, I have been assisting in the development and teaching of writing courses to students in all disciplines. Your participation in this research will help us to design effective writing courses and workshops at McGill.

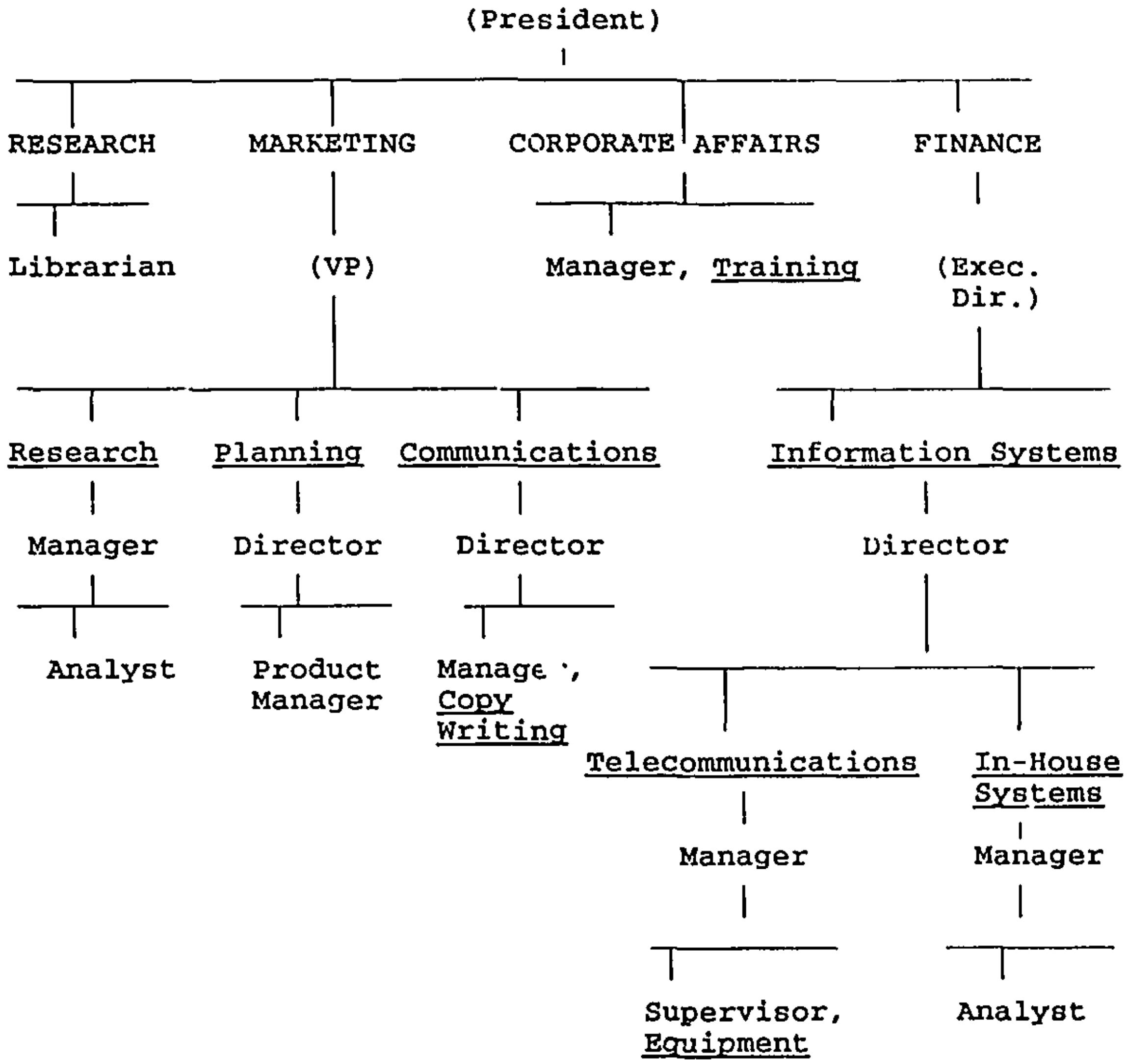
Please contact [Manager of Training and Development] if you would like to participate in my study. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at McGill (398-6964) or leave a message with Louise Murphy at McGill (398-6960). I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Jane Ledwell-Brown

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT LOCATION IN THE ORGANIZATION



Note 1: This figure identifies the positions of the participants, not the numbers who participated. For example, one Market Research Analyst position is identified here, but 3 people in this position were participants.

Note 2 : ( ) indicates positions of people who were not participants in this study.

APPENDIX C

RECORD OF SCHEDULED INTERVIEWS, SITE VISITS, AND READING EVENTS

1990
July, 12, - key contact
August, 30 - key contact
October 5 - key contact
November 13 -writer/writer/key contact/key contact/
November 14 -reader/ **Reading Event**
November 15 - reader/key contact
November 22 - writer/reader
November 30 - key contact/writer/ writer

1991
January 18 - writer/ reader/ **Reading Event**
January 24 - key contact/ reader
February 7 - site visit
February 12 - key contact
February 19 - site visit
February 26 - reader/writer/ key contact
March 1 - writer/ reader/ **Reading Event**/writer/ reader/ **Reading Event**
March 5 - site visit
March 12 - key contact
March 19 - key contact
March 26 - site visit
March 28 - reader
April 2 - writer/ writer / key contact
April 16 - key contact
April 18 - writer
April 22 - reader/ **Reading Event** / reader/ writer
April 26 - writer/ reader/ **Reading Event**
May 2 - key contact
May 3 - reader
May 7 - writer/reader
May 14 -site visit
May 16 -site visit
May 23 -site visit
May 28 - key contact/ key contact
May 30 - site visit
June 4 - key contact/ writer/ reader/ **Reading Event**
June 6 - writer
June 10 -reader /**Reading Event**

June 13 - reader/ **Reading Event/ Reading Event**
June 20 -site visit
June 21 -key contact/ writer
June 27 - writer
July 4 -writer / reader/ **Reading Event**
July 5 - reader/ **Reading Event**
August 27 -key contact
September 18 -key contact
September 23 -site visit
October 2 -reader
November 4 -key contact
November 20 -reader
November 22 - writer
December 3 - writer
December 5 -reader
December 10 -writer
December 11 -writer
December 13 -reader
December 17 - reader
December 19 - reader / reader

1992
January 8 - writer
January 28 -key contact
February 7 -research report to participants
June 12 - key contact
July 13 - key contact
July 15 - reader
August 10 -reader

Note: These visits were recorded during the research. Scheduled appointments with key contacts, writers, and readers often included time spent in my office on site. Site visits also included informal, non-scheduled interviews with participants I met in the halls, cafeteria, etc. No records were kept of the telephone conversations with participants.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR READERS AND WRITERS

(Note: All first interviews began with an explanation of my research and this statement: Please note that all the information you provide will be treated as confidential and you will have the opportunity to review your contribution before it appears in any report.)

Background Information on Writers and Readers

- Schooling
- Previous work experience
- Current position and responsibilities
- Estimated time for writing and reading at work
- Type of documents written and read
- Writing and reading purposes and methods
- Writing outcomes and response
- Relationship of writing to other documents, meetings, messages on mail system
- Functions of internal written communications
- Perceived value of writing in the company
- Final destinations of writing
- Relationship to writer or reader
- Readers)What is your role in the review process? What kind of feedback do you give to writers?
- (Writers) What is your manager's role in the review process? What kind of feedback do you usually receive?

Post-Writing Interviews with Writers

- What prompted the writing assignment?
- Is the report tied to other documents?
- What was the reader's input into the situation or document?
- How important is the document to the situation and the mission of this department?
- Have you written documents similar to this?
- Who will read this document and how well do you know them?
- What reader were you thinking about as you wrote it/
- What roles will each reader play as she or he reads it?
- How do you know what the readers will be looking for?
- What do you want this document to say and do for each of the readers? Why? have you accomplished this?
- What is the main message?
- How did you write it and how long did it take? Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- How will the readers respond/ How do you know?
- Will you have comments, suggestions from the readers?
- What kind? How will they be conveyed? What will you do as a result of these comments?
- What will happen as a result of this document?
- What is the life cycle of this document?

Post-Reading Interview With Readers

- What were you expecting from this document? Why? How does the writer know this?
- Were there any surprises?
- What role did you adopt as you read it? Why?
- Who are the other readers? What will they be looking for? How do you know?
- What is the main message in this document?
- What do you want it to say to the other readers? Why?
- What prompted this document?
- Is it tied to other documents?
- What was your input into the situation or document?
- How important is it to the mission of the department?
- Will you have any comments, suggestions for the writer? What kind? How will you convey them?
- What do you expect to happen as a result of your comments?
- What will happen as a result of the document?
- What is the life cycle of the document?
- How will you know the outcome of the document?

Note 1: Other subjects and questions arose during these interviews as I became aware of the participants' particular situations and as they became comfortable with me.

Note 2: The participants were also asked to recall a critical incident about writing or reading -usually sometime after the first interviews.

Note 3: The verification interviews focused on specific topics in each participant's transcript; these are recorded in the transcripts of the verification interviews.

APPENDIX E

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING ALOUD

(Note: Readers were assured that I was not evaluating their reading, that I was only interested in what parts of the text they paid attention to and why.)

"Approach the reading of this document as you normally would and respond aloud as you read."

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING AS YOU READ?

APPENDIX F

CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS, AND CODING DECISIONS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FIELD NOTES

The following codes categorize the participants' comments about actions to take or avoid ("prescriptions") in order to achieve "desired outcomes" in written texts as explained in Chapter 3. The comments were selected as "prescriptions" if they reflected an underlying assertion that some action or event would promote "desired outcomes." For example, the comment "I try to be to the point" is considered as an assertion that being concise promotes a positive outcome for writing in this context. Most of the comments assume variations of the following statement forms: 1) I do or do not do x; She or he does or does not do x; I look for x; I, he, she, or we want x; You have to do x. "desired outcomes" usually form part of the comments; in some cases, they are implied.

Comments are categorized with codes for "prescriptions" and for "desired outcomes". For example, the prescription, "I stress -stay within the format" (coded as a comment about formats and models [FM]) is accompanied by a comment that describes the reason for staying within the format, "because the worst thing you can do in this kind of exercise is choose a format so drastically different that no one can read it"; this outcome is coded as a comment about the providing texts that promote efficient reading [EF]. Thus, this participant is saying that adhering to the traditional format (the prescription) will avoid writing an unreadable text. In many cases, a prescription is accompanied by more than one outcome. For example, adherence to report formats not only helps to ensure a readable text, it might also make writing more efficient.

Because the comments derive from unstructured interviews, distinct boundaries between comments are rare. Codes are therefore applied to statements that reflect any of the variations listed above. The first set of codes below describes "desired outcomes"; the second set describes actions that writers should take or avoid to achieve the "desired outcomes" (each set of codes is listed in order of the frequency of occurrence in the data).

Desired Outcomes

[AT] Acceptable Texts

Comments in this category pertain to the production of a text that conforms to written or understood guidelines, criteria set by individual managers, or standards for quality attributed to the organization. These standards include format specifications (headings and content for specific reports); text quality (lack of errors in grammar and spelling, lack of typos,); and physical layout (punctuation, graphs, and tables). Examples of comments in this category are "But the first time you're writing it, it's a real guessing game as to what they want" and "I know just from being here a few years that it's Purpose, Background, Recommendation."

[AR] Action from Readers

In this category, comments refer to the acceptance of a recommendation by upper management; the agreement of a colleague, supervisor, or group of people; or the compliance with a request made to others. Examples are "Normally recommendations go through five revisions before they're signed" and "He has to agree with what I'm writing -because if he doesn't he won't put it in circulation."

[JF] Justification of Expenditures

The text convinces readers that a plan is justified, all objections are met and questions answered. Comments in this category usually refer to texts that justify to the upper management the spending of resources. Examples include "If there's no business advantage to doing it -then why do we want to do it?" and "The information was really well put together and providing convincing evidence that we had a very cost-effective product that they should reimburse at the government level."

[EF] Writing and Reading Efficiency

This category describes comments about writers producing a document quickly and readers being able to find the information they need quickly. Comments in this category include "It's much easier just to go and look at that example and follow the format if it was successful - than just to spin your wheels in trying to reinvent the format" and "If you can answer those two things -and, particularly, capture it in the first couple of sentences."

[CR] Credibility

Texts have credibility with the readers. Comments in this category refer to the goal of gaining credibility or avoiding a loss of credibility through a written report. Comments in this category include "[My reports] used to come back with a lot of changes, but now very seldom -most of my reports go through without any problems" and "And you look bad [when a report is rejected by upper management], you know [the director] really felt bad about that."

Prescriptions

[RP] Understand the Review Process

This category describes comments that focus on the role of the managerial review process. Sample comments include "It's not a matter of somebody correcting somebody else, it's a matter of all of us trying to apply whatever brainpower we happen to possess to put together as good a job as we can" and "If she's new to the job, she would give it to me first and I would review it -to see if things would make sense to the product managers."

[FM] Use the Standard Report Formats and Approved Models

Comments in this category focus on the use of specified formats (guidelines for headings and sections of a report) and existing reports as models. Examples include "It's pretty much standard format -that's the way I like it" and "I just followed the format that they used -knowing this was the official way of doing it."

[ST] Attend to style

This category includes comments about choosing words carefully, editing out grammar and spelling errors, organizing ideas in a coherent manner, using graphs and tables, and revising for clarity and conciseness. Comments in this category include "They would read it because it's a few pages, it's not a thing this thick" and "In this case, the director wanted them in point form."

[IN] Collect Sufficient and Appropriate Information

Comments in this category refer to the need to do the background work before writing a report and to the need to select appropriate information. Comments in this category include "I think I put a lot of emphasis on that -how was the information gathered and what's its value to the decision makers," "Stay away from suppositions -deal with the facts," and "When you write something, you really have to research whatever you're going to talk about."

[RS] Anticipate the Reader's Situation

Comments in this category refer to the benefits of choosing the right time to send a recommendation or to the need to consider the reader's circumstances. For example, the comment "The last few days before Christmas -writing justifications -they get accepted a lot faster" refers to the probability of getting justification reports accepted more easily during a period when most people want to get work finished before the holidays. The comment "But it can't be salesmanship of the glossy type, because most of us have been through all that" reflects the circumstance that many readers have been salespeople during their careers with the company.

[AC] Establish Authorial Credibility

This category contains comments that focus on the place of the writer's (manager's or department's) credibility in writing outcomes. Examples of comments in this category are "If you haven't sold yourself as an individual before, they won't even read it" and "The longer I've been here, the less that's [manager's review of his memos and reports] been happening.

[PT] Prepare the Terrain

Comments in this category refer to the benefits of talking to readers in order to explore their opinions and negotiate an informal agreement before confronting them with a written text. Comments in this category include "You don't take them by surprise" and "It makes for better compliance from people if we agree verbally and then confirm it in a memo." This category also includes events outside the writer's control that intervene to change the reading circumstances. For example, the president's last-minute request for certain equipment provided support for an equipment recommendation already in preparation.

APPENDIX G

CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS, AND CODING DECISIONS FOR RESPOND-ALOUD PROTOCOLS

As described in Chapter 3, I have derived the categories below from the viewpoint of the reader's dialogue with the text. The reader's comments in the protocols reflect the interactions between the reader's thoughts and feelings and the writer's thoughts and feelings as expressed through his or her text. To capture the dynamic nature of this interaction, I have created the categories from the implicit questions the readers seem to be asking themselves as they read. (The categories, including the implicit questions, are described in B below.)

A. Definitions and Coding Decisions

The transcribed respond-aloud protocols contain the following kinds of verbalizations: text read aloud from a document, the reader's comments, and the researcher's interjections. The reader's comments occur before and after reading parts of the text aloud or silently and include assertions, unfinished phrases, and false starts. The protocols include the first remarks made by the reader once the text is in hand and the final remarks made by the reader before he or she puts the document aside. The ensuing discussion between the researcher and the reader, although it may focus on aspects of the text or situation, is not considered part of the respond-aloud protocol. I have defined a comment, for the purposes of coding, as an assertion and any qualifying or explanatory text that accompanies the assertion which may or may not be embedded in a stream of speech. A stream of speech begins after a period of reading aloud or silent reading and ends when the reader resumes reading. There may be more than one comment in a stream of speech between reading periods and these are coded according to the subject of the assertion. The following is an example of a stream of speech and the reader's comments (text read aloud is enclosed in quotation marks; the researcher's interjections are enclosed in square brackets; comments are numbered; the stream of speech is bounded by *): "... an average premium price of $ Canadian or x% over the current minibag" *-1. so, that's an important piece of information -2. I tend to read documents with a highlighter"

Coding Decisions

1. I have placed category codes at the beginning of each comment.

2. If an assertion is paraphrased or repeated within the same stream of speech, I have coded it only once. For example, the following assertions count as one incidence of the category, missing information, "My first plan of attack is to look at the table of contents -and just skim over -I look through the different elements."

4. When a single assertion appears to fall into more than one category, base the decision on the qualifying information. For example, if the reader's comment is "He's got it in the right order here," the focus might be seen as organization or consistency. Since the qualifying information belongs in the consistency category ("right order"), the entire assertion should be categorized under

<u>consistency</u>.

NOTE: This decision accounts for the fact that the comment tells more about the reader's attention to consistency of the order in the text with his own standards for arrangement than it tells about the nature of the organization of the text. This comment was made by a manager reading a market research report. The are no written guidelines for these reports, but there is an understanding that the report will have ceratin sections in a particular order. The headings and order vary somewhat according to the manager. There is no explicit guideline, nor is there a widely known understanding of how information should be ordered within the sections. The 'right' order in this comment refers to the manager's belief that reports should conform to the marketing philosophy where the customer comes first. Thus, the manager is commenting on the fact that the writer specified what the customers want and then specified how the company was meeting those needs. In the first part of the text, the writer had reversed the order of ideas. Thus, the comment reflects the reader's attention to the text's adherence to or consistency with his belief that reports should reflect the marketing philosophy.

5. Where the qualifying information comprises a second assertion, I have applied two codes. For example, the comment "He's gone through some methodology -which is good" comprises two assertions and requires two codes, <u>writer's intentions</u> and <u>consistency</u>.

6. In some cases, the qualifying assertion is a single word. For example, the following comment comprises two assertions: "Okay, I read that on the first page,too -good." In this case, I have coded the two assertions two

categories, organization and consistency.

7. When a second assertion in the same stream of speech falls into the same category as the first, but is not a paraphrase, then I have coded the two assertions as one. For example, the comment, "Issues and Actions is a key component, so it's good that that's in here" is comprised of two assertions in the same category, consistency. I have coded these as one.

8. If an assertion is paraphrased or repeated in a second stream of speech, I have coded the original and the paraphrase both. For example, a reader may comment "It's all here, then read aloud again, then comment "It's a complete report." Although the two comments are essentially the same, I have coded them twice because they appear to be responses to different parts of the text.

NOTE: The categorization of comments requires familiarity with the entire protocol, the entire context of the Reading Event, and, the organizational context. For example, to code one comment, one must often refer to the comment that precedes or follows it. An example is the comment, "My first plan of attack is to look at the table of contents - and just skim over -I look through the different elements." At first glance, this comment seems to belong in the category organization, because the reader is talking about the table of contents. However, the following comments of this reader, as he continues to skim the table of contents, refer to the completeness of the report, "It appears to be quite a complete report," and have been coded as missing information (a category of comments that pertains to the sufficiency of information).

B. Categories

Note: The letters in square brackets below indicate the code abbreviations used in Appendix H, which provides examples of coded protocols.

CONSISTENCY [CON]

[Reader's Implicit Question : Does it accord with what I know or believe?]

This category applies to comments that express the reader's agreement, disapproval, or questioning of the writer's text. In effect, the reader is saying, "That makes sense to me" or "That doesn't make sense to me." The readers seem to compare what they are reading in the text with their prior knowledge, experience or beliefs. An example of a comment in this category is "I don't think that is technically correct." Here the reader is comparing a piece of information in the text with his own knowledge. The comment, "I know what we're trying to say," suggests that the reader is comparing the text with the message he and the writer agreed upon in an earlier discussion. Short comments, such as "good" or "okay," in which the reader is agreeing with or accepting the text, also suggest that the text accords with his or her vision of reality. Thus, comments in this category reflect readers' attention to the accord between the text and their own knowledge, beliefs, and expectations.

EFFECTS ON READERS [REA]

[Reader's Implicit Question : How will this text affect other readers? (How does this text affect me?)]

Comments in this category reflect participant readers' attention to the effects of the text on a reader, who may be themselves or a future reader. Some comments express the participant reader's own reaction to the text: "Right now, I'm wondering -I'm kind of all over the place, because I don't know where to focus." Other comments in this category reflect the reader taking on the role of a future reader:"If I'm Pauline, who's the person who's going to receive this -I'm in the middle of a day just like this when I've picked it up off my desk -is this going to help me?" Other comments suggest a more distant future reader: "So, people will ask -well, why do you need two?" All the comments in this category suggest the participant reader's attention is directed to how the text will be received or to the immediate effect of the text on the participant reader.

MISSING INFORMATION [MIS]

[Reader's Implicit Question : Should the information be expanded or reduced? Is it complete?]

This category reflects readers' attention to the sufficiency of the information in the text. Most comments suggest that more information would clarify or complete an idea; few comments suggest that information be reduced. Some comments confirm that the information is complete. Some comments in this category are expressed as wishes: "I would like to know how many" or "I would have liked to be able to see what he's addressing in the Purpose." Others are expressed as direct questions to the text: "What about what happened before". Some comments are simply assertions that something is missing: "He didn't do a total there -so, that's something that will have to be addressed" or "I don't see a Scope statement here." In a few cases, the comments suggested that information be deleted: "'Benefits' -out -don't need it."

WRITER'S INTENTIONS [INT]
[Reader's Implicit Question : What is the writer doing here?]

Comments in this category reflect the reader's attention to the writer's strategies for creating the text. In effect, the reader is inferring the writer's intentions. Comments in this category often reflect readers' attempts to make sense of the text as they read. This activity has been recognized by reading researchers as a common reading strategy. Drawing on the work of Solomon Asch, I.A. Richards, and others, Linda Flower notes: "Inferences about the writer's intentions appear to be an essential building block -one that readers use to construct a meaningful text" (p. 539). A typical comment in this category that reflects the reader's attention to making sense of the text is: "Again, that's stressing the second point he's got." This comment suggests that the reader is connecting one part of the text with another and keeping track of the ideas in the text. In addition to the search for meaning, the managers in this study, who are reading subordinates' work for the purpose of review, may also be appraising the writers' handling of the communication situation surrounding the report. For example, the comment "She always leaves the door open on all her memos -to come back to her, if anything is not clear" seems to suggest that the manager is observing the communication style of her subordinate. Some comments in this category suggest that the reader is attending to the rhetorical strategies of the writer: "He's not enlarging very much on this -so, it must be a shortfall from the initial implementation and he doesn't really want to go into it too much."

STYLE [STY]

[Reader's Implicit Question : Is this sentence or information clearly and appropriately phrased?]

Comments in this category reflect the reader's attention to the way the writer has combined words to express an idea. In addition to comments that confirm the clarity of the text, such as "It's very clear," some comments focus on the reader's lack of understanding at specific places in the text. For example, typical comments in this category are "What does she mean by that?" "I'm confused," and "I'm not following this part here. Sometimes the comments are suggestions for adding or deleting words to clarify an idea: "I'd probably add 'overall'." Sometimes comments in this category include the writer's tone: "She has bluntly stated the problem" or "So, he's using some strong words." Comments in this category sometimes focus on the use of a specific word: "A few of the words she uses an awful lot is 'currently,' 'presently,' and 'moreover' -I try to reduce those as much as possible -not that they're necessarily bad -it's just that it's overkill."

MESSAGE [MESS]

[Reader's Implicit Question : What does this mean?]

Comments in this category reflect the reader's attention to the message conveyed by the text. In effect, these comments express what the text or writer is saying: "At least he's telling them -as of now, it's okay." Some comments in this category are suggestions for revising the message: "Instead of saying,'here it is' -we could have said, 'Some of the things we found interesting are these and these -which we should discuss further when we're planning our specific programs'." This category differs from writer's intentions because it includes a paraphrase of the actual message. The category, writer's intentions, contains comments that simply express the writer's actions. For instance the comment above would have been categorized as writer's intentions if it had been expressed this way: "Instead of just informing them, we could also have encouraged their cooperation."

ORGANIZATION [ORG]

Reader's Implicit Question : Does this information belong here?]

This category contains comments that address the arrangement of information in the text. The comments are characterized by adverbs of place and time such as 'first', 'then', and 'next.' Examples of comments in this category are "So, I would have liked to have seen maybe this part first," "So, then he breaks it down," and "So, we kind of say that better -focus it better under 'Costs'." This category differs from Format because the comments focus on the arrangement of the parts; whereas, comments in the Format category focus on the names and order of standard headings.

FORMAT [FOR]

[Reader's Implicit Question : Does this follow the standard format?]

There are few comments in this category, and they refer to standard procedures for specific reports. For example, the Marketing Plan is a standard procedure for the marketing of a new product or a new formulation of an existing product. For this document, there are written guidelines which list the headings to be used and the contents of each section. In some cases, there are no written guidelines, but the traditional approach to any memo or report is to organize the text in this order: Purpose, Recommendation, and Discussion. Some participants use the term 'standard procedures,' some use 'format,' and some use 'the HCC style.' Therefore, comments about format are categorized under Format when they contain the word 'format'. Examples of comments in this category are "I see the thing's broken down into the standard format" and "It's got everything in here, you know -it's a standard format."

MECHANICS [MEC]

[Reader's Implicit Question : Is this an error in grammar, spelling, or punctuation?]

Comments in this category are few. They reflect the reader's attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Examples of these comments are "That should be the marketing rationale -typical," "To treat? adopt? -probably to treat and adopt," and "That's spelled 'hilites' -I'm not sure if that's right."

VISUALS [VIS]

[Reader's Implicit Question : Is the chart or layout useful?]

Comments in this category reflect the reader's attention to the visual elements of the text, such as charts, tables, and printer fonts. Typical comments in this category are "It's a good chart," "The charts attached help in visualizing -as they say -a picture is worth a thousand words," and "She's chosen a certain font on the printer -and it looks very nice."

APPENDIX H

EXAMPLES OF CODED RESPOND-ALOUD PROTOCOLS

" " text read aloud

*** text read silently

{ } researcher's observations

[ ] researcher's interjections and substitutions for information that would identify the participants

/ / code boundary

Codes: consistency [CON]; effects on readers [REA]; missing information [MIS]; writers' intentions [INT]; style [STY]; message [MESS]; organization [ORG]; format [FOR]; mechanics [MEC]; visuals [VIS].

Example 1

*** -**STY** so far, I think it's very clear [unhuh]/**MIS** I'd like to know how many -although, it's not really that important/**REA** -umm, I'm questioning {flips through report} -umm, I'm making notes now, because -if I was reading it from the receivership side -these are the figures that interest me [unhuh]/ -**CON** and what I'm thinking is here, he said that -this study -which happens to be perecptions of clients [unhuh -shows that less than [50% are using the product] -which compares to the -another study which we had ... **CON** -and it's surprising that this number is so low -given that/ *** **ORG** [Can I remind you to think out loud?] oh -sure -okay -ah -I'm just going into -he's dividing it into three questions/**CON** -and when we had talked about setting this out, we'd looked at that -I'm just trying to recall -what we had talked about actually / **MIS** -ah *** -here, I'm thinking, I'd like to see the figures {writes note on page}

Example 2

/**REA** I'm starting to want to take control,/ **ORG** because it's not of the structure [unhuh] -I'm comfortable with -I don't know what structure I want yet, but/ *** **CON** fantastic! -that's great/**ORG** -where does it fit? -I don't know yet/ *** **STY** it's about as subtle as a bulldozer/*** **REA** -it gives them a reason -first -first of all, it gives them a reason -it tells them that there's hidden costs/ *** **MIS** -and that's one thing she hasn't said -availability -of their time {writes comments on the document}/

Example 3

MESS -this is what our customers out there would like to see [unhuh] -and therefore -and this is where we stand with the two products that we sell to them [unhuh] **ORG** -so I would like -would have liked to see maybe this part first [unhuh] -which is establishing the need from the customer side and then the second -this paragraph here would be how we have done, what we have done to satisfy that need -so I guess it's just a matter of order of the paragraphs / *** **CON** he's gone through some brief Methodology which is good/ *** VIS -the charts attached [unhuh] -help in terms of visualizing -as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words {turns page}/ **CON** this is what I like to see, as well -the fact that he's made a statement, but he's supported it with an exhibit [oh, yes] -or an attachment that shows it/ **REA** -because a lot of the times, I find that -ah -people who read this kind of reports would like to see this type of charts as well -so the presentation -it lets them absorb things a little bit better/

Example 4

FOR my first plan of attack is to look at the table of contents ---and just to skim over--so -you know -Product Description and Characteristics --I look through the different elements, Review of Market--Description, Trends, Issues, Actions, / **CON** -Issues and Actions is a key component, so it's good that that's in there/ **FOR** -the Marketing Program -rationale -assumptions -objectives -Marketing Strategy, Promotion Program and Mix -fantastic, it's all there and {turns the page} -and then you have the Forecast and-- ahh - sorry- ya, the Forecast in terms of pricing and then the assumptions and then the diagrams/**CON** -so, right off the bat, it appears to be --quite a complete report/ *** **CON** okay, I know all of this stuff/ *** **CON** so, that's an important piece of information/*** **CON** now -I don't think that that is technically correct/ *** **MIS** -that isn't listed there -so that's something which needs to be addressed if it's not addressed later on/ *** **MIS** now --the first thing that comes to mind here is --he didn't do a total --should be --he did the 250 mg and the 500 mg -- but I'd like to see a total there/**CON** does that match? -what was up front here? {flips back through report}/***INT** okay, if I understand it correctly, [they] charge us [x] cents, --and he wants to put an additional [y] cents on that -so I'd have to check -double check with him --to make sure that isn't a typo {pen} -or if that's what he really intends to do/ *** **MESS** so, there's external pressure